Advancing Relational Leadership Research

A Dialogue Among Perspectives

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will help practitioners make leadership happen more fully for the collective good, independent of their position in the web of relationships that shapes their organization.

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INTRODUCTION

MAPPING THE TERRAIN

Convergence and Divergence Around Relational Leadership

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Relation: *an aspect or quality (as resemblance) that connects two or more things or parts as being or belonging or working.*

Relational: *characterized or constituted by* <u>*relations*</u>.

Relationality: *the state or property of having a relational force; the state or condition of being* <u>*relational*</u>.

Relationship: *the state of being* <u>*related*</u> *or interrelated; the* <u>*relation*</u> *connecting or binding participants in a relationship; a state of affairs existing between those having* <u>*relations*</u> *or dealings.*[1]

The "relational turn" has arrived to the scholarly field of leadership studies, as it arrived earlier in other fields and disciplines (Berscheid, 1999; Emirbayer, 1997; Slife, 2004). Many leadership scholars now acknowledge that both leaders and followers are "relational beings" who constitute each other as such—leader *and* follower...leader *or* follower—in an unfolding, dynamic relationship (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000; Crevani, Lindgren, & Packendorff, 2007; Dachler & Hosking, 1995; Ford & Seers, 2006;

Ospina & Sorenson, 2006; Uhl-Bien, 2006). This powerful idea is quite consistent with the notion of "relationality," an understanding that individuals and collectives constitute *a field of relationships* (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000; Carroll, Levy, & Richmond, 2008). As Gergen (2009) claims in his book *Relational Being*, "the individual represents the common intersection of myriad relationships" (p. 150). Bringing relationality to the leadership field means viewing the invisible threads that connect actors engaged in leadership processes and relationships as part of the reality to be studied. As these ideas have gained currency, the construct of *relational leadership* has emerged to convey the intellectual efforts, theoretical reflections and methodological ways of taking up relationality in leadership theorizing, research, and practice (Drath, 2001; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

As scholars participate in the relational turn, their understanding of what it means and how we ought to access the reality of leadership is challenged. Important shifts occur in their ways of seeing. Noteworthy examples include recent shifts of attention in the literature from the leader and/or the follower to the "reciprocal relationship" as a core target for conceptualizing and studying leadership (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Shamir, Pillai, Bligh, & Uhl-Bien, 2007), and from individual to shared and distributed forms of leadership (Gronn, 2002; Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006; Pearce & Conger, 2003). Of equal interest are calls to shift attention from leadership actors to relational practices, as well as to communicative and organizing processes associated with the emergence of leadership (Drath, McCauley, Palus, Van Velsor, O'Connor & McGuire, 2008; Fairhurst, 2007; Hosking, 1988; 2007; Ospina & Foldy, 2010).

These examples from the literature reflect genuine interest in exploring relational leadership. They are leading-edge thinking, however, more so than being a broad trend in the field. The good news is that they suggest a process of convergence around greater interest in relationality among scholars who otherwise continue to have profound philosophical differences (see Chapter 1). The bad news is that there is still a long way to go. Indeed, clarifying what it means to emphasize "relationship" or to introduce the idea of "relationality" in leadership studies is still subject to considerable bemusement and debate, as the passionate conversations in this volume attest.

This is not surprising. The consequences of taking the relational turn for the field as a whole can be quite disorienting. Doing so can challenge some of our most ingrained assumptions and mental models of concepts directly associated with leadership, such as individuality, independence, rationality and agency. Slife (2004) describes the shift toward a "relational ontology" in the practice of psychology as follows:

Suddenly, the engaged and situated character of our lives becomes clear. We are no longer primarily rational beings, with our minds and ideas as our only

or even our primary resources. We are contextual beings, with inbuilt relational resources to other contextual beings. (Slife, 2004, p. 174)

Gergen (2009) goes further in his book's conclusion: " . . . virtually all faculties traditionally attributed to the internal world of the agent—reason, emotion, motivation, memory, experience, and the like—are essentially performances within relationship" (p. 397). He goes on:

. . . in all that we say and do we manifest our relational existence. From this standpoint, we must abandon the view that those around us cause our actions. Others are not the causes, nor we their effects. Rather, in whatever we think, remember, create, and feel, we *participate* in relationship. (p. 397)

What would it mean for our understanding of leadership to seriously filter its current constructs through a relational lens? What would the notion of "participating in relationship" imply for our ideas of leaders and followers, for their agency, and for the leadership phenomenon as such? What would be the implications of redefining actors who are engaged in leadership processes and relationships from rational, self-contained individuals to contextual, relational beings?

While some scholars are increasingly posing these questions, they are yet to be answered for the field as a whole. Despite significant efforts to address them in the literature, relational concerns remain largely unresolved in the leadership conversation. Suffice it to say that as this challenge is taken up, new ways of tackling the field's recurrent concerns—process and context (Osborn, Hunt, & Jauch, 2002), language and discourse (Dachler, 1992; Fairhurst, 2007), time and levels of analysis (Marrone, Tesluk, & Carson, 2007; Yammarino, Dionne, Chun, & Dansereau, 2005)—have yet to emerge. After all, these issues are at the core of unpacking what it means to talk about relational leadership. We believe that the time is ripe to face them head-on. The budding convergence of interest in relational leadership across a group of diverse leadership scholars represents the perfect moment to seize the opportunity.

The field cannot afford to wait any longer. As we have entered the twenty-first century, issues of relationality have become more evident and are now paramount in the attention of those experiencing the reality (and practice) of leadership. Indeed, the incipient development of the relational turn in leadership scholarship lags behind the demand for relational solutions in the world of practice. There is a hunger to find novel ways to respond to the organizing challenges stakeholders face in our post-industrial, communication technology-driven, social media-oriented, global society. A complex social environment—characterized by conditions such as scarcity, uncertainty, interdependence, diversity, participation, and paradox—makes even more evident the relational nature of social processes like organizing

and leadership (Blandin, 2007; Rost, 1993; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007). There is increasing awareness among practitioners that today, no one single person can provide leadership acting alone (Crosby and Bryson, 2005). They recognize that complex, adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994) require the collective action of many people, located in different parts of interconnected networks, in *systems of systems*. Identifying the type of leadership required to successfully address the demands of this complex and nested environment is a task of utmost urgency (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Raelin, 2010).

The convergence around interest in the relational dimensions of leadership has great potential to help close this gap and define the future direction of the field. This, however, requires an understanding of the intersection among very different views. Studies of relational leadership today fall somewhere between two radically different perspectives, each of which speaks its own language and draws from dissimilar logics of inquiry. On the one side, an *entity* perspective on relational leadership (independent of which theoretical school it reflects) considers traits, behaviors, and actions of individuals or group members as they engage in interpersonal relationships to influence one another; on the other side, a *constructionist* perspective considers processes of social construction and emergent practices that reflect common understandings through which leadership gains legitimacy and produces outcomes.

