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The Role of Psychology in Leadership, Change, and Organization Development

H. Skipton Leonard, Rachel Lewis, Arthur M. Freedman, and Jonathan Passmore

1.1 Introduction

The three topics of this volume—leadership, change, and organization development (OD)—can be viewed as three separate and distinct organizational topics or they can be understood as three distinct lenses viewing a common psycho-organizational process. We begin the volume with a comprehensive treatment of leadership primarily because we view leadership as the fulcrum or crucible for any significant change in human behavior at the individual, team, or organizational level. Leaders must apply their understanding of how to effect change at behavioral, procedural, and structural levels in enacting leadership efforts. In many cases, these efforts are quite purposeful, planned, and conscious. In others, leadership behavior may stem from less-conscious understandings and forces.

The chapters in Part I: Leadership provide a comprehensive view of what we know and what we don't know about leadership. Alimo-Metcalfe (Chapter 2) provides a comprehensive view of theories and measures of leadership. Day and Antonakis (Chapter 11) argue that the lack of construct definitions within the literature can be seen as a key criticism of leadership research. These authors suggest that “if the leadership field is to continue to evolve then how carefully we define our theoretical constructs is something that must be given much closer attention.”

Despite this lack of agreement on the central question of “What is leadership?”, there are a number of common threads that bind how all the authors in this volume see the construct and therefore the definition of leadership:

- Leadership is a continuous process.
- Leadership must be viewed within a context (both internally and externally to the organization).
- Understanding and enhancing human behavior is key to leadership.

- Leadership involves influence over, and responsibility for, individuals (both internally and externally to the organization).
- Leadership both creates and addresses challenges at the strategic cultural level of an organization (but what those challenges are will be specific to the context).
- Leadership is key to the success of an organization.

Organizations are unlikely to achieve their strategic objectives, survive, and thrive without the ability to change and adapt to the challenges, opportunities, and threats they face. Leaders take responsibility for achieving organizational objectives by acting in accordance with their understanding of how individuals, teams, and organizational systems change. Part II: Change provides the principles and strategies that leaders can use to achieve their objectives and agenda. The following issues regarding change are addressed in this part of the book:

- *Major models/strategies for change*—Kurt Lewin’s contributions of organizational-change strategies and action-based research (Lewin, 1958); general systems theory (von Bertalanffy, 1969); chaos and complexity theories (see Stacey, 1992); Gregory Bateson’s (1972) contributions to change strategies, as expanded by Paul Watzlawick and his colleagues (1974); behavioral models of change such as the one offered by James and Janice Prochaska (Chapter 17); appreciative inquiry and positive psychology (Chapter 13); psychoanalytic models such as that proposed by Diamond (1993) and Kets de Vries & Miller (1984); and the neuroscience basis for understanding change (Lawrence, 2010).
- *Major controversies in the understanding of change*—The differences between being the object and the agent of change; can organizations plan change or do they react to threat by changing?; top-down versus bottom-up change (all these issues are covered in Chapter 12).
- *Major issues in understanding change*—Participation and commitment during change (Chapter 14); creativity and change (Chapter 15); culture and change (Chapter 18); and resistance to change (Chapter 16).

Our hope is that a broad and comprehensive treatment of the principles and strategies of change will improve leadership efforts within organizations.

The topic of Part III: Organization Development, provides a treatment of specific practices that can be employed by leaders in their efforts to bring about necessary change. The organizational-change methodologies identified as OD were inspired by Kurt Lewin’s interest in practical theory and action research (see Lewin, 1958). The fundamental theory, technology, values, and methods of OD have been discussed extensively elsewhere (see Bradford & Burke, 2005; Cummings & Worley, 2005; French et al., 2000; Gallos, 2006; McLean, 2006; Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005; Sorensen et al., 2001). However, the core values, theory, and methods of OD are not the focus of this part. The three chapters that make it up explore and discuss aspects of OD that are not easily accessible elsewhere: organizational diagnosis and the relationship between action research and collaborative management research.

Each of the parts of this book is discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter.

