

## Perspectives on Integrating Leadership and Followership

Wendelin Küpers

*University in Hagen, Germany*

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The paper proposes a framework for the integration of leadership and followership. An integral orientation considers that leadership is constitutively linked with followership and vice versa. Facing the diversity of approaches and theories in both fields, a comprehensive conceptualization is presented that is suited to investigating complex, interrelated processes of leading and following. Based on a holonic understanding, integral perspectives cover the interdependent subjective, intersubjective, and objective dimensions of leaders and followers; respectively, leadership and followership within a developmental perspective. Based on an integral orientation, further processual and relational dimensions are discussed by which mutually interwoven leadership/followership can be understood as an emerging event, embedded within an ongoing, interrelated nexus. Finally, the paper outlines some theoretical and methodological implications and perspectives for future research of an integral leadership and followership.

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**T**he present context of work, leadership, and followership is situated in increasingly complex, uncertain, and dynamic business environments with multiple realities based on various values, priorities, and requirements. The actual challenges demanded by globalization, increased competition, far-reaching sociocultural and technological developments, and acceleration of changes are bringing about new complexities for organizations.

External and internal contexts of business are increasingly fragmented, equivocal, and changing which require modification of conventional concepts of leadership and followership. Specific factors; such as the rise of organizational crises, increasing demotivation (Wunderer & Küpers, 2003), and corporate scandals as well as a growing awareness of environmental, social, and ethical issues triggering a greater emphasis on the search for meaning; are also contributing to heightened uneasiness, inadequacies, and the wish for another kind of leadership (e.g., Mitroff, 2003; Quinn, 2004; Senge & Carstedt, 2001).

In addition to the practical challenges of leadership as a business practice, theoretical and methodological developments and empirical findings have shown shortcomings and limitations of conventional leadership theory. Conventional approaches dominating the discourse in leadership research and practice take a person-centered and dyadic perspective (House & Aditya,

1997) and often rely on the heroic leadership stereotype (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985; Yukl, 2002). In this understanding; influence is seen as unidirectional, flowing from the individual leader to the individual follower, and represents an entitative, egocentric, monological, and modernist orientation which reconstructs hierarchical subject-object relations (Brown & Hosking, 1986; Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Consequently, the relations between leaders and followers are represented as interactions and mechanisms between independent individuals. A leader's relating is reduced to an individual action performed to know about and to achieve influence over the other. Accordingly, leaders are positioned as knowing and structuring and as having power and being able to act rationally as centered subjects to structure peoples and worlds. They use rhetoric or language for the purposes of controlling; finding out about and representing, rather than coconstructing, independently existing contexts. Accordingly, the emphasis is on the relationship between the monadic persona (abilities, traits, characteristics, and actions) of the leader and, via cause-effect relations, the outcomes of the social milieu or situations within which the leader appears to operate (Rost, 1991). For example; in leadership education, development, and training; most of the practice consists of formatting and evaluating the traits or behaviors of leaders and leaders-to-be and attempting to modify them through different means in order to achieve gains in efficiency, productivity, competitiveness, and profitability (Dotlich, Noel, & Walker, 2004; Quinn, 1996). Many leadership development programs can perpetuate leaders' self-preoccupations through their emphasis on self-development, self-awareness, and self-improvement (Jones, 2005); causing leaders to become preoccupied with their identity and restricted in their understanding of multiple influences and of followers (Kofman & Senge, 1993; Mitroff, 2003; O'Toole, 2001).

Thus, what prevails in this entitative discourse is the leader's standpoint (Harding, 1991) while positions and perspectives of followers as subordinates are not given their own legitimacy, meaning, and relevance. Followers have been systematically devalued (Alcorn, 1992) or considered only as they are available to be known and manipulated in given subject-object relationship. Thus, followership has been either neglected or restricted to a focus on followers' attributions of exceptional qualities to leaders or performance. As followership has been an understudied topic in the academic literature, only little attention has been given to followers *sui generis*, who accord or withdraw support to leaders.

As a counter-balance, follower-centric approaches (Hollander, 1978, 1992a, 1992b; Kelley, 1992; Meindl, 1987, 1993, 1995) emerged. Based on an inherently subjectivistic, social psychologist, and constructionist view; Meindl (1995) offered a follower-centric approach that views both leadership and its consequences as largely constructed by followers and hence influenced by followers' cognitive processes and interfollower social influence processes. The nonconventional approach of a romance of leadership (Meindl, 1987) defines leadership as an experience undergone by followers; it "emerges in the minds of followers" (Meindl, 1993, p. 99). Thus, leadership is conceptualized by group members and their social context and network of relationships as well as interfollower processes and dynamics (Meindl, 1993). For Hollander (1978); the locus of leadership resides at the juncture of the leader, the follower, and the embedding situational context. The reciprocal interdependence of leadership and followership have been underestimated (Hollander, 1992a, 1992b), and followers have not been seen as sufficiently integral to the leadership process (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001).

Bound to ontological, epistemological, and pragmatic implicit assumptions; various dimensions involved in the relationship between leaders and followers have not been recognized as genuine communal and mutual processes (Drath & Palus, 1994) embedded in specific

sociohistorical relationships (Gordon, 2002). Accordingly, for a long time, relatively little interest has been given to describing or considering interrelational influence processes or forms of shared or distributed leadership (Sims & Lorenzi, 1992) such as delegated leadership, coleadership, and peer leadership. Nor have postheroic leadership (Bradford & Cohen, 1998), team leadership (Sivasubramaniam, Murry, Avolio, & Jung, 2002; Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004; Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001), servant leadership (Greenleaf & Spears, 1998), or stewardship (Block, 1996) been in the focus.

Trying to understand how influences of both the leader and the follower impact leadership effectiveness, leader-member exchange (LMX) theory has focused on the development and effects of separate dyadic relationships between superiors and subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). LMX studies have shown that differentiated dyadic relationships are as much a function of the aggregated characteristics and behavior of subordinates as the behavior of superiors.

However, individual- and dyadic-oriented approaches to direct interaction between leader and follower tend to ignore or underestimate organizationally related dimensions and culturally diverse environmental context as well as indirect forms of organizational leadership (Hunt, 1991; Lord & Maher, 1991) such as complementing managements systems, external constituencies, and arrangements or use of structural or cultural forms (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004).

Conventional leadership and followership research has lacked a comprehensive coverage (Bass, 1990; Bryman, 1996; Yukl, 2002) as well as a grounding in human development (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kegan, 1994). Many studies still focus on establishing relationships, often through a reduced number of cognitive (George, 2000) or behavioral variables (House & Aditya, 1997; Kisfalvi & Pitcher, 2003). Consequently, the lack of and need for an integral orientation in leadership and followership is also evidenced in the way embodied and emotional dimensions are considered. The body and embodiment as well as bodily knowledge have been marginalized as media for organizational and leadership practices (Hassard, Holliday, & Wilmott, 2000; Küpers, 2005; Ropo & Parviainen, 2001). Following a one-sided cognitive orientation (Ilgen & Klein, 1989) and within a masculine-patriarchal, rationally organized context (Hearn, 1992, 1993); feelings have been seen as nefarious and possibly disturbing (Albrow, 1992). With this, emotions have been mostly seen as something to be minimized, rationally controlled or managed by managers (Wharton & Erickson, 1993). Thus, emotional experiences and also moods have been devalued and marginalized (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). However, feelings and emotions are intimately related to the ways that people think, behave, and make decisions (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993, 1995; Morris & Feldman, 1996) in organizational (Fineman, 2002) and managerial processes (George, 2000).

