

Reframing Leadership

A leader is a dealer in hope.

—Napoléon Bonaparte

The pitched battle between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump for the U.S. presidency in 2016 sent shockwaves around the world and was unprecedented in many ways. Clinton was the first woman nominated to run for president by a major party, while Trump was the first major candidate who had no previous political or military experience. Few, if any, could remember an election where both candidates were so widely disliked, nor one where one of the candidates, Trump, spent so much time battling leaders of his own party. Historians will no doubt spend years trying to sort this out, but a look through the four frames reveals important lessons for leadership. Structure, people, politics, and symbols all contributed to the outcome.

Structure

Two key structural issues were the process for nominating candidates and the Electoral College system for choosing the winner. In U.S. presidential elections, a party's nominee emerges over several months from a state-by-state process of caucuses and primary elections that select delegates to each party's national convention. The two major parties had different rules. On the Republican side, it was winner-take-all in many states, and a candidate could garner all of a state's delegates with less than half the votes. Running in a

multicandidate field, Trump racked up a majority of all Republican delegates with less than 40 percent of the total votes. The race ended early but produced an unconventional candidate opposed by many grassroots Republicans and much of the party's leadership. Meanwhile, the Democratic race dragged on longer because the party awarded delegates on a proportional basis. Over the primary season, Clinton got a majority of the votes but had trouble pulling away from her major opponent, Bernie Sanders. Even when she won a state, she often got only a slightly larger share of the delegates.

The Electoral College, a quaint eighteenth century compromise enshrined in the U.S. Constitution,¹ gives each state a number of electors equivalent to its representation in Congress. Beginning in the 1990s, America became sharply divided between red (Republican) and blue (Democratic) states. In the 2016 election, most of the 50 states and the District of Columbia were sure to vote either red or blue, leaving only a few states that were real battlegrounds and three that were critical. Trump was almost sure to win if, but only if, he carried Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania.

Human Needs

Turning to the human resource frame, we can ask about the concerns and attitudes that were motivating American voters. It was a year of surprises as both sides of the political spectrum saw major shifts in the electorate toward greater anger and dissatisfaction with the status quo. Many voters wanted wholesale change because they believed Washington was broken. On the Democratic side, almost everyone expected that Clinton, who had narrowly lost the nomination to Barack Obama eight years earlier, had an easy path to the nomination. But Bernie Sanders, a relatively obscure senator from Vermont, mounted a ferocious challenge from the left on a platform of economic justice, universal health care, and free college tuition. Liberals and young voters flocked to him. Caught off guard, Clinton struggled to adjust her positions to catch up with a leftward drift among Democratic primary voters. She ultimately prevailed but emerged weaker than expected amid concerns that many Sanders voters might never support her.

Meanwhile, the surprises were even greater on the Republican side. When Donald Trump first announced that he was running for the nomination, almost everyone saw it as a publicity stunt that would quickly flame out. How could a brash real estate developer and television personality with no government experience and a crazy idea about building a wall along the U.S./Mexican border get anything more than a fringe vote? But Trump tapped into a huge reservoir of disenchantment among voters who felt that they were being left behind and that the America they knew was being undermined by globalization, immigrants, bureaucrats, and condescending coastal elites. Trump gave voice to their feelings. His promise to deport

immigrants, bring jobs back, and make America great again resonated powerfully, and he overwhelmed the large field of more traditional Republicans running against him.

The human resource frame also underscores the importance of the personal characteristics of the two candidates. Clinton and Trump had a few things in common. Long before the election, both were household names and both had very high unfavorable ratings. The two were also the oldest pair of candidates in U.S. history; Trump would be 70 on Election Day, and Clinton would be 69. But they had very different personas. Trump was hot where Clinton was cool, flamboyant where she was restrained, shoot-from-the-hip where she was disciplined, and outrageous where she was cautious. To almost every issue, Trump offered dramatic but vague promises, while Clinton delineated specific policies and plans. Voters who liked one rarely liked the other. Many disliked both and lamented that they were forced to choose the lesser of two evils.

The candidates also had contrasting leadership styles. Trump was an entertainer, a business magnate, and perhaps the least-disciplined presidential candidate in American history. He was notorious for over-the-top 3 AM Twitter storms attacking his various enemies. He was a relentless warrior who mostly embodied the political and symbolic frames, both central to effective leadership. Clinton was a cool-headed policy wonk—strong on details but weaker on assembling them into a compelling vision. She was more attuned to the structural and human resource frames. Her picture of the future was clearer on the details but fuzzier in terms of the big picture. Voters knew that Trump promised to “Make America great again,” but were less clear about Clinton’s core message.

Changing Coalitions

The political frame points to the importance of coalitions and scarce resources, and the 2016 election occurred in the context of a deeply polarized nation and a changing electorate. Beginning in the 1960s, the Republicans had evolved from the party of the industrial north to a coalition of economic conservatives (including much of the business elite) and white social conservatives (particularly in the south and the Plains states). The party appealed to the first group with support for low taxes, free markets, and free trade and kept the second group happy by opposing abortion, gay marriage, and government programs many whites saw as mostly benefitting persons of color.

The Democratic coalition, meanwhile, underwent its own evolution in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Members of the white working class, particularly religious and social conservatives, drifted toward the Republicans, but a new Democratic coalition emerged that brought together groups heavily concentrated in and around major cities—the poor, minorities, and upscale progressives.

The differences between Clinton and Trump backers in the 2016 campaign reflected the evolution in both parties. Democrats increased their share of college-educated voters, and Clinton won among women and people of color. But Trump won among whites, particularly white men without college degrees. Tellingly, 81 percent of Trump supporters, but only 19 percent of Clinton's said that life for people like them was worse now than 50 years earlier (Smith, 2016).

Culture and Narrative

The symbolic frame underscores the importance of culture and narrative in understanding the election. A critical cultural shift in the U.S. electorate was the gradual decline of non-Hispanic whites as a percentage of the population. People of color had become a majority in four states (California, Hawaii, New Mexico, and Texas) and were gaining in many others. This worked both for and against Trump: demographics were shifting toward the Democrats, but that shift triggered powerful levels of distress and anger among many whites. The specter of terrorism, beginning with 9/11 and continuing with the rise of ISIS, exacerbated voters' suspicions toward immigrants in general and Muslims in particular. Trump supporters were not poorer than Clinton voters, but they had the lowest opinions of Muslims and were most likely to favor mass deportation of undocumented immigrants (Matthews, 2016).

What followed was one of the bitterest, most divisive presidential campaigns in U.S. history. Many Trump supporters saw Clinton as a corrupt, lying criminal who would confiscate their guns, open the door to terrorists, and destroy everything good in America if she became president. They cheered when Trump said that she would be in jail if he became president and nodded assent when he told them that "this election is our last chance to save our country." Many Clinton supporters found the prospect of a Trump presidency genuinely terrifying. They saw him as a homegrown version of Adolf Hitler—an authoritarian, narcissistic, racist misogynist.

In the end, Clinton got some 2.8 million more votes, but Trump won the presidency. He took the battleground states he had to get (Florida, Ohio, and Pennsylvania) and picked up narrow victories in two blue states in the upper Midwest, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

Leadership Lessons from the 2016 Election

In the tale of the 2016 election we can find many of the lessons for leadership that form the backbone of this chapter. Structure matters but is not always sufficient for leadership success. Clinton won on campaign infrastructure, but that was not enough to win the presidency. During the primaries, both candidates had to appeal to the partisan zealots who form the party's base, but Trump defied the conventional wisdom that a candidate needs to

move to the center in a general election to pick up independents and undecideds. He thrived on huge rallies where his passionate supporters devoured his message and showered him with approval. That passion turned out to be critical.

Symbolically, elections are always about shaping the narrative in order to control how voters perceive you and your opponent. Trump framed himself as the only leader strong enough to save America from terminal decline. In his story, the United States had become a weak, borderless nation that was failing on almost every front, and he knew how to “Make America great again.” That catchphrase crystallized his message and rallied his supporters. Clinton, better on policy specifics than grand narrative, struggled to communicate an equally focused and compelling message. Her catchphrases included “I’m with her,” “Stronger together,” “America is already great,” and “Love trumps hate.” They added up to a fuzzy rationale for her candidacy. In a change election, Trump offered a clearer message of making things better.

