A Systematic and Critical Review of Research on Respect in Leadership

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Please Cite As:

Rudolph, C.W., Katz, I.M., Ruppel, R., & Zacher, H. (2020, In Press). A Systematic and Critical Review of Research on Respect in Leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*.

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RESPECT IN LEADERSHIP

Abstract

Respect is an important psychological and interpersonal phenomenon that has been included in various theoretical and empirical approaches to leadership for nearly 70 years. In this systematic and critical review article, we provide a comprehensive summary and critique of theories, definitions, measures, and empirical studies of respect in leadership. We first provide an overview of the historical and theoretical background, including the most common theories, definitions, and measures that inform empirical studies of respect in leadership. Second, we present a systematic literature review of empirical studies on respect in leadership, including a critical evaluation of research designs and statistical analyses that support claims of the validity of various conceptualizations of respect that pertain to the study of leadership. Finally, we offer a new working definition of respect in leadership, and an accompanying conceptual framework which informs a number of recommendations for future theory development, empirical research, and leadership practice.

Keywords: respect; leadership; systematic review; critical review

A Systematic and Critical Review of Research on Respect in Leadership

Respect is an important psychological and interpersonal phenomenon with numerous implications for research in the organizational sciences (e.g., Blader & Yu, 2017; Dunning, Fetchenhauer, & Schlösser, 2016) and beyond (Frei & Shaver, 2002; Janoff-Bulman & Werther, 2008). Respect has been understood variously, for example, in terms of people's attitudes, values, and/or actions directed toward others that convey appreciation. Respect may be expressed through high levels of consideration (i.e., affording special attention to others), esteem (i.e., holding others in positive regard; Frei & Shaver, 2002; Janoff-Bulman & Werther, 2008), and concern for others' feelings, wishes, and rights, which are assumed to influence their feelings of being respected. At the same time, scholars have noted ambiguities across literatures concerning whether respect is best construed as "...an attitude, a mode of conduct, a feeling, a form of attention, a mode of valuing, a virtue, a duty, an entitlement, a tribute, [or] a principle" (Dillon, 2007, p. 201). Indeed, despite its importance, respect is a notoriously elusive concept, with a multitude of conceptualizations existing to describe its nature (see Table 1). Past reviews have attempted to clarify the nature of respect and have recognized that its broader conceptualization is limited by notable theoretical and operational ambiguities associated with the wide range of ways that respect is understood and studied (e.g., Grover, 2014; Rogers & Ashforth, 2017).

Leadership scholars have included respect in various definitions, conceptual models, and empirical studies (e.g., Bass, 1990a; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004). Moreover, some have argued for the need to explicitly include leaders' and followers' respectful attitudes, values, and behaviors (i.e., enacting respect), and perceptions of respect (i.e., feeling respected) as distinct constructs in leadership models and research (e.g., Clarke, 2011; DeLellis, 2000). Indeed, for over thirty years, leadership researchers have studied constructs labeled as "respectful

leadership” (e.g., Hanson & McKenna, 2011; Sashkin, 1988a,b; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). Despite this, the literature on respect in leadership is currently scattered and has not been sufficiently scrutinized by the leadership community. Additionally, respect in leadership has been construed in multiple ways, for example in terms of (a) leaders’ behaviors that are deemed respectful or (b) followers’ reactions to such behaviors (see Table 1). Confusing matters, “b” is often used to infer “a.” Thus, this literature is in need of systematic and critical evaluation.

The goal of this paper is to provide a comprehensive summary and critique of theoretical accounts, definitions, and empirical research on respect in leadership. We use the term “respect in leadership” broadly to encompass a variety of related constructs, subdimensions thereof, and processes that involve leader and/or follower respect in various ways. For example, respect has been variously cast in terms of attitudes, values, or behaviors that leaders engage in that elicit respect (e.g., Bass, 1990a), but also in terms of a specific style of leadership that embodies these behaviors (e.g., Sashkin, 1988a,b), and that are often reflected in followers’ perceptions of being respected by their leaders (e.g., Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). We focus our review on leadership constructs that are specifically labeled as “respect.” However, we discuss related constructs (e.g., consideration), especially when there are notable conceptual and operational overlaps with respect. Moreover, we purposefully differentiate socioemotional aspects of respect (i.e., interpersonal respect between leaders and followers) from other forms of respect studied in work contexts, namely respect for others’ position, status, or accomplishments (“professional respect,” Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Our review takes a comprehensive view on respect in leadership including, but not limited to, constructs labeled as “respectful leadership” (e.g., Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke, 2008; Sashkin, 1988a,b), as well as a number of closely related constructs that capture leaders’ influence on their followers’ experiences of respect (e.g.,

autonomous respect; Tyler & Blader, 2002). To be comprehensive, we focus broadly on a number of ways in which respect in leadership has been theorized and studied. For example, there exist “stand alone” theories and constructs that describe respect in leadership (e.g., DeLellis, 2000; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). However, respect also exists within broader theories (e.g., “respectful leadership” is one component of visionary leadership; Sashkin, 1988a,b). Thus, like past reviews of leadership theory, research, and practice (e.g., humor; Kong, Cooper, & Sosik, 2019) we focus broadly on a variety of theories and models that discuss the role of respect in leadership and its value for leaders, followers, and their organizations, but also those that propose related respect constructs as distinct and measurable leadership phenomena.

The contributions of this work to the leadership literature are three-fold. First, we provide a structured overview and integration of theoretical and empirical research on respect in leadership. In doing so, we summarize and critique theories and definitions of respect that can be found in the leadership literature and trace the development of respect constructs that are invoked therein. Second, consistent with criticisms of popular leadership theories, such as authentic leadership (Alvesson & Einola, 2019) and healthy leadership (Rudolph, Murphy, & Zacher, 2020), we explore whether measures map onto conceptualizations of respect in leadership, and whether this literature has taken adequate steps to investigate these topics through appropriate research designs and statistical analyses. Finally, based on our review, we present a working definition, conceptual framework, and agenda for research.

To structure our paper, we first introduce the historical and theoretical background of respect in leadership and describe and critique its most common conceptualizations. We then present a systematic and critical literature review of the research designs, statistical analyses, and findings of empirical studies on respect in leadership. Finally, we describe a new working

definition and conceptual framework of respect in leadership.

Historical and Theoretical Background of Respect in Leadership

Here we review the development of the concept of respect in leadership over time and also distinguish various dimensions of respect commonly investigated in work contexts (see Table 1). This review focuses broadly on the notion of interpersonal respect in leadership, and not only on constructs such as “respectful leadership,” because a wide variety of leadership theories and models include the notion of respect in some capacity. Arguably, one would be hard-pressed to find a description of leader behavior or the results thereof that does not include some mention of (dis)respect or closely aligned concepts (e.g., admiration, esteem, regard). Indeed, scholarly interest in the role of respect in leadership can be traced back to the development of individualized consideration (Fleishman, 1953; see also Judge et al., 2004), which involves the extent to which leaders consider workers’ feelings and engage in behaviors that are indicative of respect (Bass, 1990a; Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies, 2004).

Respect as Part of Transformational Leadership

Although respect has been conceived as part of individualized consideration, closer attention to the unique role of respect in leadership began to emerge in the late 1970s through the mid-1980s through various attempts at clarifying definitions of transformational leadership and related theories (e.g., charismatic leadership; visionary leadership). One early account, from Burns (1978), suggested that a moral transformational leader is one who is guided by universal ethical principles, including respect for human dignity. Similarly, Maccoby (1981) notes specific characteristics of what is termed “new” leadership, including the provision of respect.

In describing their model of leadership, Bennis and Nanus (1985) discuss respect as a component of the notion of the deployment of self through positive self-regard (see Rogers,

1957). Although the “deployment of self” is not directly defined, parallels are drawn between positive self-regard and “emotional wisdom,” which describes the ways leaders relate to others, including leaders’ respect for others. Although Bennis and Nanus only tangentially “take up” respect, this work was foundational to the development of other conceptualizations of respect in leadership (e.g., Sashkin’s model of visionary leadership).

We likewise see themes of respect throughout the refinement of Bass’ model of transformational leadership. For example, Bass (1985a,b) highlights the consequences of transformational leadership for followers, including the development of respect toward their leaders. Moreover, Bass’ conceptualization of “charisma” (and later, “idealized influence;” Bass & Avolio, 1997) embodies the role of engendered respect. For example, Bass (1990b) construes charisma, in part, as leader’s gaining respect from their followers. Moreover, the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) describes attributes and behaviors associated with idealized influence in terms of the respect it engenders from followers (Bass & Avolio, 1996; see also Zacharatos, Barling, & Kelloway, 2000).

Introduction of “Respectful Leadership” as a Distinct Construct

The first “stand alone” construct labeled as “respectful leadership” comes from Sashkin and colleagues’ development of visionary leadership theory and its associated measures, the “leader behavior questionnaire” (LBQ; see Sashkin, 1988a,b; Sashkin 1990; Sashkin, 1996a; Sashkin & Burke, 1990) and “the leadership profile” (TLP; see Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2014; Rosenbach, Sashkin, & Harburg, 1996). “Respectful leadership” is a re-interpretation of Bennis and Nanus’ idea of “the deployment of self,” which Sashkin (1996a) relabeled as the “management of respect.” Sashkin (1988a,b) defines “respectful leadership” as respectful behaviors enacted by visionary leaders, suggesting that such leaders respect and treat others

respectfully. “Respectful leadership” is sometimes referred to as “caring leadership” (Sashkin, 1996a), and is defined similarly as leaders’ behaviors that involve respect and concern.