However, organizations are the source of much suffering and pain as well as enjoyment. Many followers' counter-productive work behaviors are often "an emotion-based response to stressful organizational conditions" (Fox, Spector, & Miles, 2001, p. 291) or manifest followers' emotional adaptive efforts to enhance their and the organization's well-being (Küpers & Weibler, 2005). The emotions driving such followers' behaviors are often linked to injustice, frustration, and lack of autonomy particularly in relation to perceived management practices. Roberts and Parry (2002), in a focus on the impact of emotion on followership and leadership behavior, concluded that "the process of making a judgment of whether to follow or not involves the intelligent use of emotions" (p. 32). Should a person choose not to follow; they have to either comply, ignore, or subvert the person holding the leadership role. There seems to be a growing call for more holistic practices that integrate the four fundamental arenas that define the essence

of human existence: the body (physical), mind (logical/rational thought), heart (emotions, feelings), and spirit (all influencing the aspirations of organizational members) (Moxley, 2000).

All the aforementioned current conditions of the practical context, theoretical developments, and lack of integration in leadership and followership discourse and practice call for an integral framework. The term *integral* means a comprehensiveness in which constituent parts and wholes are not fragmented and in which micro and macro dimensions of leadership and followership and their interrelation are approached simultaneously.

First, the paper will outline the basic principle of the integral framework. A holonic and interrelational understanding of leadership/followership will be discussed. Finally, the paper outlines some theoretical and methodological implications and perspectives for future research of an integral leadership and followership.

### **Outlining an Integral Framework for Leadership and Followership**

Facing the challenges and deficits, developing and employing an integral framework enables a comprehensive approach and a more inclusive enfoldment that is suited to investigating and enacting the complex interrelated processes of leadership and followership in organizations. As any single perspective is likely to be partial, limited, and maybe distorted; an integral and holonic view of leadership and followership is required. Holons are integrative constructs, which are both wholes and parts of bigger wholes, at the same time (Koestler, 1967). With this, holons are structures and processes which are simultaneously autonomous and dependent. They emerge to higher orders of wholeness/partness by virtue of specific *patterns* and regulating *laws* that they exhibit (M. Edwards, 2005). This means that holons are structures and processes that are simultaneously autonomous and dependent, characterized by differentiation (generation of variety) and integration (generation of coherence).

Applying the holon construct allows considering leaders and followers simultaneously as wholes as well as parts of more complex holons like organizations, industries, economies, etc. On the one hand, a great deal of the work of a leader and follower are managing and dealing with the dynamics between the individual parts (e.g., people and/or tasks) within specific agencies and collective dimensions like team, systems, and relationships. On the other hand, the parts and whole of leadership and followership are not separate, static structures but actively constitute each other; they are primarily enfolded and entangled in each other (Cooper, 2005). Leadership is a holonic part of followership and vice versa. Followership is integral to leadership as well as leadership to followership.

More specifically, leadership and followership are actual occasions that are emergent moments containing both individual and social holons. The benefit of this view of an occasion is that both individual and social holons can be seen in a dynamic temporal relationship of emergence and temporal inclusion and not as static objects in space. As leadership and followership are interrelated holonic phenomena, they are best described as a holarchical process. In such holarchy, individual and collective holons meet in each leadership/followership occasion within its interiors and exteriors of both individual (singular) and collective (plural) perspectives (see Figure 1). Using this holistic understanding with its integrative potential as a base; an integral model demands a multilevel analysis that takes the subjective, intersubjective, and objective dimensions of leaders and leadership as well as followers and followership into account.

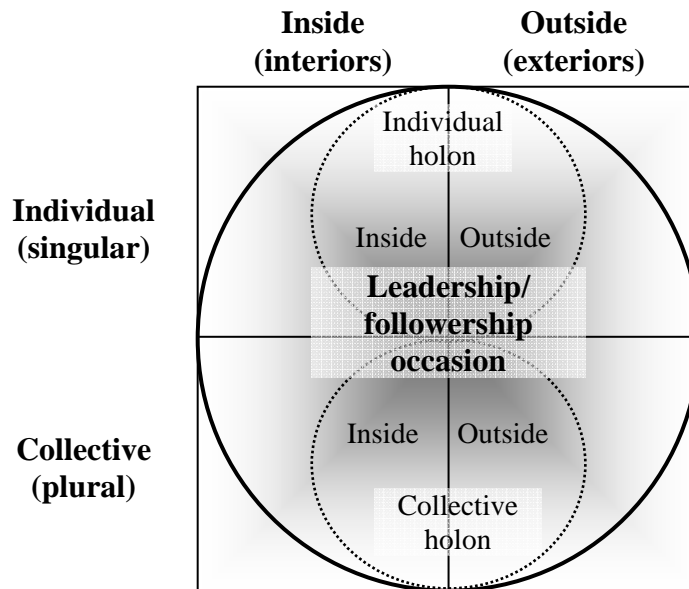


Figure 1. The modified holonic leadership/followership occasion with its part/whole relationship (M. Edwards, 2006).

An integral approach accommodates equally the internal and external as well as individual and collective dimensions of leadership and followership. Effective and sustainable leadership and followership (and their interrelationships) need to attend to all these various dimensions and interrelationships for ensuring consistency, compatibility, and creativity of organizational activities.

Building on an integral framework (Wilber, 1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2001) and its first applications to leadership (Bradbury, 2003; Cacioppe, 2000; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Neal, in press; Pauchant, 2002, 2005; Prewitt, 2004; Reams, 2005; Rooke & Torbert, 1998; Young, 2002); an integral understanding of leadership and followership (as actual occasions) focuses on the specific interconnected processes of intentional, behavioral, sociocultural, and systemic domains. With these domains, the inner spheres of a leader and follower and their respective external, behavioral aspects as well the collective embedding of leadership and followership can be assessed equally. Thus, integral theorizing differentiates two basic polar dimensions of holons and development that are an interior-exterior and an individual/agency-communal dimension. The crossing of these dimensions gives four quadrants representing four different perspectives of interior-agency or self and consciousness. While the first quadrant involves the intrapersonal or internal reality of a person; the second domain treats the individual/external aspects. The third quadrant encompasses collective internal communal issues. Finally, the last quadrant covers the collective external aspects. It is the quadrant of structural or functional order, mechanisms and systemic conditions. Figure 2 shows as an overview the different spheres of integral leadership and followership. The horizontal axis presents a continuum between internal and external realities, and the vertical axis a continuum between individual and collective holonic realities.

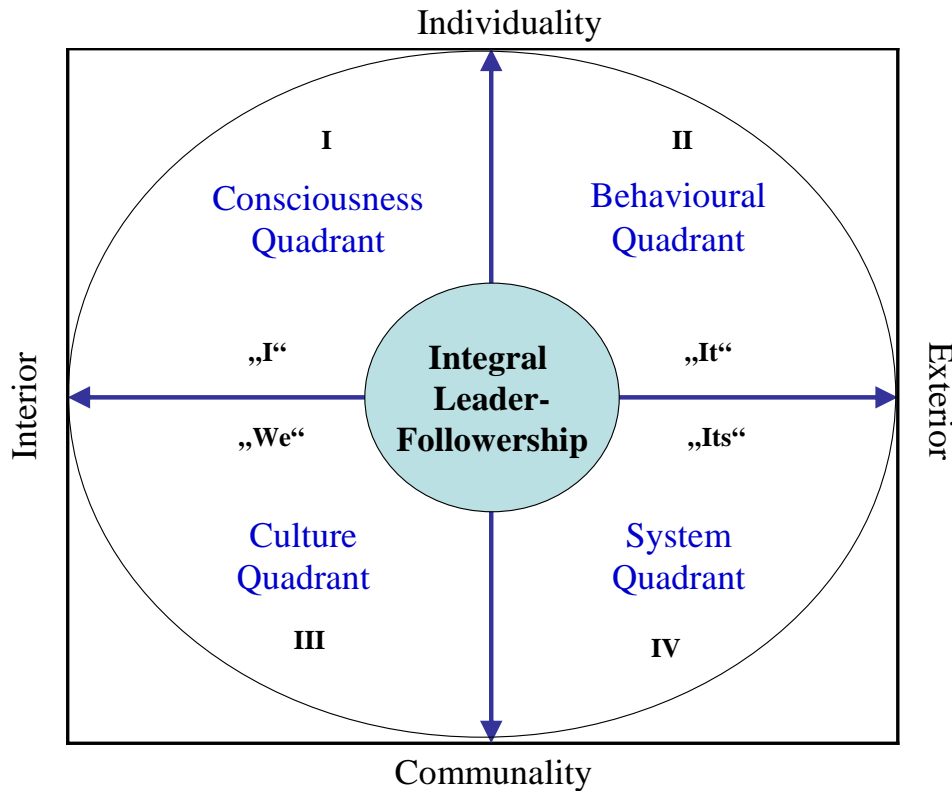


Figure 2. Quadrants of integral leadership and followership.