1.2 Part I: Leadership

The first part is made up of 10 chapters devoted to leadership and leadership theory. The aim of this part, taking a strongly psychological perspective towards the study of leadership, is to present a diverse range of current and future directions in research. Chapters

have been authored by leading academics in each field and aim to widen and challenge traditional notions of leadership.

1.2.1 Chapter 2: A Critical Review of Leadership Theory—Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe

In this chapter, Alimo-Metcalfe aims to critically review the history of, and developments in, leadership theory. The author describes six stages in leadership theory, beginning with the trait theories of the 1930s and ending with current directions in leadership theory, including the so-called post-heroic models such as ethical and authentic leadership, the theory of distributed leadership, and engaging leadership. At each stage, Alimo-Metcalfe critically reviews both the theory and the research evidence supporting it.

1.2.2 Chapter 3: Evidenced-based Management and Leadership—Rob B. Briner and Neil D. Walshe

In this chapter, Briner and Walshe focus on evidence-based management. The chapter initially reviews the origins of the approach, before describing evidence for its utility and use in practice. It then moves on to a discussion of the challenges encountered in managing within an organization in an evidence-based way.

1.2.3 Chapter 4: Psychodynamic Issues in Organizational Leadership—Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries, Elizabeth Florent-Treacy, and Konstantin Korotov

Kets de Vries, Florent-Treacy, and Korotov present the case for a psychodynamic approach to leadership. The authors argue that traditional leadership approaches are often framed within behaviorist or humanistic models, which focus on the tangible and measurable. The criticism is that, through this focus, the hidden dynamics that influence the behavior of groups and organizations are lost. The chapter illustrates how the psychodynamic approach can be used as a valuable framework for both research and practice in the area of leadership and management in organizations.

1.2.4 Chapter 5: Do I Trust You to Lead the Way?—Michelle C. Bligh and Jeffrey C. Kohles

This chapter explores trust and mistrust in leader–follower relations. Authors Bligh and Kohles provide a literature review of papers that highlight the importance of trust within this relationship, moving from a focus on the role of trust, to the antecedents and consequences of the relationship, to less-studied areas such as the transfer of trust from leaders to followers, trust repair, mistrust, and the question of when and why leaders trust followers. The chapter concludes with a look at the implications of the review for research and practice.

1.2.5 Chapter 6: Leader–Culture Fit—Gary N. Burns, Lindsey Kotrba, and Daniel Denison

In this chapter, Burns, Kotrba, and Denison explore the psychological fit of an organization's culture and its leadership. The authors argue that although the fit between a leader's behavior and the culture in which they work holds important implications for managers

and organizations, little empirical evidence has been explored in this area. They describe research linking leadership and culture and review traditional fit literature, before proposing a future research agenda.

1.2.6 Chapter 7: When Leaders are Bullies—Ståle Einarsen, Anders Skogstad, and Lars Glasø

This chapter moves on to an exploration of the dark side of leadership, focusing on leaders who abuse and bully their direct followers. Einarsen, Skogstad, and Glasø present literature on the concept of abusive supervision and its causes and outcomes, arguing that it is a significant social problem that warrants greater research interest.

In Chapters 8–10, attention is turned towards the link between leadership and well-being. Until relatively recently, although it was clearly understood by those in practice that leadership behavior was a key determinant of employee well-being, little research exploring the links between the two constructs had been undertaken. In the last 10 years, however, the situation has changed, with a proliferation of such research.

1.2.7 Chapter 8: Leadership and Employee

Well-being—Emma Donaldson-Feilder, Fehmidah Munir, and Rachel Lewis

In this chapter, Donaldson-Feilder, Munir, and Lewis provide a review of recent literature focusing on three aspects of the leader–employee relationship: how leadership affects stress and exposure to hazards; the role of leadership in employee sickness absence and return to work; and the newly-emerging area of leadership and employee engagement.