Respect as Part of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)

The role of respect in leader-member relationships has long been understood (Fernandez, 1991), and the mutual exchange relationship between leaders and followers can be characterized in terms of respect (see Dansereau, Graen, & Haga, 1975; Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell, 1993). In particular, Liden and Maslyn (1998) consider “professional respect” as part of a multidimensional assessment, along with other dimensions of LMX that were based on earlier works by Dienesch and Liden (1986). Professional respect is defined as the “...perception of the degree to which each member of the dyad has built a reputation, within and/or outside the organization, of excelling at his or her line of work” (Liden & Maslyn, 1998, p. 49). Although theoretically “professional respect” can “go both ways,” it has only ever been operationalized as subordinates’ respect toward their leader (e.g., Jordan & Troth, 2011; Lee, 2005), similar to ascriptions of expert power (i.e., French & Raven, 1959). As such, the construct of “professional respect” (i.e., as “upward respect” from subordinates to their leader) does not “fit” with other respect in leadership constructs considered here (i.e., downward respect from leaders toward their subordinates). Importantly, the knowledge-focus of professional respect (example item: “I am impressed with my supervisor's knowledge of his/her job”) likewise represents a deviation from other conceptualizations of respect in leadership, which tend to focus on interpersonal or socioemotional forms of respect (see Table 1). Given these observations, we do not consider studies of professional respect in our review.

The Integrated Typology of Respect

DeLellis (2000) reviewed and integrated various definitions to develop an integrated

typology of respect, with implications for leadership theory development. This work discusses seven “near synonyms” (i.e., terms that are used interchangeably to describe respect) for what is termed “subjective aspects of respect” (i.e., the subjective sense of the person who is “respecting”), including appreciation, admiration, esteem, honor, reverence, deference, and fear. Moreover, 12 different objects of respect (i.e., “what is respected,” p. 35) are discussed (e.g., respect for self and others; respect for station, and role). Respect for “station and role” is particularly relevant to the study of leadership, in that such respect is afforded because leaders hold highly regarded positions. DeLellis (2000) also calls for integration across these multiple subjective aspects and objects of respect, noting that the field must move toward an integrative theory, supported by clarification of its measurement.

The Group Engagement Model and Autonomous Respect

Tyler and Blader's (2003) group engagement model is an expansion of the group value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988) and the relational model of authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992). This model has been used to support research on respect in leadership, both through the application of its theoretical propositions, and through the operationalization of respect in leadership through measurement instruments developed by Tyler and colleagues (e.g., Tyler & Blader, 2002). The group engagement model offers that procedural justice affects identity judgements, which influence work group engagement. Tyler and Blader (2003) suggest that voice enables followers to feel that they are valued and have control. Respect reflects one's evaluation of their status within the work group, and voice can engender respect. Moreover, conferring respect influences identification, which subsequently influences group engagement.

The group engagement model has been used as a justification for the development of contemporary conceptualizations of “respectful leadership” (e.g., Van Quaquebeke, & Eckloff,

2010; Van Quaquebeke, Zenker, & Eckloff, 2009; see also Clarke, 2011). Likewise, Tyler and Blader (2002) describe “autonomous respect” as a core construct in the group engagement model that is often tied to leadership. Tyler and Blader (2002) distinguish between two different forms of status—respect and pride—which can take either autonomous or comparative forms (see Table 1). Autonomous judgments are based upon internal standards for inclusion within a workgroup. Tyler and Blader (2002) developed a measure of autonomous respect, defined in terms of the extent to which one perceives that their leader respects them as a valued member of the workgroup (e.g., respecting the “work you do”; respecting “work related ideas”). This measure has been used variously to measure respect in leadership research.

Integrated Model of Respect in Leadership

Clarke (2011) provides a review and development of a conceptual model that integrates various ways in which respect has been conceptualized across leadership theories, with a goal of defining respect in leadership. This work focuses on mapping themes of respect across leadership theories. The conceptual model offered by Clarke (2011) presents a phased process of respect in leadership that links different types of respect with both proximal group-level and distal organizational-level outcomes of respect. This model likewise specifies different antecedents of each form of respect that are assumed to be independent of one-another, as well as moderators of these antecedent-respect relationships. The links between these independent antecedents and the different types of respect are argued to stem from differences in respect foci (i.e., implicit vs. explicit respect) and loci (i.e., leader, leader and follower, leader relationship) across different leadership theories. For example, relational theories of leadership such as LMX are characterized by an explicit focus on respect, with the locus of respect being on leadership relationships. As a result, LMX is construed to result in appraisal respect, which is likewise characterized by

antecedents such as recognition of potential and confidence in capabilities.

Re-Introduction of “Respectful Leadership”

Approximately 10 years ago, another construct labeled as “respectful leadership” was introduced by Van Quaquebeke and colleagues, first in German (i.e., “Respektvolle Führung”; see Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke, 2008; Eckloff, Van Quaquebeke, & Witte, 2008) and then later in English (Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). This notion of “respectful leadership” involves a leader’s appreciative attitude toward their followers manifested in behaviors directed toward followers that engender feelings of being treated respectfully, including feelings of importance and equal worth (Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010). In clarifying this definition of “respectful leadership,” Van Quaquebeke (2011) describes a focus on interpersonal respect, that is, the respect people have for other people (see Table 1). Van Quaquebeke (2011) suggests that interpersonal respect can take two different forms: appraisal and recognition respect. Recognition respect is especially shown in how people interact with others, in particular how they take the needs of others into account in their actions. Van Quaquebeke (2011) suggests that by engaging in these “respectful leadership” behaviors, the leader can expect certain benefits for their followers, including stronger follower identification, enhanced happiness, and motivation, and for their organization (e.g., recruitment, retention).

Critical Assessment of Respect in Leadership Theories

Respect is a common theme across a wide variety of leadership theories and models; it is a nearly-universal way in defining what leadership “is,” what influence “good” leaders have on their followers, and the way in which leaders and their followers define the quality of their professional and interpersonal relationships. Despite its ubiquity, there are three issues to be raised about the concept of respect in leadership. Indeed, the ubiquity of respect in leadership is

not necessarily a strength of this concept. Thus, the first critique to levy lies in the nearly universal role that it plays in various theories and traditions of leadership; respect is not something that is unique to one form of leadership. At the same time, related constructs can be found in this literature, which share very similar construct definitions and operationalizations. Thus, the ubiquity of respect in leadership is characterized by both jingle (constructs that share common labels, like “respectful leadership,” but have different underlying conceptualizations) and jangle (constructs that share different labels, like “appraisal respect” and “vertical respect,” but have largely overlapping conceptualizations; see Table 1) fallacies (Kelley, 1927). This is compounded by the fact that research has infrequently considered the validity of respect constructs in terms of their broader nomological network and has generally ignored the incremental predictive validity of respect above-and-beyond such related constructs. Criticisms about incremental validity are perhaps more diagnostic of the leadership literature as a whole (see Antonakis, 2017). Likewise, the issue of redundancy also pertains to “construct proliferation” (Shaffer, DeGeest, & Li, 2016), which also is a concern for the leadership literature as a whole (e.g., Bormann & Rowold, 2018).

A second critique to be levied, especially about earlier works, is that they were far less systematic about drawing from and building formalized theories to make supporting arguments. For example, in justifying the inclusion of “respectful leadership” as a dimension of visionary leadership, Sashkin cites earlier anecdotal evidence provided by Bennis (1984), who conducted interviews among 90 CEOs, inquiring about “...behavioral competencies or strategies that he [Bennis] believed consistently characterized these exceptional leaders” (Sashkin, 1996a, p. 1; see also Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003, p. 42). At some level, well-formalized theory is not required to argue for the rather matter-of-fact influence of respect. It is not difficult to make an argument for

the potential importance of respect for a variety of leadership processes; likewise, it would be difficult to argue against the important role of respect for virtually every social situation (see DeLellis, 2000; Grover, 2014). To this end, there are growing concerns about abusive, unethical, or “toxic” leaders (e.g., Tepper, 2000), and respect has been framed as an antipode of such ills. For example, toxic leadership has been defined in terms of showing a lack of respect, while simultaneously demanding it (e.g., Schmidt, 2008).

Third, the sheer number of ways in which respect is conceptualized in the leadership literature is symptomatic of the overtheorized nature of leadership in general (i.e., *theorrhea*; Antonakis, 2017). Still, these theories are not inclusive and comprehensive of past works. For example, in defining respectful leadership, Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) do not discuss earlier work by Sashkin, and neither does Clarke (2011) in outlining his model of respect in leadership. However, Clarke (2011) does recognize earlier work by DeLellis (2000), whereas Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) do not. These theories and concepts have emerged in a partial vacuum, insulated from each other. Moreover, these theories have developed rather inductively, starting with the premise that some unique form of respect that leaders engage in exists. Thus, respect in leadership is an effect in search of a cause (see also Grover, 2014).

