

Defining Leadership

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Introduction

1. On any given day, a search at Amazon.com under the term “leadership” will bring up something in the order of 10,000 book titles – on everything from personal self-improvement (*Now, Discover Your Strengths*) to the orchestration of strategic change (*Leading Change*). There are prescriptive how-to books (*The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*), studies of institutional failure (*Goodbye, Good Men: How Liberals Brought Corruption into the Catholic Church*), “great man” confessions (*Jack: Straight from the Gut*), and books on the latest popular leadership nostrums (*Primal Leadership: Realizing the Power of Emotional Intelligence*). How did something so intuitively simple as leadership get so apparently complicated? Even if one had the inclination, would a reading of these 10,000 books yield a coherent picture of what leadership is, or would it create more confusion than clarity?

2. It may come as a surprise but, in spite of all that has been written on the subject, it is not uncommon to find statements in scholarly books and articles on leadership that characterize contemporary theory as “complex, fragmented and contradictory,”¹ or else as indicative of “an inability to know and agree upon what leadership is,”² so that in spite of “years of trying, we have been unable to generate an understanding of leadership that is both intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying.”³ One theorist, for example, summarizes the problems in the field of leadership research and practice as follows:

The *words* that scholars have used to define leadership are contradictory. The *models* that leadership scholars have developed are discrepant. The *emphasis on periphery and content*, as opposed to the essential nature of leadership, does make for highly personalistic and undisciplinatory [sic] views of leadership that do not cross over to other persons and disciplines. The *confusion of leadership with*

¹ Martin Chemers, *An Integrative Theory of Leadership* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum), 1997.

² Joseph Rost, *Leadership for the Twenty-first Century* (Westport, CT: Praeger), 1991.

³ James Meindl, Stanford Ehrlich & Janet Dukerich, “The Romance of Leadership,” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30, 1985, p. 78.

management and the *equation of leaders with leadership* do cause serious conceptual problems that are hard to reconcile in the real world. And, finally, the *exploitation of the concept* of leadership in terms of symbolic mythmaking (for instance, the savior of organizations, communities, and societies that have somehow lost “it”) and in terms of the *almost sexual appeal* that has been attached to the word by some advertisers, trainers, program developers, and authors has clearly indicated that the concept has lost its moorings, if not its essential character.⁴

3. This apparent confusion seems to be directly related to the instability and ambiguity⁵ of leadership as a *social construct*, that is, as a socially shared, hypothetical, inferred entity that is useful in explaining certain phenomena but which cannot be touched, seen, or directly measured. One major source of instability and ambiguity in the leadership construct can be found in basic processes of social cognition – the everyday ways in which people think and feel about other people and their behaviour, and how they make personal sense of their perceptions and feelings.⁶ From this perspective, Robert Lord and Karen Maher⁷ offer a detailed treatment of leadership in terms of social-cognitive processes, or information-processing principles. These processes help explain why some people are more likely than others to be perceived and labelled as leaders. In the first section of this paper, I review common perceptual phenomena that explain why we perceive some people as leaders and not others. There is a logical connection to the ensuing section in which I undertake an analysis of different approaches to defining the leadership construct, but there is no necessary order to the discussion of perceiving and defining leadership. Both are reciprocally influential activities, in that perceptions shape the constructs we create, while culturally acquired or personally created constructs condition our perceptions.

4. Another major source of instability and ambiguity in the meaning of leadership has to do with the fact that it is a pervasive phenomenon and is embedded in different and multiple forms of human social organization. Consequently, leadership definitions tend, more often than not, to be culturally and historically shaped and bounded and therefore subject to

⁴ Rost, p. 92.

⁵ Jeffrey Pfeffer, “The Ambiguity of Leadership,” *Academy of Management Review*, 2, 1977.

⁶ Susan T. Fiske & Shelley Taylor, *Social Cognition* 2nd ed. (New York: Random House), 1991.

⁷ Robert T. Lord & Karen J. Maher, *Leadership and Information Processing: Linking Perceptions and Performance* (Boston: Unwin Hyman), 1991.

cultural variation. In this vein, Joseph Rost provides an analysis of the evolution of the term ‘leadership’ as a Western cultural construct, as well as some personal ideas on how it should be defined for a post-industrial society in the twenty-first century. In a complementary way, Gary Yukl’s introductory discussion of the nature of leadership⁸ identifies many of the controversies that have been implicated in the various meanings attached to the term. These include such questions as whether leadership is most appropriately viewed as a specialized role or as a socially distributed influence process, is based on authority or personal influence, is reflected in intent or outcomes, is primarily based on reason or on emotion, and is equivalent to or different from management.

5. These and related ideas will be examined in greater detail in this paper. In doing so, we will find that definitions of leadership may be either explicit or implicit and that they vary across time and place. The conclusion we will eventually be obliged to entertain is that leadership is usually not accurately apprehended in its real-world manifestations because of inherent biases in perception, and that it has typically been defined (even by social scientists) in culturally and contextually relative terms. This is why much of the leadership literature is permeated with untidiness. Consequently, a basic assumption of this paper is that these issues must be addressed to secure any discussion of CF leadership doctrine. As we shall eventually see, a practical resolution of the dilemmas posed will essentially involve distinguishing between a context-free definition of leadership, one unencumbered by personal and cultural value judgments, and a context-dependent definition of *effective* leadership which raises all the relevant cultural values to prominence. This will help avoid many of the pitfalls that arise when people simply use the word ‘leadership’ as a shorthand way of referring to behaviour they actually consider to be good or effective leadership.

⁸ *Leadership in Organizations* 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall), 2002.

Variability in the Perception of Leadership

6. In their information-processing approach to leadership, Lord and Maher propose that “the essence of leadership is being seen as a leader by others,”⁹ and that such perceptions take form as a result of two processes: prototype matching, and causal inference or attribution. Table 1, drawn from their book, summarizes this explanatory framework:

Table 1
Cognitive processes involved in leadership perceptions

<i>Perceptual Process</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Mode of Information Processing</i> ¹⁰	
		<i>Automatic</i>	<i>Controlled</i>
Recognition	Traits and behaviours	Prototype matching based on face-to-face contact	Prototype matching based on socially communicated information
Inference	Events and outcomes	Perceptually guided, simplified causal analysis	Logically based, comprehensive causal analysis

7. Recognizing leadership. In prototype matching, leadership is “*recognized* based on the fit of a person’s characteristics with perceivers’ implicit ideas of what leaders are.”¹¹ In other words, the traits, behaviours, and other attributes exhibited by the leader match, more or less, the cultural or personal prototypes of what leaders are assumed to be like. For example, the traits exhibited by Pierre Trudeau – confidence, commitment to certain ideas, exceptional verbal skills – no doubt contributed to his being widely perceived as a capable political leader. Similarly, Nelson Mandela’s principled resistance to social injustice was prototypical of the kind of behaviour many associate with heroic leaders and made him a focus of social identification for others similarly aggrieved or sympathetic to his position. In these instances, commonly accepted prototypes of leaders seem to be operating.

⁹ *Leadership and Information Processing*, p. 4.

¹⁰ Automatic information processing refers to a “chunked” thought process in which several cognitive steps are integrated into one quick and fluid operation that executes, largely as a result of extensive practice or over-learning, at or below the threshold of conscious awareness (as in carrying on a conversation in one’s maternal language). Conversely, controlled processing involves a deliberative execution of cognitive steps and, because of limited proficiency in chunking them, requires close attention or concentration and shows as hesitant and choppy performance (as in learning to speak a new language).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

8. However, individuals also subscribe to somewhat different personal theories of leadership and this produces variability in leader perception. Because we all differ in our capabilities and experience, we create and maintain more or less different personal constructs to understand and explain a variety of phenomena, including leadership. Human understanding is always idiosyncratic to some degree. This gives rise to the “personal view” school of leadership writings – advice based on the first-hand recollections, experiences, and lessons learned of former commanders, CEOs, or other public figures. While often making interesting reading and providing suggestive data, the advice and insights found in such works tend to have limited generalizability.¹² Nevertheless, to the extent that personal constructs overlap and share important features, we can then talk about a social construct rather than an assortment of personal constructs.

9. But commonly held social constructs also vary. For instance, social constructs for leadership vary across national and organizational cultures within the same historical period. Citing the cross-cultural studies of Geert Hofstede, Chemers¹³ draws attention to the influence of internalized cultural values on ideas about leadership. With reference to Power-Distance (the degree to which a culture considers large differences in power between individuals to be normal and appropriate), he notes that cultures scoring high on this value (e.g., Far Eastern, Near Eastern, Arabic, and Latin American) generally accept the notion that superiors and subordinates are different kinds of people, and consequently expect authoritarian leadership. On the other hand, cultures scoring low in Power-Distance (e.g., Nordic, Germanic, and Anglo) are essentially egalitarian and consequently are more comfortable with legitimately exercised power and leadership. Likewise, cultural differences on the dimensions of Uncertainty Avoidance (the degree to which a people or culture prefers structured over ambiguous situations), Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity-Femininity, and others also influence cultural prototypes of what is desirable in a leader.

¹² Weak generalizability is due not only to differences in the personal constructs of leadership found in autobiographical leadership studies and other historical case studies. There is a serious problem of sampling error – the likelihood that the experiences of the subject may not be representative of the leadership domain or of a given leader cohort. There is also the problem of assuming that specific actions contributed to personal success, when other factors may have played a decisive role – including dumb luck.

