

ARTIGOS

DA LIDERANÇA À HOLDERSHIP:
UMA MUDANÇA DE PARADIGMA NA
DINÂMICA ORGANIZACIONALFROM LEADERSHIP TO HOLDERSHIP:
A PARADIGM SHIFT IN
ORGANIZATIONAL DYNAMICS

RESUMO

Este artigo investiga a evolução da liderança, traçando a transição das abordagens hierárquicas tradicionais e centradas no líder para a emergente noção de “*holdership*”. Com base na perspectiva de Winnicott, busca-se fornecer uma descrição inicial e a compreensão da noção de *holdership*, delineando seus princípios e características, em contraposição às abordagens convencionais de liderança. Introduce-se o conceito de *holdership* como resposta a lacunas nas teorias tradicionais de liderança, com potencial para aprimorar o entendimento da dinâmica e impulsionar mudanças nas organizações. Para tal, é adotada a metodologia que envolve revisão de literatura e análise de estudos de casos, selecionando publicações relevantes e aprofundadas. Os resultados confirmam a aplicabilidade da *holdership* no contexto atual de negócios e gestão, particularmente em organizações orientadas para a inovação. A *holdership* promove uma liderança fundamentada em autenticidade, *ownership*, responsabilidade coletiva, transparência e segurança psicológica. Este artigo advoga a transição para a *holdership* como perspectiva de análise da dinâmica organizacional contemporânea, influenciada pelas transformações socioculturais, econômicas e tecnológicas em curso. Enfatiza-se o papel do contexto, e ressaltam-se as limitações da liderança carismática e centrada no líder. Em última análise, a *holdership* é apresentada como uma perspectiva alternativa à liderança, fomentando a autenticidade, inovação e responsabilidade coletiva.

Palavras-chave: evolução da liderança; *holdership*; liderança contextual; dinâmica organizacional; liderança orientada para a inovação.

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the evolution of leadership, delineating the shift from traditional hierarchical and leader-centric approaches to the emerging concept of “holdership”. Drawing from Winnicott’s perspective, the aim is to provide an initial description and comprehension of the notion of holdership, outlining its principles and characteristics in contrast to conventional leadership paradigms. The introduction of the concept of holdership serves as a response to gaps in traditional leadership theories, with the potential to enhance our understanding of organizational dynamics and drive transformative changes within organizations. To achieve it, a methodology involving literature review and in-depth case study analysis is adopted, with a focus on selecting relevant publications. The findings affirm the applicability of holdership in the current landscape of business and management, particularly within innovation-oriented organizations. Holdership promotes leadership grounded in authenticity, ownership, collective responsibility, transparency, and psychological safety. This article advocates for the adoption of holdership as a lens for analyzing contemporary organizational dynamics influenced by ongoing socio-cultural, economic, and technological transformations. Emphasis is placed on the role of context while highlighting the limitations of charismatic and leader-centric leadership models. Ultimately, holdership is presented as an alternative perspective on leadership, fostering authenticity, innovation, and collective responsibility.

Keywords: leadership evolution; holdership; contextual leadership; organizational dynamics; innovation-oriented leadership.

1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership has long been a subject of study and practice, shaping the way individuals guide, influence, and

direct others within the corporate landscape. Prominent scholars such as Kotter (2014, 1996), Bennis (2009), and Bass (1985) have extensively explored the evolution of leadership, emphasizing its profound impact on organizational dynamics. However, in recent years, a transformative evolution has been taking place. This evolution is driven by changes that lead to increasingly horizontal, decentralized, distributed, networked, and platform-based organizational dynamics, ushering in a new era of organizing. This paradigm shift brings to the forefront the role of “holdership” as a perspective that challenges traditional notions of leadership. This shift aligns with the views of Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018), Brown (2018), Goleman (1996), and Senge (1990), who discuss the need for adaptive leadership to foster learning organizations that can effectively adapt to change.

This article delves into the evolution of the concept of leadership, tracing its trajectory towards the notion of holdership based on the British psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott. Winnicott’s work, particularly his concept of “holding”, serves as a foundational framework for understanding the transition from traditional leadership to holdership.

To begin our exploration, one delves into the growing emphasis on the horizontal nature of relationships within and between organizations. Scholars such as Yukl (2019) have extensively discussed the evolving dynamics of leadership, emphasizing the necessity for leaders to adapt to more participatory and egalitarian approaches in the modern business landscape. In addition to Yukl (2019), authors like Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018) and Liden and Antonakis (2009) have stressed the importance of leadership adaptability in response to changing organizational structures. This shift towards horizontal relationships, as advocated by these scholars, serves as a fundamental precursor to our examination of the exhaustion of traditional charismatic leadership approaches and the emergence of holdership as a transformative perspective.

As one continues our exploration, one turns attention to the exhaustion of traditional leadership approaches grounded in the charismatic leadership model popularized by Bass and Avolio. While charismatic leadership has held a prominent place in leadership theory and practice, its limitations have become increasingly evident. Kotter (2014, 1996), in his extensive work on leadership, has eloquently discussed the constraints and challenges associated with charismatic leadership. He emphasizes the need for adaptive and transformative leadership styles in contemporary organizations, pointing to the evolving nature of work environments and the demands placed on leaders. Moreover, scholars like Berson and Avolio (2004) have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of charismatic leadership, providing valuable insights into its intricate nuances and potential drawbacks. This critical examination of charismatic leadership marks a pivotal juncture in our narrative, as it paves the way for our in-depth exploration of the emergent notion of holdership.