Although these two perspectives might together add rich new understandings to relational leadership, the lack of openness to methodological pluralism and limited dialogue across perspectives have prevented them from interacting with one another in insightful and informative ways. Instead, the work of entity and constructionist scholars is occurring along parallel, and largely incommensurable, paths.

To address this problem, we suggest that *interplay* (Romani, Primecz, & Topcu, 2011) across the multiple views of relational leadership can substantially advance theoretical and empirical understanding of the processes and dynamics of leadership. Paradigm interplay can clarify the interconnections between individual and relational dimensions of leadership. It can offer insights to help practitioners face challenges with more useful conceptual handles (Vangen & Huxham, 2003) and for scholars to find ways of better understanding the intricate nature of leadership. As this book will demonstrate, this is not an easy task to undertake, but we believe it is imperative for advancing new understandings of leadership.

We strive for interplay in this book by assembling a group of forward-thinking scholars representing a broad spectrum of perspectives. We asked them to engage in multi-paradigmatic dialogue regarding the critical theoretical and research challenges in the study of relational leadership. Our original invitation to contributors stated that we hoped to develop a con-

structive dialogue among scholars representing the diverse perspectives constituting what Uhl-Bien (2006) coined *Relational Leadership Theory (RLT)* and Ospina and Sorenson (2006) referred to as the competing "mental models" that have defined the field. RLT suggested a vision (not yet realized) of an overarching framework for a variety of philosophical stances and methodological approaches to study *relationships* (interpersonal relationships as outcomes of, or as contexts for, interactions) and the *relational dynamics* (social interactions and social constructions) of leadership. The vision was that, independent of their emphasis on one or the other, scholars would engage in mutual learning about their ideas of *relationality* and its implications for leadership.

In our call for papers, we explicitly invited contributions from entity and constructionist scholars, calling for work that would engage the perspectives in dialogue. We also invited three pairs of leadership scholars (representing both perspectives) to read the contributions, engage in dialogue, and document their reactions and exchanges so they would become additional contributions to the book. The positive response to our call itself was evidence that the time was ripe for this conversation. The diversity of the issues raised in the contributions, the passion generated in the exchanges, and the persistent use of *the same words* to *convey different meanings and assumptions* about relational leadership also evidenced the urgency of the conversation.

These responses surface a question that is woven through the narrative of this introduction and throughout the book: Is it possible to find a space of convergence for the theorizing, research, and clinical agendas of the contributors, despite the different perspectives they bring? The answer offered by contributors is neither a unified "yes" nor a "no"; ultimately the reader must decide. We struggled with it ourselves as co-editors and learned immensely from the generative tensions that emerged from our joint efforts to produce this book given our different perspectives: Mary coming from an entity and Sonia from a constructionist tradition.

To help the reader understand the nature of the challenge, in this introductory chapter we offer a "map of the terrain" that locates the rich debates emanating throughout the chapters and dialogues in this volume. Because knowledge of the paradigmatic assumptions and assertions behind these debates is key to advancing dialogue in relational leadership, we begin by providing background in the philosophy and sociology of science to ground readers in issues of *incommensurability* and paradigm interplay (We elaborate on this in Chapter 1.) In this discussion, we contextualize leadership within the broader conversation of organization and social science research. We then present our "map" (Figure I.1) that depicts a continuum of paradigmatic perspectives brought by the authors in this book. This map helps readers to see the not-so-obvious philosophical assumptions and paradigmatic assertions implicit in the authors' theorizing. We conclude by de-

scribing the logic and structure of the book, and we provide an overview of the book's contents with a summary of the chapter contents.

THE NEED FOR INTERPLAY

This book aims to speak to leadership scholars—both those with a long trajectory in the field and those in training—who aspire to produce knowledge on leadership that is also relevant to practice. We hope the conversation resonates across perspectives regarding what constitutes legitimate research (more about this below). Because issues of legitimacy are critical to establishing the basis for an interplay among diverse scholars, we introduce below some ideas from the philosophy and the sociology of science to set the stage for the conversations that follow.

The Contested Nature of Knowledge Generation

Embedded in contemporary social science research debates are questions regarding *how can something be researched*. Answering these questions requires answering in turn questions about *how can we develop knowledge about the world* and *what is the nature of the world and of human beings*. These questions, drawn from the philosophy of science, reflect concerns of methodology (how can we capture the object of research), epistemology (how do we know what we know) and ontology (what is the nature of reality), respectively. The pragmatic methodology answer depends on responses to ontological and epistemological questions, which in turn inform the theoretical perspectives of the proposed research. This sequence of influence happens whether the researcher is aware of it or not.

Scholars who have similar perspectives on questions of ontology and epistemology will most likely agree on the best way to do research (i.e., methodology). Hatch and Yanow (2008) argue that the word "methodology" can be understood as "'applied' ontology and epistemology" (p. 3) because it "refers to the philosophical presuppositions embedded in research methods—the assumptions, often unintentionally and even unconsciously made, about the 'reality status' of the subject under study and about its 'know-ability.'" Methodologies, they argue, "provide logical structures from which to derive procedures of inquiry (methods), and they frame the ways in which we understand their products" (p. 4). Hatch and Yanow (2008) invite management and organizational researchers to be more explicitly reflective about these presuppositions and assumptions, as a way to foster scholarship in organization studies. With this book, we see this call extending to leadership, as questions of this nature pervade the discussion in a field where the

tendency has been to skip the ontological and epistemological reflections and start with theoretical and methodological considerations.

With respect to the sociology of science, also embedded in contemporary theoretical and research conversations is the question of what counts as *legitimate* scientific research and what does not. Thomas Kuhn's work (1962) has strongly influenced this conversation with his book *The Nature of Scientific Revolutions*. By introducing the idea of *scientific paradigms* competing with one another for legitimacy, Kuhn ignited an exchange about how science develops and changes over time. A paradigm is "a model that governs scientific inquiry in a discipline at a given time" (Riccucci, 2010, p. 22), one to which most members of that community commit and use. Paradigms are rooted in agreements around how the three questions described above are answered. Mature science, says Kuhn (1962), develops through iterative periods of what is called "normal science," where scientists tend to agree on basic ontological and epistemological assumptions and therefore use existing paradigms to engage in puzzle solving (rather than innovation), using methodological tools appropriate to those assumptions. Transitions from one paradigm to the next happen through a transformative process (scientific revolutions) whereby old assumptions, questions, and answers are challenged and replaced by a new paradigm. Competing paradigms may coexist for a while, creating schisms in a field that reduce the potential for knowledge sharing.

