TRANSFORMATIONAL AND CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

- **Management by exception**—this type of leadership involves corrective criticism, negative feedback, and negative reinforcement activities by the leader in response to follower activities. It can take two forms: active and passive. Active management by exception requires the leader to watch followers closely for mistakes, rule violations, and other shortcomings and to take corrective action on each occasion. Passive management by exception occurs when the leader intervenes only after certain standards have not been met or certain goals have been missed, with smaller or less significant contraventions being allowed to pass uncorrected.

- **Laissez-faire leadership**—effectively the absence of leadership, representing behaviours that are non-transactional such as abdicating responsibility, delaying decisions, giving no feedback, and so on. The name comes from the French phrase meaning ‘hands off’ or to let things ride, and hence this kind of approach is unlikely to result in the meeting of organizational goals or the development of individuals within the organization.

**A case in point: Aung San Suu Kyi**

Born in Rangoon in 1945, Aung San Suu Kyi was the third child of Aung San, commander of the Burmese Independence Army, and Daw Khin Kyi, senior nurse at the Rangoon General Hospital. Her father was assassinated when she was two years old, and her childhood years were spent watching her mother become a prominent public figure: she travelled with her to New Delhi in 1960, when Daw Khin Kyi was appointed Burma’s ambassador to India. After the death of her mother, and following the resignation in 1988 of General Ni Win, Burma’s military dictator since 1962, her political career began. The popular uprising which followed Win’s resignation, and was greeted by violent military suppression, prompted her first overtly political act—an open letter to the government, calling for the formation of an independent consultative committee to prepare the way for multi-party elections. She went on to form the National League for Democracy (NLD) with a policy of non-violence and civil disobedience. Despite a ban on political gatherings of more than four people, Suu Kyi toured the country speaking to large audiences with the result that in the following year she was prohibited by the ruling SLORC (State Law and Order Restoration Council) from standing for election. She was later placed under house arrest, without charge or trial—an act which failed to prevent the NLD from winning the election held that year with 82 per cent of parliamentary seats, a result which the SLORC refused to recognize.

In 1995, after six years of detention, the SLORC released Suu Kyi from house arrest, albeit her movements and communication channels remained heavily restricted. In 2011 incoming President Thein Sein began a wave of political reforms aimed at establishing international legitimacy for the administration. In this context, persuading Aung San Suu Kyi’s party to rejoin politics after it boycotted the 2010 election was a key turning point in the government’s campaign for the lifting of the Western economic sanctions imposed during military rule. The outcome of the April 2012 by-election was a resounding victory for the NLD, with the party winning almost all of the 45 seats contested. Whilst this has been seen as a major step towards reconciliation after decades of military rule in Burma, Suu Kyi’s right for democracy is far from secured. She and the other newly elected NLD MPs boycotted the opening of the new parliament because they objected to the oath saying they must ‘safeguard the constitution’ in fact they want to amend the constitution to reduce the military’s power. Whilst the process of democratization in Burma will no doubt continue for some time, no one can doubt the truly transformational nature of this woman’s leadership.

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Discussion point: Can anyone be charismatic?

As we have seen, views on the sources of charisma in leaders vary, but what are the implications of this for those seeking to lead?

- Based on the three approaches to charismatic leadership discussed above, do you believe it is possible to learn to be charismatic as a leader? Are there behaviours and techniques which can be used to persuade followers to see a leader in this way?
- Do you agree with the proposal made by the authors, that transformational leadership has a moral component whilst charismatic leadership may not? What are the implications of this for which model of leadership we should adopt for the future? Is it reasonable to expect leaders to be morally driven in a far from moral world?

Articulating a vision and the 'rhetoric arts'

Both charismatic and transformational leadership are strongly associated with the idea of articulating and communicating a vision. Before looking at some of the criticisms of these two types of leadership, let us briefly digress to consider what really constitutes a 'vision' and how it can be successfully communicated. Research (Nanus, 1992; Zaccaro and Banks, 2001) suggests that a leadership vision must incorporate a picture of change which is worth trying for and which, whilst challenging, is not unattainable. In communicating this vision—in representing the picture—it has been suggested that there are a number of 'rhetorical arts' through which the leader might sell his ideas to others such that they choose to 'buy into' it as their own. Such rhetorical arts might include:

- Communicating the vision by adapting the content to suit the audience
- Highlighting the intrinsic value of the vision by emphasizing how it represents ideals worth pursuing
- Choosing the right language—words and symbols—to make it motivating and inspiring
- Using inclusive language that links people to the vision and makes them feel part of the process

A case in point: Yes, we can!

