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## **Leadership Theories: Toward a Relational Model**

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# Leadership Theories: Toward a Relational Model

## Introduction

Within the context of my Ph.D. dissertation, I am interested in (1) the impact of superiors' management skills and subordinates' working skills on the building of their (hierarchical) relationship and (2) the impact this hierarchical relationship has upon the mental health of workers (i.e. both superiors and subordinates). Research to date has revealed the potentially negative consequences that hierarchical relationships can have on mental health; thus, for example, Brun, Biron, Martel & Ivers (2003) found that poor relations with the supervisor constitutes a significant risk factor for mental health. Leiter and Maslach (2004) report similar findings, that is to say, that the quality of social interactions at work is a major risk factor for mental health.

A significant and rather copious body of literature has recently been published concerning our understanding of what constitutes a "good" leader, research which attempts to explore the leader's influence upon subordinates' behavior. As I explore this literature within the context of my own dissertation, I will show that, despite the significant contributions to our understanding of leadership, the very notion of "leadership" is proving to be difficult to define, as researchers are still having trouble arriving at a clear consensus. Nonetheless, the great majority of researchers agree that leadership is a **social influenced process** (Furnham, 2005). For example, Yukl defines leadership as

**influence processes**<sup>1</sup> affecting the interpretation of events for followers, the choice of objectives for the **group or organization**, the organization of work activities to accomplish the **objectives**, the motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlistment of support and cooperation from people outside the group or organization (1994, p. 5).

In short, **influence**, **group** and **goal** are the main concepts in leadership theory (Parry & Bryman, 2006). The aim of my dissertation, therefore, is to examine how existing research on leadership can contribute to a greater understanding of the influence that hierarchical relationships have on mental health.

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<sup>1</sup> Emphasis added.

Thus, in this first exam, the general objective is to explore how leadership theories are oriented toward these relationships. More precisely, my first exam will attempt to answer the following question: Which theories allow a greater understanding of the **relationship** between a superior and a subordinate and how the concept of relationship is theorized?

In the second exam, I will explain (1) the connection between interpersonal relationship aspects (e.g. emotion, social support) and mental health and (2) the relationship between the manager-subordinate dyad (e.g. manager behaviour, manager role) and mental health.

As part of a vast research area, leadership theories are both numerous and varied. It is certainly not the aim of the present author to present a complete review of every trend and every theory of leadership<sup>2</sup>. Rather, the goal of this paper is to present a brief overview of the field and to examine certain theories in depth. The choice of theories or models is the result of an analysis of the leadership field, but not exhaustive: I have chosen those which I believe to be important in the field, those which have a more “relational”<sup>3</sup> aspect, as well as the latest models or theories. Thus, Transformational Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange Theory, for example, appear to be prevailing approaches in the literature. More recently, Authentic Leadership (in spiritual approaches) seems to be emerging as an influential model. Finally, Shared Leadership and Relational Leadership, although relatively recent models, appear to have been founded from a relational perspective.

To this end, I will

- present a brief overview of the general trends in leadership literature;
- clarify my conception of a “relational approach”;
- analyse five theories of leadership (Transformational, Authentic, Leader-Member Exchange, Shared and Relational Leadership) from a relational perspective and present the concept of followership;

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<sup>2</sup> Note that there is no consensus in the scientific literature concerning leadership; the typology of approaches, theories or models varies according to different authors. Thus, the categorization of models, theories and approaches differs in addition to differences in the label of theories (models or approaches). While some refer to a “Traits Theory” (e.g. Krumm, 2001), others refer to a “Traits Approach” (e.g. Parry & Bryman, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> This concept will be examined later.

- analyse and justify my position concerning what I believe to be the most appropriate “relational” model of leadership.

## **1. Leadership Theories: An Outline**

Amongst the copious literature on leadership theory, several overarching trends can be distinguished. Although there is no agreed upon classification among researchers, we can nonetheless draw up a picture of the major trends: An early period, consisting of such well-known theories as Traits Theory, Behavior Theory, and Contingency/Situational Theory; a second period, consisting of Multilevel Approaches; the New Leadership period, which emerged in the 1980s and included both Transformational and Charismatic theories; and finally, Post-Charismatic and Post-transformational Leadership,<sup>4</sup> which emerged in reaction to New Leadership theories. Although these approaches are presented chronologically, some approaches (for example, Leader-Member exchange, one of the Multilevel Approaches) are still relevant to current empirical and theoretical works<sup>5</sup>.

### **1.1 First models**

#### **1.1.1 Traits Theory**

It can plausibly be argued that the first three theories (Traits Theory, Behavior Theory, and Contingency/Situational Theory) are uncontroversial in the scientific literature. Essentially, the Traits Theory postulates that personal characteristics (e.g. personality traits, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills) determine an individual’s potential for leadership roles (Furham, 2005).<sup>6</sup> Thus, according to the Traits Theory, leadership is something intrinsic to the individual. As Parry and Bryman aptly put it, “nature is more important than nurture” (2006, p. 448); that is to say, an individual’s predisposition to leadership (his or her “nature”) has a greater influence than the context. This approach is essentially captured by Stogdill’s (1948) and Mann’s (1959) work (Avolio, Sosik, Jung, & Berson, 2003).

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<sup>4</sup> This classification is somewhat arbitrary, since there is no real consensus in the literature concerning the chronology or nomenclature of the major theoretical trends in leadership theory.

<sup>5</sup> Thus, despite the chronology suggested here, each theory could be associated to a different time; indeed, much research could be associated to some or all theories or approaches.

<sup>6</sup> In the literature, authors use both “leader” or “manager” (for superior) and “subordinate” or “follower”. In short, leader-follower (follower, in response to the concept of leadership) refers, more often, to the leadership theories and manager-subordinate (or superior-subordinate) to the whole management literature. However, the majority of authors are not consistent in their usage of these concepts.

### 1.1.2 Behavior Theory

Behavior Theory advances the idea that an effective leader is discernible by his or her actions (Krumm, 2001). The Ohio State Studies have been especially influential for this approach, with works on *consideration* behaviors and *initiating structure* behaviors. After an analysis of a list of behaviors, the researchers presented two categories: “The former [*consideration*<sup>7</sup> (1) behavior] denotes a leadership style in which leaders are concerned about their subordinates as people, are trusted by subordinates, are progressive to them, and promote camaraderie. *Initiating structure* (2) refers to a style in which the leader defines closely and clearly what subordinates are supposed to do and how, and actively schedules work for them.” (Avolio et al., 2003, p. 448).

Another influential model whose classification of leadership behavior is quite similar to the categories proposed by Ohio State Studies is that of Black and Mouton (1964): their managerial grid, now called Leadership Grid (Langton & Robbins, 2007), proposes two styles of behavior: *concern for people* and *concern for production*. These behavior styles are similar to *consideration* behaviors and *Initiating structure* presented by The Ohio State Studies, i.e. behavior oriented toward individuals (*concern for people*) and behavior oriented toward task (*concern for production*).

### 1.1.3 Contingency/Situational Theory

The Contingency/Situational Theory is more concerned with the *context* of applied leadership, which is left unaccounted for in both the Traits and Behavioral theories. Here, the focus is on situational variables: the leader modifies his or her leadership style according to his or her own personal characteristics and the *context*, i.e., the current situation (Krumm, 2001). According to proponents of this theory, an effective leader knows how to adapt his personal characteristics to the context. Many different models draw from this trend, such as the **Path-Goal Theory** (1971), Fiedler’s **Contingency Theory** (1967), Hersey and Blanchard’s **Situational Leadership Theory** (1984), and the **Vroom and Yetton’s Decision-Making Model** (1973).

According to House’s model (1971), the Path-Goal Theory, an effective leader guides his employees to help them attain shared goals: he or she supports employees in order to ensure that employees’ goals and collective goals coincide (Langton & Robbins, 2007). The Path-Goal Theory model is rather complex and House has modified it on several occasions. House and

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<sup>7</sup> Italics added.



Mitchell (1975) identified four leadership styles: directive, supportive, participative and results oriented. The choice of style depends upon a combination of subordinates' personal goals, subordinates' personal characteristics, and the work situation (Krumm, 2001). According to the situation (e.g. hazy work instructions with an unmotivated subordinate), the leader will choose which leadership style to favour (e.g. directive, supportive, participative, or results oriented).

According to Fiedler's Contingency Theory (1973), group performance is the result of the combination of its leader's characteristics and the leader's degree of control over the situation (Langton & Robbins, 2007, p. 387). Thus, the leader is either *task-focus* oriented or *relational focus* oriented<sup>8</sup>; an effective leader, according to Krumm (2001), tries to incorporate both orientations according to the work situation. (2001). The leader's orientation to either the task (*task-focus*) or the person (*relational focus*) is measured by the Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) Scale, which measures the leader's degree of orientation to one or the other. A good leader tries to combine these two orientations to different degrees according to the work situation. Fiedler's work (as reported by Langton & Robbins, 2007, p. 394) outlines three "contingency dimensions" that serve to define the situation the leader faces: The leader-member relations, the task structure, and the position of power. Thus, according to Fiedler, elements of context determine the leadership style (Krumm, 2001).

Hersey and Blanchard's Situational Leadership Theory (1984) claims that an effective leader adapts his or her leadership style to subordinates' capacity to accomplish tasks (Langton & Robbins, 2007). That degree corresponds to the maturity of the subordinates. Thus, the leader will choose a type of leadership according to the subordinates' maturity.

Vroom and Yetton's Decision-Making Model (1973) focuses on the decision-making process. As mentioned by Krumm, "[t]he Vroom and Yetton Theory usually is classified as a prescriptive theory, meaning that it provides leaders with a way to choose the best decision-making method before going ahead" (2001, p. 250). A series of questions allows to the leader to choose from among five methods of decision-making, ranging from entirely authoritative to completely participatory (Krumm, 2001): The method choice depends upon the leader's answers to seven types of questions (Krumm, 2001).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> This is quite similar to *consideration* behaviors and *initiating structure* behaviors from Ohio State Studies.

<sup>9</sup> For example, the first question is, "Is the technical quality of this decision important?" (Krumm, 2001, p. 251).

## **1.2 Multilevel Approaches**

Of the Multilevel Approaches, the Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) can be said to be the most influential. According to this theory, an effective leader is an individual with a high “relationship quality”; the focus is thus on the dyadic nature of leader and subordinate (Gerstner & Day, 1997). We will see below that LMX has its roots in the Vertical Dyad Linkage Theory (VDL)<sup>10</sup>. Other examples of Multilevel Approaches are Individualized Leadership (IL) or Multiple-Linkage Model (MLM) (taken from Lowe & Gardner, 2001), however, the influence of these theories is rather limited, as evidenced by their scant presence in the literature and it is why I don't linger over a description.

