




LEADERSHIP THEORY

CULTIVATING CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

JOHN P. DUGAN

 **JOSSEY-BASS™**
A Wiley Brand

LEADERSHIP THEORY AND PRACTICE GROUNDED IN CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

“This book breathes new life into leadership studies. Every student of leadership — novice or veteran — will benefit from exploring the implications of Dugan’s developmental and critical approach. While calling attention to hidden social realities in leadership discourse — like inequality and injustice — Dugan invites a hopeful reframing of leadership theory and practice and challenges readers to recognize their own capacity to transform the world.”

—**Sonia M. Ospina**, professor, R.F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University

“John Dugan provides a valuable addition to the leadership literature by introducing perspectives derived from critical social theory as a means to engage readers as critical learners. This is a novel approach to teaching leadership and one that readers will appreciate.”

—**David V. Day**, director, Kravis Leadership Institute, Claremont McKenna College


“What a fantastic book—I could not put it down! This critical review of the strengths and weaknesses of the best known leadership theories fundamentally enhances our understanding. Its insights are transformative. Dugan offers ways to improve these theories rather than disregarding them based on their shortcomings. I love the notion of zombie theories—you have to read the book to find out what that is! The narratives help ground complex concepts and the reflection questions compel the reader to struggle with the material.”

—**Adrianna Kezar**, professor for higher education, University of Southern California

JOHN P. DUGAN is an associate professor in the higher education graduate program at Loyola University Chicago, where he teaches student development theory, leadership, and multiculturalism for social justice. He is the principal investigator for the Multi-Institutional Study of Leadership, and the co-editor of *The Handbook for Student Leadership Development, Second Edition* (Jossey-Bass, 2011).

Cover Design: Wiley
Cover Image: ©David Marchal/Getty Images, Inc.

JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

 Also available
as an e-book

EDUCATION/Leadership

ISBN 978-1-118-86415-9




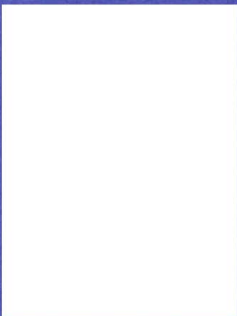
9 781118 864159

LEADERSHIP THEORY

CULTIVATING CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES

DUGAN





Leadership Theory

Cultivating Critical Perspectives

John P. Dugan



JB JOSSEY-BASS™
A Wiley Brand

Copyright © 2017 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published by Jossey-Bass

A Wiley Brand

One Montgomery Street, Suite 1000, San Francisco, CA 94104-4594—www.josseybass.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600, or on the Web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, 201-748-6011, fax 201-748-6008, or online at www.wiley.com/go/permissions.

Permission is given for individual classroom teachers to reproduce the pages and illustrations for classroom use. Reproduction of these materials for an entire school system is strictly forbidden.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages. Readers should be aware that Internet Web sites offered as citations and/or sources for further information may have changed or disappeared between the time this was written and when it is read.

Jossey-Bass books and products are available through most bookstores. To contact Jossey-Bass directly call our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-956-7739, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3986, or fax 317-572-4002.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Dugan, John P., 1977- author.

Title: Leadership theory : cultivating critical perspectives / John P. Dugan.

Description: San Francisco, CA : Jossey-Bass ; Hoboken, New Jersey : John

Wiley & Sons, 2017. | Includes index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016044790 (print) | LCCN 2016054381 (ebook) | ISBN 9781118864159 (cloth) | ISBN 9781118864302 (epdf) | ISBN 9781118864227 (epub)

Subjects: LCSH: Leadership—Study and teaching. | Critical theory. | Social justice.

Classification: LCC HM1261 .D84 2017 (print) | LCC HM1261 (ebook) | DDC 303.3/4—dc23

LC record available at <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016044790>

Cover image: ©David Marchal/Getty Images, Inc.

Cover design: Wiley

Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

HB Printing

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Leadership Theory

This book is dedicated to:

Mary Agnes Broderick, Maria Teresa Jiménez Arnau, & Kathleen Elizabeth Dugan

Preface

Leadership. Few words elicit simultaneously such a wide range of conflicting understandings and feelings. It is a concept that both provokes and appeases. It is both desired and detested. Indeed, the concept of leadership is almost impossible to escape in our contemporary context. Across nearly every form of media the terms *leader* and *leadership* are bandied about, sometimes as a clarion call for what is most absent and needed in society and other times as a harbinger of the most compelling of social ills.