¹³ *An Integrative Theory of Leadership.*

10. Along the same lines, in discussing difficulties in the transferability of U.S. leadership training programs to other cultures, Hoppe¹⁴ notes that such training will assume an optimum fit in cultures having values most like those of mainstream American culture. A number of studies characterize U.S. culture as highly individualistic, egalitarian, achievement-driven, open to change and self-improvement, empirically disposed, practical, and action oriented. When national cultures are compared on these dimensions, countries such as Australia, Canada, Sweden, Germany, and France tend to form a cluster with the U.S., whereas Mexico, the Arab countries, China, and Japan are most culturally dissimilar.

11. Ideas about leadership also differ because cultures vary across and within organizations. Notwithstanding the CF's existence as a unified entity for almost 35 years, cultural differences across the navy, army, and air force have remained. In this vein, Allan English¹⁵ has proposed that concepts of leadership necessarily vary across the navy, army, and air force, in part because of differences in their historical origins, but also because of differences in the socio-technical systems (i.e., the unique ways in which technology and social dynamics merge, interact, and shape both social organization and group performance) which have evolved for the conduct of sea, land, and air operations. This is another illustration that old habits and current practices largely define one's culture.

12. Finally, even within the same organization and culture, ideas about leadership can be observed to change over time. In a brief historical review of leadership in the Canadian Army since its beginnings, Stephen Harris¹⁶ illustrates the evolution of its leadership construct from an antiquated ascriptive form based on social position to a modern version based on education and technical proficiency.

¹⁴ Michael Hoppe, "Cross-cultural Issues in Leadership Development," in Cynthia McCauley, Russ Moxley & Ellen Van Elser (eds.), *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 1998.

¹⁵ *Understanding Military Culture: A Canadian Perspective*, DCIEM Contract Report 2001-047, June 2001; *The Masks of Command: Leadership Differences in the Canadian Army, Navy and Air Force*. Presentation at the Conference on Leadership in the Armies of Tomorrow and the Future, Kingston, ON, 6-7 February 2002.

¹⁶ *Leadership in the Canadian Army: An Impressionistic Survey*, presentation at the Conference on Leadership in the Armies of Tomorrow and the Future, Kingston, ON, 6-7 February 2002.

13. Inferring leadership. Leader perception based on inference or attribution is a slightly more complex process than prototype matching and involves logical deductions based on assumptions about the relationships between outcomes and their causes. Leadership is “*inferred* based on outcomes of salient events”¹⁷ and most commonly occurs when people, rightly or wrongly, attribute changes in the fortunes of organizations to the actions of the leaders at the time. Part of the mythology of leadership involves the idea that leaders are supposed to shape and control events, so that favourable outcomes tend to be naively interpreted as signs of their single-handed success in exercising control over the environment, while unfavourable outcomes are sometimes mistakenly viewed as signs of complete inadequacy. This explains why corporate CEOs are lionized when their company stocks are soaring (e.g., John Roth at Nortel, who was named Canadian CEO of the year in 2000), why sports coaches are routinely scapegoated and fired when their teams can’t break out of a losing streak, and why military commanders are occasionally relieved of command. In this light, it was probably appropriate for the Somalia Commission to be critical of those senior commanders who, during the pre-deployment phase of the Airborne Regiment, “were satisfied to attribute all failures of readiness to LCol Morneau’s ‘poor leadership,’ even though other serious problems in the unit and in its preparations were evident.”¹⁸

14. Variability in the attribution of strong or weak leadership to particular individuals often occurs because of reductionist tendencies in cause-and-effect reasoning. As a means of dealing with the myriad of external and internal factors that collectively affect the performance of organizations and other complex systems, leadership happens to be a simple and convenient way of accounting for success and failure, especially in extreme cases. In the field of social cognition, people are characterized as *cognitive misers*, a term that refers to the simple fact that limitations of short-term memory oblige us to adopt simplifying or ‘satisficing’ strategies to deal with large amounts of information, uncertainty, and/or complexity.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸ Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of Canadian Forces to Somalia, *Dishonoured Legacy: The Lessons of the Somalia Affair*, Vol. 2 (Ottawa: Minister of Public Works & Government Services), p. 698.

15. In addition to our reductionist tendencies, why we are disposed to exaggerate the effects of leadership probably also has something to do with the sub-conscious ideas and taken-for-granted assumptions that inform so much of Western culture – the mythology of the hero, our belief in individualism and personal agency, a pervasive belief in free will and a corresponding rejection of fatalism, the Protestant Ethic, faith in progress, and a host of other related concepts. Leadership has high value in liberal democratic societies because it underwrites a core mythology – the mythology of individual control.¹⁹ James Meindl, Sanford Ehrlich, and others have labelled this phenomenon “the romance of leadership.” In their words, this conception

. . . denotes a strong belief – a faith – in the importance of leadership factors to the functioning and dysfunctioning of organized systems. It implies that leadership is the premier force in the scheme of organizational events and occurrences. It can be construed as an assumption, preconception, or bias that interested observers and participants bring to bear when they must find an intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying comprehension of the causes, nature, and consequences of organizational activity.²⁰

Faith in the extraordinary capability of the individual has found expression in the contemporary “cult of the CEO.”²¹ In any case, as discussed by Yukl,²² a number of factors increase the likelihood of good performance being attributed more to leadership than to other organizational, group, or individual variables:

- a sudden improvement in performance shortly after a change in leadership,
- direct and salient action by a leader that appears to be relevant to performance,
- decisive and visible action by a leader in an immediate crisis,
- innovative changes by a leader in what is done or how it is done, and
- dedication and self-sacrifice on the part of the leader.

¹⁹ Pfeffer.

²⁰ J.R. Meindl & S.B. Ehrlich, “The Romance of Leadership and the Evaluation of Organizational Performance,” *Academy of Management Journal*, 30, 1987, p. 92. See also Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, “The Romance of Leadership.”

²¹ Martha Lagace, “The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs,” *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge* Sep 16, 2002.

²² *Leadership in Organizations*.

16. Leadership in organizational perspective. Because of the aforementioned kinds of problems in making accurate inferences, Pfeffer and others emphasize the importance of thinking critically about leadership effects and distinguishing what is real from what is illusory. “In analyzing leadership, this mythology [belief in the importance and effectiveness of individual control] and the process by which such mythology is created and supported should be separated from analysis of leadership as a social influence process, operating within constraints.”²³ It is a fair question to ask then: does leadership make a real difference in organizational outcomes and, if so, how much of a difference? Empirical findings that are both definitive and robust are hard to come by, largely because of the difficulty of conducting real-world experiments with appropriate controls for other influential factors, but the conventional wisdom is that individual executives can affect organizational outcomes only by something in the order of 10-15%.²⁴

17. Some researchers interpret this finding as a practically significant effect which can mean the difference between organizational survival and failure, whereas others have used this figure to discount the importance of leadership to organizational success, drawing attention to the influence of other organizational and environmental factors within a more expansive systems framework. For example, institutional theory²⁵ emphasizes the pattern of assumptions and social structures that shape and govern behaviour in a formal organization. Likewise, the examination of any standard textbook on organizational behaviour quickly reveals that organizational performance can be empirically explained, with varying degrees of reliability and accuracy, as a function of a broad array of factors: systemic variables (organization structure and design, technology and work design, organizational culture, human resource policies and practices, environmental adaptability); group-level factors (group structure, team processes, communication, decision making, politics and conflict, leadership); and individual attributes (abilities, values and attitudes, personality, perceptions,

²³ Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, p. 111.

²⁴ David Useem, “Do Leaders Make a Difference?,” *The Financial Post*, Part 18 in the Mastering Management Series, 1997.

²⁵ N.W. Biggart & G.G. Hamilton, “An Institutional Theory of Leadership,” *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 23, 1987.

motivation and commitment). In other words, as suggested by Figure 1, leadership is only one of many variables or factors that affect organizational performance and effectiveness.

18. In this vein, leadership-substitutes theory²⁶ highlights the reduced importance of formal leadership when considered in relation to other situational factors that may either neutralize leader influence or substitute for leader contributions. For instance, as noted by Pfeffer, “the leader is embedded in a social system, which constrains behavior. . . . Leader behavior is constrained by both the demands of others . . . and by organizationally prescribed limitations on the sphere of activity and influence.”²⁷ Thus, rigid human resource policies or practices, operating as an organizational constraint, may limit commanders’ efforts to support their people in some circumstances. Moreover, experienced, highly trained, motivated, and professionally oriented individuals, render much directive leadership superfluous; in many situations, such subordinates don’t have to be told the specifics of what to do or how to do it, but, once assigned an objective, can function independently.

19. The finding that followers’ need for hands-on leadership is variable rather than constant does not mean, however, that leaders do not affect organizational performance. Several large-scale longitudinal studies in the business sector suggest that the 10-15% effect is an under-estimate and that the upper limit of the actual amount of variance attributable to executive leadership is closer to the 30%-45% range. Zaccaro interprets these findings as “convincing evidence for the impact of executive leaders on organizational performance.”²⁸

20. Apart from demonstrable leadership effects on day-to-day operations, it is also commonly believed that strong leaders are critical to group performance and survival in

²⁶ S. Kerr & J.M. Jermier, “Substitutes for Leadership: Their Meaning and Measurement,” *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 22, 375-403, 1978; J.P. Howell & P.W. Dorfman, “Substitutes for Leadership: Test of a Construct,” 24, 714-728, 1981; J.P. Howell, D.E. Bowen, P.W. Dorfman, S. Kerr, & P.M. Podsakoff, “Substitutes for Leadership: Effective Alternatives to Ineffective Leadership,” *Organizational Dynamics*, 19, 21-38, 1990.