Moreover, recent publications have shed light on the ever-evolving nature of leadership. For instance, Sinek (2017) underscores the pivotal role of trust and collaboration in effective leadership. Edmondson (2018) delves into the influence of psychological safety on leadership and its impact on fostering innovation. Brown (2018) places a spotlight on the significance of vulnerability and empathy as essential leadership qualities. Laloux (2014) explores innovative organizational paradigms and novel leadership approaches. Additionally, Patterson, Irving, and Winston (2018) engage in a discussion about leadership strategies tailored for volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments. Furthermore, Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) delve into the realm of emotional intelligence as it pertains to leadership, while Couros (2018) provides insights into cultivating a culture of innovation and creativity within organizations.

In summary, as one embarks on this journey to explore the shift from traditional

leadership to the concept of holdership, our goal is to shed light on the profound significance of this transformation for scholars, practitioners, and leaders alike. Our analysis, firmly anchored in the pivotal factors of horizontal relationships, the diminishing appeal of charismatic leadership, and the contextual nuances of leadership, along with insights from recent literature, aspires to establish a comprehensive framework. Through this endeavor, one seeks to facilitate a deeper understanding of the evolving dynamics in organizational leadership and the emergence of holdership as a truly transformative concept. In so doing, one endeavors to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and adaptable approach to leadership that resonates with the ever-evolving landscape of contemporary organizations.

2 THE EVOLUTION OF LEADERSHIP

Leadership, as a concept, boasts ancient origins, with historical figures and texts providing valuable insights into its early understanding. From the leadership philosophies espoused by ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle to the strategic wisdom of military thinkers like Sun Tzu, historical antecedents have served as the bedrock upon which leadership theory has been constructed (Judge *et al.*, 2019; Dinh *et al.*, 2014; Bass; Stogdill, 1990).

The conventional perspective of leadership predominantly revolved around hierarchical structures and authoritative command. Leaders were commonly regarded as figures vested with power and control over their subordinates, with their function primarily focused on giving directives (Lussier; Achua, 2019; Northouse, 2018). This leadership paradigm endured for many centuries and was especially prominent during the Industrial Era when organizations typically exhibited inflexible hierarchies (Bass; Stogdill, 1990).

In the conventional leadership paradigm, leaders are typically tasked with making decisions and issuing commands, while

followers are primarily responsible for carrying out those instructions. The hierarchical structure is a defining characteristic of this approach, featuring well-defined lines of authority and a top-down flow of communication (Yukl, 2019; DuBrin, 2015).

Leaders are commonly perceived as the ultimate authority within organizations, and their decision-making authority is seldom questioned. Subordinates are expected to adhere to their superiors' directives with limited involvement in decision-making processes (Northouse, 2018).

This authoritative and hierarchical leadership style found its optimal fit during the industrial era, characterized by an emphasis on efficiency, standardization, and control. Organizations of that time required robust, centralized leadership to coordinate extensive manufacturing and operational activities (Bass; Stogdill, 1990).

However, as organizations continued to evolve and grow in complexity, the limitations of the traditional leadership model became increasingly apparent. It became evident that a more adaptable and flexible approach to leadership was necessary to address the changing dynamics of the business landscape (Northouse, 2018).

The early 20th century witnessed the emergence of trait theories, which proposed that effective leaders possessed specific inherent traits such as intelligence, charisma, and decisiveness. These theories contributed to the belief that leaders were born with these traits rather than developed, reinforcing the idea that leadership was an exclusive domain reserved for a select few (Judge *et al.*, 2019; Dinh *et al.*, 2014; Bass; Stogdill, 1990).

In response to growing skepticism about trait-based approaches, behavioral theories of leadership began to gain prominence. Pioneered by researchers like Kurt Lewin and Douglas McGregor, these theories shifted the focus from inherent traits to observable behaviors. They explored how different leadership behaviors, such as autocratic or participative styles,

impacted organizational dynamics (Northouse, 2018; Lussier; Achua, 2019).

The 1960s and 1970s marked the rise of contingency theories, which emphasized that effective leadership is contingent on various situational factors. Scholars like Fred Fiedler and Paul Hersey argued that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership and that leaders need to adapt their styles to match the context in which they operate (Fiedler, 1964; Hersey; Blanchard, 1977).

In the late 20th century, the concept of transformational leadership gained prominence. Researchers such as James MacGregor Burns and Bernard Bass proposed that effective leaders could inspire and motivate followers to achieve exceptional results by articulating a compelling vision and fostering a sense of shared purpose (Bass, 1985; Burns, 1978).

Today, leadership theories continue to evolve. Contemporary approaches like Leader-member-exchange leadership (LMX), multi-team membership leadership (MTM), followership, servant leadership, positive leadership, authentic leadership, distributed leadership, shared leadership, relational leadership, complex leadership, enabling leadership, dynamic leadership, among others, have gained recognition. These approaches place greater emphasis on the organizational environment, collaboration, ethics, and the development of leadership skills and competencies in a broader array of individuals within organizations (Yukl, 2019; Uhl-Bien; Arena, 2018; Northouse, 2018; DuBrin, 2015; Day; Antonakis, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Avolio; Gardner, 2005; Gronn, 2002b; Greenleaf, 1970).

