

LEADERSHIP

THEORY AND PRACTICE • SEVENTH EDITION

The background of the cover features a dynamic, abstract graphic of flowing, curved lines in shades of blue and yellow, set against a black background. The lines create a sense of movement and energy, suggesting the fluidity and complexity of leadership.

PETER G. NORTHOUSE

LEADERSHIP

Seventh Edition

To Laurel, Lisa, Madison, Scott, and Kallie

LEADERSHIP

Theory and Practice • Seventh Edition

PETER G. NORTHOUSE

Western Michigan University



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Preface

This seventh edition of *Leadership: Theory and Practice* is written with the objective of bridging the gap between the often-simplistic popular approaches to leadership and the more abstract theoretical approaches. Like the previous editions, this edition reviews and analyzes a selected number of leadership theories, giving special attention to how each theoretical approach can be applied in real-world organizations. In essence, my purpose is to explore how leadership theory can inform and direct the way leadership is practiced.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

New to this volume is a chapter on *adaptive leadership*, which examines the nature of adaptive leadership, its underpinnings, and how it works. The chapter presents a definition, a model, and the latest research and applications of this emerging approach to leadership. In addition, the strengths and weaknesses of the adaptive leadership approach are examined, and a questionnaire to help readers assess their own levels of adaptive leadership is provided. Three case studies illustrating adaptive leadership are presented at the end of the chapter.

This volume also presents an entirely new chapter on psychodynamic leadership written by a leading expert in the field, Manfred F. R. Kets De Vries, and Alicia Cheak. Like the other chapters, this chapter provides a theoretical explanation of psychodynamic leadership, applications, cases studies, and an assessment instrument.

This edition also includes an expanded discussion of the dark side of leadership and pseudotransformational leadership and the negative uses and abuses of leadership. New research has been added throughout the book as

well as many new case studies and examples that help students apply leadership concepts to contemporary settings.

This edition retains many special features from previous editions but has been updated to include new research findings, figures and tables, and everyday applications for many leadership topics including leader–member exchange theory, transformational and authentic leadership, team leadership, the labyrinth of women’s leadership, and historical definitions of leadership. The format of this edition parallels the format used in earlier editions. As with previous editions, the overall goal of *Leadership: Theory and Practice* is to advance our understanding of the many different approaches to leadership and ways to practice it more effectively.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Although this text presents and analyzes a wide range of leadership research, every attempt has been made to present the material in a clear, concise, and interesting manner. Reviewers of the book have consistently commented that clarity is one of its major strengths. In addition to the writing style, several other features of the book help make it user-friendly.

- Each chapter follows the same format: It is structured to include first theory and then practice.
- Every chapter contains a discussion of the strengths and criticisms of the approach under consideration, and assists the reader in determining the relative merits of each approach.
- Each chapter includes an application section that discusses the practical aspects of the approach and how it could be used in today’s organizational settings.
- Three case studies are provided in each chapter to illustrate common leadership issues and dilemmas. Thought-provoking questions follow each case study, helping readers to interpret the case.
- A questionnaire is provided in each of the chapters to help the reader apply the approach to his or her own leadership style or setting.
- Figures and tables illustrate the content of the theory and make the ideas more meaningful.

Through these special features, every effort has been made to make this text substantive, understandable, and practical.

AUDIENCE

This book provides both an in-depth presentation of leadership theory and a discussion of how it applies to real-life situations. Thus, it is intended for undergraduate and graduate classes in management, leadership studies, business, educational leadership, public administration, nursing and allied health, social work, criminal justice, industrial and organizational psychology, communication, religion, agricultural education, political and military science, and training and development. It is particularly well suited as a supplementary text for core organizational behavior courses or as an overview text within MBA curricula. This book would also be useful as a text in student activities, continuing education, in-service training, and other leadership-development programs.

