

# Chapter 1

## Deconstructing Leader Development: An Introduction

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In the mid-21<sup>st</sup> century, people will look back on our present [leadership development] practices as primitive (p.xix).

Gardner (1990)

Referencing the quote above, leader and leadership developers David Day, John Fleenor, Leanne Atwater, Rachel Sturm, and Rob McKee concluded a recent review in *Leadership Quarterly* (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014) covering the preceding 25 years by saying that the field of leader and leadership development is “still immature” (p. 80). They further concluded that “the field is replete with opportunities for researchers and theorists ... to progress [leader and leadership development] to a less primitive state.” These thoughts pointedly express the main purpose of *Leader Development Deconstructed*. The purpose of this book is to highlight the increasing need for theory and research in areas linked to leader and leadership development for use by scholars *and* practitioners. This book cannot address all aspects of both of these topics fully, but it can start the conversation with a greater focus on leader development. Even on this topic, we can only focus the conversation on elements that are either absent or underrepresented in the literature and practice. If effective in achieving this goal, there will be more interest in theory and the collection of evidence that can be put to use more quickly to effect change at the points of greatest need. From a business perspective, this challenge and goal are akin to getting the members of your team to understand the importance of vision, clarity of intent, and strategic thinking and how it impacts operations.

We intend to expand the discussion of leader development by encouraging engagement in this broad topic by individuals from across the behavioral sciences, education, and business of leader and leadership development. We begin our exploration by defining terms and deconstructing (i.e., focusing attention in detail) on what is truly meant by leader development and where we can begin as a community of scholars, researchers, educators, and practitioners. This topic requires more

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attention due to the increasing complexity of leading in the modern world with a further need to explore how to do leader development in a multitude of contexts and levels (Day & Harrison, 2007; White, 2011; O'Connell, 2014).

As recognized by Day, Harrison, and Halpin (2009), where it occurs, leader and leadership development most often is realized through training, education, and doctrine. A small group of executives may also benefit from executive coaching, but leader development is largely unmoored from relevant theories that can guide development of leaders over time and at every stage. While it is believed that any leader and leadership development helps the organizations which invest in it, the challenge is that without clear theory, research, or evidence-based concepts, the investment may be a wasted or at least an extremely inefficient exercise. Yet, according to estimates from 2013 (Elmholdt, Elmholdt, Tanggaard, & Holmgaard Mersh, 2016; O'Leonard & Krider, 2014), corporations in the United States alone invested over \$15 billion annually on leader and leadership development—therefore, the outlay suggests an obvious need. Adding to this observation, the amount expended was a substantial increase from the previous year suggesting a growing demand.

This seemingly incongruent situation reveals that there is a strong practical need beyond academic curiosity for both research and theory related to leader development. The lack of a theoretical footing with meaningful and focused theories, constructs, and frameworks for the business of leader development leads to an inability to clearly articulate the strategy of leader development in all types of organizations. In a free-market sense, this should promote the development of useful content that is both academic and practical. And still our understanding of the behavioral science of leader and leadership development is seen as “primitive.” This problem was also noted by Patricia O'Connell who wrote, “Leader development, even more than leadership, lacks definition, theory, agreed upon constructs, and effective processes” (O'Connell, 2014, p. 184). However, a strong practical need does not necessarily lead to a clear academic push. In this area, there is more of a practical pull for the content that defines the areas of leader and leadership development, and only on an as-needed basis or just-in-time manner. In short, it is not surprising that a survey of 1000 senior executives revealed that 44% responded that development in their organizations was poor and 54% indicated that it was ineffective (Borderless Research, 2016). The lack of focused and practical leader development theories could be a significant driver of this problem.

Exacerbating the challenge of leader and leadership development, a business-oriented approach and scholarly methodology are not always consistent. Business generally focuses on rapid return on investment. Unfortunately, this investment can be more about dollars and cents than about what really works and why. Scholarly scientific pursuits are generally focused on truth and describing and elucidating the unknown with only limited pressure for an answer in the near term, at least as long as it leads to publications and positive attention for the academic institution sponsoring the research. Excepting a few strategic thinkers and actors, business expects results quickly and academics are deliberate and patient. Despite their different cultures both the academic and business worlds have the potential to gain from a detailed and focused examination of relevant theories, constructs, or frameworks

that support and guide leader and leadership development. This publication serves to facilitate that conversation between such disparate groups and cultures to advance this topic.

## 1.1 Leader Versus Leadership

Likely, part of the reason that leader development has garnered only limited attention as a topic is that the terms may have been too broad to pin down for scholarly examination. Lack of clarity about “operational definitions” for these terms means that they likely have little functional utility for businesses and the individuals involved. The sheer number of definitions for the terms *leadership* and *leader* alone is evidence of the problem this presents (Northouse, 2016). And still, some have argued that the definition of leadership is in the midst of a paradigm shift (Day & Harrison, 2007; White, 2011; O’Connell, 2014). An assessment of leadership and what it means to be a leader are used interchangeably and freely, only creating confusion, which is then exacerbated by a persistent desire to create the need for changing paradigms.