Despite being almost omnipresent in contemporary discourse, so little time is directed toward unpacking what is really meant by the terms *leader* and *leadership*. We default to the assumption of a shared understanding despite clear evidence that we may be operating from different conceptualizations altogether. In our relationships, our communities, our places of worship, our work environments—in nearly every aspect of our lives—the theme of leadership is at play. And yet . . . to what extent do we invest in examining our assumptions, comparing our perspectives, and converging around a shared meaning.

The purpose of this book is to foster dialogue about how we understand, experience, and enact leader roles and leadership processes through the exploration of leadership theory. A remarkable gap exists between the knowledge generated from the formal, academic study of leadership and its translation into everyday practice. This is at least in part attributable to the ways in which the formal, academic literature on leadership reflects a “story most often told” or dominant narrative that is frequently disconnected from and/or incongruent with people’s lived experiences. Thus,

the focus of this book is not just on exploring the architecture that informs our understandings of leadership but also on cultivating the perspectives necessary to engage with theory as a critical learner.

WHAT THIS BOOK OFFERS

The marketplace for leadership education, training, and development is growing at an exponential rate. This is evidenced in the increasing number of academic programs, community seminars, and corporate training opportunities, many of which draw on a flourishing body of scholarship on leadership theory. Leadership theory represents a particularly important area for intervention given the foundations it provides for both research and practice.

There is no shortage of books distilling the content of leadership theory. This book, however, is unique in a number of compelling ways. It offers an alternative approach to learning leadership theory that is *developmental in nature* and grounded in *critical perspectives*.

That the book is developmental means its goal is not to expose readers to the most expansive breadth of theories possible or encourage rote memorization and regurgitation. Acquisition of knowledge on a broad range of theories is important, but the process of learning *how* to learn about leadership theory offers greater additive value. Therefore, the organization and content of the book focuses on building readers' capacities to meaningfully interpret, evaluate, and apply theory—a process that can then be replicated as new theories emerge.

Part of the developmental approach taken in this book involves the infusion of perspectives derived from critical social theory. Critical social theories are concerned with understanding the flow of power in society, how this contributes to social stratification, and ways in which we can create more democratic and equitable social arrangements. The use of critical perspectives is a direct response to scholarly calls for greater attention to issues of justice in leadership theory.

The developmental approach and integration of critical perspectives work in tandem to position readers as critical learners of leadership theory. Readers are situated as valid knowers in their own right and, through the deconstruction and reconstruction of theory, begin to craft their own theories of leadership. The goal is to build agency to transform and apply theory in ways that advance leadership that can make a meaningful difference in the world.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

Sometimes it is easiest to understand the purpose and goals of a project through the articulation of what it is *not*. No book can serve the needs of all readers or cover all possible content. In fact, there lies a danger in trying to be everything to everyone. Too often this results in a watering down and oversimplification of content. As such, this book is guided by a number of delimitations that frame its design.

This Is Not an Exhaustive Examination of Leadership Theory

The goal of this book is to aid in building readers' capacities to engage with leadership theory as critical learners. To some degree, this means sacrificing breadth for depth in terms of coverage. Additionally, the book attempts to disrupt the "story most often told" in leadership theory. One of the ways in which this dominant narrative plays out is through the privileging of certain disciplines, content, and theories. Therefore, the metric for inclusion of theories in the book was the degree to which they shape or have the potential to shape formal and informal understandings of leadership across a wide array of disciplines. This means a number of well-known theories were omitted, including psychodynamic approaches, charismatic leadership, and Fiedler's contingency model, among others. This is *not* a statement of their relative value but a conscious decision made to create space for theories traditionally left out of leadership texts. Given the developmental and critical approach employed in the book, readers are encouraged to apply lessons learned to the examination of theories not included.

This Is Not a Book on Critical Social Theory

It merits explicit statement that this is *not* a book on critical social theory. This is a book on leadership theory. Concepts derived from critical social theories are employed as an interpretive lens to deepen the understanding of and ability to apply leadership theories. Therefore, I have attempted to synthesize large swaths of literature into three meta-themes. However, significant debate, distinction, and unique perspectives across the varying strands of critical scholarship are lost in this process. Perhaps the best and safest framing is that the critical perspectives presented in this book should serve as nothing more than a catalyst to seek out the rich and expansive body of literature representing critical social theory.

