

Imagining leadership.

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Imaginary conversation between Ella Flagg-Young and John Dewey centering on leadership; Critiques of leadership theory and research; Imagined leadership.

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IMAGINING LEADERSHIP

This critique of leadership theory and research starts with an imaginary conversation between Ella Flagg-Young and John Dewey in which they discuss what leadership ought to be. The conversation sets up the more serious critique, which points to fallacies in traditional thought about leadership: the assumptions that we can find a certain, value-free "truth" about leadership, the failure to consider leadership as enacted by women and others who have, heretofore, not attained leadership in bureaucracies, the failure to separate leadership from its enactment in bureaucracies, and the failure of traditional leadership to create school systems that enact social justice. Such schools will require leaders who work collaboratively, inclusively, with sensitivity to the range of potentials of diverse children and adults.

Bear with me. Imagine a conversation between two highly educated educational administration professors who, through a slip in laser surgery, had lost the leadership theory part of their brains.

Professor Dewey: What are school leaders for and what are they like?

Professor Flagg-Young: Beats me! I know, let's ask Slater to send us his article on leadership as well as the Primus compendium about leadership (Slater, 1995; Slater, Bolman, Crow, Goldring, & Thurston, 1994).

Dewey: Let's play with some ideas while we await his reply. You'd have to start by asking what are schools for? and what would leaders of those schools be like?

Flagg-Young: I'll start. Schools are places where communities send their young to spend time in a safe, nurturing, and resource-filled environment, being helped by knowledgeable adults who collaborate in the common goal to assist in children's development to their best potential -- physical, spiritual, and intellectual.

Dewey: That sounds lovely, but a tad vague. You must define terms like their best potential, knowledgeable adults, and resource-filled. But maybe that's what leaders do.

Flagg-Young: Surely the papers we're awaiting will give us answers, but I think leaders would need to be good collaborators, listeners, closely in tune with the resources that help, good at helping others coordinate those resources, sensitive to the range of potentials of diverse children and adults, and someone who is caring with children.

Dewey: Plus they'd have to be caring with adults -- in the community and in the school -- so they could coordinate activities and resources and get community involvement.

Flagg-Young: And the community wouldn't entrust their youngsters in schools unless they believed that the leader had a real determination to actively search out problems and push, invent, and generally support efforts at solution.

Dewey: What problems?

Flagg-Young: Communities expect schools to find ways to help every kid, no matter about disability, race, class, gender, sexual preference. Also, they're expected to provide a model of democracy and social justice to prepare young citizens. So leaders would have to create schools that are set up for those purposes. Say, now we're back to schools' purpose, goals, what schools stand for. It's obvious that you cannot separate leadership from goals and purpose. And lots of issues flow from that -- like, Do schools need leaders? Where do they come from? If leadership is good, how can we prepare leaders? Tell you what -- let's see, when we get the Primus and the Slater pieces, we'll see if we didn't come up with the right ways of framing school leadership.

When the professors received the two papers, they were confused and mystified:

Dewey: Could it be that our field has been studying leadership for decades and failed to see the things we see? How did these scholars get the assumptions and approaches they use?

Flagg-Young: Wow, take a look: They are mostly men! In Slater's article 16% of the authors appear to be female. Also, there are references in the Primus chapter's sections that apparently have no female authors or a tiny percentage! Talk about domination of a field!

Dewey: Oh, Ella, stop obsessing over divergent matters! Now, back to the important theoretical discussion: In our brainstorming, we didn't have the years of tradition and expertise on leadership represented in these articles. These "experts" had no way getting outside of the assumptions of their dominant paradigm to challenge assumptions as we did. I don't see much to support our ideas of leadership.

Flagg-Young: Knowing academia, I'll bet the traditional paradigm were rewarded with endowed chairs and achievement awards and those who challenged were belittled and had difficulty even getting tenure.

Dewey: Let's look for literature that challenges the traditional paradigm. Maybe they'll justify our vision of school leadership.

So, Dewey and Flagg-Young perused journals, combined their own and others' ideas, wrote the following critique, and submitted it for publication in EAQ.

CHALLENGING TRADITIONAL IDEAS FOR LEADERSHIP by E. Flagg-Young and J. Dewey

If leadership is bright orange, leadership research is slate gray. (McCall & Lombardo, 1978, p. 3)

The Slater (1995, [this issue]) article in EAQ and the Primus chapter provide a review of the traditional ways of thinking about leadership. We, however, have perused important critiques to color the discussion and discover promising lines of inquiry.

Critiques of Leadership Theory and Research

We intend to raise critical questions left unasked and unanswered by the recent efforts to review leadership theory and research for education. We question the assumption that there is, somewhere, a definitive and value-free definition of leadership. We question the assumption that leadership can be defined by studying White males. We quest for definitions of leadership that are separated from hierarchical positions in bureaucracies. Finally, we search for theoretical frameworks for leadership in organizations where collaboration, nurturing, and inclusivity, relationship-building and caring, and social justice are asserted to be goals.

Politics of Knowledge

Why do leadership theorists and researchers continue to search for a value-free definition of leadership? Are schools and their leadership value-free? Why is leadership so often studied in a way disconnected to educational purposes, to children? Why does its study continue to ignore the ways our current leadership and structures perpetuate inequality? "Knowledge -- the processes and practices and organization of meaning that we use to make sense of the world -- is never neutral. Rather, it is a result of struggle and conflict over diverse interests" (Martusewicz & Reynolds, 1994, p. 4).

Kuhn (1962/1970) demonstrated the power of paradigms in suppressing challenge. Theorists create boundaries in their discourse about what leadership is, defining what it is not. A strong motivation to study leadership is to keep this commodity, leadership, confined to discourses and definitions that favor a certain type and exclude others. Who benefits and who loses in this discourse? Who controls the discourse?

"Cognitive politics" (Ramos, 1981, p. 76) hide the biases and assumptions in leadership theory and practice, conditioning us to accept a certain version of truth. Metanarratives that construct meaning, for example, for leadership, are actually powerful claims over what Lather (1991) calls "contested cultural terrain" (p. xvi).

People seek knowledge for reasons, purposes, so why would we want to study leadership? Hopeful scholars would answer: to have more of it to improve schooling. Cynics, scholars who study the politics of knowledge, would answer (a) to find its elements and control access to them, (b) to set up programs for training and certifying it according

to their definitions and knowledge, and (c) to keep it from emerging where we do not want it, for example, revolutionaries and "riff-raft." Critical theorists would add this fourth purpose: to perpetuate leadership as "administrative control that systematically ignores both educational issues and those social and cultural issues that lie at the heart of people's commitment to, or alienation from, educational institutions" (Bates, 1983, p. 47; Bates, 1986), emphasizing the role of schools in perpetuating inequalities and training children for behavior that benefits capitalist society and calling for leadership for social justice.

The Feminist Critique

One of the built-in fallacies in traditional models of leadership (McCall & Lombardo, 1978) is the assumption of White male superiority (Blackmore, 1993; Marshall, 1988; Regan, 1990). Leadership theory was developed by White males doing observations of White males holding leadership positions in bureaucracies. The behaviors, perspectives, and values of women, minorities, and others who could not get through socialization and selection systems in bureaucracies to attain those leadership positions were, therefore, excluded from theory and research on leadership. Behaviors, backgrounds, appearance, language, and values that were different, or were enacted by someone in a low position, were simply dismissed as uncredentialed, nonleadership-like, deviant, or deficient. The focus on highly visible line administrators leaves unexplored questions about alternative manifestations of leadership that might be exhibited by other professional educators -- teachers, women, minorities, and risk takers -- who cannot or choose not to pass through administrator socialization and traditional administrative filtering systems. To move beyond having White males as the overwhelming majority of leaders (in the western world) and the majority of people who write and theorize about leadership, we must imagine and explore differently.