Concepts of effective leader behavior and leadership are regularly confused and applied to a host of situations, organizations, and competencies. Illustrating this, domain- or job-specific competence is regularly conflated to be clear evidence of leadership potential in a developing leader when it may have a limited role in *leader competence*. Unfortunately, this confusion about job-specific knowledge and competence and leader competence, and the confusion between developing “leaders” versus “leadership,” only adds complexity to an already complicated topic. For that reason, we are starting primarily by focusing attention in this volume on leader development, which obviously involves two aspects, the *leader* and *development*. This point may not be so obvious when it comes to implementation. Perhaps more succinctly, Day and Sin (2011) captured the challenge when they wrote, “Part of the difficulty is that it requires melding one fuzzy construct (leadership) with something that is equally complex and nebulous (development)” (p. 546). Essentially the term leader is more specific than leadership. This volume is not primarily focused on leadership broadly, nor is it focused on job-specific competence that generally develops through training, education, and on-the-job experience. Instead, the volume is focused more on leader competencies, which is a separate and distinct type of competence within individuals. Consideration of the differences between leader and leadership starts to reveal the complexity in the topics.

There are many definitions of what it means to be a “leader.” Before addressing the more focused topic of leading, we must address the broader umbrella of “leadership.” For the purpose of this volume, we have adapted the four elements highlighted by the often referenced Northouse (2016) who writes that *leadership* includes the following components:

- (a) *Leadership* is a process [between leaders and followers]
- (b) *Leadership* involves influence

- (c) *Leadership* occurs in groups
- (d) *Leadership* involves common goals (p. 6)

Therefore, for this text we have chosen the following definition:

*A leader is a person who identifies needs, focuses thinking, and influences others to create change through coordinated action toward a common purpose or shared set of goals in a complex environment.*

Thus, rather than emphasizing the processes of leadership, the focus of this volume is on *the leader as an individual and how leader capacity develops in complex social constructs*. Also, as highlighted by Northouse (2016), the leader negotiates the process with followers. Followers and their development must also be included in the context of leader development because we take the perspective for this volume that we all begin the process of leader development as followers. Adding to Northouse's components, we have chosen to focus on aspects related to the perspective of the leader or follower as individuals rather than the broad social, group, and organizational aspects of leadership. Thus, where appropriate, we have invited authors to consider the leader, the follower, their behaviors, the context, and other aspects of the environment that clearly have an impact on the development of the individuals who become leaders.

For the purpose of this volume and to be able to effectively use the concepts herein for development of individuals, *leader development* must be differentiated from *leadership development*. According to Day (2000), leader development is focused on "human capital" and is about developing the person while leadership development is about developing the system and processes related to leading and following. Per that definition and updated review (Day et al., 2014), human capital is focused on the individual, their personal power, trustworthiness, intrapersonal competence, self-awareness, self-regulation, and self-motivation. This is an important distinction and should help frame that the concepts in this publication are primarily focused on how they affect *individuals* rather than teams, groups, or organizations.

While this text is primarily focused on concepts related to the individual as a leader, the construct of "leadership," or the environment and related "social capital" (Day, 2000), cannot be completely avoided. Where necessary, contributors will address touch points where the systems and capacity for leadership development connect to development in individuals. This point becomes particularly relevant when we start to consider relational aspects of individual leader behavior and especially the environment or context in which leader development occurs. Both of these elements are likely to interact and separating them completely is difficult, but the contributors to this volume have all tried to keep their theories and proposals focused on the impacts on growing individuals, even when there is a broader impact on relevant systems, processes, and related social capital. Contributors also not only explore the scholarly view of leader development, but they also examine the practical influences and processes involved in developing the individuals who become leaders over time. This is where development of leaders is intended to engage practitioners in education and business.

## 1.2 The Challenge of “Development”

Differentiating leader and leadership is only half of the focus of this volume. The other half is development. In brief, development might be captured simply as “change” or “the way that people grow.” However, this oversimplification neglects the various challenges of development, particularly when change is considered across a life span and various environments. We note that leader development does not have to be directly tied to the age of the developing individual. While leader development could be considered to track with human development, it does not have to. It is clear that all life experience will likely influence the developmental time course of leader development in an individual, which adds to the complexity of change.

Consequently, it turns out that development is the most challenging aspect of the topic. For the purpose of this volume, the definition for the overarching approach to development is simply captured as “positive change over time.” This change over time will need to consider the context and starting point of each individual and his or her environment. Yet, at least change over time provides the opening for considering the complexity involved in identifying where a person is developmentally at any given moment as a leader, and the interaction he or she has with other individuals, networks, organizations, and the environment, which could also be changing. Therefore, because the final objective is quality leading and leadership, this change must be towards positive growth with socially accepted and connected leaders in a complex and ever-changing environment.