### *Integral Quadrants of Leadership and Followership*

*Quadrant I.* Quadrant I is the individual/internal aspects and involves the intrapersonal or internal reality of a person lived here by a leader or a follower as an individual. This includes personal values, attitude, intention, and meanings as well as various experiences. In this quadrant; the articulation of specific self-relationships, a sense of confusion, raptures, or vocation and visions involves an internal language or other form of intrapersonal conversation (i.e., sensations, images, sounds, feelings, intuitions, etc.). Therefore, methodologically, responses are accessible through profound dialogues with the person; access to private writings, speeches, or other productions; or interviews with the individual and his or her close associates.

Related to the business context; this quadrant comprises the readiness and self-management for motivation and commitment to self, to a goal, or to an organization. In this quadrant, the focus is on helping organizational members see what their leadership and followership style might be so that they get more insight into themselves and their impact on others. It also deals with the psychological, cognitive, emotional, and volitional dimensions of an individual leader or follower and how these impact the organization and its development. As this realm reflects the self's personal experience being conscious, it can be named the *consciousness quadrant* which has specific relevance for leadership and followership (Chatterjee, 1998; Young, 2002). A long-term study done by Torbert (2004) clearly showed that the success of organizational transformation efforts was dependent upon the level of consciousness.

In many leadership studies, the focus of leaders' character and inner traits emphasizes the upper left quadrant or the intentional realm. On the one hand, trait theories are often criticized as inadequate means for understanding leadership (Rost, 1991); while on the other hand, leadership scholars are continuously flailing away at mounds of traits (e.g., Fleishman et al., 1991) and reviving and refining the idea to investigate individuals and their innate, intentional qualities. One important issue in this field concerns the motivation of leaders (e.g., McClelland & Boyatzis 1982) and followers (e.g., Mumford, Dansereau, & Yammarino, 2000). In addition to other personal characteristics, research has shown the relevance of leaders' and followers' values (e.g., Hanges, Offerman, & Day, 2001). Ehrhart and Klein (2001) have shown that followers look for leaders whose values match their own. Recent research showed that incongruence of values of leaders and followers reduce effectiveness (Ilies, Morgeson, & Nahrgang, 2005). The research on charismatic leadership has suggested that followers' self-concepts and self-identity may be relevant in determining their motivations to follow certain leaders (Howell & Shamir, 2005; Lord & Brown, 2004). Nevertheless, identities of followers and leaders are inextricably linked, mutually reinforcing, and shifting within specific contexts (Collinson, 2006). Moreover, there seems to be no evidence demonstrating routinization or stable and long-term effects of leaders on follower self-esteem, motives, desires, preferences, or values (Bryman, 1993, 2004). However, leadership and followership development and practice is most effective when the individual interior dimensions are linked and supported by external tangibles.

*Quadrant II.* The second quadrant treats the individual external aspects of enacted leadership and followership. This is the area of external traits, knowledge, concrete skills and their practice, embodied action, accountability, and performance levels that can be measured and refined. Methodologically, this behavioral world can be approached by empirical observation, measurement, and analysis. Furthermore, training and development opportunities that support the development and enactment of competencies and peak performance as well as coaching, planning, decision making, and any skill that develops individual effectiveness are part of this quadrant. The role of leadership and followership in this realm of performance requires the management and realization of specific tasks, competencies, and actions to achieve the larger goals of the organization. In this capacity, leaders and followers manage performance-related resources, staff, and time efficiently and check that tasks and costs are on target and are being carried out correctly. As this sphere covers particularly overt behaviors with others and in the world, it can be marked as the *behavior quadrant*.

For example; path-goal theory (House, 1996), besides emphasizing the leader/follower relationship through its focus on the level of motivation of the follower, sees that appropriate behaviors can be taught and are less dependent on the traits of the leader and more amenable to training. The behavioral model still dominates both the research and practice of leadership (Bryman, 1996; Yukl, 2002), particularly approaches considering the leadership style and competencies in relation to followers.

Implicit leadership theory (ILT) (Lord & Maher, 1991) demonstrates that individuals hold inherent schemas of prototypical leadership (external) traits and behaviors. Individuals who display prototypical traits and behaviors are more likely to be perceived as leaders by potential followers and, hence, are more effective in leadership roles than others who do not portray those characteristics. According to this line of research, addressing the evaluations people make about leaders and the cognitive processes underlying evaluations and perceptions, leadership and leadership success become social constructions of the followers (Meindl, 1995; Meindl et al.,

1985) that help them make sense of social situations. However, due to the theoretical foundation of ILT strongly embedded in the information processing paradigm, it is difficult to draw valid conclusions about (a) the cognitive and particularly emotional processes underlying subjects' responses and behavior and (b) the interrelation between leaders and followers and their embedment. Thus, a more holistic integral orientation would enhance existing ILTs towards a more comprehensive embrace.

Furthermore, the effects of transformational leader behaviors as determinants of employee satisfaction, commitment, trust, and organizational citizenship behaviors have been investigated (e.g., Podsakoff et al., 1996). However, neocharismatic theories have been criticized for offering inadequate or untested explanations of the process by which the theoretical leader behaviors are linked to and influence the affective states of followers (House & Aditya, 1997).

Also, followership behavior has been investigated as a neglected aspect of leadership studies (Ifechukude & Mmobuosi, 1991). Followers may use impression management in practices like appraisal, negotiations, and career strategies (Giacalone & Rosenfeld, 1991) or deploy dramaturgical strategies (Collinson, 2006). However, behavior-oriented approaches tend to be fragmented by not connecting the interior aspects of leadership with the exterior behavioral aspects. Considering both relationship and tasks as influential categories of leader behavior, some leadership approaches (e.g., Blake & Mouton, 1964) expanded the attention also into further dimensions.

*Quadrant III.* The third quadrant deals with the collective internal aspects of leadership and followership. Shared history, myths, stories, and values are all part of this quadrant. It is also the domain of unwritten beliefs, shared meaning worldviews, as well as taboos and informal norms. It calls leaders to focus on the deeper significance of collective symbols, sociocultural purposes, and visions. In this quadrant, crucial ingredients for sustainable organizational success such as organizational integrity and morale are also addressed. This world of the *we* is characterized by a common language and signs that can be understood, communicated, and shared with others. It also includes the levels of consciousness expressed at the collective level. One the one hand, leadership exerts various influences upon this area; on the other hand, it is very much codetermined by the followers. As a kind of people management leadership and followership, coaching and working with and among leaders and followers to cultivate teamwork and communication is required. Via accurate and timely feedback, followers feel valued and develop their contribution to the team and organization. As all these dimensions are part of the organization's culture, this sphere can be titled the *culture quadrant*. There have been many studies investigating ways in which leaders and followers are influenced and influence the culture of an organization.