Kuhn (1962) saw cyclical stages of scientific development, from pre-paradigmatic stages (with no single set of agreements or paradigm on how to do science, with lots of dynamism and creativity) to normal science (where creativity gives way to more routinized processes of scientific accumulation, often increasing productivity but also producing straight jackets that stifle innovation). Then, a new revolution would take place, when the assumptions of the unified paradigm would be challenged, and the competition among paradigms—old and new—would yield innovation, gradually giving way again to another cycle of normal science. An important characteristic of a normal science phase is the preference for a deductive (theory testing) over an inductive (theory building) mode of inquiry. Normal science motivates a preference for testing and refining hypotheses from theories previously derived from the data. An inductive mode that allows the data to speak for themselves, building theory from the ground up, is less preferred in normal science mode. This reduces the opportunity for innovation and methodological pluralism.

Much water has passed under the bridge since Kuhn (1962) introduced and later redefined these ideas (Bird, 2000). Yet, the idea that "paradigm shifts" are at the core of scientific development permeates conversations about what constitutes legitimate "knowledge generation" in the context of science and social science. With some exceptions (e.g., Walker, 2006),

this conversation might be relatively new within conventional leadership studies (particularly in the context of the U.S.). Yet, it has been present in exchanges about the "scientific" identity of most disciplines (Boudon, 1988; Ritzer, 1980; Weiner & Palermo, 1973), as well as in multidisciplinary fields such as organization and management studies (Boisot & McKelvey, 2010; Daft & Lewin, 1990; Davis & Marquis, 2005; Hassard & Kelemen, 2002; Hatch & Yanow, 2003) and public administration (Ospina & Dodge, 2005; Riccucci, 2010).

From Paradigmatic Closure to Dialogue across Perspectives

Twenty years ago the first editors of the journal *Organization Science* invoked Kuhn (1962) to argue that the field seemed to have "prematurely settled into a *normal science* mindset," forcing researchers to move too soon toward few "conceptual and methodological boxes" (Daft & Lewin, 1990, p. 2). They also highlighted the dangers of a situation when "convergent thinking overtakes a field before it has matured" (p. 2). Reiterating the emergence of organization science as a new discipline, the editors made a case for taking seriously the scientific tasks associated with doing pre-normal science, rather than moving too quickly to the narrow confines of normal science that result in paradigmatic closure.

The editors observed the fact that organizational scholars spanned many disciplines and fields of inquiry, from anthropology to economics, and from organization behavior to organization theory. They argued that this made it difficult to find common ground—a single paradigm to govern scientific practice. They lamented the limited set of topics considered. They also observed barriers to publication of papers not anchored in established theories or those not using "legitimate" methods. Finally, the editors thought that the narrow focus typical of paradigmatic closure precluded dominant approaches from adequately addressing the complexity and multidimensionality of the subject of study.

These observations may very well apply to leadership studies, where the entity perspective (with its multiple theoretical manifestations and its quantitative bias) *may have become too paradigmatic too soon*. Some of the strategies that *Organization Science*'s editors proposed to loosen the existing straight-jackets could not be more relevant for the dialogue needed today in the leadership field. For example, they propose focusing on equivocal problems—that is, problems whose solutions would be of interest to all scholars, independent of their stance. They also propose using "heretical" research methods—going beyond the dominant logical positivist tradition—by opening research to a new grammar, new variables, new definitions, and

new logics that produce novel theoretical explanations. In addition, they suggest opening the space for creativity, innovation, and "heresy," all of which require taking a step back from a methodological to a philosophical conversation, and only then going forward to theory and methods.

These calls resonate strongly in relational leadership research today. With its variety of ontological and epistemic stances, relational leadership offers a promising entry point for such a conversation. Perhaps more importantly, relational leadership transforms the aspiration for methodological pluralism from a philosophical longing to a pragmatic concern: the need to advance more serious theoretical and practical understandings of the complex social realities of leadership.

Incommensurability of Paradigms

Achieving multi-paradigmatic theory building requires relational leadership scholars to engage one another in conversation. This, in turn, requires clarity about each other's perspectives. We cannot reach this point until we move beyond hardened positions of incommensurability toward more open (and informed) mindsets of paradigm interplay.

Entity and constructionist leadership scholars often inhabit different paradigmatic communities, and therefore do not know how to speak to one another. It is understandable that some would see their assumptions as "irreconcilable"—in Kuhn's (1962) terms "incommensurable," meaning not even comparable by the same standards or measures. Discussions about the *incommensurability of paradigms* have filled many pages of social science debate, with Kuhn himself going back and forth on the issue (Sankey, 1993). We see these issues come to life later in this book in dialogues about the extent to which entity and constructionist perspectives on leadership (and their preferred methodologies) can be integrated, reconciled, or even produce insights of common interest.

The chapters in this book are also illustrative of this debate: of the tensions it generates, and of the barriers and opportunities for authentic exchanges. The challenges tend to come more strongly from the constructionist side, which has long felt left out of the conversation by a lack of understanding (and concern) from the entity side. Drawing from Collins (1986), Deetz (1996) summarizes this problem in his description of tensions among paradigmatic stances (1996, p. 204):

> Any research group dominating over time becomes inward looking, isolated from the problems of the larger society, and filled with blinders and trained incapacities. Its acts of perpetuation exceed its attempts at social service, its prophets become priests. Similar to most societies, marginalized research groups have had to learn two systems—their own and the dominant one—and dominant groups only one. (Collins, 1986)

For this reason, efforts to generate dialogue to date have mostly occurred on the constructionist side, by scholars who have become frustrated that the "dominant group" (entity scholars) has not acknowledged or understood the issues. Their frustrations in trying to be heard have led them to make louder and stronger arguments, which in turn further aggravates the entity scholars, who do not fully grasp the problem or understand the concerns because they have not had to "learn" the other system. Entity scholars, in their own frustration, hence turn back to their own paradigmatic views and ignore the calls—which further exacerbates the problem. It is this process that gives rise to *cycles of incommensurability*.

We see the challenges of trying to break this cycle in each of the dialogues in this book. For example, in Chapter 18, Dian Marie Hosking sees these perspectives as not commensurable. The epistemic communities they represent, she argues, make "totally different assumptions" about the relationships between the self and others. They use words like relation or process to imply different meanings; and they invite different research questions and address different types of practical concerns. Therefore, she argues for "multiple thinking spaces."

An interesting impasse happens, however, when Hosking opens the dialogue organized for this book by inviting Boas Shamir to an exchange framed around the relational rules that have guided both her own scholarship and her relations (Chapter 16). This way, Hosking was inviting Shamir to dialogue while defining the terms of engagement from within her paradigmatic view. This was not comfortable for Shamir, who decided to first step back and offer ideas for the dialogue from within his own perspective (Chapter 17).