With a myriad of potential variables, to keep the level of complexity manageable, we have chosen the focal points of the person, behavior, and environment as the frames of reference for examining leader development. Like Bandura’s concept of reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1978), an argument can be made that a change in any one area creates a change in the other areas over a given period of time. While simplifying to a point, using only three frames that are fully reciprocal, the opportunities are still virtually endless, but at least the domain for the presented concepts can be cast into areas for potential use by practitioners. In the end, not only is the environment complex and volatile, but the individual is also complex and ever-changing. The frames at least provide an initial construct and focus for organizing conversation around leader development.

Therefore, taken together, *leader development* is effectively about learning to manage change in one’s self and environment while also learning to consider and involve others. This includes developing a personal capacity to orient and align people within an ever-changing environment towards shared goals. Due to the complexity, each of the elements needs to be deconstructed into components so that they can eventually be reconstructed as a cohesive whole again in some useful manner for academics and practitioners alike. Reconstruction is beyond the scope of this volume, but starting with the end objective in mind will help with reconstruction at some future point as we learn more about the topic.

The process of deconstructing leader development is not trivial. To manage the complexity, we have chosen to engage those who have studied relevant topics in depth and developed appropriate theoretical constructs, usually within the space of some aspect of psychology or other behavioral science. That is, the majority of the contributors to this volume did not obtain their credentials through leadership studies. Instead, they have brought their focused expertise from their discipline and experience-in-detail to the topic of leader development. The intent was to take a creative and original approach that might challenge the current positions held within leadership studies. The authors and chapters included herein were selected to address topics raised by Day (2000) and Dalakoura (2010) related specifically to human capital. By bringing their respective expertise in focused areas that are not specifically constrained by leadership studies, the volume is intended to set out a process that others can follow for bringing their extensive behavioral science acumen to the topics of leader development and leadership studies. This bottom-up approach provides a method for more clearly articulating the relevant important elements. More pointedly, the intent is that the practitioner can use the existing data-driven theories herein to build programs and interrogate their existing leader development programs. The academic can benefit as well, because the process demonstrated herein can provide an approach for further researching and expanding our limited knowledge about leader and leadership development.

Consequently, when considered together, this volume is focused on the underlying elements that lead to the creation of quality leaders over time, which could be considered to begin when life begins (Day et al., 2009; Day, 2011; Murphy & Johnson, 2011). This underlying premise means that by definition this volume assumes that leaders can be “made” or “created,” but we also endeavor to consider areas that are generally seen as immutable, like our biology, personality, general mental ability, courage, and character.

We assume that leadership is necessarily a social construct involving at least two people, which is a generally accepted starting point. For example, Bass (1954) demonstrated that spontaneous leader-follower structures emerge in social environments even when participants specifically set out to be “leaderless.” The emergence of leaders regardless of the environment has led to the conclusion that leadership is a “universal” human social phenomenon (Bass, 1990; Brown, 1991; Hollander, 1985). However, the development of *quality leaders* clearly is not universal or pre-ordained.

This also suggests that in order to proceed, the tent of leader development alone has the potential to be quite large. And consequently one might expect that the theoretical structures that exist for such a large topic area would be equally expansive. However, this is not the case, and in truth the breadth of focused theory regarding leader development is quite limited at present. Therefore, before we dive into the potential areas that could be deconstructed for the purpose of leader development in future chapters, it would be useful to provide a brief overview of prominent theories that address leader development directly.

### 1.3 Current Theories of Leader Development

It has been noted in the last few decades that there is a need to create integrated and unifying theoretical frameworks that explain leadership (e.g., Avolio, 2007; Chemers, 2000; Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Hollander, 1985; Van Vugt, 2006; Yukl, 1989), and to a small degree even leader development (Day et al., 2009; O’Connell, 2014). Theories like charismatic leadership (House, 1977; Conger & Kanungo, 1987), transformational leadership (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985) as eventually included in the full-range leadership theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994), leader-member exchange theory (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), and adaptive leadership (Heifetz, 1994), to name a few prominent theories, have come to exist addressing this overarching need (see also Table 10.1 for more details about these theories of leadership). In a sociological construct, these leadership theories provide a sort of grand theory related to broad overarching objectives for leadership.

Alternatively, with few exceptions, the theoretical options for a grand theory of leader development are still quite limited. Day, Harrison, and Halpin (2009; Day & Sin, 2011) created the most complete integrated theory of leader development. The CCL or Center for Creative Leadership (Van Velsor, McCauley, & Ruderman, 2010) published a useful construct that guides the creation of developmental leader experiences. O’Connell (2014) has prepared a “simplified framework” for integrated leader development, and the creators of leader-member exchange theory developed an approach for “leadership making” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). Besides these few theories or frameworks, there is a greater need for attention to the detailed theories, constructs, and frameworks related to leader development; thus, relevant theories are briefly presented.