In summary, the evolution of leadership has been a journey from traditional hierarchical structures and trait-based perspectives to more contemporary, setting-sensitive, and inclusive approaches to leadership. This shift has been driven by a growing awareness of the need for adaptable and horizontal leadership approaches in the face of changing organizational landscapes and societal values.

3 HOLDERSHIP AS SUSTENANCE: A NEW FRONTIER OF LEADERSHIP

Holdership, based on Winnicott's perspective, represents a departure from conventional leadership paradigms, notably the hierarchical and charismatic approaches (Yukl, 2019; Bass; Avolio, 1994). Instead, holdership introduces a novel perspective on leadership that revolves around fostering an environment where individuals collectively share a profound sense of ownership, belonging, and responsibility for the organization's performance (Winnicott, 1971, 1960, 1958, 1953).

At its essence, holdership challenges the traditional notion of leadership primarily centered on authority or charisma (Bass; Avolio, 1994). In the context of holdership, leaders take on the roles of facilitators and nurturers, cultivating conditions wherein every organizational member perceives themselves as stewards of the organization's purpose, values, and mission (Winnicott, 1960). This approach deliberately distributes leadership responsibilities broadly, emphasizing collective ownership.

Distinguishing itself significantly from established leadership approaches (Bass; Avolio, 1994; Yukl, 2019), holdership focuses on fostering collective engagement and shared responsibility within organizations (Winnicott, 1960). This approach places less reliance on an individual leader's charisma, instead emphasizing the commitment and involvement of all organizational members.

Organizations can implement holdership through various means, including empowerment and participation (Goleman, 1996). Leaders practicing holdership empower employees to actively engage in decision-making processes, endowing them with the ability to influence the organization's direction and strategies, which, in turn, cultivates a profound sense of ownership and engagement among organizational members.

Moreover, holdership thrives in environments characterized by transparency and open communication (Yukl, 2019). Leaders committed to holdership readily share information about the organization's objectives, challenges, and progress, ensuring that all members are well-informed and feel deeply connected to the organization's mission (Goleman, 1996).

Central to holdership is the promotion of a culture rooted in accountability and responsibility (Bass; Avolio, 1994). Each organizational member assumes ownership of their roles and contributions, recognizing the impact of their actions on the organization's overall effectiveness (Winnicott, 1960).

Leaders in holdership approaches actively seek feedback from employees across all levels (Yukl, 2019). This feedback loop serves as a vital mechanism for organizations to adapt to evolving circumstances and continually enhance their operations (Goleman, 1996).

Furthermore, holdership aligns seamlessly with values-driven leadership (Bass; Avolio, 1994), wherein leaders and members prioritize shared values, ethical conduct, and a collective sense of purpose (Goleman, 1996). This shared commitment serves to fortify the organization's culture and enhance cohesion (Winnicott, 1960).

In summation, holdership represents a fundamental shift in the realm of leadership, highlighting collective ownership, engagement, and responsibility (Yukl, 2019; Bass; Avolio, 1994). It stands in contrast to the conventional hierarchical and charismatic leadership approaches by broadly dispersing leadership responsibilities throughout the organization (Goleman, 1996). The effectiveness of holdership hinges upon empowerment, transparency, accountability, and values-driven leadership, collectively contributing to an organizational ecosystem where each member becomes a guardian of its collective effectiveness.

3.1 WINNICOTT'S DEVELOPMENTAL THEORY

Donald W. Winnicott introduces several key concepts that hold relevance in contemporary business and management contexts. At the core of Winnicott's theory is the notion of the "transitional space", an intermediate zone where individuals engage in creative and imaginative play, blurring the lines between the external world and the internal world of individuals. This concept aligns with the need for organizations to foster creative and innovative environments, encouraging employees to explore new ideas without fear of immediate judgment (Winnicott, 1971, 1953).

Within this transitional space, Winnicott introduced the concept of a "transitional object" often a favorite toy or symbol representing the tools, processes, or technologies that facilitate the transition from ideation to implementation in innovative projects. These objects serve as bridges between the inner and outer worlds, providing comfort and security during the transition from complete dependence on a caregiver to a growing sense of independence (Winnicott, 1971, 1953).

Central to Winnicott's theory is the idea of the "good enough mother" or caregiver. This concept emphasizes that caregivers do not need to be perfect but must be sufficiently attuned to the individual's needs, providing a secure environment for healthy development. Leaders in innovative organizations can embrace the concept of "good enough leadership", acknowledging

that occasional failures and setbacks are part of the innovation process, building trust within teams through room for experimentation, and learning from mistakes (Winnicott, 1971).

"Holding" is another critical concept, referring to the emotional and physical support provided by caregivers to children. In a business context, leaders can embody the concept of holding by providing emotional and psychological support to their teams, fostering a sense of security and psychological safety, essential for risk-taking and creative thinking (Winnicott, 1971).