1.2.8 Chapter 9: Transformational Leadership and Psychological Well-being—Kara A. Arnold and Catherine E. Connelly

Arnold and Connelly continue the review by presenting a critical analysis of research linking transformational leadership and employee psychological well-being. They also explore the relationship from a different viewpoint, looking at the effect of enacting transformational leadership behaviors on the psychological well-being of the leader themselves.

1.2.9 Chapter 10: Making the Mindful Leader—Jeremy Hunter and Michael Chaskalson

In this chapter, Hunter and Chaskalson present an argument that the practice of mindfulness, and therefore provision of mindfulness training to leaders, could be a powerful and effective way of helping leaders meet the adaptive and complex challenges of the current working world. Hunter and Chaskalson describe the issues facing leaders at present, in terms of both the external environment and internal cognitions, before using research evidence to hypothesize how mindfulness in this context might be beneficial. The chapter concludes by describing, from a cognitive perspective, how mindfulness works, and what the long-term impacts of this type of training might be for leaders.

1.2.10 Chapter 11: The Future of Leadership—David V. Day and John Antonakis

Finally, Day and Antonakis conclude Part I with a chapter on the future of leadership. They start with a brief overview of changes in leadership theory across the past decade, before

describing four emerging pathways for leadership research: construct definition, process models, the development of leaders and leadership, and the use of stronger methodologies. Day and Antonakis then present the need for more research on the sociobiological, evolutionary, and diversity approaches to leadership. The chapter concludes by arguing that the future of leadership theory may not be in new constructs, but rather in better theory, more-rigorous research methods, and a focus on under-researched areas of literature.

1.3 Part II: Change

In this part, the contributing authors present and discuss what we currently know about the process of change, particularly in an organizational context: (1) how theorists and scholars, both contemporary and historical, have viewed and understood organizational change; (2) what principles are fundamental to change; (3) what general strategies for change have been derived from these principles; (4) how and to what degree research supports these strategies and models for organizational change; (5) and how organizational-change models and strategies have been and can be applied in cultures and economic situations (e.g. developing economies) that are dissimilar to the cultures and economies that many of our change strategies and models were based upon (e.g. US, European, and other developed economies).

We believe that a thorough understanding of the theories, principles, and strategies contained in the chapters in this part will help the practitioner choose specific leadership and OD and change (OD&C) strategies to utilize in efforts to change the structures, processes, or outcomes of organizational behavior. We hope that these models can be used by practitioners and scholars alike in their attempts to understand the process of organizational change. They will be useful in both the design of planned change and the evaluation and assessment of organizational-change efforts. Furthermore, when the organizational-change process doesn't go as planned, as is usually the case, these models and strategies can be used to make necessary changes to implementation plans.

1.3.1 Chapter 12: The History and Current Status of Organizational- and Systems-change Theory—H. Skipton Leonard

In this chapter, Leonard presents a discussion of the many distinctions, debates, and controversies that have been offered in discussing organizational change. The majority of the chapter, however, is devoted to a comprehensive summary and review of the major schools of organizational change. This review begins with an extensive discussion of the models for organizational and social change that developed from Kurt Lewin's research and his desire that social psychological theory be put to use in addressing and solving important social and societal problems. Lewin's insistence that "nothing is as practical as a good theory" (Marrow, 1972, p. 169) not only promoted practice-based research but also inspired and fostered a broad interest in group dynamics in the early 1950s, and later in OD&C. This chapter provides a comprehensive treatment of Lewin's basic change models as well as of the Lewin-based research that underpins much of OD&C (e.g. data-based decision-making and feedback, participative management, attitude change, group cohesion and identification, and bases of social power). In addition, it provides discussion of other relevant approaches to change from other psychological perspectives: GST, Gregory Bateson's group in Palo Alto, California, chaos and complexity theories, behavioral models of change, psychoanalytically-inspired organizational-change models, and neuroscience.