Both campaigns’ efforts to develop a positive image for their candidate were sometimes overshadowed by efforts to persuade the public that their opponents were terrible leaders and vile human beings. Trump consistently referred to Clinton as “crooked Hillary” and labeled her the worst candidate for president in American history. That narrative drew support from an FBI investigation into Clinton’s use of a personal e-mail server while she was Secretary of State and from an ongoing drip-drip of e-mails hacked from her campaign by Russian operatives and distributed through Wikileaks. Clinton supporters believed that her momentum was seriously damaged when FBI director James Comey announced days before the election that new e-mails had been discovered that “might be pertinent” to the investigation. A week later, Comey said that it had been a false alarm, but Democrats believed the new announcement served only to keep the e-mails in the news.

Although the Democrats got no help from the FBI or Wikileaks, they benefited from a continuing flow of new material from investigative reporters and from Trump himself to support their framing of him as a liar, misogynist, racist, and tax cheat who lacked the judgment and self-control to be trusted in the White House.

Gender was a central issue for the first time in a U.S. presidential election. It both helped and hindered Clinton. She was a powerful symbol to millions who hoped to see the first woman president. But leadership has historically been associated with maleness, and research (that we examine later in this chapter) shows that women who seek high office often face discrimination and higher expectations than men. Both men and women are often uncomfortable with women who are powerful or who seem to want power.

In the end, much of the public believed the worst about both candidates—polls suggested that Clinton was viewed unfavorably by 57 percent of the public and Trump by 62 percent. Even many Trump supporters feared that he lacked the maturity and

steadiness required in a president. But they saw him as the candidate who could bring change to Washington. That was enough to make him president.

We begin this chapter with a historical tour of theory and research on leadership, examining quantitative and qualitative strands that have run in parallel to one another. This will lead us into an exploration of the idea of leadership—what it is, what it is not, and what it can and cannot accomplish. We look at the differences between leadership and power and between leadership and management. We examine the intersection of leadership with gender and culture. Finally, we explore how each of the four frames generates its own image of leadership.

LEADERSHIP IN ORGANIZATIONS: A BRIEF HISTORY

In nearly every culture, the earliest literature includes sagas of heroic figures who led their people to physical or spiritual victory over internal or external enemies. In Egypt and China, we find narratives about pharaohs and emperors and the rise and fall of dynasties that date back thousands of years. Ancient Chinese chronicles tell a cyclical story that begins when a dynamic leader leverages disorder and discontent and amasses sufficient force to found a new dynasty. For a time the new dynasty produces vigorous and far-sighted leaders who create a stable and prosperous state. But eventually corruption spreads, leadership falters, and the dynasty collapses in the face of a new challenger. Then the cycle begins anew. This saga still has a powerful resonance in modern China because the Communist party leaders understand that their dynasty, like all that have come before, may someday lose the “mandate of heaven.”

From ancient times to the late nineteenth century, the leadership literature consisted mostly of narratives about monarchs, generals, and political leaders. Then the rise of big business triggered an interest in the qualities of the giants who founded great enterprises, like Cornelius Vanderbilt, Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, and John D. Rockefeller. In the same era, social science began to separate from philosophy and emerge as a distinct academic field. Scholars like Harvard psychologist William James and the sociologists Herbert Spencer in England and Emile Durkheim in France began to lay the intellectual foundations for a science of society and human behavior based on systematic research.

Out of this ferment emerged two distinct approaches to understanding leadership in organizations that have coexisted for more than a century, traveling more or less side by side, with only occasional nods to one another. One track, which we label *quantitative-analytic*, emphasizes testing hypotheses with quantitative data to develop leadership theory. The work is typically published as articles in scholarly journals (an overview of eras in the evolution of this strand appears in Exhibit 17.1). A second track, *qualitative-holistic*, relies

Exhibit 17.1.
A Short History of Quantitative-Analytic Leadership Research.

Leadership Theory	Examples	Central Idea	Current Status
Trait theory: how are leaders different?	Galton, 1869; Terman, 1904; Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Zaccaro, 2007	Leaders possess distinctive personal characteristics (intelligence, self-confidence, integrity, extraversion, and so on).	Fell out of favor in the 1950s when reviewers found weak empirical support, but has returned to favor in recent decades.
Leadership style theory: how do leaders act?	Lewin, Lippitt, and White, 1939; Likert, 1961; Fleishman and Harris, 1962	Leadership depends on style (democratic vs. autocratic, task-oriented vs. people-oriented, etc.).	Mixed evidence stimulated move toward contingency theories, which often include leader style variables.
Contingency theory: how do circumstances affect leadership?	Fiedler, 1967; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Evans, 1970; House, 1971, 1996	Effective leadership depends on the characteristics of followers and context: what works in one situation may not work in another.	No single contingency view has found consistent empirical support or wide acceptance, but most modern leadership research incorporates the idea that leadership depends on circumstances.
Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory: what happens in the leader-follower relationship?	Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 2008	Leadership is rooted in the quality of the relationships between leaders and individual followers.	Advocates of LMX theory have been actively conducting research since the 1970s; many LMX propositions have empirical support, but the approach is criticized for complexity and viewing leadership too narrowly.
Transformational leadership theory: how do leaders transform followers?	Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Conger and Kanungo, 1998	Transformational (or charismatic) leaders use inspiration, idealized influence, and the like to generate followers' trust and willingness to go above and beyond.	Evidence suggests transformational leadership makes a difference, but more research is needed on when and how it works best.

on case studies and interviews with practitioners to develop ideas and theory about how leadership works in practice. Such work is often published in books aimed at an audience that includes both practitioners and scholars. We will survey quantitative and then qualitative work before trying to capture the current state of the field.

Quantitative-Analytic Research

Since the early twentieth century, quantitative research has moved through several eras, gradually evolving from simpler to more complex views of leadership. The initial research, flowing from the “great man” theory of leadership (Carlyle, 1841), focused on finding the distinctive traits that made leaders different from everyone else. Around 1950, multiple reviews (Stogdill, 1948; Gibb, 1947; Jenkins, 1947) concluded that there was little consistency in leadership traits across people and circumstances. That gave rise to two lines of research in the 1950s and subsequent decades: one on leadership style and another on situational contingencies. Style research focused particularly on the difference between task-oriented and people-oriented leaders. The results suggested that leaders who focused on people generated higher morale although not necessarily higher productivity, and that the most effective leaders were good at dealing with both tasks and people (Fleishman and Harris, 1962).

Contingency theorists examined characteristics of situations that interacted with leader behavior. One influential line, for example, found that task-oriented leaders did best in situations that were either highly favorable or highly unfavorable for the leader, while people-oriented leaders did best in situations in the middle (Fiedler, 1964, 1967).

Another contingency theory, Hersey and Blanchard’s situational leadership model (1969, 1977), had less research support (Hambleton and Gumpert, 1982; Graeff, 1983; Blank, Weitzel, and Green, 1990) but became more popular with practitioners because it is more intuitive and offers clearer practical guidance to practitioners. The model incorporates its own version of the distinction between task and people, using a two-by-two table to develop four different leadership styles (see Exhibit 17.2). Hersey and Blanchard argued that each style was appropriate for a different level of subordinate “readiness,” which they defined in terms of how able and willing subordinates were to do the work. If subordinates are neither willing nor able, then the leader should tell them how to do the job. If they want to do the job but lack skill, then the leader should sell or coach to build capacity. When subordinates are able but unwilling or insecure, then the leader should use a participative style to build motivation. If they are both able and willing, the leader should delegate and get out of the way.

Exhibit 17.2.

Situational Leadership Model.

High Relationship, Low Task:

Participate

Use when followers are “able” but “unwilling” or “insecure.”

Low Relationship, Low Task:

Delegate

Use when followers are “able” and “willing” or “motivated.”

High Relationship, High Task:

Sell (or Coach)

Use when followers are “unable” but “willing” or “motivated.”

Low Relationship, High Task:

Tell

Use when followers are “unable” and “unwilling” or “insecure.”

Hersey and Blanchard’s model continues to be popular for leadership training but has been criticized for lack of research support and for generating self-fulfilling prophesies. If, for example, managers give unwilling and unable subordinates high direction and low support, what would cause their motivation to improve? The manager of a computer design team told us ruefully, “I treated my group with a ‘telling’ management style and found that in fact they became both less able and less willing.”

The 1970s spawned a new line of research: leader-member exchange theory (LMX). LMX research began with the insight that leaders create different relationships with different followers, and, in particular, they create in-groups and out-groups by interacting with some subordinates in a more personal way while focusing strictly on task with others (Dansereau, Graen, and Haga, 1975; Graen and Uhl-Bien, 2008). One practical implication from this research is that leaders can get better results by creating strong relationships with all, not just some, of their subordinates (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 2008, p. 225).