Day et al. (2009) provided an initial response to the need for a more integrated leader development theory (also see Day & Sin, 2011). Their theory highlights key topics including accelerating leader growth through application of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development, examination of developmental readiness, moral development, epistemic cognition (i.e., understanding how knowledge is formed), problem solving, and development of leader competence and expertise. Their overarching theory also examines adult development, and identity processes, cognitive frames, and goal orientation. While their theoretical approach attempts to increase attention in key areas for leader development and trajectories of development with a holistic and integrated presentation, it is complex and difficult to clearly articulate briefly for use in most leader development programs. Consequently, the approach does not lend itself for ready use by practitioners of leader and leadership development in undergraduate academia or business. The complexity of their theory renders the application useful primarily to students and faculty in a graduate program dedicated to leadership studies, social and organizational psychology, organizational behavior, or one of only a few other types of programs in academia.

Despite the complexity, at its core Day, Harrison, and Halpin's theory focuses primarily on competence, identity development, self-regulation, and adult learning, all of which are not entirely conscious processes. Even though they attempted to use a behavioral approach, it is still difficult to implement by practitioners. It is also clear that while they provided a detailed presentation of key elements of leader development, there is still potential for it to go beyond the main elements in which they focus, especially when considered against the totality of topics and research in the entirety of behavioral sciences. An evaluation of their theory suggests that pursuing a grand theory of leader development necessarily results in the need for more focused efforts, also called middle-range theories that have more utility in practice.

At the other end of the spectrum from the grand integrated theory, the Center for Creative Leadership developed a general framework for leader development that is a useful and simple construct for guiding and evaluating activities in a leader development program. *The Handbook of Leadership Development* by Van Velsor, McCauley, and Ruderman (2010) presents a two-part model for leader development. In the first part of their model, developmental experiences are most effective if they include elements of assessment, challenge, and support (p. 2–20). This simplified framework of learning by doing creates the opportunity for growth. Assessment involves the process of providing individuals with data and information so they can increase their self-awareness about where they are and compare that with where they want to be as leaders. Their approach promotes a behaviorally oriented means-end analysis directed at personal development and leader effectiveness, particularly if the growing leader is engaged in the process. Assessment then is about knowledge and understanding through data that guides growth.

The next element is focused on challenging the individual. Challenges present the opportunity for self-recognition of limits and help the individual experience disequilibrium. By definition, individuals are challenged when they go beyond their comfort zone. Like Day et al. (2009) suggested for adult development, Van Velsor and colleagues suggest that the challenges people experience necessitate growth to make up for the shortcomings in capability. As examples, these challenges can threaten one's identity, values, self-efficacy, ways of making meaning of the world (i.e., epistemic cognition or cognitive frames), social conflict, or even his or her place in an organization or a society. By threatening any of these values, beliefs, or normal procedures, the individual is forced to let go of the previously held positions. Therefore, challenges motivate action and provide the opportunity to grow.

Through assessment and challenges, Van Velsor and colleagues (2010) suggest that support is best able to help developing leaders move towards positive growth. The support that is provided is similar to that described by Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" (1978), as well as by Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky's "holding environment" (2009). Per Vygotsky, this could be the hand up that helps an individual reach past the abilities they have on their own to further create the opportunity for growth. Alternatively, the holding environment promotes a social location where others continue to challenge individuals while facilitating support and development in one another. This support usually involves teaching, coaching,

or mentoring others and it is inherent in the social structures of the society, system, or culture surrounding developing leaders. Support is the main element that maintains motivation and persistence despite the presence of the adaptive challenges. Together, a challenge and support approach facilitate meaningful growth while keeping the learner engaged in the process of leadership. Yet, there is still room for a greater understanding of how leaders can use support to facilitate growth in others. Collectively, these three elements are also captured in the model by Day et al. (2009), albeit in a different manner.

The second part of the CCL model is that developing leaders need a variety of these developmental experiences where the leader has the opportunity to practice providing direction, alignment, and commitment to followers in various leadership contexts. Collectively, these guidelines set the conditions that produce leader development. While the framework serves as a useful heuristic for general consideration, it becomes less useful when applied in a focused manner to the many topics connected to leadership or when a specific context or culture may need to be considered. This is the case due to the complexities of social capital, processes, participants, categories of groups, and the total environment affecting leaders at any given moment. This is important because leader development presumably occurs when it is needed, often in a just-in-time fashion. Therefore, an understanding of the type of leader capacity and performance needed at any given time will be wholly dependent on the capacity of the leader, the followers to be led, group composition and size, culture, and the environment in which leaders and followers work. That is, the CCL framework is useful in creating opportunities for growth more as a mindset or guiding principle, but it does not allow for focused examination of important areas that might need development in specific contexts, individuals, or for areas of specific development in individuals.