Review of Empirical Studies on Respect in Leadership

Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria and Literature Search

Our systematic literature review focused on empirical leadership research that considers constructs labeled as “respect,” broadly defined. We adopted an iterative approach to literature searching (Siddaway, Wood, & Hedges, 2019). As a primary search strategy, we searched Google Scholar, PsycINFO, and Web of Science, using structured keywords (e.g., “respect” AND “leadership”, “respectful leadership”), resulting in over 10,000 records. After removing

duplicates, 4,200 records remained. We then screened titles, abstracts, and, when possible, full-text articles for inclusion. Following our inclusion criteria, we retained empirical studies that have considered the role of respect in leadership research, broadly defined. From this, $k = 19$ studies were retained. Most studies were excluded at this stage because they did not operationalize respect in leadership in any capacity (n.b., the terms “respect” and “leader” are often used in a colloquial sense). Given our inclusion criteria, we excluded non-empirical studies (e.g., conceptual/theoretical reviews) at this stage (e.g., Clarke, 2011; DeLellis, 2000) and studies that operationalize respect-like constructs that do not map onto the broader notion of interpersonal or socioemotional respect in leadership (e.g., professional respect).

After obtaining the initial $k = 19$ studies, we closely read these works, and based on our developing understanding of this literature, initiated a secondary search strategy. Specifically, we conducted a supplemental literature search to find additional published and unpublished studies (e.g., dissertations; theses) on respect in leadership. These searches were carried out using several complimentary strategies. First, we conducted targeted searches to find articles that conceptualize respect in leadership via the models and conceptualizations reviewed above (e.g., Sashkin’s, 1988a,b, visionary leadership theory). These targeted searches were carried out using Google Scholar to search the keywords “leadership” AND “respect” within key papers that introduced various respect in leadership constructs (e.g., within studies that cite Tyler & Blader, 2002). Second, because the terminology has “shifted” over time, additional database searches were conducted with keywords related to Sashkin’s work (e.g., “the leadership profile” AND “caring leadership;” “leader behavior questionnaire” AND “respect”). Third, based upon our understanding of the development of Van Quaquebeke’s work, we searched the term “Respektvolle Führung” (i.e., “respectful leadership,” in German). Finally, we conducted

searches of articles citing recent reviews (i.e., Grover, 2014; Rogers & Ashforth, 2017).

Across these three strategies, the supplemental literature search yielded nearly 740 potential articles for inclusion. After removing duplicates and screening titles, abstracts, and full-text articles, $k = 32$ additional studies were retained for inclusion in our review. Studies were excluded here for various reasons, for example, citing earlier works without directly operationalizing respect in leadership constructs, or measuring similar constructs, but not in a leadership context (e.g., Koivisto & Lipponen, 2015). These two search strategies resulted in $(k = 19) + (k = 32) = 51$ empirical (i.e., quantitative or qualitative) studies of respect in leadership.

Overview of Literature Review Strategy

We grouped the $K = 51$ studies identified in our literature search into five broader categories. Recognizing the variety of ways in which respect in leadership has been studied, these categories represent how it has been operationalized in empirical studies. Specifically, we organize our discussion around the work of (1) Sashkin and colleagues, (2) Tyler and colleagues, (3) Clarke and colleagues, and (4) Van Quaquebeke and colleagues. Lastly, we also discuss (5) “other” ways in which respect in leadership has been defined and studied (e.g., Conger, Kanungo, & Menon, 2000). We do not comprehensively discuss each of the $K = 51$ studies here. Rather, we present a purposefully selected review to highlight important themes in this literature. Our online appendix (OA) includes dynamic (i.e., searchable and sortable) tables that summarize the definitions (OA Table 1), research designs, samples, and key findings (OA Table 2), and measures used (OA Table 3) in each of the $K = 51$ studies identified through our literature searches: https://sluseallab.github.io/respect_in_leadership/index.html

General Findings

Research on respect in leadership is somewhat scattered across disciplines, with studies

published in outlets spanning the medical sciences (i.e., *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*; Arensberg, Schiller, Vivian, Johnson, & Strasser, 1996), military studies (i.e., *Armed Forces & Society*; Wombacher & Felfe, 2012), organizational behavior/management (i.e., *Journal of Organizational Behavior*; Conger et al., 2000), work and organizational psychology (i.e., *Journal of Applied Psychology*; Blader & Tyler, 2009), and leadership (*The Leadership Quarterly*; Zhang, Huai, & Xie, 2015). Although clearly a topic of multidisciplinary concern, this diversity of focus may account for the somewhat fractured nature of research in this area. Moreover, we also noted that of those studies published in indexed journals, the average 2019 impact factor was 2.97 (SD = 1.68, Range .25 to 6.42). Considering its representation in theoretical/statistical models, respect in leadership is variously treated as an outcome (12/51 studies, 23.52%), a correlate (12/51 studies, 23.52%), or an antecedent (11/51 studies, 21.57%) in the studies identified here (see OA Table 2). Additionally, most studies (34/51, 66.67%) rely exclusively on follower reports, and nearly all (46/51, 90.19%) measure respectful leadership in terms of “what” leaders do (i.e., actual behaviors or perceptions thereof; see OA Table 2).

Definitions of Respect in Leadership

We first consider the definitions of respect in leadership used in the $K = 51$ studies considered here (see OA Table 1). Across the five broader conceptualizations found in the literature, there is a distinction—albeit a fuzzy one—between those that define respect in leadership in terms of either (a) various respectful behaviors that leaders engage in that engender feelings of respect from their followers, (b) the anticipated effects that such behaviors have for followers, especially followers’ perceptions of being respected by their leaders, or (c) both “a” and “b,” in terms of a relational quality (see also Rogers & Ashforth, 2017).

Respect as Leader Behavior. Considering definitions that describe leaders’ behavior,

Sashkin and Burke (1990) define respectful leadership as “...the way the leader treats others...in daily interactions...consistently and constantly express[ing] concern for others and their feelings...[and] how he or she fits into the organization” (p. 311). Similarly, in defining leaders’ provision of autonomous respect (see Tyler & Blader, 2002), Boezeman and Ellemers (2014) suggest that “[Autonomous] respect concerns an evaluation of one’s own personal standing within the organization... respect from the leadership of the organization [is] evoked by specific behaviors and characteristics of leaders” (p. 162). Boezeman and Ellemers (2014) go on to describe such behaviors and characteristics in terms of those that facilitate followers’ autonomy, including leaders’ supportive actions, and those that encourage the expression of ideas.

Respect as Anticipated Effects of Leader Behavior. Moreover, considering definitions that describe the anticipated effects of leaders’ behavior, Zhang, Huai, and Xie (2015) reconceptualize Tyler and Blader (2002) and define autonomous respect as “...individuals’ recognition of their value, position, and respect in a group” (p. 28). Likewise, Al-Atwi and Bakir (2014) use Tyler and Blader’s (2002) measure of autonomous respect to define what they label as “perceived internal respect” as “...reflecting the self-perception status in the eyes of others within the organization” (p. 473). They further suggest that “Employees perceive their status within the organization by their ... supervisors” (p. 476).

Respect as a Relational Quality. There also exist definitions that attempt to account for the relational nature of respect in leadership. For example, Conger et al. (2000) defines “sensitivity to member needs” as a component of charismatic leadership, which they suggest “... reflects a caring concern and respect for followers which most likely engenders reciprocal respect from followers” (p. 761). Similarly, Clarke and Mahadi suggest that “mutual recognition respect” is “... the recognition form of respect between leaders and their followers” (2017a, p.

163) and that it “... is a relational property, and that there are important benefits that accrue to individuals as a result of the interdependence they feel from one another” (2017b, p. 130).

Whereas these “relational” definitions attempt to be more integrative, there is also some confusion in the literature about the foci of “respectful leadership” as defined by Van Quaquebeke and colleagues. Specifically, “respectful leadership” has been defined in terms of both leaders’ respectful behaviors, and as the results of such behaviors. For example, Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) define “respectful leadership” in terms of leaders’ actions directed at “...maintaining an appreciative attitude toward the other person and acting on the basis of this attitude even if one does not personally like or agree with the object of respect” (p. 344). Shifting focus, Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2013) define “respectful leadership” in terms of its anticipated effects on followers, as “The extent to which subordinates feel that they are being treated respectfully by their leaders” (p. 76). This shift in focus has led to confusion in the literature, with more recent studies attempting to hybridize this focus. For example, Wöhrmann, Fasbender, and Deller (2017) suggest that “...respectful leadership reflects leader behaviors and attitudes that give employees the feeling of being respected” (p. 2). We take up these, and related issues next, with a more explicit critique of definitions of respect in leadership.