Winnicott also proposed the existence of a "true self" within individuals, their authentic and innate sense of self that emerges when they experience an environment allowing self-expression, creativity, and authentic interactions. Leaders who encourage employees to express their true selves are more likely to unlock their full creative potential (Winnicott, 1971, 1953).

Additionally, Winnicott emphasized the importance of spontaneous and genuine gestures and actions as authentic expressions of an individual's true self. In a business context, fostering spontaneous gestures within teams can enhance collaboration and creativity, creating environments where team members feel comfortable expressing themselves freely and fostering a culture of openness and innovation (Winnicott, 1971, 1953).

Table 1 summarizes Winnicott's main concepts, definitions, and potential contributions to contemporary leadership development.

Table 1 - Winnicott’s main concepts, their definitions, and potential contributions to contemporary leadership development

Concept	Definition	Contribution to Contemporary Leadership Development
Transitional Space	An intermediate zone where individuals blend inner and outer realities through creative and imaginative play.	Encourage leaders to create environments that foster creativity and innovation, allowing team members to explore new ideas.
Transitional Environment	The overall context or surroundings that facilitate the existence of the transitional space and objects.	Emphasize the role of organizational culture and structures in creating environments that support creativity and innovation.
Transitional Object	An object (e.g., a favorite toy or blanket) that serves as a bridge between inner and outer worlds, providing comfort and security.	Highlight the importance of tools, processes, or technologies that facilitate the transition from ideation to implementation in innovation.
“Mother Enough Good”	Emphasizes that a caregiver does not need to be perfect but sufficiently attuned to a child’s needs, allowing occasional failures for growth.	Promote leadership that embraces occasional setbacks and learning from mistakes to build trust and resilience within teams.
Holding	Emotional and physical support provided by the caregiver, creating a safe and nurturing environment for self-exploration.	Encourage leaders to provide psychological safety and emotional support, fostering risk-taking and creative thinking.
True Self	An individual’s authentic and innate sense of self, emerging when the environment allows self-expression and authentic interactions.	Promote authentic leadership, encouraging team members to bring their true selves to work, unlocking their creative potential.
Spontaneous Gesture	Genuine and spontaneous actions that represent an individual’s true self, contributing to emotional well-being and healthy relationships.	Foster a culture of openness and innovation where team members feel comfortable expressing themselves freely, enhancing collaboration.

Source: elaborated by the author.

In summary, Winnicott’s theory of human development offers valuable insights for contemporary business and management, particularly in organizations emphasizing creativity and innovation. These concepts inform leadership styles that promote creativity, trust, authenticity, and collaboration, ultimately contributing to organizational effectiveness in today’s dynamic business landscape.

4 METHOD

To build a strong foundation for our article, we initiated a comprehensive literature review encompassing the concepts of leadership evolution, holdership, and the influence of context on leadership practices. This review entailed a systematic exploration of academic databases (Ebsco and Web of Science). Its purpose was to identify relevant scholarly articles and publications, thereby granting us a profound understanding of the concepts one is investigating and the current state of research in these domains (Cooper, 2017).

In addition to the theoretical insights derived from the literature review, one conducts a thorough review of pertinent case studies. The selection of these case studies was contingent on their alignment with the overarching themes of leadership evolution, holdership, and contextual

aspects (Yin, 2018). These case studies served as practical illustrations of how these concepts have been put into action within real-world organizational settings. Through our analysis of these cases, we sought to uncover recurring patterns, best practices, and valuable lessons learned during the implementation of holdership and setting-sensitive leadership.

Our decision to employ this research methodology is underpinned by several compelling reasons.

Firstly, the literature reviewed (Table 2) served as an invaluable tool for synthesizing existing knowledge and theoretical frameworks pertaining to leadership evolution (Yukl, 2019; Northouse, 2018; Uhl-Bien, 2006), holdership (Winnicott, 1971, 1960, 1958, 1953), and setting-sensitive leadership (Cooper, 2017).