²⁷ “The Ambiguity of Leadership,” p. 106.

²⁸ Stephen J. Zaccaro, *Models and Theories of Executive Leadership: A Conceptual/Empirical Review and Integration* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences), 1996, p. 16.

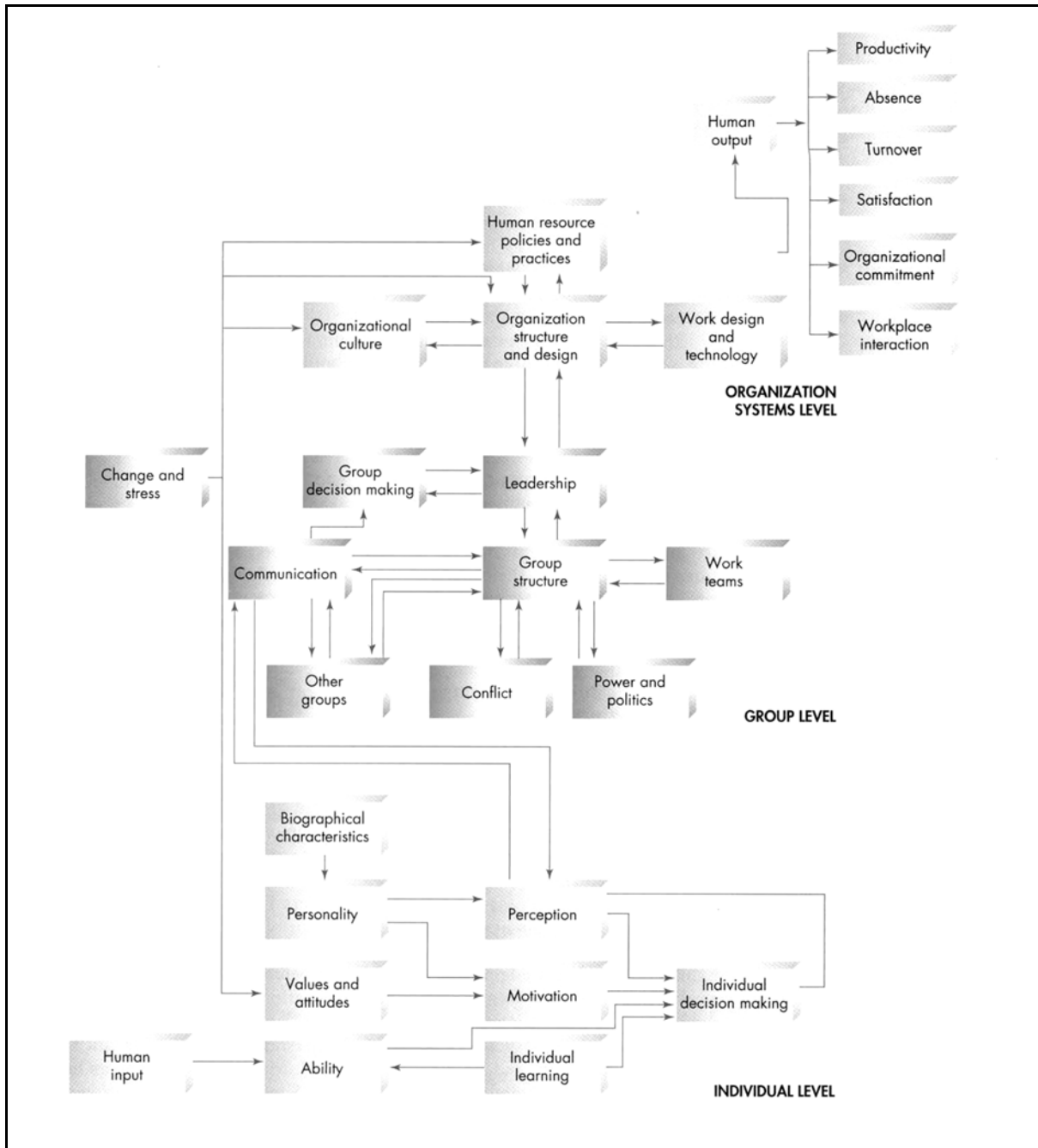


Figure 1: Basic organizational behaviour model showing relationships of individual-level variables, group-level variables, and organization-level variables to representative outcomes of interest.²⁹

²⁹ Stephen P. Robbins & Nancy Langton, *Organizational Behaviour: Concepts, Controversies, Applications* 2nd Canadian ed. (Toronto: Prentice Hall), 2001.

times of instability, crisis, and uncertainty, or when groups are otherwise confronted by novelty, stress, or major changes in circumstances (e.g., Rudy Giuliani in the aftermath of 9/11, LCol James Calvin's actions in the Medak Pocket). In these situations, a formal or emergent leader may have to provide a sense of direction or purpose, a plan of action, motivational impetus, or whatever other enabler that may be necessary for an adaptive group or organizational response. Furthermore, in contrast to the general interest shown in the actions of individual 'heroic' leaders, we must also consider the aggregated effect of a competent leadership cadre on organizational performance – namely, the effect of distributing leadership capability across an organization. For example, the success of the nascent U.S. Army in its 1846-1848 war with Mexico is largely credited to the establishment of the military academy at West Point decades earlier in 1802 and its production of a technically and tactically adept professional cadre that was heavily represented in the army's officer corps³⁰ (unhappily, many of these same officers would later find themselves on opposite sides in the American Civil War). Similarly, the creation of the Prussian *Kriegsakademie* in 1810, following defeats by Napoleon, introduced a systematically professional approach to war that persisted well into the twentieth century. According to Dyer, this "early professionalization of the German officer corps ensured a high level of technical competence throughout the armed forces,"³¹ an opinion validated by van Creveld's analysis of the German army's unmatched fighting power in the Second World War.³² Both developments, incidentally, illustrate the near-simultaneous origins in North America and Europe of the technical-proficiency model of military leadership.

21. Implications of information-processing theory. Because of culturally based differences in how leadership is perceived, leaders who are successful in one culture will not necessarily be successful in a different national or even organizational culture, simply because of a disconnect between the leader prototype they embody and the prevailing leader construct in the host culture. This conclusion has been generally borne out by studies in the

³⁰ Public Broadcasting System, *West Point: The First Two Hundred Years*, 30 January 2002.

³¹ Gwynne Dyer, *War* (New York: Crown Publishers), 1985, p. 149.

³² Martin van Creveld, *Fighting Power: German and U.S. Army Performance, 1939-1945* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press), 1982.

management literature concerning the derailments and failures of corporate managers on out-of-country assignments. This issue has special relevance for military commanders on international assignments and those involved in combined operations. Prototype variation is also relevant to leadership in a mixed military-civilian environment such as NDHQ and the debate over gender differences in leadership. Finally, it could also be a complicating factor in joint operations in the absence of a common professionalism and collegial culture.

22. Certain individual attributes can compensate, however, for any rigidities of leadership that may have developed in a particular culture. Chief among these are *self-awareness* (an understanding of how one's leadership style is perceived by others and how it affects others), *openness to experience* (receptiveness to new knowledge and the willingness to alter one's views on the basis of such knowledge), *respect for differences in others* (the ability to appreciate similarities across cultures at the level of values and basic assumptions and not be distracted by surface differences in appearances and customs), *excellent interpersonal skills* (especially courtesy and respect), and *advanced principle-based moral reasoning* (because ethical dilemmas are inherent in the practice of cultural tolerance).³³ Chemers concludes that a major behavioural moral of this story is that leaders must engage in a certain amount of adaptive image management and role playing to ensure their characteristics are consistent with the prevailing cultural prototype of leadership. "Image management recognizes that individuals who wish to function in a leadership role must present themselves in ways that legitimize their authority. They must, in effect, look and act like effective leaders."³⁴

23. Because leader incumbency is sometimes closely associated in time or space with organizational results, leader effectiveness is often confounded with other factors that contribute to organizational outcomes, including factors not under the control of the leader.

³³ John Alexander & Meena Wilson, "Leading across Cultures: Five Vital Capabilities," in F. Hesselbein, M. Goldsmith, & R. Beckhard (eds.), *The Organization of the Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 1997; Maxine Dalton, "Developing Leaders for Global Roles," in Cynthia McCauley, Russ Moxley & Ellen Van Elser (eds.), *The Center for Creative Leadership Handbook of Leadership Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 1998.

³⁴ *An Integrative Theory of Leadership*, p. 153.

Consistent with the fundamental attribution error,³⁵ those who observe and comment on or evaluate leader performance will tend to exaggerate the praise or blame due the leader, as illustrated by the examples cited previously. Observers are even more prone to commit such attributional errors when leaders engage in image-management activities designed to increase the credit or deflect the blame they receive for organizational outcomes. To protect against erroneous inferences of this kind, what is required is careful and controlled analysis of what the leader actually directed, or what influence was exercised, and whether others were affected primarily by such action or by other factors.

