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#### INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The ever-increasing awareness by businesses in every part of the world that distant organizations and distant events affect their own activities is driving new thinking about leadership just as it has affected all areas of business. Corporate-level leaders--chief executives and top-level management teams--find themselves challenged by a broad array of strategic alternatives for engaging in global competition. Leaders at all organization levels find themselves concerned with matters of multicultural relations and whether, what, and how cross-border learnings may be possible. Scholars working with international leadership find motivation for their research in these pressing problems. They grapple with questions of how far scientific social research can take us, and how the organization science ideas and methods developed in the United States and other technologically-advanced societies can be used elsewhere in the world. In this article, we deal with the kinds of efforts underway to deal with tensions between global consistency and local uniqueness in the nature and exercise of phenomena related to what social scientists have come to analyze under the label "leadership." These tensions affect scholarly exchange no less than they affect multinational management. This article offers a context for this focus for both international leadership research, in general, and the work in this special issue, in particular.

#### BACKGROUND

"Leadership?" What global sense can one make of the label "leadership" as it typically appears in Leadership Quarterly articles? Does an "international leadership" journal or

special issue rest upon a presumptuous oxymoron that contributes nothing more than yet another example of American academic colonialism?

"Global" Leadership? Even if "leadership" has some residue of meaning that can somehow transcend its English language usage, what possible motives could there be to investigate it in various parts of the world?

Scientific Leadership Research? Why presume to make our leadership investigations "Scientific?" What aspects of social experience can be represented by social "science" anyway? Has the role of social science not become sufficiently narrow and anachronistic even in the post-modern West that imposing it on other societies exceeds presumption?

Exporting Technologically Biased American Social Science? If there is room for social science, to what extent and in what way can theory biased by idiosyncrasies of the United States inform even other societies valuing highly complex, sophisticated technology and social science? What about the social science hegemony of American institutions and journals? If the relevance of social science to other technologically developed societies is questionable, how much more so is its relevance for emerging market economies and the developing world?

## INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEMES

International leadership scholars face the above four questions, among others. Each of the four taken alone is daunting. The last two, when generalized beyond leadership, are among the most daunting current questions facing the social sciences as a whole. The four as a set present scholars with a formidable challenge. In this article, we start by considering ways in which these four questions are being answered in international leadership research. An overview of possible directions for answers is shown in Table 1.

The discussion that follows begins by outlining these possible directions with particular attention to the fourth--ways in which the heritage of academic leadership research, particularly U.S. leadership research, does and does not reflect global leadership concerns as compared to U.S. academic uniqueness. We conclude by considering the current status and future of international leadership research.

### The Idea of Leadership

How can one create a global meaning for "leadership" either to fit precisely a particular leadership theory or to circumscribe a family of scientific concepts? (House & Wright, in press). "Leadership" can be used to draw attention to individuals who take initiatives that are followed by others and, in so doing, hold a disproportionate influence over some element of a group's or community's activities and resources for at least some period of time. Given this rough description of elements typical in the American use of the word, there are two directions that can be taken for arguing that some sort of leadership concept has global relevance. One is to look for evidence of a global spread of institutionalized social constructions about leaders and leadership. A second direction is to consider

whether the inherent qualities of social situations, in general, and organization settings, in particular, generate a functional need for some kind of leadership-like phenomenon. Let us consider these directions.

### Institutional Commonalties Underlying Leadership Theory

Institutional theory explains how imitation, social obligation, and coercion serve to transfer established patterns of action and thought (Scott, 1995, pp. 33-45). History provides evidence for broad international institutionalization of leadership-like ideas, although there is also evidence for unique qualities in the leadership role as institutionalized in the United States. The way powerful individuals conduct themselves has occupied attention in diverse societies throughout history. Reviews of international leadership research follow the recent history of leadership theory through various stages principally in the United States and secondarily in Europe and elsewhere (Bass, 1990; Dorfman, 1996; House & Wright, in press). However, the history of leadership concepts begins much earlier (Bass, 1990, ch. 1; Bass et al., 1979). It is this earlier history that provides a sense of institutional transmission of related concepts.

Greek accounts of legendary heroes like Odysseus (Homer, trans. 1871), and Plutarch's (trans. 1910) portraits of leading Greek and Roman citizens shape the Western leadership tradition brought into Renaissance focus by Machiavelli (1513/1977). Plato (trans. 1937) portrays Socrates as a moral "John Wayne" who with conviction stood his ground against a wilderness of unenlightened legislators who had no authority over his beliefs. Unlike our Western hero, he ultimately accepted the legitimacy of the state's authority over his life. Ancient Israel's struggles to live within social structures guided by judicially or theoretically administered law (the Biblical book of Judges) gave way to the anointing of an individual, visible leader--a king (I and II Samuel) with mixed results (I and II Kings and I and II Chronicles).

The central role in societal leadership of formal state, military, and economic leaders gives way to the servant leadership of the godly person following the example of Christ and the New Testament teachings about church leadership. The dynamic between potentially malevolent, overly empowered authority versus the benevolent, empowering servant leader (Covey, 1989) has been worked out in church and government from ancient times through the present. Debates in Western societies about the various forms and approaches to leadership currently institutionalized in organizations of all sorts continue to be fueled by this common ancient history.

The Renaissance and Reformation social processes that developed variously in Northern and Southern Europe conjoined church traditions with renewed analysis of Biblical examples and the stimulus toward rational and empirical thought stimulated by ancient philosophy. Post-medieval thought about leadership arose from debates about how powerful individuals should and did conduct themselves. One set of questions focused on the dynamic between Middle Ages theology now re-confronted with ancient philosophy and classical examples. Did the precedents and teachings of Israel, Greece and Rome support the divine right of kings and willing subjection to land and business owners? Or

did they instead support an enforced subjection of powerful parties to a larger collective good, and the enactment of leadership roles as servant to followers? Through the early Renaissance, these questions could be most legitimately addressed by arguing from ancient texts.

Machiavelli (1513/1977) added another element to the debate. His contribution is only partly in the particular models of leadership he outlined in *The Prince*. Methodologically, this and Machiavelli's subsequent works mark a transition from normative, rationalistic leadership theory linked to ancient texts to descriptive theory, illustrated by both ancient and contemporary empirical case analysis (Palmer & Colton, 1992, pp. 61-2). His work and his line of thought increased the force of empirical argument about social process. Into the broil of debate, empirical data could be tossed. What is to be concluded not only from the mix of good and bad kings in ancient Israel, the mix of good and bad citizen leaders portrayed in ancient history, but also from the mix of good and bad power holders of all sorts in contemporary European history? He drew from all of these sources.

These leadership questions are part of a common heritage in Western society and the large portion of the world affected by it through colonialism, evangelism, trade, and spreading industrialization. The institutional process of imitation can occur because these leadership examples are long and broadly available as models. In some instances, a particular country or region has added social obligation or coercive elements to the institutional process. Models supporting democratic constraint of government leaders, for example, can be mandated and normatively supported by highlighting historical examples showing dysfunctions of competing alternative models. Much of the world shares an institutionalized tradition that empiricism is an element in debate about all social issues, including leadership. The extent to which this tradition is institutionalized is reflected in its transparency to us--we now see no other option.

Other non-Western civilizations had institutionalized leadership models before industrial times. A few shared with the West the use of written communication to coerce compliance, communicate norms, and promote imitation. The self-identity of one such society is the "central kingdom," but is known in English as China. Much of the political-intellectual dynamic of ancient China focused upon Confucian moral leadership implemented by a powerful elite (e.g., Confucius, trans. 1938, p. 88). This morality is set against the unique pacifism of Taoism which takes the position that elite leaders who impose a morality on society accomplish nothing but conflict and war (e.g., Lao Tzu, trans. 1963, p. 118; Welch, 1957). Confucian thought continues to affect various Chinese cultures in their global Diaspora in various ways. It remains evident in mainland China despite the vigorous, direct confrontation with agrarian communism through China's cultural revolution (Kort, 1994). This confrontation bears analogy to that between the classical and religious Western traditions noted above and the response of technological communism to modernization in the Soviet Union (Daniels, 1985, pp. 75-81). Institutionalized leadership-like ideas certainly has occurred within the extended Chinese community (Peterson, 1988) and is evident today in its interchanges with non-Chinese societies. Over time, similar interchanges are increasing with Arab, Hindu and other societies with distinctive heritages of leadership-like concepts.