The protagonist in Marge Piercy's *Women on the Edge of Time*, "can shift his/her sex at will and . . . lives in a culture that does not institutionalize . . . gender" (Harding, 1986, p. 20). Harding challenges scholars to imagine this; she challenges the assumption that women should try to become just like men. She asks why we should "contribute to scientific projects that have sexist, racist, and classist problematics and outcomes?" (p. 21). Dorothy Smith (1981) proposes to construct a sociology from the "standpoint of women" (p. 155) to create new conceptual schemes based on women's experiences that "do not fit within the distorted abstractions of men's conceptual schemes" (Harding, 1986, p. 156) and that are determined to be important, real, and worthy of study. The leadership enacted by a woman teacher or a female head of household does not count as leadership if it does not fit the dominant conceptual schemes. Such leadership could not be viewed as valuable experience from which to launch a leadership career. If leadership theory, research, and practice are male normed, any deviation (e.g., by women and minorities) will be seen as inappropriate or even incompetent. If women have different ways of talking, leading, supervising, collaborating, learning, including, affiliating, relationship building, empowering, nurturing, and valuing, those ways will not appear as leadership (Marshall, 1988; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988).[1]

Important and challenging theory and research pose the likelihood that women do differ, that they speak with less dominating and more inclusive language (Tannen, 1990), that their mode of decision making in moral dilemmas are more focused on relationship maintenance and community than on rights, that their ways of understanding are grounded in their own experience, and that their ethic of caring can assist in relationship building in otherwise coldly bureaucratic organizations (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1992). Research shows that women as educational administrators are more attuned to teaching, curriculum and instruction, and children--perhaps because they spend more time as teachers and as mothers before they become administrators; they produce more positive interactions with community and staff; they have a more democratic, inclusive, and conflict-reducing style; and they are less concerned with bureaucracy (Bell & Chase, 1989; Ortiz & Marshall, 1988; Shakeshaft, 1989).

The Challenge to Bureaucracy

Foster (1986) says that "we tend to see leadership as being intimately related to particular social positions rather than as emergent in community and group actions We have to consider how the concept (leadership) has become so closely identified with the social system within which it is used" (p. 182). Leadership theory is ensconced in assumptions of the inevitability and superiority of bureaucracy (Clark & Meloy, 1988; Ferguson, 1984). Theory seems to be derived from research carded out in bureaucracies and business, as if these were the logical forms of organization; researchers do not question the applicability of these models for schools. They often and

uncritically start with studies of business management as if production lines for widgets had parallels with helping children learn, so leadership and management and the structures for organization should be the same. Also they seem to assume that teaching professionals need someone to direct, monitor, inspire, make meaning for them. With notions of leadership so enmeshed in and miffed by acceptance of hierarchical bureaucratic organization, scholars keep punching at theory with the same fallacious assumptions.

However, letting go of the theory of organization as instrumental --concerned with manipulation and control -- and, instead, embracing the educative model, can support leaders who would be taking on the challenge of creating organizational patterns that enhance nurturance and collaboration -- multiplier effects rather than competitive zero-sum games (Fay, 1977). (See "Feminist Critique," above.)

Critical Theory

In critical theory, we find the basis for leadership of empowering systems, the critical humanist leader who engages in a constant search for inequality and oppression, questioning assumptions that governments set up institutions (like schools) to guarantee equal opportunity.

Critical theorists are generally concerned with issues of social justice and believe that many of the institutions and structures that organize our lives, especially our economic system, the state and its institutions, operate to keep in place fundamentally unequal and unjust social and political relations. (Martusewicz & Reynolds, 1994, p. 6)

Critical theorists take a stand for moral and democratic practices in schooling (Giroux, 1994; Pulpel, 1989).

Leaders would be critical humanists who "appreciate the usual and unusual events of our lives and engage in an effort to develop, challenge, and liberate human souls. . . and are therefore not satisfied with the status quo; rather they hope to change individuals for the better and to improve social conditions for all" (Foster, 1986, p. 18). They would be empowerers. As Fay (1977) says, "The function. . . is to enlighten the social actors so that, coming to see themselves and their social situation in a new way, they themselves can decide to alter the conditions which they find oppressive" (p. 103).

Combining critical and feminist perspectives would provide a framework for leaders who are carers, people who constantly work to maintain relationships, community, caring, and connection (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1992). The challenge of such frameworks, however, causes discomfort to those who benefit from the current system. "Education has fundamental connections with the idea of human emancipation, though it is constantly in danger of being captured by other interests" (Connell, Ashenden, Kessler, & Dowsett, 1982, p. 208). (See "Politics of Knowledge" above.)

Imagined Leadership

The prevailing views of leadership fail to identify leaders who persist in uncovering, naming, and reordering schooling to eliminate the perpetuation of poverty, social Darwinism, factory models, competitiveness, silencing and exclusion, loneliness and frustration, violence -- physical and mental -- and sexism and racism. They do not help identify leadership in women, minorities, and people in lower hierarchical positions. They obviate the possibility of establishing a caring ethic by reifying traditional bureaucratic structures in schools, where the goals are control, standardization, and bureaucratic maintenance -- the antithesis of situation-specific, holistic, relationship-building caring.

Leadership theorists need to let go of fallacies and imagine leadership that emphasizes coordinating resources for teaching professionals, assists in creating caring, nurturing relationships in schools, incorporates the talents of nontraditional, nonmale leaders, and identifies as leaders those who are constantly searching for ways to enhance social justice. Take a moment to imagine leadership without the encumbrances of previous theory and research but with schools and schooling in mind; if you can do that, you will be starting on a promising and useful venture, and you will find scholars of the politics of knowledge, the challenge to bureaucracy, the feminist critique, and critical theory to provide guidance.

After sending their article to EAQ, Dewey and Flagg-Young reflected:

Flagg-Young: I'd say we certainly laid out an exciting challenge with our words!

Dewey: Yeah, but now I'm going to lose my leadership status in educational administration.

Flagg-Young: Oh, John, lighten up.

NOTE

1. The idea that women from their different socialization and/or their different values systems offer a different way of leading and decision making is substantiated by plentiful research on women in school administration, generally, in "women's ways feminism" (Marshall and Anderson, 1995). Liberal feminism, on the other hand, promotes women attaining equal access to the current socio-political system, on equal footing with men but without challenging the structures in that system. "Power and politics feminisms" focus on the ways in which the current system has embedded powerful structures that are set up to benefit white males, so more radical change is needed than just equal access or the valuing of women's ways.

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By Catherine Marshall

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## Transformational leadership theory: Using levels of analysis to determine boundary conditions.