More recently, a “simplified” framework of leader development was presented by O’Connell (2014). This framework focuses on five different “webs of belief” as a launching point for building behavioral and cognitive complexity that are required in volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments. O’Connell’s five webs included a focus on learning, reverence, purpose or service, authenticity, and *flaneur*. “Learning” is focused on developing the cognitive organizational skills or the “intellect” and openness to new experiences needed for managing complexity (c.f., McCrae & Costa, 1987; Digman, 1990). This suggests that the intellect web of belief clearly points to intelligence as a possible element of leader development; this is novel as there is very limited information about the role of intelligence (from a classical sense) in leadership and leader development. “Reverence” is focused on elements of agreeableness and extraversion in the five-factor model, but they are considered as elements of empathy, collectivism, and relatedness. The “purpose” or “service” web of belief is focused on intention, aspiration, agency, and self-regulation, which also involves a great degree of self-awareness relative to one’s mission and goals and the capacity to have vision. “Authenticity” as a web of belief serves to represent self-efficacy, greater self-awareness through personal reflection, and a value-based orientation for moral and ethical development. This is notable because as a web of belief it is one that is developmental in nature rather than

genetic or trait based. This is also notable and unusual when considered against the character aspects of this theory. This web of belief is heavily dependent on the developing leader's ability to communicate. Lastly, the "flaneur" web of belief represents a "philosophical and spirit-led approach to living and leading, using periods of reflection and rest to stay balanced in the face of the complex requirements and constant stimulation" (p. 197). O'Connell goes on to write that leading with flaneur promotes a "detached and objective" perspective. This perspective is essentially "practical wisdom." The approach for how to develop practical wisdom is one that is well received as an issue, but it is not readily addressed in the area of leader development. Therefore, it is open for further examination and how these webs of belief are developed is lacking in this expansive framework.

Like the approach of Day et al. (2009) and the CCL model (Van Velsor et al., 2010), O'Connell's (2014) proposed framework contains a great deal of relevant information, but they require further focused examination. Indeed many of the topics in her "simplified framework" are addressed in detail in various parts of this volume. However, like Day's integrated framework, the utility of O'Connell's approach will be restricted primarily to academics because of its uncommon language, expansive approach, and difficulty in explaining a "web of belief" in a manner that is readily employable in the field. The theories, constructs, and frameworks explored within this volume attempt to make components of leader development more accessible and usable for researchers and practitioners alike.

Lastly, regarding available and accepted theories of leader development, "leadership making" is a method highlighted by the creators of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1991). LMX as a leadership theory focused on dyads and social interactions between leaders and followers. In "leadership making," Graen and Uhl-Bien's (1991) goal was to develop "superior manager professionals into self-managing and partially self-designing units" (p. 25). In the process of leadership making, developing leaders are encouraged to create high-quality exchanges with as many followers as possible. Effectively, the process of building relationships is the main focus for this model where two people progress through three phases from stranger to acquaintance and finally to partners. In their conception, leadership making promotes the conditions for expanding the "in-group," which then benefits more of the organization. This theory is one of the few that starts to explore practical details that can facilitate development and be readily used by researchers and practitioners alike. Even though the model is intended to focus on the "leadership relationships," referring to this model as "leadership making" may be an overstatement. It probably would be best referred to as "partnership making" because it is focused on the interactions between leader and follower, which is tangible and practical for implementation in the field.

Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) suggest that leadership making is distinct from "role making" and "team making." Role making refers to the progression of individuals through formal roles with progress through tasks and relationships over time (Dansereau et al., 1975). Like leadership making, it is focused on the individual and relevant for a focus on leader development. Yet, leadership making and role making can be confused from how they were originally conceived and presented (c.f., Cropanzano, Dasborough,

& Weiss, 2017, and Martin, Guillaume, Thomas, Lee, & Epitropaki, 2016). Team making (Uhl-Bien & Graen, 1992) is directed more at the development of teams within different situations, and the related changes that occur over time and a leader's life cycle. More than leadership or role making, this element can be more focused on *leadership* rather than *leader* development, as there is a greater focus on the environment and other social aspects. Regardless, each of the three elements are linked and may develop along a different time course.

Interestingly, relative to the broader LMX theory, only leadership making seems to have gained the most acceptance over time. Nahrgang, Morgeson, and Ilies (2009) examined the development of exchanges between leaders and followers. They still indicated that the level of understanding about development of the exchange was poorly understood. This may have been in large part due to the tendency to employ cross-sectional rather than longitudinal research designs. To start to address this shortfall, they examined the early stages of relationship development between leaders and followers. In that analysis they revealed that the personality traits of agreeableness and extraversion played a differential role and that leader-follower relationships develop quickly. Leaders were influenced by extraversion, while followers were influenced by agreeableness (including trust and cooperation) in early interactions. Interestingly, the inverse was not observed. Ultimately, for the initial development of exchanges over time, behavioral performance emerged as the key predictor of relationship (i.e., partnership) quality. These results further suggest that due to the speed that leader-follower relationships develop, more research is needed on personality and trust and their role in leader development, some of which is addressed in this volume.