Critique of Definitions of Respect in Leadership

The sheer volume of respect in leadership constructs and definitions that can be found represents more of a liability than a benefit (see OA Table 1). There is a remarkable amount of inconsistency and confusion surrounding how many predominant theories define respect in leadership—even within the same theoretical tradition. Consider, for example, Sashkin and colleagues’ conceptualization of “respectful leadership.” Sashkin has relabeled “respectful leadership” variously as “caring leadership” in developing the leader behavior questionnaire and

the leadership profile, respectively. In their book “Leadership that Matters,” Sashkin and Sashkin (2003) use the label “respectful leadership.” These definitional ambiguities carry over to the measure of these two constructs. Indeed, early versions of the leader behavior questionnaire refer to “respectful leadership” as a sub-dimension of visionary leadership (Sashkin & Burke, 1990). Later revisions relabel this sub-dimension as “caring leadership,” although still falling under the umbrella of visionary leadership (Sashkin, 1996a). The leadership profile (Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2014) purports to measure “caring leadership.” However, the leadership profile is billed as a measure of transformational, not visionary leadership (i.e., Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2014). The relabeling of construct names and switching theoretical traditions represented by such constructs obfuscates the potential theoretical and practical value of “respectful leadership.”

Moreover, as a behavior, respect in leadership is often defined *in terms of respect itself*. For example, Sashkin (2018) defines “caring leadership” as “...the degree to which a leader demonstrates respect and concern for others” (p. 17). Similarly, Chen (2013) defines “caring leadership” in behavioral terms as “Respecting others’ feelings, thinking, and differences” (p. 109). Such definitions are tautological, to the extent that “respectful” and “caring leadership” are one in the same (e.g., “respectful leadership is leadership that is respectful”), and do not help clarify exactly “what” respect entails. Relatedly, definitions of respect in leadership tend to conflate leaders’ behavior with its intended effects. For example, consider that Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) characterize “respectful leadership” as (a) leaders’ appreciative attitude toward their followers that (b) leads them to show a degree of attention and behavior toward them, which, (c) in return, makes followers feel that they are important, of equal worth, and treated respectfully. This definition includes descriptions of leader behavior that must be understood in terms of its *intended effect* on followers. Re-conceptualizations of the Van

Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) definition have tried to circumvent this. For example, Van Gils, Van Quaquebeke, Borkowski, and van Knippenberg (2018) define “respectful leadership” as “...the manifestation of the belief that the other person (i.e. the follower) has dignity and value in his or her own right,” however this construal is itself convoluted—how *specifically* does such a belief manifest? The answer also lies in a necessary understanding of intended follower effects.

Given the breadth of all of the definitions and constructs reviewed here, it is difficult to draw parallels between each to arrive at a unified understanding of what respect in leadership “is” and “is not.” Definitions variously imply that respect in leadership is either a quality of leaders’ attitudes, values, or behavior, or that it is manifest in the attitudes, values, or behaviors that such leader attributes engender in their followers. In some definitions, both sides are argued (e.g., Van Quaquebeke’s definitions of “respectful leadership”). Inferring that a leader has enacted respect as a result of observing follower attitudes, values, or behaviors that are purported manifestations of experiencing respect from their leader is problematic, because this fundamentally confounds respect with its intended outcomes. Applying a “follower effects” definition, the attitudes, values, or behaviors that define followers’ experiences of respect cannot be unambiguously attributed to the enactment of respect by leaders themselves. This is further compounded by the typical adoption of cross-sectional and follower report research designs, discussed below. This criticism is symptomatic of the study of leadership more generally (e.g., Rudolph et al., 2020; Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013).

The most general criticism to raise here is the lack of a clear definition of what respect in leadership means. Such critiques have likewise been levied against the definition of respect in the organizational sciences in general (e.g., Rogers & Ashforth, 2017). Moreover, the lack of a clear understanding of what respect means is a long-noted problem for theorizing and research

across disciplines (e.g., Dillon, 2007). These issues combine to make for an ambiguous nomological network of respect in leadership (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955). We take up these issues in more detail, below, and use these observations as a basis for developing a new working definition and conceptual framework of respect in leadership.

The Measurement of Respect in Leadership

Our review found 21 different measures of respect in leadership used across the $k = 51$ studies. There is a notable dearth of information about the development and psychometric qualities of these measures (see OA Table 3), as well as evidence for “phantom validation” (i.e., the propagation of unvalidated measures across multiple studies; Friedberg, 2019). Because the various measures of respect in leadership have generally failed to follow “best practices” for the development of psychometric measures (e.g., Furr, 2011; Hinkin, 1995, 1998), no measure identified in our review provides enough information to confidently support the validity of these measures (Irwing & Hughes, 2018). We next consider more specific critiques of these measures.

Measures of Sashkin’s “Respectful Leadership” Construct. Our literature search found $k = 17$ studies that have used measures developed by Sashkin and colleagues to assess “respectful leadership” or “caring leadership.” Over time, Sashkin has published two different proprietary measures to assess characteristics of visionary leadership (along with several revisions to each): the leader behavior questionnaire (e.g., Sashkin, 1996a) and the leadership profile (e.g., Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2014). Although these two measures were cited variously within the studies considered here (e.g., Dixon, 2009), it is important to point out that nine different versions of Sashkin’s measures were cited across these $k = 17$ studies, often coming from unpublished or out of print sources. Sashkin and colleagues provide some evidence that supports the construct validity of “respectful leadership” and “caring leadership.” For example,

Sashkin (1996a) reports a reliability estimate for “caring leadership” ($\alpha = .71$). Moreover, Sashkin (1996a) notes difficulties in achieving “clean” factor structures; specifically, “...while the items do not generally sort out by scale they do form groups (factors) that make sense” (p. 12) and “Most of the LBQ scales do not sort out into pure factors, independent of one-another” (p. 13). Multiple measures of Sashkin’s “caring leadership” and “respectful leadership” constructs exist to measure both constructs with largely overlapping items. For example, a “respectful leadership” item from the leader behavior questionnaire, measured from the leader’s perspective, is: “I show that I really care about other people” (Sashkin, 1996a, p. 20). Likewise, a “caring leadership” item from the leadership profile, measured from the follower’s perspective, is: “Shows he or she cares about others” (Rosenbach & Sashkin, 2014, p. 6).

Measures of Tyler’s Respect Constructs. Our literature review found $k = 9$ studies that measured respect in leadership using measures developed by Tyler and colleagues (e.g., Blader & Tyler, 2009; Tyler & Blader, 2000; Tyler & Blader, 2002). Tyler and colleagues provide evidence to support the construct validity of their “autonomous respect” construct. For example, across three studies, Tyler and Blader (2002) report internal consistency estimates for “autonomous respect” (range $\alpha = .84-.95$). Moreover, both exploratory (study 1) and confirmatory factor analysis (studies 2 and 3) are reported to support the factor structure of “autonomous respect.” Of note, Tyler and Blader (2002) present three different versions of these scales (i.e., study 1: 5-item scale; study 2: 8-item scale; study 3: 6-item scale) using different items and response formats; see Tyler & Blader, 2002, pp. 833-836). This inconsistency makes it difficult to triangulate exactly “what” items are used in later studies that use of Tyler and Blader’s (2002) measures. This has contributed to confusion in the literature, as Tyler and Blader’s (2002) measures of “autonomous respect” have been used to operationalize a variety of

differently-labeled constructs. For example, “autonomous respect” (Yang et al., 2015), “perceived internal respect” (Al-Atwi & Bakir, 2014), “respect from the leadership of the organization” (Boezeman & Ellemers, 2014), and “perceived disrespect” (Demmer, 2015).

Measures of Clarke’s Respect Constructs. Our literature review found $k = 3$ studies that have operationalized “mutual recognition respect” using a measure developed by Clarke and Mahadi (2017a). Clarke and Mahadi (2017a) provide evidence to support the construct validity of their “mutual recognition respect” measure. Beyond describing the process of item generation, and item refinement, Clarke and Mahadi (2017a) report the results of dimension-reduction efforts, both through principal components analysis and confirmatory factor analysis, the latter including measures of related constructs (i.e., Liden & Maslyn’s, 1998, liking and appraisal respect measures) for the purposes of ascertaining and exploring evidence for incremental and discriminant validity. Of note, principal components analysis is not appropriate for psychometric analyses, as it is not clear exactly the extent to which different sources of variance (i.e., true score variance vs. measurement error) are reflected in a resulting component (see Leandre, Fabrigar, & Wegener, 2012; Raykov & Marcoulides, 2008). Although Clarke and Mahadi (2017a) do not report reliability estimates for this initial scale development effort, they do report later evidence for internal consistency ($\alpha = .92$).

Measures of Van Quaquebeke’s “Respectful Leadership” Construct. Our literature review found $k = 19$ studies that have operationalized “respectful leadership” using measures developed by Van Quaquebeke and colleagues (i.e., Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010, but also earlier works by Eckloff et al., 2008; Graf & Van Quaquebeke, 2006; Van Quaquebeke et al., 2009). Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) describe the process of developing their measure of “respectful leadership” via a content analysis of narratives describing critical incidents of leader

behaviors. These content-analyzed narratives were translated into 149 items, which were reduced to a smaller set of 12 items both through empirical means (i.e., comparing item-level correlations with a “marker item”) and through subjective assessments of whether items “...applied to a wider array of situations and which at the same time indicated a concrete leadership behavior or attitude towards a subordinate...” (p. 349). These items were then subjected to principal components analysis and “discriminatory power scores” were calculated for each without explanation as to whether these scores pertain to differential item functioning, or to some other index of item discrimination (see Findley, 1956). Finally, evidence for the internal consistency of these 12 items was presented ($\alpha = .95-.96$; split-half correlations $r_{xy} = .95$ across two samples).