## **1.3 New Leadership Approaches**

Beginning around the 1980s, the concept of leadership changed direction with what is referred to as the New Leadership. Instead of considering leadership as an influence process, the New Leadership views leaders as “**managers of meaning**” (Parry & Bryman, 2006, p. 450), i.e. the individual who create the meaning, who make sense of events. Researchers have most often tended to include Transactional Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Charismatic Leadership and Visionary Leadership in this trend<sup>11</sup>.

### **1.3.1 Transactional and Transformational Leadership**

Essentially, Transactional Leadership is distinct from Transformational Leadership in its use of a reward system (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000), while Transformational Leadership (as its name suggests) implies the transformation of subordinates. Although both approaches are different, according to Bass, they are not mutually exclusive. Thus, both types can be used by the same leader at different times for different situations (Yukl, 1998).

### **1.3.2 Charismatic Leadership**

Charismatic Leadership is also very closely related to Transformational Leadership; in short, this approach is differentiated mainly by the fact that the charismatic leader transforms the subordinates' interests to match those of the *leader*, while the transformational leader transforms

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<sup>10</sup> I will come back to the definition further on.

<sup>11</sup> Although less important within scientific literature (and not examined in any detail here), Visionary Leadership can be described as a leader's capacity to impose his vision to subordinates (Westley & Mintzberg, 1989).

the subordinate's interests toward *group* (i.e., collective) interests. The distinctions between these three types of leadership will later be analysed in depth.

#### **1.4 Post-Transformational and Post-Charismatic Leadership**

In reaction to Transformational and Charismatic Leadership Theories, a new trend, called by some authors "Post-Transformational" or "Post-Charismatic" Leadership was born. Because the concept of charisma (intrinsic to the Transformational and Charismatic Leadership) has been associated with narcissism (Parry & Bryman, 2006) and, sometimes, with destructive leaders Krumm (2001), spirituality became an important aspect of leadership.

As Parry & Bryman (2006, p. 456) state the problem,

The movement away from the behaviours and styles of the transformational or charismatic leader has also led to an interest in the spirituality of leadership. Conversations about the dark side of charisma, narcissism and pseudo-transformational leadership have led inevitably to theoretical discussion about the "right" and "wrong" of leadership, rather than just the utilitarian effectiveness of organizational leadership.

This perspective of Spiritual Leadership involves new concepts, such altruism, love, honesty and integrity.

Brown and Treviño (2006) present an excellent synthesis which shows both distinctions and similarities between Spiritual, Authentic<sup>12</sup> and Transformational Leadership. Essentially, three approaches have in common three characteristics: altruism, integrity, and role modeling. As for Transformational and Authentic Leadership, they include, in both cases, ethical decision-making (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 598). More specific to the Authentic Leadership, this type of leader has a "moral management" which focuses on transaction and awareness of others. Moreover, the authentic leader, according to this model, should be authentic and self-aware. As for the spiritual leader, his or her moral management concerns values of vision, hope and faith. This type of leader considers the labor as a vocation. Finally, the transformational leader's moral management deals with ethical standards, and he or she thinks that vision, values and intellectual stimulation are important (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 598).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> This concept will be dealt with in greater depth further on.

<sup>13</sup> There is also Ethical Leadership, however this model will not be addressed in this paper. For an overview, see Brown & Treviño (2006).

## 1.5 Other Models

Obviously, not all theories can be broached in the present work; the goal of this overview was to paint a picture of the leadership literature with a broad brush. Nevertheless, it is worth keeping in mind that there are several others models. These theories were omitted because they were deemed either insignificant in the literature or insufficiently developed. Just to cite a few examples, the Influence Tactics Theory or the Leader Reward and Punishment Behavior Theory all could have been mentioned. Moreover, there are Political and Strategic Leadership Theories, all of which were excluded (for a review, see (amongst others) Lowe & Gardner, 2001).

## 2. The Relational Side of Leadership

We have many decades of research in leadership, which has produced a plethora of theories, models, and measurement scales, all of which aim to increase our understanding of how leadership (or supervisory relationships) can best improve organizational outcomes. Thus, “[t]his tendency to view supervisory relationships as **instruments of organizational effectiveness rather than as relationships**<sup>14</sup> in their own right underestimates their complexity and their significance in people's lives” (Waldron, 2000 as quoted by Sias, Krone & Jablin, 2002, p. 621). In fact, we can claim that there are many studies and data on the effects of leadership upon different outcomes (e.g. performance, turnover, work satisfaction), but less on the co-construction of the relationship between leader (manager) and follower<sup>15</sup> (subordinate or member). In addition, we know that these different models of leadership influence outcomes, and we know, also, a lot about the leader’s characteristics which involve in leadership. However, we have less understanding and data on the follower’s role and characteristics. Indeed, others (e.g. Avolio et al., 2003; Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001; Dvir & Shamir, 2003) have also mentioned this weakness in the literature. For example, Avolio et al. present questions which must be considered in future research on leadership:

What have we learned so far about what constitutes exemplary followership, and how does it differ from exemplary leadership? Does followership vary as a consequence of the context? For example, does exemplary followership differ in a strong versus in a weak context (see

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<sup>14</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>15</sup> I will come back to this concept further on.

Mischel, 1973)? How does the leader's creation of networks among followers shape their development (Chan & Drasgow, 2001)? Do the capabilities and motivations of followers set certain limits on a leader's developmental potential? (2003, p. 278)

As mentioned by Collinson (2006), it is rather odd after many decades of research that we only have a conception of “**leader-manager**” and still no clear conception of **leader-subordinate**. Indeed, we know little about the role of the subordinate (Uhl-Bien, Graen, & Scandura, 2000), little about the *followership*<sup>16</sup>. Moreover, in a relational perspective, “[l]eadership emerges with the process of creating shared meaning, both in terms of *sensemaking* and in terms of *value-added*. **From this approach everyone is considered to be a leader**<sup>17</sup>” (Day, 2001, p. 605).

Furthermore, not many models of leadership focus on the understanding of the **relationship process** between manager and subordinate. As mentioned by Uhl-Bien (2006), the traditional view considers leadership less as a relational process, and is rather centered on the individual. However, in my opinion, it is essential to conceive leadership theory as a social process. Indeed, one must consider, following Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch, “[...] that leadership is embedded in the context. It is socially constructed in and from a context where patterns over time must be considered and where history matters. Leadership is not only the incremental influence of a boss toward subordinates, but most important it is the collective incremental influence of leaders in and around the system” (2002, p. 798).

## **2.1 The Relationship Process**

If we return to the leadership definition, we can claim, first of all, that it is a social influence process and, secondly, “**influence processes** affecting the interpretation of events for followers” (Yukl, 1997, p. 5). However, if we consider leadership theory as a social influence process, how is it possible to stipulate that construction of this process is only unidirectional, only “affecting the interpretation of events for followers”? This social influence process occurs in a social context (in this case, the workplace) through interactions between individuals. Interactions can occur between two individuals (a manager and a subordinate)<sup>18</sup> or in a group context. Charaudeau

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<sup>16</sup> Essentially the counterpart of leadership. However, the theoretical foundations of followership are more complex. I will come back to this concept further on.

<sup>17</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>18</sup> Although this can occur between two colleagues, the aim here is not to discuss all interactions, but rather to illustrate the case of hierarchical interactions or relationships.

and Maingueneau (2002) define the concept of interactions as a **mutual influence process**<sup>19</sup> exercised by some upon other participants in the communicational exchange.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it is through interactions between people that the influence process is mutually constructed. Johansson's argument is situated in the same vein: "[i]n interpersonal communication, interactants are **co-constructing the definition of the situation**"<sup>21</sup> (Johansson, 2007, p. 276).<sup>22</sup> As Kelly et al. see it, "*Relationship* refers to the subjective and structural pattern of **interdependence and closeness**<sup>23</sup> between interactants" (Kelly et al., 1983 as quoted by Spitzberg & Cupach, 2002).

According to Mead (1962), the content of the thought is dependant on social interactions. Thus, the construction of thoughts is mutually dependant upon relationships with others. Therefore, the social influence process must be considered as a system where both parties are implicated in the construction of "reality." Thus, the nature of a relationship is not objective or independent; it is actively constructed by its participants. As Sias et al. explain it,

Relationships do not exist outside the partners involved; rather, they are social phenomena constituted in partners' interaction (Duck & Pittman, 1994). At the same time, partners' perceptions of their relationship influence their communication with one another. Thus communication between relationship partners is influenced by the partners' past interaction and influences their future interaction. As a consequence, relationships are defined by *patterned* interaction that occurs over *time*. Such a conceptualization emphasizes the dynamic nature of relationships, yet recognizes stability (patterned behavior over time) within that dynamism. (Sias, Krone, & Jablin, 2002, p. 616)

Whether we talk about the mutual influence process, the interdependence, or the dynamic nature of relationships, relationships between individuals are necessarily the **co-constructed result of both parties**. The co-constructed result of the interaction between both parties, which takes place in a broader social or organizational context.

The goal of this paper is to examine the "relational side" of leadership theories from a social construction perspective. For example, it appears that Traits Theory would be less conducive to a relational analysis, since it is concerned primarily with leader characteristics, rather than with

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<sup>19</sup> Free translation from French.

<sup>20</sup> Secondly, it is also the place for the play of actions and reactions.

<sup>21</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> The distinction between relationship and interaction can be summarized in this way: we can have interactions with strangers, with many people in the same day while relationships imply many exchanges during a long time (see Vallerand, 1993). Both are implied in a relationship process.

<sup>23</sup> Emphasis added.

an understanding of the leader's relationship with his subordinates; the "structural pattern of interdependence". Indeed, many leadership models omit the follower side altogether, and, ipso facto, the relational dimension.

Some authors (as already mentioned) believe that we ought to conceive leadership as a complete social process, which necessarily includes the act of influencing. As we will see, other theories describe leadership as a social influence process but only from the manager's perspective. The present analysis will examine the various dimensions of specific approaches (or theories) and analyse them in a relational perspective, using the following principal analytical criteria:

- recognition of the role of both interactants (manager and subordinate);
- focus on the relationship process;
- nature of the various dimensions of each theory (i.e., trust, linking, empowerment, etc.)

I have chosen to present those theories or models which appear to me to have the weakest relational aspect first, ending with those which I believe have a stronger relational aspect. I will thus address, respectively, Transformational Leadership, Authentic Leadership, Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX), Shared Leadership, and Relational Leadership.

