



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

## The Leadership Quarterly

journal homepage: [www.elsevier.com/locate/leaqua](http://www.elsevier.com/locate/leaqua)

## Pluralized leadership in complex organizations: Exploring the cross network effects between formal and informal leadership relations

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## ARTICLE INFO

*Article history:*

Received 28 January 2015

Accepted 4 January 2016

Available online xxx

Editor: Francis J. Yammarino

*Keywords:*

Pluralized leadership

Collective leadership

Social network analysis

Formal and informal leadership

## ABSTRACT

Understanding the connection between leadership and informal social network structures is important in advancing understanding of the enactment of pluralized leadership. In this article we explore how the enactment of pluralized leadership is shaped by leadership influence and informal (advice and support) networks and the interactions between the two. Building on recent developments in Exponential Random Graph Modeling, we empirically model the cross network effects across three leadership networks and explore different forms of cross network effects and under what conditions they occur. Our findings suggest that patterns of pluralized leadership have important endogenous qualities, as shaped through actors' leadership and informal networks, and are important for understanding the required capability for facing increasingly complex organizational situations.

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Rather than the individualized heroic view of leadership, we consider leadership as an emergent network of relations, which is a shared and distributed phenomenon, encompassing several leaders who may be both formally appointed and emerge more informally (Balkundi & Kilduff, 2006; Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007; Mehra, Smith, Dixon, & Robertson, 2006). Scholars' attempts to theorize the notion that leadership extends beyond the individual have spawned a range of different concepts such as: distributed leadership (Currie, Lockett, & White, 2011; Fitzgerald, Ferlie, McGivern, & Buchanan, 2013; Gronn, 2002; Mehra et al., 2006), collective leadership (Carter & DeChurch, 2012; Contractor, DeChurch, Carson, Carter, & Keegan, 2012; Cullen, Palus, Chrobot-Mason, & Appaneal, 2012; Denis, Lamothe, & Langley, 2001; Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark, & Mumford, 2009; Mumford, Friedrich, Vessey, & Ruark, 2012; Yammarino, Salas, Serban, Shirreffs, & Shuffler, 2012), shared leadership (Carson et al., 2007; Ensley, Hmieleski, & Pearce, 2006), and relational leadership (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In the face of a good deal of inconsistency surrounding conceptual and definitional issues, a number of these scholars have provided prescriptions for a better understanding of these labels (see: Denis, Langley, & Sergi, 2012; Yammarino et al., 2012). In particular, Denis et al. (2012) present the idea of pluralized leadership, within which these other concepts of leadership, extending beyond the individual, are encompassed. In doing so, they present an opportunity to better our understanding of how pluralized leadership arises.

Specifically, Denis et al. (2012) describe pluralized leadership as being characterized by the existence of multiple leaders in organizations, whom exert influence through both formal and informal means, and is "naturally occurring" in complex organizations. As such, leadership is continuously collectively enacted and becomes a consequence of actors' relations; an effect which is a product of their local interactions (Denis et al., 2012, p. 254). In fact, this is a view, shared by many scholars of pluralized leadership (broadly defined) who see leadership as a collective product of actors' interactions that emerges in social relations

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