There are several additional critiques to be raised about Van Quaquebeke and colleagues’ measure of “respectful leadership.” For example, the incremental validity of “respectful leadership” for predicting outcomes above and beyond more established leadership and related constructs has not been examined. This matters, because items from the respectful leadership scale (e.g., “My leader trusts my ability to independently and self-reliantly perform well,” “...treats me in a polite manner,” “...provides me with any information that is relevant to me,” and “...treats me in a fair way”) seem to overlap in context with several established leadership constructs, such as individualized consideration (e.g., items from the LBDQ: “... treats all group members as...equals,” “...is friendly and approachable,” Fleishman, 1953; Halpin, 1957) and LMX (e.g., “My supervisor has respect for my capabilities;” Graen & Schieman, 2013). Moreover, Van Quaquebeke and Eckloff (2010) report zero-order correlations as high as $r_{xy} = .89$ between their measure of “respectful leadership” and a measure of perceived self-determination that assesses basic needs satisfaction (see La Guardia, Ryan, Couchman, & Deci, 2000).

Additionally, the content of the various items included in the Van Quaquebeke and

Eckloff (2010) measure is in many cases less than clear. Specifically, a closer examination of item content suggests that this scale has a number of double-barreled items, which leads to a conflation of professional respect with interpersonal respect. For example, consider the items, “My leader unequivocally stands up for me and my work against third parties” and “My leader takes me and my work seriously.” In these items, the phrase “me and my work” conflates interpersonal (i.e., me) and professional (i.e., my work) forms of respect with one-another. In other cases, double-barreled items likewise lead to ambiguous interpretations of scale items. For example, “My leader trusts my ability to independently and self-reliantly perform well” (i.e., independent work is not necessarily self-reliant; work that you do alone may depend on others’ outputs). Additionally, “My leader expresses criticism in an objective and constructive way” (i.e., objective criticism may not always be constructive). Finally, “My leader interacts in an open and honest way with me” (i.e., that which is open is not necessarily honest).

Measures of Other Respect in Leadership Constructs. Our literature review found $k = 2$ studies that used “other” measures of respect in leadership. There have been attempts over time to modify existing measures into *ad hoc* measures of respect in leadership. For example, Friedman, Carmeli, and Dutton (2018) adapted an earlier measure of “respectful engagement among organizational members” developed by Carmeli, Dutton, and Hardin (2015), to capture “respectful engagement with one’s supervisor.” An example item is “My manager pays the utmost attention to me and my needs.” Friedman, et al. (2018) report a series of confirmatory factor analysis models based upon parceled items and internal consistency estimates ($\alpha = .90$) to support the use of this measure to operationalize “respectful leadership.” The practice of item parceling to “simplify” measurement models is a controversial practice (see Little, Cunningham, Shahar, & Widaman, 2002), which runs afoul of psychometric “best practices.”

Research Designs and Statistical Analyses in Studies of Respect in Leadership

Our online appendix presents complete details of the $K = 51$ studies included in our literature review (see OA Table 2). Here, we focus on general themes observed in considering the research designs and statistical analyses used to study respect in leadership. In particular, we consider whether or not this research allows for unambiguous inferences (i.e., statistical conclusion validity; see Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002).

Cross-sectional designs for studying respect in leadership. The majority of research on respect in leadership relies on cross-sectional observational research designs (i.e., $k = 39/51$ or 76.47% of the literature reviewed here). Issues associated with such designs are well-documented (e.g., Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010). Of note, a number of studies have attempted to test causal mediation models within the constraints of such designs (e.g., Hameed, Riaz, Arain, & Farooq, 2016; Martens, 2018; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2013). However, it is well understood that it is not possible to unambiguously identify causal mediation models with cross-sectional and exclusively single-source (i.e., follower-report) observational research designs (e.g., Kline, 2015; Pek & Hoyle, 2016).

The observation that most of what we know about respect in leadership is grounded primarily in evidence from cross-sectional and single-source (i.e., follower-report) research gives us pause. Indeed, the conclusions from observational studies based on cross-sectional research designs should be interpreted cautiously for various reasons (e.g., inflation of effects by common method bias; Williams & McGonagle, 2016). Moreover, studies that attempt to test causal mediation models with cross-sectional methods are fraught with issues (e.g., equivalent models; Kline, 2015). It is thus unclear “what” we can learn from the results of these studies with regard to assumed processes that represent antecedents and outcomes of respect in leadership.

Notably, a large number of the studies we identified that adopt cross-sectional research designs use definitions and associated measures of “respectful leadership” from Van Quaquebeke and colleagues (see OA Table 2). In reviewing this literature, we noticed that three studies published by Van Quaquebeke and colleagues (i.e., Eckloff, et al., 2008; Eckloff & Van Quaquebeke, 2008; Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff, 2010) report results based on the same three samples (n.b. this overlap was confirmed by N. Van Quaquebeke, personal communication, August 2, 2020). Each study reports the results of three cross-sectional studies of $n = 426$, $n = 228$, and $n = 412$ workers, respectively; the same variables, analyses, and findings are reported in each. The two earlier studies were published in German, whereas the latter was published in English, and the three studies overlap a great deal in their content and language.

Multi-wave designs for studying respect in leadership. Only $k = 4$ studies ($k = 4/51$ or 7.84% of the literature reviewed here) have used multi-wave research designs (i.e., observations were collected at multiple time points; Abid, Ijaz, Butt, Farooqi, & Rehmat, 2018; Al-Atwi & Bakir, 2014; Friedman et al., 2018; Gerpott, Fasbender, & Burmeister, 2019). We characterize these as “multi-wave” studies, as the term “longitudinal” is reserved for studies with three or more timepoints that adopt a repeated measures design (i.e., “complete panel” designs; Wang et al., 2017). Importantly, each of the multi-wave studies identified uses an incomplete panel design. In such designs, data are collected at multiple waves (e.g., the predictor at Time 1; the criterion at Time 2); however, each variable is not collected at each point in time (i.e., as in a complete panel design, where predictor and criterion are collected at Time 1 and Time 2; see Kearney, 2017). Incomplete panel designs allow for the temporal separation of variables, however, they leave much to be desired (e.g., the inability to account for regression artefacts, such as autocorrelation and regression to the mean; Campbell & Kenny, 1999; the inability to

substantively model time, see Singer & Willett, 2003; the inability to separate within- from between-person processes, see Hamaker, Kuiper, & Grasman, 2015). Such designs treat the data as essentially cross-sectional, so the same limitations and associated critiques noted above by- and-large apply to studies that adopt incomplete panel designs.

“Other” research designs for studying respect in leadership. Considering “other” research designs, $k = 4$ studies ($k = 4/51$ or 7.84% of the literature reviewed here) used either quasi-experimental (i.e., Lafferty, 1998) or “true” experimental designs (i.e., Decker & Van Quaquebeke, 2015; Demmer, 2015; Kerin, 2010). Of the “true” experimental designs, only one (i.e., Kerin, 2010) was a field experiment among employees in which participants were randomly assigned to conditions, one of which was a control group (i.e., a pre-test, post-test control group design; Shadish et al., 2002). Although such designs bolster stronger causal inferences, some caution should be applied interpreting the results of this study, owing to small sample sizes per condition (i.e., as low as $n = 7$) and high rates of differential attrition by condition from pre- to post-test (e.g., 66% attrition). We also noted that, $k = 2$ studies used mixed-methods approaches (i.e., Freeze, 2005; Wright, 2004), in particular coupling cross-sectional qualitative interviews with cross-sectional surveys (e.g., Wright, 2004).

Statistical analyses for studying respect in leadership. Considering statistical analyses, we focus specifically on two key issues to the study of leadership: the recognition and proper remediation of omitted variable (i.e., endogeneity) bias (Antonakis et al., 2014) and evidence for incremental validity (Antonakis, 2017). We noted that only $k = 1$ study (i.e., 1/51 studies; 1.96%) identified mention the issue of endogeneity. Specifically, Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015) discuss ruling out endogeneity as a strength of their experimental vignette study. However, this article does not address the issue of endogeneity in either of the two cross-

sectional studies also reported (e.g., via instrumental variable regression), which report tests of causal mediation models. It is important to point out that experimental research designs in-and-of themselves do not alleviate the issue of endogeneity (Sajons, 2020). With respect to statistical analyses, the fact that issues of endogeneity have been ignored in this literature is concerning, given that much of what is understood about respect in leadership is based on cross-sectional methodologies. This issue has been noted in the leadership literature more broadly (e.g., Antonakis, Bendahan, Jacquart, & Lalive, 2010; Antonakis et al., 2014).

We noted that $k = 13$ studies (i.e., 13/51 studies; 25.49%) measured “other” leadership constructs in addition to respect in leadership. Of these, only $k = 1$ study (i.e., 1/51 studies; 1.96%) directly addresses the issue of the incremental validity of respect in leadership above-and-beyond established leadership constructs. Specifically, Clarke and Mahadi (2017a) report that mutual recognition respect accounts for an additional 2% of the variance in job performance 3% of the variance in well-being above-and-beyond to liking and appraisal respect.