This Is Not an Exhaustive Set of Critiques

Electing for depth over breadth means that an exhaustive set of critiques are not provided for each theory. The approach I have taken is to offer general strengths and weaknesses for each individual theory. These critiques are varied to avoid redundancy as well as push readers to begin identifying strengths and weaknesses on their own. Additionally, Chapter 2 introduces a variety of tools of deconstruction and reconstruction to support the application of critical perspectives. Each chapter offers insights associated with just a single tool of deconstruction and reconstruction. This does not mean, however, that the others do not apply. My hope is that you will consider on your own how *all* of the tools of deconstruction and reconstruction relate to each theory as well as craft your own tools to supplement the ones I provided. Again, this approach reflects an attempt to stimulate your own agency and efficacy as a critical learner.

SUMMARY OF CONTENT

This book is organized into three sections. The first section sets the stage for learning leadership theory. Chapter 1 introduces the architecture of leadership—mapping the essential elements that comprise a theory and insights into how to delineate among theories. It provides the grounding on which the rest of the book is built. Chapter 2 introduces three meta-themes derived from critical social theory (i.e., stocks of knowledge, ideology/hegemony, and social location), along with a set of tools for deconstruction and reconstruction. The content of this chapter provides the interpretive lens for the rest of the book. Chapter 3 applies considerations from the architecture of leadership and critical perspectives to the “story most often told” in leadership theory. An alternative means for organizing theories is provided, and implicit leadership theory is introduced and used as an example to model the application of critical perspectives. Collectively, these three chapters are designed to begin developing readers’ efficacy and capacity to engage with leadership theory as critical learners.

The core content of the book appears in the second section, which provides syntheses and analyses of more than 20 theories embedded within six theoretical

clusters. Chapters 4–10 employ a standardized format with three segments to ease the learning process:

1. *Standard overview*: Each individual theory is introduced through an overview of its core premises along with how it defines leadership. This is followed by a discussion of how the theory can be translated to practice as well as how empirical research evolves our understanding of its substance and utility. Strengths and weaknesses are also provided.
2. *Application of critical perspectives*: The cluster of theories appearing in a chapter are analyzed using the tools of deconstruction and reconstruction. Reconstructions are offered from multiple perspectives to build readers' comfort with the process and showcase varied ways to apply reconstructed theories to practice. For example, Chapter 5 reconstructs theories of production and effectiveness through the lens of supervision, while Chapter 6 reconstructs group-centered leadership theories through the infusion of content related to inclusion.
3. *Counter-narratives*: The final segment introduces a narrative that weaves together theory, critical perspectives, and translations to practice bringing to life the very human process of engaging in leadership. These stories challenge the "story most often told" and reflect critical life incidents from a brilliant group of leaders from varied disciplines and sectors (e.g., healthcare, education, government, business, nonprofit work, consulting).

The final chapter of the book outlines five key themes associated with the interpretation of leadership theory. These represent essential considerations for translating theory to practice. The chapter also introduces an integrated model for critical leadership development to provide a framework for readers' ongoing journey as critical learners.

A Note on Content

It is important to provide some context regarding how content in the book was generated. The product you see in front of you is the result of a significant amount of labor by an incredible team of students and colleagues. The syntheses of

leadership theories were assembled through a comprehensive examination of over 20 years of articles across five of the most influential academic journals in leadership studies. This was supplemented with content from original source materials, scholarly books, and additional articles from discipline-specific academic journals. The goal was to paint a clear picture of the origins of theories along with their evolution as a result of research. Additionally, our dedicated team engaged in a two-year, empirical study using critical narrative inquiry to create the counter-stories that conclude each chapter.

I hope the above information makes clear the comprehensiveness and rigor that went into creating the content of the book. We took seriously the importance of framing theory in ways that were accurate, highlighted innovations in research that extend our understandings, and approached the processes of deconstruction and reconstruction through an ethic of care. The use of narratives not only humanizes the theories but amplifies the voices of those whose stories are too often left untold in the leadership literature.