Sociocultural approaches (e.g., based on Cole & Engestrom, 1993) dealing with issues such as implicit or explicit group norms and values and dynamics, role expectations, and further influences of organizational culture on leadership and followership (Schein, 1985) focus attention to this quadrant. For example, in social exchange theory, the amount of status and power attributed to a leader is proportionate to the group's evaluation of the leader's potential contribution relative to members or followers. Social exchange theory explains that the most fundamental form of social interaction is an exchange of benefits which can include not only material benefits but also psychological benefits such as expressions of approval, respect, esteem, and affection. Individuals learn to choose to engage in social exchanges early in their childhood, and they develop expectations about reciprocity and equity in these exchanges.



Member expectations about what leadership roles the person should have in the group are determined by the leader's loyalty and demonstrated competence (Hollander, 1995). On a macro level, national cultural influence as evidenced in the GLOBE report (House et al., 2004) has shown that leadership and its relationship to followership vary from one culture to another.

*Quadrant IV.* The final quadrant covers the collective external aspects of leadership and followership. This is the world of resources, tools, technologies, organizational design, strategic plans, and workflow procedures or formal policies and rules. It is also formed by institutional conditions, external constraints, and influences (e.g., natural resources, climate, etc.). It includes financial processes and compensation programs as well as quantities and qualities of outputs, productivity, and efficiency. In other words, this is where thinking about the organization as a performance system is important. The leadership and followership focus of this area is on issues such as how to design the organization to perform at higher levels or how the creative forces show up in the way the organization runs. It covers tools such as the structuring of external management and group conditions and processes; financial strategies; means of production; and techniques of marketing, information, and communication technologies. This realm also includes relationships and negotiating with the next level of the organization or industry stakeholders to obtain resources and factors relevant for the organization. This includes keeping in contact with customers and ensuring that the services and products are meeting their needs. As this realm refers to the concrete collective world of that which is tangible, measurable, and quantifiable; it can be apprehended from the outside. Relating to various functional and structural systemic functions, structures, and conditions; it represents the *system quadrant*.

Leaders and followers engage with each other through practical structures and functions or formal roles to accomplish objectives. This systemic order includes concrete workplace conditions, workflow procedures, or resources like budgets and information and communications technologies used for delegation or exchanges between leaders and followers. Additionally, individual leaders or followers take on behavioral identities or receive structural empowerment defined by the necessities of this collective sphere. Furthermore, this sphere encompasses institutional settings and media, reward systems, problem-solving strategies or methods for supporting ethical action, and so forth.

Approaches focusing on organizational structure and external context (Osborn, Hunt, & Jaush, 2002) or functional or resource-related orientations as well as different systems theories of leadership generally emphasize the lower right, systemic quadrant. System thinking and chaos theory have been applied to leadership and follower-relevant issues (e.g., Stacey, 1992, 2001). Following more recent approaches of system theory, leadership and followership have been described as the interpenetration between the organization system and the personality system of humans generating mostly organizational communications (Charlton & Andras, 2004). Figure 3 shows the different quadrants of integral leadership and followership with some specific features and an exemplary approach within each sphere.

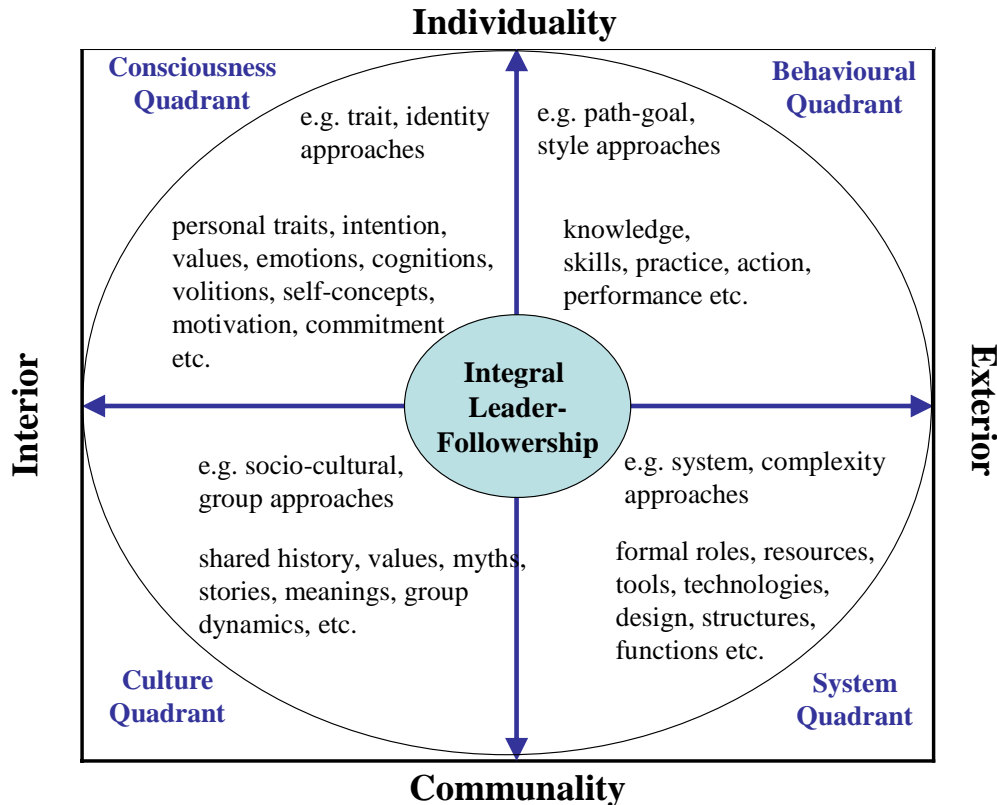


Figure 3. Exemplary features and approaches for each quadrant of integral leadership/followership.

Many further research traditions in leadership and followership can be assigned to different quadrants. They have made tremendous contributions to a deepened understanding of specific aspects of both phenomena. Nevertheless, they tend to perceive leadership or followership only in selective fields. Each of those possible approaches has limitations particularly in terms of modelling, assessing, and developing a comprehensive integration. Further concepts or theories are only partially true. The challenge is to figure out how to fit these partial truths together. Thus, the question asks how to integrate them, not how to pick one and get rid of the others. Unfortunately, the developments of leadership theory have not been organized or reassigned in a metaframework. What is needed is a framework that is able to contextualize and understand the value of various approaches and methodologies covering different aspects and link them within a deliberate and explicit integration.

The integral approach of leadership and followership taken here provides a base for multi- and metaparadigm orientation (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). By transcending but including various theories, methodologies, and insights holistically; they can find their place in a broader, integral probable scheme. With this inclusive capacity; the integral model presented here encourages greater awareness of theoretical and methodological alternatives and, thereby, facilitates discourse and/or inquiry across paradigms and fosters greater understanding and metatriangulation within pluralist and even paradoxical organizational and leadership contexts (Küpers & Weibler, in press; Lewis & Grimes, 1999; Lewis & Kelemen, 2002).

*Interrelations between Quadrants of Leadership and Followership*

Each of the four orientations would be incomplete without the others; each depends on the others for its basic existence and sustenance. An approach is needed that considers all quadrants and how leadership and followership practices and developments are carried and played out within and between them. As the effectiveness of one domain of leadership and followership is dependent on the effectiveness of the other domains, all four quadrants are important for effective practice and development of leaders and followers. Similarly, the quality of development in each domain is dependent on the presence and relationships among all quadrants of each domain. In other words, to understand and enact leadership and followership in an integral fashion, all four quadrants need to be explored and related to each other.