## Functional Evidence for Commonality and Uniqueness

There were certainly exchanges providing opportunities for institutional influence between Europe and China before modern times; however, an institutional argument that one of these societies determined the nature of leadership in the other is unlikely. The simultaneous appearance of social institutions like government, organized religion, and a significant role for individual leaders argues that there may well be something about people in complex organizations that provides a social value in having "leaders." This is a "functional" argument (Malinowski, 1939/1944). The argument that leaders of some sort often arise to fulfill a basic social function is supported by ideas arising in much of the world. Concern with the conduct of powerful parties and influence of leaders is not peculiar to societies affected by a Western or Chinese heritage. The Melanesian "bigman" is an individual who uses a disproportionate control of resources to engage in gift exchanges sustaining his own political-economic influence and supporting societal stability (Stewart, 1990). Bass (1990, ch. 1) develops examples from other non-industrial societies. The individual leader's role is well understood within that social context, and the way the leader conducts the role is a matter of societal concern.

## Implications for Definitions

But when we use "leader" to refer to key figures in Chinese society and in Melanesia, are we subtly using American ideas where they do not belong? In part, we are. The especially frequent use of the labels "leader" and "leadership" and many of their connotations are distinctly if not uniquely American. Americans have been argued to have a "romantic" attachment to leaders that overplays their influence (Meindl, Ehrlich, & Dukerich, 1985; Meindl & Ehrlich, 1987). However, the common heritage of Western European cultures and others influenced by them, and the apparent functional value found for key individuals in many societies, suggests that interest in how powerful parties conduct themselves is not narrowly American. The significance of particularly powerful individuals may be culturally variable, but the social processes of influencing the way events are given meaning (Smith & Peterson, 1988) appears not to be the result of an individualism unique to the classical and religious traditions of U.S. or even of Western societies.

The answer, then, to the question of whether "leadership" has a global meaning that extends beyond its typical English language or American use also has been a qualified "yes" by many international leadership scholars. The qualification is that international concerns support a particular choice of how to construct social science terms like leadership. One typical approach when defining terms is to take a common idea like leadership, look carefully at the ordinary usage and our own intuitive sense of the word, then make the meaning explicit in a formal definition. This approach to definition was popularized by essayists since the Renaissance (Najemy, 1993) and is a firm part of the Western tradition in social thought. It is, in effect, a sort of hermeneutic approach to explicating the tacit, but institutionalized, social constructions in general discourse. This approach may well be optimal for creating terms that will communicate intuitively to

managers or other participants in a particular community. However, the approach also produces a highly community-bound and language-bound social science. Constructing social science terms for global use makes this approach impracticable, at least as a standalone method.

The second approach is to use analyses of culture-specific scientific concepts as a starting point. We can then allow analyses conducted in several societies and circumstances to drive us toward a more basic construct that we hope will find broad utility and require only modest modification to communicate well in a particular society. As discussed above, global or large-scale institutionalized meanings and practices and functional commonalities of human nature, social necessity, and techno-organizational imperatives suggest that the search for such constructs is likely to be worthwhile.

The above approach to developing terms is often used by the international leadership scholars, most of whom do not offer analyses of the word "leadership." Instead, the intuitive English language word "leadership" and its various formal definitions tends to drive these scholars toward various aspects of basic theory. These include leadership-related ideas of power and resource possession differences among people, initiatives in social interpretation, sensemaking, or shaping meanings, and the place of individuals among social control options like law, the collective, informal norms, and the person. Other leadership-related topics are those built into such organization properties as differentiation, integration, boundedness, and the varying skills individuals have to contribute towards handling the dynamics arising from these basic properties. Hence, either institutionalized practice or basic problems of human beings in society and in large scale organizations imply that "leadership" and the international mission of Leadership Quarterly can be given meanings that transcend the uniqueness of English-speaking countries. The American concept of leadership helps identify the domain within which international leadership scholars write, while attempting to use concepts not constrained to the United States.

#### Studying leadership Globally: MNC Management, Comparative and Intercultural Rationales

Turning now to the second of our four opening questions, three types of motives are evident for studying the leadership-related concepts represented in this special issue. These motives are linked to the evolution of multinational corporations, reasons for comparing social processes in different parts of the world, and a variety of issues in intercultural negotiation and collaboration. Motives of each sort have evolved along with the tremendous expansion of organization studies beginning after the close of World War II (WWII). International businesses changed quite substantially (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1995; Perlmutter, 1969).

The problem of multinational management began principally as one of how expatriates from one country, notably the United States, could provide leadership for a population abroad (Haire, Ghiselli, & Porter, 1966). The central issues at that time for comparative management included the Cold War problem of (a) which competing socio-economic

system provides the best solution to the technical and social problems of industrialized society and (b) what learnings could experiences with leadership and authority in one society provide for others (Harbison & Myers, 1959; Tannenbaum, Kavcic, Rosner, Vianello, & Wieser, 1974). For example, Tannenbaum and colleagues (1974) ask whether the kibbutzim model or the participative, employee-owned company provides a marketfriendly approach to handling the problems of collectivity that are of such central concern in socialist societies. Issues of intercultural relations were closely linked to problems of multinational management and socio-economic system comparison. These are by no means the driving problems for international leadership research today. Research based on these earlier motives helps provide the backdrop for much current international leadership work; however, the literature diverges from such earlier work because of changes in topics of concern as well as changes in concept and method.

### MNC Management

The central current problem facing multinational organizations is that the scope of their operations provides the potential for both cross-product and cross-border synergies, but there are tremendous leadership challenges which mitigate against realizing both potentials simultaneously (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1995; Prahalad & Doz, 1987). Bartlett and Ghoshal (1995) have assembled a set of Harvard case studies into a popular international management text that highlights the alternative approaches that organizations and their leaders can take toward global competition. These alternatives vary from the role that CEOs of the Body Shop and the Swedish furniture store chain IKEA have taken in leading the replication of equivalent business practices around the world, through the highly delegatory leadership practice of Kentucky Fried Chicken in its early days of international expansion, to the executive leadership needed in a company like Philips Electronics that seeks cross-border learnings. Key to these cases is not only the problem of CEO leadership, but persistent problems in leadership through multicultural teams of executives. Although all organizations seeking management innovations can find options from sources outside their own borders, organizations that operate across many societies find such learnings strategically central.

### Comparative Management

Cross-border learning is not restricted to MNCs. Comparative research can indicate opportunities in foreign business practices and help managers assess whether and how these practices are adaptable to their own use. The interest in analyzing dissimilar cultures to provide a lens for looking anew at ones own culture and to unearth previously unconsidered options extends back to Margaret Mead's analysis of Samoan society (Mead, 1939, pp. 7-18). For example, like comparative management research in general, comparative leadership research in the 1980s was dominated by the theme, "Can Japanese management be applied in the United States?" (Peng, Peterson, & Shyi, 1991). Even in the 1950s (Harbison & Myers, 1959), scholars recognized that Japan was seeking options in the exotic West, and the gaze was now being returned from the West to the exotic East. The motives for the intense attention to Japan combined an interest in the pragmatics of Japan's success with Japan as a sort of experimental treatment condition in

the laboratory of global technology spread. It was the extreme group that strikingly called into question whether technology really overwhelms and subordinates culture to drive management practice (e.g., Bird & Wiersma, 1996; Campbell & Stanley, 1963; Child, 1981; Lincoln & Kalleberg, 1990; Tayeb, 1988).

An equally substantial pragmatic question with theoretical overtones today has become, "Where can China, Latin America, and central Europe look for options?" Or would looking outside to the historically very different situations of technologically-advanced countries prove too problematic? Should societies seeking technological and economic development search their own souls by looking in a radically creative way to the logic of their own situation and the true requirements of technology, freed from practices institutionalized elsewhere?