Reframing Hosking's invitation to speak from within his paradigmatic view, Shamir urges us to find common ground around some core understanding of the essence of leadership so that the conversation can take place. Unknowingly, however, in searching for a commonly accepted definition of leadership (a postpositive approach), he *de-facto* reduces the chances for a conversation with constructionists, whose "anti-essentialist" ontology would argue against researcher-imposed definitions (see Chapter 1). Consistent with his postpositive orientation, Shamir wants scholars to agree on a minimal essence (i.e., a common definition) of leadership. In inviting Hosking to agree on a definition, Shamir takes what, for Hosking, as a constructionist, is an incommensurable stance: Whereas postpositivism assumes that the essence of objects exists independently of the knower (and therefore we need to have precise definitions of our constructs), constructionist inter-subjectivism assumes there is no essence in objects themselves. (Instead, meaning is given by participants as they co-construct it in context.)

The crux of the issue here is not that (as Shamir seems to conclude) there is no "agreed upon" phenomenon called *leadership*. It is that post-

positivists, with their "realist" orientation, think leadership can (and must) be precisely defined by the researcher,[2] while constructionists, with their inter-subjectivist orientation, think leadership must be understood as "defined" by those who construct it in their interactions, in very particular contexts. Predictably, therefore, another impasse happens in the conversation when Hosking, consistent with her constructionist and critical orientation, resists the notion of a universal core that defines the essence of "leadership" as a fixed point of departure. Instead, she advocates for the need to explore the meaning that is given to leadership in the specific contexts in which it emerges.

We see the challenge of incommensurability again in the dialogue between Gail Fairhurst and John Antonakis (Chapter 15). Less explicit than Shamir, but equally categorical, is Antonakis—coming from an entity postpositivist perspective—in his dialogue with constructionist Fairhurst. Agreeing with Fairhurst about some of the methodological faults of leadership research, he indicates that he welcomes any kind of leadership study that builds useful theory *as long as it meets "four basic conditions of the scientific method."* When these are listed, it becomes apparent that they reflect a postpositivist approach to science—again rendering *de facto* his approach incommensurable with interpretivist scholarship.

In the dialogue between Bill Drath and David Day (Chapter 8), Day invites thinking about a continuum rather than "truly discrete ontological and epistemological classes," thus suggesting openness to commensurability. While pointing to some potential areas of convergence, he is nevertheless categorical about the primacy of agency over relationships in leadership (consistent with his entity paradigm). He recognizes the potential incommensurability of this position, asserting that perhaps this difference is at the core of the entity and constructionist impasse because it represents "a fundamental disagreement about the ontology of leadership."

Although constructionists Drath and Fairhurst, like Hosking, advocate allowing the perspectives to co-exist and inform one another and are willing to accept insights gained from postpositivist research, they also make strong paradigmatic assertions regarding the limits of postpositivism in addressing relationality. They urge entity scholars to take the notion of relationality more seriously by unpacking its more constructionist meanings. For example, in his dialogue with Day (Chapter 8), Drath, while not denying the existence of leaders or their agency, suggests these as less interesting points of entry than the question, "What's going on with leadership from a whole-system perspective?" He also questions whether only one form of influence—from leader to follower—can be defined as leadership, and invites Day and other postpositivist scholars to recognize and revisit this objectivist belief (see Chapter 1).

In her dialogue with Antonakis regarding how relationality can be researched empirically (Chapter 15), Fairhurst argues against the "heavy reliance" she sees "on the study of individuals to discern relational patterns." Highlighting potential for complementary, she points out that most leadership theorizing focuses on predicting and causally explaining leadership, when what is needed is the use of theories "more heuristically to make leadership relationships intelligible and open to insight in ways that we would not otherwise have had."

As we can see throughout these dialogues, the genuine desire for communication is as palpable as the tensions and passions that surface in the exchanges. A key issue that arises, however, is the deep challenge of being in communication with one another when the basic assumptions across the perspectives are not well understood (and are often misunderstood). The tensions between the two perspectives become evident as soon as scholars make choices on how to do research, whether they are aware of taking a paradigmatic stance or not.

In some cases, the dialogues again remind us of a degree of epistemic closure that may be indicative of a field that became too paradigmatic too soon. But is this enough of a reason to engage a conversation that will "rock the boat?" After all, leadership studies is experiencing great vitality and legitimacy as an academic field. Why not just continue to let all flowers bloom and let the quality of the products dictate their standing? We return to Deetz (1996):

> As we gradually learn socially the positive effects of diversity—beyond "separate but equal" *and* integration—organization science can also benefit from better discussions. This does not mean that we each should automatically find other groups' issues and procedures interesting or helpful, nor should we believe that all of them are. But let us make our claims and the relation between our claims and procedures clearer so objection and conflict can be on those grounds rather than impose traditional problem statements and methods on those doing something else. In doing so, the ultimate point is not in arguing it out to get it right, but to reclaim the suppressed tensions and conflicts among the many contemporary stakeholders to negotiate a life together based in appreciation of different and responsive decision making. (p. 204)

An Alternative to Incommensurability: Paradigm Interplay

Consistent with this quote from Deetz (1996), we offer in this book another approach to the issue of *incommensurability* across leadership perspectives. Our original—somewhat idealistic—motivation to produce this book was to generate dialogue that would create common ground.

We now realize that not only was this goal unattainable, it is undesirable. Rather than try to produce assimilation across assumptions, a more beneficial approach is paradigm interplay (Romani et al., 2011). Paradigm interplay recognizes the value of heterogeneous assumptions and insights from multiple perspectives for advancing understanding. The focus in paradigm interplay is on highlighting connections and distinctions among paradigms—identifying resonances *as well as* tensions—and using these to learn from one another.

There is no need to give up one's paradigm of choice. Rather, paradigm interplay represents a constructive way to develop theory when normal science reaches a point where competition for legitimacy among *incommensurable* paradigms shuts down communication. Paradigm interplay opens up a space when competition has led to a narrowing of the field, stifling our ability to develop new approaches and generate broader understandings. To illustrate the value of interplay, in our concluding chapter we present a paradigm interplay across the perspectives represented in this book in order to advance a multi-paradigmatic understanding of relational leadership.

For now, with this introductory chapter we reiterate the ideas that still hold behind our motivation to produce this book. First, neither perspective is "right"; they are just different; each is more and less helpful in illuminating various dimensions of leadership phenomena. Second, the differences do not preclude learning from the others' gained understanding of relational leadership; if anything, they promote it. Third, for genuine sharing and learning to happen, scholars in both "worlds" must be able to understand and recognize the worthiness of multiple perspectives and respect what the others are trying to do and say.