### **3. Transformational Leadership**

As we have seen, Transformational Leadership Theory is part of the New Leadership trend. More precisely, Transformational Leadership finds its roots in Weber's work (on charisma) and Downton (on rebel leadership) (Yammarino & Bass, 1990). Leadership behaviors are divided into two categories: Transactional and Transformational (Yukl, 1998). Concerning Transactional Leadership, Krumm (2001) suggests that "[t]here is an implied social contract indicating that if the follower goes along with what the leader wants done, the follower will get certain benefits, such as pay, a promotion, or not getting fired. This is called transactional leadership" (p. 253). In short, the transactional leader shows the follower how to be rewarded. For Bass (1999), this can be done in one of two ways: management-by-exception (active or passive form) or *laissez-faire* (i.e. Non Leadership)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> These concepts will be dealt with in greater depth later on.

Conversely, “[t]ransformational leadership refers to the leader moving the follower beyond immediate self-interests through **idealized influence**<sup>25</sup> (**charisma**), **inspiration**, **intellectual stimulation**, or **individualized consideration**<sup>26</sup>. It elevates the follower’s level of maturity and ideals, as well his or her concerns for achievement, self-actualization, and the well-being of others, the organization, and society” (Bass, 1999, p. 10-11). In essence, what distinguishes Transactional from Transformational Leadership is its reward aspect (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000, p. 223). As previously mentioned, although both theories have significant differences, Bass (1999) claims that they are not inseparable; indeed, the same leader can make use of Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership in different contexts; the choice of the style of leadership depends upon the situation.

### ***3.1 Charismatic Leadership or Charismatic Leader?***

Also part of the New Leadership trend is the Charismatic Leadership Theory. Note that both typologies (Charismatic and Transformational) are closely linked (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000). Furthermore, some authors, such as Avolio et al. (2003), speak in terms of a “Charismatic-Transformational Leadership”. Thus, some authors consider charisma as a theory in and of itself (i.e., Charismatic Leadership), while others consider charisma as leadership dimension (i.e., as in Transformational Leadership). Indeed, with regard to Bass’s model, the dominant one, the transformational leader is charismatic, gives intellectual stimulation to subordinates, and recognizes and encourages each subordinate (i.e., the “consideration” dimension; see Krumm, 2001; Bass, 1990). From a Charismatic Leadership Theory perspective, the central dimension is the leader’s charisma (Krumm, 2001). Weber was the first author to introduce the concept of charisma (Bass, 1990, p. 1984); he characterised

charismatic leaders as being extremely highly esteemed persons, who are gifted with exemplary qualities. Such individuals tend to exude confidence, dominance, a sense of purpose, and the ability to articulate the goals and ideas for which followers are already prepared psychologically. (Fromm, 1941, as cited in Bass, 1990, p. 184)

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<sup>25</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>26</sup> To be further examined below.



Thus, the charismatic leader can inspire subordinates. House (1977) defines Charismatic Leadership as a phenomenon that occurs when the leader has a major impact on subordinates. Likewise, Conger, Kanungo, Menon and Mather (1997) view this leader as an individual who is able to present an inspiring vision. Moreover, Charismatic Leadership involves a novel aspect: that of **emotion**. As Ashkanasy and Tse explain, “[t]he implication here is that charismatic leadership is essentially emotional, in which case control of self and influence over other’s emotions may be a key ingredient” (Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000, p. 223). Thus, the charismatic leader, through his or her affective influence, can modify the personal interests and goals of subordinates so that they conform to those of the leader (Krumm, 2001).

Although both the Charismatic and Transformational leader seek to transform the personal interests and goals of subordinates, there is a nuanced yet important distinction to be made: while the Charismatic leader seeks to transform *individual* goals and interests to conform to those of his own, the Transformational leader seeks to transform the *individual* goals and interests of the subordinate so that they conform to those of the *group*. In other words, the Charismatic leader wants the subordinate to reach his leader’s goals, while the transformational leader wants the subordinate to reach organizational goals (Krumm, 2001) and modifies his or her needs and personal goals in order to answer to the needs of others (Bass, 1985). Finally, “[Ashkanasy and Tse (2000)] define transformational leadership primarily in terms of the leader’s effect on followers, and the behavior used to achieve this effect. [...]The underlying influence process is described in terms of motivating followers by making them more aware of the importance of task outcomes and inducing them to transcend their own self interest for the sake of the organization” (Yukl, 1999, p. 286).

### ***3.2 Transactional, Transformational and Charismatic Leadership: Toward One Theory.***

As mentioned earlier, there is a lack of consensus in leadership theories. The New Leadership approach is no exception, particularly for certain specific dimensions. One of the objectives of the present work is to discuss Transformational Leadership, because (1) the principal measure, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), measures both the transformational and transactional approaches, and because Transactional Leadership could be categorized as one aspect of Transformational Leadership; (2) in the present author’s view, charisma ought to be considered as a leadership *dimension*, rather than as a leadership *theory* in its own right.

### **3.3 Levels Analysis of Transformational Leadership**

Transformational Leadership is a dyadic process (i.e., between manager and subordinate), and must therefore be examined differently according to the nature of each specific dyad. Since the relationship between a manager and each different subordinate is unique, an analysis of these different relationships could reveal both striking similarities and salient differences. Furthermore, relationships can vary both within a group or between groups. If one accounts for all this, it becomes clear that a subordinate's individual perception of a transformational leader may differ from that of his or her colleague according to each specific context. In order to frame their analysis of this phenomenon, Yammarino and Bass (1990) utilized four distinct categories:

- Average Leader Style (ALS)
- Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)
- Information-Processing Approach
- Inexplicable<sup>27</sup>

As for the ALS category, Yammarino and Bass state that relationships involving the leader and all of his or her subordinates (within the group) are homogeneous; in this case, the interaction style is consistent within the group. However, the style can be different from one leader to the next. According to the LMX perspective, the various relationships between a leader and each of his or her individual subordinates (within the group) can be different; the leader's style will thus vary to accommodate each individual subordinate. Here, interaction styles are multiple within the group. The information-processing category focuses on the subordinate's cognitive interpretation of the leader's behaviour: "There are differences within and between groups and leaders so that leader-follower interactions are individualized and not group-based. For example, a nature of a relationship with a transformational leader can be perceived as unique by each follower and not dependant on the other follower of that leader" (Yammarino & Bass, 1990, p. 977). In other words, the same leader behaviour can elicit different interpretations and emotions from each individual follower. Yammarino and Bass's fourth category of analysis refers to the "inexplicable" aspect. As their research results show, each individual relationship between leader and follower is different; therefore, it would appear as though the concept of adaptation is central for the leader. Also, the participation of the follower — at least for the information-processing approach

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<sup>27</sup> Concept from Dansereau, Alutto and Yammarino (1984). (Yammarino & Bass, 1990)

— seems to be essential in the construction of the relationship. Indeed, Yammarino and Bass conclude with the claim that “[b]uilding on this transactional base, leadership which is individually considerate, intellectually stimulating, and generates confidence and the inspiration in the individual follower, rather than in a group of followers, may result in even more heightened outcomes” (1990, p. 992).

Likewise, it is also the present author’s view that leader behavior in a group context is different than that of an individual interaction. However, although the information-processing approach takes into account the “perception of subordinates”, it does not account for the influence of the subordinate on the leader’s behavior. Thus, although Yammarino and Bass’s level analysis is very relevant to the study of Transformational Leadership, their model of “leader behaviors and subordinate reactions” is nonetheless constrained to a unidirectional perspective, ignoring the influence of subordinate behavior on the leader.

### **3.3 Dimensions of Transformational Leadership**

The most popular measure of Transformational Leadership is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), written by Bass and Avolio (1990). This questionnaire measures Transactional, Transformational, and *Laissez-Faire* Leadership (Den Hartog, Muijen, & Koopman, 1997). Essentially, the questionnaire is completed by followers, who must rate the frequency of each leader behavior (Yukl, 1999). In sum, this questionnaire measures the follower’s perceptions of leader behaviors. As mentioned by Yukl (1999), the MLQ has changed over time, as the authors have added behaviors in some versions of the questionnaire.

The Transformational Leadership Theory has been rendered into three aspects: Transformational, Transactional, and Non-Leadership dimensions. According to Yammarino and Bass (1990), the dimensions of these aspects are summarized in the following table.

Table 1 – Reproduction of the dimensions of Transformational, Transactional and Non-Leadership

Transformational	Transactional	Non-Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ charisma (also called idealized influence)</li> <li>▪ individualized consideration</li> <li>▪ intellectual stimulation</li> <li>▪ inspirational leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ contingent promises</li> <li>▪ contingent rewards</li> <li>▪ active management-by-exception</li> <li>▪ passive management-by-exception</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ laissez-faire</li> </ul>

Note that shortcomings in measure could be detrimental to the identification of specific dimensions. As Yukl (1999) notes,

The identification of specific types of transformational behavior seems to be based mostly on an inductive process (factor analysis), and the theoretical rationale for differentiating among the behaviors is not clearly explained. Each transformational behaviour includes diverse components, which makes the definition more ambiguous. The partially overlapping content and the high inter-correlation found among the transformational behaviors raise doubts about their construct validity. (Yukl 1999, p. 288)

This potential weakness notwithstanding, it appears necessary to present a more in-depth analysis of the behaviors under each dimension<sup>28</sup> and of each aspect of the scale in order to examine any relational influence.

According to Yukl, the *individualized consideration* dimension is composed of supporting and developing behaviors. “Supporting behaviors” refer to such interpersonal acts as “being friendly, helpful, considerate, and appreciative of individual subordinates” (1999, p. 288), while “developing behaviors” refer to actions of a more pedagogical nature, such as coaching and mentoring. Although I would consider supporting behaviors (e.g. being friendly) from a relational perspective, Yukl (1999)<sup>29</sup> claims that it is preferable not to consider these behaviors as central to Transformational Leadership, in light of research which has showed a weak effect of supporting behaviors on subordinate outcomes (e.g. satisfaction and performance).

<sup>28</sup> Note that each dimension is measured by an independent scale.

<sup>29</sup> We want underline that the Yukl’s review does not quoted all the dimensions for each scale.

The *Intellectual stimulation* dimension concerns subordinates' resolution of problems. As Yukl explains it, this dimension

[...] is operationally defined as causing a subordinate to question traditional beliefs, to look at problems in a different way, and to find innovative solutions for problems. The content is diverse and ambiguous. There is not a clear description of what the leader actually says or does to influence the cognitive processes or behavior of subordinates. For example, what does the leader do to encourage creative problem solving? Another source of ambiguity is that some aspects of intellectual stimulation appear to overlap with aspects of individualized consideration or inspirational motivation. (Yukl, 1999, p. 288-289)

Although the intellectual stimulation helps the subordinate to resolve problems in an original way, the process is quite not clear.