### Intercultural Management

Comparative articles also provide part of the base for anticipating the dynamics of intercultural interactions. However, applying comparative research to intercultural analysis carries a risk. The risk comes in extrapolating how parties will interact in intercultural situations based solely on an analysis of their respective within-culture dynamics (e.g., Adler, 1983b; Peterson, Brannen, & Smith, 1994). To the extent that interactions are affected by the participants' cultures of origin, there is reason to continue to look for potential synergies provided by particular cultural combinations (Maznevski & Peterson, 1997). Analyses of intercultural relations in general apart from the particular cultures that are interacting is also limited. A hybrid of the cross-border learning and intercultural dynamics reasons for comparative research appears when cross-border learnings are between facilities owned by the same organization, as in the case of managing foreign direct investments (FDIs).

The answer to the second of our four questions, then, is that international analyses of leadership are currently needed for reasons of multinational management, cross-border learning about management practice, and intercultural relations. In the form that they appear today, these motives differ from those of much research that provides their background. Some limitations in applying earlier studies to leadership in modern multinational corporations or to current problems of comparative management are due to differences between the motives underlying that earlier work and current concerns.

### Studying Leadership Scientifically

In response to our third question, literature about the family of leadership concepts written to meet the three purposes described above has taken diverse forms. Many of these are not intended to be closely informed by science. Walter Scott's Waverly novels find heroic leaders in the history of Scotland's relationship to England. Mark Twain (1874/ 1917, ch. 46) critiques the leadership these images provided and the heroic culture they represent as having had a de-modernizing effect on the American south. Ionesco's absurdist plays question the value of leaders at all (Coe, 1970). Star Trek provides screenplays using hypothetical futures to explore implications of alternative leader



models. Then there is the American comic strip Dilbert (Adams, 1996). With all this richness, wherein lies the value of social science?

In spite of the above concerns, much of the current international leadership literature tends to be scientific. It finds value in applying a formal, explicit language of concepts and relationships together with carefully described, systematic methods that combine reason and observation to understand a phenomenon. While the literature does not follow Machiavelli in the political sense, it shares the combination of literature base, rationality, and empiricism that he and his contemporaries stimulated. To different degrees, it is either the method followed or the results obtained that the literature presents as providing the best learning opportunity. Compared to non-scientific alternatives, the literature leans more toward what has demonstrably happened, why has it happened, and might something like it happen again?

Controversies abound about the role of social science. In international social science, these controversies are typically framed around "etic" and "emic" research and theory. This pair of concepts has for several decades been central to debates about theory and method in anthropology (Harris, 1990) and cross-cultural psychology (Berry, 1990) about whether and how to generalize from one setting to another. As in international social science at large, these terms are used in subtly different ways in current international leadership studies.

The distinction between etic and emic theory and method originated in one that Pike (1954/1967) first made in studying linguistics. He wanted to find ways to help generalize first from the basic structure of sounds people make to grammar structures, and then from verbal behavior to behavior in general. Says Pike, "An emic unit, in my view, is a physical or mental item or system treated by insiders as relevant to their system of behavior and as the same emic unit in spite of etic variability" (Pike, 1990, p. 28). The words "treated as" are a frequently overlooked key--insiders may well be unable to explicitly identify or explain the cues to which they respond. Etic theory, on the other hand, is the comprehensive, structured set of taxonomies and links among concepts with which one can begin to analyze events in a new setting.

The etic and emic concepts are used to raise questions both about the extent to which social experience can be represented scientifically, and also about the problem of transferring the application of scientific concepts from one society to another. If we are to use a formal, explicit scientific language, how can we free it, if at all, from its culture of origin and use it elsewhere? Should the ideal method for international social science be one that somehow builds from the ground up in each new society one studies, and leaves the transfer of concepts between societies as a secondary matter? Or should the ideal method be to seek general concepts and find specific relationships that treat "country" as contingency? Some scholars identify squarely with the first approach, others with the second approach (Erez, 1990), while still others seem to move back and forth (Triandis, 1990).

The three risks in taking etic theory into a new setting are irrelevance, confusion, and omission. As a leadership example, a concept that we have found hard to communicate in the United States is the Japanese concept of "pressure" from a superior (Peterson, Peng, & Smith, in press). Seeking to analyze pressure from a leader can be viewed as irrelevant to modern U.S. leadership processes. Institutionalized through the Northern European Renaissance was the rejection of strong leadership. It is not part of the leader role to pressure subordinates. Pressure is not leadership. Period. To many Americans, the concept is irrelevant. Second, the nuances of the concept in its original cultural context can be confused with the nuances of related concepts. In the Japanese setting, one natural, reasonable association of pressure from a leader is that the leader is communicating a genuine threat from outside, an external pressure (Misumi, 1985; Peterson, Peng, & Smith, in press).

Communicating external threat, then, evokes social processes of collective self-protection. While these processes can also occur in the United States, pressure there is more naturally associated with management greed, inconsiderateness, or ineptness. Without careful leadership and a bit of charisma, a leader's appeal to "real" external threat is likely to be met with suspicion. Third, if one were to take U.S. leadership concepts into Japan without adequately representing pressure among them, a serious problem of omission of a key leadership component would limit the predictive power of the research.

One also takes a risk when not using an etic starting point. Pike's position has been that etic theory can help expose elements of emic meaning, particularly those that are not easy for insiders to articulate. The ability of insiders to help outsiders understand an inside perspective is debated. One line of anthropological work has long taken the position that insiders are often quite self-conscious of norms and values and able to articulate them (Murdock, 1940). Harris (1990) points out various reasons for disconnects to occur between insiders' reports of what they do and what they actually do. His view favors observers' ability to learn more by imposing concepts from outside and looking for their reflection in insiders' behavior. Implicit in discussions of the etic-emic dynamic, each empirical experience augments etic theory and makes more comprehensive the etic starting point for analyzing each subsequent new situation.

In linguistics, Pike felt that he had eventually provided an etic taxonomy that comprehends all possible sounds that a human being can make. In that field, then, emic analysis of sounds in any one setting is a subset of a larger etic theory. In other areas of social behavior like leadership, however, it is unlikely that a comprehensive taxonomy will ever be developed. The problem of studying emic leadership meanings for a particular society will always have some element of fundamental new discovery.

One way of dealing with the above concerns is to use a systematic structure built from some combination of social science disciplines to analyze leadership. However, unlike many articles in scholarly social science journals, including many dealing with cultural themes (Peng, Peterson, & Shyi, 1990), it often is helpful to supplement the most highly structured, typically quantitative portion of one's analysis with a description of cultural context. The descriptions of context themselves certainly require structure and

abstraction, and abstraction that is likely to be frustratingly incomplete. The problem of giving the cultural or other context needed to understand systematic analysis is an awkward one (Mohr, 1982; Peterson, Elliott, Bliese, & Radfor, 1996) and requires providing adequate framing for scholars' abstractions. Hence, for many, the answer to the third question is that social science--at least when done with humility and a recognition of the limitations inherent not only in quantification, but also in all formal scientific analysis--has a useful place.

### Technological and U.S. Biases in Leadership Theory

The first of the four questions challenging international leadership scholars was whether the basic concept of leadership has any application outside the United States. Their answer is that the label "leadership" points to concepts that have broad relevance. This answer, however, does not necessarily mean that a particular set of established concepts, theories, or lines of empirical research based on them have broad application. United States culture still may be having a disproportionate influence on theeric concepts and expected empirical relationships that are used as a starting point for too many analyses of other societies.

But what does it mean for a theory to be American? Does "American theory" have the benign meaning that a theory was developed in a technologically-developed society rooted in a Western heritage that has had substantial resources to support systematic social science? Or is the meaning more insidious?

One might argue that the strong American influence on social science is incidental. Technological development and social science may be naturally related. Physical science has provided the grist for technological development. Social science has at least occasionally had a similar role in helping to develop management technologies. For example, participation programs evolved through active cooperation of scholars with a few business leaders (e.g., Likert's association with General Motors) and business-funded foundations (e.g., Ford, Rockefeller). Perhaps social science research, as science, is only modestly affected by the nationality of social scientists. Some argue that it has been easier to apply American scholars' work abroad than in the United States (Harbison & Myers, 1959; Smith & Peterson, 1988, pp. 156-168; Triandis, 1990, p. 107). Does this not suggest that U.S. social science is culturally neutral?