24. Finally, because people's perceptions of leadership are conditioned by personal and cultural schema which operate at the level of tacit knowledge (i.e., most people may not be able to articulate a coherent or precise definition of leadership but are, nevertheless, confident they know it when they see it), the basis for perceiving certain figures as leaders or attributing leadership qualities to them may bear little or no relationship to formally adopted definitions of leadership. This being the case, such personal schema have the potential to colour and bias the assessment of leader potential and performance in selection, development, and performance-evaluation processes. Moreover, perceptions and attributions of leadership may vary across the points of view of superiors, peers, and subordinates because the cognitive schema for leadership (read effective leadership) vary to some degree across these sub-groups (hence the growing interest in 360° assessment practices³⁶). Careful delineation and reinforcement of prototypes of both leadership and effective leadership can be helpful in minimizing the biasing effects of personal and sub-group conceptualizations. In other words, definitions can be used to influence perceptions.

³⁵ A figure-ground phenomenon, in which observers tend to over-estimate the importance of an actor's personal agency while under-estimating the effects of situational factors on his/her behaviour and performance.

³⁶ For a military rationale, see LTC Timothy R. Reese, "Transforming the Officer Evaluation System: Using a 360-Degree Feedback Model," U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, April 2002.

Variability in the Definition of Leadership

25. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* contains no entry for *leadership* (nor does *Harrap's* provide a good French equivalent) but offers about a dozen meanings for its root verb, *lead*. As they apply to people, these include: to cause to go with one; to conduct or guide, especially by going in front; of a commander, to direct the movements of; to guide a person by the hand or contact, to guide by persuasion; to guide the actions or opinions of, bring by argument to a conclusion, induce to do; to go first; to direct by example, to be official director or spokesperson. Although this list expands our understanding of the richness of the concept, these meanings do not sufficiently or precisely specify the common features of leadership so that it can be distinguished from similar concepts, or, for that matter, so that it can be applied consistently across different circumstances. This is because dictionary definitions simply document the everyday non-technical usage of language, as well as changes in usage over time. From a practical perspective, a formal definition of leadership should stipulate all important aspects of the phenomenon, should be non-circular, should be applicable to a variety of social situations where leadership might occur, and should provide a basis for measurement. In other words, a formal definition should be more like a scientific definition than a dictionary definition and should lay out clear boundaries of meaning.

26. The definition attached to leadership serves as a lens through which we view the social world and make sense of our observations. As a result, it shapes and determines a broad range of human resource activity in support of developing leadership capability. Hence, what features are included in the definition of leadership and what features are left out become important doctrinal points of discussion. This was Joseph Rost's assumption in *Leadership for the Twenty-first Century*, a book he described as "a critique of the efforts of leadership scholars and practitioners in the twentieth century to understand leadership based on the values and cultural norms of the industrial paradigm."³⁷ Beyond asserting this ideological distortion of the leadership construct, he agreed with many others that basic thinking in the field was in disarray and that points of contention required resolution.³⁸

³⁷ Op cit., p. xiv.

³⁸ Other reviewers tend simply to compare and contrast leadership definitions; see, for example, Chapter 1 (Concepts of Leadership) in Bernard Bass, *Bass and Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research,*

27. Rost arrived at his conclusions after reviewing some 587 books, book chapters, and articles on leadership written between 1900 and 1990. Interestingly, in over 60% of these several hundred references, the term leadership is not defined. In the remaining 221 sources, definitions vary considerably, and can be clustered around a half dozen or so disputed questions. As noted earlier, Yukl also briefly addresses similar definitional problems. In considering both lists, as well as definitional issues raised by Zaccaro's work on executive leadership, we can identify the following doctrinal questions:

- Should leadership be understood as a function of organizational authority, personal influence, or both?
- Is leadership a specialized role associated with a specific appointment, or can anyone, in theory, be a leader?
- Is leadership defined by influence attempts or what is actually accomplished?
- Should leadership be understood only in terms of face-to-face (direct) influence?
- What is the relationship between leadership and management, and how do these constructs align with military ideas about command?

28. Basis of leader influence. One of the major theoretical divides in leadership theory and research concerns the question of whether influence based on position authority or rank should be included in the definition of leadership, or, alternatively, whether use of the term *leadership* should be reserved for influence based on personal attributes alone. Influence is commonly accepted as “the essence of leadership”³⁹ and is defined by many leadership scholars as an attempted change in the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, values, and/or behaviour of others brought about by either persuasion, direction, or other methods. In other words, it is often treated as a broadly inclusive concept involving the use of any of the available sources of power – both position power (legitimate, reward, coercive) and personal

and Managerial Applications 3rd ed. (New York: Free Press), 1990. Rost, however, undertakes a consistently polemical analysis of the leadership construct, which, on that account, merits special attention in any definitional discussion.

³⁹ Yukl, p. 141.

power (expert, referent) as originally described by French and Raven.⁴⁰ This is how Yukl, for example, uses the term. Moreover, the range of influence tactics he and his research colleagues have identified is fairly broad, including rational persuasion, coaching, inspirational appeals, modeling, simple requests, pressure, legitimating tactics, coalition formation, and others.⁴¹

29. By way of contrast, influence is more narrowly defined by Rost as *non-coercive persuasive* behaviour intended to change the perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, values, or behaviour of others and which *allows the element of choice to operate*. This view is not unique and is consistent with that of other theorists and researchers who also distinguish between the exercise of position power and authority as mandated by an organizational role and incremental influence derived from personal characteristics.⁴² This distinction also characterizes the difference between leadership (or headship) being imposed on a group and leadership being accepted or accorded by the group.⁴³ In any case, personal influence is the defining element of several theorists' conceptualization of leadership, and Rost in particular rejects any definition based on formal authority because it reflects a value orientation that is inherently anti-democratic and therefore out of step with the core values of Western culture.

30. The rationale for this American – hence democratic and egalitarian – view is based on the notion that the modern concept of leadership represents a cleavage with the cultural past:

Leadership, as we know it, is a twentieth-century concept, and to trace our understanding of it to previous eras of Western civilization (much less other civilizations) is as wrong as to suggest that the people of earlier civilizations knew what, for instance, computerization meant. Even the word *leader*

⁴⁰ J. French & B.H. Raven, "The Bases of Social Power," in D. Cartwright (ed.) *Studies of Social Power* (Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research), 1959.

⁴¹ See, for example, G. Yukl & C.M. Falbe, "Influence tactics in upward, downward, and lateral influence attempts," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 1990; G. Yukl, H. Kim & C.M. Falbe, "Antecedents of influence outcomes," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81, 1996.

⁴² D. Katz & R.L. Kahn, *The Social Psychology of Organizations* 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley), 1978.

⁴³ C.R. Holloman, "Leadership and Headship: There is a Difference," in W.E. Rosenbach & R.L. Taylor (eds.), *Contemporary Issues in Leadership* (Boulder, CO: Westview), 1984.

had a different meaning to people of the seventeenth century than it does to the people of the twentieth, and that difference relates, in large part, to the democratization of Western civilization.⁴⁴

Similarly, Bernard Bass makes the observation that “a preoccupation with leadership, as opposed to headship based on inheritance, usurpation, or appointment occurs predominantly in countries with an Anglo-Saxon heritage.”⁴⁵ And Charles Handy notes that, for other culturally based reasons, “the Japanese language has no word for ‘leadership’, the leader being thought of as inseparable from the group.”⁴⁶

31. About here, a post-modern deconstructionist might be tempted to jump into the discussion and point out that leadership is just another word for talking about social dominance and the mechanics of social control, but one which, in its contemporary guises, reflects the cultural biases of post-industrial liberal societies. There is considerable validity to this observation which asserts a continuity between leadership as a cultural construct (or phenotype) and social dominance as the biological substrate (or genotype). For example, in social groups in which dominance, or status, is established by biological competition involving horns, claws, talons, brawn, or weapons, the conquering protagonist is the *de facto* dominant individual and leader of the social unit. This basic kind of social stratification and hierarchical organization we have in common with chimpanzee colonies, wolf packs, and other social mammals. In any case, there seems to be a biological basis for dominance in humans and other social animals, and this partially explains why hierarchical structure is still the most prevalent form of social organization on the planet; it’s in our genes.⁴⁷

32. Similarly, in human societies in which dominance, once attained, is maintained by rigid cultural conventions such as hereditary rulers, class birthright, or caste, anyone with the right parentage is accepted as socially dominant and is ascribed to be a leader; from this,

⁴⁴ *Leadership for the Twenty-first Century*, pp. 42-43.

⁴⁵ *Bass and Stogdill’s Handbook of Leadership*, p. 11.

⁴⁶ *Understanding Organizations* 4th ed. (Toronto: Penguin Books), 1993, p. 117.