We believe that engaging this conversation around relational leadership can help address urgent concerns within each paradigm. For scholars comfortable with the entity perspective, it may open new and creative ways to tackle burning puzzles, such as how to more effectively incorporate time, context, and intersecting levels of action (e.g., levels of analysis) and their reciprocal influences. For scholars comfortable with the constructionist perspective, the conversation may open new and creative ways to theoretically translate dense ideas of relationality into usable constructs for advancing empirical research that are consistent with their postmodern ontologies. For scholars interested in either perspective, it may produce insights for developing theories with more practical implications for leadership—thus offering practitioners something more than simplistic formulas or hardly actionable and complicated propositions.

Finally, the entity and the constructionist perspectives of relational leadership represent two *ideal types*, or what Max Weber would describe as "constructs," that can be used as the reference from which to compare what we see in the world (Roth & Wittich, 1978). Despite the gap that separates

scholars espousing the two perspectives, neither reflects a single unitary approach; instead, they represent clusters of "communities of inquiry" with members who approximate (in different degrees) the same ontological project and epistemic stance. These stances in turn motivate preferences for similar theoretical lenses and methodological choices. For this reason, rather than thinking of two separate "camps" we view leadership scholars within a continuum between two poles.

In Chapter 1, we *unpack* the assumptions behind the various stances associated with each pole. We also more deeply discuss the way leadership research is conceived by each perspective, and the problems these differences have created for the field. In the sections below, our focus is on locating the book contributors along the continuum to help readers better understand where the authors fall in the complex terrain of today's leadership studies. As we will see from this discussion, what our mapping reveals is that the issue is not one of dichotomies (pure entity, pure constructionist) but rather one of a range of perspectives.

MAPPING THE TERRAIN: LOCATING AND INTRODUCING CONTRIBUTORS

A key purpose of this introductory chapter is to help the reader work their way through the myriad assumptions and paradigmatic issues raised by the authors in this book. We do this with our "map of the terrain" in Figure I.1.

Figure I.1 is organized along a continuum of ontologies ranging from fully modernist to fully postmodernist (cf. Boisot & McKelvey, 2010). At the core of the modernist stance is the belief that there is a single truth about our objects of study, and that it is possible to approximate this truth with some certainty, independent of any subjectivity (i.e., objectivism). At the core of the postmodernist stance is the idea that there are multiple truths about our objects of study, and that the most we can do is attain a glimpse of these truths through interpretation of people's negotiated subjective understandings (i.e., subjectivism). (There are, of course, variations within these stances, which are further developed in Chapter 1.)

Modernist assumptions resonate with the orientation to science originally called positivism, and its contemporary version, postpositivism (or neo-positivism). Postmodernist assumptions resonate with the orientation to science called interpretivism (Hatch & Yanow, 2003; Yanow & Schwartz-Shea, 2006). Of particular interest to our discussion is one version of interpretivism, called *constructionism*.

With modernism and postmodernism as poles, the continuum ranges from soft to hard shades of gray between the poles. The most objectivist versions of postpositivism are positioned on the far left of the axis; the most

Figure I.1 The contributors: A continuum from entity to constructivist stances on leadership.
[1] Names in bold indicate dialogue scholars and editors.

subjectivist versions of interpretivism are positioned on the far right of the axis. The shades in between reflect slight differences in orientation as a function of the contributors' distance from either one of the extremes.

We offer this table with two important caveats. First, the table represents our effort to make sense of the contributors' positions in a complex leadership terrain, and we alone are responsible for any misplacement; scholars themselves might not agree with their location on the continuum. Second, the one-dimensional nature of written text does not do justice to this complexity. In reality, there may have been more overlaps and slight movement to the right or the left of the continuum if we had been able to physically align the contributors in a two-, or even a three-, dimensional representation.

As the table suggests, the various book contributors who use an entity perspective fall under the broad umbrella of modernism/postpositivism; the various contributors who use a constructionist perspective fall under postmodernism/interpretivism. Some constructionists may be more postmodernist than others—just as some entity scholars may be more postpositivist than others. This may be reflected in their theoretical orientation, as well as in their applications of social science with consequent definitions of rigor. Variations among postpositivist leadership researchers are mostly a function of commitments to theoretical schools, and the consequent methodological choices in their empirical research designs. Constructionists differ according to what each scholar accentuates when looking at leadership as an emergent phenomenon, for example, language and interpersonal communication or narrative and organizational processes.

Specific contributions from each perspective approximate in different degrees the extremes to their left and right respectively, with no contributor falling on the far extremes on either side of the continuum. The arrows are intended to represent degrees of movement away from objectivism and toward subjectivism. A three-dimensional application of this model would depict this continuum as a cylinder, in which the two extremes connect according to the privileging of the individual in both perspectives of leadership. (We return to this topic in Chapter 1.)

The continuum depicted in Figure I.1, complemented with the longer discussion presented in Chapter 1, is offered to help make sense of the dense ideas and information provided in the chapters and the puzzles generated by their juxtaposition. It also offers the backdrop against which to consider the insights presented in the subsequent dialogues at the end of each part of the book. Our goal here is to offer readers material that helps them better understand the question of whether convergence is possible among the multiple perspectives, consistent with our aspiration to develop multi-paradigmatic understandings of relational leadership.

The Book's Logic and Structure

Some clarifications will help readers understand the final product they hold in their hands. The call for contributions to the volume did not specify any guidance for writing the chapter other than exploring the challenges and opportunities of relational leadership to advance the field. Once we had the contributions, we classified and clustered the pieces according to an emergent logic. We also asked the dialogue scholars to avoid doing critiques of the pieces, and instead to think about what the contributed ideas opened up for advancing the creation of the proposed space to explore relational leadership in ways that were helpful to the field as a whole.

The book is structured in three parts, bookmarked by the Introduction and Chapter 1 at the beginning, and the Conclusion at the end. In the first set of chapters, Part I: Theorizing the Practice of Relational Leadership, contributors are concerned with advancing theoretical ideas about the construct and practice of relational leadership. In the second set of chapters, Part II: Researching Relational Leadership, contributors are concerned with introducing ideas of relationality into research programs to explore either previous treatments in the literature or to identify potential ways to operationalize (entity perspective) or translate (constructionist perspective) relational assumptions in empirical research. In the final chapters of Parts I and II, "dialogue scholars" representing each perspective offer reflections triggered by reading the contributions and engaging in conversation around them. In Part III: A Conversation Across Perspectives, additional dialogue scholars and the editors engaged in a final dialogue based on reading the entire set of contributions.