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SAGE edge for Instructors, a password-protected instructor resource site, supports teaching by making it easy to integrate quality content and create a rich learning environment for students. The test banks, which have been expanded for this edition, include multiple-choice and true/false questions to test comprehension, as well as essay questions that ask students to apply the material. An electronic test bank, compatible with PCs and Macs through Diploma software, is also available. Chapter-specific resources include PowerPoint slides, study and discussion questions, suggested exercises, full-text journal articles, and video and audio links. General resources include course-long projects, sample syllabi, film resources, and case notes. Printable PDF versions of the questionnaires from the text are included for instructors to print and distribute for classroom use. A course cartridge includes assets found on the Instructor Teaching Site and the Student Study Site, as well as a bonus quiz for each chapter in the book—all in an easy-to-upload package. Go to edge.sagepub.com/northouse7e to access the companion site.

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Introduction

Leadership is a highly sought-after and highly valued commodity. In the 15 years since the first edition of this book was published, the public has become increasingly captivated by the idea of leadership. People continue to ask themselves and others what makes good leaders. As individuals, they seek more information on how to become effective leaders. As a result, bookstore shelves are filled with popular books about leaders and advice on how to be a leader. Many people believe that leadership is a way to improve their personal, social, and professional lives. Corporations seek those with leadership ability because they believe they bring special assets to their organizations and, ultimately, improve the bottom line. Academic institutions throughout the country have responded by providing programs in leadership studies.

In addition, leadership has gained the attention of researchers worldwide. A review of the scholarly studies on leadership shows that there is a wide variety of different theoretical approaches to explain the complexities of the leadership process (e.g., Bass, 1990; Bryman, 1992; Bryman, Collinson, Grint, Jackson, & Uhl-Bien, 2011; Day & Antonakis, 2012; Gardner, 1990; Hickman, 2009; Mumford, 2006; Rost, 1991). Some researchers conceptualize leadership as a trait or as a behavior, whereas others view leadership from an information-processing perspective or relational standpoint. Leadership has been studied using both qualitative and quantitative methods in many contexts, including small groups, therapeutic groups, and large organizations. Collectively, the research findings on leadership from all of these areas provide a picture of a process that is far more sophisticated and complex than the often-simplistic view presented in some of the popular books on leadership.

This book treats leadership as a complex process having multiple dimensions. Based on the research literature, this text provides an in-depth description

and application of many different approaches to leadership. Our emphasis is on how theory can inform the practice of leadership. In this book, we describe each theory and then explain how the theory can be used in real situations.

LEADERSHIP DEFINED

There are many ways to finish the sentence “Leadership is . . .” In fact, as Stogdill (1974, p. 7) pointed out in a review of leadership research, there are almost as many different definitions of *leadership* as there are people who have tried to define it. It is much like the words *democracy*, *love*, and *peace*. Although each of us intuitively knows what we mean by such words, the words can have different meanings for different people. As Box 1.1 shows, scholars and practitioners have attempted to define leadership for more than a century without universal consensus.

Box 1.1 The Evolution of Leadership Definitions

While many have a gut-level grasp of what leadership is, putting a definition to the term has proved to be a challenging endeavor for scholars and practitioners alike. More than a century has lapsed since leadership became a topic of academic introspection, and definitions have evolved continuously during that period. These definitions have been influenced by many factors from world affairs and politics to the perspectives of the discipline in which the topic is being studied. In a seminal work, Rost (1991) analyzed materials written from 1900 to 1990, finding more than 200 different definitions for leadership. His analysis provides a succinct history of how leadership has been defined through the last century:

1900–1929

Definitions of leadership appearing in the first three decades of the 20th century emphasized control and centralization of power with a common theme of domination. For example, at a conference on leadership in 1927, leadership was defined as “the ability to impress the will of the leader on those led and induce obedience, respect, loyalty, and cooperation” (Moore, 1927, p. 124).



1930s

Traits became the focus of defining leadership, with an emerging view of leadership as influence rather than domination. Leadership was also identified as the interaction of an individual's specific personality traits with those of a group; it was noted that while the attitudes and activities of the many may be changed by the one, the many may also influence a leader.