Concerning *idealized influence (charisma)*, Bass and Avolio include behaviors such as "leader expression of beliefs, acting consistent with espoused beliefs, emphasizing the importance of subordinate beliefs, clarifying the purpose of subordinate activities, and talking about the importance of mutual trust" (Bass & Avolio, 1990, as quoted by Yukl, 1999, p. 289). Yukl (1999) mentions that there is an overlap between *idealized influence* and *inspirational motivation*; for him, there is no clear difference. As for Bass and Avolio (1993), *idealized influence* can be described as follows: "[the leader] has [the subordinate's] trust in his or her ability to overcome any obstacle," while with inspirational motivation, on the other hand, the leader "uses symbols and images to focus [the subordinates'] efforts" (as quoted by Bass, 2005, p. 367).

Relating to transactional behaviors, Yukl relates deficiencies in measure similar to those we have already seen earlier; indeed, he characterises transactional behaviors as "mostly ineffective" (1999, p. 289). Nevertheless, certain points should be mentioned: the *contingent reward* dimension is composed of impersonal behaviors, such as "explaining reward contingencies, offering incentives, rewarding good performance and personal reward" (Yukl, 1999, p. 289), and more personal behaviors, such as showing recognition to subordinates. Concerning *passive management-by-exception*, the leader waits for the problem to happen before taking action, whereas in *active management-by-exception* the "leader monitors the follower's performance and takes corrective action if the follower fails to meet standards" (Bass, 1999, p. 11).

Beyond the approach illustrated by the MLQ, the Transformational Leadership approach includes several models. For example, Sashkin (2004) presents in his review eight approaches to Transformational Leadership. Following the presentation of eight models, Sashkin concludes that there are three common aspects for all approaches of Transformational Leadership: “leaders’ personal characteristics (traits), leader behaviours, and the situational context of leadership” (2004, p. 188). Sashkin presents a table with what he calls “common behavioral competencies” for each approach, which I have partially reproduced below<sup>30</sup>:

Table 2 – Adaptated table of the aspects of Transformational Leadership

Behaviors	Traits	Contexts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>communication (of vision)</b></li> <li>▪ management skills</li> <li>▪ communicating the need for change</li> <li>▪ <i>trust</i></li> <li>▪ <b>caring (consideration)</b></li> <li>▪ modeling</li> <li>▪ recognizing</li> <li>▪ accomplishments</li> <li>▪ challenging the status quo</li> <li>▪ developing follower</li> <li>▪ unconventional behaviour</li> <li>▪ charisma-producing actions</li> <li>▪ <b>creating empowering opportunities (“risk”)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ charisma</li> <li>▪ environmental sensitivity</li> <li>▪ outsider perspective</li> <li>▪ insider knowledge</li> <li>▪ willingness to risk and sacrifice</li> <li>▪ <b>self-confidence</b></li> <li>▪ <b>empowerment orientation</b></li> <li>▪ <b>vision (cognitive capability)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ organizational context (structure)</li> <li>▪ organizational context (culture)</li> </ul>

Note: In bold type, the dimensions are mentioned by three or more approaches. In italics, the dimensions which appear more relational.

<sup>30</sup> It is not necessarily my objective to examine in detail the behavioral competencies of each approach, but, rather, to discover which behavioral competencies are characteristic of transformational leaders. Thus, I have chosen not to specify which approach is associated with each behavioral competency. For more detail, see Sashkin, 2004.

### **3.4 Transformational Leadership: A Relational Analysis**

It would be pretentious to try to present every aspect of Transformational Leadership, since this would be a huge venture. However, I have drawn a short outline of the theory in order to analyse it in a relational perspective.

Firstly, if we return to the conceptualisation of Transformational Leadership, we can see that this definition or conceptualization implies, above all, the idea of a *transformation* of the follower through leader behaviors. According to this perspective, the subordinate is merely a *tabula rasa* whose behavior can be transformed and modeled according to what an inspired leader writes upon it. Thus, it seems that the subordinates are not really implied in the social influence process (among others) of the level analysis. Although the information-processing accounts for the subordinate's perception of the leader behavior, this perception does not seem to have any subsequent influence on the leader's behavior. We can thus claim that the subordinate is insufficiently accounted for in the social influence process of Transformational Leadership.

Secondly, we can see with the dimensions of Transformational Leadership (as described in table 2) that this theory focuses **only** on leader characteristics and on leader behaviors and traits which influence the subordinate's behavior. Effectively, even though the leader has to adapt his approach to the context and, sometimes, to the follower, we know nothing about the role of follower in the process. We also know nothing about the construction of the relationship between the manager and the follower, i.e., on the actual nature of the process itself.

Lastly, common behavioral competencies presented by Sashkin (2004) are oriented in a unidirectional way, i.e., analysing only the influence of the leader's behaviors on the followers. Concerning the nature of behavioral competencies, with the exception of *trust* and *caring (consideration)*, other behaviors are analysed more from management skills perspective. And although trust and consideration are seen as essential to the construction of the relationship, trust and consideration must originate (ideally) from both parties, i.e. manager and subordinate; this does not seem the case with Transformational Leadership.

Consequently, Transformational Leadership should not, in my opinion, be considered from a "relational perspective". Indeed, the focus is almost entirely on the characteristics (traits and behaviors) of the leader, whereas the follower seems to have a passive role. As mentioned by Day, "[t]he charismatic and transformational leadership approaches have merit and should not

be ignored; these approaches, however, do not come close to representing the **entire depth or complexity of thinking on leadership**<sup>31</sup> needed to design, evaluate, and improve leadership development efforts for the present and the future” (Day, 2001, p. 606). I agree with Day, since this approach does not come close to representing the full scope of the social process of the relationship between the leader and the follower.

By way of conclusion, “[f]urther, we have made few advances in making predictions regarding specific dimensions of Charismatic Leadership such as personal liking, trust, and legitimacy, or in decomposing their effects into cognitive and rational responses. Finally, we have made little progress in matching the intentionality behind leader behavior with follower responses and reciprocal intentionality” (Lowe & Gardner, 2001, p. 502).

#### 4. Authentic Leadership

As we have seen, Authentic Leadership is a part of the Post-Charismatic and Post-Transformational trend. The underlying principles of Authentic Leadership are very close to those of Spiritual Leadership and Ethical Leadership. As Parry and Bryman explain,

The movement away from the behaviours and styles of the transformational or charismatic leader has also led to an interest in the spirituality of leadership. Conversations about the dark side of charisma, narcissism and pseudo-transformational leadership have led inevitably to theoretical discussion about the "right" and "wrong" of leadership, rather than just the utilitarian effectiveness of organizational leadership. (Parry & Bryman, 2006, p. 456)

Thus, in response to the “dark side” of Charismatic and Transformational Leadership and to the need to have a more **positive approach**<sup>32</sup> toward leadership, Authentic Leadership appeared to be necessary; after scandals like Enron (Cooper, Scandura, & Schriesheim, 2005), for example, or, worse yet, in a context of negativity in the wake of the terrorist attacks of September 11th (Luthans & Avolio, 2003).

According to Luthans and Avolio (2003), Authentic Leadership proponents put together various aspects: positive organizational behavior, transformational/full-range leadership, and the

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<sup>31</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>32</sup> This is central in the foundation of Authentic Leadership.



moral/ethical leadership perspective, with the goal of “trying to better cope with the new, turbulent environment”; however, “eclectically integrating these various fields into a broader framework of authentic leadership has not yet occurred” (p. 243). These approaches are founded in **positive** psychology (here the idea is that psychology is oriented toward pathology and illness instead of health).

However, the construct of Authentic Leadership is still fragile. Indeed, for Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005), the concept is multi-dimensional and it appears necessary to further develop some aspects, such as the nature of dimensions or the level of analysis. Judging by the current literature, it seems as though the Authentic Leadership construct is still at the introduction/elaboration stage<sup>33</sup>, using the criteria set forth by Reichers and Schneider (1990) for the developmental stages of a construct. Moreover, as Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim have noted, “[t]his will eventually allow the empirical differentiation of authentic leadership from other types of leadership, such as transformational, charismatic, and servant, and also demonstrate that it truly is a root construct (rather than a construct which is equivalent to one or more of these types)” (2005, p. 480). Notwithstanding the nascent state of the construct, the principal dimensions of Authentic Leadership have been analysed.

#### ***4.1 Dimensions of Authentic Leadership***

According to Brown & Treviño (2006), the principal dimensions of Authentic Leadership are self-awareness, openness, transparency, and consistency. Avolio et al. describe authentic leaders as “individuals who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspective, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and high on moral character” (Avolio, Luthans, & Walumbwa, 2004, p. 4).

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<sup>33</sup> The next stages are evaluation/argumentation and consolidation/accommodation.

Table 3 – Dimensions of Authentic Leadership

Brown & Treviño (2006)	Luthans & Avolio (2003)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>self-awareness</b></li> <li>▪ openness</li> <li>▪ <b>transparency</b></li> <li>▪ consistency</li> <li>▪ <b>hope</b></li> <li>▪ <b>optimism</b></li> <li>▪ <b>resiliency</b></li> <li>▪ judging ambiguous ethical issues</li> <li>▪ viewing them from multiple perspectives</li> <li>▪ <b>aligning decisions with their own moral values</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>self-awareness</b><sup>34</sup></li> <li>▪ <b>transparent</b></li> <li>▪ confident</li> <li>▪ <b>hopeful</b></li> <li>▪ <b>optimistic</b></li> <li>▪ <b>resilient</b></li> <li>▪ associated building</li> <li>▪ future-oriented</li> <li>▪ <b>moral/ethical</b></li> </ul>

Note: Dimensions common to both approaches have been emphasized.

Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) have attempted to analyse the definition of Authentic Leadership by these two authors (see table 3)<sup>35</sup>. They reported that “[i]t contains elements from diverse domains—traits, states, behaviors, contexts, and attributions” (p. 478). Thus, it seems to present the same problem as the level analysis: it is at the same time an individual, team, and organizational level. It seems necessary to emphasize that Authentic Leadership theory is still a work in progress, and as such, unpolished. According to Cooper et al. (p.478), the following issues must be addressed:

- a new definition of the concept is needed which will include the nature of its dimensions
- “observer/perspective of the person(s) providing the report (e.g., self, subordinate, peer, etc.)”
- analysis levels
- “the response category measurement units to be employed (e.g., frequency, magnitude, extent of agreement, etc.)”
- “and the dimension’s content domain”.