Few of us can have escaped hearing—either at the time or via the internet since—Barack Obama’s now famous ‘Yes, we can!’ campaign speech during the New Hampshire primaries, prior to his election in 2008. It was a rousing call to the people of America to acknowledge the many problems they faced and to meet them head on. It was also a confident claim by Obama that he was the right person to lead them through the difficult times ahead. In the course of the speech, he created a number of vivid pictures of how key issues within the country’s economic, domestic, and foreign policy would be different if he were to be elected, and gave clear indications of how he (and the American people) would need to go about achieving these changes. He drew constantly on a sense of shared values and used language that was strongly resonant of the American self-image. Not surprisingly, it produced a powerfully positive reaction in supporters. Listen to the speech again and deconstruct the ‘rhetoric arts’ through which Obama conveyed this powerful message.

Source: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe751kMBwms
TRANSFORMATIONAL AND CHARISMATIC LEADERSHIP

The essence of these arts—and of conveying a vision—is the ability to make a message delivered to a large number of people feel very personal and individual: not too difficult perhaps in a single organization but far more challenging across a whole nation.

From a critical perspective

A number of criticisms can be levelled at 'new leadership' generally, with varying degrees of accuracy for the different formulations we have seen. For many, the apparent focus on senior and formally appointed leaders excludes the significant amount of leadership activity going on in middle management and in informal or emergent situations. For others, the somewhat generic, often prescriptive nature of the approaches seems to ignore necessary elements of organizational context. There have also been complaints that insufficient attention has been paid to the underlying influence processes which are at work here and/or the specific behaviours entailed. We would suggest that all of these criticisms have some truth in them but—as will be evident from the preceding sections—they are less true than they were and much work has been done to fill in the gaps. Perhaps a more worthy challenge relates to the somewhat rosy view the literature seems to have of transformational and charismatic leadership, and the insufficiency of work to identify the negative effects which each approach can generate.

RESEARCH IN FOCUS: New managerial ism's 'disciplinary gaze'

In an article that is critical of what they call 'new managerialism' Ball and Carter (2002) use the ideas of Foucault to call attention to the 'normalizing' or 'disciplinary gaze' which they suggest is shaping how managers behave and how they seek to be perceived. In coinage the phrase 'new managerialism' Ball and Carter draw attention to the number of highly popular new initiatives (TQM, BPR, lean, six sigma, and so on) which have been promulgated within organizations since the 1980s. They claim that what they all have in common is an increased emphasis on organizational culture and a consequent need for charismatic leadership to drive them. They also note the rigour with which such initiatives are presented as the current 'best practice', acting as what Foucault (1972) referred to as a 'regime of truth'. Using Foucault's archaeological and genealogical methods, they argue that 'new managerialism' has become a discourse on a grand scale (that is, one which delimits a field of knowledge) as well as occurring in everyday talk and text. It is through taking on 'archaeological' or grand-scale status that a discourse is said to become institutionalized into organizational thinking and beliefs and to exert a normalizing effect on managers' behaviours and—perhaps more significantly—on their sense of their own identities. Thus constructing one's identity as a charismatic leader is seen as being key to achieving perceived dominance, control, and good practice within one's own organizational domain. Ball and Carter identify a number of 'interpretive repertoires', all of which are said to align with ideas within the new managerialism discourse, which managers were found to use in constructing such identities for themselves and presenting themselves to their followers. Through a series of case studies, they explore how these repertoires are utilized to build power relations and legitimate the manager's own position. In a return to Foucault, they contend that the 'relations of power' thus created offer further evidence of the way in which these discourses serve to restrict or shape the practice of everyday management.