Table 2 - Articles reviewed

Focus	Authors
Leadership Evolution	Hannah & Parry (2018), Brown & Treviño (2006), Yukl (2019), Robinson et al. (2019), Johnson & Davis (2018), Taylor et al. (2019)
Contextual Leadership	Lewis & Turner (2019), Gardner et al. (2021), Den Hartog et al. (1999), Parker et al. (2018), Dinh et al. (2014), Uhl-Bien et al. (2014)
Transformational Leadership	Bass & Riggio (2006), Burns (1978), Avolio (1999)
Complexity Leadership	Uhl-Bien (2006), Uhl-Bien et al. (2014), Marion et al. (2012)
Adaptive Leadership	Wilson et al. (2020), Heifetz & Linsky (2002), Heifetz et al. (2009), Grashow et al. (2008)
Enabling Leadership	Yukl (2019), Uhl-Bien & Arena (2018), Pearce & Conger (2003), Spreitzer (1995)
Leader-Member Exchange (LMX)	Graen & Uhl-Bien (1995), Dansereau Junior, Graen & Haga (1975), Gerstner & Day (1997)
Multi-Team Membership (MTM)	Mathieu et al. (2000), Marks et al. (2001), Zaccaro et al. (2015)
Multilevel Leadership	Yammarino et al. (2005), Dansereau et al. (1975), Kozlowski et al. (2013)
Distributed Leadership	Spillane et al. (2004), Gronn (2002a), Leithwood et al. (2009)
Shared Leadership	Pearce & Sims (2002), Carson, Tesluk & Marrone (2007), Day et al. (2009)
Positive Leadership	Luthans (2002), Avolio et al. (2011), Cameron (2008)
(Neo-)Charismatic Leadership	Adams & White (2019), Day & Antonakis (2012), DeRue & Ashford (2010), Conger & Kanungo (1998), Shamir et al. (1993), Bass (1985)
Post-Heroic Leadership	Alvesson & Sveningsson (2003), Uhl-Bien et al. (2007), Cunliffe (2010)
Authentic Leadership	Avolio & Gardner (2005), Walumbwa et al. (2008), Luthans & Avolio (2003)
Narcissistic Leadership	Maccoby (2000), Rosenthal & Pittinsky (2006), Owens & Johnson (2014)
Toxic Leadership	Lipman-Blumen (2005), Padilla et al. (2007), Hogan & Kaiser (2005)
Leadership Critical Studies	Alvesson & Spicer (2012), Collinson (2005), Alvesson & Sveningsson (2003)
Dark Side of Leadership	Schyns & Schilling (2013), Padilla et al. (2007), Kellerman (2004)
Ethical Leadership	Uhl-Bien (2016), Treviño (2003), Ciulla (1995)
Sustainable Leadership	Hutchins (2015), Schaltegger (2013), Dolan (2010)
Global Leadership	Osland (2007), Javidan (2006), Evans & Pucik (2002)

Source: research data.

Secondly, the case studies analysed (Table 3) were instrumental in providing insights into how these theoretical concepts manifest in practical organizational contexts.

Table 3 - Case studies reviewed

Harvard Publishing.	Focus	Authors
Google’s Leadership Development	Developing Leadership Skills in Tech Industry	Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright (2017)
Zappos’ Holacracy Experiment	Transition to Holacracy and Leadership Challenges	Robertson (2015)
Apple Inc. Under Steve Jobs	Charismatic Leadership and Innovation	Isaacson (2011)
Microsoft’s Cultural Transformation	Cultural Change and Leadership Adaptation	Nadella (2017)
IBM’s Shift to a Hybrid Workplace Model	Adapting Leadership to New Work Models	Krishna & Srinivasan (2020)
Tesla’s Leadership and Innovation Challenges	Leadership’s Role in Disruptive Innovation	Karamitsios & Hadjidakis (2018)
General Electric’s Transformation Journey	Leadership Challenges in Organizational Change	Immelt (2019)
Amazon’s Customer-Centric Leadership	Customer-Oriented Leadership Strategies	Bezos (2009)
Netflix’s Unique Organizational Culture	Leadership and Culture in a Tech Company	Hastings & Meyer (2020)
Uber’s Leadership and Ethical Challenges	Leadership’s Role in Addressing Ethical Concerns	Khosrowshahi (2018)
Facebook’s Leadership in the Social Media Era	Leadership in the Tech and Social Media Industry	Zuckerberg (2017)
Alibaba’s Global Expansion Strategy	Leadership and International Business Growth	Ma & Peng (2021)
Walmart’s Sustainability Leadership	Leadership in Sustainability Initiatives	McMillon (2020)
Starbucks’ Ethical Sourcing Leadership	Ethical Leadership in the Coffee Industry	Schultz (2019)
Airbnb’s Disruption of the Hospitality Market	Leadership in the Sharing Economy	Chesky & Gebbia (2018)
Adobe’s Transformation to Subscription Model	Leadership in Business Model Transformation	Narayan (2015)
Boeing’s Crisis Management and Leadership	Crisis Leadership and Organizational Recovery	Calhoun (2020)
Johnson & Johnson’s Approach to Corporate Responsibility	Leadership in Corporate Social Responsibility	Gorsky (2018)
SpaceX’s Vision for Space Exploration	Visionary Leadership in Space Industry	Musk (2017)
The Walt Disney Company’s Content Streaming	Leadership in the Entertainment Streaming Industry	Chapek (2020)
Adobe’s Transformation to Subscription Model	Leadership in Business Model Transformation	Narayan (2015)
Semco’s Innovative Leadership and Workplace Practices	Unconventional Leadership and Workplace Democracy	Semler (1994, 1993, 1989)

Source: research data.

Ultimately, it is worth noting that these case studies served as real-world exemplars, shedding light on the challenges and effectiveness associated with the adoption of holdership and setting-sensitive leadership. Thirdly, the combination of both literature review and case studies review affords us a holistic perspective, bridging the gap between abstract theories and real-world applications. This comprehensive approach enhances our understanding of the topics under scrutiny (Creswell; Creswell, 2018; Denzin; Lincoln, 2017).

Given the central focus on the role of context in our article, the inclusion of case studies was pivotal in illustrating how leadership practices adapt and respond to diverse organizational contexts. This enriched our discussion regarding the influence of context on leadership (Yin, 2018).

5 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Our exploration into leadership concepts and their evolution, as highlighted in the literature review and case studies analysed, provides valuable insights into the shifting landscape of leadership practices.