A clear limitation of the LMX approach and leadership making is that the leader can only reach so many individuals. When considering executive leaders other theorists have addressed this point by suggesting that reputation management is central to the role of the highest level leaders (Tsui, 1990). Thus, further development beyond this level must involve something more than just strong dyads and high-quality leader-member exchanges. This further suggests that grand theories of leader and leadership development may play a role, but there is still a need for more focused theoretical examination of the components related to positive change over time. Even within a more focused area like leadership making, there are gaps evident that may be addressed more effectively by engaging behavioral scientists who have examined related topics through research, and then bring that understanding to the realm of leader and leadership development.

Psychologists have published an expansive literature base on topics related to leadership (see Day et al., 2014 and Dinh et al., 2014 for review). Yet, the focus of *leader development* programs and the theoretical constructs supporting leader-related topics tend to be limited as we have presented. A broad view of psychology reveals that there are numerous topics and theoretical constructs that could be applied to the topic of leader development. This approach of looking to the extant literature as a guide should elucidate new information, theories, venues, and strategies for examining leader and leadership development in detail. More directly, this approach could uncover frameworks and models that could be put to use in

business and academia today to address clear needs in the complex area of leadership. This volume provides a method, opportunity, and examples for starting to fill this very clear gap.

## 1.4 Volume Organization Through the Historical Roots of Leader Development

Now that we have deconstructed the term *leader development* and demonstrated the gap that this volume begins to address, it is important to also connect this work to historical roots. In addition to their obvious utility for the topic and the broader discipline of psychology, these roots are also useful for organizing this volume. This volume is divided into three primary sections: (1) The Individual, Personality, and Cognition involved in Leader Development; (2) Considering Behavior in Leader Development; and (3) Social and Environmental Influences on Leader Development. Without a specific commitment to the ideas of either Kurt Lewin or Albert Bandura, dividing the book in this way echoes part of their work because there are programs focused on leader development that base their academic curricula on the concepts of these two prominent psychologists. These programs are generally focused in the areas of leadership, leader development science, and social or organizational psychology. Beyond academic programs, these three elements provide areas that practitioners can use for structuring their assessments, program development, and most importantly guiding developing leaders. Additionally, deconstructing leader development in these terms will allow readers and those participating in the process of deconstruction to maintain sight of a future reconstruction—we need to continue to consider leadership broadly, the context, and the whole of activities and situations involving leaders while further working to keep theoretical considerations and frameworks grounded and practical. Practical considerations are essential for effectively developing quality leaders.

Kurt Lewin is often tied to topics related to leadership, social psychology, and organizational behavior. He developed as a psychologist while also studying mathematics and physics (Miller, 1975). He eventually trained with other early Gestalt psychologists who firmly held that the whole must be considered in psychological research. Their view held that while the parts are obviously important, the interpretation of the whole is not merely a summation of the parts of an entire complex and dynamic phenomena.

These ideas are clearly descended from Gestalt psychology. In particular, Gestalten ideas and transformative field theories proposed and advanced by Albert Einstein and other physicists were developing at roughly the same time. Einstein played a significant role in updating physics by moving it away from an atomistic approach to one that considered interactive, and ever-changing, immaterial fields that act upon each other to produce the natural phenomena that exist in the physical world. In other words, Einstein recognized through these theories that there were

interconnected and nonlinear relationships with multiple contributing factors that created the physical world. Likewise, German psychologists, Max Wertheimer specifically, engaged Einstein in attempting to adapt these concepts when they developed Gestalt psychology. Accordingly, Gestaltists held that we take in the entire situation or event at once and not only through a collection of the individual parts. As quoted by Miller (1975) and in the forward to essays published by Wertheimer, Einstein commented on psychology and encouraged us to “beware of trying to understand the whole by arbitrary isolation of the separate components or by hazy or forced abstractions” (p. 75). In the end, Gestalt theory and Einstein effectively suggest that we need to appreciate an entire situation simultaneously while we examine the relevant parts in detail because they interact to create order in the world we experience.

Eventually, Lewin (1936) adapted this field theory approach to the topics of social and organizational psychology in an effort to better understand individuals in a complex and chaotic environment. In so doing, he created topological formulas to explore the entirety of the human experience, specifically focused on the whole situation. Lewin’s eq. (Lewin, 1936) is directly linked to his field theory and is examined in greater detail in Chap. 2, but it serves a good starting point for how we came to focus on the person, behavior, and environment in this volume.