A major new strand that emerged in the 1980s emphasized a distinction between transactional and transforming leadership (Burns, 1978). Transactional leadership involves practical, give-and-take exchanges, such as pay for performance. Transforming leaders, on the other hand, “champion and inspire followers . . . to rise above narrow interests and work together for transcending goals” (Burns, 2003, p. 26). Over the next two decades, research on transformational, or charismatic, leadership became a dominant research strand, producing a number of studies confirming that transformational leaders had a more powerful impact than those who relied only on transactional approaches (Shamir, House, and Arthur, 1993; Conger and Kanungo, 1998).

Qualitative-Holistic Leadership Studies

The quantitative research tradition has both strengths and limits. Over more than a century, scholars have tested hypotheses, discarded ideas that don't work, and gradually built theory that fits the data. But the work has often simplified the complexities of leadership by treating only a few variables at a time and by treating leadership as equivalent to what happens between managers and their subordinates. Qualitative research on real-world practice has viewed leadership in more nuanced and holistic ways, often developing ideas decades before they make their way into quantitative studies. Mary Parker Follett (1896, 1918, 1941), for example, was well ahead of her time in exploring distributed leadership, charisma, and the importance of the human element. Many of the major themes in Follett's work were extended by two of the most influential management thinkers of the early twentieth century: Elton Mayo and Chester Barnard. Mayo, often viewed as the founder of the "human relations" school of management, conducted the famous studies that gave rise to the "Hawthorn effect" and promoted the idea, viewed as radical at the time, that human and social factors mattered as much as technical and economic ones (Mayo, 1933).

Chester Barnard, a telephone executive, was a practitioner rather than an academic, but he wrote one of the most influential management books of the midtwentieth century, *The Functions of the Executive* (Barnard, 1938). Barnard argued that the task of leadership is to balance technical and human factors to achieve cooperation among the many groups and individuals within an organization. Organizations rarely survive indefinitely, he noted, because it is so challenging to solve two central issues: achieving goals while satisfying the needs of those who do the work.

The idea that leadership is about balancing or integrating concerns for task and people remained a central theme in qualitative work on leadership for the next several decades (examples include Argyris, 1962; Bennis, 1961; Likert, 1961; McGregor, 1960), but in later years researchers began to give greater attention to political and symbolic issues in the workplace (Dalton, 1959; Mintzberg, 1973; Kotter, 1985; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002).

Interest in the symbolic dimension of leadership exploded in the 1980s when students of organization discovered something long known to anthropologists—organizations had cultures, and those cultures mattered (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Schein, 1992). Symbolic elements such as charisma, vision, and transformational leadership became dominant themes in discussions of leadership, although Collins and Porras (1994) and Collins (2001) led a kind of counterrevolution, arguing that charisma was overrated (Collins and Porras, 1994). Instead, they argued, leaders of successful companies were disciplined and determined but humble (attributing success to the team, not to

themselves) and even self-effacing. Heifetz and Linsky (2002), focusing particularly on leadership in the public sector, took a similar position, arguing that the essence of leadership is not vision but mobilizing followers to work on solving hard problems.

EVOLUTION OF THE IDEA OF LEADERSHIP

Prior to the twentieth century, leadership was usually equated to high position, and the dominant theme in leadership studies was that leaders were born with special gifts that made them different from ordinary mortals. That view is dying, brought down by leadership research and by the complex challenges of leading in contemporary organizations. Our tour of more than 100 years of leadership history shows a gradual shift from a simpler view centered on the individual to a more complex view that takes account of individual, relationship, and context. Five propositions capture this evolution:

Leadership Is an Activity, Not a Position

Leadership is distinct from authority and position, although authorities may be leaders. Weber (1947) and Barnard (1938) both linked authority to legitimacy. People consent and choose to obey authority only as long as they believe it is legitimate. Authority and leadership are both built on voluntary compliance. Leaders cannot lead without legitimacy, but many examples of authority fall outside the domain of leadership. As Gardner put it, “The meter maid has authority, but not necessarily leadership” (1989, p. 7).

Heifetz (1994) argues that authority often impedes leadership because in times of distress we expect those in authority to know and do more than they can and to solve our problems for us. This tempts leaders to overpromise and underdeliver, a recurring setup for failure and disappointment. After the 2016 election, many observers wondered how Donald Trump would be able to deliver on the many promises that he made during his election campaign.

The management literature has often equated leadership to whatever managers do with their subordinates, but this defines leadership too narrowly. Leaders need skill in managing relationships with all significant stakeholders, including superiors, peers, and external constituents (Burns, 1978; Gardner, 1986; Kotter and Cohen, 2002; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002).

Leadership Is Different from Management

You can be a leader without being a manager, and many managers could not “lead a squad of seven-year-olds to the ice-cream counter” (Gardner, 1989, p. 2). Bennis and

Nanus (1985) suggest that “managers do things right, and leaders do the right thing” (p. 21); that is, managers focus on execution, leaders on purpose and values. Barnard (1938) argued that a moral dimension is central to leadership because it rests on “creating faith: faith in common understanding, in the probability of success, in the ultimate satisfaction of personal motives, in the integrity of objective authority, and in the superiority of common purpose” (Barnard, 1938, p. 239). A managerially oriented navy officer gave a ringing endorsement of his more leaderlike successor: “I go by the book; he writes the book.”

Kotter (1988) sees management as being primarily about structural nuts and bolts: planning, organizing, and controlling. He views leadership as a change-oriented process of visioning, networking, and building relationships. But Gardner argues against contrasting leadership and management too sharply, because leaders may “end up looking like a cross between Napoleon and the Pied Piper, and managers like unimaginative clods” (1989, p. 3). He suggests several dimensions for distinguishing leadership from management. Leaders think in the long term, look outside as well as inside, and influence constituents beyond their immediate formal jurisdiction. They emphasize vision and renewal and have the political skills to cope with the demands of multiple constituencies.

Leadership Is Multilateral, Not Unilateral

Heroic images of leadership convey the notion of a one-way transaction: leaders show the way and followers tag along. But leaders are not independent actors; they both shape and are shaped by their constituents (Gardner, 1989; Simmel, 1950; Heifetz and Linsky, 2002). Leaders often promote a new initiative only after a large number of constituents favor it (Cleveland, 1985). Leaders’ actions generate responses that in turn affect the leaders’ capacity for taking further initiatives (Murphy, 1985). As Briand puts it, “A ‘leader’ who makes a decision and then attempts to ‘sell’ it is not wise and will likely not prove effective. The point is not that leaders should do less but that others can and should do more. Everyone must accept responsibility for the people’s well being, and everyone has a role to play in sustaining it” (1993, p. 39).

Leadership Is Distributed Rather Than Concentrated at the Top

In times of crisis we expect leadership from people in high places, and we are grievously disappointed if they fail to provide it. But it is misleading to imagine that leadership comes only from people in prominent positions. Such a view leads us to ask too much of too few. It relegates the rest of us to a passive role and reinforces a tendency for those at the top to take on more responsibility than they can discharge (Oshry, 1995). The

turbulent world of the twenty-first century pushes organizations to be fast, flexible, and decentralized, which requires leadership from many quarters (Barnes and Kriger, 1986; Kanter, 1983).

Leadership does not come automatically with high position, as Follett (1896) documented long ago in a study of the U.S. Congress. Speakers of the House were always elected by their colleagues, but Follett found that some were able to leverage and expand the potential in the job, while others failed to lead. Conversely, it is possible and often necessary to lead without a position of formal authority. In 1991, the year that she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Aung San Suu Kyi was the most credible and respected leader in Myanmar, even though she held no office and was under house arrest. Finally set free in 2010, she was elected to parliament in 2012, and her party won control of the Myanmar government in 2015.

Leadership Is Contextual and Situated Not in the Leader but in the Exchange between Leader and Constituents

In story and myth, leaders are often lonely heroes and itinerant warriors, wed only to honor and a noble cause. Think of Batman, Ellen Ripley, Han Solo, James Bond, Joan of Arc, Rambo, or every character ever played by Clint Eastwood. But images of solitary, heroic leaders mislead by suggesting that leaders go it alone and by focusing the spotlight too much on individuals and too little on the stage where they play their parts. Leaders make things happen, but things also make leaders happen. The transformation in Rudy Giuliani's image after 9/11 from has-been to hero in 24 hours is a perfect illustration. An unpopular, lame-duck New York mayor found himself center stage in an unplanned theater of horror and delivered the performance of his life. But Giuliani's heroic image was fleeting. *Time* magazine named him person of the year for 2001, but he left the mayor's office at the end of the year and struggled to find another opportunity to demonstrate such visible and heroic leadership. He ran for the Republican presidential nomination in 2008, but his early lead in the polls evaporated after a series of gaffes. He disappeared from the public eye until he bobbed up again in 2016 as a loyal surrogate promoting Donald Trump for president.