For example, an integral understanding of influence and power in leadership and followership would include a phenomenological analysis of the subjective feelings, thoughts, meaning, and projections of sovereign individuals (consciousness quadrant); enactments and observations of rules and roles of corresponding individuals' behaviors (behavior quadrant); a prompting of the tools and processes used and realized at the collective level in relation to power and authority together with uncovering its normative sociocultural dimensions of control (culture quadrant); and functional and structural aspects such as governance of resources (system quadrant). Finally, also the interrelationship among these different quadrants concerning constructing, maintaining, or strengthening influence or devolving or resuming power need to be taken into account.

Effective leadership and LMX have been investigated from different perspectives, using leaders' interior qualities or attributes and exterior behaviors and their influence on subordinate and small group effectiveness. Facing the limitations of explaining all leadership through emphasizing either the individual or the group, situational approaches (e.g., Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) have tried to match the development level of subordinates (task/psychological maturity) to a leadership style and practice with various directive or supportive elements to the subordinates' needs in the particular external situation. Similarly, the influential contingency theory (Fiedler, 1964) also looked to match the traits, style, and orientations of leaders with the situational context or right setting for determining the leader's effectiveness. Typical situational parameters like the nature of the task, hierarchy, and the organizational environment are included. But, both situational and contingency theories tend to focus on leadership and stress external factors.

From a more integral interrelational perspective, the interiors and exteriors and the individual and collective dimensions of the practice of leadership and followership cocreate each other and holonistically unfold and develop together. Such integrative investigation shows that specific dimensions of leadership and followership are not narrowly located in one quadrant but need to be studied from the perspective of each quadrant as well as from their complex interrelations.

With this orientation, it becomes possible to consider integrally the full capacities, potential, needs, and interests of both the leader and followers (I); their behaviors (II); their interrelation and collective embedment within a culture (III); as well as the goals, structures, and functioning of the organization as a system (IV). That is the intrasubjective, objective, intersubjective, and interobjective spheres between the interior and exterior as well as individual and communal need to be seen as an interwoven nexus, as shown in Figure 4.

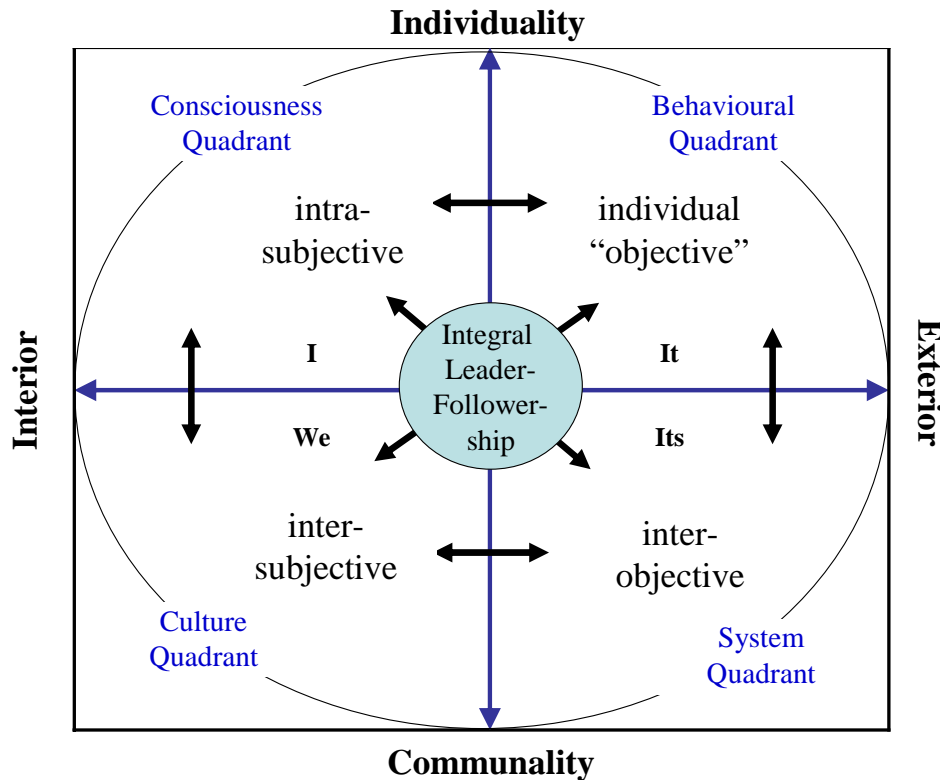


Figure 4. Multidimensional and multilevel model of integral leadership/followership.

An all-quadrant approach is an essential presupposition for effective leadership and followership practice. Organizations that embark on comprehensive and sustainable as well as effective strategic change and development need to address each quadrant and the interrelation between them (Landrum & Gardner, 2005). Practically, the integral framework may help to determine tasks, interventions, and measurements which can be applied to each of the quadrants in the integrated model on a situation specific basis and in a coordinated manner. Furthermore, the integral model can identify gaps or aberrant or pathological forms as well as opportunities and potential for introducing a corresponding range of strategies or developments in the everyday workplace. However, it is important to keep in mind that the four-quadrant model represents an analytic differentiation; the outlined spheres are lenses that frame perception along certain lines. Actual experience always encompasses all four quadrants and its holonic embedment as well as dynamics related to developmental stages and lines within an integral cycle.

#### *Developmental Stages and Lines Within an Integral Cycle*

The quadrant model can be extended by a series of different developmental stages or levels and lines of development of leaders and followers. Both levels and lines of development are essential aspects of personality with which leaders and followers need to understand themselves as well as for influencing and motivating each other. The stages or levels of development mark out new capacities and emergent qualities (e.g., acquiring, competing,

conforming, achieving, including, visioning). Developmental psychology defines various lines of development that codetermine an individual's capacity to perform successfully in various circumstances. These lines develop over time through increasingly complex levels of maturity, education, and skill. The developmental lines concern complex developments like spatiotemporal, object-relations, cognitive (e.g., strategic thinking), emotional, interpersonal (e.g., social awareness), behavioral, knowledge and learning developments, and ethical/moral lines of leaders and followers and the leader-follower processes. There are also lagging lines of development that represent specific weaknesses or nonstrengths of leaders and followers. These underdeveloped capacities may be a limiting factor in leaders' and followers' effectiveness or success. Figure 5 shows different stages and lines of development and domains of leadership and followership.

An integral leadership/followership theory acknowledges leaders and followers as complex beings who mature and develop over time in relationship to physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual lines and recognize that they have desired transcendent-related work accomplishments (Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2003) progressing through the stages of human development.

Unpacking the significance of levels and lines simply means that a leader, a follower, or a group or organizational system can be at a fairly high level of development in some lines (i.e., cognitive), at a medium level of development in other lines (i.e., interpersonal), and at a fairly low level in yet others (i.e., moral). This makes intuitive sense as we all know persons or groups who are advanced in some skills (e.g., highly intelligent) but not as developed in others capabilities or competencies (e.g., less empathetic or ethical).

The developmental stages and lines of leaders and leadership can also become important as leaders, followers, groups, or organizations using the integral model will comprehend and act on it in a way that is filtered by the leading edge of their developmental capacity and disparities in development along different lines (Reams, 2005).

The lines of development influence how well leaders or followers or groups and organizations perform. Therefore, these developmental lines can be measured using levels of proficiency. For example, a leader or a follower may possess a high level of proficiency in cognitive ability (e.g., high IQ) but may have a low level of proficiency at interpersonal skills (e.g., low EQ). With this, there is the need to assess and identify levels of proficiency on each major line of development of leaders as well as of their followers (e.g., in integral psycho- and sociographs).