However, the critique that a theory is too American is rarely so benign. "American" and "Western" are certainly not synonymous with "technological." Compared to Europe and China, the United States had a "greenfield site" experience of introducing industrial technology to a frontier society. Social change was less significant than social invention. Indigenous societies were destroyed and replaced rather than changed in the European sense. Managers familiar with the far simpler problem of organization redesign recognize that starting "from scratch" presents fewer problems. Many specifics of American leadership concepts and models, then, are likely to reflect quite a bit more than decontextualized industrial technology.

The partial overlap and partial separation between America's national uniqueness and the generality inherent in its institutional heritage and functional response to technology raises several questions. When social science takes leadership within organizations in an industrialized country as its object, what is really being studied? Is it leadership as it inherently appears in organizations regardless of the culture being studied? Is it leadership as it has emerged in a particular society's culture regardless of the organization that is being studied? Is it some combination of these two? And if the last, can the combination be disentangled?

#### Normative Leadership Theory: Do American Theories Apply in America?

Controversies about these sorts of questions are now well known in organization studies (Adler, 1983a, 1983b). In some instances, they are presented as challenges to the generalized application of managerial technologies--normative theories--that originate in one country, typically the United States. This is Hofstede's (1980a) main point when he raises the question of whether U.S. management theories apply abroad. In other instances, they are presented as challenges to the generalized application of social science ideas--descriptive/analytic theories and concepts--that originate outside the country of application (Boyacigiller & Adler, 1991 ). This second challenge includes the question of the emic meaning in other societies of an eric developed in the United States. It also includes the cultural contingency question of generalizability of relationships found between concepts, even once the concepts themselves are shown to have broad application.

Normative leadership theories come from a variety of sources, only one of which is scientific leadership research. A question for many American normative theories is whether they even apply in the United States. For example, Harbison and Myers (1959) argued that the human relations theories dominating American management rhetoric in the 1950s actually did not succeed in having nearly the extensive successful application in the United States that even in the 1950s they were beginning to have in Japan. A great deal of academic leadership work seeks to either evaluate particular normative theories or to evaluate the assumptions underlying them.

#### Concepts and Structural Relationships: Are U.S. Hypotheses a Good Starting Point for Research?

If even American scholars question the application of American normative theory in the United States, what is it, then, about the American biases in scientific leadership theory to which we should be most alert? One approach to this question is to look for American biases in broad reviews of organization studies that provide the theoretical basis for various specific leadership theories.

Americans have been quite prepared to provide such broad reviews, and it is not at all given that either the reviewer or the majority of American scholars will take compatible positions on the basic theory issues that these reviews reveal. Scott (1992, p. 102) sorts organization theories using a matrix built around three levels of analysis (social

psychological, organization structural, ecological) and four progressively more complex kinds of models (closed rational, closed natural, open rational, and open natural). A likely U.S. bias within this frame is that leadership research draws most heavily on analyses at the social psychological level. In such research, leadership effects on organizations are treated largely as aggregations of individual and group effects.

Studies of leadership that individuals or small groups provide to reshape entire organizations are scarce (Hunt, 1991). Analyses of leadership in shaping institutional practices of industries or business in general are even more scarce. The practice of holding up CEO exemplars, as Bartlett and Ghoshal (1995) have done for multinational corporation managers, is consistent with the belief that individual leaders, through various media and educational programs, have institutional effects that transcend single organizations. As discussed below, the within-organization focus of U.S. leadership theory is consistent with America's experience with the industrial revolution.

Potential biases in even U.S. social psychological organization theory are pointed out in other venues. Smith and Bond (1993) provide a comprehensive review of social psychology research conducted outside the United States. The work they review frequently raises questions about the generalizability of relationships found in the United States and in some instances even about the basic concepts used. Reviews of the international status of social psychological studies of organization (Erez, 1990; Triandis, 1990) are the most germane to the current state of international leadership research (Dorfman, 1996; House & Wright, in press).

Do these reviews indicate that either the selection of topics or the manner in which they are treated show a U.S. bias? Biases in the selection of topics raise issues of the potential "omission" problem of etic research noted above. Erez (1990) argues that one American bias is the individual level focus of organizational behavior research on "individual difference characteristics, individual goals, expectancies, self-efficacy, and need satisfaction" (p. 564). Her review indicates that there are noticeable differences in the research topics emphasized by scholars working from various countries and that these differences correspond to their country's culture. For example, a particular emphasis on leadership characterizes research in high power distance societies like Japan and India, while a mental health focus is found in high femininity countries like most in Scandinavia. The fascination of American scholars with control through selecting and motivating individuals, she argues, is quite consistent with the prevailing individualism of U.S. culture. By implication, leadership is unlikely to be overemphasized in U.S. research, but it is likely to have an individual focus.

Erez (1990) also provides evidence for the potential "irrelevancy" problem of etic generalization about relationships between leadership and criteria to other countries based on U.S. results. Her review provides clear cautions not only about global application of U.S. normative theory, but also about generalizing relationships between any pair of X and Y found in the United States to relationships between the same variables in other countries. However, the problems she points out are more problems of balance in topics studied than American biases that produce inaccuracy. Her review takes the implicit view

that many constructs developed first in the United States are only coincidentally American constructs. Apart from an overemphasis on motives linked to Americans' tendency to clearly distinguish between self and others, many American constructs--goals, motives, and the like--intended as eric constructs are not fundamentally problematic. Culture is largely treated as a moderator, not as something fundamentally shaping basic concepts and meanings for organizationally relevant variables.

Triandis (1990) shows more concern for the possibility that many U.S. constructs are fundamentally culture-specific. In effect, he raises more cautions about the "confusion" potential in using American constructs in other societies. For example, not only are some of the dynamics within Maslow's (1954) need hierarchy model likely to vary by culture, the constructs themselves may be problematic in some cultures. Self-actualization is hard to conceive in a collective society where the idea of self and other are less sharply distinguished than in individualistic societies (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Other ideas, like the amae form of dependence relationship in Japan, may be fundamentally unique to some cultures. He concludes:

Our ideas are still quite vague. We still do not have a widely accepted definition of culture. We do not have a good way of sorting out (a) what is psychological from what is cultural, (b) what is universal from what is culture specific, or (c) what is specific to one case from what is a general pattern. (Triandis, 1990, p. 156)

#### Unique Institutions, Functions, and Social Constructions Affecting American Leadership Theory

The problem of applying normative theory abroad is more typically a problem for management consultation or practice than for a scientific journal. Hence, not all international leadership scholars tend to strongly advocate generalized application of a managerial technique developed in the United States. However, the challenge of how best to apply concepts and methods influenced by the United States is still persuasive. Some have noted the potential for irrelevancy, confusion, or omission when starting from a research-base developed by U.S. scholars. In the next section, we work through some of the specific historical circumstances that have shaped U.S. leadership research in hopes of anticipating particularly which ones especially need to be taken into account when seeking an etic base for international research.

When looking at American academic leadership theories, our question becomes: In what ways are the topics studied and methods used in U.S. leadership research culturally American or only accidentally American? In other words, to what extent have we stumbled on universals and to what extent have we documented what currently serves the requirements for a leader's role in American business systems? The theoretical bases for an answer take us back to expand the discussion of institutional theory, social/technological functionalism, and unique social construction.

Institutional theory directs us to attend to how established thought and practice about leadership came to be transmitted to U.S. businesses. To what extent does the

transmission tacitly derive from the social milieu shared with Europe, and how compatible is that milieu with other parts of the world? To what extent does it reflect thought and practice coming more uniquely from the frontier culture of 19th Century America--refined and legitimated by its experienced success in WWII, and by its global economic success in the immediately following decades? To what extent have unique forces shaped what is institutionalized in uniquely American business practice? To the extent that institutional forces are shared by a common heritage with other industrialized societies, U.S. theory is likely to provide a more useful etic starting point than otherwise.