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### TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY: USING LEVELS OF ANALYSIS TO DETERMINE BOUNDARY CONDITIONS

The purpose of this study was to refine understanding of transformational leadership theory by a specification and test of boundary conditions. Multiple levels of analysis (individual, dyad, and group) were used to identify conceptually and assess empirically the potential bounds on transformational leadership theory. Multi-source data were collected from a sample of 105 salespersons and their 33 sales supervisors, and within and between analysis (WABA) procedures were conducted. Contrary to higher-level (dyad, group) and cross-level assertions in the literature, transformational leadership results were based solely on individual differences. That is, in this sales setting, transformational leadership theory was determined to be an individual-level theory bounded by individuals' (superiors' and subordinates') perceptions and not holding at higher levels of analysis. Implications of the findings for future leadership research and practice are discussed.

relationships among the variables, but also the boundaries or domains within which the theory is expected to hold (see Dubin, 1976). Some leadership scholars seem to view transformational/charismatic leadership theory as an unbounded theory (see Bass, 1990). Bass (1985, 1990), Bass and Avolio (1990, 1993), and their associates (see Bass & Avolio, 1994), for example, have discussed the "universality" of transformational leadership theory. Included in these discussions are (a) the relevance of the theory for numerous fields of study and various historical periods and events; (b) the theory's applications to and implications for different levels of analysis and levels of management; (c) the meaning and relevance of the theory for different types of organizations, jobs, and industries; and (d) the common features of the theory that hold across various cultures and national boundaries. One interpretation of these ideas and discussions is that transformational leadership theory is an unbounded theory (also see Yuld, 1989). The purpose of the current study was to use multiple levels of analysis to specify conceptually and test empirically some boundaries on transformational leadership theory as articulated by Bass and his colleagues (e.g., Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993, 1994; Hater & Bass, 1988; Waldman, Bass, & Yammarino, 1990; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994).

#### Levels of Analysis as Boundary Conditions

Theoretical models comprising variables, relationships, and boundaries permit the specification of propositions, hypotheses, and empirical indicators for theory testing. But boundary or domain specification is often overlooked or underdeveloped in formulating theories. Dubin (1976) defines boundaries as the limits within which a theory is expected to hold. A boundary can be explicitly stated (e.g., a relationship among variables holds in some settings but not others) or benign, that is, "one beyond which the model is alleged not to hold, but where the characteristics of the boundary are not themselves relevant to the manner in which the model operates" (p. 24).

One type of boundary, explicit or benign, is the level(s) of analysis at which a theory is expected to hold. Levels of analysis are the entities or objects of study; they are typically arranged in hierarchical order such that higher levels (e.g., groups) include lower levels (e.g., individuals), and lower levels are embedded in higher levels (Behling, 1978; Miller, 1978). Because levels of analysis are included in theories (i.e., relationships among variables), they provide a way to specify boundaries on a theory (Miller, 1978). Likewise, Dubin (1976) notes that a theory may hold for individuals but not apply to collectivities of individuals (e.g., groups, organizations). Relatedly, as a specification of a boundary, Sackett and Larson (1990) state that research questions should include a level of analysis of interest and that the use of data should match the level of analysis of the research question.

In organizational (e.g., Behling, 1978; Dansereau, Alutto, & Yammarino, 1984; Glick & Roberts, 1984; Johns, 1991; Rousseau, 1985) and leadership (e.g., Bass, 1990; Yammarino & Bass, 1991; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1992, 1994; Yukl, 1989) research, there have been numerous calls to incorporate levels of analysis as a way to improve specifying and testing theoretical models. These calls have generally gone unheeded in research on transformational/charismatic leadership (e.g., Bass, 1985, 1990; Burns, 1978; House, 1977; House, Spangler, & Woycke, 1991; Howell & Frost, 1989; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Yukl, 1989). This body of leadership theory appears to differ from transactional/contingent reinforcement approaches and has produced much research and controversy (cf. Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1989). Some of the controversy focuses on the different approaches to transformational/charismatic leadership, the similarity and differences of these views as compared to transactional/contingent reward approaches, and the strengths and weaknesses of various operationalizations of the theories. A portion of the controversy may arise from a lack of a clear specification of the boundaries on transformational/charismatic leadership theory.

To date, a complete investigation of boundary conditions, expressed as levels of analysis, which include a priori hypotheses and measures from multiple levels of analysis, has not been reported in the literature. Moreover, previous studies examined only individuals and groups with same-source data. In the current study, three levels of analysis (individuals, superior-subordinate dyads, and work groups) and cross-level effects are specified and examined with different-source (multi-rater) data. As such, we are able to provide the first comprehensive assertions about, and evidence for, boundary conditions on a theory that has been generally viewed as unbounded (also see Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994).

Compatible with extensive prior research (Bass, 1990; Behling, 1978; Miller, 1978; Yammarino & Bass, 1991; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1992), in this study individuals are defined as persons (subordinates or superiors) who are independent of (respond independently from) one another. Bass (1985, 1990), Bradley (1987), House (1977), and House et al. (1991) note the role of individual leader traits and personality characteristics as well as individual follower responses and reactions in transformational/charismatic leadership theory. Groups are defined as a collective of individuals who are interdependent and interact face-to-face with one another. Our interest is in formal work groups comprising subordinates who report to a common immediate superior. Dyads, a special case of groups, are defined as two individuals who are interdependent on a one-to-one basis. We focus specifically on superior-subordinate dyads within groups and on dyads independent of their formal work groups (see below). Bass (1985, 1990), Bradley (1987), and Burns (1978) discuss the relationships between leaders and followers in transformational/charismatic leadership theory in terms of interpersonal dyadic relationships and within formal work groups.

Beyond these single levels, we are also concerned with a key type of multiple-level formulation. Cross-level propositions and hypotheses are statements about relationships among variables that are likely to hold equally well at a number of levels of analysis (e.g.,  $z$  and  $y$  are positively related for individuals, dyads, and groups) (Behling, 1978; Dansereau et al., 1984; Miller, 1978). Rousseau (1985) notes that such cross-level formulations "specify patterns of relationships replicated across levels of analysis" (p. 22). (Rousseau, however, calls these "multi-level," not cross-level, formulations.) Hypotheses of this type are uniquely powerful and parsimonious because the same effect is presumed to be manifested at more than one level of analysis (e.g.,  $E = mc^2$ ). Avolio and Bass (1988), Bass (1985, 1990), Bass and Avolio (1990), Bradley (1987), Burns (1978), Howell and Frost (1989), House (1977), House et al. (1991), Kuhnert and Lewis (1987), Yammarino and Dubinsky (1994), and Yukl (1989) describe concepts and/or relationships from transformational/charismatic leadership theory that hold for individuals, dyads, and groups. As such, cross-level formulations are especially relevant for transformational leadership theory and are asserted and tested in the current study.

#### Transformational Leadership Theory and Boundary Conditions

##### Overview of Transformational Leadership

Based on the work of Burns (1978) and House (1977), among others, as formulated by Bass (1985), transformational leadership theory explains the unique connection between a leader and his/her followers that accounts for extraordinary performance and accomplishments for the larger group, unit, and organization. Transformational leadership goes beyond the attempts of leaders who seek to satisfy the current needs of followers through transactions or exchanges via contingent reward behavior (e.g., Graen & Scandura, 1987; Hollander, 1985). Transformational leaders, in contrast, arouse heightened awareness and interests in the group or organization, increase confidence, and move followers gradually from concerns for existence to concerns for

achievement and growth. Transformational leaders develop their followers to the point where followers are able to take on leadership roles and perform beyond established standards or goals (see Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993, 1994).

To accomplish this transformation, four key dimensions of leadership are employed (Bass, 1985). Charismatic leadership, or charisma, is central to the transformational leadership process and the key component of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1990; Yukl, 1989). It involves gaining respect, trust, and confidence of others and transmitting a strong sense of mission to them. Inspirational leadership, or inspiration, is communicating a vision with fluency and confidence, increasing optimism and enthusiasm, and giving pep talks to energize others. Intellectual stimulation is actively encouraging others to look at old methods in new ways, fostering creativity, and stressing the use of intelligence. Individualized consideration is giving personal attention to all individuals, making each individual feel valued, and recognizing each individual's contribution as important.