⁴⁷ These ideas were popularized in the 1960s and 1970s through the writings of Robert Ardrey (*African Genesis, The Territorial Imperative, The Social Contract*) and Lionel Tiger and Robin Fox (*Men in Groups, The Imperial Animal*).

comes the notion that leaders are born and not made. This is one of the lessons of Harris's ruminations on the historical status of leadership in the Canadian Army, and he cites J.F.C. Fuller's autobiographical reminiscences to illustrate this ascriptive class-based model that dominated Canadian Army ideas about leadership from its beginnings to well past the mid-point of the 20th century:

I joined an aristocratic army, feudal in the sense that it was grounded on leadership and fellowship in which, with few exceptions, the leaders were sons of gentlemen and more frequently than not the eldest sons – the privileged son. . . . The men – the followers – of that period were a rough lot, simple, tough, illiterate . . . There were really two distinct classes by birth. The idea of an officer imposing his will on his men never entered his head because one class was so superior – that is, the officers – and the other so inferior – the men – that it was unnecessary to do so.⁴⁸

33. That was yesterday. Today, people in societies characterized by extraordinary individual liberty, freedom of choice, and social mobility are uncomfortable with the language of social control and power. Kotter's comments on power are illustrative:

Americans, as a rule, are not very comfortable with power or with its dynamics. We often distrust and question the motives of people who we think actively seek power. We have a certain fear of being manipulated. Even those people who think the dynamics of power are inevitable and needed often feel somewhat guilty when they themselves mobilize and use power.⁴⁹

People in liberal societies are more comfortable with the idea of accepting the personal influence of another – either explicitly, through democratic processes of appointing people in charge, or tacitly, through voluntary participation in institutions and organizations with established authority structures. However, this bias obscures the fact that straightforward requests based on the authority of hierarchical position are not injurious to individual dignity or liberty and can hardly be considered coercive. Conversely, influence based on persuasion can be subtly coercive and exploitive, as exemplified in the Machiavellian tactics used by “compliance professionals.”⁵⁰ Thus a restrictive definition of leadership based on personal

⁴⁸ *Leadership in the Canadian Army: An Impressionistic Survey.*

⁴⁹ John Kotter, “Power, Dependence, and Effective Management,” *Harvard Business Review on Human Relations* (New York: Harper & Row), 1979, p. 359.

⁵⁰ These are people in fields such as sales, evangelism, politics, etc. who are knowledgeable about, skilful in, and use to advantage the psychology and techniques of persuasion to obtain the desired compliant behaviour. Robert B. Cialdini, *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* Rev. ed. (New York: Quill), 1993.

influence alone may be appropriate for defining an *idealized* form of effective leadership in the cultural space defined by Western democratic, egalitarian, and networked societies of the late 20th century and early 21st century; this kind of leadership is preferred and valued in this culture. But there is no compelling reason for adopting such a narrow and culturally relative definition of leadership in general. The term is used in both non-restrictive and restrictive senses, and when used non-restrictively is often qualified by the use of appropriate descriptors (e.g., authoritarian leadership, participative leadership, *laissez-faire* leadership).⁵¹

34. Leadership based on formal authority may be a minimal kind of leadership, what Pigeau and McCann characterize as “rigid command.”⁵² It may also result in mere compliance (i.e., outward behavioural conformity *without* internalized acceptance or support) rather than commitment (i.e., behavioural conformity *with* attitudinal acceptance and support).⁵³ But, for people in formal leadership roles, it is extremely difficult in practice to disentangle those effects on others that are induced by hierarchical authority from those that are achieved through personal attributes:

In an organizational setting leadership and authority are two modes of gaining control – or in Weberian terminology, two strategies of domination. Although they can be conceptualized as analytically distinct strategies, one relying on personal capacities and the other on the command power of an office, in practice leadership and authority are always combined in some manner.⁵⁴

Therefore, as a matter of CF doctrine, leadership should be understood in terms of both formal authority and personal influence.

35. Specialized role or broadly distributed capability. Related to the issue of hierarchical authority and personal influence, especially in formal organizations, is the question of

⁵¹ See, for example, one of the early classic studies on such differences: K. Lewin, R. Lippitt, & R.K. White, “Patterns of Aggressive Behavior in Experimentally Created Social Climates,” *Journal of Social Psychology*, 10, 1939.

⁵² Ross Pigeau & Carol McCann, “What is a Commander?” in Bernd Horn & Stephen Harris (eds.), *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell), 2001.

⁵³ This is what Norman F. Dixon had in mind when he observed that the statutory authority of military leaders at least allows them to push their followers by force of law if they cannot always pull them by force of character. *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence* (London: Jonathan Cape), 1976.

⁵⁴ Biggart & Hamilton, p. 432.

whether leadership should be considered the prerogative of people appointed to leadership roles, or whether others without any hierarchical authority can exercise leadership. While it is true that authority is concentrated in particular managerial or command appointments, leaders may only exercise such authority down the chain of command. Hierarchical structure in organizations means that authority flows only one way.

36. However, leaders may also be “legitimated by an informal process of acceptance of their influence through the impact of their personal qualities.”⁵⁵ In other words, leadership based on expert or referent power is non-hierarchical. Consistent with most people’s experience, such influence can be exercised multi-directionally – upward, laterally, and downward – and is prototypically exemplified by people who are at the centre of grass-roots actions (e.g., Martin Luther King’s leadership of the African-American civil rights movement, Lech Walesa’s leadership of the Solidarity union). This also means that leadership need not be tied to a position of formal managerial or command authority but can be exercised by anyone within a group or organization. Such *emergent* leadership reflects the willingness of an individual to assume responsibility for the collective good, and may be manifested as some initiative in advancing and supporting an idea, or as coping behaviour in an emergency or other crisis situation where formal direction may be lacking but appears to be necessary. Hence, for the purposes of CF doctrine, leadership should be considered both a specialized role requirement and a capability that everyone in the organization has some potential for, great or small, and is encouraged to develop.

37. Organizational achievement versus influence attempt. According to one broad conceptualization, leadership is about getting things done through people. A significant variation on this theme is achieving group or organizational goals through people. Unlike the broader definition, which places no restrictions on the object of the leader’s intent, equating leadership to the achievement of group or organizational goals at least implies that leader authority and influence are legitimate only when employed in the pursuit of group or organizational objectives. In other words, to use one’s authority or influence for personal

⁵⁵ Edwin P. Hollander, “Leadership and Power,” in Gardner Lindzey & Elliot Aronson (eds.) *Handbook of Social Psychology: Volume II* 3rd ed. (New York: Random House), 1985, p. 505.

objectives would not qualify as leadership, but rather would constitute an abuse of authority, such as breach of trust, other malfeasance, or careerism. Hence the narrower view attaches a moral criterion to achievement, which arguably distorts the objective study of leadership. While the subordination of authority and influence to group or organizational purposes is valid as a criterion of *effective* leadership, it overlooks the fact that leader motives are frequently mixed, reflecting both organizational and personal values. There is no good *a priori* reason to exclude leadership based on personal goals or mixed motives from an objective definition of the term.

38. What makes any goal-achievement definition of leadership especially troublesome is that it shifts attention from influence as the essence of leadership to outcomes; leadership efforts which do not result in success do not count:

All leadership, then, has to be effective because it does not exist unless it is effective. It may be a nice idea of leadership, and it certainly puts leadership on a pedestal, but it does not square with what people experience in their daily lives. We all know of cases where leadership has been tried and found wanting, cases where leaders and followers tried to change an organization or society and failed.⁵⁶

A recurring theme in the literature on change management is the notion of readiness for change. Experience shows that sometimes, in spite of the best efforts of leaders, a society or group either cannot be convinced of the need for change or strenuously resists it. For example, the provisions of the Rowley Report on officer education in the CF have taken over 30 years to be implemented. Would it be accurate to say that not until now did anyone show any leadership in attempting to improve officer professionalism and education? Similarly, during his tenure as Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda in 1993/94, General Roméo Dallaire was unable to convince his superiors at the UN to take additional military action and avert the slaughter he saw coming. In considering his efforts, would it be reasonable to claim that he did not display leadership? These examples simply illustrate the point that sometimes personal influence is not enough, and must be supplemented by authority to make things happen.

⁵⁶ Rost, p. 77.

39. As discussed earlier, in the context of attributional errors and problems, equating leadership with goal achievement confounds causes and effects. Leadership cannot be inferred from results alone. Results should enter the discussion only when distinguishing between successful and unsuccessful leadership. This again brings us back to the proposition that, if leadership is not about achieving a particular outcome, it essentially involves influencing and attempting to influence others.⁵⁷ It is doing something rather than doing nothing, and therefore is purposeful. A leader's objectives may be personal or social. Influence attempts may be effective or ineffective and result in either group success or failure. In sum, CF leadership doctrine should not go much beyond, or unnecessarily qualify, the assertion that leadership involves the purposeful exercise of authority and/or influence.

40. Direct and indirect leadership. One of the common assumptions about leadership is that it primarily involves face-to-face or direct influence on individual and group performance,⁵⁸ and, indeed, most of the leadership literature is devoted to the activities of managers, leaders, and supervisors engaged in carrying out organizational operations. Current leadership theories are pre-occupied with identifying the most appropriate behaviours and techniques for such things as setting goals and clarifying tasks, improving subordinate skills, encouraging high levels of effort, and promoting cohesion and teamwork. While it is true that direct leadership of this kind will always be the cornerstone of any organization's practice, recent work on executive leadership has focussed attention on the indirect effects of leaders (e.g., policy environment, culture change, development and communication of a strategic vision, organizational restructuring, etc.) and has, as a result, expanded our conceptualization of the domain.

⁵⁷ Consistent with this influence perspective, Kanungo and Mendonca observe that "*leadership effectiveness* should be measured in terms of (a) the degree to which a leader promotes the instrumental attitudes and behavior for the achievement of group objectives; (b) the followers' satisfaction with the task and context within which they operate; and (c) the acceptance of the leader's influence, which is often manifested through the followers' emotional bond with the leader, by their attributions of favorable qualities to the leader, and by their compliance behavior and commitment attitudes and values." Rabindra Kanungo & Manuel Mendonca, *Ethical Dimensions of Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, CA; Sage Publications), 1996, p. 15.