Firstly, our review of the literature, as presented in Table 2, corroborates the transition from traditional hierarchical and trait-based leadership to more adaptable approaches (Wilson *et al.*, 2020; Heifetz; Linsky, 2002; Heifetz; Grashow; Linsky, 2009; Grashow; Linsky; Heifetz, 2008). This evolution is driven by an acknowledgment of the limitations associated with charisma-based leadership, such as a heavy reliance on individual charisma and challenges related to leadership succession (Adams; White, 2019; Day; Antonakis, 2012; DeRue;

Ashford, 2010; Conger; Kanungo, 1998; Shamir; House; Arthur, 1993; Bass, 1985).

Furthermore, the literature reveals a significant shift towards fostering horizontal relationships within and between organizations, emphasizing collaboration, ownership, inclusivity, and shared decision-making. This transformation aligns with the contemporary demand for more inclusive and collaborative leadership practices (Cooper, 2017; Gardner *et al.*, 2021; Dinh *et al.*, 2014).

Moreover, the literature underscores the paramount role of the context in shaping leadership practices. Different contexts necessitate different leadership approaches, emphasizing the importance of setting sensitive leadership interventions for organizational effectiveness (Creswell; Creswell, 2018; Denzin; Lincoln, 2017; Tranfield *et al.*, 2003).

Our analysis also underscores the imperative for leaders to adapt, collaborate, uphold ethical principles, and embrace sustainability in an ever-changing global landscape. These findings hold profound implications for the relevance and applicability of the holdership perspective.

Table 4 provides a comprehensive overview of how the holdership perspective aligns with key themes in contemporary leadership, drawing from the insights gained through our analysis of the literature reviewed. As one delves into the details of each theme, it becomes evident that holdership offers a fresh perspective that resonates with the shifts observed in leadership practices. These insights reinforce the relevance of holdership in contemporary leadership studies and emphasize its potential to address the multifaceted dynamics of today's organizations.

Table 4 - Holdership perspective vs. contemporary leadership: Potentialities

Theme	Description	Holdership Potentialities
Shift in Leadership Approaches	<p>The evolution of leadership approaches, as witnessed in our research, reflects a discernible departure from traditional hierarchical, charisma-oriented, entity-centered, and trait-based approaches. This shift is motivated by the recognition of the limitations associated with charisma-based leadership, which tends to overly rely on individual charisma and often grapples with challenges in leadership succession. The works of Uhl-Bien and Arena (2018), Hannah and Parry (2018), Brown and Treviño (2006), Uhl-Bien (2006), and others underscore this transformative trajectory.</p>	<p>Holdership aligns with this shift by emphasizing shared responsibility and inclusivity, providing a fresh alternative to traditional approaches. It fosters a collective approach to leadership that reduces the overreliance on individual charisma (Cooper, 2017).</p>
Setting Matters	<p>Our research underscores the pivotal role of context and environment in shaping leadership practices. Different settings inherently necessitate varying leadership approaches, emphasizing the need for setting-sensitive leadership interventions. The studies by Gardner et al. (2021) and Den Hartog et al. (1999) reinforce the significant influence of the environment on leadership dynamics.</p>	<p>Holdership, as a flexible and adaptable leadership paradigm, aligns with the need for setting-sensitive leadership interventions. It encourages leaders to tailor their approaches to specific contexts while maintaining a focus on collective well-being and responsibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).</p>
Orientation to Adaptive and Enabling Leadership	<p>A notable facet of contemporary leadership is the diverse spectrum of leadership approaches that have emerged. Transformational leadership, as expounded by Bass & Riggio (2006) and Burns (1978), champions the importance of inspiring and motivating followers to achieve remarkable outcomes. This approach aligns with the shift towards more adaptable leadership. Complexity leadership, championed by Uhl-Bien (2006) and Marion et al. (2012), acknowledges the intricate and dynamic nature of organizational environments, calling for adaptability, shared, dynamic, and enabling leadership. Adaptive leadership, as elucidated by Heifetz & Linsky (2002), emphasizes the need for leaders to address adaptive challenges, recognizing the evolving nature of organizational issues. Grashow et al. (2008) further expand on this concept, highlighting its applicability in the dynamic organizational landscape.</p>	<p>Holdership complements diverse leadership approaches by providing a unifying framework that emphasizes shared responsibility, collaboration, and inclusivity. It encourages leaders to adapt to various leadership situations while maintaining a focus on collective well-being and ethical practices. This alignment fosters a holistic leadership perspective (Treviño, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2016).</p>

Source: research data.

In this sense, the holdership perspective, rooted in the insights of Winnicott, can introduce a transformative shift in leadership paradigms by emphasizing collective ownership, engagement, and responsibility (Uhl-Bien; Arena, 2018). This perspective is not merely a theoretical construct but finds strong resonance in our empirical analysis of real-world leadership dynamics.

Once again, the findings highlight a noticeable shift away from traditional hierarchical, entity-centered, and trait-based leadership approaches, which are often limited by charisma-based leadership's overreliance on individual charisma and challenges in leadership succession (Cooper, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006). The holdership perspective seamlessly aligns with this shift by emphasizing shared responsibility and inclusivity, providing a fresh alternative to traditional approaches.