Social/technological functionalism directs us to consider whether leadership practices studied in the United States are built up from a constructive social response to characteristics of industrial technology and the social structures of the communities and government that support it. To the degree that functional alternatives are based on the inherent nature of people and organization, then functional arguments support the general applicability of U.S. theory. To the extent that the leadership practices that are functional in the United States are the result of fit with a distinctive U.S. culture, then functional arguments suggest that eric theory beginning in the United States will be limited.

Social construction arguments highlight the unique in both of the above. Societies, like individuals, shape the implications of even the most established institutions to their own ends. Institutions rooted in the European industrial revolution can be radically reinterpreted when transferred, say, to Japan or Africa. The criteria defining what is functional are dependent on value choices. From a strong social construction viewpoint, the U.S. mode/ is likely to be not only specific to a nation, but to a period in time. Its value in providing an etic starting point, then, is quite limited.

There are good reasons to believe that American normative theory is quite difficult to take abroad, and that transferring even descriptive/analytic leadership theory will pose difficulties. Most analyses of American biases in social science end at about this point. As a next step in working out the specifics and possible solutions to American biases, Table 2 positions leadership theories within general Western (and secondarily word) history and the evolution of social thought and in the history of leadership science. The earlier parts of this history are discussed above in the first few pages of this piece when presenting the argument that there is some broadly common heritage underlying leadership thought. The discussion that follows elaborates upon leadership theory as it has developed beginning with the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and 19th Centuries. We do so by taking a careful look at the historical evolution in two rarely linked literatures. One is the literature on social thought and international management, as noted in the first two columns of Table 2. The other is the "leadership literature" per se and the methods literatures to which it has been tightly linked, as noted in the final two columns of Table 2.

LEADERSHIP THEMES IN THE HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND INTERNATIONAL MANAGEMENT

Leadership in the sense of initiative by one party that is followed by others, is a common phenomenon in all sorts of social situations, but "the field of leadership" in which Leadership Quarterly has so far had its most important role analyzes leadership within formal work organizations. The subtitle of Leadership Quarterly, "An international journal of political, social and behavioral science," aims at breadth. Still, the preponderance of work submitted is based on research within work organizations. Is Leadership Quarterly an anomaly, or does its emphasis reflect something about American leadership studies? We think the latter.

Explicitly designed work organizations are a central social counterpart to the physical production and mass agricultural technologies of the industrial revolution. The international social issues and viewpoints on international management most familiar to the majority of us who read academic leadership journals have been affected by the spread of industrialization and recent information technologies. The corresponding motives for studying leadership and the leadership topics studied have changed as well. However, industrialization has not been globally uniform. The "American" feel to much leadership research comes about in part because of differences between the way industrialization and information technologies have affected the United States compared to other parts of the world.

### Industrialization Through the 19th Century

The 18th and 19th Century debates about the way in which mankind was being affected by emerging industrial technologies had substantial leadership elements. A key debate was about how can society find some effective means to control industrial leaders. How can powerful individuals be controlled so that they effectively organize the complex requirements of industrial technology, but do so without endangering the well being of the led or of society at large?

Three lines of thought about controlling industrial leadership prevailed through the 19th Century, especially in Europe and also in the United States. The first begins in the belief and hope that well socialized "great men" classically educated in the Renaissance/ Reformation tradition noted above will as individuals effectively guide their own domains of business and as a collective elite ethically guide nations (Harbison & Myers, 1959, ch. 3). After all, in conjunction with the royal elite of interlocked families, had this group not successfully guided pre-industrial Europe?

A second line of thought followed from the outworking of democratic ideals promoting control by suffrage of a broader population rather than a small educated elite. During the 19th Century, this democracy theme did not develop for the direct control of business owners by workers. That waited until the second half of the 20th Century as an "industrial democracy" innovation for parts of Europe. Instead, various democracies evolved which took the more circuitous form of electing government officials who were made responsible for regulating business owners.



A third line of leadership thought followed upon Marx. Marxism evolved to depict concentrated private property as working itself into an ever-spiraling focus in the hands of industrial owner/leaders who contributed little but misery to employees and society alike. It presented the vision that such misery could be ameliorated only by eliminating private capital and private capitalists--in effect, by preventing leaders from being owners or agents of private owners.

Experiences during the early industrialization period contributed to differences in leadership thought depending upon the time period when industrialization was introduced and the preexisting society onto which it was superimposed. The process and experimentation with social change in leadership and other processes to accommodate industrialization began earliest and progressed most quickly in Northern Europe. The European experience was one of transition, whereas the U.S. experience was one of invention. The coercion of China by outside parties to permit the opium trade in the early 19th Century indelibly linked the technological and social processes of industrialization with exploitation in the Chinese experience. Colonial exploitation and economic control by commercial organizations based in other countries left similar associations in much of Africa, Asia, and South America. If the industrialization process was one of invention in the United States and transition in Europe, it combined in many other locales an interest in economic and industrial benefit with reaction against foreign cultures and foreign control.

The United States did not have as great a burden of transition or reaction as did other parts of the world. The process of developing leadership forms consistent with industrialization could focus on technical problems, problems within organizations and in competitive dynamics between organizations. Problems of industrialization for larger society, comparatively at least, were those of inventing institutions rather than changing them. Benjamin Franklin's (1717-1790) autobiographical description of initiating social structures to support libraries, businesses, fire companies, and the like are remarkable in part because of the issues that were not addressed. Issues of resistance or cooperation or concern of any kind for a pre-existing power elite is minimal. United States social thought and leadership theory required less energy be devoted to problems of how to promote changing patterns of thought by an established aristocracy, how to reshape traditionally established industries, or how to coordinate long traditions of national governance having hard-fought provisions for popular well-being with the demands of industrial technology.

As an example, consider societies like China where introducing a leadership innovation to an organization includes a change process not just within that work organization, but in the way leaders relate to other established institutions. The early industrial revolution experience of the United States meant that even the earliest of U.S.-rooted etic theories of leadership could easily focus within organizations to the neglect of concerns for context, hence supporting its social psychological quality.

The Early 20th Century Through WWII

The focus in much of Western Europe and the United States into the 20th Century was to increasingly follow the path of electing officials to support regulations that would constrain corporate leaders. The futility of hoping that enlightened leaders will rise to power and maintain self-control in industrialized societies was generally realized. The results of 19th Century leadership idealism had included exploitation of colonies for the principal benefit of colonizers, the continuing use of slavery, labor strife, and the social damage to the Far East caused by the global opium trade. The idea of a largely unconstrained, self-governing elite leading class had become anachronistic in Western thinking by the end of the first half century. The highly centralized control of fascism was progressively confronted and abandoned. Lewin (1948, 1951) provides a forceful critique of the transformation in leadership under fascism as it was emerging in Germany before WWII. Albeit with numerous variants, national governance by election came to be viewed as a universal solution to the basic problem of controlling industrial leaders.

The limitations in the Marxian line of logic about leadership were identified in a number of ways. One way was by linking what are sometimes considered the very different logics of cooperative social interpretation and competitive power dynamics. Michels (1959) developed what he treated as the universal theme that separating capital from the leader role would not produce the Marxian magic of giving leaders back their soul. His "iron law of oligarchy" showed how even those people most committed to rule from below can increasingly fall into disproportionately powerful oligarchic leadership roles as they learn how to manage complex organizations. Information, understanding, and expertise in managing industrial technology's social corollary--complex organization--are at least as seductive as ownership. The complex coordination requirements of organization inherently produced an elite leadership, and one likely to be coopted by the survival demands of organization to put at jeopardy the well-being of less powerful individuals. From Michels standpoint, the problem of disproportionate control by leaders in industrialized society turns out to be not so much one of capital ownership, but one that is tied to the social skill of mastering industrial technology management and the tendency to seek control of resources concomitant to this skill. Although communism continued, a basic theoretical response had been formulated that was not linked to the idiosyncrasies of particular leaders of particular communist countries.