Contributors' responses to the challenge posed by our invitation were not homogenous. Some authors, like Seers and Chopin (Chapter 2) and Kennedy, Carroll, Francoeur, and Jackson (Chapter 6), created an internal dialogue between the paradigms to build insights within their chapter. Similarly, Fitzsimons (Chapter 5) also compared paradigms to show how an additional relational approach rooted outside of the leadership field could bring fresh and useful perspectives to the conversation. Others, like Fletcher (Chapter 3) and Crosby and Bryson (Chapter 10), explored the complementarity of the perspectives by proposing ways to combine them with illustrations from their own work. Yet, others took up the challenge from positions firmly rooted within their own paradigms. In some cases, constructionists like Barge (Chapter 4) and Ospina, Foldy, El Hadidy, Dodge, Hofmann-Pinilla, and Su (Chapter 9) "unpacked" the logic and implications (for theory, research, or practice) of relational assumptions that they viewed as inherent to this perspective. At the extreme of this group were Alvesson & Svenningsson (Chapter 7), who complemented constructionism with critical theory to question and deconstruct the meaning of leader-

ship. Finally, postpositivists like Ashkanasy, Tee, and Paulsen (Chapter 11), Offerman (Chapter 12), Treadway, Breland, Williams, Yang, and Williams (Chapter 13) and Wassenaar and Pearce (Chapter 14) tried to "push the envelope" of their own perspective by asking how the notion of relational leadership could advance thinking about the nature of leadership or its effective study.

Reactions to these responses and the subsequent reflections they triggered are reported in the concluding chapters for each part, where the dialogues between Day and Drath (Chapter 8), Fairhurst and Antonakis (Chapter 15) and Shamir and Hosking (Chapters 16–18) are documented.

We believe all these exercises were quite helpful in unpacking the ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions the contributors brought to the conversation. They also made evident the tensions and passion these assumptions generated when posed side-by-side.

In the concluding chapter of this volume, we take up some of these assumptions to advance paradigm interplay. For now, we close this introduction with a brief description of how each contributor used the idea of relational leadership to enter the conversation, followed by our closing remarks.

Overview of the Chapters

In Chapter 1, *Competing Bases of Scientific Legitimacy in Contemporary Leadership Studies*, we begin with a "primer" that helps to unpack the ontological and epistemological assumptions brought by the authors of this book. We do this by contrasting the paradigmatic assumptions of the two primary leadership perspectives that represent competing paradigms in the field: entity and constructionism. Our goal is to contextualize both the trends toward convergence within a field characterized by divergence, and the negative implications for the field as a whole of the existing gap between the two perspectives.

In Chapter 2, we begin with the first of the contributions in Part I, focused on theorizing the practice of relational leadership. With *The Social Production of Leadership: From Supervisor-Subordinate Linkages to Relational Organizing*, Anson Seers and Suzzette M. Chopin engage an interplay among entity and constructionist perspectives to explore how constructionist thinking might advance entity-based views of relational leadership currently grounded in LMX theory. Arguing that present (entity-based) leadership theory focusing on "relationships" has been too static and has not adequately framed the problem of relationality, they propose instead a "relational organizing" framework that moves beyond leadership "in organizations" to a consideration of leadership *as* the organizing of behavior.

At the core of their framework is the suggestion that relational processes and social entities are mutually constitutive—that is, analysis of social entities and relational processes are "alternate manifestations of a unitary phenomenon." Focusing on role and relational identities, they consider how leaders and followers enact identities as they develop a leader-follower relationship. According to Seers and Chopin, "each relational interaction reinforces the individual actor's identity as leader or follower within that particular relationship." Hence, they argue that theoretical models in a relational, as opposed to an entity perspective, should explain both interaction processes and the levels taken on by defining attributes associated with all these entities of interest.

In Chapter 3, *The Relational Practice of Leadership*, Joyce K. Fletcher distinguishes traditional and relational/constructionist approaches to relational leadership, arguing for complementarity, rather than incommensurability, among these views. According to Fletcher, entity scholars focus on *interactional skills and competencies* that help us understand how to enact the type of relational leadership that is much needed today; constructionist scholars focus us on considering how broad systems of cognition and power co-create relational practices reflecting either leadership or non-leadership. Fletcher recognizes the value and limits of each perspective and warns readers of "the dangers of focusing on one to the exclusion of the other." Instead, she urges researchers to hold these perspectives together, even if this is "an uneasy alliance."

In her chapter, Fletcher identifies three micro-processes of relational practice that the entity perspective must address: fluid expertise, growth process beyond the dyadic, and achieving effectiveness outcomes through a relational stance. She also uncovers three relational (constructionist) processes that undermine relationality: misunderstanding motives of relational behavior, devaluing relational practice through language, and conflating relationality with femininity. Bringing personal agency back into constructionism, Fletcher's framework helps practitioners reflect on their leadership by comparing dimensions associated with entity and constructionist *relational practice, non-relational practice*, and relational *malpractice*.

In Chapter 4, *Systemic Constructionist Leadership and Working from Within the Present Moment*, J. Kevin Barge focuses on exploring the implications of social constructionist ideas for developing leadership practices, recognizing that leaders work within continually evolving and changing linguistic landscapes. According to Barge, if we take the notion of social construction seriously, leadership is about meaning work and managing contexts. Therefore, people "who wish to construct leadership positions within teams, organizations, and societies" need to learn how to operate within the flow of conversation and develop practices that allow them to "make sense of it" in ways that shape direction. Barge accomplishes this by moving from a third-

person perspective focusing on "What are they doing?" and "How are they doing it?" to a first-person perspective focusing on "What am I doing here?" and "What should I do next?"

From Barge's systemic constructionist point of view, "leadership may be viewed as 'a co-created, performative, contextual, and attributional process where the ideas articulated in talk or action are recognized by others as progressing tasks that are important to them' (Barge & Fairhurst, 2008, p. 232)." This conception is relational in that it sees leadership as occurring in the joint action between or among people: It "cannot be understood in terms of the behaviors or utterances of a single individual." Barge views relationality in the contextual nature of leadership: "... [O]ur understanding of what counts as leadership or a leader depends on the unique combination of people, task, context, time, and place," and in its attributional processes of meaning-making that are "always performed in relation to tasks."

In Chapter 5, *The Contribution of Psychodynamic Theory to Relational Leadership*, Declan J. Fitzsimons introduces concepts from the systems psychodynamic perspective to break the polarization between entity and constructionist ontologies' focus on either the individual *or* the collective in the study of leadership. Psychodynamic Theory, he argues, embeds individuals' feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and actions within collective sources of experience (e.g., unconscious group-level processes) that go beyond the individual self. Fitzsimons proposes that psychoanalytic perspectives add considerable conceptual weight to three debates within the relational leadership conversation: how the self is theorized; the nature of relational dynamics; and how to engage process in leadership research.

In his chapter, Fitzsimons describes how psychodynamic perspectives break the polarity between entity and constructionist approaches. He also shows how Object Relations Theory, with its notion that connection drives human existence, offers a unit of analysis consistent with relational ontology: "the interactional field within which the individual arises and struggles to make contact and articulate himself." This offers a novel understanding of relational dynamics by privileging social context and recognizing the "complex field of systemic forces" in leadership that are both psychological and social. Two constructs in the psychoanalytic perspective are offered that deepen this notion: First, the relational drive originates in a fully *embodied self*, and second, *the group-as-a-whole* (not the aggregate of individual psychologies) induces behavior on individual members through collective unconscious projective processes. Fitzsimons sums this up by arguing that understanding relational leadership requires uncovering the "powerful systemic emotional dynamics unleashed" when groups work collaboratively.