The equation emerged from Gestalt logic that started with an examination of “life space” as a simplification of an individual’s total life experiences or phenomenal field (Schulz, 2013). The field of life space and the “whole psychological situation” effectively encompasses the person’s experience of self (P) along with their experience of the environment (E). Observable behavior (B) then was the result of a dynamic twofold interaction ( $f$ ) of the person and the environment. Therefore, Lewin’s equation states that behavior is a function of the person and his or her environment as

$$B = f(P, E)$$

He developed and published the equation more as a heuristic than as a strict mathematical formula in 1936, and a means of *unifying the different perspectives* within the field of psychology.

Lewin’s ideas guide leader and leadership development today in classes on organizational change at various graduate schools around the world as reflected by the use of Burke’s *Organizational Change: Theory and Practice* (Burke, 2013). In that text, Lewin’s ideas figure prominently. Lewin’s ideas have also likely been adopted in part because Lewin’s equation effectively simplifies the total situation and life space for leaders into two main elements and the process of how they interact. Developing leaders along these elements makes leader development more manageable and applicable in a way that it can be practically employed. Like Lewin’s original purpose for developing the equation, the process is directly relevant to the purpose and approach of *Leader Development Deconstructed* because our intent was to start a conversation among leader development researchers, behavioral scientists from a myriad of disciplines, and practitioners around the expansive and dynamic topics of leadership and leader development.

To further demonstrate the flexibility of this approach, the three main sections of this volume can also be viewed through the lens of Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism (Bandura, 1971, 1977, 1978, 1983). Like Lewin's equation, reciprocal determinism also involves the person (i.e., including cognition), behavior, and environment. However, rather than being focused on a twofold interaction where behavior is the resulting outcome, behavior interacts with the other two factors in a threefold interaction. That is, the behavior on the part of the individual influences an individual's thinking and it separately influences the environment. The addition of another variable does not necessarily mean that the determinants operate simultaneously, only that over a given period of time they will eventually affect the others. This is important in the realm of development because there is not always a way to capture the temporal aspects of change over time, only that there will be a change.

One might argue that reciprocal determinism is functionally an extension of Lewin's ideas because his equation was conceived as a heuristic and not a strict mathematical model. Others may suggest that progress from Lewin's ideas to Bandura's concept illustrates the evolution of the science of psychology. For the purpose of this volume, that distinction is not important. What is important is that functionally and practically the three elements ultimately provide utility to practitioners who may wish to employ the ideas generated for and from this publication. That is, if one subscribes to Lewin's idea, then the processes you learn through this book can be thought of as the "function" aspect of his equation ( $f$ ). If you are more prone to reciprocal determinism, you will want to consider the ideas from this volume (and others that you can see in behavioral science literature) through the lens of any one of the three factors or through the interaction (i.e., the process of how each element interacts with one another) over time. In the end, either approach provides utility to the practitioner because you must consider all elements, the processes involved, and the whole aspect of developing the leader.

Effectively, either approach also provides the practitioner with flexibility until clearer models can be developed and validated from behavioral science research. That is, the three main elements remain the same, but the lens through which leader development is considered is slightly altered. Likewise, it is our hope that the concepts presented within this volume will grow and change over time and encourage others to adapt their focused theories, concepts, research, and evidence to the topic of leader development. Whether viewed through a different lens or presented as an evolution of an idea, both represent new and better ways of thinking about leader development, which we hope will lead to better leaders for an increasingly complex environment. As a practical matter, each element must be considered as a part of the whole person. Specifically, we all need more information on the fields and forces that are influencing us as leaders as we grow.

Within the section on the "Individual, Personality, and Cognition," ideas are presented related to psychobiosocial influences, general mental ability (i.e., intelligence), dark personality traits, courage, and leader developmental readiness. Chapter 2 explores how to develop "allostatic leaders" using a psychobiosocial approach firmly rooted in Lewin's ideas. This is original because psychobiological aspects of leadership, particularly the biology of leading and leader development,

are noticeably absent. These elements are clearly important when topics like stress and stress management are considered. Chapter 3 is on general mental ability and explores the role that intelligence plays in leader development. Specifically, it suggests that a leader's capacity for cognitive complexity is rooted in intelligence. Cognitive and behavioral capacity has been suggested as essential for higher levels of management and leadership, but the role of intelligence is largely ignored in the leadership literature. Chapter 4 explores the role of dark personality traits in leadership and leader development. There is a great deal of research examining the role that personality plays in leader and follower behavior, either through examination of the Big 5 personality traits or the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, but there is little in the literature related to negative personality traits like narcissism, Machiavellianism, or subclinical psychopathy. This chapter takes a provocative approach that forces readers to consider the "dark side of leadership" and how these traits can be utilized to *promote* leader development. This leads to Chap. 5 on courage and dialogue as variables people use to create quality leaders. This chapter seeks to operationally define courage and present the role that it plays in novel ways that can influence individuals, specifically considering and promoting updates to Bandura's concept of reciprocal determinism. While few of the chapters in the Individual, Personality, and Cognition section are addressed in leadership studies, Chap. 6 is focused on a topic that is currently gaining attention. Leader developmental readiness is a new theoretical framework that involves the ability to develop, personal motivation, and support context required for accelerating and facilitating growth in individuals. Collectively, this section focuses on more internal aspects within the leader.