1.3.2 Chapter 13: Positive Psychology and Appreciative Inquiry—Stefan P. Cantore and David L. Cooperrider

This chapter provides an extensive and thorough discussion of the application of positive psychology (PP) and appreciative inquiry (AI) to the process of change in general and of organizational change in particular. These authors trace the shift in organizational-change thinking from “modernist” approaches to “organizational change” (i.e. assessment based on reason, rational thought, and mechanistic planning) to postmodern approaches that rely more on social construction and co-creation. They compare and contrast the PP and AI approaches, noting the many similarities in the view of effective change and some of the important distinctions between the two schools. For instance, both schools emphasize the importance of recognizing and building upon strengths rather than looking for and focusing on deficits and dysfunction. By focusing on the positive, both promote an optimistic approach to change, an appreciation of the capacity for change, and a desire for development in all people and organizations. However, PP is rooted in the values-neutral and evidence-based stance of behavioral science and change, while AI recognizes the value of all co-constructed or designed change efforts without specific reliance on the rational analysis of outside experts. For AI, what is most important is the engagement and co-creation that comes from discussion and dialogue between all those who will be participants in the change process, promoting the life-giving forces that are inherent in any organization.

1.3.3 Chapter 14: Participation and Organizational Commitment during Change—Rune Lines and Marcus Selart

The notion that employee/manager participation in planning and decision-making leads to commitment or ownership and is therefore critical to the success of organizational change makes it a cornerstone of most contemporary organizational-change strategies. Although it is so central to modern OD&C and change-management strategies, the evidence to support this theory has been surprisingly thin. The authors of this chapter have provided a comprehensive summary of the research literature that demonstrates (thankfully, for most OD&D and change-management practitioners) that these assumptions are in fact based on strong evidence. In addition to providing evidence that there is a direct main-effect relationship between these variables, the authors also explore and report the many interaction effects with other relevant antecedent variables, such as experience with organizational decision-making, trust in leadership, job satisfaction, and organizational tolerance for risk-taking.

1.3.4 Chapter 15: Development Approaches to Enhancing Organizational Creativity and Innovation—Jane Henry

It is quite reasonable to associate creativity with change; by definition, organizational change requires a break from the status quo, which in turn requires members of the organization to look at their business, clients, and organizational opportunities in new and novel ways. In this chapter, Henry provides a comprehensive review of the many facets of organizational creativity and innovation, including:

- *Culture*—Henry examines the impact of open culture on trust, employees’ sense of freedom and control over their work, and their resulting motivation and engagement

in the organization's destiny. She also addresses the frequent circumstance in which an organization's rhetoric about culture and empowerment fails to match employee experience—when organizational management does not “walk the talk.”

- *Employee development and OD*—In this respect, Henry notes the importance of creating organizational values, norms, and processes that promote employee empowerment, encourage continuous organizational learning, and foster self-organization rather than reliance upon the hierarchy to make decisions and take action.
- *Organizational structure*—Henry also examines a number of structural approaches used to foster creativity and innovation, including the creation of matrix organizational structures, the separation or disconnection of special project teams from regular reporting structures, the use of specialized contractors, and the crossing of organizational boundaries by engagement in corporate partnerships and joint ventures.
- *Idea development*—Henry describes a number of strategies for developing ideas. Scenario-planning can be used to envision and create solutions for a variety of potential future situations. Methods for encouraging all employees—not just managers and leaders—to participate in creating and innovating, as well as in evaluating new ideas, are also examined.
- *Innovation management*—Henry examines the various stages of innovation and the way innovation is managed in business, industrial, and governmental sectors.
- *Process improvement*—Incremental change through quality- and process-improvement programs (e.g. TQM, Six Sigma, and lean manufacturing) and radical change through such processes as business process reengineering are also addressed.

1.3.5 Chapter 16: Individual Readiness for Organizational Change—Myungweon Choi and Wendy E.A. Ruona

In this chapter, Choi and Ruona distinguish between readiness to change, which is based upon the degree to which reasonable concerns and objections to change are addressed, and resistance to change, which is seen as a protection of the status quo or a state of dynamic equilibrium. The authors forward the argument that addressing the readiness of the organization to change by addressing personal concerns about change and assuming that there is some reasonable basis for these concerns is often more effective than assuming that people have a natural dislike of change and will, in an almost knee-jerk fashion, resist any change, even if it is in their best interests, because it requires them to change habits and think differently. In this view, resistance to change is situationally-based and the wise and skillful leader, by taking individual concerns seriously, can elevate trust in and support for the change.