Knowing about these levels of lines helps leaders and followers to be better informed about how best to delegate, support, and coach team members based on their specific configurations of capacities or to determine the need for training to strengthen proficiency on selected lines. An integral level of development of a leader and a follower is more adaptive to fundamental change without threat to personal identity, better able to support the self-development of others, and understand oneself in a multiparadigmatic way.

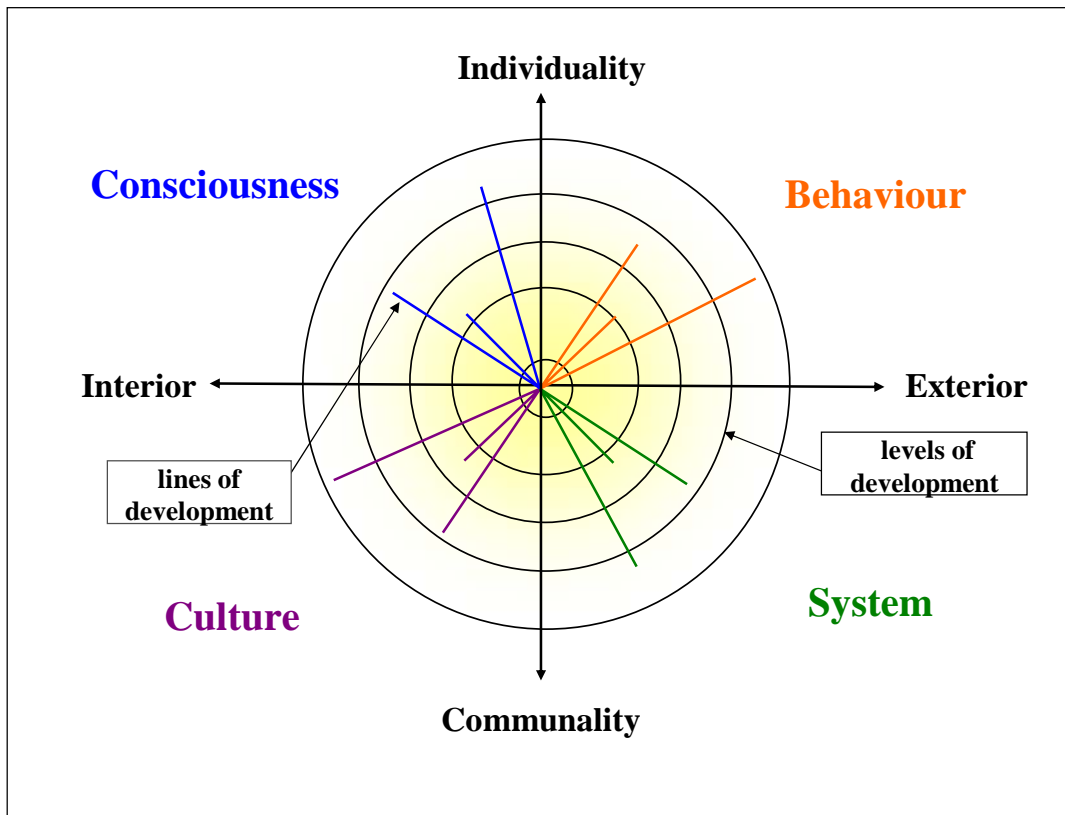


Figure 5. Modified figure of the levels and lines of development and domains of integral leadership/followership (M. Edwards, 2004, 2005).

Furthermore, the levels and lines and the quadrants are energized by the dynamics of growth and integration within an integral cycle (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005a, 2005b; M. Edwards, 2004, 2005) which keeps all these elements hanging together in a coherent and dynamic system. Moreover, it coordinates the interaction between the four quadrants and the holonic developmental levels and lines. Its capacity to analyze, categorize, and synthesize the concept of an integral cycle offers some important heuristic benefits. It is a way of representing the mutual interpenetration of the quadrants and their constituent structures and developmental stages and lines. These are shown with their integrative and growth dynamic relationship that exists between the domains and its involutory and evolutionary pathways.

Taken together, the four quadrants and the various developmental levels and lines within the integral cycle leads to an all quadrant, all level, all lines (AQAL) (Wilber, 1995) approach of leadership and followership. This AQAL framework of quadrants, levels, lines, and dynamics can be flexibly applied to individual leaders and followers as well as to teams and whole organizations and larger social entities.

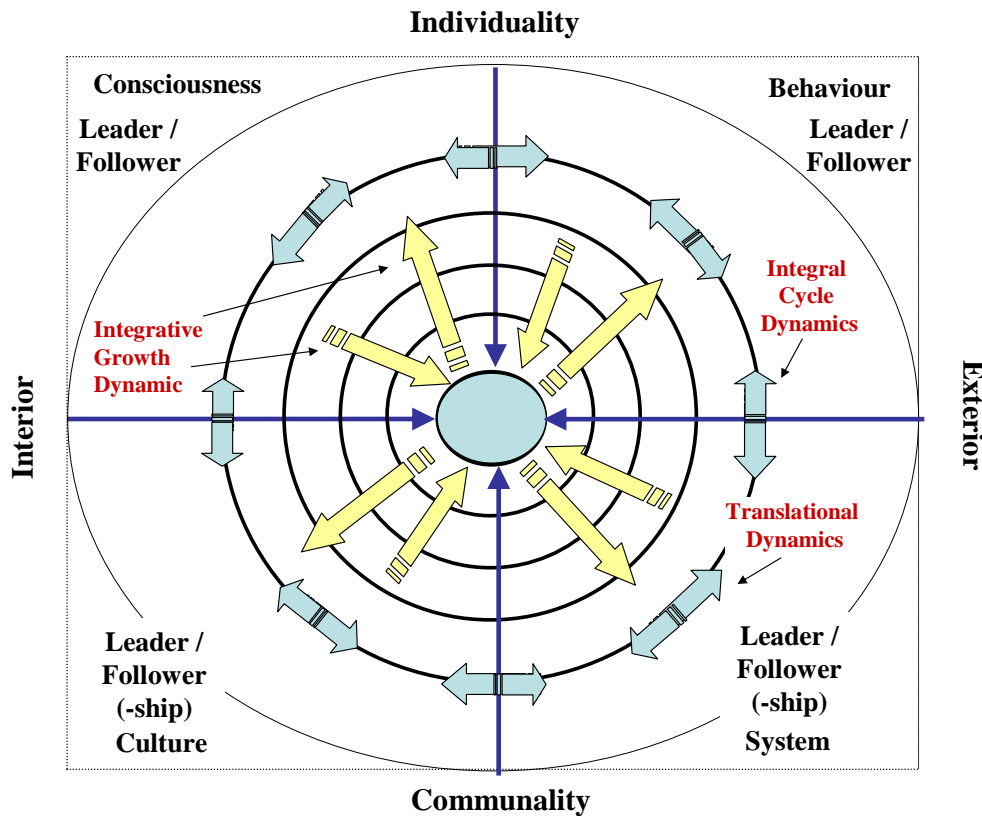


Figure 6. Modified integral cycle of leader-follower-ship (M. Edwards, 2004).

### Processual Turn towards Inter-, Leader-, and Followership

As we have seen, understanding and enacting leadership and followership in organizations demand a comprehensive and integrative framework that is suited to investigating complexities involved. The outlined holonic, multilevel, and integrative approach allows differentiating and relating interior and exterior dimensions as well as individual and collective spheres of leadership and specific, interconnected, intentional, behavioral, cultural, and social domains. However, for overcoming the dualistic orientation in these differentiations and developing a more dynamic approach, the following outlines a necessary processual turn towards an interrelational understanding of leadership and followership events. A relational paradigm finds its theoretical underpinnings in social constructionism (Gergen, 1986, 1944) and advanced phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, 1995; Küpers, 2007a).