<sup>34</sup> For these authors self-awareness is the process by which you become transparent, confident, etc.

<sup>35</sup> It is my table.

## **4.2 Authentic Leadership: A Relational Analysis**

I must emphasize that Authentic Leadership is very different from Transformational Leadership and Leader-Member Exchange. Despite the fact that Authentic Leadership is a nascent construct, we can nonetheless analyse the theory from a relational perspective. Although it is very useful to have a positive perspective on leadership theory, we remain, in this case, in a static view of leadership. In Transformational Leadership, the focus is on the *leader*, and on the criteria used for determining if he or she is an effective leader. Hence, as we have already seen, the follower's role is passive in this model; the process seems decidedly unidirectional. Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) claim that "if relationships are one of the primary tenets of the theory, data may need to be collected from both authentic leaders and their followers. For example, if **authentic leadership is viewed as an attribution by followers**<sup>36</sup>, it will be important to be able to separate the leaders' perception of their own behaviour from follower perceptions of it" (p. 480). Hence, "Authentic" Leadership is unidirectionally attributed by followers. Finally, although the dimensions of Authentic Leadership are quite new, I would qualify these dimensions as "human" dimensions and not "relational" dimensions. All the more so, since only a few dimensions play a part in the relationship (i.e., transparency, openness) in contributing to establish the relationship with the follower. As for the other dimensions, they remain centered principally on the traits and behaviors of leaders.

Although there is an increasing body of empirical work in this approach, I believe, as do Parry and Bryman (2006), that current literature is more interested in the spirituality of leadership than it is in constructing a new leadership theory per se. Finally, in my opinion, the perspective we are trying to develop is not necessarily "relational", but rather one in which the leader is more "human".

## **5. Leader-Member Exchange**

The Leader-Member Exchange Theory (LMX) has a long tradition. Effectively, more than 35 years of research cover this area. LMX was first developed from the perspective of Vertical Dyad Linkage (VDL) Theory, with the works of Dansereau, Graen, and Haga (1975).

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<sup>36</sup> Emphasis added.

In the very early period, Graen was concerned with the various roles people assume in organizations and with what he called the role-making process. As this approach increasingly began to focus on the superior-subordinate dyad, the term vertical dyad linkage (VDL) was adopted in the early 1980s leader-member exchange (LMX) replaced VDL as more appropriate descriptive of the process involved, although some publications of this period use the term vertical exchange as well, and some refer to dyadic career reality theory. (Graen, 2005, p. 257)<sup>37</sup>

The development of the VDL branched into two separate models: the LMX model (sometimes called Leadership-Making model) and Individualized Leadership<sup>38</sup> (Schriesheim, Castro, & Cogliser, 1999).

The majority of authors agree upon the definition of LMX for which the central point is the **quality of the relationship**. More precisely, it is the quality of the relationship between the leader and the follower which determine leader effectiveness (Krumm, 2001). Moreover, that quality of the relationship predicts different outcomes (Gerstner & Day, 1997), such as satisfaction or turnover intentions. Thus, “[t]he central premise behind LMX is that within work units, different types of relationships develop between leaders and their subordinates, or members. These relationships are characterized by the physical or mental effort, material resources, information and/or emotional support exchanged between the two parties” (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997, p. 48).<sup>39</sup> We can therefore have a high or low LMX; more precisely, “[a] high-quality LMX relationship is based on social exchange, meaning that the leader and member must contribute resources valued by the other and both parties must view the exchange as fair” (Liden, Sparrowe, Wayne, 1997, p. 50).

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<sup>37</sup> I chose not to give more information on the VDL Theory, because (1) that theory is the precursor to the LMX and I want to focus on the LMX Theory in this paper, and (2) because I do not think it is necessary to go in depth for VDL to analyse the relational side of LMX. However, I want to emphasize that some authors make a distinction between VDL and LMX.

<sup>38</sup> This approach will not be analysed further in this paper. For an overview, see Dansereau, Yammarino, Markham, Alutto and Newman (1995).

<sup>39</sup> LMX Theory finds its roots in Role Theory and Social Exchange Theory (Gerstner & Day, 1997). As mentioned by Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997), Role Theory postulates that the behaviors of organizational members are the result of their position. The role goes beyond tasks description; the informal process contributes to define the member’s role too. “Consistent with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which states that when a person provides something of value to another person it obligates the recipient to reciprocate, LMX theory states that when a party makes an initial effort to develop the relationship (i.e., an “offer”) this effort must be reciprocated through a series of exchanges. Blau noted, however, that such reciprocation is not always the case, such as when what is received is not valued or reciprocation is not possible. When no reciprocation happens repeatedly, the frequency of the valued offers diminishes.” (Maslyn & Uhl-Bien, 2001: 698). Because of the constraints of this paper, I have chosen not to further explain these theories.

LMX Theory has always been in constant transformation. Since the beginning of the theory, four stages have been identified. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995, p. 225) present LMX's evolution in four stages:

- 1) "discovery of differentiated dyads" (i.e., in-groups and out-groups) in a perspective of vertical dyad linkage
- 2) "investigation of characteristics of LMX relationships and their organization implications".
- 3) "description of dyadic partnership building"
- 4) "aggregation of differentiated dyadic relationships to group and network levels"

### **5.1 The Complexity of Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

Despite the tendency to conceive LMX as the quality of a relationship, Schriesheim, Castro and Cogliser (1999) showed in their study that there are numerous theoretical definitions of LMX from *special interdependent relationship of leader and member* to *team working relationship*. According to the literature review of Schriesheim, Castro and Cogliser (1999), 67 of the 147 studies they reviewed use the **quality of exchange** as their theoretical definition.<sup>40</sup> Over time, the definition and conceptualisation of LMX was modified. Otherwise, even in the same time period, there is no consensus on the definition:

Of the 37 other dissertations or research papers published or presented during the 1980s quite noteworthy is the use of 11 different theoretical definitions in these works (opportunities for influence/control, leadership attention, noncontractual social exchange, quality of exchange, negotiating latitude, supervisory relations, trust in supervisor, leadership interpersonal sensitivity, role making, role latitude, and leadership exchange) as well as 35 different subcontent elements. (Schriesheim, Castro & Cogliser, 1999, p. 76)

It must be emphasized that the LMX model can sow confusion. Indeed, this theory is constituted by specific dimensions which vary according to different authors. For example, as emphasized by Gerstner & Day (1997), for Dienesch and Liden (1986) the dimensions of LMX are "perceived contribution, loyalty and affect" (1997, p. 828) whereas Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) place

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<sup>40</sup> That does not include the theoretical definition such as *quality of relationship*, *quality of interaction*, or *quality of social exchange relationship*. I make no distinction between quality of relationship or quality of interaction.

emphasis on “the interrelated dimensions of respect, trust, and mutual obligation” (1997, p. 828)<sup>41</sup>. It is clear, then, as Avolio et al. (2003) suggest, that there is a lack of consensus for the definition of the LMX construct. This must be kept in mind during our analysis.

However, from the perspective of the relational side of leadership theory, LMX is especially interesting because of its focus on the quality of the relationship; more specifically on the measure of the quality of the exchange (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000).

## **5.2 The Leader-Member Exchange Process**

The leader-member exchange relationship “is based on the characteristics of the *working relationship* as opposed to a personal or friendship relationship” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 237). Indeed, the focal point in LMX Theory is the dyad between leader-follower. Moreover, this theory stipulates that relationships between a leader and followers differ; the leader does not have the same relationship with all subordinates (Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997). LMX is characterized by three key dimensions: leader, follower and the relationship (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The analysis of LMX can be on different levels: “For example, in the relationship domain, one can examine the relationship from the level of the group, the dyad, the individuals within the dyad, or even larger collectivities” (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 222). The transformation of LMX has continued with the development of LMX-MMX, that is to say the “new LMX–MMX theory of Sharing Network Leadership” (Graen, 2006, p. 277). More specifically, “this approach recognizes the importance of both formal and informal influences on individual, team and network flows of behavior (cf., Katz & Kahn, 1978)”. According to LMX-MMX, we have to go beyond manager-subordinate relationships and consider informal leadership in others relationships (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In sum, “LMX [is] vertical and MMX is every direction but vertical” (Graen, 2006, p. 276).

## **5.3 Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Leader-Member Exchange Theory**

Numerous studies have been published on the LMX process, on the antecedents (e.g. personality traits) of LMX, and on the consequences (e.g. work turnover) of LMX. Indeed, Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997) present a review (which is exhaustive, if not recent) of the

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<sup>41</sup> I will come back to the dimension aspect further on.

antecedents and consequences of LMX which had been previously reported by empirical research. Below, I have reproduced a table summarizing their review.

Table 4 – Reproduction of the summary of LMX variables in empirical research

Antecedants		Consequences
<p><b>member characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. ability</li> <li>. age</li> <li>. belief in company paternalism</li> <li>. education</li> <li>. gender</li> <li>. performance</li> <li>. personality               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- affectivity (positive &amp; negative)</li> <li>- growth need strength</li> <li>introversion/extroversion</li> <li>- locus of control</li> </ul> </li> <li>. race</li> <li>. upward influence               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assertiveness</li> <li>- bargaining</li> <li>- coalition</li> <li>- higher authority</li> <li>- ingratiation</li> <li>- rationality</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>leader characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. ability</li> <li>. affectivity (positive &amp; negative)</li> </ul> <p><b>interactional variables</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. demographic similarity (between leader and member)</li> <li>. expectations</li> <li>. liking</li> <li>. perceived similarity</li> <li>. personality similarity</li> </ul> <p><b>contextual variable</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. leader workload</li> <li>. leader time-based stress</li> </ul>	<p>→ <b>LMX</b> →</p>	<p><b>attitudes and perception</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. climate</li> <li>. job problems</li> <li>. leader supply of resources</li> <li>. leader support of innovation</li> <li>. organizational commitment</li> <li>. satisfaction               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- co-workers</li> <li>- pay</li> <li>- promotions</li> <li>- supervision</li> <li>- work itself</li> <li>- overall</li> </ul> </li> <li>. turnover intentions</li> <li>. upward influence               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- assertiveness</li> <li>- bargaining</li> <li>- coalition</li> <li>- higher authority</li> <li>- ingratiation</li> <li>- rationality</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>behaviors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. communication</li> <li>. innovation</li> <li>. organizational citizenship</li> <li>. performance</li> <li>. turnover</li> <li>. work activities               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- boundary spanning</li> <li>- decision making/empowerment</li> <li>- liaison</li> <li>- task variety</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>outcomes provided by the organization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. bonuses</li> <li>. career progression</li> <li>. promotions</li> <li>. salary increases</li> </ul>

As demonstrated by table 4, numerous different variables have been included in empirical research on LMX. However, not all variables have had the same impact on LMX. According to Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne, “[...] LMX has been found to be related to a variety of employee attitudes. The most consistent support has been found for the relation between LMX and overall satisfaction and supervisor satisfaction (1997, p. 67). It is not my intention to go into details regarding antecedents and consequences of LMX.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, this table illustrates well the abundance of possible variables and the possible confusion that can occur between what is what (i.e. antecedents, dimensions or consequences). “There is some ambiguity in the LMX literature as to which variables are considered **dimensions**<sup>43</sup> of LMX and which are **antecedents**” (Graen, 2005, p. 265). Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) share the same view. Moreover, we can consider consequences as antecedents that can facilitate or spoil the exchange.