The third alternative gained ascendance. Through countervailing pressures by labor, government and a marketplace regulated to promote competition, corporate leaders could be encouraged to exert sufficient self-control. Details of how these pressures could be coordinated with management practice were reflected in a series of analyses and programs--industrial betterment, scientific management, human relations, systems rationalism. Barley and Kunda (1992) describe these as alternating between those which focus on the social and those which focus on the rationally technical. Each one has a leadership component. The leader in industrial betterment is the last surviving paternalist in the European elite tradition. The leader in scientific management is a carefully trained technician. Leadership in the latter two kinds of programs is reflected in the leadership theories detailed below.

Basic means of controlling industrial leaders came to be accepted in societies following the "invention" and "transition" routes to industrialization. However, parts of the world that had limited resources to industrialize or that responded to industrialization in reaction to the early industrializers had not reached these same conclusions about leadership (Harbison & Myers, 1959). A few societies--the Amish in the United States and indigenous peoples of several continents--have witnessed industrial society and have chosen traditional leadership and social organization instead. Analyses of such cultures appear rarely in the leadership literature.

### Cold War Tensions and Leadership Issues

Leadership theories, theories of the role of leaders and the means of controlling them, even through the mid-20th Century, then, were tied to universal, abstracted treatments of the industrialization's effects. From the perspective of these theories, the world's problems were to integrate industrial technology in general with social systems in general. Increasingly after the post-WWII period, scholars recognized potential differences among societies in appropriate responses to technology and in views of international management and organization.

Comparative leadership research addressed such possible differences. Several post-WWII comparative analyses give managerial leadership a central position. The InterUniversity Study of Labor Problems in Economic Development (Dunlop, Harbison, Kerr, & Myers, 1975; Harbison & Myers, 1959; Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison, & Myers, 1960) places managerial leadership squarely in the midst of controversies about the global spread of large scale production and agricultural technology. Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966) document that despite commonalties in economic system and technological capability, it is possible for leadership practices, roles, and motives to substantially vary among countries. Bass, Burger, Doktor and Barrett (1979), by showing that the effects of a manager's attitudes and values on career progress vary by country, indicate that industrialization does not wholly homogenize world business practice.

Several early comparative management studies developed and conducted by multinational teams dealt with influence and hierarchy. One documents employees' experiences of hierarchy and leadership in five societies--Israeli kibbutzim, Austria, Yugoslavia, Italy, and the United States--that were selected to differ in their intended manner of handling technology and capital (Tannenbaum, Kavcic, Rosner, Vianello, & Wieser, 1974). Another, the Industrial Democracy in Europe (IDE) project, evaluated European countries' success in adapting democratic controls designed for national government to the democratic control of organizations (IDE, 1981). Heller and Wilpert (1981) address similar themes by showing that country differences in attitudes about influence remain even when a manager's level of leadership responsibility for corporate governance is taken into account.

These early comparative management studies all contained substantial elements of leadership theory. Each was motivated by a concern with the role of leaders and leadership in various countries. Harbison and Myers (1959) were particularly concerned

with implications for government policies. Government's first problem was to promote a social infrastructure that would suit local management practice requirements. The second was to prepare citizens to use markets, elect appropriate leaders, and learn the management practices needed for large scale production technology through formal organizations.

Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966) were concerned to promote the success of multinational corporations. They sought to prepare managers for overseas assignments who would have a sufficient intuition for local values to somehow successfully integrate the requirements of technology and organization with the requirements of local practice. Bass and colleagues (1979) explain the basic rationale for their project as promoting the success of multinationals' headquarters in industrially developed countries. However, they also show an interest in Harbison and Myers' (1959) problem & using an Understanding of traditional national cultures to promote global industrial development. The IDE (1981) group, Heller and Wilpert (1981), and Tannenbaum and colleagues (1974) were concerned with what learnings could be shared between societies that had sought locally appropriate ways to set up the influence structures, hierarchies, and informal practices needed to handle the inherent problematic of differentiation and integration that is universal to the nature of organization.

Harbison and Myers' (1959) insights into alternative models for government and organizational leadership in different societies were noted in research through the mid-1980s, but their work is used less in the most recent international leadership analyses. The problems of concern appear to have evolved. Alternatives to American and Western European models are now of secondary interest. For the current applied interests of international leadership research, the Haire, Ghiselli, and Porter (1966) theme--how best to manage multinationals--has proven the most relevant. The problem was how their methods could be improved to provide multinationals with a firmer base for selecting and training leaders as their agents to control overseas operations.

### Societal Concerns About leadership in a High Tech World

Three motivating themes--government policy for management practice, multinational management, and unique social innovation versus cross-societal institutional learning--continue to appear in international analyses of leadership. Our increasing understanding of cultural nuances and interest in working out their effects, however, is seductive. It can take us into specifics of cultural comparison at the expense of whether cultural differences produce irrelevancy, confusion, or omission in our etic starting points. Still, these motivating themes are primary in recent reviews of cross-cultural and intercultural management (Erez, 1990; Triandis, 1990).

A sequence in recent decades in attention to these three themes has been noticed (Boyacigiller, et al., 1996). Hofstede (1980b) creatively integrates theories of societal evolution into the theme of corporate management to speak to the reasons for local variability in implementing business practices of a U.S.-based multinational. The economic success of Japan eliminated any vestige of American and European

complacency about the economic significance of Asia and initiated a response by scholars that included Japan-focused and bilateral intercultural research. The threats and opportunities of a global market make multiple cross-border relationships the central current problem guiding international management research. Even in the American literature, the theme of how multinationals, regardless of country of origin, can effectively compete appears to have superseded the theme of how American multinationals can succeed abroad (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1995).

This former theme represents the current recognition that technology creates opportunities for learning across products and across boundaries. It also reflects the now fully-digested recognition that Harbison and Myers, (1959), Haire, Ghiselli and Porter (1966), the IDE (1981) group, and Tannenbaum and colleagues (1974), were basically right--technological homogeneity, whether industrial or post-industrial, has not homogenized the world (House & Wright, in press; Smith, in press). The appropriate practices of leading and managing do not mean that what is appropriate in one country will be appropriate elsewhere. However, the question has become more subtle than the one of simply transferring identical management practices--although identical practice is unlikely across borders, is there enough similarity that adapting cross-border learnings can provide competitive advantage?

## LEADERSHIP THEORY IN THE HISTORY OF ORGANIZATION STUDIES

Current theories and models of leadership, the ones that appear in American management textbooks and others now being developed, rarely make explicit reference to the history of social thought as we have described it. They are built largely around a domain of social psychological work beginning in the 1950s and defended in part by rejecting the trait, scientific management and paternalistic approaches that went before. The extent to which post-WWII academic leadership theory reflects American biases is evident in the historical evolution of themes noted in Table 2 from which this "leadership theory for managers" draws. This is not the history of leadership themes in international management research. Instead, it has been influenced by uniquely post-WWII American business concerns and by methodological and theoretical developments in U.S. social science.

In the view of American managers after WWII, the most serious problem of how to prevent substantial abuses by high-level leaders had been basically solved. Senior managers can be compelled or controlled to operate within the constraints of limited, impersonally-enforced government regulations as agents representing the interests of economically-motivated stockholders moderated by markets and labor demands (Scott, 1995, pp. 35-7). Of course, the occasional "loose cannon" CEO might gain power, but such cases came to be viewed as aberrations that a basically accepted, institutionalized system will correct. Politics and social context were no longer central to leadership. The question, then, becomes how should these adequately controlled leaders accomplish their work of influencing others? In many other societies, the basic problem of controlling managers either has not been solved to the general satisfaction of people in those societies, or has been solved in quite different ways than in the United States. But for

American scholars, managers, and consultants, the question that mattered had become how to enact leadership effectively.