In relation to transformational leadership, it has been suggested that despite the significant amount of empirical support for some measures of the model (in particular, Bass and Avolio's Four Is) there is a lack of conceptual clarity. Research by Tracey and Hinkin (1998) showed substantial overlap between each of the four Is (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), which would suggest that these dimensions are not clearly delineated. Rafferty and Griffin (2004) suggest there is also a lack of empirical support for the hypothesized Four Is model and suggest an alternative five factor model, consisting of vision, inspirational communication, intellectual stimulation, supportive leadership, and personal recognition. Whilst they go on to test the associations between the various factors and specific follower outcomes, and offer confirmatory factor analysis for their proposed factor structure, they acknowledge that the limited scale of their research can allow for only modest claims for this alternative model. It is certainly insufficient to resolve the previous lack of clarity. Also, as pointed out by Bryman (1992), there is considerable overlap between the dimensions of transformational leadership models and those of other leadership models, bringing into question whether it is truly a 'new' conceptualization.

The measurement of transformational leadership is also seen as problematic, with the validity of the MLQ having many doubters. The high correlation between the factors here (as found by Tejeda, Scandura, and Pillai, 2001) is an unsurprising corollary of the conceptual confusion already noted. At a more fundamental level, it is also questioned whether transformational leadership should be considered as a personality trait or personal predisposition rather than as a set of behaviours which can be learned. Again, the overlap with charismatic leadership serves to muddy the waters here. Its potential to be elitist and antidemocratic—and to suffer from a bias towards 'heroic' forms of leadership—has been noted by its main protagonists, Bass and Avolio, and refuted by them on the grounds that leaders can be simultaneously directive and participative, democratic and authoritarian. We would suggest that this refutation—that transformational leaders can be all things to all followers—is somewhat flimsy and fails to address what appears to be a valid question in relation to this highly acclaimed leadership 'solution'. The potential for abuse through—and indeed, the underlying ethics of—a form of leadership which advocates changing followers' values in the process of moving them to a new vision has also been raised, hitting at the heart of Burns' original conception of leadership as creating a relationship of 'mutual stimulation and elevation' with followers.

Turning to charismatic leadership, one of the major problems here has been recognized as the transitory nature of the phenomenon, which is based on personal identification with an individual leader who is perceived to be in some way extraordinary. When the leader departs or dies, a succession crisis is likely, and many organizations founded on charismatic leadership fail to survive this crisis. Characterizing this problem as the 'routinization' of charisma, Yuki (2002) suggests three methods by which organizations (and/or the departing leaders themselves) can attempt to perpetuate the leader's influence on the organization:

1. By transferring charisma to a designated successor through rites and ceremonies. The problems here are that it is seldom possible to find an equally extraordinary successor for an extraordinary leader and that the existing leader may be unwilling to identify a strong successor early enough to ensure a smooth transition.

2. By creating administrative structures that will continue to implement the leader's vision. This can be difficult to sustain when a vibrant, living vision is replaced by a bland,
bureaucratic set of rules. It can also strangle the organization as the vision becomes tired through lack of personal renewal.

3. By perpetuating the leader's vision by *embedding it in the organizational culture*. This requires followers to be persuaded to internalize the vision and feel empowered to implement it. Of the three, this approach is probably the most likely to be successful, though it is not without its pitfalls and limitations, not least of which is the fact that sooner or later a new leader with ideas of their own is likely to be required.

In addition to issues of sustainability, charismatic leadership has also been attacked on the grounds that its proponents overemphasize the potential for positive consequences. The 'dark side' of charisma is now emerging as a topic in the literature and refers to such issues as the dependency relations which may be created and the potential for narcissism. The former is said to inhibit followers from making suggestions or challenging ideas, to lead to the acceptance of risky projects and the denial of problems or failures, to prevent the development of individuals who could be potential successors, and to create an illusion of leader infallibility. The other side of this relationship is the tendency for narcissistic individuals to be drawn to positions of high power and influence in order to feed their need for adoration and praise, potentially with disastrous results. The weak self-control, indifference to the needs and welfare of others, and lack of emotional maturity which form part of this syndrome can cause leaders to articulate impossible goals and require them to be met at all costs.