In Chapter 6, *A Tale of Two Perspectives: An Account of Entity and Social Constructionist Approaches to "Conflict" in Leadership Development*, Fiona Kennedy, Brigid Carroll, Joline Francouer, and Brad Jackson tackle the issue of para-

digm interplay head on. In this chapter, Kennedy et al. describe the challenges and tensions that occur when academics holding multi-paradigmatic perspectives attempt to work together in delivering leadership development programs. Using the characters of "Rachel" and "Meg," they describe the assumptions associated with differing paradigmatic views of leadership development and the tensions that arise when these assumptions come in conflict. This chapter brings to life the challenges of commensurability, even among scholars who are fully committed to working with one another.

At the core of Kennedy et al.'s chapter are issues of realism and subjectivism. Rachel, the constructivist "entity" scholar focuses on training participants in self-awareness using "objective" tools, methods, models, and technologies. Meg, the subjectivist "constructionist" scholar focuses on engaging with participants in the moment, using metaphor, imagery, and symbols to produce generative spaces in the face of unpredictability where collective learning will take place. These differences are sources of severe tension, that play out in struggles as the scholars work to maintain positions of openness, and even respect, toward one another.

In Chapter 7, *Un- and Re-Packing Leadership: Context, Relations, Constructions and Politics*, Mats Alvesson & Stefan Sveningsson use critical theory to deconstruct what they see as a naïve view of leadership: a tension-free, morally superior co-construction around shared common goals. Highlighting a social context of "politically charged co-constructions" where subjects are not equal, they explore four problematic assumptions of contemporary scholarship (leader-centrism, entitism, romanticism, and objectivism-LERO). The critique targets both entity and constructionist scholars, since the latter tend to romanticize shared meaning while neglecting the role of power and multiple voices in co-construction.

The authors argue that leader-centrism and entitism are socially invented truths that help maintain dominant discourses. According to Alvesson and Sveningsson, viewing leadership as a social phenomenon must involve consideration of how macro dynamics like "ideology, discourse, and institutionalized practices" induce the micro dynamics of local relationship. One must view the entire gestalt—not just the leadership relationship—as leadership. In other words, leadership is not an already existing entity (a given), it is "an emergent outcome of situation;" it is not an objective phenomenon, but the outcome of how people construct it as such.

Part I concludes with Chapter 8, *A Dialogue on Relational Theorizing*, where David Day and Wilfred (Bill) Drath document the conversation triggered by reading the chapters in this part of the book. In Part II, contributors answer the question of how a "relational" perspective changes the way they do their research. Independent of whether the context of the research described is nonprofit and public (Chapters 9 and 10) or private (Chapters 11 through 14), contributors discuss methodological implications of rela-

tional assumptions and constructs, as well as challenges and opportunities for advancing relational leadership by way of empirical research.

Chapter 9, *Social Change Leadership as Relational Leadership*, is the sole contribution in Part II that takes an explicit constructionist perspective. Here Sonia M. Ospina, Erica G. Foldy, Waad El Hadidy, Jennifer Dodge, Amparo Hofmann-Pinilla, and Celina Su describe a large research program focusing on leadership in community-based organizations. In this research, they explore the consequences of bringing constructionism to frame, design, choose methods, analyze and interpret the data. They describe two research decisions at the core of their commitment to relationality. First, they focus on the collective experience of leadership as manifested in group-generated narratives about how the social change work was advanced, rather than on leaders' traits, behaviors or activities. Second, they use practice theory as the anchor for interpreting the findings.

Their findings identify three leadership practices—reframing discourse, bridging difference, and unleashing human energies—as distinct types of leadership work that help the group move their own collective effort of leadership work that help the group move their own collective effort forward. Placing their findings in conversation with insights from transformational, neo-charismatic and team leadership studies, they highlight the advantages of their approach for documenting the "how" of leadership. The key achievement of this research, the authors claim, was to find practical but rigorous ways to do social-science-based empirical research that shifts attention from the individual dimensions of leadership—exhaustively documented in entity perspectives as well as in some constructionist approaches—to its collective dimensions. According to Ospina et al., exploring these dimensions will require devising more creative and innovative research methods that are consistent with relationality assumptions, rather than merely mixing methods or shifting from variance to process methods.

In Chapter 10, *Integrative Leadership and Policy Change: A Hybrid Relational View*, Barbara C. Crosby and John M. Bryson advocate the need to consider both individual and collective dimensions in understanding the role of leadership in tackling complex public problems. Building on Gidden's theory of *structuration*, the authors identify a specific set of social practices through which policy entrepreneurs contribute to successfully mobilize agendas for policy reform or social transformation (e.g., the creation and communication of shared meaning). They view these as reflecting the collective side of leadership for the common good.

Acknowledging the role of particular individuals in moving these processes, the authors then focus on the individual dimensions of leadership and identify eight leadership capabilities. Policy entrepreneurs must enact these in their leadership roles (as champions and sponsors) to successfully achieve their goals toward public problem solving. Drawing from structuration theory, the authors recognized that in shared power situations, outcomes are not achieved directly by leaders. That is, leaders do not "cause" them, but instead, outcomes are produced when formal leaders work with other actors "to shape the ideas, rules, modes, media, and methods that help determine outcomes." Through their *integrative leadership framework*, Crosby and Bryson offer a view of "relationship" in leadership that is both individual and collective. This framework is illustrated using four successful policy change efforts around the unemployment of African-American men, the isolation of elderly adults, information barriers for governmental planning, and urban traffic congestion.

While the first two chapters in this section rely on sociological and public policy frameworks, the next four are anchored within the psychology and management literatures. The reflections of the study of leadership also shift from public to private contexts. These chapters explore what it means to try to incorporate a relational perspective of leadership into an existing research agenda that highlights leader-follower exchanges within the mainstream literature. They all share a firm commitment to a postpositivist research paradigm; they differ in the emphasis given to particular constructs in making their research more relational.

In Chapter 11, *Extending Relational Leadership Theory: The Role of Affective Processes in Shaping Leader-Follower Relationships*, Neal M. Ashkanasy, Neil Paulsen, and Eugene Y.J. Tee integrate the latest developments in LMX and in emotions research to emphasize the affective dimension of leadership. They push the relational envelope by suggesting that relational approaches to leadership must conceptualize leadership processes more holistically, recognizing that organizational phenomena are produced by way of intrapersonal and interpersonal exchanges.