Thus, relating to the specific dimensions of LMX, there is no complete consensus either. At first, it ought to be mentioned that there is more than one measure for LMX; according to Graen (2005), there are seven versions, and from two to fourteen different items. However, for Graen (2005) and Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), the seven-item measure seems to be closest to unidimensionality of the construct. Listed in the following table are the various LMX dimensions, according to the work of different authors:

Table 5 – Dimensions of Leader-Member Exchange

Dienesch & Liden (1986)	Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995) and Graen (2005)	Schriesheim, Castro, and Cogliser (1999)	Liden & Maslyn (1998)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ perceived contribution</li> <li>▪ loyalty</li> <li>▪ affect</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ respect</li> <li>▪ trust</li> <li>▪ obligation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ mutual support</li> <li>▪ trust</li> <li>▪ liking</li> <li>▪ latitude</li> <li>▪ attention</li> <li>▪ loyalty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ affect</li> <li>▪ loyalty</li> <li>▪ contribution</li> <li>▪ professional respect</li> </ul>

<sup>42</sup> It is also for this reason I am not interested to see if there is a broad consensus among authors on this list of antecedents and consequences.

<sup>43</sup> Emphasis added.



As several authors have noticed, there is an overlap among antecedents and dimensions. For example, in table 5 (see page 32), Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997)<sup>44</sup> report *liking* (interactional variables) as an antecedent whereas Schriesheim, Castro, and Cogliser (1999) put *liking* as a dimension (see table 5). Indeed, the differences between authors are rather striking. Also, *affect* is a dimension for Dienesch and Liden (1986) and Liden and Maslyn (1998) whereas Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997) report affectivity (positive and negative) as an antecedent of LMX.

#### **5.4 Leader-Member Exchange: A Relational Analysis**

In my view, LMX Theory is certainly more of a “relational theory” than Transformational and Authentic Leadership. Despite the lack of consensus (not only regarding the LMX Theory, but for others as well, as we have seen), LMX is characterised by the **process**; that is to say, by **the quality of the relationship**. Beyond the distinctions between authors upon LMX’s dimensions and antecedents, these dimensions are part of a relational perspective. Indeed, unlike Transformational or Authentic Leadership, LMX’s dimensions could actually be said to be “relational”. For example, *respect, trust, affect, liking, and mutual support* are all dimensions that contribute to the construction of the relationship. Contrary to the theories I already examined, LMX’s dimensions are a part of the process, and not simply a two dimensional analysis of the leader’s or follower’s traits or behaviors.

Thus, the new perspective of LMX-MMX of Graen (2006) suggests the idea that leadership goes beyond the leader to examine the *process* of leadership. However, although the conceptualisation of LMX refers to the quality of the exchanges or of the relationship, the understanding of the exchange process is still unclear. As Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne see it,

Although a valid criticism of all leadership research, it is remarkable how few studies have directly examined actual exchange processes between leaders and members given the theoretical centrality of social exchange process in the formation of LMX relationships (cf. Fairhurst, 1993; Fairhurst & Chandler, 1989). We feel that LMX theory can be greatly enhanced with the integrations of social exchange principles. Benefits of an exchange theory framework of LMX include a richer conceptualization of the leader-member relationship than is currently possible, as well as a means by which LMXs can be integrated within the larger network of exchanges in which the leader and

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<sup>44</sup> Notice that Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne’s table represents a review of others studies. This table is a good illustration of the overlap.

member participate (Cook & Whitmeyer, 1992). (Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne, 1997, p. 75)

I tend to agree that, beyond the purely theoretical assumption of LMX concerning the quality of the relationship, we do not yet have a complete understanding of the process. As mentioned by Gerstner and Day (1997), “LMX can be measured from both leader and member perspectives, but is it the same construct when measured from different perspectives? Empirical support for the relationship between leader LMX and member LMX has been equivocal” (p. 828). The lack of consensus concerning antecedents and dimensions of leadership, and, moreover, the lack of consensus between authors concerning the dimensions of LMX, is certainly another ambiguous point in the understanding of the process.

Nevertheless, we can state with relative certainty that LMX Theory is the most “relational theory” to date, because (1) both parties (leader and follower) are implied, (2) the dimensions of LMX participate in the building of relationship, and (3) it takes into account that relationships are different between with each subordinate. However, we remain in a perspective wherein the manager is the leader. Although the relationship is at the heart of LMX, LMX does not imply that the relationship between the manager and the subordinate builds leadership. Thus, we are not in the perspective of Day, as we seen before, where “[l]eadership emerges with the process of creating shared meaning, both in terms of *sensemaking* and in terms of *value-added*. From this approach everyone is considered to be a leader” (2001, p. 205).

## 6. Shared Leadership<sup>45</sup>

In the perspective of Shared Leadership, we see a shift from an individual perspective to a group perspective (Avolio et al., 2003; Fletcher & Käufer, 2003). The nature of modern organizations is such that we no longer work solely with professionals from the same field (e.g. engineers working with engineers,), but more within a team of varied professionals (e.g. engineers working with technicians and architects). More and more, we find ourselves in cross-functional context (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Therefore, group work is conceived more frequently in terms of multi-faceted projects rather than in terms of a single profession, or occupation. Consequently, the way of doing things in the traditional hierarchy is evolving toward teamwork (Sennett, 1998). Thus, “[l]eadership is therefore not determined **by positions and authority but rather by an**

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<sup>45</sup> Shared Leadership and (especially) Relational Leadership are recent theories. For the sake of brevity, I have chosen to omit certain aspects of these theories because (1), we have less literature and (1) they are theories in construction.

**individual's capacity to influence peers**<sup>46</sup> and by the needs of the team in any given moment” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. xi). This new perspective challenges the traditional view of leadership where leadership is associated with the manager, or where leadership is created from the hierarchical relationship. “Whereas vertical leadership entails the process of one individual projecting downward influence on individuals, shared leadership entails the process of shared influence between and among individuals.” (Pearce & Sims, 2000, p. 116) More precisely,

We define shared leadership as a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organisation goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence. The key distinction between shared leadership and traditional models of leadership is that the influence process involves more than just downward influence on subordinates by an elected leader (see Pearce & Sims, 2000, 2002). Rather, leadership is broadly distributed among a set of individuals instead of centralized in the hands of a single individual who acts in the role of a superior. (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p. 1)

In sum, the leadership is not simply relegated to a position, i.e., to a single authority, but is instead associated with the capacity of individuals to influence peers (Pearce & Conger, 2003). Thus, Shared Leadership is defined by its relational aspect and the distribution of the leadership itself, a “phenomenon occurring at different levels and dependent on social interactions and networks of influence” (Fletcher & Käufer, 2003, p. 21). Indeed, according to Fletcher and Käufer (2003, p. 24), Shared Leadership implies three shifts in leadership theory: it is “distributed and interdependent”, “embedded in social interaction”, and considered “leadership as learning”, i.e. the learning is collective.

Several theories subtend Shared Leadership. Pearce and Conger (2003) relate the historical bases of this theory; from the *Law of the Situation* —“let the situation, not the individual, determine the “orders” (p. 4)— to the *Connective Leadership* —“examines how well leaders are able to make connections to others both inside and outside the team” (p.5).

### **6.1 Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Shared Leadership**

The five dimensions of table 6 are the result of the analysis of Pearce (1997) for the measure of Shared Leadership. “The final factor solution Pearce (1997) identified included five factors, with

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<sup>46</sup> Emphasis added.

each factor representing a particular form of shared influence strategy: (1) aversive; (2) directive; (3) transactional; (4) transformational; and (5) empowering.” (Pearce & Sims, 2000, p. 124)

Below, I have reproduced a table summarizing the antecedents, dimensions and group outcomes of Shared Leadership.

Table 6 – Reproduction of the conceptual framework of Shared Leadership<sup>47</sup>

Antecedants		Group outcomes
<p><b>group characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. ability</li> <li>. personality</li> <li>. proximity</li> <li>. maturity</li> <li>. familiarity</li> <li>. diversity</li> <li>. vertical leader strategy</li> <li>. group size</li> </ul> <p><b>task characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. interconnectivity</li> <li>. creativity</li> <li>. complexity</li> <li>. criticality</li> <li>. urgency</li> </ul> <p><b>environment characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. Supports systems</li> <li>. Reward systems</li> <li>. cultural systems</li> </ul>	<p><b>Shared Leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ aversive influence</li> <li>▪ directive influence</li> <li>▪ transactional influence</li> <li>▪ transformational influence</li> <li>▪ empowering influence</li> </ul>	<p><b>group psyche</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. commitment</li> <li>. potency</li> <li>. cohesion</li> <li>. satisfaction</li> </ul> <p><b>group behavior</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. internally directed</li> <li>. externally directed</li> </ul> <p><b>group effectiveness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>. quantity</li> <li>. quality</li> <li>. etc.</li> </ul>

Beyond the information presented in this table, the authors offer no further explanation of the dimensions of Shared Leadership. Although this table does represent the theoretical framework of Shared Leadership, and its authors do indeed state the psychometric validity of this new theory, we still do not have a full understanding of its dimensions.

### 6.2 Shared Leadership: A Relational Analysis

The conceptual shift implied in Shared Leadership (the “sharing” of leadership, as its name suggests) represents a significant step toward a relational conception of leadership. Moreover,

<sup>47</sup> From Pearce and Sims (2000, p. 126).

the conception of leadership as “distributed and interdependent”, “embedded in social interaction”, and a process of “learning” brings us closer to the idea of “shared meaning” (Day, 2001). However, if the theoretical basis of Shared Leadership fits into a “relational” perspective, the mechanisms of this process are not clear. Indeed, at first sight, it seems that the group approach is the heart of the theory, rather than the interactional or the relational process. Thus, leadership can emerge from anyone within a work team, but the process by which the interactant in turn influences the leader is not considered (or not made explicit). Perhaps further development of the theory will illuminate these issues. As mentioned by Pearce and Conger, “very few empirical studies of shared leadership have appeared in the literature. Thus, we can confidently state the field is clearly still in its infancy” (2003, p. 14).