Given extensive prior research on transformational leadership theory, a set of five expectations, relevant to the current study, can be stated:

1. The dimensions of transformational leadership (charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) are positively related (e.g., Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993; Hater & Bass, 1988; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994).
2. Transformational leadership and transactional (contingent reward) leadership are positively related (e.g., Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Waldman et al., 1990; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yukl, 1989).
3. Transformational leadership is positively related to subordinates' effort and performance and supervisors' effectiveness (e.g., Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993; Hater & Bass, 1988; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994; Yukl, 1989).
4. Transactional (contingent reward) leadership is positively related to subordinates' effort and performance and supervisors' effectiveness (Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993; Hollander, 1985; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Podsakoff & Todor, 1985; Podsakoff, Todor, & Skov, 1982; Williams & Podsakoff, 1988; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994; Yukl, 1989).
5. Outcomes of transformational and transactional leadership--subordinates' effort and performance and superiors' effectiveness--are positively related (e.g., Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990, 1993; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992; Hollander, 1985; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Yukl, 1989).

#### Transformational Leadership and Levels

A conceptual issue remains, however, to enhance clarification and understanding of transformational leadership theory; that is, the boundary conditions on the theory must be specified. Levels of analysis can be used for this purpose. Specifically, three primary levels of analysis (viewed separately as well as collectively) appear to serve as potential boundary conditions on transformational leadership theory.[1]

**Individuals.** The person level of analysis, or individual differences, may serve as a boundary condition. We use this term to convey individual variability on concepts and relationships in transformational leadership theory, that is, individual-level effects. Yammarino and Bass (1990), Avolio and Yammarino (1990), and Avolio, Yammarino, and Bass (1991) operationalized concepts in transformational leadership theory, including components and various outcomes (e.g., leader effectiveness, subordinate extra effort, subordinate satisfaction with the leader), at more than one level of analysis to assess leader-follower interactions. In all three studies, results indicated that relationships predicted by the theory held only at the individual level of analysis. Thus, the effects (i.e., variance on variables and covariance among variables) were based on individual differences in subordinates' perceptions of leadership and outcomes that were independent of their group membership. In other words, transformational/charismatic leadership is "in the eye of the beholder or varying in degree from one individual to another" (Avolio & Yammarino, 1990, p. 193). So, an individual subordinate's perceptions of leadership and outcomes were related, as were those of other subordinates, but perceptions differed from subordinate to subordinate, even when the subordinates were part of the same group or reported to the same superior.

These results are compatible with the work of Lord and his colleagues (e.g., Lord, Foti, & DeVader, 1984; Phillips & Lord, 1981) who viewed leadership as implicit in nature and based on information processing of individuals. Individual differences in responses of subordinates (and superiors) are manifested in terms of differential perceptions, attributions, and/or cognitive categorizations. Yammarino and Bass (1991) and Yammarino and Dubinsky (1992) have elaborated this view in terms of levels of analysis.

The individual differences view indicates that each subordinate perceives his/her superior uniquely, or individually, and a superior likewise perceives each of his/her subordinates as a unique individual. Independent individuals (superiors and subordinates) are the focus for understanding transformational leadership theory. This suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Relationships derived from transformational leadership theory (five previously stated expectations) will hold at the individual level of analysis; that is, they are based on individual differences.

Although three studies (Avolio & Yammarino, 1990; Avolio et al., 1991; Yammarino & Bass, 1990) provide direct support for this assertion, their key limitations must be noted which suggest consideration of additional levels of analysis boundary conditions. First, in terms of conceptualization, all three studies were exploratory in nature and so did not hypothesize the level of analysis expected to place boundaries on the variables and relationships. Second, in terms of measurement, only same-source data (from the subordinates of the focal leader) were obtained. So the results must be tempered by the potential for individual-level same-source bias. Third, in terms of empirical testing, because of a lack of matched superior-subordinate reports, Graen's level of analysis alternative explanation of dyads within groups (Dansereau, Graen, & Haga 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992) and a purely dyadic alternative explanation independent of formal work groups (Dansereau et al., 1984; Hollander, 1985; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1992) were not tested.

**Dyads within groups.** The group level of analysis, or specifically dyads within groups, may serve as a boundary condition on transformational leadership theory. There is a constant focus on the transformational leader's ability to get subordinates to think and act beyond their self-interests and in terms of the interests of the group or team in which they are members (Bass, 1985; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987). There also is a focus on the tailoring of transformational leadership within the group to each subordinate's unique needs, interests, and desires (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass 1985). This position is compatible with that of Graen and Wakabayashi (1992) and Yukl (1989), who argue that transformational leadership may represent another form of exchange within the group--a "higher order" exchange (Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987) with intangible rather than tangible benefits in high quality, mature dyads (also see Graen & Scandura, 1987; Sridhar & Marks, 1991).

Compatible with the work of Graen and his colleagues (Dansereau et al., 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992), to identify dyads within groups as a levels of analysis boundary on transformational leadership theory, reports of both superiors and subordinates about their interactions are needed. In obtaining multiple perspectives on each superior-subordinate dyad, there is an opportunity to assess leader-member agreement and identify the in-group and out-group; that is, dyads within the group that are part of the leader's cadre (high-quality dyads) versus those dyadic relationships within the group that involve the hired hands (low-quality dyads).

Support for this level of analysis as a boundary condition has been provided by Graen and his colleagues (e.g., Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992) and other researchers (see Bass, 1990; Hollander, 1985; Yukl, 1989) for leadership and outcome relationships similar to those of transformational leadership theory. Dansereau et al. (1984), Yammarino and Bass (1991), and Yammarino and Dubinsky (1992) have clarified this level of analysis view. In particular, consistent with the position of Graen and Scandura (1987) and Graen and Wakabayashi (1992), they note that superior-subordinate interactions occur on a one-to-one (dyadic) basis within a group where the nature or quality of each interaction differs. In other words, the superior displays a different style toward each subordinate in a group; some subordinates are linked more closely to the superior than others (a relative notion); and the superior controls, manages, or influences all the differential interactions. Reviews by Bass (1990), Graen and Wakabayashi (1992), Hollander (1985), Podsakoff and Schriesheim (1985), and Yukl (1989) suggest that the relationships of focus in the present study may hold for dyads within groups.

The dyads-within-groups view indicates that superior-subordinate relationships are managed by a superior and differ within a group, and

that superiors of other groups act similarly. This implies that superiors have relatively similar behavioral repertoires, but that the specific behavior displayed in any group depends on the particular superior-subordinate relationship (Graen & Scandura, 1987). In this situation, the superior controls or determines the closer linkage with some subordinates (in-group) than with others (out-group). Thus, the nature of each dyadic relationship in the group differs, and each is managed by the superior relative to the others in the group. This suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Relationships derived from transformational leadership theory will hold at the dyads-within-groups level of analysis; that is, they are based on differences among dyads within groups.

Between dyads. The dyad level or differences between dyads (irrespective of work groups) may serve as a boundary condition on transformational leadership theory. This is a purely dyadic view of a boundary on the theory, independent of the formal work group. Dansereau et al. (1984) and Yammarino and Dubinsky (1992) have found empirical support for this type of boundary condition for leadership and outcome relationships similar to those of interest in the present study. To assess this level alternative fully, as with the dyads-within-groups alternative, reports of both superiors and subordinates about their interactions are needed. In this way, multiple perspectives on the interactions can be used to identify superior-subordinate dyadic agreement.