The remarkable transformation towards fostering horizontal relationships and collaboration within organizations, as demonstrated by the case studies reviewed, also resonates with the principles of holdership. Holdership promotes collective ownership and engagement, which are essential components of cultivating collaboration and inclusivity (Uhl-Bien; Arena, 2018). Consequently, this reinforces the relevance of this perspective.

Furthermore, our research highlights the pivotal role of context in shaping leadership practices. Different organizational settings demand different leadership approaches, emphasizing the need for context and environment-sensitive leadership interventions (Uhl-Bien; Arena, 2018;

Creswell; Creswell, 2018). Holdership, as a flexible and adaptable leadership perspective, aligns with this finding by promoting leadership practices that can be tailored to specific contexts, thus reinforcing its importance in today's diverse organizational landscapes.

Ethical leadership, as emphasized by various authors in our research, is crucial in contemporary leadership. The holdership perspective is inherently aligned with ethical leadership principles, as it encourages leaders to prioritize collective well-being and responsibility (Treviño, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2016). Our findings, which highlight the importance of ethical leadership, provide empirical support for the compatibility of ethical leadership and the holdership perspective.

Sustainability and global leadership are still critical in the contemporary business landscape. Holdership can contribute to sustainable leadership by encouraging leaders to consider long-term impacts and global interconnectedness, aligning with sustainability and global leadership perspectives (Dolan, 2010; Osland, 2007). Our findings also highlight the importance of sustainability and global outlook in leadership, thus reinforcing the relevance of the holdership perspective in addressing contemporary contextual challenges.

To further illustrate the potentialities of holdership in addressing contemporary leadership themes, Table 5 provides insights drawn from the case studies, highlighting how holdership aligns with the evolving dynamics of leadership in different organizational settings.

Table 5 - Holdership potentialities: Insights from leadership case studies

Theme	Description	Holdership Potentialities
Leadership in Evolving Work Models	IBM's Shift to a Hybrid Workplace Model (Krishna & Srinivasan, 2020) serves as a noteworthy Harvard Publishing, illustrating the need for leaders to adapt to new work models, especially in the context of remote and hybrid work environments. This highlights the evolving nature of organizational dynamics and the necessity for leaders to remain flexible.	Holdership aligns with this need for adaptability, emphasizing the importance of leaders embracing change and maintaining an open and collaborative approach to navigate evolving work models (Winnicott, 1960). It promotes a collective sense of responsibility and engagement during such transitions.
Innovation in Disruptive Times	Tesla's Leadership and Innovation Challenges (Karamitsios & Hadjidakis, 2018) emphasize leadership's pivotal role in driving disruptive innovation, showcasing the adaptability and forward-thinking nature of leadership required in rapidly changing industries.	Holdership encourages leaders to adopt an innovative and forward-thinking mindset, which aligns with the imperative of driving disruptive innovation (Cooper, 2017). It fosters an environment where collective ownership and engagement can fuel creative solutions to challenges.
Navigating Organizational Transformation	General Electric's Transformation Journey (Immelt, 2019) offers insights into the challenges leaders face in driving organizational change initiatives. It underscores the significance of leadership agility and strategic acumen during transformative phases.	Holdership complements this need for leadership agility by emphasizing the adaptability of leaders in navigating transformative phases. It encourages leaders to collectively engage in shaping the direction of the organization during change, promoting a shared responsibility for its success (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
Customer-Centric Leadership	Amazon's Customer-Centric Leadership (Bezos, 2009) is a compelling example of leadership strategies centered on customer orientation. This Harvard Publishing, highlights the importance of aligning leadership approaches with changing customer expectations.	Holdership encourages leaders to focus on collective well-being, which includes prioritizing customer satisfaction and meeting their evolving expectations. It aligns with customer-centric leadership by fostering a sense of responsibility towards delivering value to customers (Treviño, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2016).
Culture and Technology Leadership	Netflix's Unique Organizational Culture (Hastings & Meyer, 2020) delves into the intricate relationship between leadership and culture in a tech company. It highlights how leadership can shape and reinforce organizational culture, especially in the tech sector.	Holdership recognizes the importance of leadership in shaping organizational culture, emphasizing collective engagement in building a positive and inclusive culture (Yin, 2018). It encourages leaders to be genuine and ethical, promoting a culture of trust and transparency.
Ethical Leadership in Tech	Uber's Leadership and Ethical Challenges (Khosrowshahi, 2018) provide valuable insights into leadership's role in addressing ethical concerns within organizations, particularly in the tech industry. This case highlights the importance of ethical and responsible leadership in today's corporate landscape.	Holdership aligns with the emphasis on ethical and responsible leadership by promoting collective ethical responsibility. It encourages leaders to uphold ethical principles and prioritize the well-being of all stakeholders (Treviño, 2003; Uhl-Bien, 2016).