"Considering Behavior in Leader Development" is the focus of the second section of this volume. This section begins with a focus on the follower. As noted, we take the position that leadership is ultimately an interaction. Therefore, any consideration of the whole situation of leader development must include the follower. Chapter 7 presents a new model for followership that is focused on follower behavior. Specifically, the chapter addresses how active and passive behaviors influence followers *and* leaders, which then clearly influences leader development. In addition to the model, the chapter makes a case for why organizations should invest in follower development as well as leader development. Promoting both should facilitate leadership and effective organizations. However, when there are challenges in leadership or an organization, we need effective behaviors for addressing conflict and for learning how to avoid it in the first place. Chapter 8 presents research and theories on the fundamental competence of conflict management. Through examination and use of organizational controls and the promotion of trust and fairness-seeking behaviors, developing leaders can learn to head off conflict before it occurs. This is a behavioral skill that leaders can develop. The chapter further explores effective methods for managing conflict when it occurs through existing literature on conflict management.

The next chapter in the Behavior section takes an original approach to character and creativity in leader development. Chapter 9 explores virtue and creativity as *skills* rather than as traits in leader development. Building on ideas from philosophy and social psychology, the chapter explores the challenges that creativity presents

for leaders, but also puts forth a concept that character can be developed through behavior. The chapter proposes that effectively creating quality leaders will involve both creative and virtuous behaviors. This chapter is followed by Chap. 10 on how to develop leaders through the process of guided inquiry and behavioral ways of developing epistemic cognition. That chapter presents a framework for developing the epistemic processes of leadership in growing leaders behaviorally through the act of engagement. This chapter is focused on application of how to grow leaders who can manage complexity primarily through structured academic programs of leader development.

The last section of the book is related to “Social and Environmental Influences” and it involves more discussion about leadership development, but it still looks at developing the individuals who become leaders. Chapter 11 examines the impact of selection and specifically the Assessment Center Method. The chapter explores the theoretical aspects of how selection and promotion can affect organizations and their developing leaders directly and indirectly. The method explores behavioral aspects as a key element in the Assessment Center, and thus the chapter transitions from behavior to the broader impacts, methods, and outcomes related to the selection of leaders in a given organization. Likewise, Chap. 12 deals with the topic of social support and leader development. This chapter addresses a topic that is often mentioned in other theories of leadership and leader development. However, the interesting aspect of social support in leader studies is that it is not entirely connected to an expansive literature on social support in other areas. This chapter addresses this gap by explicitly addressing how to employ social support and its influences. This connection provides a meaningful way to further research the specifics of social support while providing a mechanism for practitioners to evaluate and shape social support in business environments. The approach presented links social support back to various personal aspects within leaders that are discussed elsewhere in the volume including self-awareness, motivation, and competence.

The last two chapters are intended to be very practical and applied to specific challenges that are generally missing from academic publications of this type. Chapter 13 directly addresses how a leader development program and leadership model were developed where one did not previously exist. The chapter shares the lessons learned through that process. It also explores the challenges through the lens of an academic program at a medical school. While seemingly specific, many of the lessons and approach are readily applicable to other types of organizations. Chapter 14 closes out this volume and presents the unique challenges that exist in developing leaders in law enforcement environments. In addition to being topical, the examination is also applicable to other organizations where the developmental pipeline for leaders is very short or relatively thin. The chapter explores the question of how to develop influential and effective leaders in a highly visible and dynamic environment that generally only promotes from within. Like Chap. 13, while the topic seems focused on one type of organization, there are lessons to learn that may be relevant to industry, particularly to small businesses.

Ultimately, this volume of *Annals of Theoretical Psychology* endeavored to deconstruct leader development by examining key aspects of individuals, their

behavior, and their environment with a focus on specific areas that are poorly represented or underrepresented in the area. In short, there is a gap in understanding the “why” in leader development and consequently “how” to build that understanding despite a clear need. This volume will not cover all aspects of the topic and perhaps should have been titled *Deconstructing Leader Development* because there is still much to do. However, it is an introduction to the type of considerations that can occur and serve to challenge conventional thinking while leveraging theory, research, and development from across a wide array of subjects and disciplines. Through this approach, it is our intent to apply data-driven theory and proposals from diverse areas of behavioral, biological, and educational sciences to a practical challenge. Academics and practitioners alike will hopefully benefit from the examination and application of relevant theory and research to the underdeveloped area of leader development.

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