Basically, relating itself is a “reality-constituting practice” (D. Edwards & Potter, 1992, p. 27) in which shared understandings are developed, negotiated, and socially constructed between participants with their embodied experiences. This relational reality is characterized by ongoing, local processes (Parker, 1992) that include nonlinguistic (e.g., gestures, objects, documents, etc.) as well as linguistic and cognitive processes (e.g., conversations, stories, rumors, etc.) and emotional dimensions (e.g., various feeling states and emotions).

Relationally, it becomes possible to overcome a possessive individualism (Sampson, 1993) or obsessive objectivism by which leadership or followership is seen as an identifiable

entity *sui generis* based on the individual or made objectively measurable. Alternatively, with a relational intelligibility in place, we can shift our attention from what is contained within individuals to what transpires between people (Sampson) and artifacts.

For example, relational arguments allow us to go beyond notions of *power over* to include something like *power to* (Gergen, 1995; Hosking, 1995) which is a power to reconstruct or to change ways of relating and, therefore, constructions of self and other in relationship. Furthermore, with such a relational approach, it becomes possible to understand that the interactions, interpassions, and structural interrelationships between leaders and followers constitute their realities. With this, leadership and followership become factually based on relational processes that are joint or dialogically structured activities as a kind of responsive action (Shotter, 1984, 1995; Stacey, 2000, 2001) involved in all experiencing. As an ongoing event of relating and responding, leadership and followership develop out of a complex set of interactions between subjects and objects by which experiences and meanings are continually created, recreated, put in question, and renegotiated through a weaved systemic internetwork of “to-and-fro influences” (Cooper, 1976, p. 1001). Thus, the interwoven process of leadership and followership; “always momentary, tentative and transient” (Cooper, 1998, p. 171); “occurs in that imperceptible moment between the known and the unknown” (Cooper, 1998, p. 171) via a vacillating interaction (Cooper, 1987) of subjective form and advantageous circumstance.

Accordingly, the interrelationships of the leaders’ consciousness, his or her behavior, values and worldviews, and social/formal roles and embedments are linked together with that of the follower’s consciousness, behavior, values and worldviews, and his or her social/formal roles and embedments. Consequently, for a relational understanding, the complex interrelationships among leaders, followers, tasks, performances, and contexts become central (Hosking, Dachler, & Gergen, 1995). With this, the focus shifts towards the processual space in between (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000), the intermediate field and interplay, where all parties involved can meet in mutual admiration and respect in an ongoingness of relating within embedded responsive contexts (Küpers, 2006). This interspace between the individual and environment is marked by a creative tension that both separates and joins as a reflection of each other (Cooper, 2005). Therefore, leaders and followers are collaborative agents in the transformation of social reality (Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). For this reason, leadership and followership as interconnected human agencies are continuously connecting and disconnecting in a fluctuating network. In other words, it is the interrelationship between leaders and followers that constitutes their phenomenal realities.

Ontologically, the interrelationship of this relational nexus, the in-between of leadership and followership as an ongoing flow of events, can be assessed by Merleau-Ponty’s (1962, 1964) phenomenology and indirect ontology of primordial flesh. This philosophy of flesh refers to a formative medium or milieu anterior to the conceptual bifurcation into the subjective and the objective, a chiasmic intertwining and reversibility. This embodied interbeing is part of an intercorporeality within a relational and reversible chiasm (Merleau-Ponty, 1964).

By going back to our actual lived bodily experience, we can rediscover the process of a living in between which allows a specific interstanding (Taylor & Saarinen, 1994) of interrelated leadership and followership. The inclusion of felt, embodied experience of leading and following provides renewed possibilities for developing deeper, richer, more textured understanding of how leaders, followers, and organizations are enfolded with each others’ interbeings.

Ultimately, this embodied in between is the birthplace of the process of leading and following as well as individual identity, social relationships, objective manifestations, and



creativity and added value in organizations. All the interrelational processes are always on the move between order and disorder that are always becoming and never complete. It is a continuously energizing, excessive “zero degree of organization” (Cooper, 1990, p. 182). Hence, developing an integral leadership and followership requires taking an ontological stance where leadership and followership are holonically, intermediated processes in which reality is in constant flux. Stabilities are merely recursively created feedback loops in the fluxing reality. What the relational and processual paradigm encourages us to do is describe and understand leadership and followership processes in a continual state of becoming (Bergson, 1946; Chia, 1999; Cooper, 1986, 2005; James, 1909; Ranson, Hinings, & Greenwood, 1980; Sztompka, 1991; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Whitehead, 1979). Framed in terms of ontology of becoming, leadership and followership can be perceived as events in the ongoing stream of activities of multiple organizational participants. Such a process and activity-based view treats each and both leadership and followership not as something that an organization *has* but as something that the members of an organization *do* that together form a coherent pattern of actions and unfoldment. Thus, leadership and followership are perpetually differentiating processes of becomingness in which the fixity of ephemeral arrangements conversely comes and goes (Wood, 2005, 2006).

### Theoretical Considerations and Methodological Implications

Methodologically, an integral and processual approach shifts to seeing interrelationships in their connections rather than linear cause-effect chains and seeing processes of nonlinear change rather than regarding snapshots for control and predictability. An integral and relationalistic methodology emphasizes conditions of possibility and recognizes the multiplicity of causal forces of leadership and followership rather than simple causal explanation. In the space between; agency, action, and structures have polycasual interdependence (Archer et al., 1998) and intertwine and cogenerate individual, social, and objective interdependencies and interrelationships. This genealogical and processual approach allows overcoming the inherent problems and limits of an atomistic and mechanistic substantialist perspective with its codifying and essentialistic interpretations. With this, the dyadic perspective can be replaced or complemented and the relationship between leaders and followers more adequately described and employed in terms of several distinct but interrelated influence processes. Instead of seeing only the roles of individual leaders or followers as enduring and pervasive sets of traits and behaviors, such perspective links the leadership and followership processes to specific activities in the work involved in making organization and change happen. Furthermore, from an integral, interrelational perspective; leadership and followership effectiveness and personal, social, and organizational well-being depend on the active integration of the complex interrelationships (a dynamic balance between personal and interpersonal relationships as well as the accomplishment of objective tasks and performance goals) (Küpers, 2005). As subjective, intersubjective, and objective relationships and processes are in a constant codetermining and coevolving connection; an integral leadership and followership considers systematically diverse dimensions and roles of leaders and followers (e.g., self-management, self-organizing, people management, and performance management). This can be assessed by an integral 360-degree feedback (Cacioppe & Albrecht, 2000) and responsive evaluation (van der Haar & Hosking, 2004).

As we have seen, integral leadership is a multifaceted construct which calls for multiple research designs covering the different dimensions for an integral investigation. Therefore, researchers need to engage with ideas and standpoints from different inquiry paradigms

characterized by different assumptions about actors and relationships (Bryman, 1996, 2004). For growing into a more multi- and interdisciplinary endeavor, future leadership/followership research needs to break the largely univocal narrative and open to multiple and innovative methods. Approaches from disciplines outside of social psychology, management, and the social sciences in general and nontraditional disciplines need to be recovered and juxtaposed against one another and against the field's traditional narrative (Lowe & Gardner, 2000).

As conventional ways of inquiry and measurement are often limited in assessing and investigating the outlined domains, developmental stages and lines of leadership and followership require an integral methodology. Methodologically, it is challenging to investigate and integrate various perspectives as the first-, second-, and third-persons (singular and plural forms) related to leadership and followership.