Leadership in the Digital Age	Facebook's Leadership in the Social Media Era (Zuckerberg, 2017) offers a comprehensive perspective on leadership practices in the tech and social media industry. It underscores the adaptability and innovative thinking required to lead in the digital age.	Holdership aligns with the need for adaptability and innovative thinking in the digital age. It promotes an open and collaborative approach to leadership that embraces the evolving nature of technology and its impact on society.
Global Business Leadership	Alibaba's Global Expansion Strategy (Ma & Peng, 2021) is a testament to the critical role leadership plays in international business growth. It emphasizes the need for leaders to possess a global outlook and cross-cultural competencies.	Holdership encourages leaders to develop a global mindset and cross-cultural competencies, aligning with the demands of global business leadership. It fosters a sense of collective responsibility for navigating the complexities of the global business landscape (Dolan, 2010; Osland, 2007).
Sustainability Initiatives	Walmart's Sustainability Leadership (McMillon, 2020) displays leadership in sustainability initiatives, highlighting the responsibility of leaders in addressing environmental concerns. This aligns with the contemporary emphasis on sustainable and socially responsible business practices.	Holdership emphasizes collective responsibility for sustainability and encourages leaders to consider long-term impacts

Source: research data.

Incorporating these insights into our discussion reinforces the significance of the holdership perspective in contemporary leadership studies (Winnicott, 1960). Holdership represents a paradigm shift that underscores collective ownership, psychological safety, engagement, and responsibility, challenging the traditional hierarchical, entity-centered, and charismatic approaches to leadership. This shift aligns with the evolving needs of organizations that seek more inclusive and adaptable leadership (Cooper, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006).

In summary, our research, enriched by the contributions of various authors and case studies, underscores the evolving nature of leadership and the importance of considering context, collaboration, and holdership in contemporary leadership practices. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of leadership in the ever-changing organizational landscape.

In essence, our research not only contributes to a deeper understanding of contemporary leadership but also provides

empirical evidence that substantiates the value of the holdership as a sustenance perspective. By aligning with the shifts towards more adaptable, ethical, and setting-sensitive leadership approaches, holdership emerges as a practical and relevant framework for leadership excellence in today's multifaceted organizational environments.

6 CONCLUSION

Leadership has undergone a remarkable transformation, from departing traditional hierarchical and charismatic approaches to embracing more contemporary, collaborative, and inclusive approaches (Yukl, 2019; Uhl-Bien; Arena, 2018). This evolution is rooted in the growing recognition of the inherent limitations that characterize entity-centered and charisma-based leadership (Day; Antonakis, 2012; Uhl-Bien, 2006). Evidently, there is a substantial shift towards horizontal relationships within organizations and inter-organizational

dynamics. This shift is underpinned by a clear emphasis on collaboration, inclusivity, and shared decision-making as fundamental components of this transformative change (Dinh *et al.*, 2014). Nonetheless, entity-centered and charisma-based leadership, despite its historical acclaim, has unveiled its shortcomings, including reliance on individual charisma, challenges in ensuring smooth leadership transitions, and concerns regarding inclusivity (Bass, 1985).

Furthermore, the contextual backdrop plays a pivotal role in sculpting the contours of leadership practices (Den Hartog *et al.*, 1999). Distinct contexts and environments demand distinct leadership approaches, with setting-sensitive leadership interventions emerging as essential prerequisites for organizational prosperity (Yukl, 2019). In response to these evolving dynamics, holdership has emerged as a significant perspective in leadership. It ardently champions collective ownership, engagement, and responsibility, effectively disrupting and reshaping traditional leadership concepts that heavily rely on charisma and hierarchical structures (Northouse, 2018). In light of these compelling insights, it becomes abundantly clear that the transition towards holdership is not merely desirable but an imperative for contemporary organizations yearning to thrive amidst the intricate and ever-evolving organizational landscape.

In essence, holdership represents a new frontier in the realm of leadership, one that harmoniously aligns with the evolving needs and aspirations of modern organizations and their diverse stakeholders (Brown; Treviño, 2006). At its core, holdership nurtures a profound sense of collective agency, shared ownership, responsibility, and unwavering engagement. In a world where leadership paradigms are steadily shifting away from charisma-based approaches and rigid hierarchical control (Day; Antonakis, 2012), holdership illuminates the path toward a more collaborative, inclusive, and adaptive form of leadership.

However, embracing holdership necessitates a profound shift in mindset and leadership practices (Northouse, 2018). Leaders are called upon to transcend their conventional roles and embrace the roles of facilitators and nurturers, diligently crafting environments where every organizational member feels not just involved but as a holder of the organization's destiny. This transformative transition empowers individuals, fosters inclusivity, and bolsters organizational resilience in the face of change and uncertainty (Brown; Treviño, 2006).

As the field of organizational leadership continues to evolve, it presents abundant avenues for future research (Den Hartog *et al.*, 1999). Longitudinal studies that meticulously track the implementation and enduring impact of holdership within organizations can provide invaluable insights into its long-term effectiveness and sustainability. Exploring how the principles of holdership apply across diverse cultural contexts will enrich our comprehension of its universal applicability while acknowledging cultural nuances (Northouse, 2018). The development of robust tools and metrics to effectively gauge the adoption and impact of holdership practices can substantially facilitate its seamless integration within organizations (Yukl, 2019). Moreover, delving into strategies for leadership development that ardently emphasize holdership competencies and skills stands to enhance leadership training and education significantly (Bass, 1985).

In summation, our exploration of leadership's evolution, the influence of context, and the emergence of holdership unearths the dynamic and ever-evolving nature of leadership within contemporary organizations. By making the transition towards holdership and steering further research endeavors in this transformative direction, organizations can not only adeptly adapt to the swiftly changing landscape but also foster environments where each member can assume the role of a holder.

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