No single formula is possible for the great range of situations leaders encounter. Three of the most dominant and destructive figures of the twentieth century were Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, and Mao Zedong. All were able to come to power because they came of age when their respective countries were in disarray, and people were looking for someone strong enough to lead them out of chaos. Had they been born in different times or places, no one would remember them.

Leadership is thus a subtle process of mutual influence fusing thought, feeling, and action. It produces cooperative effort in the service of purposes embraced and enhanced by both leader and led. Single-frame managers are unlikely to understand and attend to the intricacies of this lively process.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT GOOD LEADERSHIP?

Threading through the literature on leadership have been two divergent propositions. One asserts that good leaders need the right stuff—qualities like vision, strength, and commitment. The other holds that good leadership is situational; what works in one setting will not work in another. A proposition from the “effective schools” literature illustrates the right-stuff perspective: A good school is headed by a strong and visionary instructional leader. An example of the situational view is the belief that it takes a different kind of person to lead when you’re growing and adding staff than when you’re cutting budgets and laying people off.

Despite the tension between these one-best-way and contingency views, both capture part of the truth. Studies have found shared characteristics among effective leaders across sectors and situations. Another body of research has identified situational variables that determine the kind of leadership that works best.

Recent decades have produced a steady stream of studies of effective leadership. Modern trait research (reviewed in Zaccaro, Kemp, and Bader, 2004) tells us that leaders, compared to nonleaders, tend to be smarter, more creative, more extroverted and agreeable, and better at thinking outside the box. They have more social skills and stronger needs for power and achievement. But this research tells us more about what leaders are like than what they do. A list of leadership traits may help in selecting leaders but provides limited guidance for how to lead (Zaccaro, 2007).

We get a different picture if we look at the many qualitative studies of leadership in recent decades. No characteristic is universally associated with good leadership in these studies, but vision and focus show up most often. Effective leaders help articulate a vision, set standards for performance, and create focus and direction. A related characteristic, explicit in some reports (Clifford and Cavanagh, 1985; Kouzes and Posner, 2007; Peters and Austin, 1985) and implicit in others, is the ability to communicate a vision effectively, often through the use of symbols. Another quality often mentioned is passion, determination, or will (Clifford and Cavanagh, 1985; Collins, 2001; Collins and Hansen, 2011; George, 2004; Peters and Austin, 1985; Vaill, 1982). Good leaders care deeply about their work and the people who do it and are doggedly persistent in pushing the cause forward. Yet another

characteristic is the ability to inspire trust and build relationships (Bennis and Nanus, 2007; Kotter, 1988; Kouzes and Posner, 1987, 2007; Maccoby, 1981). But beyond vision, focus, passion, and trust, there is less consensus. The many reviews of the literature (Bass, 1990; Gardner, 1987; Hollander, 1978; Yukl, 2012) generate a long list of attributes associated with effective leadership, but they do not add up to a coherent picture.

Research has made progress in one area of growing importance: the intersection of culture and leadership. We'll discuss results from the GLOBE program, a large international research project, in the next section.

CULTURE AND LEADERSHIP

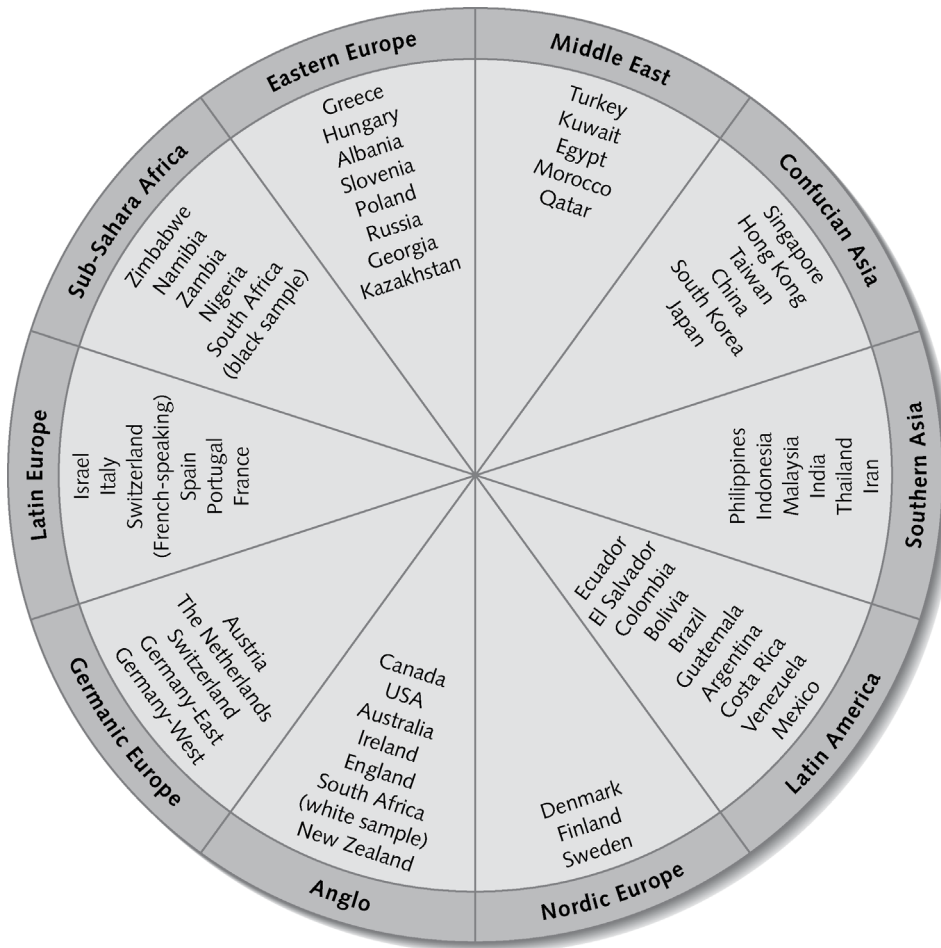
Organizational culture (as we discussed in Chapter 12) is a pattern of basic assumptions and values shared among members of a group. This definition applies to groups of any size, from a small work group or family to a nation like China or the United States. Much of the research on leadership in organizations has been conducted in a Western context, particularly in the United States, but globalization drives a need to better understand what happens when citizens of one culture try to lead those of another. What do they need to understand? What adjustments do they have to make?

The GLOBE researchers surveyed more than 17,000 middle managers in 950 organizations across 62 countries (see Exhibit 17.3). They found that some leadership characteristics seemed to be universal, but others were not. Managers around the world wanted leaders who were trustworthy, planful, positive, motivating, decisive, and intelligent, and not unfriendly, irritable, or self-centered. But other characteristics—such as autonomous, ambitious, cunning, intuitive, logical, and risk-taking—were valued much more highly in some cultures than others.

The GLOBE researchers identified six different leadership styles in their data:

1. *Charismatic/values based*: leader sets high standards, seeks to inspire people around a vision, emphasizes core values
2. *Team-oriented*: leader evokes pride, loyalty, and cooperation, values team cohesiveness and shared goals
3. *Participative*: leader encourages input in decisions, emphasizes delegation and equality
4. *Humane*: leader is patient, supportive, concerned for others' welfare
5. *Autonomous*: leader is independent and individualistic and puts self at the center
6. *Protective*: leader emphasizes procedure, status, face-saving, and safety and security of individual and group

Exhibit 17.3.
GLOBE Country Clusters.



Source: Adapted from House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (eds.), *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. Copyright © 2004 by Sage Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Which of those styles is most like you? Which do you think works best? Your answer is likely to be different depending on the culture you grew up in. The GLOBE researchers categorized their 62 countries into 10 regional clusters, shown in Exhibit 17.3. Countries that are near one another on the wheel are more similar in terms of culture and views of leadership. Those that are opposite one another are least alike. Thus the English-speaking Anglo cluster is least like the Middle-Eastern cluster of Islamic nations. The Anglo managers preferred the charismatic/values-based, participative, and humane styles. They liked the protective style least. Middle-Eastern managers liked the protective style best and the charismatic/values-based style least. It is easy to imagine how an American or Australian trying to lead in the Middle East could flame out while implementing a leadership approach—charismatic or participative, for example—that was perfect back home but wrong for a new and unfamiliar context. Instead of recognizing the cultural dynamics, the failed manager might blame the locals for having bad attitudes or a poor work ethic. Globalization increases the chance that at some point in your career you will be working in another culture that has different values and ideas about leadership. Your cultural intelligence and willingness to learn will be vital to your success.

GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

When Carlyle (1841) laid out his influential “great man theory” of leadership, his story included women only as wives and mothers. He omitted Vietnam’s national heroines, the Trung sisters, who raised a mostly female army almost 2,000 years ago and succeeded for a time in pushing out Chinese overlords. Nor did he mention Joan of Arc, revered in France for leading her dispirited prince to the victories over the English that he needed in order to be coronated as King of France. The implicit, taken-for-granted assumption was that leadership is a male activity. Recent decades, however, have seen a dramatic shift in women’s roles and accomplishments. At the end of 2016, some of the world’s most prominent leaders were women, including Germany’s long-serving chancellor, Angela Merkel, and Theresa May, the new prime minister in the United Kingdom. In breaking through old barriers and bringing their own strengths and styles to traditionally male roles, an increasing number of women have blazed new paths.

One example is Karren Brady, who became managing director of the Birmingham (England) City Football Club in 1993. At 23, she was the youngest and the only female head of an English professional soccer team. As you might expect, she ran into some challenges. There was the strapping forward who told her on the team bus that he liked her blouse because he could see her breasts through it. She looked him in the eye and replied, “Where

I'm going to send you, you won't be able to see them from there." A week later, he was downgraded to a club a hundred miles away. There was the time the directors of another team told her how fortunate she was that they were willing to let her into their owners' box. She fired back, "The day I have to feel grateful for half a lager and a pork pie in a dump of a little box with a psychedelic carpet is the day I give up" (Hoge, 2002, p. A14. Copyright © 2002 by The New York Times Co. Reprinted by permission.).

Brady got plenty of media attention, but it often focused on her looks and wardrobe. One newspaper ran a full-page photo of her in a short skirt under the headline "Sex Shooter." Another described her entry into a meeting: "Every inch the modern woman, she totters into the room on high-heeled strappy sandals and a short and sexy black suit." Brady was continually perplexed: "I came here to run a business, to put right a dilapidated, rundown operation with a series of business solutions. But the media, with the combination of my age, the way I look, and obviously the fact that I was a female—the first in a male-dominated world—went into a frenzy. It was unbelievable. I'd be in press conferences, and journalists would actually ask me my vital statistics" (Hoge, 2002, p. A14. Copyright © 2002 by The New York Times Co. Reprinted by permission). Brady did not have the benefit of later research showing that "self-sexualizing" women suffered a backlash related to discomfort with women being powerful (Infanger, Rudman, and Sczesny, 2014)

Still, Brady understood that publicity, even tinged with notoriety, was good for business. She took a team that had never shown a profit from the edge of bankruptcy to become one of the England's strongest teams, both on the field and at the cash register. The club was sold in 2009 for almost \$130 million. She even overcame the complications that might have arisen after she married one of her players. She bought and sold her husband twice, making over a million pounds in the process. She won businesswoman-of-the-year awards, and even her fellow football executives recognized her talent, naming her to represent them in negotiations for the national television contract that provided much of their revenue.

Women like Karren Brady have proven that they can lead in a man's world. But do men and women lead differently? Are they seen differently in leadership roles? Why do men still have such a disproportionate hold on positions of institutional and organizational power? Research on gender and leadership has asked these and other questions, and we turn next to some of the answers that have emerged.

Do Men and Women Lead Differently?

Book (2000), Helgesen (1990), Rosener (1990), and others have argued that women bring a "female advantage" to leadership. They believe that modern organizations need the leadership style that women are more likely to offer, including concern for people,

nurturance, and willingness to share information. But the evidence is equivocal. We might expect, for example, that women would be higher on people attributes (warmth, support, participation) and lower on political characteristics (power, shrewdness, aggression), more “communal” and less “agentic.” But examples like Karren Brady and “the Iron Lady,” British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, tell us that things are not so simple. In fact, research gives such stereotypes limited support (Van Engen, Van der Leeden, and Willemsen, 2001; Dobbins and Platz, 1986; Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Bolman and Deal, 1991, 1992a).

For the most part, the available evidence suggests that men and women in similar positions are more alike than different, at least in the eyes of their subordinates (Bolman and Deal 1991, 1992a; Carless, 1998; Komives, 1991; Morrison, White, and Van Velsor, 1987; Paustian-Underdahl, Walker, and Woehr, 2014; Thompson, 2000). When differences are detected, they often show women scoring somewhat higher than men on a variety of measures of leadership and managerial behavior (Bass, Avolio, and Atwater, 1996; Eagly and Carli, 2003; Edwards, 1991; Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis, 1990; Weddle, 1991; Wilson and Wilson, 1991). But the differences are not large, and it is not clear that they have practical significance, except among physicians—female doctors get better outcomes in terms of mortality and hospital readmission rates (Tsugawa et al., 2016).

Why the Glass Ceiling? And the Glass Cliff?

If women lead at least as well as men, why does the so-called glass ceiling cap their rise to top positions? Growing numbers are now in the pipeline leading to the executive suite. In the United States, they are a substantial majority of college students and an expanding presence in professional schools—more than half of education and law students and close to half in business and medical schools. This is a dramatic shift (except in education, where they have long been a majority).

Nevertheless, in 2014, women made up less than 10 percent of CEOs in Fortune 500 companies (Glass and Cook, 2016). More than half the companies did not have a single female officer. The story is similar in education. In American schools, women constitute the great majority of teachers and a growing percentage of middle managers, yet in 2010 they accounted for slightly less than a quarter of school superintendents (Kowalski et al., 2010). That was only slightly more than in 1930, though it was up from a low of 1.2 percent in 1981 (Keller, 1999).

There is no consensus about what sustains the glass ceiling, but evidence points to several contributing factors:

- *Stereotypes associate leadership with maleness.* Both men and women tend to link leadership characteristics to men more than women (Schein, 1975, 1990). Job applicants

with more masculine voices get rated as more competent (Ko, Judd, and Stapel, 2009). Even with identical backgrounds, female CEOs are seen as less capable, and therefore less worthy of investment, than men (Bigelow, Parks, and Wuebker, 2012).

- *Women walk a tightrope of conflicting expectations.* Simply put, high-level jobs are “powerful, but women, in the minds of many people, should not be” (Keller, 1999). Women have the difficult challenge of being powerful and “feminine” at the same time. Expressing anger and wanting power are viewed as positive or neutral traits for men, but negative ones for women (Brescoll and Uhlmann, 2008; Okimoto and Brescoll, 2010). Women are attracted to intelligent men, but men are not enthusiastic about women who are smarter than they are (Fisman et al., 2006). As a woman running for president in 2016, Hillary Clinton had to negotiate this tightrope. How could she prove that she was tough enough to be commander-in-chief without seeming too angry or too smart? How could she show feminine warmth and caring without seeming weak?
- *Women encounter discrimination.* In ancient fairy tales as well as modern films, powerful women often turn out to be witches (or worse). Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew* is typical of many stories with the message that a strong woman is dangerous unless tamed by a stronger man. The historical association of powerful men with leadership and of powerful women with evil produces unspoken and often unconscious bias. Subtle gender biases associate competence with maleness and inhibit women’s ability to accumulate the “career capital” that leads to success (Valian, 1999; Fitzsimmons and Callan, 2016).
- *Parenting has a positive career impact for men but a negative one for women.* Women are rated lower on almost everything if they are parents, but the opposite is true for men (Correll and Benard, 2007). Bosses, regardless of gender, see women as having greater family-work conflict than men, even when their family situations are the same (Hoobler, Wayne, and Lemmon, 2009). Those perceptions in turn led them to see women as less promotable.
- *Women pay a higher price.* Shakeshaft (cited in Keller, 1999) argues that the rewards of senior positions are lower for women because, compared with men, they have higher needs for success in their family and personal lives but lower needs for esteem and status. Almost 70 percent of women in one study named personal and family responsibilities as by far the biggest barrier to their career success (Morris, 2002). Executive jobs impose a crushing workload on incumbents. The burden is even more overwhelming for women, who still do the majority of the housework and child rearing in most dual-career families. That helps to explain why fast-track women are less likely to marry and, if they do marry, are more likely to divorce (Heffernan, 2002; Keller, 1999). It also clarifies why many

women who do make it to the top are blessed with “trophy husbands”—those hard-to-find stay-at-home dads (Morris, 2002).