⁵⁸ John P. Campbell, "The Cutting Edge of Leadership: An Overview," in J.G. Hunt and L.L. Larson (eds.), *Leadership: The cutting Edge* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press), 1977.

41. There are several contributing streams to this broader view of leadership. One derives from theorizing by Katz and Kahn⁵⁹ and by Jacobs and Jaques⁶⁰ that leadership responsibilities vary in accordance with the size of unit led, scope of work, and also the time span of activity. The point of note is that these responsibilities increase in complexity as leaders move up the organizational ranks. Katz and Kahn initially proposed three levels of qualitative differences in managerial responsibility, while Jacobs and Jaques have identified up to seven levels. Zaccaro⁶¹ provides a consolidated description and schematic of these approaches which is further abstracted into a two-level version of leader responsibility: direct and indirect leadership.

42. As discussed in some detail by Lord and Maher,⁶² direct leadership and indirect leadership may be exercised by both lower- and upper-level leaders in an organization. As these terms are used here, the essential difference between the two is a matter of proximity between leader and led and immediacy of effect. Leadership is considered direct when it has an unmediated and fast-acting effect on subordinate ability, attitudes, motivation, behaviour, performance, and related psychological states. Verbal direction, goal setting, practice training, coaching, performance monitoring, feedback, contingent reward and discipline, and so on are examples of direct leadership behaviours. Indirect leadership comprises two kinds of mediated effects on behaviour and performance. First, it involves slower but longer-term changes in the beliefs and values of subordinates – accomplished through ongoing exemplary leadership, socialization, and the shaping of group norms. Second, indirect leadership also involves alterations to the slower-acting task and organizational conditions that moderate behaviour and performance – training and development programs, technology, group/organizational structure, reward systems, member-support programs, professional culture, policies and operating procedures, and so on. Many of these latter classes of

⁵⁹ *The Social Psychology of Organizations*.

⁶⁰ T. Owen Jacobs & Elliott Jaques, "Executive Leadership," in Reuven Gal & A. David Mangelsdorff (eds.) *Handbook of Military Psychology* (New York: John Wiley), 1991.

⁶¹ Stephen J. Zaccaro *Models and Theories of Executive Leadership: A Conceptual/Empirical Review and Integration* (Alexandria, VA: U.S. Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences), 1996.

⁶² Chapter 9 in *Leadership and Information Processing*.

variables, which are depicted in Figure 1, tend to fall under the authority of senior leaders. Once optimized, they may also function as leader substitutes, as previously discussed. It is also worth noting that attempts to influence and shape the operating environment will often extend beyond organizational boundaries and will be exhibited in a variety of efforts to position the organization favourably with one or more stakeholders. The cultivation of co-operative relationships with other groups or organizations (e.g., suppliers, regulatory agencies), policy advocacy with the government and its departments, public relations programs, are illustrative of this equally important leadership function.

43. A major implication of this discussion relates to Schein's observation⁶³ that all groups and organizations must continually address two basic problems: (1) integrating internal processes to ensure efficient and consistent goal achievement; and (2) adapting to changes in the external environment to ensure growth and survival. Chemers, likewise, refers to an internal maintenance function ("the regularization of activities to provide a stable base for production") and capacities for external adaptability ("mechanisms for restructuring traditional approaches in light of new conditions").⁶⁴ Under stable conditions, where the environment is relatively invariant or routinely predictable, internal maintenance tends to be the focus of leadership at both lower and upper levels. As the world has become a more changeable place and the rate of change has accelerated, though, the need for adaptive organizational change has become more salient and more critically important to organizational effectiveness and survival. Familiar examples of environmental pressures driving change in the CF include:

- an expanded spectrum of operations and increased operational tempo, which will continue to affect operational doctrine, training, and personnel support,
- enhanced applications of information technology, which will shape military capabilities and concepts of operations under the RMA rubric,
- heightened public expectations of institutional accountability, which have resulted in more scrutiny by the media and other agencies,

⁶³ Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 1992.

⁶⁴ *An Integrative Theory of Leadership*, pp. 2-4.

- a renewed societal emphasis on human rights, diversity, and individualism, which has implications for human resource policies and leadership practice, and
- a substantially smaller budgetary base for defence, which affects just about everything including the value placed on the efficient use of resources.

The responsibility for external adaptation to these changed and changing circumstances falls primarily on the shoulders of executive leaders, the people at the top who are supposed to understand the big picture and the long view. Accordingly, CF leadership doctrine should give equal attention to the responsibilities of direct and indirect leadership

44. Leadership and management (and command). One of the undercurrents that has run through the leadership and management literatures for several decades is the notion that leaders and managers are different kinds of people. Zaleznik gave a boost to the leadership mystique in 1977 with his contention that managers are other-directed rational technicians, whereas leaders are inner-directed imaginative visionaries.⁶⁵ More recently, Bennis, among others, has drawn an even sharper dividing line (see Table 2), appropriating Peter Drucker's

Table 2
Purported characteristics of managers and leaders

The manager administers	The leader innovates
The manager is a copy	The leader is an original
The manager maintains	The leader develops
The manager focuses on systems & structure	The leader focuses on people
The manager relies on control	The leader inspires trust
The manager asks how and when	The leader asks what and why
The manager has his eye on the bottom line	The leader has his eye on the horizon
The manager has a short-range view	The leader has a long-range perspective
The manager accepts the status quo	The leader challenges it
The manager is the good soldier	The leader is his own person

⁶⁵ Abraham Zaleznik, "Managers and Leaders: Are They Different?" *Harvard Business Review*, 15(3), 1977.

descriptions of efficiency (“doing things right”) and effectiveness (“doing the right things”) and applying them differentially to managers (people who do things right) and leaders (people who do the right things).⁶⁶ What emerges from this series of *ad hominem* attributions is an image of leaders as knights of high purpose and managers as bean-counting clods. As noted by Yukl, however, “associating leading and managing with different types of people is not supported by empirical research; people do not sort neatly into these extreme stereotypes”⁶⁷ and some management theorists have recanted such views.⁶⁸

45. To some extent, the tendency to disparage management while idolizing leadership reflects a misunderstanding of management and its confusion with management science. For example, today’s characterizations of leaders and managers were once associated with the separate cultures of managers (front-line decision makers operating on rules of thumb and intuition) and management scientists (academic and staff experts more inclined to use scientific and quantitative methods).⁶⁹ According to some, Henry Mintzberg being among the leading critics,⁷⁰ the long shadow of management science and the emphasis on analytical decision making in MBA programs have contributed to current practical and image problems for management. Writing in particular of the leadership failures of many business leaders, Evans attributes much of the blame to “ubiquitous MBA programs that concentrate on training experientially impoverished idiot savants to manage companies of which they have no personal sense, in a social context they do not understand.”⁷¹ As we shall see, management embraces a broader set of functions than business administration.

⁶⁶ Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley), 1994.

⁶⁷ *Leadership in Organizations*, p. 5.

⁶⁸ John Kotter, for example, has admitted he is guilty of erroneously using this dichotomy in the interests of simplicity. Deborah Blagg & Susan Young, “What Makes a Good Leader?” *Harvard Business School Working Knowledge*, April 2, 2001.

⁶⁹ C. Jackson Grayson, Jr., “Management Science and Business Practice,” in *Harvard Business Review on Human Relations* (New York: Harper & Row), 1979.

⁷⁰ See, for example, Henry Mintzberg & Joseph Lampel, “MBAs as CEOs” <http://www.henrymintzberg.com>, 2001.

⁷¹ Robert Evans, “Hollow the Leader,” *Report on Business Magazine*, November 1977, p. 58.

46. The polarization of attitudes around management and leadership also reflects competing value orientations that are complementary parts of a larger organizational effectiveness construct. One of these orientations, associated with stabilization and routinization processes, or efficiency, more often than not gets labeled as management, while other processes, associated with change and creative adaptation, or effectiveness, get labeled as leadership. Each set of processes has strengths and weaknesses. Stabilization and routinization create economies of effort and free up organizational resources for novel challenges, but, carried to an extreme, can produce the familiar frozen bureaucracy. Likewise, innovation and risk-taking increase the odds of survival in the business world and in combat, but overdone may create confusion and anarchy. Both kinds of activities are necessary for organizational effectiveness over the long run.⁷² Thirty years ago, rational management techniques (zero-based budgeting, quality circles, Theory Z) were all the rage as North America sought to close a productivity gap with Japan. More recently, heroic leadership (excellence, transformational leadership, visioning) has been in vogue as corporations struggled to maintain employee and customer loyalty. Now, in an environment of global competition and shrinking resources, efficiency is again ascendant (down-sizing, value chains, business planning). However, Lt-Gen Gus Pagonis's account of leadership and logistics challenges in the Gulf War, and his observation that "the military is a structure that depends both on flexibility and rigidity" – doctrine and innovation, provide a more balanced and corrective view.⁷³ Leadership is not just about visionary heroics. Sometimes it is about stabilizing and re-assuring. For instance, few people would dispute the opinion that the efforts by state and federal politicians to stabilize and normalize the American public following the terrorist acts of 9/11 were acts of leadership. What has to be understood is that both kinds of processes have complementary utilities and that neither should be over-valued; effective leaders know when to stabilize things and when to shake things up.