1940s

The group approach came into the forefront with leadership being defined as the behavior of an individual while involved in directing group activities (Hemphill, 1949). At the same time, leadership by persuasion was distinguished from "driveship" or leadership by coercion (Copeland, 1942).

1950s

Three themes dominated leadership definitions during this decade:

- **continuance of group theory**, which framed leadership as what leaders do in groups;
- **leadership as a relationship that develops shared goals**, which defined leadership based on behavior of the leader; and
- **effectiveness**, in which leadership was defined by the ability to influence overall group effectiveness.

1960s

Although a tumultuous time for world affairs, the 1960s saw harmony amongst leadership scholars. The prevailing definition of leadership as *behavior* that influences people toward shared goals was underscored by Seeman (1960) who described leadership as "acts by persons which influence other persons in a shared direction" (p. 53).

1970s

The group focus gave way to the organizational behavior approach, where leadership became viewed as "initiating and maintaining groups or organizations to accomplish group or organizational goals" (Rost, 1991, p. 59). Burns's (1978) definition, however, was the most important concept of leadership to emerge: "Leadership is the reciprocal process

(Continued)



(Continued)

of mobilizing by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realize goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (p. 425).

1980s

This decade exploded with scholarly and popular works on the nature of leadership, bringing the topic to the apex of the academic and public consciousnesses. As a result, the number of definitions for leadership became a prolific stew with several persevering themes:

- **Do as the leader wishes.** Leadership definitions still predominantly delivered the message that leadership is getting followers to do what the leader wants done.
- **Influence.** Probably the most often used word in leadership definitions of the 1980s, *influence* was examined from every angle. In an effort to distinguish leadership from management, however, scholars insisted that leadership is *noncoercive* influence.
- **Traits.** Spurred by the national best seller *In Search of Excellence* (Peters & Waterman, 1982), the leadership-as-excellence movement brought leader traits back to the spotlight. As a result, many people’s understanding of leadership is based on a trait orientation.
- **Transformation.** Burns (1978) is credited for initiating a movement defining leadership as a transformational process, stating that leadership occurs “when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 83).

Into the 21st Century

Debate continues as to whether leadership and management are separate processes, but emerging research emphasizes the *process* of leadership, whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal, rather than developing new ways of defining leadership. Among these emerging leadership approaches are

- **authentic leadership**, in which the authenticity of leaders and their leadership is emphasized;
- **spiritual leadership**, which focuses on leadership that utilizes values and sense of calling and membership to motivate followers;

- **servant leadership**, which puts the leader in the role of servant, who utilizes “caring principles” to focus on followers’ needs to help these followers become more autonomous, knowledgeable, and like servants themselves; and
- **adaptive leadership**, in which leaders encourage followers to adapt by confronting and solving problems, challenges, and changes.

After decades of dissonance, leadership scholars agree on one thing: They can’t come up with a common definition for leadership. Because of such factors as growing global influences and generational differences, leadership will continue to have different meanings for different people. The bottom line is that leadership is a complex concept for which a determined definition may long be in flux.

SOURCE: Adapted from *Leadership for the Twenty-First Century*, by J. C. Rost, 1991, New York: Praeger.

Ways of Conceptualizing Leadership

In the past 60 years, as many as 65 different classification systems have been developed to define the dimensions of leadership (Fleishman et al., 1991). One such classification system, directly related to our discussion, is the scheme proposed by Bass (1990, pp. 11–20). He suggested that some definitions view leadership as the *focus of group processes*. From this perspective, the leader is at the center of group change and activity and embodies the will of the group. Another set of definitions conceptualizes leadership from a *personality perspective*, which suggests that leadership is a combination of special traits or characteristics that some individuals possess. These traits enable those individuals to induce others to accomplish tasks. Other approaches to leadership define it as an *act* or a *behavior*—the things leaders do to bring about change in a group.