Ashkanasy et al. offer "a multi-level conceptualization of relational leadership processes that incorporates the influence of followers and affective processes as key determinants of the leader-follower relationship quality." Specifically, they examine affective exchanges between leaders and followers based on processes of emotional contagion, and argue for the relevance of evaluating their impact on effectiveness. To address this research program, they advocate for combined orientations and triangulated methods. They also promote multilevel quantitative methods, with a shift from a dyadic to a team context, to explore how context impacts behavior at the various levels.

In Chapter 12, *Relational Leadership: Creating Effective Leadership with Diverse Staff*, Lynn R. Offermann describes her efforts to shift from a "relationship-based" to a "relational" approach in a research project on leadership in cross-demographic organizational contexts. Offerman expands upon previous notions of relationality in postpositive research by introducing "issues of meaning" more typical of constructionist approaches. Problematizing the quality of the leadership relationship in contexts where followers

are demographically different, she links constructs like social categorization from relational demography theory to constructionist assumptions of leadership to argue that leadership emerges from shared agreements, and therefore a key leadership function is that of managing meaning.

Offerman identifies "relational best practices" in leading diversity and characteristics of highly successful diversity leaders. She discusses her finding that one's mother tongue poses a "potential relational leadership obstacle" in diverse contexts, acting as a barrier for "creating a shared leadership process." She also reflects on the decision to use mixed methods, first to test the hypotheses, and second, to bring in the voices of diverse actors.

In Chapter 13, *Political Skill, Relational Control, and the Self in Relational Leadership Processes*, Darren C. Treadway, Jacob W. Breland, Laura A. Williams, Jun Yang, and Lisa Williams set out to expand the relational leadership theory framework by exploring how political communication processes impact the quality of the leadership relationship. Their comprehensive model of relational leadership integrates the concepts of influence and control to highlight political activity and behavior (such as impression management, influence tactics, and self-presentation) as a dynamic reciprocal process that constitutes the relational context, where "abilities and motivations of both the actor and the target" help to define the actual leadership relationship. The authors expand our views of relationality by introducing the idea of self as "a socially constructed relational entity."

Treadway et al. explore the role of political communication processes as relational mechanisms that moderate the leadership process, and influence the emergence and quality of the leadership relationship via individual perceptions and interpretations of self (by both leaders and followers). This attention to the emergence of self-concept within dyadic interactions highlights the role of political skillfulness of subordinates on relational control, in contrast to leader-centered models that highlight leaders' actions and motivations. To test their model, the authors propose methodologies that address network embeddedness, temporal considerations, and multi-level issues, including social network analysis, longitudinal designs, hierarchical linear modeling, and linear growth modeling.

In Chapter 14, *Shared Leadership 2.0: A Glimpse into the State of the Field*, Christina L. Wassenaar and Craig L. Pearce argue that insights from empirical research on shared leadership can shed light on relational leadership theory, given that they "occupy a similar conceptual space." They enumerate myriad antecedents and outcomes of shared leadership as documented in literature, reporting recent qualitative and quantitative studies, and drawing from a variety of organizational and cultural contexts. Among the broad range of antecedents mentioned are follower-related factors like trust in the hierarchical leader, interventions such as team training and coaching, processes (e.g., communication), and conditions (e.g., relation-

ship longevity). Outcomes include changes in attitudes (e.g., satisfaction), cognition, behavior (e.g., constructive interaction style), employee effectiveness, and company performance.

Part II of the book concludes with a dialogue between Gail Fairhurst and John Antonakis in Chapter 15, *A Research Agenda for Relational Leadership*, which documents the conversation triggered by reading the chapters in this part of the book. This is followed by Part III, which records the dialogues and reflections about the entire set of contributions.

In Chapter 16, *On Entitative and Relational Discourses*, Dian Marie Hosking and Boas Shamir initiate their dialogue with a letter by Hosking, where she frames the invitation to Shamir within a relational discourse. Shamir responds with a request to take a step back so he can develop his ideas in an independent document, which is the content of Chapter 17, *Leadership Research or Post-Leadership Research? Advancing Leadership Theory versus Throwing the Baby Out with the Bath Water*. In Chapter 18, *Exploring the Prospects for Dialogue across Perspectives*, the two come together again, along with the editors, to engage in a spirited dialogue that draws from Parts I, II, and III of the book (including the ideas developed in Chapters 16 and 17).

We conclude in Chapter 19, *Paradigm Interplay in Relational Leadership: A Way Forward*, by returning again to the issues raised in this introduction and elaborated in the book. We draw the issues out by attempting ourselves to engage in paradigm interplay, using the guidelines laid out by Romani et al. (2011). In this chapter, we use content from the authors as the "empirical material," and present three interplays that emanated from the multi-paradigmatic discussion of relational leadership: leadership is co-constructed, leadership is a relational process, and leadership can and should be developed. Through these interplays, we were able to analyze areas of convergence and divergence, revealing new insights regarding relational leadership. We were also able to engage in the tensions, rather than get bogged down by them, to identify a way forward for relational leadership research.

CLOSING REMARKS

This book is a product of our strong and passionate beliefs that leadership research can best advance through multi-paradigmatic conversation. We are not the only ones with this belief. Like us, many scholars, independent of the stance they hold, are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with existing approaches to theorizing, researching and practicing leadership. Many of them share our concern that both entity and constructionist scholars need to take more seriously issues of relationality in leadership research.

This convergence of interest around relational leadership—despite the existing divergence in perspectives on leadership between entity and con-

structionist scholars—offers a rare opportunity to advance a needed conversation in the field. An important step toward engagement in productive dialogue and mutual learning consists of making visible the ontological, epistemological, and methodological scaffolding of both perspectives on leadership. We lay the ground for this work in Chapter 1, and the contributors of the book continue to deepen it in the chapters that follow.

With this book, we invite the leadership studies community to think about how we might do our research differently if we see the value of multiple stances and embrace epistemological and methodological pluralism for the field. Our motivation is to create the "thinking space" to which Hosking (Chapter 18) refers. Uhl-Bien (2006) proposed Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) as such a space, where scholars can think and talk about questions around relationality in leadership research. At the time, she believed it would lead to integration. As it turns out, in the development of this book, we now envision this as multi-paradigmatic theorizing, which requires paradigm interplay.

We see the goal of paradigm interplay as learning to share the assumptions, designs, and insights of multiple perspectives without trying to eliminate what makes each unique. It is in creating the conditions for interplay among multiple perspectives where the greatest potential lies for moving the field forward. We hope you will join the conversation.

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NOTES

1. The first, second, and fourth definitions were retrieved from http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary; the third definition was retrieved from http://www.wordnik.com.
2. The challenge of definition is not lost on entity scholars, who have long struggled with the myriad definitions of the phenomenon, so much so that there are "almost as many definitions of leadership as there are leadership scholars" (Rost, 1993).