### Leadership Theory Through the 19th Century

We have argued that current U.S. leadership theory has an institutional link to Europe, and given the turn toward a focus on internal organization practice, that means the institutionalization of psychology as a field of study. Through the middle of the 19th Century, scholars showed special interest in the personal qualities that leaders developed through physical inheritance combined, perhaps, with the social legacy of a fortunate upbringing. This theme was supported by the first applications of mental testing technology in social science by Darwin's cousin Galton (1869) and the statistical methods--the correlation coefficient--developed by Galton's student Pearson (Watson, 1971). The functional value of developing such statistics arose directly from the industrial revolution need to manage large quantities of things treated as fundamentally homogenous--be they fields of wheat or people. This work was done in the societal context of an elitism epitomized by Carlyle, the author of *Heroes and Hero Worship* (1841/ 1907). It continued into leadership work of the 20th Century partially using mental tests designed by Galton's junior associate, Cattell, and then through projects sponsored by large U.S. organizations (e.g., the military and AT&T). To the extent that leadership theory was influenced by the other principal competing line of early psychological research, Wundt's and Tichener's Introspectionism, the influence is reflected in the content of mental tests.

### Leadership Theory in the Early 20th Century through WWII

As noted above, leadership elements appeared in such lines of work as industrial betterment and scientific management, and they come into the "leadership literature" to some degree. Industrial betterment's paternalism is reflected in one of Likert's (1961 ) four systems of management. Ideas reminiscent of scientific management are evoked by models that treat task structure as something reducing the need for leadership (e.g., House, 1971; Hunt, 1974).

Lewin, Lippitt and White's (1939) analysis of autocratic, democratic and laissez-faire leadership provides an unusual bridge between leadership as a contemporary social/ political issue and the scientific study of leadership in organizations. Ideas originating in means of controlling leaders came to be applied to strategies of control used by leaders. Their findings supported the value of "democracy" as a general way of managing that extends well beyond government even to leading groups of children. This finding stimulated critiques from psychologists that democracy was a culture-bound phenomenon specific to the history of a subset of European countries and the United States. Response to this critique gave impetus to a line of Japanese research (Misumi, 1985; Misumi & Peterson, 1985).

### Post-WWII American Leadership Research

The interest in learning and behavior that dominated both American and European experimental psychology through the middle 20th Century was reflected in various leader "behavior" theories. These models--notably the Ohio State consideration and initiating structure model (Stogdill & Coons, 1957), the Michigan studies of close supervision (Katz, Maccoby, & Morse, 1950), and Bales' (1950) studies of interaction processes--continued the statistical themes of selection work. Statistical work required clear, quantifiable objects of study. Rather than focusing upon uniquenesses in a leader's mental processes, however, the objects of study became uniquenesses in a leader's behavior. Considerable attention was given to evaluating the relative utility of self-descriptions, subordinate descriptions, and observer records as means to precisely, accurately, and objectively record behavioral events (Fleishman, 1973). Once adequately measured, it was hoped that effective leadership behavior patterns could be identified. They could be identified through studying the processes whereby leaders "emerged" in unstructured settings, or generated desired actions by followers. Once identified, the ideal was that appropriate behaviors could then be taught. The interpretations by subordinates and the leader's own self-observations did not need to be theoretically modeled; discrepancies from actual actions were viewed as error to be corrected.

Post-War studies of leadership behavior were conducted in a scholarly milieu containing elements of another theoretical theme--the re-emergence of a successor to Introspectionism. Hitler had succeeded in promoting the departure of much of his country's social science academic elite to the United States (Triandis, 1990). German-American Gestalt psychology and French phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 1964) had persuasively argued that individual and social interpretive processes were at least as important to study as behavior. They also demonstrated that physical (Koehler, 1947) and social context (Asch, 1955) affect even the simplest perceptions. While not radically rejecting the influence of objective behavior, the Gestalt theme highlighted the powerfully subtle ways in which context affects perception--including interpretations and descriptions of a leader's behavior.

Increasingly through the 1970s, viewpoints treating leader behavior as raw data were seen as quite limited (Smith & Peterson, 1988). Leadership "behavior" theory needed to be reinterpreted. There are no studies of leader behavior per se, except perhaps experimental studies that manipulate actions by providing leaders with a script or instructing them on specific actions to take. Instead, most research is of abstracted leadership "styles" or "perceived leadership" inferred through the interpretive frames of subordinates, colleagues, or by the leaders themselves (Lord, 1985). Although the language of "leader behavior" research continues to be used into the present (e.g., House & Wright, in press), numerous scholars followed the behavioral spirit to argue that leadership questionnaires were flawed. A minority of scholars followed the Gestalt spirit as it developed into cognitive theory to argue that the meaning of leadership questionnaires was only now being clarified (Peterson, 1988; Smith, in press).

The task could begin to reinterpret prior studies to learn how followers actively construe a leader's actions, and how leaders in a complex way seek to shape these construals (Lord, 1985; Peterson & Sorenson, 1990). Thus, there has been a straggle for some

international leadership scholars to coordinate this behavioral slant characteristic of American post-WWII research with the increased recognition that leaders use actions to shape meanings and the particular problem of the culturally-contingent meanings given to behaviors. The discussion of these scholars as to why these measures have been reconstructed shows a refinement in our understanding of the way in which cultural context affects meanings and our understanding that surveys do and should be evaluated according to how well they reflect respondents' experiences rather than decontextualized leader actions.

Another substantial development intensified in the 1970s as American leadership research expanded along with organization psychology and with organization and management theory. Leadership had been long since recognized to be more social than could be represented by a neo-Galton emphasis on individual qualities. Katz and Kahn (1966/1978) and Osborn, Hunt, and Jauch (1980) reflected/he movement to take leadership out of a group context and put it into an organization context. This change in focus developed along with a series of increasingly complex, sociologically-driven models of organization.

United States organization and management scholars were now doing the majority of leadership research. In the 1980s, their attention was being drawn to the influence of a larger scope of context than even that envisioned by Gestalt psychology or phenomenology. This context is the widespread recognition of the social impact of culture. Culture was viewed to include typical qualities or consistencies in individual characteristics within a nation's boundaries, but more importantly in the nature of social processes and shared experiences (House & Wright, in press). This recognition was brought to the intense awareness of U.S. management scholars by the consequences of increasing global business competition during the 1980s.

Multinationals were finding they needed a sophisticated response to the tension between localization and centralization in their international operations. Apart from MNCs, U.S. corporations sensed that they were being defeated for the first time in a century in competition on their home ground. The legitimacy of American business ideals institutionalized since WWII was shaken. United States leadership scholarship, now motivated by shrinking university resources to even more distinctly serve a U.S. business call to relevance, needed to respond. Its response has been influenced by the need to work through the implications of the various theoretical and methodological themes noted above.

#### THE CURRENT INTERNATIONAL STATUS OF LEADERSHIP RESEARCH AND ITS DIRECTIONS IN A HIGH TECH WORLD

The preceding two-pronged historical analysis of the implications that international social thought and organization science have for leadership mixes institutional and functional observations. The etic base provided by established leadership theory, strongly influenced as it tends to be by the managerial concerns and lines of thought in the United States, is likely to have some value, but also some substantial limitations. Many social



issues that stimulated American international leadership research had a global content and were pursued in connection with scholars and lines of thought from other countries. The opportunity for international institutional influence, both in the phenomenon of industrial leadership as it was communicated among business people and of leadership research as communicated among scholars, was quite substantial, certainly more so than the opportunity for institutional influence between, say, Middle Ages China and Europe.

The social problems of internal management that have absorbed American leadership scholars are to a considerable extent shared by other industrializing parts of the world, but they also have had some idiosyncrasies. American research, for example, does not treat the relative social status of leader and follower based on their ancestral heritage as a central contingency. It focuses instead on contingencies internal to organizations. The social constructions of leadership typical in America may not be fully determined by these institutional and functional considerations, but neither do they occur in a sort of social "spot market" without history or immediate value.

The current international status of leadership research has been largely shaped by the history of leadership, especially in American organization studies. However, it needs to be evaluated through the lens of the history of leadership in global social thought and international management theory as well. Bass (1990), Dorfman (1996), Kanungo and Mendonca (1996), House and Wright (in press), and Smith (in press) have provided extensive recent reviews of international and cross-cultural leadership. These include analyses of leadership in different parts of the world (Bass, 1990; Dorfman, 1996) and in less developed countries in general (Kanungo & Mendonca, 1996). Some deal extensively with research methods issues (Bass, 1990; Dorfman, 1996; House & Wright, in press). These reviews all maintain their coherence by concentrating attention on the post-WWII interest in leadership within organizations, particularly businesses. Although much of the literature is consistent with this focus, placing it in the perspective of global leadership issues of today has the potential to help understand where such literature may be creating etic overemphases that risk irrelevance, omission, or perhaps occasionally confusion.