1.3.6 Chapter 17: Towards an Integration of Stage Theories of Planned Organizational Change—Janice M. Prochaska, James O. Prochaska, and Dustin Bailey

This chapter extends the use of the authors' transtheoretical model of behavioral change (TTM) from personal to organizational contexts. The authors also compare and contrast the TTM to other stage and anti-stage theories. A justification for using a model originally developed for individuals and for modifying it for use in organizational contexts is offered.

The authors also address some of the criticisms that have been leveled against the use of the TTM with organizations.

1.3.7 Chapter 18: Culture and Change in Developing Western Countries—Anthony Montgomery

In this chapter, Montgomery addresses the intersection between culture and change with specific reference to the developing countries of Eastern Europe. This is an important analysis, since most theories of organizational change implicitly assume that the strategies and principles that have worked in the context of more advanced and developed countries will work in a similar fashion in countries that are less developed and are “emerging” as economies and societies. Montgomery examines the development of a number of Eastern European and Eurasian countries (e.g. Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, and Turkey) from a variety of perspectives: (1) theories of change, (2) culture, and (3) politics. He also uses his special knowledge of the development of health care and hospital organizations in Eastern Europe and Eurasia to provide illustrative case examples of organizational change in this region.

1.4 Part III: Organization Development

Kurt Lewin inspired the creation of the NTL Institute for the Applied Behavioral Sciences in 1947 and was a co-creator of T-group (sensitivity-training) technology. He is also considered to be the grandfather of OD and the father of social psychology (Freedman, 1999). His theories and field experiments formed the foundations of action research and experiential learning in general, and planned social change, consultation skills, democratic values-based systems interventions, strategic change, organizational analysis, change strategies, management and leadership skills development, role renegotiation, participative problem-solving and decision-making skills development, group-process facilitation, team-building, intergroup conflict management, large-group interventions, diversity, organizational learning, the use of power, and quality of work life in particular (Gold, 1999; Lewin, 1997).

The name “organization development,” was given to the infant discipline in 1959. Herbert Shepard and Robert Blake were using the managerial grid at Esso’s Bayway Refinery at the same time as Richard Beckhard and Douglas McGregor were facilitating an organizational-culture change project with General Mills. Both were adapting small-group theory and methods (derived from sensitivity—or T-group—training developed by the NTL Institute for the Applied Behavioral Sciences) to organizational settings. Simultaneously and independently, both teams named their work “organization development.” From then until the mid-1970s, the NTL Institute for the Applied Behavioral Sciences and its members produced the bulk of the research, publications, and training in OD.

The fundamental theory, technology, values, and methods of OD have been discussed extensively elsewhere (see Bradford & Burke, 2005; Cummings & Worley, 2005; French et al., 2000; Gallos, 2006; McLean, 2006; Rothwell & Sullivan, 2005; Sorensen et al., 2001). However, the core values, theory, and methods of OD are not the focus of this part. The three chapters that make it up explore and discuss aspects of OD that are not easily accessible elsewhere: organizational diagnosis and the relationship between action research and collaborative management research.

1.4.1 Chapter 19: A Critical Review of Organization Development—Bernard Burnes

Burnes considers OD to be continuing to evolve and change, rather than becoming irrelevant. He shows how it grew from efforts to apply T-group technology to intact organizational units during the late 1950s through the early 1970s. OD was a key component of the movement to democratize organizational systems, while also helping these systems to become more effective. The flow of clinical psychologists into the ranks of T-group trainers during this decade diverted the focus from self-reflective awareness and education to psychotherapy therapy. This led to criticism that T-groups (and OD) damaged the careers and psychological health of participants.