- *Women in high positions are pushed toward the “glass cliff” where they are more likely to fail.* Glass and Cook (2016) studied male and female Fortune 500 CEOs—including all 52 of the women who had held one of those jobs by 2014. They report, “Women are more likely than men to be promoted to high-risk leadership positions and often lack the support or authority to accomplish their strategic goals. As a result, women leaders often experience shorter tenures compared to male peers.” Women in powerful positions have a harder time than men eliciting respect and admiration from subordinates. As a result, female power-holders are seen as less legitimate than male counterparts (Viall, Napier, and Brescoll, 2016, p. 400).

Despite the challenges, women have made progress. Attitudes are changing, support mechanisms (such as day care) have increased, and cultural views have shifted. A study of gender and leadership in higher education underscores the importance of culture and the policy context that it spawns:

In secular Sweden there are strong policies that are implemented at all political levels supported by the public discourse, while in Ireland such measures are few and the equality infrastructures and discourse have been weakened by the state. In Sweden women have come to dominate the Rector/President/Vice Chancellor positions, and each gender has between 40 and 50 percent of the other leading positions. In Ireland, there are no women in the top position and their percentage of other leading positions is between 13 to 25 percent (O'Connor and Goransson, 2015, p. 323).

Perhaps the strongest force for continued advancement is the talent pool that women represent—they make up more than half the population and have a growing educational edge over their male counterparts. Glass and Cook (2016, p. 55) note that, despite the many barriers, an increasing number of women are getting to the top of large corporations. “Prior to the year 2000, only seven women had been CEO of a Fortune 500 company. Twenty-four women became CEO between 2001 and 2010, and from 2011 to 2014, 22 women became CEO.” In 2009, Ursula Burns at Xerox became the first African American woman to head a major U.S. corporation and the first woman to succeed another woman.

Between 1986 and 2006, the proportion of female presidents of American universities more than doubled—to almost one in four—and Harvard put a woman in the job for the first time in 2007. Princeton accepted no women until 1969, and 30 years later, some of its

mostly male alumni worried that their beloved alma mater might be on the skids when the first woman president appointed the first female provost. But grumbling at alumni gatherings could not change the fact that women were making gains even in America’s most elite academic institutions.

REFRAMING LEADERSHIP

Each of the frames offers a distinctive image of leadership. Depending on leader and circumstance, each turn of the kaleidoscope can reveal compelling and constructive leadership opportunities, even though no one image is right for all times and seasons. In this section, we discuss four images of leadership summarized in Exhibit 17.4. For each, we examine skills and processes and propose rules of thumb for successful leadership practice.

Architect or Tyrant? Structural Leadership

Structural leadership may evoke images of petty tyrants and rigid bureaucrats who never met a command or rule they didn’t like. Compared with other frames, literature on structural leadership is sparse, and some structural theorists have contended that leadership is neither important nor basic (Hall, 1987). But the effects of structural leadership can be

Exhibit 17.4. Reframing Leadership.				
Frame	Leadership is effective when		Leadership is ineffective when	
	Leader is:	Leadership process is:	Leader is:	Leadership process is:
Structural	Analyst, architect	Analysis, design	Petty bureaucrat or tyrant	Management by detail and fiat
Human resource	Catalyst, servant	Support, empowerment	Weakling, pushover	Abdication
Political	Advocate, negotiator	Advocacy, coalition building	Con artist, thug	Manipulation, fraud
Symbolic	Prophet, poet	Inspiration, meaning-making	Fanatic, charlatan	Mirage, smoke and mirrors

powerful and enduring, even if the style is subtler and more analytic than other forms. Collins and Hansen (2011) argue that great companies develop and adhere to a set of durable operating principles that are specific, methodical, and consistent.

One of the great architects in business history is Jeff Bezos, who has built Amazon into one of America's most dominant firms with a relentless focus on building structure and technology to support a relentless focus on customers. Bezos follows in a long line of structural leaders that can be traced back at least to Alfred P. Sloan Jr., who became president of General Motors in 1923 and remained a dominant force until his retirement in 1956. The structure and strategy he established made GM the world's largest corporation. Lee (1988) described Sloan as "the George Washington of the GM culture" (p. 42), even though his "genius was not in inspirational leadership, but in organizational structures" (p. 43).

GM founder, Billy Durant, had built GM by buying everything he could, forming a loose combination of previously independent firms. "GM did not have adequate knowledge or control of the individual operating divisions. It was management by crony, with the divisions operating on a horse-trading basis. The main thing to note here is that no one had the needed information or the needed control over the divisions" (Sloan, 1965, pp. 27–28).

Uncontrolled costs and a business slump in 1920 created a financial crisis, and GM almost sank (Sloan, 1965). In 1923, Sloan's first year at the helm, GM's market share dropped from 20 percent to 17 percent, while Ford's increased to 55 percent. But change was afoot. Henry Ford had a disdain for organization and clung to his vision of a single low-priced, mass-market car. His cheap, reliable Model T—the "Tin Lizzie"—was a marketing miracle at a time when customers would buy anything with four wheels and a motor if the price was right. But Ford stayed with the same design for almost 20 years and dismissed the need for creature comforts. Sloan surmised that consumers would pay more for amenities like windows to keep out rain and snow. His strategy worked, and Chevrolet soon began to gnaw off large chunks of Ford's market share. By 1928, Model T sales had dropped so precipitously that Henry Ford was forced to close his massive River Rouge plant for a year to retool. General Motors took the lead in the great auto race for the first time in 20 years. For the rest of the twentieth century, no one sold more cars than General Motors.

The dominant structural model of the time was a centralized, functional organization, but Sloan felt that GM needed something better. He developed the world's first divisionalized organization. The basic principle was simple: Centralize planning and resource allocation; decentralize operating decisions. Under Sloan's model, divisions focused on making and selling cars, while top management worked on long-range strategy and major funding decisions, relying on headquarters staff for the information and control systems they needed.

The structure worked. By the late 1920s, GM had a more versatile organization with a broader product line than Ford's. With the founder still dominating his highly centralized company, Ford was poorly positioned to compete with GM's multiple divisions, each producing its own cars and chasing distinct market niches at different price points. GM's pioneering structural form eventually set the standard for others: "Only two basic organizational structures have been used for the management of large industrial enterprises. One is the centralized, functional departmentalized type perfected by General Electric and Du Pont before World War I. The other is the multidivisional, decentralized structure initially developed at General Motors and also at Du Pont in the 1920s" (Chandler, 1977, p. 463).

In the 1980s, GM found itself with another structural leader, Roger Smith, at the helm. The results were less satisfying. Like Sloan, Smith ascended to the top at a difficult time. In 1980, his first year as GM's chief executive, every American carmaker lost money. It was GM's first loss since 1921. Recognizing that the company had serious competitive problems, Smith banked on structure and technology to make it "the world's first twenty-first century corporation" (Lee, 1988, p. 16). He restructured vehicle operations and spent billions of dollars in a quest for paperless offices and robotic assembly plants. The changes were dramatic, but the results were dismal: "[Smith's] tenure has been a tragic era in General Motors history. No GM chairman has disrupted as many lives without commensurate rewards, has spent as much money without returns, or has alienated so many along the way" (Lee, 1988, pp. 286–287).

Why did Smith stumble where Sloan had succeeded? The answer comes down to how well each implemented the right structural form. Effective structural leaders share several characteristics:

- *Structural leaders do their homework.* Sloan was a brilliant engineer who had grown up in the auto industry. Before coming to GM, he ran an auto accessories company where he implemented a divisional structure. He pioneered the development of better information systems and market research. He was an early convert to group decision making and created a committee structure to make major decisions. Roger Smith had spent his career with General Motors, but most of his jobs were in finance. His numbers told him machines were cheaper than people, so much of his vision for General Motors involved changes in production technology, an area where he had little experience or expertise.
- *Structural leaders rethink the relationship of structure, strategy, and environment.* Sloan's new structure was intimately tied to a strategy for reaching the automotive market. He foresaw growing demand, better cars, and more discriminating consumers. In the face of

Henry Ford's stubborn attachment to the Model T, Sloan initiated the "price pyramid" (cars for every pocketbook) and the annual introduction of new models, which soon became the industry norm.

For a variety of reasons, GM in the 1960s began to move away from Sloan's concepts. Fearing a government effort to break up the corporation, GM reduced the independence of the car divisions and centralized design and engineering. Increasingly, the divisions became marketing groups tasked to build and sell the cars that corporate gave them. "Look-alike cars" confused consumers who found it hard to tell a Chevrolet from a Cadillac.

Instead of addressing this marketing challenge, Smith focused more on reducing costs than on making better cars. As he saw it, GM's primary competitive problem was high costs driven by high wages. He showed little interest in efforts already under way at GM to improve working conditions on the shop floor. Ironically, one of his best investments—a joint venture with Toyota—succeeded because Toyota brought innovative approaches to managing people: "With only a fraction of the money invested in GM's heavily robotized plants, [the NUMMI plant at] Fremont is more efficient and produces better-quality cars than any plant in the GM system" (Hampton and Norman, 1987, p. 102).