The eventual integration of Shared Leadership Theory would not necessarily entail the end of hierarchy; indeed, Peace and Sims asked some very interesting questions to be examined in future studies regarding the integration of this nascent theory:

Is the age of vertical leadership dead and gone? The issue is not vertical leadership *or* shared leadership. Rather, the issues are: (1) when is each the preferred source of influence; (2) how does one develop shared leadership; (3) how does one shift between vertical and shared leadership, and (4) under what form of vertical leadership can shared leadership flourish?. By addressing these questions we will move the field toward a true multi-level theory of leadership.” (2003, p. 135)

In sum, Shared Leadership introduces the idea that leadership is not only a hierarchical aspect. In my opinion, it is a significant contribution to the understanding of leadership. However, despite the progress of the theory in its conception of leadership as “distributed and interdependent”, “embedded in social interaction”, and a learning process, the interactional process (i.e. the influence of other interactants) in the construction of leadership is not taken into account.

## 7. Relational Leadership: An Overview

This approach, first introduced by Uhl-Bien (2006), is rather new and original. According to this author, “[w]e need to move beyond a focus on the manager–subordinate dyad or a measure of relationship quality to address the question of, **what are the relational dynamics by which leadership is developed throughout the workplace**<sup>48</sup>?” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 672)

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<sup>48</sup> Emphasis added.

At first sight, in the perspective of a relational analysis of leadership, the answer seems to be in the question. Essentially, Uhl-Bien defines Relational Leadership as “a social influence process through which emergent coordination (i.e., evolving social order) and change (e.g., new values, attitudes, approaches, behaviors, and ideologies) are constructed and produced” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 655). In other words, the social aspect is at the heart of Relational Leadership. Because changes are “constructed and produced”, everybody participates in the process. Thus, as Uhl-Bien (2006) adds, Relational Leadership is not dependent on role or hierarchical position.

Relational Leadership can be considered from two different perspectives: *entity* and *relational*. The *entity* perspective refers to “attributes of individuals as they engage in interpersonal relationships” whereas the *relational* perspective refers to “a *process of social construction* through which certain understandings of leadership come about and are given privileged ontology” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 654). For example, Uhl-Bien (2006) classifies LMX, charismatic relationships and social network (to mention only a few) in an entity perspective whereas “relational” (multiple realities) perspective, relational constructionism and Drath and Murrell's “relational leadership” in a relational perspective. Essentially, the meaning or the conceptualisation of the relationship changes according to the perspective: “The former focuses primarily on leadership in conditions of already “being organized” while the latter considers leadership as “a process of organizing” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 664). In sum, in an entity perspective the relationships are within perceptions, behaviors, cognition, etc. of the individual, whereas “relational perspectives view leadership as the processes by which social order is constructed and changed” (Hosking & Morley, 1988 as quoted by Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 664). According to Uhl-Bien the process can be considered from both perspectives.

To summarize, Uhl-Bien considers leadership as the result of a social dynamic. Members of the organization participate in “knowledge systems” through the relational dialogue (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 663).

As Uhl-Bien succinctly explains it,

[This perspective] would allow us to consider processes that are not just about the quality of the relationship or even the type of relationship, but rather about the social dynamics by which leadership relationships form and evolve in the workplace. In this way, it moves leadership beyond a focus on simply getting alignment (and productivity) or a manager's view of what is productive, to a consideration of how leadership arises through the

interactions and negotiation of social order among organizational members.  
(Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 672)

Relational Leadership is definitively a “relational” perspective of leadership. Although Uhl-Bien’s work proposes only a theoretical reflection upon the question, this theory presents a promising way of rethinking, reconceptualising, and remeasuring the social influence process in leadership. Beyond being employees, managers, leaders or followers, we are individuals; the organizations to which we happen to belong are merely systems in which individuals participate together in order to construct social order. Thus, an examination of the influence processes of these hierarchical relationships ought automatically to imply a consideration of the concomitant social interaction which unfolds.

## **8. Followership: An Overview**

Before we analyse the nature of followership, recall that *follower* is the counterpart of *leader*, and, also, that the follower represents, most often, the subordinate and the leader the superior (or the manager). However, the role of the follower is not considered in a majority of leadership theories; as mentioned by Avolio et al., many questions remain unresolved:

What have we learned so far about what constitutes exemplary followership, and how does it differ from exemplary leadership? Does followership vary as a consequence of the context? For example, does exemplary followership differ in a strong versus in a weak context (see Mischel, 1973)? How does the leader’s creation of networks among followers shape their development (Chan & Drasgow, 2001)? Do the capabilities and motivations of followers set certain limits on a leader’s developmental potential? (2003, p. 278)

However, a growing number of recent theories see the role of follower as essential in the process of leadership, that the follower is an important player within the organization (Kelley, 1992, 2004; Lundin & Lancaster, 1990; Potter, Rosenbach & Pittman, 2001; Seteroff, 2003). There is a need to include followership as a focal point in leadership models (Howell & Shamir, 2005 as quoted by Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa, 2005, Baker, 2007).

As mentioned by Baker (2007), it is the works of Kelly (1998) and Chaleff (1995) that first introduced the idea of followership in the literature. Although the follower is included in more recent studies on leadership, Baker (2007) claims that, first of all, the followership literature is limited, and secondly, that followership literature is quite distinct from the traditional leadership

literature. As I mentioned before, the most recent works aim to integrate both sides. Thus, contrary to the “traditional leadership”, tenants of the followership perspective consider that followers not only follow (i.e., stay in a passive role), but are implied in the process. Thus, the followership literature – more precisely, the idea that the follower is active in the relationship – has precipitated changes in the leadership literature. Indeed,

“[t]he theorists constructing the image of active follower shared four basic tenets of active followership theory: (a) that followers and leaders are roles, not people with inherent characteristics; (b) that followers are active, not passive; (c) that followers and leaders share a common purpose; and (d) that followers and leaders must be studied in the context of their relationship. This fourth theme has recently been re-emphasized in the leadership literature.”(Baker, 2007, p. 58)

The follower side has been studied according to different perspectives. For example (for a systematic review see Baker, 2007), the follower side can be analysed according to the Attributional Theory: i.e., the follower’s attribution upon the leader’s behavior are analysed; the Attributional Theory thus emphasizes perception. Hence, the Attributional Theory “posited the importance of recognizing leaders’ and followers’ perceptions about leadership rather than focusing solely on a leader’s traits or how he or she acted.” (Baker, 2007, p. 54) Here, the follower’s perception plays an important role upon the leader-follower relationship (Hollander, 1992).

Other studies went about describing follower characteristics in essentially the same way that previous studies had described leader characteristics. For example, Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May & Walumbwa (2005) present a “conceptual framework for authentic leader and follower development” in which the development of followership is the result of Authentic Leadership. In sum, an authentic leader, by his self-awareness (values, identity, emotions and motives/goals) and self regulations (internalized, balanced processing, relational transparency, authentic behaviour), has an influence on the development of the characteristics of the authentic follower; i.e., the self-awareness (and self regulations, values, identity, emotions and motives/goals) and self regulations (internalized, balanced processing, relational transparency, authentic behaviour). This process, in turn, has positive results for followers, such as trust, engagement, or workplace well-being. According to Baker (2007), the characteristics of an effective follower need further examination. Indeed, there are only six followership survey instruments, but those instruments need to be assessed (Baker, 2007).



This brief presentation of followership highlights the oft-neglected side of leadership: the follower. If the concept of followership is not new in the scientific literature (see among others Litzinger & Schaefer, 1982; Hollander & Webb, 1955) its integration in the leadership literature is quite recent. The most important contribution of the followership literature is its emphasis on the interdependent relationship between leader and follower. However, in my view, it is imperative to be cautious about the development of followership theory. As previously alluded to, Baker (2007) mentions that research is lacking on followers' characteristics. Thus, "[o]ther areas of followership literature that have yet to be explored include identification of the major questions and issues raised in followership theory, categorization of characteristics held by effective followers, and identification of followership models and styles. Additionally there is an opportunity for investigation and analysis of followership research" (Baker, 2007, p. 58). I believe that it is imperative that we avoid any attempt to create a portrait of a perfect follower, as others have done with traditional leadership. We have to understand the follower from a relational perspective, in a dynamic social context<sup>49</sup>. As Collinson rightly points out, "[t]he production of conformist follower selves is certainly one possible outcome of contemporary leadership dynamics. Yet is conformity inevitable? Post-structuralist writers suggest that other follower identities often emerge in organizations" (Collinson, 2006: 184). We have to keep in mind that the construction of follower identities, much like that of leader identities, is a dynamic process.

## 9. Discussion

The leadership literature is certainly vast, with numerous theories and empirical studies. I have attempted in my paper to give a brief overview of the field. Though I am aware that the present analysis is far from exhaustive, I nonetheless believe that I have contributed to our understanding of the major trends. I chose particular approaches or theories<sup>50</sup> of leadership in order to go more in depth in my analysis of how the social influence process is taken into account by different models, and from different theoretical approaches. In the following section, I will discuss briefly the following points: the notion of power in leadership, and the dynamic aspect of leadership.

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<sup>49</sup> I will come back to this idea further on.

<sup>50</sup> See above page six for the reasons for this choice.

### **9.1 Leader-Follower Relationships: The Place of Power**

Although several leadership theories take the leader-follower relationship into account, the notion of power is remains ambiguous. As Collinson illustrates,

Traditional conceptions treat power as a solely negative and repressive property exercised in a top down fashion. The foregoing writers on follower identity tend to associate power with coercion and differentiate this from leadership, which they define as an influence process that mobilizes others in the attainment of collective goals. Understanding leadership as a positive process of disproportionate social influence, they distinguish between influence (where followership is voluntary) and power (where followers are coerced into compliance or obedience). (Collinson, 2006, p. 181-182)

However, Collinson adds that the post-structuralist rejects this opposition between power and influence as the negative view of power. Nevertheless, it is a fact that the distinction between leadership and power represents a central question, and a thorny one at that.