This level of analysis as a boundary condition indicates that independent superior-subordinate interactions can be viewed as equitable, balanced, composed of similar individuals, or as drawing on credit balances to induce equity between the individuals involved (Berscheid, 1985; Hollander, 1985). In other words, there is agreement on the leadership dimensions of interest within each superior-subordinate dyad, but interactions differ from dyad to dyad, and work group membership per se is not relevant for understanding leadership and outcomes. This case differs from Graen and Scandura's (1987) and Graen and Wakabayashi's (1992) dyads-within-groups alternative where all superior-subordinate interactions in a group are managed by a superior relative to one another. Rather, a purely dyadic or interpersonal view (e.g., Berscheid, 1985; Hollander, 1985) is asserted when superior-subordinate dyads are viewed as not influenced by, nor dependent on, group membership of the superior or subordinates (also see Dansereau et al., 1984; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1992). The work of Bass (1985, 1990) on transformational leadership and of Hollander (1985), Podsakoff and Schriesheim (1985), Podsakoff and Todor (1985), and Podsakoff et al. (1982) on related theoretical formulations suggests this level of analysis may serve as a boundary condition on transformational leadership theory.

The between-dyads view indicates an interpersonal perspective: Independent one-to-one relationships (dyads) are viewed as not influenced by, nor dependent on, group membership of a superior and subordinates. In this case, the superior does not control or manage the dyads. Rather, because these are independent, interpersonal relationships, there is mutual control and influence by superior and subordinate. Some superior-subordinate dyads show stronger interpersonal relationships than others, and individuals' perceptions within a dyad are similar to one another (i.e., superior-subordinate agreement). This suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: Relationships derived from transformational leadership theory will hold at the between-dyads level of analysis; that is, they are based on differences between dyads.

Cross-level. Given the above discussion, a fourth possibility is that all three of these levels of analysis--individual differences, between-dyads differences, and differences among dyads within groups--are involved in transformational leadership theory. In other words, because there are theoretical justification and empirical support for each level of analysis possibility, all three may be operating and relevant for transformational leadership theory. In many writings (cf. Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990; Bradley, 1987; Burns, 1978; Kuhnert & Lewis, 1987; Yukl, 1989), this cross-level formulation is proposed.

Yukl (1989), summarizing this work, notes that:

A major controversy is whether charisma [transformational leadership] is primarily a result of leader attributes, situational conditions, or an interactive influence process between leader and followers. This controversy resembles the divergent perspectives of the trait, situational, and reciprocal influence approaches within the mainstream leadership literature. (p. 205)

Yammarino and Bass (1991) elaborated this point and clarified the perspectives using multiple levels of analysis. Briefly, leader attributes or trait approaches noted by Yukl (1989) are individual-(leader) or person-level explanations of leadership. Situational conditions, or situational approaches, discussed by Yukl provide group- or collective-level explanations of leadership. Person-situation views then address leadership in terms of these multiple levels of analysis. The interactive influence process or reciprocal influence approaches mentioned by Yukl deal with leader-follower relationships that are dyadic in nature. Given these multiple views, a cross-level formulation is plausible.

Yukl also states that:

Charisma [transformational leadership] is believed to result from follower perceptions of leader qualities and behavior. These perceptions are influenced by the context of the leadership situation and the followers' individual and collective needs. (Yukl, 1989, p. 205)

As noted by Yammarino and Bass (1991) and Yammarino and Dubinsky (1992), follower perceptions of the leader and follower needs may be individual- or person-level (i.e., in the eye of the beholder), dyad-level (i.e., determined by one-to-one follower-leader interaction), or group-level (i.e., shared by a group of followers). The context of the leadership situation is typically a set of group- or collective-level factors (Yammarino & Bass, 1991). Again, given these different views, a cross-level formulation is plausible.

Viewing transformational leadership theory as a cross-level formulation means that in transformational leadership theory, relationships among constructs hold at more than one level of analysis (see Behling, 1978; Dansereau et al., 1984; Miller, 1978, Rousseau, 1985). In this case, transformational leadership theory would be more of an unbounded formulation, holding for individuals, dyads, and groups. This suggests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 4: Relationships derived from transformational leadership theory will be cross-level in nature, holding at three levels of analysis; that is, they are based on individual differences, between-dyads differences, and differences among dyads within groups.

#### Method

##### Sample

The entire domestic sales organization (188 salespersons and 42 sales supervisors) of a \$1 billion multinational medical products firm was asked to participate in this study (also see Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994). Of the contacted sales personnel, 174 subordinates (93%) and 38 superiors (90%) participated in the study. Usable matched reports of complete data (i.e., subordinates reported about their superiors and superiors reported about each of their subordinates) were obtained for 105 subordinates and their 33 superiors. As such, the effective response rates were 56% for salespersons (subordinates) and 79% for sales supervisors (superiors). Potential participants were dropped from analyses if (a) a subordinate report was provided, but a matching superior report was not; (b) a superior report was provided, but a matching subordinate report was not; or (c) the host company informed us that a subordinate or superior was no longer linked in the organizational hierarchy. The participating subordinates and their superiors comprised 105 superior-subordinate dyads and were embedded in 33 work groups.[2]

All respondents (subordinates and superiors) were males. For the subordinates, mean age was between 29 and 39 years; mean educational level was a bachelor's degree. Average tenure in the organization, in their present position, and with their current superior were 2 to 4 years, 1.5 to 2 years, and 1 to 1.5 years, respectively. For the superiors, mean age was between 40 and 50 years; mean educational level was a bachelor's degree. Average tenure in the organization and in their present position were 4 to 10 years and 1 to 1.5 years, respectively.

##### Measures

Data were collected from matched questionnaires distributed via intracompany mail to all subordinates and superiors. Each subordinate was asked to respond regarding his relationship with a superior, and a superior was asked to respond regarding his relationship with each subordinate. This approach permitted individual, dyad, group, and/or cross-level effects to be displayed. The surveys, which focused on perceptions (rather than actual behaviors) of superiors and subordinates, were returned directly to the researchers. Multiple-item measures were summed and divided by the appropriate number of items to

generate scale scores for the respondents.

**Leadership.** Five leadership measures were obtained using 47 items from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1990). Because some of these items focus only on a group of subordinates or leave the referent ambiguous, the items were modified slightly to specifically tap the interactions (relationships) between a superior and each subordinate. For example, an item on a subordinate questionnaire stated, "My superior gives personal attention to me when I seem neglected." The matched item on the superior questionnaire stated, "I give personal attention to this subordinate when he/she seems neglected." Respondents (subordinates and superiors) were asked the frequency with which each item described the interaction between the superior and specific subordinate. Potential responses for each item ranged on a 5-point format from 0 = "not at all" to 4 = "frequently, if not always."

Four dimensions of transformational leadership--charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration--were measured using items from the MLQ. The four scales, number of items in each, and a sample item for each scale from the subordinate questionnaire were:

**Charisma (10 items)**--"My superior has a sense of mission which he/she transmits to me."

**Inspiration (7 items)**--"My superior's vision spurs me on."

**Intellectual Stimulation (10 items)**--"My superior's ideas have forced me to rethink some of my own ideas which I had never questioned before."

**Individualized Consideration (10 items)**--"My superior treats me as an individual."

To assess transactional leadership, the contingent reward items from the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1990) were used:

**Contingent Reward (10 items)**--"When I do good work, my superior commends me."

**Outcomes.** Three outcomes of transformational and transactional leadership were measured using reports of subordinates and superiors. First, using three additional items from the MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1990) that were modified slightly for parallelism as noted above, subordinate extra effort was assessed. Subordinates and superiors were asked the frequency with which a subordinate was motivated to do more than expected. Potential responses for each item ranged on a 5-point format from 0 = "not at all" to 4 = "frequently, if not always."

Second, in terms of performance, superiors were asked to rate the performance of each of their subordinates using a 10-item multi-dimensional performance measure (Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1990). This measure, designed for evaluating sales personnel, included criteria such as profitability of sales efforts, overall work attitude, and product knowledge. Potential responses for each item ranged on a 5-point format from 0 = "poor" to 4 = "excellent." This measure is called subordinate performance in subsequent analyses.