- *Structural leaders focus on implementation.* Structural leaders often miscalculate the difficulties of putting their designs in place. They underestimate resistance, skimp on training, fail to build a political base, and misread cultural cues. Sloan was no human resource specialist, but he intuitively saw the need to cultivate understanding and acceptance of major decisions. He did that by continually asking for advice and by establishing committees and task forces to address major issues.
- *Effective structural leaders experiment.* Sloan tinkered constantly with GM's structure and strategy and encouraged others to do likewise. The Great Depression produced a drop of 72 percent in sales at GM between 1929 and 1932, but the company adapted adroitly to hard times. Sales fell, but GM increased its market share and made money every year. In the 1980s, Smith spent billions on his campaign to modernize the company and cut costs, yet GM lost market share every year and remained the industry's highest-cost producer.

Catalyst or Wimp? Human Resource Leadership

The tiny trickle of writing about structural leadership is swamped by a torrent of human resource literature (including Argyris, 1962; Bennis and Nanus, 1985, 2007; Blanchard and Johnson, 1982; Bradford and Cohen, 1984; Boyatzis and McKee, 2005; Fiedler and Chemers,

1974; Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee, 2004; Hersey, 1984; Hollander, 1978; House, 1971; Levinson, 1968; Likert, 1967; Vroom and Yetton, 1973; and Waterman, 1994). Human resource theorists typically advocate openness, caring, mutuality, listening, coaching, participation, and empowerment. They view the leader as a facilitator and catalyst who uses emotional intelligence and social skill to motivate and empower subordinates. The leader's power comes from talent, caring, sensitivity, and service rather than position or force.

Greenleaf contends that followers “will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants” (1973, p. 4). He adds, “The servant-leader makes sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test [of leadership] is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants?” (p. 7). Research confirms that servant leadership improves employee attitudes, job performance, and loyalty (Liden et al., 2014; Ling, Liu, and Wu, 2016)

Martín Varsavsky is one example of a human resource leader whose skill and artistry have produced extraordinary results. Varsavsky, a native of Argentina, wound up in New York as a teenager after violence forced his family to flee the military dictatorship in his homeland. Over two decades, Varsavsky founded seven companies and picked up entrepreneur-of-the-year awards on both sides of the Atlantic. He made his first millions in New York City real estate before moving to Europe. There he founded two high-tech companies that he later sold for more than a billion dollars each. In 2005, he partnered with venture capitalists and Google to found FON, which soon became the world's largest Wi-Fi network. His approach to managing people was pivotal to his success: “Martín developed management practices that would be keys throughout his career: create horizontal organizations without any hierarchy, communicate clearly what you intend before doing it, delegate as much as possible, trust your colleagues, and leave operating decisions in the hands of others” (Ganitsky and Sancho, 2002, p. 101).

Gifted human resource leaders such as Varsavsky typically apply a consistent set of people-friendly leadership principles:

- *Human resource leaders communicate a strong belief in people.* They are passionate about “productivity through people” (Peters and Waterman, 1982). They express this faith in both words and actions, often formalized in a core philosophy or credo. Fred Smith, founder and CEO of Federal Express, sees “putting people first” as the cornerstone of his company's success: “We discovered a long time ago that customer satisfaction really begins with employee satisfaction. That belief is incorporated in our corporate philosophy statement: “People—Service—Profit . . . In that order” (Waterman, 1994, p. 89).

- *Human resource leaders are visible and accessible.* Peters and Waterman (1982) popularized “management by wandering around”—the idea that managers need to get out of their offices and spend time with workers and customers. Patricia Carrigan, the first female plant manager at General Motors, modeled this technique in the course of turning around two manufacturing plants, each with a long history of union–management conflict (Kouzes and Posner, 1987). In both situations, she began by going to the plant floor to introduce herself to workers and to ask how they thought the operation could be improved. One worker commented that before Carrigan, “I didn’t know who the plant manager was. I wouldn’t have recognized him if I saw him.”
- *Effective human resource leaders empower others.* People-oriented leaders often refer to their employees as “partners,” “owners,” or “associates.” They make it clear that workers have a stake in the organization’s success and a right to be involved in making decisions. In the 1980s, Jan Carlzon, CEO of Scandinavian Air Systems (SAS), turned around a sluggish business with the intent of making it “the best airline in the world for business travelers” (Carlzon, 1987, p. 46). To find out what the business traveler wanted, he turned to SAS’s frontline service employees. Focus groups generated hundreds of ideas and emphasized the importance of frontline autonomy to decide on the spot what passengers needed. Carlzon concluded that SAS’s image was built on countless “moments of truth:” 15-second encounters between employees and customers:

“We have to place responsibility for ideas, decisions, and actions with the people who are SAS during those 15 seconds. If they have to go up the organizational chain of command for a decision on an individual problem, then those 15 golden seconds will elapse without a response and we will have lost an opportunity to earn a loyal customer” (Carlzon, 1987, p. 66).

Advocate or Hustler? Political Leadership

Even in the results-driven private sector, leaders find that they have to plunge into the political arena to move their company where it needs to go. Lee Iacocca, who became chief executive of Chrysler in the late 1970s when the company was near death, provided one of the most impressive examples of political leadership in American business history.

Iacocca’s career had taken him to the presidency of Ford Motor Company. But then in 1978 his boss, Henry Ford II, fired him, reportedly with the simple explanation, “Let’s just say I don’t like you” (O’Toole, 1984, p. 231). Iacocca’s unemployment was brief. Chrysler Corporation, desperate for new leadership, saw Iacocca as the best answer to the company’s business woes.

Iacocca had done his homework before accepting Chrysler's offer but still found things were worse than he expected. Chrysler was losing money so fast that bankruptcy seemed almost inevitable. He concluded that the only way out was to persuade the U.S. government to guarantee massive loans. It was a tough sell; much of Congress, the media, and the American public was against the idea. Iacocca had to convince them all that government intervention was in their best interest as well as Chrysler's.

Ultimately, Iacocca got his guarantees. He won by artfully employing rules for political leaders:

- *Political leaders clarify what they want and what they can get.* Political leaders are realists. They don't let hope cloud judgment. Iacocca translated Chrysler's survival into the realistic goal of getting enough help to eke out a couple of difficult years. He was always careful to ask not for money but for loan guarantees. He insisted that it would cost taxpayers nothing because Chrysler would pay back its loans.
- *Political leaders assess the distribution of power and interests.* Political leaders map the political terrain by thinking carefully about the key players, their interests, and their power, asking: Whose support do I need? How do I go about getting it? Who are my opponents? How much power do they have? What can I do to reduce or overcome their opposition? Is this battle winnable? Iacocca needed the support of Chrysler's employees and unions, but they had little choice. The key players were Congress and the public. Congress would vote for the guarantees only if Iacocca's proposal had sufficient popular support.
- *Political leaders build linkages to key stakeholders.* Political leaders focus their attention on building relationships and networks. They recognize the value of personal contact and face-to-face conversations.
- *Iacocca worked hard to build linkages.* He spent hours meeting with members of Congress and testifying before congressional committees. After he met with 31 Italian American members of Congress, all but one voted for the loan guarantees. Said Iacocca, "Some were Republicans, some were Democrats, but in this case they voted the straight Italian ticket. We were desperate, and we had to play every angle" (Iacocca and Novak, 1984, p. 221).
- *Political leaders persuade first, negotiate second, and coerce only if necessary.* Wise political leaders recognize that power is essential to their effectiveness; they also know to use it judiciously. William P. Kelly, a veteran public administrator, put it well:

"Power is like the old Esso [gasoline] ad—a tiger in your tank. But you can't let the tiger out, you just let people hear him roar. You use power terribly sparingly

because it has a short half-life. You let people know you have it and hope that you don't have to use it" (Ridout and Fenn, 1974, p. 10).

Sophisticated political leaders know that influence begins with understanding others' concerns and interests. Iacocca knew that he had to address a widespread fear that federal guarantees would throw taxpayer dollars down a rat hole. He used a big ad campaign to respond to public concerns. Does Chrysler have a future? Yes, he said, we've been here 54 years, and we'll be here another 54 years. Would the loan guarantees be a dangerous precedent? No, the government already carried \$400 billion in other loan guarantees, and in any event, Chrysler was going to pay its loans back. Iacocca also spoke directly to Congressional concerns with data painting a grim picture of jobs lost in every district if Chrysler went under.