**A case in point:** Steve Jobs—a hero of our time?

Steve Jobs was undoubtedly a charismatic and highly successful leader. As co-founder and CEO of Apple he became a byword for innovation and great design. As one-time head of Pixar he helped to launch one of the most creative and successful movie companies of the modern era. But almost as famous as his charisma and talent are his narcissism, near-legendary temper, and tendency towards *very public faux pas*. This combination of the negative and positive elements of charismatic leadership make him an interesting study for practitioners and academics alike. And with Jobs' habit of making the keynote address at nearly every significant Apple event, many of which can be viewed on YouTube or similar media, there is plenty of material to examine. Look out for the obvious stage management, production, backdrops, props, lighting, etc. which collectively support and maintain the identity which Jobs has created as the personification of Apple. What do you think would have been the benefits and costs of working for this undoubtedly charismatic man?


Finally, a number of studies have considered the transferability of transformational and charismatic leadership models to non-Western cultures. Given the presentation of new leadership as a universal panacea in much of the Western literature, this is important research and has produced some interesting results. Walumbwa and Lawler (2003) noted that previous cross-cultural research in this area had focused on replicating the augmentation effects of transformational over transactional leadership. They chose, instead, to examine the moderating effects of culture on the relationship between transformational leadership and work outcomes, with particular attention being paid to collectivism versus individualism. Their study was conducted in China, India, and Kenya and suggested that, whilst transformational...
In the eye of the beholder: Leadership as a social construction

Learning outcomes

On completion of this chapter you will:

- Understand the main follower-centric approaches to leadership and how they stand in relation to more mainstream views
- Understand the notion of the 'romance of leadership' and how this influences our construction of leadership as a phenomenon and our assessment of practising leaders
- Be aware of the role of implicit leadership theories in shaping our response to the leadership of others
- Understand the role of cultural factors in shaping our ideas of leadership and our willingness to follow particular styles of leadership
- Have considered how practising leaders construct ideas of success and failure in relation to their own practice

Introduction

Whilst most mainstream writing discusses leadership from the perspective of the leader—their traits, their behaviours, their vision—the socially constructed view of leadership explored in this chapter acknowledges the key role of followers and followership. Drawing on the seminal work of Meindl, Shamir, Uhl-Bien, and others, the socially constructed view of leadership contrasts a view of followers as passive recipients of leadership influence with that of active constructors of leaders and leadership. On this view, what counts is how the actions of would-be leaders are perceived rather than what their intentions were in performing them: the response of potential followers rather than the intentions of those seeking to lead. Underpinning this response—this willingness to follow—will be the followers’ understanding of what constitutes leadership and whether the actions of the putative leader conform to these views. Thus how we construct our ideas of leadership is fundamental to the establishment of a leader–follower relationship.

The chapter will explore the implications of this thesis for our understanding of leadership, and some of the specific theories to emerge will be outlined and critiqued. As a corollary to the notion that leadership is 'in the eye of the beholder' the chapter will also critique its current status in both popular and academic thinking via Meindl's thesis of 'romanticization'—the
leadership at the peak of his career) by putting forward five ‘follower-centred perspectives on leadership’ (Shamir et al., 2007). They saw followers in the following roles:

- as recipients of leader influence
- as moderators of leader impact
- as substitutes for leadership
- as leaders
- as constructors of leadership

The first two roles are what we would recognize from the traditional, mainstream leadership literature. ‘Followers as recipients of leader influence’ represents the early trait theories and later charismatic/transformational views of leadership, where the follower is seen as a passive recipient of whatever the leader is or does. ‘Followers as moderators of leader impact’ is recognizable in approaches such as situational or contingent leadership theories where the leader is required to adjust their behaviours to suit different individuals or situations, but the followers are still largely passive recipients. ‘Followers as substitutes for leadership’ is exemplified by the work of Steven Kerr and John Jermier (1978) which argues that under certain conditions, the influence of a leader over a follower may be neutralized or even substituted. For example, where the task at hand is very routine or straightforward (such as a worker on a production line) and thus there is seen little need for leadership. Similarly where the job is intrinsically satisfying, such as a paramedic or member of the clergy, and hence no need for the operative to be externally motivated to do it or praised afterwards. Seeing ‘followers as leaders’ is a slightly odd perspective here: whilst it is usually taken to refer to distributed leadership and its variants, it is more accurately neither leader- nor follower-centred; rather it attempts to do away with the distinction between the two. The suggestion is that any given individual will both lead and follow within the exercise of the duties of a given role, and that the distinctions between the two are thus less than might be supposed.