In addition, some define leadership in terms of the *power relationship* that exists between leaders and followers. From this viewpoint, leaders have power that they wield to effect change in others. Others view leadership as a *transformational process* that moves followers to accomplish more than is usually expected of them. Finally, some scholars address leadership from a *skills perspective*. This viewpoint stresses the capabilities (knowledge and skills) that make effective leadership possible.



Definition and Components

Despite the multitude of ways in which leadership has been conceptualized, the following components can be identified as central to the phenomenon: (a) Leadership is a process, (b) leadership involves influence, (c) leadership occurs in groups, and (d) leadership involves common goals. Based on these components, the following definition of leadership is used in this text:

Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.

Defining leadership as a *process* means that it is not a trait or characteristic that resides in the leader, but rather a transactional event that occurs between the leader and the followers. *Process* implies that a leader affects and is affected by followers. It emphasizes that leadership is not a linear, one-way event, but rather an interactive event. When leadership is defined in this manner, it becomes available to everyone. It is not restricted to the formally designated leader in a group.

Leadership involves *influence*. It is concerned with how the leader affects followers. Influence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without influence, leadership does not exist.

Leadership occurs in *groups*. Groups are the context in which leadership takes place. Leadership involves influencing a group of individuals who have a common purpose. This can be a small task group, a community group, or a large group encompassing an entire organization. Leadership is about one individual influencing a group of others to accomplish common goals. Others (a group) are required for leadership to occur. Leadership training programs that teach people to lead themselves are not considered a part of leadership within the definition that is set forth in this discussion.

Leadership includes attention to *common goals*. Leaders direct their energies toward individuals who are trying to achieve something together. By *common*, we mean that the leaders and followers have a mutual purpose. Attention to common goals gives leadership an ethical overtone because it stresses the need for leaders to work with followers to achieve selected goals. Stressing mutuality lessens the possibility that leaders might act toward followers in ways that are forced or unethical. It also increases the possibility that leaders and followers will work together toward a common good (Rost, 1991).

Throughout this text, the people who engage in leadership will be called *leaders*, and those toward whom leadership is directed will be called *followers*. Both leaders and followers are involved together in the leadership process. Leaders need followers, and followers need leaders (Burns, 1978; Heller & Van Til, 1983; Hollander, 1992; Jago, 1982). Although leaders and followers are closely linked, it is the leader who often initiates the relationship, creates the communication linkages, and carries the burden for maintaining the relationship.

In our discussion of leaders and followers, attention will be directed toward follower issues as well as leader issues. Leaders have an ethical responsibility to attend to the needs and concerns of followers. As Burns (1978) pointed out, discussions of leadership sometimes are viewed as elitist because of the implied power and importance often ascribed to leaders in the leader-follower relationship. Leaders are not above or better than followers. Leaders and followers must be understood in relation to each other (Hollander, 1992) and collectively (Burns, 1978). They are in the leadership relationship together—and are two sides of the same coin (Rost, 1991).

LEADERSHIP DESCRIBED

In addition to definitional issues, it is important to discuss several other questions pertaining to the nature of leadership. In the following section, we will address questions such as how leadership as a trait differs from leadership as a process; how appointed leadership differs from emergent leadership; and how the concepts of power, coercion, and management differ from leadership.

Trait Versus Process Leadership

We have all heard statements such as “He is born to be a leader” or “She is a natural leader.” These statements are commonly expressed by people who take a trait perspective toward leadership. The trait perspective suggests that certain individuals have special innate or inborn characteristics or qualities that make them leaders, and that it is these qualities that differentiate them from nonleaders. Some of the personal qualities used to identify leaders include unique physical factors (e.g., height), personality features (e.g., extraversion), and other characteristics (e.g., intelligence and fluency; Bryman, 1992). In Chapter 2, we will discuss a large body of research that has examined these personal qualities.

To describe leadership as a trait is quite different from describing it as a process (Figure 1.1). The trait viewpoint conceptualizes leadership as a property or set of properties possessed in varying degrees by different people (Jago, 1982). This suggests that it resides *in* select people and restricts leadership to those who are believed to have special, usually inborn, talents.