As a consequence of globalization, the impact of cultural influences on leadership and leader effectiveness is gaining significance (Peterson, Brannen, & Smith, 1994; Dorfman, 1996). Dorfman (1996) addresses the question of culturally-contingent leadership. He argues that to achieve the scientific goal of universality, we need to develop theories that transcend cultures. In testing the generalizability and transferability of leadership theories, however, many difficulties arise. Constructing a culture taxonomy, handling discontinuities between "nation" and "culture," managing consistent theories of continually-evolving cultures, and distinguishing individual from cultural differences are but a few of these difficulties (Dorfman, 1996; Dorfman & Howell, 1988).

Bass (1990) provides a thorough review of the empirical literature comparing leadership and leadership-related organizational behavior in different parts of the world. Dorfman (1996) updates this review and describes the advances in and the potential for further international extensions to the major organizational leadership research traditions--great

man and trait theories, behavioral approaches, various contingency theories, participative leadership and decision approaches, and charismatic and transformational leadership approaches. A few cross-cultural leadership studies have been done within these traditions.

## EMICS, ETICS AND THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP RESEARCH

Bass (1990, ch. 34) systematically works through the peculiarities of leadership as it appears in various clusters of countries. Dorfman (1996) uses the examples of Japan, India, and Arab countries to provide examples of leadership perspectives particularly affected by the area in which specific leadership-related concepts originate. These examples show locally specific applications and adaptations of etic theory, some of which include nuances that may be too historically unique to generalize or perhaps even to preserve for very many years in situ. More and more international leadership articles provide similar country context not only by the quantified data they present from varied parts of the world, but in their descriptions of specific societal situations. The varied historically unique situations developing throughout the world are likely to add new ideas that may not only prove useful in the situations from which they emerge, but that, like the industrial revolution itself, may provide the tacit base for new elements to be added into our generalized, "etic," theories of social science. We believe these to be an advance on the current state of work in the area and a harbinger of advances to come.

As amateur historians at best, we understand that there are many other viewpoints on the strands of history that we have tried to twist together. In introducing the topic of international leadership research, we wish to emphasize that modern academic interest in how leaders conduct themselves has been shaped by an interplay of social issues, theory, and methods. Organizations have certain functional requirements--differentiation, integration, boundedness, and the like. These requirements can be handled in various ways. Choices are possible among several institutionalized traditions that reasonably meet functional requirements. Even given institutionalized practice, social construction is a source of interorganization variability and innovation within a society. We take a position that combines substantial elements of institutionalism and functionalism, softened by the ongoing emergence of culturally-unique social constructions. The history of leadership research suggests that a range of established leadership ideas are likely to be linked to common traditions, and to have relevance for issues facing industrial, industrializing, postindustrial, and anti-industrial societies throughout the world. The preceding has tried to frame and note the biases in Western, particularly American, contributions. Our emphasis on these contributions is partly due to their accessibility in the social science literature and partly due to our personal limitations in knowledge of alternative traditions. Regardless, we think they illustrate a range of adaptations, innovations, and elaborations upon existing theory needed for scholars to contribute to deal with the leadership-related issues that continue to arise throughout the world.

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## Table 1

### Directions for Answers to Four Questions of International Leadership Research

#### IS LEADERSHIP A GLOBAL IDEA?

Leadership-like ideas show breadth for two reasons:

- \* Semi-global institutional influences
- \* Functional commonalities of social relationships and organizations

#### WHY STUDY LEADERSHIP INTERNATIONALLY?

International awareness affects leadership thought:

- \* MNC management: Challenged to find processes consistent with strategies.
- \* Cross cultural learning: Opportunities for cross-border learning.
- \* Intercultural relations: General issues in intercultural negotiation and cooperation.

#### WHY STUDY LEADERSHIP "SCIENTIFICALLY?"

- \* Rationality (structured analysis) is one significant part of human experience.
- \* Working from tacit understanding to explicit knowledge is a universal.
- \* Tacit understanding is a permanent complement to explicit knowledge.

#### DOES LEADERSHIP HAVE A TECHNOLOGICAL/MODERN U.S. BIAS?

- \* Yes, as do work organizations.
- \* Industrial technology supported by work organizations spread from Europe throughout the world.
- \* While all societies, including European ones, had pre-technological modern industries, their particular nature shapes the approaches to the requirements of industrial production.
- \* Organizations and organization leadership will be a part of all societies that follow a technology path.

## Table 2

### Concurrent Evolution in Western Industry, Leadership Thought, Social Theory, and Research Methods

## Social Theory and Issues

Ancient agriculture and trade, Developing ideas of large scale early empires and trade routes, social structures: government, church, and military. Earliest writings on rationalism, empiricism, and theology.

Middle Ages feudal agriculture, Theology-centered scholasticism church, and military, based on church traditions interpreted by an authoritative, elite clergy.

Renaissance and Reformation, Rediscovery of ancient emergence of independent city philosophy. Rationalism. Theology states, revival of major trade based on Biblical hermeneutics. routes. Physical science practiced by clergy. Extension of literacy beyond clergy and of written works beyond Latin. Early universities.

Mercantile period, nation Empiricism and basic sciences states emerge, church expand. governance dissipates, colonialism expands.

Industrialization unleashed: Applied science becomes Late 18th and 19th century. widespread. Outworking of American frontier development, evolution. U.S. frontierism (also Colonialism, slavery, opium romanticized in Europe). trade continue. Competing alternatives to traditional monarchy develop.

Industrialization tamed: Early Struggles to regulate 20th century through WW II. industrialization and control Political/economic/military industrial leaders. Social struggles among major nation science emerges. Scientifically states. driven technological advance.

## Leadership Thought

Ancient agriculture and trade, Oral traditions and written early empires and trade routes. accounts idealize heroes, kings, philosophers and military

leaders.

Middle Ages feudal agriculture, Problems of jointly managing church, and military. political, military and agriculture under church influence.

Renaissance and Reformation, Combined empirical and normative emergence of independent city leader analyses by Machiavelli. states, revival of major trade Leader/patron portrayals by routes. Cellini. Broadened re-reading about ancient leaders and innovators

Mercantile period, nation Monarchies engage problems of states emerge, church increasingly complex societies. governance dissipates, Issues of managing colonial colonialism expands. empires and of colonial leadership arise.

Industrialization unleashed:  
Late 18th and 19th century.  
American frontier development,  
Colonialism, slavery, opium  
trade continue.

Industrialization tamed: Early Traits: Stogdill's 1948 review.  
20th century through WW II. Autocratic, democratic,  
Political/economic/military laissez-faire leadership, and  
struggles among major nation Lewin's critique of Hitler's  
states. Germany.

#### Analysis Methods

Ancient agriculture and trade, Reflects on experience and early empires and trade routes. observation. Theological discussions of inspirations. Beginnings of codified systems and "theory."

Middle Ages feudal agriculture, Elaborated theological theory church, and military. based on traditional authority.

Renaissance and Reformation, Rational formalizations of emergence of independent city legitimate belief based on states, revival of major trade induction and deduction,

routes.                      empiricism and logic. First applied to basics of theology (natural theology), then to physical and secondarily social things.

Mercantile period, nation states emerge, church governance dissipates, colonialism expands.                      The essay as analytic device. Scientific method developed for classifying and analyzing physical things, later applied to social things.

Industrialization unleashed:  
Late 18th and 19th century.  
American frontier development.  
Colonialism, slavery, opium trade continue.

Industrialization tamed: Early 20th century through WW II. Political/economic/military struggles among major nation states.                      Introspectionism competes with behaviorism in psychology. Cultural anthropology develops. Statistical studies of self-reports: Selection, surveys. Systematic approaches to induction without statistics.

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