It is when we come to ‘followers as constructors of leadership’ that we truly move into the territory of socially constructed leadership, and where Shamir et al. (2007) made their real departure from what had gone before. By drawing attention to how followers make or construct ideas of leadership—and specifically how they construct and represent leaders and leadership in their thought systems—they were turning the field on its head. The emphasis was no longer on the leaders as creators of their own leadership practice, but on followers as arbiters of construct content.

Discussion point: leaders and followers

- What evidence do you see in your own experience of the different roles played by followers in determining what we understand by the term ‘leadership’? How important are the views of followers in the leader-follower relationship?
- Where do your own ideas of what constitutes leadership come from? Leaders you have seen? Media representations? Cultural expectations? Training courses? The views of peers?
- If followers play an important role in determining what constitutes leadership—and hence effective leadership—what are the implications of this for leaders? How should they go about creating followership in their subordinates and team members?
LEADERSHIP AS A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

if that person were a parent or other significant figure from early childhood, for example by being subservient or showing undue admiration. These processes can be particularly salient during periods of crisis or threat, when people feel confused, helpless, or insecure. Their idealization of the leader is in no way related to the leader’s actual abilities or any special characteristics. Nonetheless, through these psychodynamic processes leaders are seen as providing a means by which followers can reduce their level of anxiety and obtain a measure of psychological safety in an increasingly dynamic and ambiguous working environment.

It has been suggested (Popper, 2011) that these and other approaches to understanding the psychology of followers are actually key to understanding the influence leaders have over followers and the attraction that specific leaders—even poor ones—can have for them, either individually or en masse. So, for example, this approach can explain why followers sometimes allow or tolerate the creation of ‘toxic leaders’—leaders who manipulate their followers’ ordinary human needs and exploit their natural fears for their own advancement. Cult leaders or religious fundamentalists might fall into this category: but to a lesser extent ‘management gurus’ such as Peter Senge or Stephen Covey might be said to exercise a similar influence over followers seeking a miracle cure for their organizational problems. Over the decades, we have seen numerous management fads—just in time, business process reengineering, the learning organization, to name but three—promulgated as the way forward. Where do we draw the line in deciding whether these philosophies are really in our best interests or are just commercially successful manipulations of our desire to be more effective leaders?

Leadership in the media: The Magnificent Seven (or The Seven Samurai)

In an American remake of the classic 1954 film The Seven Samurai, The Magnificent Seven tells the story of a Mexican peasant village, oppressed by bandits, who offer what little they have as payment to American gunfighters to come and defend their homes. The seven who eventually come to the villagers’ aid all come for their own reasons and bringing their own ‘baggage’ but within the group are some fascinating portraits of psychodynamic theory at work. Foremost amongst these is the relationship between Chico—from a peasant home himself but trying desperately to deny his origins—and Chris, the leader of the seven, whom he admires and tries to emulate. In this relationship we see both the projection of all of Chico’s leadership ideals onto Chris, and his counter-dependent reaction to Chris when he feels belittled by the tests he is set by the older, more experienced man. In another interesting relationship, we see Bernardo—a fatherly figure amongst the gun-fighting group—adopted by the peasant village children. Less glamorous than most of his compatriots, he at once represents a recognizable image of leadership and provides a contrast with the children’s own fathers whom they view as cowardly for not having stood up to the bandits before. Again, we see the complex psychodynamic origins of their understanding of leadership played out in this touching relationship. All-in-all this is a film that goes far beyond the ‘shoot ‘em up’ genre to which it is often seen as belonging.