The process viewpoint suggests that leadership is a phenomenon that resides in the context of the interactions between leaders and followers and makes leadership available to everyone. As a process, leadership can be observed in leader behaviors (Jago, 1982), and can be learned. The process definition of leadership is consistent with the definition of leadership that we have set forth in this chapter.

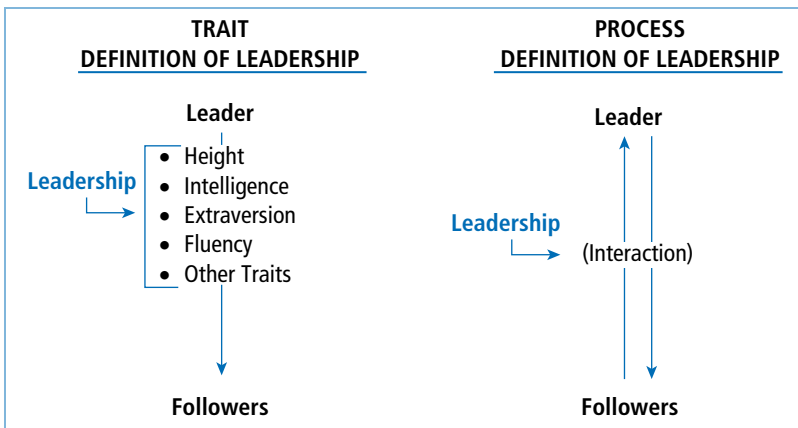
Assigned Versus Emergent Leadership

Some people are leaders because of their formal position in an organization, whereas others are leaders because of the way other group members respond to them. These two common forms of leadership are called *assigned leadership* and *emergent leadership*. Leadership that is based on occupying a position in an organization is assigned leadership. Team leaders, plant managers, department heads, directors, and administrators are all examples of assigned leadership.

Yet the person assigned to a leadership position does not always become the real leader in a particular setting. When others perceive an individual as the most influential member of a group or an organization, regardless of the individual's title, the person is exhibiting emergent leadership. The individual acquires emergent leadership through other people in the organization who support and accept that individual's behavior. This type of leadership is not assigned by position; rather, it emerges over a period through communication. Some of the positive communication behaviors that account for successful leader emergence include *being verbally involved*, *being informed*, *seeking others' opinions*, *initiating new ideas*, and *being firm but not rigid* (Fisher, 1974).

In addition to communication behaviors, researchers have found that personality plays a role in leadership emergence. For example, Smith and Foti (1998) found that certain personality traits were related to leadership emergence in a sample of 160 male college students. The individuals who were more dominant, more intelligent, and more confident about their own performance (general self-efficacy) were more likely to be identified as leaders by other members of their task group. Although it is uncertain whether these findings apply to women as well, Smith and Foti suggested that these three traits could be used to identify individuals perceived to be emergent leaders.

Figure 1.1 The Different Views of Leadership



SOURCE: Adapted from *A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs From Management* (pp. 3–8), by J. P. Kotter, 1990, New York: Free Press.

Leadership emergence may also be affected by gender-biased perceptions. In a study of 40 mixed-sex college groups, Watson and Hoffman (2004) found that women who were urged to persuade their task groups to adopt high-quality decisions succeeded with the same frequency as men with identical instructions. Although women were equally influential leaders in their groups, they were rated significantly lower than comparable men were on leadership. Furthermore, these influential women were also rated as significantly less likable than comparably influential men were. These results suggest that there continue to be barriers to women's emergence as leaders in some settings.

A unique perspective on leadership emergence is provided by social identity theory (Hogg, 2001). From this perspective, leadership emergence is the degree to which a person fits with the identity of the group as a whole. As groups develop over time, a group prototype also develops. Individuals emerge as leaders in the group when they become most like the group prototype. Being similar to the prototype makes leaders attractive to the group and gives them influence with the group.

The leadership approaches we discuss in the subsequent chapters of this book apply equally to assigned leadership and emergent leadership. When a person is engaged in leadership, that person is a leader, whether leadership