A Note on Using the Book

Care was taken to write this book in a developmentally sequenced manner. Readers will note that the complexity of theoretical content increases as the chapters progress. So, too, does the depth of the application of critical perspectives. Therefore, maximizing the intended purpose of the book would involve a sequential reading of chapters. Of utmost importance is that ample time and attention be directed to Chapter 2 and building a base understanding of critical perspectives as these undergird the approach to learning theory through the rest of the book.

The book is also designed with the knowledge that not every reader will want to explore all of the theories or theoretical clusters that are presented. The organization of content within chapters easily allows for bypassing individual theories while retaining the ability to engage with the deconstruction/reconstruction of a chapter. Ultimately, beyond the first three chapters a reader could pick and choose the individual theories or chapters with which to engage and still have a sense of the cohesive whole at the end of the book.

A Note on the Approach to Writing

As you explore the book you will likely note distinctive shifts from a more academic tone to a lighter, more personal, and sometimes humorous or even irreverent one as theory is interpreted, examined, and ultimately played with in service of its deconstruction/reconstruction and application to practice. I recognize that these shifts may be jarring for some who prefer a more straightforward academic text. For some, this may even appear to undermine credibility. However, I might argue that this alternative approach offers a beneficial disruption to the dominant and prototypical ways that leadership theory is traditionally written about in academia.

A FEW CAVEATS

Let me share a few general notes that may be helpful in framing the content you are about to explore. Consider these points of information that invite you to pause and ponder the reactions you may have to the book and its content.

Reactions to Critical Social Theory

There is no doubt that critical social theory evokes strong reactions. The next time you are with family or friends, just casually drop the fact that you are “doing some light reading on leadership, racial injustice, and domination,” or “considering how Marx’s thoughts on commodification draw into question management and leadership in society.” Then wait for their reactions.

Some people immediately lean in; their excitement and intrigue is palpable. Many people, though, start to squirm or may even scrunch their face in disapproval. Some might express outright hostility toward these ideas. Here is the reality . . . in the United States we are socialized to have an almost immediate response to Marx as antithetical to democratic principles. McLaren (1997) coined the term *Marxophobia* to capture how we are often acculturated to associate his work with the ideals of failed and dangerous totalitarian communism. McLaren reminds us, though, that “many if not most critical educators work outside the orthodox Marxian tradition and do not consider capitalism an irrevocable evil” (p. 172), while Brookfield (2005)

stated firmly that “critical theory and democracy are not at odds” (p. 363). Marx is not the only target of fear and mis-associations; scholarships on feminism and critical race theory have also been demonized as fringe and dangerous by some.

If you find yourself shutting down or skeptical of these ideas, I would encourage you to think about why and from where this comes. Could it be part of how you have been socialized culturally and educationally? Does it trigger an internal reaction because of its requirement to reconsider taken-for-granted assumptions about the world? Have you read critical social theories for yourself, or are your reactions built on assumptions about what they assert?

Interestingly, critical social theorists welcome skepticism, but this is often lost in interpretations. The critical perspectives covered in this book, along with the assertions leveraged in their use to deconstruct and reconstruct leadership theory, are all open to critique. What I present are not alternative “right” answers but tools for how to come to your own conclusions. Agger (2013) argued that “a book that purports to explain critical social theories itself needs to be explained, which is what will happen when teachers teach it and students study it” (p. 60). My hope is that this caveat is a relief for those who may worry that the use of critical social theory cannot itself be critiqued. In actuality, this is exactly what I want you to do.

My Positionality as Author

A central component of applying critical perspectives involves engaging continuously in critical self-reflection, which helps to identify and respond to one’s positionality within broader social systems. There is no doubt that my positionality as a White, cisgender, gay man currently living as a member of the middle class shapes the lens through which this book is written. Any number of other social identities are also at play at varying levels of my consciousness, yet still influencing content and how it is presented. Therefore, I think it is important to at least have some sense of my background so you can consider how it shapes the content of the book and its presentation.

I didn’t come to leadership as a true believer but from a place of skepticism and doubt. My socialization to the topic was negative at best and downright scary at worst. I perceived positional leaders as ambitious and typically self-serving, chasing popularity, profit, and power rather than attempting to make meaningful contributions. I witnessed abuses of power by authority figures that drew into question both their legitimacy and whether leaders and leadership even held the possibility of being