Social identity theory of leadership

The previous section dealt with psychological constructions of leadership at the individual level. In this section, we consider the individual in their social context and the manner...
Leaders and leading: Everyone is a leader now!

Learning outcomes

On completion of this chapter you will:

- Know the critique of traditional leadership theory that led to the development of ideas of shared and distributed leadership
- Understand the core concept of distributed leadership
- Be familiar with ideas that share the basic premise of leadership not being solely the property of the individual such as shared, collective, and collaborative leadership
- Be aware of the research evidence linked to distributed leadership
- Appreciate the limits of the distributed concept and the main criticisms of this approach to leadership

Introduction

This chapter describes a radical attempt to redefine the very idea of leadership, moving it away from the belief that leadership is the preserve of a single individual. As charted in earlier chapters, leadership has been thought of as the preserve of 'great men', of individuals who either possess certain attributes, or who have the ability to be flexible in certain situations. Either way, it is the individual who is seen as a leader, positioned at or near the top of an organization, creating the vision, setting the direction, and taking the decisions. The individual with the position has been seen as the one who influences in order to achieve the purpose of the organization.

This belief in the individual leader has spawned a leadership research agenda that has taken the individual as the single unit of analysis and places a great emphasis on the ability of the individual to have an all-pervasive influence on the organization. Thorpe, Gold, and Lawler (2007) note that while there is a large amount of anecdotal evidence of the importance of the individual leader, there is very little empirical research evidence that backs the idea that an individual leader actually has such a great level of influence.

Distributed leadership challenges this belief in the individual as leader. It proposes that leadership may actually be the result of people collectively performing acts of leadership in close collaboration with each other, with a shared understanding of desired outcomes. From this perspective, leadership becomes an interdependent process that occurs between people which results in an outcome that may be observed as collective leadership behaviour.

Authors writing on distributed leadership generally see this collective leadership as beneficial to organizations. The concept has its origins in the education sector and the existence of...
Similar concepts
Shared leadership

Shared leadership is described by Pearce and Conger as:

a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective
is to lead one another to the achievement of group of organizational goals or both. (Pearce

This is done through the creation of practices that can be used by employees at all levels
of the organization. Shared leadership clearly sees leadership as emerging from the inter­
dependencies created at group level. To enable this, there is a focus on the creation of the
conditions, skills, and abilities needed to enable collective learning (Currie and Lockett, 2011).
Pearce and Conger suggest that when shared leadership has been enabled, there will be a
flow of influence that is both horizontal and vertical in an organization, with leaders influenc­
ing across peer groups as well as up and down the institutional hierarchy.

The case made by Pearce and Conger for shared leadership includes a view that modern
corporations are moving away from the traditional top-down hierarchies, with more flat­
tened structures that require leadership to become a process of influence rather than relying
on positional power. They make the point that creating the vision for an organization is no
longer the job of a single leader, rather it is the job of many employees to jointly create shared
visions for an organization, and to share in the motivation of staff towards achievement of
these shared visions. However, they are keen to clarify that shared leadership is not a rejec­
tion of leadership as an individual activity, but rather an attempt to integrate the individual as
leader with the concept of leadership being a social process shared across an organization. In
this they differ from distributed leadership, which imagines leadership emerging organically,
rather than being planned or having the involvement of a hierarchical leader.

Collaborative leadership

Kramer and Crespy (2011) offer a description of a collaborative leadership method which ac­
knowledges the importance of the role of the hierarchical leader in creating the conditions for
collaboration to occur. This includes the leader framing or describing issues in an accessible
way, mobilizing the talent in the group to act, using dialogue as a tool to reduce the perceived
difference in power between group members including the leader, and giving away decision
making power to the group. The authors envision collaborative leadership being generated
through the relationships that are built within the group. These will be both between the
group members themselves and between the group and the leader, meaning that collabora­
tive leadership is in essence a co-constructed phenomenon (Kramer and Crespy, 2011).

Participative leadership

Participative leadership is a method of enabling employees to make a greater contribution
to the work process. It consists of a set of behaviours or actions that a leader could take to
improve the participation of followers. This might include giving followers more information,
control of resources, discretion, or increased attention and support. The aim is to include