The notion of power is at the heart of the hierarchical relationship. As mentioned by Marc & Picard (2000), any hierarchical relationship involves a “high” and a “low” position. Though the hierarchical position or the status (i.e. manager or employee) can give power, power is more complex than this. According to Bernoux (1999), power can be defined as the capacity of an actor<sup>51</sup> (an individual), within the relationship with the other, to see to it that the terms of an exchange are favourable to him. It is a matter of mobilizing available **resources** in a relationship.<sup>52</sup> For Clegg (1990) as well, the **possession of resources** is what gives power; however, the nature of the resources change according to need. For example, an individual can have relational resources (for example, he has more information about a contract with a client because he has a friendship with the chief executive officer); this type of resource gives him more power. Another type of power is related to what we may call **influence resources**; in this case, the power is in the hands of the keeper of influence, and does not necessarily depend solely upon hierarchical position. Indeed, as the preceding examples illustrate, the **capacity to influence** depends upon much more than mere hierarchical position (Anonymous, 1998)<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>51</sup> In sociology, the term “actor” replaces the term “individual”.

<sup>52</sup> Free translation from French.

<sup>53</sup> Free translation from French.

In a context where there is more and more teamwork (i.e., as in Shared Leadership) rather a bureaucratic system (where hierarchy is more important), the capacity of influence becomes of even greater interest. In this new context, the nature of power may have changed in that it is more fragmented amongst individuals (see Sennett, 1998); however, power is still present and just as important. For example, Collinson (2006) mentions that employees' resistance represents a form of power for followers. Thus, this resistance can be a formidable form of influence. This form of power is certainly an important element in the process of leadership, as it concerns the building of the relationship between the leader and the follower.

The fact is that neither the notion of power nor the role that it plays is made explicit in the existing theories or models of leadership. For example, in Fiedler's Contingency Theory (see above), there are three "contingency dimensions" that serve to define the situation the leader faces: The leader-member relations, the task structure, and the position of power. Although power is indeed considered, it is considered solely from the viewpoint of either the manager or employee, and does not take into account the dynamic capacity of influence of both parties involved.

If leadership is a social influence process, and if power is the capacity of influence, we might wonder, as does Collinson (2006), if we are simply looking at two sides of the same coin: the positive and negative sides of the same construct. However, power is a complex concept and represents a slippery slope, and I will develop further on this concept within the framework of my dissertation, because power is inextricably linked to hierarchical relationships.

## ***9.2 Toward a Dynamic Leadership Process***

I believe we must distinguish leadership in a political context from leadership in an organizational context. Indeed, the term "heroic," as it is used by some authors (e.g. Pearce & Sims, 2000)<sup>54</sup>, paints a picture of a "heroic leader" with charisma, vision, self-confidence, and who is moral and ethical; from my viewpoint, this picture is a **static** one. In politics, the influence of the "leader" upon citizens is mainly centered on the leader's characteristics, traits, and behaviors. However, the citizens are in a passive role, are not in interactional relationships.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Also, Post-Heroic is another model of leadership (Fletcher, 2004).

<sup>55</sup> Although the media and public opinion constitute a form of interactant, the nature of interaction is definitively different, not interpersonal (face-to-face).

Conversely, in an organizational context, we are in a **dynamic** social context with the following proponents: the leader, the follower, and the organization. Although an analysis of traits and characteristics is necessary to understand the way in which an individual influences others toward a goal, these traits or these behaviors can change according to the work context (according to the interactions) or according to the individual (follower). Thus, an analysis of the *process* by which an individual succeeds in influencing others seems to yield richer results than mere characteristics, traits or behaviors of an individual. As we have seen, there are not only differences between models, but, also, there is often a lack of consensus between authors for the same model. Thus, I think the issue with the nature and the “place” of antecedents, dimensions, and consequences in the models of leadership represents a blind alley. To examine leadership by analysing its antecedants, dimensions or consequences is to miss the forest for the trees. The process can change like social ties change, but the basis stays the same. As Sias et al. put it, “[s]uch a conceptualization emphasizes the dynamic nature of relationships, yet recognizes stability (patterned behavior over time) within that dynamism” (Sias, Krone, & Jablin, 2002, p. 616). Furthermore, Uhl-Bien notes that the “critical factor to understand throughout this discussion, however, is that a key difference between relational leadership study and more traditional approaches is the recognition that leadership is relational, and cannot be captured by examination of individual attributes alone” (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 671).

Future researchers should conduct more longitudinal studies. By these types of studies, we can have a better understanding of the process, i.e., the building of the social influence process of an individual and the impact on others. Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne, referring to the conceptualization of LMX within a laboratory setting, illustrate my affirmation with similar observations:

Another major concern with the laboratory setting is that the leader-member dyads exist for a short period of time. Because the leader and the member are not dependant on each other in the long term, the benefits of developing a high-quality exchange or the costs of not developing such an exchange may be minor. This is typically not true for leader-member dyads in organizations. Again, the implication is that the results of laboratory experiments on LMX may not generalize to LMX relationships in organizations. (1997, p. 51).

If it is certainly difficult to examine a relationship or dyad in a laboratory setting, I think we can suppose the same conclusion in an organizational context. The relationships between individuals are dynamic; during the stages of its evolution, a relationship can be modified several

times. Thus, longitudinal studies can illuminate how an individual becomes a leader through interactional processes.

However, over the last few years, researchers have sought both to reconstruct and deconstruct theories of leadership. My viewpoint is that we are experiencing a theoretical reorientation, the majority of authors trying to reconceptualize the notion of leadership of several social theories. Indeed, more and more recent articles are interested in the redefinition of the theoretical foundation of leadership; for example, Relational Leadership with Uhl-Bien (2006), how a theory of social networks can “read” the leadership theory (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006), or a theory of identity to seize the leader phenomenon (Day & Harrison, 2007). In sum, certain models focus on the behaviors and traits of leaders and followers, whereas other models focus on the process (particularly Relational Leadership). In the last issue of *Human Resource Management Review*, Pearce writes that:

Some focus on leaders occupying roles, while others focus on leadership as a process. Some document current best practices, while others offer agendas for future research. Some focus on lower to mid-hierarchical levels, while others focus on executive levels and yet others identify cross-level issues. Some focus on capacities, capabilities and behaviors while others focus on physical and spiritual dimensions of leadership. What they all have in common, however, is a deep and profound grounding on the historical research foundations of leader and leadership development. Interestingly, in juxtaposition to the deep grounding of the articles that comprise this special issue is the fresh tilling of new, rich and fertile soil for cultivating our next generations of leaders in multi and varied organizational contexts.” (2007, p. 1-2)

Obviously, however, the organizational context changes rapidly, and these changes bring new forms of social ties. As we have seen with Shared Leadership Theory, the new reality of work involves more and more teamwork, where social ties are necessarily in a process of redefinition. However, although these social ties are in constant redefinition, individuals are still in interaction. This social influence process can take different forms (e.g. the introduction of Information and Communications Technology changes the nature of human interaction), but these forms are always built by the social interaction. Thus, a manager can have all the competencies and traits required to be the best leader, but if the team members (i.e., the followers) of this leader do not recognize, or do not interpret these competencies and traits as leadership influence, this manager will have greater difficulty acquiring the status of leader. Obviously, a majority of

theories include the importance of context in the exercise of leadership, but not in a perspective of a co-construction of that leadership.

As for identity (see Dubar, 1998), I think leadership is characterized not only by a manager's traits, but by an aspect that is constructed by the individual and others, and, also, the social context. The point here is not to claim that leadership is equal to identity, but, rather, that leadership, in a work context, is a result of social interactions between all workers. According to Mead (1962), the concept of *Self* is, in large part, the result of how individuals themselves perceive the perspective of others, and the fruit of their interactions. The fact that more and more researchers claim to have a multi-level analysis perspective reflects the trend to move toward an interactional model, a model where the *social influence process* is constructed by the workers. Moreover, we can wonder if these leadership theories are a framework for a functionalist paradigm. Bresnen makes the same observation, but, more specifically, from the perspective of attribution (Attributional Theory) in the understanding of leadership. "On the one hand, attribution-based approaches tend to remain firmly within the functionalist paradigm-understating the complexity of interpretations of leadership and effectively ignoring the impact of broader social relations. On the other hand, more radical perspectives tend to ignore the multiplicity of meanings attached to the concept of leadership and underplay the role of subjectivity and agency." (Bresnen, 1995: p. 511). Finally, the majority of leadership models and theories propose a description of a "good" leader, and, very soon no doubt, a "good" follower. Thus, a large number of leadership models are prescriptive. If our conception of leadership emerges from interactions and relationships between workers, it would be risky to "prescribe" a model leader with the best practices, the best behaviors, indeed the best personality.

Despite a certain amount of progress, we must conclude by saying that there is considerable work left to be done on the definition of leadership. To borrow from Graen and Uhl-Bien, "[d]espite many years of leadership research and thousands of studies, we still do not have a clear understanding of what leadership is and how it can be achieved. In particular, there appear to be many theories that address different aspects of leadership but little cohesion among the theories that help us understand how they all tie together" (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995, p. 221).

## Conclusion

I have presented a brief overview of the leadership literature, and I have examined in depth certain theories from a “relational” approach. We have seen that Transformational Leadership and Authentic Leadership present, essentially, a portrait of the leader’s characteristics. The Leader-Member Exchange Theory and Shared Leadership, however, are more conducive to a relational approach. Indeed, in the LMX perspective, both parties (leader and follower) are implied; the dimensions of LMX account for the building of relationship, and it takes into account that relationships differ from one subordinate to the next. Furthermore, Shared Leadership goes farther than LMX, in that it introduces the idea that leadership is not merely a hierarchical relationship. However, despite the progress of these theories (or models), the interactional process (i.e. the influence of other interactants) in the construction of leadership is not taken into account. As for Relational Leadership, it is definitively a “relational” approach to leadership; this theory presents a promising way of rethinking, reconceptualising, and remeasuring the social influence process in leadership. I also presented an overview of the followership concept: although this concept is relatively recent (although some authors have included this concept a long time ago), the literature on followership will be very relevant to understand this neglected side of the leader-follower relationship. However, it will be essential not to fall into the trap of a descriptive or *prescriptive* model of the “good” follower.

In light of what I have shown, we can see that the majority of the literature on leadership expresses a prescriptive approach which focuses on the leader’s traits or behaviors rather than on the process of leadership. Moreover, the role of the follower has been ignored in almost all theories/models. Furthermore, it will be important to introduce and analyse the *social influence process* in light of the literature on power.

The most recent theories are more concerned with an assessment and an understanding of the *process* of leadership. Relational Leadership goes even further with the idea that this “individual’s capacity to influence” is the result of a social dynamic. Relational Leadership, as its name suggests, certainly represents the most “relational” theoretical model, and is perhaps the most promising model to date to further our understanding of the nature of leadership. Thus, we ought to begin work on the operationalization of certain key concepts within this theory, work which should be inspired by other theories which can serve as a blueprint for the Relational Leadership Theory.

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