These perspectives, with their inherent methodologies or modes of inquiry, help to inform the way research seeks out different approaches for understanding the complex dimensions of the leadership/followership connection in organizations. The first-person perspective is related to subjective awareness and meaning of personal experience and action as spheres of influence via self-reporting or biographic ethnomethodologies. The second-person interpersonal perspective seeks insight and understanding through dialogue and direct communication with qualitative empathy to disclose multiple voices about collective meaning making. The third-person perspective uses empirical observation and methods of behavioral or systemic sciences to investigate quantitative data with rigor. Bringing these perspectives together highlights the different possibilities that exist for investigating how they might interrelate to better understand the interdependence of leadership and followership in organizations. Exploring leadership and followership as interrelated and processual events implies a methodological focus on relationships, connections, dependences, and reciprocities investigating specific encounters, issues, or situations (Wood, 2005).

Furthermore, the outlined integral and interrelational premises and arguments for a processual understanding make it possible to view leadership and followership research as processes of social construction. Thus, this research itself is part of the relational process investigated and narrated. Hence, the research process can be interpreted as a way of going on in relationship, constructing knowledge, and socially validating them. To facilitate multiloguing heterarchical ways of relating (Hosking, 1995); the research methodology of participatory action research (Reason, 1994) and the deployment of a qualitative, interpretive, and ethnographic research strategy with a strong situational focus (Alvesson, 1996) seem particularly suitable. Methodologically, an integral approach can also contribute to reexamining the implications of variations in qualitative techniques, participative observation, narrative interviews, and so forth. But, integral methodology recognizes also the validity of behavioral, functionalist, and objectivist analyses in the study of organizations. Following such integral methodological pluralism contributes to obtaining a more comprehensive explanation and deeper understanding of interrelated processes of leadership and followership.

### **Conclusion and Perspectives**

This article has argued that an integral approach to leadership enables a consequent and more inclusive enfoldment and offers practical implications for a different discourse and practice of leadership and followership as well as their interrelationship. Taking into account the integral and relational dimensions of personal, interpersonal, and structural dimensions and influences

allows developing a much needed decentered perspective on the leadership and followership connection. Furthermore, by considering stages and lines of development in an integral cycle, dynamic processes of leadership and followership can be assessed more systemically.

As a consequence, the integral model provides a powerful heuristic framework in which we can make sense of how leadership and followership are interwoven. Providing a metaorientation, it enables analysis and interpretation of various aspects and dimensions of both leadership and followership and their complex holonic interrelationships. The comparative advantage of an integral theory with respect to leadership and followership research lies in its potential to generate theory and research that is inclusive but juxtaposed against prevailing conceptions.

Drawing upon the integral model, the proposal is to advance the study of leadership and followership by appreciating how both are founded upon each other. The proposal is to offer a base for a substantial theoretical advancement of investigating the interplay between leadership and followership. This may contribute to overcoming increasingly outdated individualistic, mechanistic inquiries and corresponding realities of organizations.

However, understanding leadership and followership as an integral capacity of *all* members at various levels of an organization means that corresponding leadership practice and development are more complex and difficult to design and implement (van Velsor & McCauley, 2003). Realizing such extended and sustainable practice of an integral leadership and followership requires an even deeper understanding of the role of personal, interpersonal sociocultural and systemic interrelations in organizations. Attaining this kind of a more profound comprehension and practice of an integral leadership and followership requires further research. Accordingly, the outlined concept of integral leadership and followership provides only a bedrock for more rigorous theory building, further analysis, and empirical testing.

As we are in the early stages of moving into an integral leadership/followership paradigm, there are lots of open questions and fields of applications to be explored. Research may further investigate ways in which diversely situated individuals and their behavior as well as groups in various interrelational arrangements and systemic organizational settings constitute, experience, enact, and process interrelated leadership and followership practices. The conceptual integrated framework presented in this paper can support research along those avenues. Thus, it would be beneficial to conduct research on the outlined four interrelated quadrants, levels, and lines and their interdependent effects. By examining all four dimensions in an integrated fashion, one arrives at a more integrated understanding of the causes, developments, and effects of leadership in organizations including the ways for dealing with and evaluating them. Research could also examine how the interaction between individual and organizational priorities affects the character and development of various experiences and processes including aesthetic dimensions (Küpers, 2002, 2004) or ethical issues.

Leadership and followership research is evolving more and more into one of converging evidence and integration (van Seters & Field, 1990). Therefore, the challenge is to synthesize accumulated results and develop further knowledge in such a way that we can begin to construct hybrid theories of leadership and followership covering diverse perspectives. Researchers and practicing organizational members cannot only categorize existing data but also evaluate future concepts. Thus, the integral framework helps to generate innovative conceptual leverage in studies of leadership and followership as well as facilitates a corresponding practice. As a dynamic model, it is robust enough to provide guidance to practitioners and help explain problems being experienced. For example, it may tell them where sticking points might be and

what might be causing them and suggest what needs to be done about them. Accordingly, it may help leaders and followers consider which aspects of the personal, interpersonal, and objective dimensions are being impacted in order to set priorities and enact practices. An integration of theory and practice may help to bridge the divide between practitioner and academic perspectives towards an effective symbiosis (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003).

The process of developing an integral leadership and followership is a long-term project that requires much effort, time, learning, continual updating, feedback, and modification. This is not an easy agenda in times of increasingly strong performance and other pressures faced by practitioners. While an integral leadership and followership and a corresponding development are strategically important, both are also expensive. Therefore, an evaluation of expenses and benefits as well as creating a chain of impact that connects leadership development to relevant organizational outcomes is needed (Martineau & Hannum, 2004).

Nevertheless, as a differentiated reminder of the life-world's multifaceted wholeness and tremendous multidimensionality, a further integral investigation and implementation of an integral leadership and followership is likely to serve as a helpful antidote to short-time orientations, biased approaches, and one-sided investigations. Even more, employing the proposed integrated framework in an emerging leadership/followership theory and practice will provide a base on which to build a more sustainable, successful, and rewarding life-world of organizations.

In other words, successful and effective leaders and followers and their interrelated practices of the 21st century will be those who and which understand, foster, help create, and enact a more integral way of leading and following; integrating and processing practical wisdom (Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1998; Sternberg, 1998). Integral wise leadership and followership comprises and enacts the ability to influence and develop individuals, teams, and organizations and their various relevant dimensions integrally. This supports processes not only to successfully accomplish organizational objectives but to achieve a worthwhile purpose that meets the present and future needs and contributes to the well-being and well-be(com)ing of members and stakeholders of organizations (Küpers, 2005). It is hoped that the approach proposed in this article offers grounds for a more holistically-oriented research and innovative practice of leadership and followership.

All in all, the integral and interrelational model of leadership and followership allows developing a much needed comprehensive perspective on both as well as their mutually constitutive and interconnected practices and coevolution. Specifically, the outlined integral processual approach can be used to illustrate, highlight, interpret, deconstruct, or reconceive the interrelationality of leaders and followers. Leaving behind the reductionistic flatland ontologies (Wilber, 1995) and researching the lived experience and complex nexus of leadership and followership is a challenging endeavor. However, it can contribute to a more integral and profound understanding and practice of leading and following for the present and future.

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### About the Author

After working for several years in the business world and earning a Ph.D. at the University of Witten-Herdecke in Germany, Wendelin Küpers has worked with the Institute for Leadership and Human Resource Management at the University of St. Gallen in Switzerland. Currently, besides teaching at various universities, he is affiliated with the department of business

administration, leadership, and organization at the German FernUniversität in Hagen. His research interests include integral leadership/followership as well as emotional dimensions and issues related to knowledge and learning in organizations. Being involved in an advanced phenomenological research project, he is developing an integral phenopractice providing the practical relevance of phenomenology for questions related to integral ways of organizing and managing.

E-mail: Wendelin.Kuepers@Fernuni-Hagen.de

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