The observation that research has by-and-large ignored the issue of incremental validity in advancing respect in leadership constructs is not surprising and is generally symptomatic of the failure of leadership research to identify the incremental validity of new leadership constructs (e.g., Antonakis, 2017). Although evidence for incremental validity is scant, it is possible to infer such evidence on the basis of reported zero-order relationships (e.g., Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff’s, 2010, measure of “respectful leadership” does not predict job satisfaction above-and-beyond self-determination, leader identification, and appraisal respect, see OA for details).

Discussion

The goal of this systematic and critical review was to comprehensively summarize and critique theories, definitions, measures, and empirical studies on respect in leadership. Here we

broadly summarize our critiques of the theoretical basis for studying respect in leadership. With these critiques as a backdrop, we offer a number of recommendations for future theorizing, empirical research, and practice that considers the role of respect in leadership supported by a new working definition and conceptual framework.

Summary of Criticisms of Respect in Leadership

Our review suggests that respect in leadership has not been rigorously examined, especially against ostensibly different, but related constructs such as consideration. This raises concerns about construct redundancy and proliferation (Shaffer et al., 2016), a noted concern for the leadership literature (Bormann & Rowold, 2018; DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). The lack of integration among theories of respect has long been bemoaned as well (e.g., Clarke, 2011; DeLellis, 2000; Grover, 2014; Rogers & Ashforth, 2017). We are left to question why there is a lack of integration of such theories. From our review, certain themes are evident: First, there exist far too many (potentially) overlapping constructs to describe essentially the same idea. Second, among these constructs, the source, nature, and/or direction of respect is sometimes not clearly specified (e.g., received vs. given, professional vs. unconditional regard, vertical vs. horizontal). Third, over time, there have been examples of shifting constructs and traditions (e.g., Sashkin's shifts between "respectful leadership" and "caring leadership"). In short, it seems there have been too many "moving targets" in this literature for a clear, formalized, and integrated theory on respect in leadership to emerge, despite 20 years of calls for such work to be undertaken (DeLellis, 2000).

Considering definitions of respect in leadership, a major issue is that previous approaches have confounded relevant leader behaviors with their intended effects on followers. This represents an opportunity for future theoretical clarification and (re)development, which could

focus on what “respectful leaders” actually “do” when interacting in a respectful way with their followers through a taxonomy of relevant leader behaviors (e.g., Lehmann-Willenbrock, Meinecke, Rowold, & Kauffeld, 2015). For example, researchers have recently suggested that leaders asking questions and listening to their followers constitute specific behavioral manifestations of “respectful leadership” (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). Additionally, theorizing on respect in leadership has generally ignored the temporal dynamics of respect, including the process by which respect develops between leaders and their followers, and the emergence of and changes in respect over time (McClean, Barnes, Courtright, & Johnson, 2019).

It makes sense now to address an important question: “Do we need to differentiate a unique ‘respect’ construct in leadership research and theory?” As suggested, it would be very difficult to argue against the role that respect plays in nearly every social situation. Indeed, as Fernandez notes, “...there are important theoretical and empirical precedents for viewing respect as a crucial component of relational leadership” (1991, p. 38). Moreover, DeLellis (2000) suggests, “...respect is a pervasive factor in practicing, teaching and studying leadership...” (p. 35). There is an inherent conflict to be addressed here: on the one hand, respect clearly plays an important role for the process of leadership in organizations; on the other hand, the state of the empirical evidence for drawing firm conclusions about respect in leadership is rather weak. We attempt to address this conflict next by presenting a new working definition and an associated conceptual framework of respect in leadership. Based on this working definition and conceptual framework, we offer recommendations for enhancing leadership theory, research, and practice.

Respect in Leadership: A New “Working Definition”

To date, the most comprehensive definition of respect in leadership comes from Clarke (2011). Based upon appraisal, identification, and recognition forms of respect, Clarke (2011, p.

319) proposes that respect in leadership is: “A set of judgments relating to the perceived worthiness, ethical behaviors and shared values that exist between leader and follower.”

Although comprehensive in some respects (e.g., focusing on leader-follower relationships, instead of a “one way” flow of respect from leaders to followers), Clarkes’ (2011) conceptualization could also be critiqued. For example, it is not clear why a close identification of values is a necessary component of respect. More importantly, defining respect in leadership in terms of judgements of *perceived levels* of worthiness, ethical behaviors, and shared values frames respect in leadership in perceptual terms, and does not account for specific leader behaviors. Similar issues defining respect exist in the organizational sciences, more broadly. For example, Grover (2014) suggests various theoretical and operational ambiguities associated with the ways that respect is understood and studied. Grover offers that various definitions of respect tend to confound different sources and forms of respect (e.g., interpersonal treatment, reputation, and respect for one’s actions). Moreover, research often relies on respondents to construct their own definition of respect, further obfuscating clear definitions of what respect really “means.”

An important step toward enhancing our understanding of respect in leadership is to provide a clear definition that will direct new theorizing and research to bring together diverse constructs and definitions. Thus, we propose a new working definition of respect in leadership that is useful for integrating across definitions of respect, its manifestations in leadership theories, and among respect-related constructs studied in the leadership domain. Consistent with existing definitions (e.g., Frei & Shaver, 2002; Janoff-Bulman & Werther, 2008; see also Table 1), we assume that “respect” involves the appreciation of others, especially through the expression of due regard for their individual feelings, wishes, and rights. Unlike other definitions that tend to focus on respect as an insular phenomenon, our working definition adopts a process-

focus which elaborates on the mechanisms at play in the development of respect in leadership and is generative in that it informs new theoretical and empirical inquiry.

Our primary goal with introducing this working definition is to emphasize the importance of decoupling leaders' behavior from its antecedents and intended effects. Thus, we propose that respect in leadership cannot be understood in isolation—that is, it is best not to conceptualize it as a standalone “thing.” Rather, it must be understood as a process that unfolds and develops between leaders and their followers, and that involves (1) respectful intentions affecting (2) behaviors and (3) subsequent perceptions of being treated respectfully. Although often assumed, these mechanisms have not been considered holistically nor explicitly within definitions of respect in leadership. Thus, we offer the following working definition of respect in leadership:

Respect in leadership is an unfolding process in which leader and follower respectful intentions (i.e., the aim to treat another person with respect—that is, the goal to act in due regard for their individual feelings, wishes, and rights) affect behaviors, which in turn lead to another person's perceptions of being treated respectfully (i.e., the experience of being respected—that is, of being treated with due regard for their individual feelings, wishes, and rights).

Next, we elaborate more on this working definition, offering an associated conceptual framework and propositions to guide future research. We also offer advice for moving beyond this working definition and towards a more formalized and integrative view of respect in leadership.

A New Conceptual Framework for Respect in Leadership

Figure 1 outlines the proposed conceptual framework that embodies our working definition of respect in leadership. At its core, this framework specifies the intention-behavior-perception linkages assumed by our working definition (see also Ajzen, 1991). Moreover, this framework outlines a phased process that describes relationships between various mechanisms assumed to be at play in the development of respect between leaders and their followers. Four key propositions about respect in leadership can be derived from this framework. Specifically,

this framework offers that leader and follower individual differences (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, and other factors [KSAOs], including especially attitudes, values, and beliefs) are preconditions for respectful intentions (Proposition #1). Moreover, leader and follower respectful intentions predict a variety of concrete leader and follower behaviors (Proposition #2), for example engaging in “respectful inquiry” (Van Quaquebeke & Felps, 2018). Such actions are supported in part by contexts (i.e., culture/climate/norms) for respect, and leader and follower behaviors are mutually reinforcing (e.g., through the norm of reciprocity, respectful actions beget respectful actions). Thus, such behaviors are simultaneously motivated *and* influenced by context. Respect is therefore a contingent behavior, influenced by person-context interactions. Leaders and followers may intentionally choose to engage (or not) in respect across circumstances, and those circumstances may change over time with the development of leader-follower relationships. Our model allows for contextual features (e.g., that define the social environment and interactions between leaders and followers) to both influence and be influenced by the expression of respect (e.g., through the development of *mutual respect*, discussed below). Importantly, contexts for respect can be abstracted at multiple levels, including the dyadic level (i.e., norms for respect that manifest in the exchange relationship between leader and follower) and higher levels (i.e., respectful climates and cultures within workgroups and organizations).

Additionally, this framework offers that actions lead to perceptions of being treated respectfully among leaders and followers (Proposition #3). Such perceptions of respect are understood independently of intentions and behaviors that give rise to them. However, this proposition additionally implies the potential for two concurrent sensemaking processes to occur from the perspective of the target of respect (i.e., the one being respected). First, to make sense of one’s own experiences, the target of respect must perceive a specific action (or pattern of

actions) enacted by another person as being respectful. Second, to make sense of the other's motives, targets of respect may also seek explanations for "why" behaviors were enacted (i.e., attributions for respectful intentions). Notably, and consistent with our suggestion that there is not one "thing" that defines respect in leadership, we purposefully do not classify behaviors that result from respectful intentions as being "respectful behaviors." We contend that various specific actions (e.g., listening, celebrating birthdays, supporting employees) can be intended (Proposition #2) and/or perceived (Proposition #3) as respectful. This may also include behaviors that fall under established typologies of leadership behaviors, such as consideration. Thus, coupled with the implied sensemaking process, we leave room in our definition and framework for respect to be constructed "in the eye of the beholder," rather than defined typologically.

