# Authentic leadership development: Getting to the root of positive forms of leadership

Bruce J. Avolio*, William L. Gardner

*Gallup Leadership Institute, College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, NE, United States*

## Abstract

This Special Issue is the result of the inaugural summit hosted by the Gallup Leadership Institute at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2004 on Authentic Leadership Development (ALD). We describe in this introduction to the special issue current thinking in this emerging field of research as well as questions and concerns. We begin by considering some of the environmental and organizational forces that may have triggered interest in describing and studying authentic leadership and its development. We then provide an overview of its contents, including the diverse theoretical and methodological perspectives presented, followed by a discussion of alternative conceptual foundations and definitions for the constructs of authenticity, authentic leaders, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development. A detailed description of the components of authentic leadership theory is provided next. The similarities and defining features of authentic leadership theory in comparison to transformational, charismatic, servant and spiritual leadership perspectives are subsequently examined. We conclude by discussing the status of authentic leadership theory with respect to its purpose, construct definitions, historical foundations, consideration of context, relational/processual focus, attention to levels of analysis and temporality, along with a discussion of promising directions for future research.

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\* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 402 472 6380; fax: +1 402 472 3189.
  *E-mail address:* bavolio2@unl.edu (B.J. Avolio).

## 1. Introduction

Leadership has always been more difficult in challenging times, but the unique stressors facing organizations throughout the world today call for a renewed focus on what constitutes genuine leadership. Public, private and even volunteer organizations are addressing challenges that run the gamut from ethical meltdowns to terrorism and SARS. What constitutes the normal range of functioning in these conditions is constantly shifting upwards as new challenges, technologies, market demands, and competition emerge. We suggest that such challenges have precipitated a renewed focus on restoring confidence, hope, and optimism; being able to rapidly bounce back from catastrophic events and display resiliency; helping people in their search for meaning and connection by fostering a new self-awareness; and genuinely relating to all stakeholders (associates, customers, suppliers, owners, and communities). As former head of Medtronic, Bill George (2003), succinctly states: "we need leaders who lead with purpose, values, and integrity; leaders who build enduring organizations, motivate their employees to provide superior customer service, and create long-term value for shareholders" (p. 9). We suggest a need to concentrate on the root construct underlying all positive forms of leadership and its development, which we label authentic leadership development or ALD.

### 1.1. Special issue origins

In these challenging and turbulent times, there is a growing recognition among scholars (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Seligman, 2002) and practitioners (George, 2003) alike that a more authentic leadership development strategy becomes relevant and urgently needed for desirable outcomes. Such recognition provided the impetus for the inaugural Gallup Leadership Institute Summit held in Omaha, Nebraska in June 2004, and this Special Issue on Authentic Leadership Development. The purpose of the GLI Summit was to promote a dialogue among scholars and practitioners from diverse domains with leaders from the business, political, educational, and military arenas to stimulate original insights and basic theory regarding the emergence and development of authentic leadership and followership.

Over 80 manuscripts were presented at the Summit in response to this charge, of which, a subset were invited for submission to this special issue and evaluated through *The Leadership Quarterly's* standard review process. Due to the large number of high quality articles submitted, we were faced with many difficult decisions in selecting a set of seven for inclusion. Ultimately, we chose articles that offered original, diverse, provocative and complementary perspectives that could contribute to building a theory of authentic leadership development. Other high quality manuscripts from the GLI Summit will appear in a forthcoming volume of Elsevier's Monographs in Leadership and Management series. In comparison to this special issue, this edited volume will include a broader range of topics, such as positive organizational behavior, transparency, authentic leadership measurement, and leadership development initiatives.

### 1.2. Special issue contents

We provide here an overview of the special issue followed by definitions of the terms authenticity, authentic leader, authentic leadership and authentic leadership development. Next, we present and discuss a table summarizing the key components of authentic leadership as described in the available literature, including articles contained in this special issue. Using this table, we proceed to differentiate

authentic leadership from what we judged to be closely related leadership theories, including charismatic, transformational, spiritual, and servant leadership. We conclude by highlighting what we see as especially promising avenues for research into authentic leadership and its development.