Third, also in terms of performance, subordinates were asked to rate the performance of their superiors using the MLQ 4-item effectiveness measure (Bass & Avolio, 1990). This measure assessed the effectiveness of the superior in meeting subordinate, unit, and organizational needs and requirements. Potential responses for each item ranged on a 5-point format from 0 = "not effective" to 4 = "extremely effective." This measure is called effectiveness of superior in subsequent analyses.

#### Descriptive Statistics

Because of the very high correlations among the four transformational leadership dimensions ( $r$ 's ranged from .70 to .91 for subordinate reports and from .49 to .73 for superior reports) and the very high loadings of these items on a single transformational factor for both subordinate and superior reports, an overall transformational leadership measure was used in all the analyses. This collapsing of dimensions is further justified on theoretical grounds given the conceptual connections among the dimension of transformational leadership (see Bass, 1985, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1990). Results and inferences for the overall measure were compatible with those based on the four dimensions separately.

Descriptive statistics for all measures are presented in Table 1. Separate reliabilities (coefficient alpha) were calculated for subordinates and superiors to determine the internal consistency of the multiple-item (summed) scales. All scales yielded reliabilities

deemed adequate for further analyses. Means and standard deviations for the variables based on the reports of subordinates and superiors also are shown in the table. With the exception of subordinate performance (superior reports) and effectiveness of superior (subordinate reports), the variables were assessed by both subordinates and superiors.

#### Data Analysis

Because the research issues focused on multiple levels of analysis, within and between analysis (WABA), a multiple-level data-analytic technique, was used to test for and draw conclusions about level effects (boundaries). The data-analytic and inference-drawing procedures in WABA have been fully described by Dansereau et al. (1984) and used widely (e.g., Avolio & Yammarino, 1990; Avolio et al., 1991; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1990, 1992, 1994; Yammarino & Markham, 1992). An overview of the key aspects relevant to the current study is now presented.

There are three steps in WABA, regardless of the analytic level. First, each variable is assessed at a particular level to determine whether the variable varies primarily between, within, or both between and within the units of interest (e.g., groups). Within and between etas are used to assess sources of variation, and they are tested with F-tests of statistical significance and E-tests of practical significance (magnitude of effects). These procedures are called WABA I.

Second, each relationship among variables of interest is assessed at a particular level to determine whether the covariation among variables is primarily between, within, both between and within, or neither between nor within the focal units. Between- and within-cell correlations are used to assess covariation among variables, and their differences are tested with Z-tests of statistical significance and A-tests of practical significance. Moreover, each between- and within-cell correlation is tested for statistical and practical significance using t- and R-tests, respectively. These procedures are called WABA II.

Third, using the WABA equation, the results of the first two steps are combined to draw an overall conclusion from the data. In particular, within and between components, which total to the traditional raw-score correlation, are examined to draw an inference about the Level, 1 of analysis at which effects operate.

In this study, for the individual differences view of transformational leadership theory, the focal conceptual level of analysis is the individual level. To test this alternative, raw scores from superiors and subordinates on the leadership and outcome variables are partitioned into within- and between-dyad scores and within- and between-group scores. The within- and between-dyad scores are analyzed in WABA with dyads as the focal unit of analysis. This analysis permits data from multiple sources (superiors and subordinates) to be integrated via dyads. Thus, multiple perspectives on the same variables can be assessed concurrently for agreement or disagreement (WABA I), and the associations among different variables can likewise be evaluated for the degree of dyadic agreement (WABA II). The within- and between-group scores from both superiors and subordinates are analyzed in WABA with groups as the unit of analysis. This analysis permits same-rater correlations and different-rater cross-correlations on variables to be assessed via groups. In the ideal case, both the dyad- and group-level analyses would yield results that indicate variation and covariation both between and within dyads and between and within groups--equivocal effects at the dyad and group levels. In conjunction with a significant individual-level (raw score) correlation, these findings suggest that individual differences are evidenced. In this case, transformational leadership theory would be bounded at the individual level.

For the dyads-within-groups view of transformational leadership theory, the focal conceptual level of analysis is the group level. To test this alternative, raw scores from superiors and subordinates on the variables are partitioned into within- and between-group scores that are input into a group-level WABA. In the ideal case, this analysis would yield results that indicate significant variation and covariation within and not between groups. Groups are relevant, but there is a relative positioning of individuals within the groups. These findings would suggest that dyads-within-groups differences, consistent with a leader-member exchange perspective on leadership, are evidenced. In this case, transformational leadership theory would be bounded at the group level.

For the between-dyads view of transformational leadership theory, the focal conceptual level of analysis is the dyad level. To test this alternative, raw scores from superiors and subordinates on the variables are partitioned into within- and between-dyad scores that

are input into a dyad-level WABA. In the ideal case, this analysis would yield results that indicate significant variation and covariation between and not within dyads. This is superior-subordinate agreement on the variables within dyads. These findings would suggest that between-dyads differences are evidenced. In this case, transformational leadership theory would be bounded at the dyad level.

Moreover, in terms of multiple levels of analysis, if there is evidence of (a) individual differences, (b) between-dyads differences, and (c) differences among dyads within groups, then cross-level effects would be inferred. In this case, support would be provided for a more unbounded view of transformational leadership theory, holding at the individual, dyad, and group levels of analysis.

## Results

The findings for this study are summarized in Table 2. For each WABA, within and between etas, within- and between-cell correlations, within- and between-components, and the resulting raw-score (individual-level) correlations are shown for each relationship of interest. All the associated test results also are indicated in the table.

Results from within- and between-dyads analyses are summarized in the first portion of Table 2. These results are based on superior-subordinate multi-rater reports. There is no variable for which the E- and F-tests of the etas are significant. There is no relationship for which the A- and Z-tests of the correlations and the A -tests of the components are significant. These results indicate variation and covariation both between and within dyads. Dansereau et al. (1984) and Yammarino and Markham (1992) call these "equivocal effects" at the dyad level or "nondyadic" results. However, all the raw-score (individual-level) correlations are significant, based on R- and t-tests. Overall, therefore, these findings mean that the relationships of interest do not hold at the dyad level of analysis, but operate based on individual differences in responses of superiors and subordinates. Support is provided for Hypothesis 1 but not for Hypothesis 3.

Results from within- and between-groups analyses based on subordinate (same-source) reports are summarized in the second portion of Table 2. There is no variable for which the E- and F-tests of the etas are significant. There is no relationship for which the A- and Z-tests of the correlations and the A-test of the components are significant. These results indicate variation and covariation both between and within groups (of subordinates) and are called "equivocal" at the group level or "non-grouped" results. Note all the individual-level (raw-score) correlations are significant, based on R- and t-tests. Overall, therefore, these findings mean that the relationships of interest do not hold at the group level, but operate based on individual differences in responses of subordinates. Support is provided for Hypothesis 1 but not for Hypothesis 2.

Results from within- and between-groups analyses based on superior (same-source) reports are summarized in the third portion of Table 2. Contingent reward is the only variable for which the E- and F-tests of the etas are significant, suggesting between-groups (superiors) variation on this variable. There is no relationship, however, for which the A- and Z-tests of the correlations and the A-test of the components are significant. These results indicate variation and covariation both between and within groups (superiors) and are "equivocal" at the group level or "nongrouped" results. Again, all the individual-level (raw-score) correlations are significant based on R- and t-tests. Overall, therefore, these findings mean that the relationships of interest do not hold at the group level, but operate based on individual differences in responses of superiors. Support is provided for Hypothesis 1 but not for Hypothesis 2.