⁷² This is the thesis of Robert Quinn's competing values framework, which proposes a model of organizational effectiveness based on balancing and reconciling what often seem to be opposing goods. *Beyond Rational Management: Mastering the Paradoxes and Competing Demands of High Performance* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 1988.

⁷³ Lieutenant-General William G. Pagonis (with Jeffrey Cruikshank), *Moving Mountains: Lessons in Leadership and Logistics from the Gulf War* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press), 1992.

47. On the other hand, there is considerable validity to the idea that leadership and management do differ in some important ways. First, in terms of the restrictions normally imposed on managerial authority (i.e., may only be exercised down the chain of command) and the potential for personal influence to be exercised in a less restricted way (i.e., upward, downward, and laterally), leadership has greater scope and reach. Second, when compared in functional terms, management looks like the broader construct of the two. This holds from both a prescriptive rational vantage point and a descriptive empirical perspective. For example, the broad classic functions of management outlined by Henri Fayol (*Administration industrielle et générale*, 1916) consist of the following five (leadership roles are in **bold**):

- *Planning* (anticipating the future, setting objectives and goals),
- *Organizing* (structuring work, assigning people to tasks, allocating resources),
- ***Commanding*** (maintaining activity, directing effort),
- *Co-ordinating* (scheduling, harmonizing activity), and
- *Controlling* (monitoring performance, taking corrective action).

48. Alternatively, Henry Mintzberg's pioneering and now classic empirical study of what managers really do⁷⁴ identified three interpersonal roles based on formal authority and status, which in turn give rise to three informational roles and four decision roles:

- *Interpersonal roles*
 - Figurehead (performing ceremonial and status duties of position)
 - **Leader (directing, reconciling individual needs and organizational goals)**
 - Liaison (maintaining contacts outside vertical chain)
- *Informational roles*
 - Monitor (scanning environment, questioning peers and contacts)
 - Disseminator (sharing and distributing information)
 - Spokesman (representing organization)
- *Decisional roles*
 - Entrepreneur (improving operating capability)
 - Disturbance handler (resolving disputes, responding to pressures)
 - Resource allocator (distributing personal time and other resources)
 - Negotiator (managing explicit and implied contracts)

⁷⁴ "The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact," *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1975.

Subsequent research and integrative work by Yukl proposed a common managerial repertoire consisting of the following 14 roles: planning and organizing, problem solving, **clarifying roles and objectives**, informing, monitoring, **motivating and inspiring**, **consulting**, **delegating**, **supporting**, **developing and mentoring**, **managing conflict and team building**, networking, **recognizing**, and **rewarding** (leadership roles are in **bold**).

49. In all these typologies of managerial roles and functions, we see a broad range of activities and responsibilities underpinned by the formal authority of hierarchical position. Embedded in this mix, is a fuzzy set of interpersonal directing and influencing roles related to organizational interests. In other words, leadership is one of several formalized and expected role requirements of managers. Leadership based on position authority and personal influence is clearly a role requirement for line and staff managers who have subordinates, whereas leadership based on personal influence would seem to be the fallback role for managers who have no subordinates and who provide a staff-specialist service. These considerations make the CF's much narrower technical definition of management ("the science of employing men and material in the economical and effective accomplishment of a mission"⁷⁵) and the army's resourcing concept ("the allocation and control of resources (human, material, and financial) to achieve objectives"⁷⁶), both of which exclude the leadership function, somewhat eccentric to say the least. It's possible that the romance of leadership and the rationalist excesses of MBA programs are at work here too. Certainly, the federal Public Service seems to take a broader view of management, and consistent with aforementioned theory and research, includes leadership (i.e., motivating, providing challenge, developing employees, organizational influence, creating vision and values, catalyzing innovation and change) as a critical element of the managerial profile.

50. How does the military concept of command relate to leadership and management? New work on the theory of command by Ross Pigeau and Carol McCann⁷⁷ has done much to

⁷⁵ A-PD-131-002/PT-001, *Leadership: The Professional Officer*, 1973. p. 2-1.

⁷⁶ B-GL-300-003/FP-000, *Command*, 1996, p. 6.

⁷⁷ See, for example, "Redefining Command and Control," in Pigeau & McCann (eds.) *The Human in Command: Exploring the Modern Military Experience* (New York: Kluwer/Academic Publishers), 2000, and

refine our understanding of this concept. According to their proposed model, command is a three-dimensional construct defined by the inter-relationships of *competency* (physical, intellectual, emotional, and interpersonal), *authority* (with special emphasis in the military on the statutory legal authority inherent in a command position, but also including authority based on personal attributes), and *responsibility* (which, at a minimum, means externally imposed obligations to the chain of command, or otherwise phrased, organizational role requirements). This concept of command permits them to include the exercise of command authority in the general category of creatively expressing will to accomplish a mission.

51. When we compare command to management, what we find is that, like management, command is based on *formal authority*; for example, in CF leadership manuals, “Command is defined as the lawful authority which a superior exerts over his subordinates . . . by virtue of his rank and appointment”;⁷⁸ NATO defines command as “the authority vested in an individual of the armed forces for the direction, coordination, and control of military forces”;⁷⁹ similarly, Pigeau and McCann assert that “legal authority specifies the position of commander.”⁸⁰ Like management, command entails an equally broad array of *comparable functions*; for example, CF command doctrine makes reference to analysis and planning, coordination, directing and leading, controlling, and monitoring.⁸¹ Like management, command theory affirms *leadership as a subsidiary role requirement*; on this point, Pigeau and McCann state that “a commander is a superset concept that includes but cannot be reduced to a leader. In fact the commander position provides the context for leadership to emerge.”⁸² In sum, then, rather than claiming command and management are different

“What is a Commander?” in Bernd Horn & Stephen Harris (eds.), *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell), 2001.

⁷⁸ *Leadership: The Professional Officer*, p. 2-1.

⁷⁹ AAP-6, *NATO Glossary of Terms and Definitions* (2002).

⁸⁰ Pigeau & McCann, “What is a Commander?” p. 92.

⁸¹ B-GL-300-003/FP-000, *Command*.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 83.

constructs or that management is a component of command,⁸³ it is probably more accurate to say that the management role as practised in civilian organizations is isomorphic with the command function found in the military. Furthermore, line and staff management roles in combination correspond to military command and staff functions. This does not mean that military commanders and civilian line managers have equivalent authority or operate in the same way. As Pigeau and McCann note, the special powers of commanders to put subordinates in harm's way and to apply severe disciplinary measures to members make military authority unique and distinctive, as does the authority they have to resort to large-scale lethal force.

52. In contrast to the conventional CF notion of leadership and management constituting elements of the superordinate construct, command, Figure 2 depicts an alternative view.

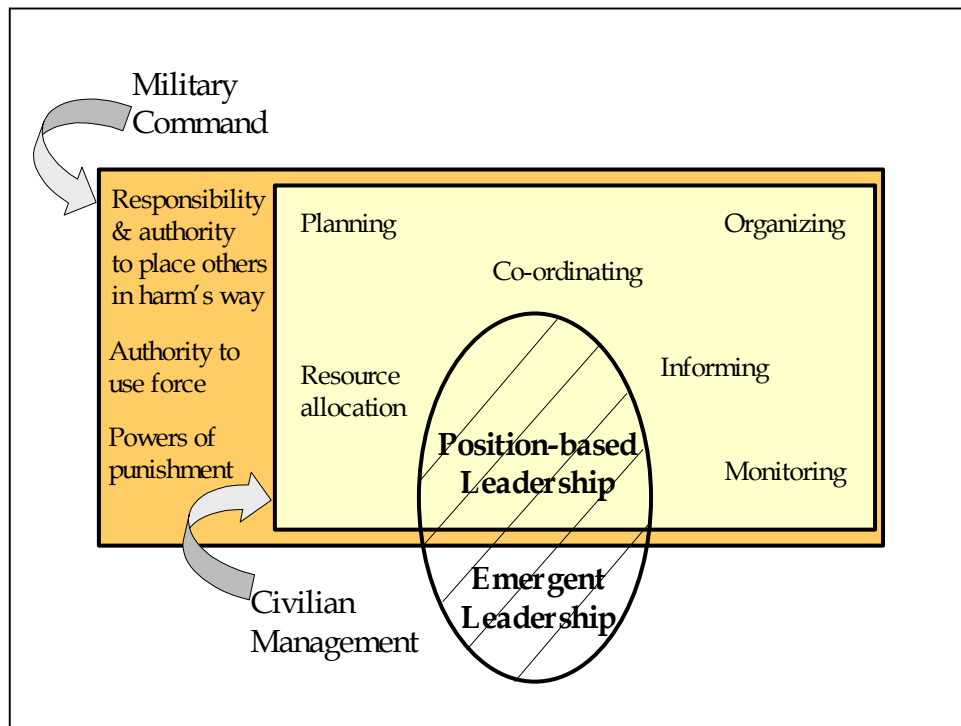


Figure 2: Functional inter-relationships of command, management, and leadership.

⁸³ This conventional military view of management being different from leadership and a component of command is summarized by LCol Peter Bradley, "Distinguishing the Concepts of Command, Leadership and Management," in Bernd Horn & Stephen Harris (eds.), *Generalship and the Art of the Admiral* (St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell), 2001.