Since the mid-1950s, the influence of action research and participative management in the practice of OD has grown, and these have substantially replaced T-groups as the core technology of OD. Of considerable interest is the prominence of Lewinian theory up to the early 1980s and his decline in popularity through to the early 1990s, when he was marginalized (mostly by practitioners) in favor of postmodern OD values, theories, and methods and the growing demands from client organizations for OD practitioners to demonstrate a positive and significant return on investment. This led to an expansion of the focus of OD from small-group dynamics to a more holistic and comprehensive perspective that built on sociotechnical systems (STS) models and shifted attention from group norms to organizational culture, from group to organizational learning, from incremental, participative change to fast, top-down, driven transformation, and from planned to emergent change initiatives. From the 1990s through the first decade of the 21st century, the world of OD seems to have experienced a crisis of confidence. However, Burnes sees a current renaissance that may be an integration of the beliefs and opinions of practitioners and researchers, during which Lewin seems to have been posthumously “rehabilitated” and OD researchers and scholars have expanded their boundaries to incorporate the perspectives, opinions, and beliefs of the theory’s critics. Burnes concludes with an optimistic view that the gaps between researchers, scholars, and practitioners will be bridged and OD will continue to evolve to show its rigor and relevance.

1.4.2 Chapter 20: The Application of Systems Theory to Organizational Diagnosis—Arthur M. Freedman

Freedman offers a history of conceptual mental models of organizational systems that have served to both educate organizational leaders and guide OD practitioners in diagnosing, planning, and implementing complex systems change. He points out that organizational leaders must feel dissatisfied with the status quo before they are likely to consider either incremental change or radical transformation. Mental models of organizations also assist organizational architects to design or redesign organizational systems. He shows how mental model makers built their models on the foundations established by their predecessors, mostly by adding or rearranging elements or microsystems and interactions of these elements and microsystems. He differentiates between systems thinking (which is an essential functional competence for executive leaders) and systems analysis (which is essential in diagnosing and evaluating an organization’s effectiveness). He points out that the designers of these systems models claim their models guide the creation of comprehensive action plans that address the primary, secondary, and tertiary perturbations that are caused

by social, technological, structural, political, or process changes. However, his historical critique reveals that some models are better able to serve these functions than others.

Freedman also presents a thorough explication of his “swamp model,” which incorporates the culture, climate, strategy, talent-management, structure, and finance elements of a system as well as its technological elements—and their interactions. Freedman shows how each element of his mental model—and the transactions among them—serve as “buckets” to hold data collected during an organizational diagnostic process and that the contents of each of these buckets can be analyzed in terms of both their functionality and their flexibility or adaptability. This analysis allows change agents and organizational leaders to identify primary, secondary, and tertiary targets of change, specify their incremental or transformational change goals, and begin to plan the action steps needed to move from the current to the desired future state.

1.4.3 Chapter 21: Organization Development Research Interventions—David Coghlan and A.B. (Rami) Shani

Coghlan and Shani offer their perspective that the practice of OD is based upon two foundational processes: action research (AR) and collaborative management research (CMR). They define and specify the relationships between these two processes, and compare and contrast “diagnostic OD” with “dialogic OD”; they believe that AR and CMR exemplify dialogic OD, which enables organizational members to understand their organizational systems and determine what actions might be undertaken to improve their effectiveness. They explore how various sets of interventions cluster around these two processes. Interventions are selected in two stages. In the first, they are delineated into two approaches: those that enable organizational members to (1) close the gap between current and desired states and (2) establish and maintain congruence among relevant systems elements. In the second stage, researchers and practitioners collaborate to co-construct an acceptable view of the organization. Then they select and apply particular interventions on the basis of the focal issue, change orientation, target-system readiness, leverage points, and change-agent skills. This provides a philosophical basis from which to enable change agents to select interventions that serve the needs of their client systems.

Coghlan and Shani then describe holistic, focused, and limited OD initiatives, while also referencing instances where OD theory and methods have been melded with non-OD interventions. They describe the use of the general empirical method that engages OD researchers with client-system leaders in a community of inquiry which constructs and articulates the organization’s current and desired future states. This becomes the basis of co-designing and co-implementing research-guided organizational change that illuminates central issues and leads to the selection of OD interventions that address these issues.

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