This framework additionally offers that *mutual respect* is an emergent phenomenon that results from the correspondence between leader and follower perceptions of respect. Through a feedback loop, mutual respect reinforces contexts for respect. Finally, this framework offers that (a) leader and (b) follower perceived respect, and (c) emergent mutual respect have unique consequences (Proposition #4). These consequences occur at different levels of analysis, and include leader and follower outcomes (e.g., well-being), workgroup outcomes (e.g., collective trust, shared identity), and organizational outcomes (e.g., performance, citizenship, retention).

Our working definition and conceptual framework differs in a number of important ways from past models of respect in leadership, in particular Clarke's (2011) conceptualization. Recall that Clarke (2011) focuses on mapping three forms of respect to existing typologies of leadership. Our framework is largely agnostic to such typologies of respect and to other models of leadership, focusing instead on how respect develops between leaders and their followers over time through intention-behavior-perception linkages. Moreover, although other models suggest

the development of mutual forms of respect (e.g., Clarke & Mahadi, 2017a,b, “mutual recognition respect”) our model does not require the form of respect (e.g., “recognition”) to be set. Moreover, although Clarke’s (2011) definition acknowledges that respect exists between leaders and their followers, the form of that relationship is not clearly specified. Our conceptualization of mutual respect as an emergent property of leader-follower relationships, stemming from the development of respect over time, attempts to make up for this ambiguity.

Recommendations for Empirical Research

Just as the critiques raised here offer the opportunity for theoretical (re)development, so do they offer the opportunity for enhanced programs of empirical research concerning respect in leadership. To this end, we offer advice for future research along two lines: First, we consider general issues in the literature on respect in leadership, and encourage future research based on our working definition and proposed framework. Second, to support this, we offer more specific guidance for formalizing our working definition and conceptual framework of respect in leadership. Each of the recommendations below are predicated on first developing better measures and employing more rigorous research designs to study respect in leadership. Thus, our broadest advice is that research must first focus on (re)developing psychometrically sound measures of respect in leadership, with specific attention toward decoupling the process of respect depicted in our model (i.e., differentiating respectful intentions, behaviors, and reactions to respect for leaders and followers; see Figure 1).

Considering our working definition and proposed framework, future research should focus on improving the knowledge base regarding the actual leader and follower behaviors that are predicted by respectful intentions and lead to perceptions of respect, especially given the observation that there has not been adequate attention paid to the issue of incremental validity of

respect in leadership constructs above-and-beyond established leadership (and followership) behaviors. These issues are inherently related to various concerns about the conceptualization and measurement of respect in leadership raised here. Similarly, the broader literature on respect in leadership typically does not examine whether perceived respect by leaders or followers has incremental predictive validity above and beyond related psychological constructs such as trust or follower satisfaction. Research should thus focus on establishing the nomological network of respect and these related constructs. It is also important for research to demonstrate the unique role of respect in its various forms and attend to the relationships between, and unique effects of, interpersonal respect and other forms of respect (e.g., professional respect).

Future research on respect in leadership must also address the confounding of leadership behaviors and their intended outcomes (see Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013). Research on “respectful leadership,” particularly research that is based on cross-sectional and single-source (i.e., follower-report) survey studies, potentially confounds actual leadership behavior with its intended outcomes (e.g., followers’ reports of feeling respected by their leader). Our working definition and proposed framework addresses these concerns by making explicit that both leaders and followers are involved in the development of respect, and that respectful intentions, behaviors, and perceptions of respect are understood independently of one-another. Research designs that allow for the separation of leader and follower individual differences, intentions, behaviors, and reactions, especially experimental and multi-source longitudinal research designs that collect leader and follower reports are more appropriate to represent this process.

Regarding research designs, we also noted that the few multi-wave studies in this literature did not make use of complete panel designs with appropriate baseline controls. We also did not identify many (quasi-)experimental studies in this literature. This raises concerns about

common-method bias and makes it impossible to derive causal conclusions or to statistically test for reverse and reciprocal effects of respect and its proposed antecedents and outcomes. Thus, we suggest that researchers should make use of multiple data sources (e.g., leaders, followers, customers) as well as more sophisticated research designs that maximize both internal and external validity. In testing our model, research should also focus on the antecedents of respectful intentions that affect individual-level respect and emergent group-level respect. Moreover, the notion of mutual respect should be investigated through studies of respect congruence, and the consequences thereof, between leaders and followers.

Beyond these general suggestions, the “working” aspect of our working definition of respect in leadership implies the need for further elaboration. Research should focus on moving from a “working” to a “formalized” definition of respect in leadership. To do so, several open questions need to be addressed. First, our working definition and conceptual framework imply parallel leader and follower processes. Indeed, although typically focused on a top-down (i.e., leader-to-follower) “flow,” research on respect in leadership needs to consider both leader and follower behaviors that result in the psychological experience of being respected for both parties, fully recognizing that such experiences are largely subjective, and are likely to vary from person to person. Thus, there is a need to focus not only on leader and follower behaviors, but also on the intentions that underlie these behaviors and the subjective experiences that they engender. Corollary to this, there is a need to recognize that behaviors in our definition and framework of respect in leadership can take myriad forms, and that typological classifications of behaviors as “respectful” versus “disrespectful” may fail to capture nuances of any given actor.

Second, to formalize our working definition of respect in leadership, research must consider a variety of individual and contextual preconditions for the development of respect

(e.g., trust, communication), recognizing that it is possible for two parties to respect each other fundamentally (i.e., respect for personhood), absent high levels of such preconditions. Likewise, research must focus on the timeframe necessary for respect to emerge, and whether such preconditions shorten/lengthen the timeline for this process to unfold. We would also encourage research to expand the parameters of our working definition, and to clarify specific facets of respect in leadership, for example to focus not only on “who” is respected, but also toward addressing questions such as “What is respected?” and “Why is it respected?” Thus, a focus should be on interpersonal respect, which is to say respect that is afforded to others because people are inherently deserving of respect (e.g., Clawson, 1999), because this is an ethical imperative (e.g., Resick et al., 2011), and to differentiate status from respect. Indeed, although both are reflexive of social worth and status, the former represents an evaluation of the respect felt from others, whereas the latter represents the worth or value that is afforded to an individual (e.g., Blader & Yu, 2017). There are likely different underlying sets of values, attitudes, orientations, and motives that predict the development of interpersonal and professional respect.

Finally, there is a need to address multiple perspectives on respect and its experience. For example, from the follower perspective, is the source of respect experienced or perceived directly (i.e., from the leader to the follower, in terms of leaders’ actions) or indirectly (i.e., from the leader to the follower, with the leader merely acting as a representative of their organization)? From the leader’s perspective, is behavior that is perceived as respectful by followers a feature or reflection of one’s intrinsic values, or is it elicited because one is enacting a role as an agent of their organization (i.e., normative expectations for the provision of respect)?

Recommendations for Practice

Given its ubiquity and intuitive appeal, it should not be surprising that the concept of

respect in leadership has gained quite a bit of attention from organizational practitioners. Indeed, these ideas are prevalent in the popular business press (e.g., Caprino, 2019; Patel, 2017; Porath, 2014; Porath, 2015). Leadership development firms are particularly interested in respect in leadership (The Power of Respect, n.d.), and there are entire consultancies built around the idea of respect in leadership (e.g., Ward, n.d.), including The Center for Respectful Leadership (n.d.). Notably, respect in leadership has been combined with popular leadership fads; for instance, recently, the “neuroscience of respectful leadership” (2020) has been proposed.

Considering the popularity of respect in leadership against the theoretical and methodological critiques raised here, we would caution practitioners about overstating the benefits of this presumed unique dimension of leadership. Suspending critiques, so far we do not know about the long-term effects of respect (i.e., as evidenced by no longitudinal research), nor about the team- and organizational-level impacts of respect in leadership (i.e., the highest “level” studied is the leader-follower dyad, e.g., Chen, 2013). To be clear, we think that the recommendation that people should treat each other respectfully is good advice, and in particular for leaders to treat their followers with respect. However, we should be careful not to bill respect as a panacea; the evidence base is just not “there” at this point to warrant such claims.

Additionally, “respectful leadership” is one of a growing number of “adjective leadership” (Day & Antonakis, 2013, p. 225) constructs (e.g., “healthy leadership,” “digital leadership”) that have a tendency to proliferate in the literature. Such constructs have several related qualities. First, they emerge as “pet” constructs that are pushed by influential scholars, often accompanied by a popular press book (e.g., Ward & Meyer, 2016). Second, they have an intuitive appeal and a “hook” (i.e., it would be hard to argue for a situation in which respect would not be beneficial). Third, they are offered uncritically, and without regard for their

positioning among established leadership constructs. Finally, as a result of the combination of these characteristics, the adoption of such “adjective leadership” constructs quickly develop, become engrained in our thinking, and ultimately take on a degree of “functional autonomy” (Astin, 1961); their existence is taken as axiomatic and their validity is not questioned.