With the exception of some unique responsibilities of military command, management roles are treated as functionally equivalent to military command functions. Leadership is shown as a requirement of both management and command role sets, but its ultimate reach, as determined by personal influence is not bounded by the limits of position authority. To be specific, emergent leadership is located outside the role box of organizational authority and likewise may be exercised in an expansive way – by staff officers or staff managers who have no subordinates, for instance, or any other organizational member with the ability and motivation to do so. In other words, the foregoing comments simply state that all commanders and managers are expected to demonstrate leadership but that it isn't necessary to be a commander or a manager to lead others. This configuration of constructs, which better reflects theory and empirical observations, should be part of a revised CF leadership doctrine.

53. Summary of doctrinal discussion. At the beginning of this section, five questions were identified as important points of doctrinal discussion and debate. Arguments have been presented which support the following positions with respect to these questions:

- Leadership should be generally understood as a function of both organizational authority and personal influence, recognizing that leadership based on organizational authority alone is a minimal kind of leadership which will at least produce subordinate compliance but is unlikely to earn follower commitment.⁸⁴
- Leadership is a role requirement of people in positions of formal authority and is a discretionary but highly desirable attribute in other organizational members.
- Leadership must not be confused with organizational results or outcomes, which are also affected by other factors, but should be properly viewed as a continuing effort to direct and influence others.
- Leadership may be exercised directly and indirectly, with direct leadership being the more prevalent pattern at lower organizational levels and indirect leadership being the more critical kind at upper organizational levels.

⁸⁴ In terms of an integrated CF approach to leadership and command, this is consistent with reservations expressed by Pigeau and McCann concerning a common interpretation of leadership as personal influence; their view is that “leadership should be considered as the act of getting others to achieve particular objectives, regardless of the strategy used to do so.” “Redefining Command and Control,” p. 181.

- Leadership is one among several roles which characterize management and command functions, but, unlike these functions, may be exercised outside the confines of position-based authority to also extend laterally and upward in groups and organizations.

Against these considerations, it seems appropriate to review existing CF definitions of leadership and assess how adequately they satisfy these criteria.

Deconstructing CF Definitions of Leadership

54. Some time in 1960, when he was Commandant of the Royal Canadian School of Infantry, J.A. Dextraze put his thoughts about leadership on paper⁸⁵ and subsequently addressed them to the whole of the CF in 1973 when he was Chief of the Defence Staff.⁸⁶ The latter article has served as a doctrinal reference point ever since. In it, he wrote that he favoured a definition of leadership as “the art of influencing others to do willingly what is required in order to achieve an aim or goal.” Although he went on to identify four qualities (loyalty, knowledge, integrity, courage) that he considered “essential ingredients of successful leadership” and also offered several basic behavioural rules of leadership, he did not elaborate on the definition. He did not, for example, elaborate on the meaning of influence – whether it included or excluded the exercise of lawful authority. Nor did he explain why willing compliance was a necessary feature of leadership or how willing compliance with a superior’s intent could be readily distinguished from normative compliance with the institutional authority symbolized by a superior.

55. CF doctrinal manuals from 1973 similarly define leadership as “the art of influencing human behaviour in order to accomplish a mission in the manner desired by the leader.”⁸⁷ A subsequent publication from 1978, *Leadership: A Manual of Military Leadership for the Canadian Forces*, defines a leader as “anyone who directs and influences people in such a way that they will act with willing obedience, confidence, respect, and loyal cooperation in

⁸⁵ Reported in Harris.

⁸⁶ “The Art of Leadership,” *Canadian Forces Personnel Newsletter*, June 1973.

⁸⁷ A-PD-131-001/PT-001, *Leadership: Junior Leaders Manual*, 1973; A-PD-131-002/PT-001, *Leadership: The Professional Officer*, 1973.

order to accomplish a mission,” while leadership is defined as “that combination of persuasion, compulsion and example that makes people do what you want them to do.” Here, the definition of leader is broader than that put forward by General Dextraze, allowing for both direction based on position authority and influence based on personal authority. However, there is a significant inconsistency between the requirement for willing obedience specified in the definition of a *leader* and the permissible use of compulsion in the definition of *leadership*. As we have seen, this confused understanding of the subject is not unique to the CF but is also a general feature of the academic literature; some theorists and researchers do not distinguish across categories of follower response, whereas others require a voluntary response for direction or influence to qualify as leadership.

56. It should be evident that available CF definitions of leadership suffer from several weaknesses identified in the preceding discussion. Some terms are not explained and hence are ambiguous. Other elements are inconsistent. Moreover, several of the qualifying ideas are neither sufficiently value-neutral to articulate a generic definition (although the 1978 definition comes close) nor sufficiently elaborated to work as an institutional statement of good or effective leadership.

A Generic Definition of Leadership

57. As discussed in this paper, many of the definitions of leadership which appear in the theoretical literature display a value orientation reflecting a particular research interest or contextual background, or else one or more perceptual biases. For instance, North American values and the industrial context are at play in the debate over whether the definition of leadership should make room for formal authority. Equating leadership with preferred organizational outcomes not only abuses the logical connection between effects and their causes, but also highlights the premium placed on winning and success in our culture. In a related but different way, even though indirect leadership at the executive level can have profound effects on organizational effectiveness, ‘invisible hands’ rarely get appropriate recognition because of attributional biases which favour what is immediate and salient.⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Lord & Maher.

Finally, in the never-ending argument over differences between leadership and management, the romance of leadership inappropriately relegates management to an inferior role.

58. Most of these observed biases reveal an intentional or inadvertent interjection of value-laden ideas about what constitutes preferred, good, or effective leadership. One way around this problem is to separate the generic objective definition of leadership from an organizationally specific definition of good leadership. A context-free definition of leadership would provide some consistency and would be a surer way of comparing leadership across times and places, while a culturally constructed definition of effective leadership (e.g., attainment of organizational goals, lawful, ethical, transformational, or non-coercive, etc.) would permit an affirmation of what is locally valued and should serve as a basic reference point for selecting, developing, and assessing leaders. Hence, without attaching any value judgments as to whether it is good or bad, effective or ineffective, leadership may be generally defined as ***directly or indirectly influencing others, by means of formal authority or personal attributes, to act in accordance with one's intent or a shared purpose.***

59. To absolutely clear about what this definition means, its key features are elaborated as follows:

- Consistent with the notion that authority and influence may be exercised in a face-to-face way or by altering the task, cultural, and organizational environments which condition behaviour, this definition acknowledges the dual importance of direct and indirect leadership. It seems important to make this explicit because the indirect effects of leadership are often overlooked.
- Like command, characterized by Pigeau and McCann as “the uniquely human activity of creatively expressing will, but one that can be expressed only through the structures and processes of control,”⁸⁹ leadership, as defined here, is also a creative expression of will, but one that is *not* limited to the structures and processes of control over subordinates. It embraces other influence processes (persuasion, negotiation, bargaining, co-optation, networking, and others) that not only reach down to subordinates but also extend laterally and upward in social and organizational status systems.

⁸⁹ “What is a Commander?” p. 101.

- In this definition, the exercise of organizational and personal power need not result in specific outcomes or the achievement of particular goals to be deemed leadership; altering individuals or the situation is sufficient. When goal achievement enters into the equation, then we are talking about the results of actions and efforts by others, which is a different discussion.
- In this definition, the deployment of formal authority or personal influence is purposeful. Either implicitly or explicitly, leadership is about setting, maintaining, or changing collective direction, and thus distinguishes leadership from casual or other forms of social influence (e.g., peer or referent-group influence), but no value judgments are attached to the leader's purpose. In other words, in the value-neutral realm of objective definition, leader intent may fall anywhere along the continuum of destructive to self-serving to socially or organizationally beneficial behaviours. But especially in the former case, we might be justified when evaluating such behaviour to speak of defective, immoral, or bad leadership (e.g., Stalin, Pol Pot, Milosovic). "The ethical use of power is a legitimate concern for leadership scholars, but it should not limit the definition of leadership or the type of leadership influence processes studied."⁹⁰
- According to the general definition offered, which tacitly recognizes the potential for leadership in any member of a group, leadership is viewed as both a specialized social role, equivalent to headship (which can be obtained through usurpation, appointment by superior authority, or election), and as a distributed or temporarily shared role, which may be assumed according to situational demands and the capabilities and motivation of group members (i.e., emergent leadership). Leadership may be a continuing pattern of influence or a one-time act. In either case, the "leadership role is defined, as are other roles, by stabilized expectations (norms) . . . ,"⁹¹ and such norms simultaneously constrain leader behaviour while defining a zone of acceptable influence.⁹²
- Finally, under this general definition, no statements are made about the quality of follower response. Leader intent may or may not be shared or fully accepted by subordinates. If it is not, then they are likely merely to comply with the leader's intent; if it is, then they are more likely to be committed to the leader's purposes. Moreover, if they are moved to accept and become psychologically committed to the leader's purpose, we are more likely to characterize the leader as inspiring, charismatic, or transformational.⁹³

⁹⁰ Yukl, p. 4.

⁹¹ Bass, p. 17.

⁹² This is equivalent to what Chester Barnard (*The Functions of the Executive*, 1938) termed the "zone of indifference" – the range of directives or requests to which a subordinate or follower is willing to respond without questioning their legitimacy.

⁹³ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row), 1978; Bernard M. Bass, *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations* (New York: The Free Press), 1985.