Results from within- and between-groups analyses based on superior-subordinate (cross-rater) reports are summarized in the fourth portion of Table 2. These results are based on different-source data--subordinate reports of leadership and superior reports of outcomes. The etas were interpreted above as equivocal at the group level. There is no relationship for which the A - and Z- tests of the correlations and the A -test of the components are significant. Two of the four individual-level (raw-score) correlations are significant, based on R- and t-tests. These results indicate variation and covariation both between and within groups (superiors and subordinates) and are "equivocal" at the group level ("nongrouped" results) for the transformational leadership/performance and contingent reward/performance relationships. The results also indicate "null effects" at the group level (lack of significant between- and within-groups covariation) for the transformational leadership/extra effort and contingent reward/extra effort relationships (see Dansereau et al., 1984; Yammarino & Markham, 1992). Null results were also evident for all other cross-rater relationships among variables at the

group level (not shown to conserve space). Overall, therefore, while there is limited cross-rater agreement (two relationships), the relationships of interest do not hold at the group level. No support is provided for Hypothesis 2.

## Discussion

### Bounded Results

Given the lack of dyad- and group-based results, no support is provided for Hypothesis 4. Contrary to higher-level (dyad, group) assertions (Hypotheses 2 & 3) and cross-level assertions (Hypothesis 4) based on the extant literature, results of the current study were based solely on individual differences/variability in the responses of superiors and subordinates (Hypothesis 1). As such, expected positive relationships among variables derived from transformational leadership theory were bounded at the individual level of analysis. There was a general lack of superior-subordinate agreement, and superior-subordinate relationships in dyads and groups were not evidenced. Individuals' (superiors' and subordinates') perceptions, regardless of dyad or group membership, did not aggregate to higher levels or cross levels of analysis. Based on the significant raw-score (individual-level) results (last column of Table 2), transformational leadership theory holds only at the individual level of analysis and appears to have its basis "in the eye of the beholder"--what one individual perceives differs from what others perceive.

The same-source (within-rater) results for subordinates and superiors separately (second and third portions, respectively, of Table 2) essentially parallel the multi-source and cross-rater results (first and fourth portions, respectively, of Table 2). In the case of superior reports, because the specific focus is a particular relationship and because the superior data based on the group-level WABA is "nongrouped" ("non-superior"), there is no superior rater effect and independence of data points is maintained. Regardless of the source(s) and analyses that were conducted, relationships among the variables generally are positive and significant. As such, common-methods bias or rater effects do not appear to have influenced the findings. The key conclusion is that the relationships, regardless of source, hold solely at the individual level and not the dyad nor group levels. Respondents in this study experienced leadership at the individual level.

These results are compatible with prior investigations which incorporated levels of analysis (Avolio & Yammarino, 1990; Avolio et al, 1991; Yammarino & Bass, 1990). The current findings, however, provide much stronger support for this effect because boundary conditions on transformational leadership theory in terms of levels of analysis were hypothesized, measurement procedures included matched multi-source data, complete tests of dyad- and group-level effects were conducted, and several levels of analysis alternative explanations for the relationships were ruled out to draw stronger inferences (see Behling, 1978; Dubin, 1976).

The central conclusion of this study--that the expected relationships held only at the individual level of analysis--can be explained in at least two different ways. First, the effects may be due to implicit leadership theories in that relationships were found among perceptual measures at the individual level. This interpretation could imply that perceptions of leader behavior have little or nothing to do with actual leader behavior. Second, the effects may suggest that leader behavior differs for different subordinates, and thus, the different perceptions of subordinates are valid. In this case, leader behavior actually affects the measured outcomes. However, this second explanation seems less likely than the first because the dyad-level results were equivocal, suggesting individual differences/variability and not between-dyads differences.

### Implications

Given that the first explanation seems more likely, there are several implications for transformational leadership theory. First, the network of relationships among variables derived from the theory seems reasonable and supported. Second, level of analysis assertions derived from the theory suggesting higher level (dyad, group) and cross-level effects may need rethinking, as these were unsupported in the current study. Third, cross-rater correlations (fourth portion of Table 2) suggest that contingent reward leadership may be more strongly linked to subordinate performance than is transformational leadership. This result, however, may be due, in part, to the setting/sample of this study (see below). Fourth, whether these findings would replicate for actual leader behaviors and objective performance data (rather than perceptual measures and subjective data as in this study) is an issue for future research. Bass (1990) and Yukl (1989) appear to provide mixed evidence on this point. There is a tendency in leadership research to collect subordinate perceptual data and label these;

"leader behaviors." As Bass notes, sometimes the perceptions and behaviors are closely linked, other times they are not; but the perceptions may be as important or more important than the actual behaviors in determining subsequent actions by subordinates and superiors. As such, future research on transformational leadership theory could explore these issues by gathering perceptual and behavioral leadership data as well as subjective and objective performance data in the same studies to assess their degree of convergence.

The current findings are not too surprising given that the host organization was a somewhat traditional sales setting in which sales personnel are relatively independent of one another, and individual behavior (e.g., performance) is controlled to some degree by individual (and not group) quotas and incentive pay. In addition to these largely autonomous sales positions, some sales personnel may actually view their peers or co-workers as competition for the same rewards. Thus, subordinates may have tended to have mostly formal relationships with their superiors (regulated by rules and procedures), and employees might have worked relatively independently of each other. So, the absence of dyad- and group-level effects seems plausible, but may not extend to organizations in which strong interpersonal relationships are encouraged or where individuals work in a highly interdependent manner in work groups. Nevertheless, the results would appear to generalize to other sales organizations.

If the results of the current study are accepted tentatively, they suggest additional implications for leadership research and practice. In terms of research, leadership theory variables and relationships cannot be assumed to operate at a particular level of analysis; levels of analysis effects must be specified and tested. Nor does the measurement of variables at a particular level guarantee their operation at that level; such operationalizations require testing. Focusing on only the magnitude and direction of relationships does not present a total picture of hypothesized or obtained effects; the level of analysis involved also must be asserted and tested. Thus, leadership research in general, and transformational leadership theory in particular, would be enhanced by incorporating levels of analysis as boundary conditions in conceptualization, measurement, and testing procedures.

Regarding the substantive results, transformational leadership theory appears to operate similarly to other leadership phenomena identified by different variables. For example, compatible with the work of Lord and his colleagues (Lord et al., 1984; Phillips & Lord, 1981) on other dimensions, transformational leadership relationships were based on individual differences in perceptions and information processing. Thus, at least in terms of levels of analysis, presumably different leadership theories may be more similar than researchers have believed (also see Yammarino & Bass, 1991; Yukl, 1989). Likewise, in terms of variables and relationships, transformational leadership theory seems to operate quite similarly to variables and relationships identified in other theoretical positions (i.e., transactional/contingent reward leadership) developed by Graen and his colleagues (e.g., Graen & Scandura, 1987; Graen & Wakabayashi, 1992; Sridhar & Marks, 1991) and Podsakoff and his colleagues (e.g., Podsakoff & Schriesheim, 1985; Williams & Podsakoff, 1988). Perhaps future research efforts could focus on integrating, with levels of analysis, these various leadership theories or seeking out the common themes in these works to enhance understanding of leadership per se.

In terms of management practice, the results of this study suggest that managers must be cognizant of the particular dimensions of leadership in use. For example, if leadership or its outcomes are instituted or manipulated on a group-wide or dyadic basis, but subordinates perceive these notions on an individual basis, managerial efforts will fail. As suggested by the results of this study, fostering subordinate motivation and performance with transformational and transactional leadership should occur on an individual basis for each subordinate, independent of other group members. To do otherwise would seemingly be inappropriate and not improve managerial effectiveness. Clearly other dimensions and aspects of transformational leadership theory not investigated here may operate differently, or the investigated aspects may operate in another fashion in other settings.

#### Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations of the current study warrant attention in future research before conclusions of the study are accepted. First, this investigation was limited to transformational leadership theory as espoused and operationalized by Bass and his colleagues. Potential measurement problems with the MLQ (see Yulk, 1989) may have resulted in its failure to operate at higher levels of analysis. Whether other theories and operationalizations of transformational/charismatic leadership operate in a similar way, are bounded to hold at the person

(individual) level of analysis, hold at other (and multiple) levels of analysis, or are cross-level in nature remains an open research question. Relatedly, although multiple raters were used in the current study, all raters completed the same instrument, a paper-and-pencil measure of transformational leadership. The amount of influence of common-methods bias and rater effects on the current findings could be explored in future research with a more comprehensive multitrait/multimethod design and structural equation modeling.

Second, the current study included only male superiors and subordinates, and the organization was a traditional, male-dominated one. Some prior research (see Bass, 1990) suggests differences between men and women leaders on transformational leadership as well as between male and female subordinates reporting to them. Thus, replication and extension of the current findings to samples of men and women leaders and subordinates are necessary.

Third, additional elaboration of transformational leadership theory in terms of precursors and consequences and the levels of analysis at which these variables operate seems warranted (also see Yammarino & Dubinsky, 1994). For example, how do various personality characteristics and job assignments of subordinates influence their perceptions of leaders and leadership? How do personality characteristics of superiors influence their subordinates' perceptions, motivation, and performance? What role do various macro-level organization variables (e.g., structure, technology) play in determining leader behaviors and perceptions of these behaviors? Or in stressful or crisis situations, would differing processes be operating, thus resulting in a rather different set of obtained effects? Clearly, different and multiple levels of analysis are implied here and should be accounted for in future investigations. To date, investigations have generally ignored the specification and test of the levels of analysis involved in these potential precursors and consequences of transformational leadership theory.

Fourth, examining whether transformational leadership effects aggregate or operate at still higher levels of analysis seems useful. In this study, the sample size was relatively small (105 dyads and 33 groups), and the groups tended to be small. Perhaps in larger groups of subordinates reporting to a common superior, group-level effects for transformational leadership would be more likely to be displayed. Moreover, with larger samples and multiple organizations, department, functional area, organization, and social system levels of analysis could be explored. To date, investigations have generally ignored the explicit incorporation of these higher levels of analysis in formulations and tests of transformational leadership theory.

Fifth, leadership processes develop over time, so a cross-sectional study, like the current investigation, cannot capture the full range and dynamics of transformational leadership theory. Perhaps individual-level effects develop over time to a point where agreement or consensus is reached by superiors and subordinates and dyad- or group-level effects are obtained. Another possibility is that in times of organizational change or crisis, the operation of transformational leadership theory shifts from one level (individual) to another (organization) or becomes cross-level in nature. These speculations could be investigated in future work.

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1 Although other levels of analysis boundary conditions are plausible, only the three most feasible, based on transformational leadership theory and research, are developed here. This strategy allows us both to conserve space and limit the complexity of this manuscript. For additional boundary conditions expressed as levels of analysis, interested readers can consult the work of Dansereau et al. (1984), Yammarino and Bass (1991), and Yammarino and Dubinsky (1992).

2 Although the response rates were adequate, several checks were performed to ensure that there was minimal nonresponse bias. In particular, biodata (e.g., age, education, tenure in the organization) and scale scores based on survey responses (e.g., leadership and outcomes) for subordinates included in the final sample and those excluded because of a Jack of a matching superior report were compared. Likewise, biodata and scale scores based on survey responses for superiors included in the final sample and those excluded because of a lack of a matching subordinate report were compared. In these

cases, there were no significant differences on these variables between respondents (subordinates and superiors) who were included in the study as compared to those individuals who were excluded. Thus, nonresponse bias was not deemed to be problematic.

TABLE 1

Descriptive Statistics[a]

| Variables                                          | Subordinate reports |      |     | Superior reports |      |     |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------|-----|------------------|------|-----|
|                                                    | alpha               | M    | SD  | alpha            | M    | SD  |
| <b>Leadership</b>                                  |                     |      |     |                  |      |     |
| Transformational                                   | .97                 | 2.43 | .81 | .93              | 2.96 | .38 |
| Contingent reward                                  | .83                 | 2.34 | .69 | .76              | 2.76 | .43 |
| <b>Outcomes</b>                                    |                     |      |     |                  |      |     |
| Subordinate extra effort                           | .83                 | 1.93 | .93 | .77              | 2.76 | .63 |
| Subordinate performance: Effectiveness of superior | -                   | -    | -   | .92              | 2.90 | .68 |

a Based on responses of 105 subordinates and their 33 superiors reporting about each of them.

TABLE 2

Dyad-Level and Group-Level Results

Information is presented in the following order: Level and relationships; etas, Between; etas, Within; Correlations, Between; Correlations, Within; Components, Between; Components, Within; Raw-score correlations

Dyad (Sub.-Sup.)[a]

TF and; .69; .73

CR; .68; .74; .71; .76; .33; .41; .74[e][g]

EE; .62; .78[f]; .78; .84; .33; .48; .81[e][g]

CR and

EE; ; ; .47; .66[f]; 20; .38; .58[e][g]

Group (Subordinates)[\*\*]

TF and; .73[g]; .69

CR; .65; .76; .85; .73; .40; .38; .78[e][g]

EE; .64; .77; .93[e][g]; .80; .43; .42; .85[e][g]

EF; .66; .75; .72; .70; .35; .36.; 71[e][g]

CR and

EE; ; ; .76; .56; .31; .33; .64[e][g]

EF; ; ; .67; .51; .29; .29; .585[e][e]

EE and

EF; ; ; .62; .50; .26; .29; .55[e][g]

Group (Superiors)[\*\*]

TF and; .79[g]; .62

CR; .90[e][g]; .44; .50; .55; .35; .15; .50[e][g]

EE; .79[g]; .60; .73[d]; .53; .46[d]; .20; .66[e][g]

PF; .66; .75; .48; .30; .25; .14; .39[d][g]

CR and

EE; ; ; .40[d]; .09; .28[d]; .03; .31[d][g]

PF; ; ; .46; .39; .28; .13; .41[d][g]

EE and

PF; ; ; .40; .22; .21; .10; .31[d][g]

Group (Sub. x Sup.)[c]

TF (Sub.) and

EE (Sup.); ; ; -.10; .30; -.06; .13; .07

PF (Sup.); ; ; .37; .21; .18; .11; .29[d][g]

CR (Sub.) and

EE (Sup.); ; ; -.17; .15; -.09; .07; -.02

PF (Sup.); ; ; .38; .40; .16; .23; .39[d][g]

Note: TF = transformational, CR = contingent reward, EE = subordinate extra effort, EF = effectiveness of superior, and PF = subordinate performance. Subordinates (sub.) and superiors (sup.) designate the raters.

a Analyses are based on N=210 and J=105. All relationships are based on superior-subordinate matched reports. The inference for all relationships is "nondyadic," indicating individual-level effects.

b Analyses are based on N=105 and J=33. All relationships are based on same-source (subordinate or superior) data. The inference for all relationships is "nongrouped," indicating individual-level effects.

c Analyses are based on N=105 and J=33. All relationships are based on cross-rater (different-source) data. The inference for the second and fourth relationships is "nongrouped," indicating individual-level effects; for the first and third relationships and all other cross-rater relationships (not shown), the inference is "null results."

d 15 degree; e 30 degree; f p<.05; g p<.01

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