Conclusion

Our manuscript contributes to the accumulated knowledge base regarding leadership in at least three important ways: First, our review aids in coalescing existing theoretical, methodological, and empirical knowledge regarding the nature, operationalization, and nomological network of respect in leadership. We bring needed structure and clarity to this long investigated and popular topic. Second, various conceptualizations of respect in leadership have been offered and adopted rather uncritically and without regard for the broader nomological network of leadership. This work should serve as a call for more careful theoretical and empirical elaborations about the role of respect in leader-follower relationships. Our working definition and conceptual framework of respect in leadership should support these efforts. Finally, we critically evaluated existing research on respect in leadership regarding the confounding of actual leadership behaviors and their intended outcomes, and we assess whether research has sufficiently addressed the issues of endogeneity and the incremental validity of respect in leadership. To advance knowledge in this area, we outlined a set of recommendations for future theory development efforts, including a working definition and preliminary conceptual framework, and for empirical studies and organizational applications regarding respect in leadership. Overall, a more critical perspective on respect in leadership is needed, and we should not accept its assumed matter-of-fact influence at face. Our hope is that these efforts inspire the (re)development of our knowledge base about the (purported) effects of respect in leadership.

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Note: References marked with “*” indicate studies included in the systematic review

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Table 1

Overview of Concepts and Definitions of Respect and Closely Aligned Constructs found in the Leadership Literature (in Rough Chronological Order)

Decade	Leadership Concept/Construct	Definitions and Representative Quotes	Key Citations
1950s	Individualized Consideration	"Consideration refers to behavior indicative of friendship, mutual trust, respect, and warmth in relationship between the leader and members of the group."	Halpin (1957, p. 1)
1970s	Moral Transformational Leadership	"At the highest stage of moral development persons are guided by near-universal ethical principles of justice such as equality of human rights and respect for individual dignity. This stage sets to opportunity for rare and creative leadership."	Burns (1978, p.42)
1980s	Emotional Wisdom	"...[emotional wisdom] reflects itself in the way people relate to others. The ability to treat those who are close to you with the same courteous attention that you extend to strangers and casual acquaintances..."	Bennis & Nanus (1985, p. 66)
	Self Respect in Leadership	"To have self-respect is everything. Without it, we are nothing but unwilling slaves, at everybody's mercy, especially those we fear or hold in contempt."	Bennis & Nanus (1985, p. 58)
	The "New Leader"	"...there is a strong need for meaningful relationships at work. There is a willingness to give one's best, to be productively involved in organizations run on principles of equity, concern for human dignity, and individual development, based on mutual respect and voluntary cooperation."	Maccoby (1981, p. 49)
	The Deployment of Self	"It may be easier to say what positive self-regard isn't than what it is..."	Bennis & Nanus (1985, p. 57)
	Transformational Leadership	"Along with the heightened and changed motivation and awareness, frequent reactions of followers to the transforming leader included trust, strong liking, admiration, loyalty, and respect."	Bass (1985a, p. 33)
1990s	Caring Leadership	"The visionary leader treats people with respect simply because they are people."	Sashkin (1988, p. 8)
	Caring Leadership	"...displaying respect and concern for people."	Sashkin (1996a, p. 5)
	Charisma	"[the leader] Provides vision and sense of mission, instills pride, gains respect and trust."	Bass (1990b, p. 22)
	Idealized Influence	"These leaders are admired, respected, and trusted..."	Bass & Avolio (1996, p. 61)
	Management of Respect	"...showing caring and concern for followers as individuals."	Sashkin (1996a, p. 3)

	Professional Respect	"...perception of the degree to which each member of the dyad has built a reputation, within and/or outside the organization, of excelling at his or her line of work."	Liden and Maslyn (1998, p. 49)
	Respect in Mutual Exchange Relationships	"...[mutual exchanges are]characterized by mutual trust, respect, liking and reciprocal influence."	Liden, Wayne, & Stilwell (1993, p. 662)
	Respectful Leadership	"...[respectful leaders] possess a high degree of respect for others and treat individuals with respect simply because they are people."	Sashkin (1988b, p. 8)
2000s	Autonomous Respect	"...judgments of pride and respect that are linked to the characteristics associated with membership in different groups."	Tyler & Blader (2002, p. 813)
	Comparative Respect	"...judgments of pride and respect that are linked to comparisons of one's status to the status of other people or groups."	Tyler & Blader (2002, p. 813)
	Congruent/Incongruent Respect	Simultaneously high (low) levels of appraisal and recognition respect, and or mis-matches between high and low appraisal and recognition respect.	Grover (2013, pp. 40-42).
	Respect	Attitudes and/or actions directed toward others that include high levels of consideration (i.e., affording special attention) and esteem (i.e., holding in positive regard)	Frei & Shaver (2002) Janoff-Bulman & Werther (2008)
	Respect for Station and Role	"Certain individuals, simply because they hold certain positions in society or in organizations, appear to receive respect. It is likely, however, that the respect is for their position or station, not necessarily for their accomplishments, virtues, or values."	DeLellis (2000, p. 46)
	Respectful Leadership	"Actions that show that the leader cares about followers, such as expressing congratulations to individual follower for achievements."	Sashkin & Sashkin (2003)
2010s	Appraisal/Vertical Respect	"In the organizational context, appraisal respect is acknowledgement of work performance..."	Grover (2013, p. 27)
		"Appraisal respect is given to those people we perceive to have superior skills, knowledge or expertise in a domain that is of relevance to us. ... This kind of respect is also known as vertical respect because it structures hierarchies of influence within certain domains."	Van Quaquebeke (2011, p. 12)
		"...vertical respect is paid to people for reasons such as their expertise, excellence, or status; it is conditional in the sense of being based on differences between people..."	Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015, p. 544)
		"A judgment of worthiness based upon some perceived quality possessed by an individual."	Clarke (2011)
	Individualized Consideration	"the degree to which a leader shows concern and respect for followers, looks out for their welfare, and expresses appreciation and support"	Judge, Piccolo, & Ilies (2004, p. 36)
	Enacted Respect	Respect that is "...enacted by the sender..."	Rogers & Ashforth (2014, p. 1578)
	Generalized Respect	"...the sense that 'we' are all valued in this organization..."	Rogers & Ashforth (2014, p. 1578)
	Identification Respect	"A close identification of values between leader and follower."	Clarke (2011)

Mutual Recognition Respect/Equality Based Respect	"...the recognition form of respect between leaders and their followers..."	Clarke & Mahadi (2017a, p. 163)
Particularized Respect	"...the sense that the organization values 'me' for particular attributes, behaviors, and achievements."	Rogers & Ashforth (2014, p. 1578)
Received Respect	Respect that is "...perceived by the receiver..."	Rogers & Ashforth (2014, p. 1578)
Recognition/Horizontal Respect	"In the organizational context...recognition respect is the quality of interpersonal treatment."	Grover (2013, p. 27)
	"recognition respect, relates to a more general mindset we have towards others as being of equal worth. We also refer to it as horizontal respect because it describes an acknowledgement of others as being on the same level."	Van Quaquebeke (2011, p. 12)
	"Horizontal respect is (or should be) unconditionally guaranteed to every human being: It is a personal attitude of treating others as equals or, at least, extending them equal dignity."	Decker and Van Quaquebeke (2015, p. 544)
	"To act in an unbiased, dignified, ethical and trustworthy manner."	Clarke (2011)
Respect in Leadership	"A set of judgments relating to the perceived worthiness, ethical behaviors, and shared values that exist between leader and follower."	Clarke (2011, p. 319)
Respectful Behavior	"Respectful behavior is the manifestation of believing another person has value, and can be differentiated between appraisal and recognition respect."	Grover (2013, p. 35)
Respectful Leadership	"The extent to which subordinates feel that they are being treated respectfully by their leaders."	Van Quaquebeke & Eckloff (2013, p.76)
	"...[respectful leadership] is about identifying which behaviours from leaders signal to subordinates that they are of equal worth – even given the hierarchical nature of most workplaces."	Van Quaquebeke (2011, p. 12)

Figure 1.

Conceptual Framework of Respect in Leadership **Propositions:**

1. Leader and follower individual differences (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics [KSAOs], including especially attitudes, values, and beliefs) are preconditions for respectful intentions.
2. Leader and follower respectful intentions predict a variety of behaviors that convey respect; such actions are supported in part by (a) contexts (i.e., culture/climate/norms) for respect and (b) are mutually reinforcing (i.e., through the norm of reciprocity, respectful actions beget respectful actions). Thus, such behaviors are simultaneously motivated and influenced by context. Contexts for respect can be abstracted at multiple levels, including dyadically, and at higher levels (i.e., workgroup; organization)
3. Leader and follower actions lead to (c) perceptions of respect. Perceived respect can be variously understood and is often cast terms of an understanding that one being treated with due regard for their individual feelings, wishes, and rights. Such perceptions are understood independently of intentions and behaviors that give rise to them. Mutual respect is an emergent phenomenon that results from the correspondence between leader and follower perceptions of respect. Through a feedback loop, mutual respect, in turn, reinforces contexts for (i.e., culture/climate/norms) for respect.
4. Together, (a) leader and (b) follower perceived respect, and (c) emergent mutual respect have unique consequences for leader and follower outcomes (e.g., well-being), workgroup outcomes (e.g., collective trust, shared identity), and organizational outcomes (e.g., performance, citizenship, retention).