Iacocca got what he wanted—enough breathing room for Chrysler to pull out of its tailspin. The company repaid its loans, ignited the minivan craze, and had many profitable years before the return of bad times in the 1990s (which led to a sale to German automaker Daimler Benz in 1998 and then to a private equity firm in 2007).

Prophet or Zealot? Symbolic Leadership

The symbolic frame represents a fourth turn of the leadership kaleidoscope, portraying organization as both theater and temple. As theater, an organization creates a stage on which actors play their roles and hope to communicate the right impression to their audience. As temple, an organization is a community of faith, bonded by shared beliefs, traditions, myths, rituals, and ceremonies.

Symbolically, leaders lead through both actions and words as they interpret and reinterpret experience. What are the real lessons of history? What is really happening in the world? What will the future bring? What mission is worthy of our loyalty and investment? Data and analysis offer few compelling answers to such questions. Symbolic leaders interpret experience so as to impart meaning and purpose through phrases of beauty and passion. Franklin D. Roosevelt reassured a nation in the midst of its deepest economic depression that "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." At almost the same time, Adolf Hitler assured Germans that their severe economic and social problems were the result of betrayal by Jews and communists. Germans, he said, were a superior people who could still fulfill their nation's destiny of world mastery. Though many saw the destructive paranoia in Hitler's message, millions of fearful citizens were swept up in Hitler's bold vision of German preeminence.

Symbolic leaders follow a consistent set of practices and scripts:

- *Symbolic leaders lead by example.* They demonstrate their commitment and courage by plunging into the fray. In taking risks and holding nothing back, they reassure and inspire others. When Ann Mulcahy took the top job at Xerox in 2001, the building was burning and few thought she had much chance of putting the fire out. Her financial advisors told her bankruptcy was the only choice. Determined to save the company she loved, Mulcahy became a tireless, visible cheerleader working to get the support she needed to make Xerox a success: “Constantly on the move, Mulcahy met with bankers, reassured customers, galvanized employees. She sometimes visited three cities a day” (Morris, 2003, p. 1).
- *They use symbols to capture attention.* When Diana Lam became principal of the Mackey Middle School in Boston, she faced a substantial challenge. Mackey had the typical problems of an urban school: decaying physical plant, poor discipline, racial tension, disgruntled teachers, and limited resources (Kaufer and Leader, 1987a). In such a situation, a symbolic leader looks for something visible and dramatic to signal that change is on the way. During the summer before assuming her duties, Lam wrote personal letters to every teacher requesting individual meetings. She met teachers wherever they wanted (in one case driving for 2 hours). She asked them how they felt about the school and what changes they wanted. Then she recruited her family to repaint the school’s front door and some of its ugliest classrooms. “When school opened, students and staff members immediately saw that things were going to be different, if only symbolically. Perhaps even more important, staff members received a subtle challenge to make a contribution themselves” (Kaufer and Leader, 1987b, p. 3).

When Iacocca became president of Chrysler, one of his first steps was to announce that he was reducing his salary to \$1 a year. “I did it for good, cold pragmatic reasons. I wanted our employees and our suppliers to be thinking: ‘I can follow a guy who sets that kind of example’” (Iacocca and Novak, 1984, pp. 229–230).

- *Symbolic leaders frame experience.* In a world of uncertainty and ambiguity, a key function of symbolic leadership is to offer plausible and hopeful interpretations of experience. President John F. Kennedy channeled youthful exuberance into the Peace Corps and other initiatives with his stirring inaugural challenge: “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.” When Martin Luther King Jr. spoke at the March on Washington in 1963 and gave his extraordinary “I Have a Dream” speech, his opening line was, “I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.”

He could have interpreted the event in a number of other ways: “We are here because nothing else has worked”; “We are here because it’s summer and it’s a good day to be outside.” Each version is about as accurate as the next, but accuracy is not the issue. King’s assertion was bold and inspiring; it told members of the audience that they were making history by their presence at a momentous event.

- *Symbolic leaders communicate a vision.* One powerful way in which a leader can interpret experience is by distilling and disseminating a vision—a persuasive and hopeful image of the future. A vision needs to address both the challenges of the present and the hopes and values of followers. Vision is particularly important in times of crisis and uncertainty. When people are in pain, when they are confused and uncertain, or when they feel despair and hopelessness, they desperately seek meaning and hope. In the 2016 U.S. presidential election, Donald Trump’s vow to “Make America Great Again” was accompanied by very few policy specifics, but that did not trouble millions of voters who longed to see their country get back on the right track.

Where does such vision come from? One view is that leaders create a vision and then persuade others to accept it (Bass, 1985; Bennis and Nanus, 1985). A different take is that leaders discover and articulate a vision that is already there, even if unexpressed (Cleveland, 1985). Kouzes and Posner put it well: “Corporate leaders know very well that what seeds the vision are those imperfectly formed images in the marketing department about what the customers really wanted and those inarticulate mumblings from the manufacturing folks about the poor product quality, not crystal ball gazing in upper levels of the corporate stratosphere. The best leaders are the best followers. They pay attention to those weak signals and quickly respond to changes in the corporate course” (1987, p. 114).

Leadership is a two-way street. No amount of charisma or rhetorical skill can sell a vision that reflects only the leader’s values and needs. Effective symbolic leadership is possible only for those who understand the deepest values and most pressing concerns of their constituents. But leaders still play a critical role in articulating a vision by bringing a unique, personal blend of history, poetry, passion, and courage in distilling and shaping direction. Most important, they can choose which stories to tell to express a shared quest.

- *Symbolic leaders tell stories.* Symbolic leaders often embed their vision in a mythical story—a story about “us” and about “our” past, present, and future. “Us” could be a school’s faculty, a plant’s employees, the people of Thailand, or any other audience a leader hopes to reach. The past is usually golden, a time of noble purposes, of great deeds,

of legendary heroes and heroines. The present is troubled, a critical moment when we have to make fateful choices. The future is a dreamlike vision of hope and greatness, often tied to past glories.

A version of this story line helped Ronald Reagan, a master storyteller, become America's thirty-ninth president. Reagan's golden past was rooted in the frontier, a place of rugged, sturdy, self-reliant men and women who built a great nation. They took care of themselves and their neighbors without interference from a monstrous national government. America had fallen into crisis, said Reagan, because "the liberals" had created a federal government that levied oppressive taxes and eroded freedom through bureaucratic regulation and meddling. Reagan promised a return to American greatness by "getting government off the backs of the American people" and restoring traditional values of freedom and self-reliance. Reagan's story line worked for him and for a Reagan acolyte, George W. Bush, in 2000. It worked still a third time in 2016 for Donald Trump. Trump did not spell out the golden past that was implicit in his campaign mantra "Make America great again." But he was clear that America was in crisis because of a toxic combination of terrorism, uncontrolled immigration, increasing crime and violence, the loss of jobs to foreign competitors, and bad leadership in Washington. His vision for the future offered resolution of all those problems: "Together, we will lead our party back to the White House, and we will lead our country back to safety, prosperity, and peace. We will be a country of generosity and warmth. But we will also be a country of law and order" (Politico Staff, 2016).

Leaders' stories succeed when they offer something that people want to believe, regardless of historical validity or empirical support. Even a flawed story will work if it taps persuasively into the experience, values, and hopes of listeners.

CONCLUSION

Although leadership is universally accepted as a cure for social and organizational ills, it is also widely misunderstood. Many views of leadership fail to recognize its relational and contextual nature and its distinction from power and position. Shallow ideas about leadership mislead managers. A multiframe view provides a more comprehensive map of a complex and varied terrain.

Each frame highlights significant possibilities for leadership, but each by itself is incomplete. A century ago, models of managerial leadership were narrowly rational. In the 1960s and 1970s, human resource leadership became fashionable. In recent years,

symbolic and political leadership have become more prominent, and the literature abounds with advice on how to become a powerful or visionary leader. Ideally, managers combine multiple frames into a comprehensive approach to leadership. Wise leaders understand their own strengths, work to expand them, and build diverse teams that can offer an organization leadership in all four modes: structural, political, human resource, and symbolic.

Note

1. In the constitutional convention, delegates were divided over whether the president should be selected by Congress or elected directly by the voters. The Electoral College was the compromise solution. Usually, the winner of the national popular vote wins the presidency, but there have been exceptions, including two in this century. In 2000, Al Gore won the popular vote, and would have been president if he had carried Florida, which he lost by 537 votes out of almost 4 million total. In 2016, as we discuss, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by more than 2.8 million votes but lost in the electoral college when Donald Trump carried key swing states.