We have found that over the last 100 years, most leadership theories have been originated without a focus on the essential core processes that result in the development of leadership that would be characterized by those models, e.g., a path-goal leader. As a consequence, there has typically been no attention to development or we find post hoc conceptualizations and testing with little rigor. We have chosen the opposite approach and conceived of the model of authentic leadership starting with and integrating throughout our conceptualization of the dynamic process of development in context.

We view the collection of articles here as drawing upon a wide variety of theoretical traditions to offer diverse but complimentary and challenging perspectives on what might constitute authentic leadership, authentic followership, and their respective development. In the lead article, we present a comprehensive, self-based model of authentic leader and follower development (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumba, 2005). Our central premise is that through increased self-awareness, self-regulation, and positive modeling, authentic leaders foster the development of authenticity in followers. In turn, followers' authenticity contributes to their well-being and the attainment of sustainable and veritable performance. A key point in this article is the importance of authentic followership and its relationship with authentic leadership and its development. This article builds directly on a paper published last year by Avolio, Gardner, Luthans, May, and Walumbwa (2004) in this journal and earlier work by Luthans and Avolio (2003).

The second article by Ilies, Morgeson and Nahrgang (2005) advances a complementary model of authentic leader and follower development that focuses on the elements of authenticity and the processes whereby authentic leadership contributes to the eudaemonic well-being of leaders and followers. Interestingly, even though the conceptual models advanced in our lead article and by Ilies et al. were developed independently without discussion, they contain some significantly important common elements, perhaps indicating they are both unearthing fundamental components of authenticity, or are both similarly off target!

Both of these models draw heavily from the work of Kernis (2003), although there are some differences in their application of his ideas. As part of a larger theory of optimal self-esteem, Kernis identifies four core elements of authenticity: self-awareness, unbiased processing, relational authenticity, and authentic behavior/action. Although Ilies et al. (2005) use the same terms in their model, we modify them slightly to better reflect our conception of authentic leadership. Specifically, we use the term "balanced processing", as opposed to unbiased processing in recognition of extensive research from cognitive psychology which indicates humans are inherently flawed and biased information processors (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Tice & Wallace, 2003). Instead of arguing that authentic leaders and followers are free of cognitive biases, we assert that they are inclined and able to consider multiple sides of an issue and multiple perspectives as they assess information in a relatively balanced manner. We likewise consider the term relational transparency to be more descriptive than the phrase relational authenticity because it better reflects the open and transparent manner whereby authentic leaders and followers are posited to share information with each other and close others.

Other areas of convergence between these two respective models include their focus on positive modeling as a primary means whereby authentic leaders influence followers, as well as a focus on well-being as an outcome of authenticity, which stems directly from Luthans and Avolio (2003). Key differences involve the inclusion of additional means of influence (e.g., positive emotions contagion,

positive social exchanges) and the inclusion of specific components of leader and follower eudaemonic well-being (e.g, personal expressiveness, self-realization/development, flow experiences, self-efficacy/self-esteem) in the model of Ilies et al. Our model devotes greater attention to various facets of leader and follower self-awareness (e.g., values, identity, emotions, goals and motives) and the relationships between the follower outcomes of trust, engagement and well-being and the attainment of veritable and sustainable performance. Despite these notable differences, the commonalities shared by these models suggest that, even at this early stage of theory development, some agreement on the core elements of the authentic leadership and followership may be emerging, which starts to address some of the concerns raised in the Cooper, Scandura, and Schriesheim (2005) article in this special issue.

Next, Shamir and Eilam (2005) advance a life stories approach to authentic leadership development. After first clarifying their use of the terms authentic leader, authentic leadership, and authentic leader development, Shamir and Eilam describe how leaders' life stories provide insight into the meanings they attach to life events to guide followers, and in turn to develop themselves over time through reflection. As such, a leader's life story reflects the degree of self-knowledge, self-concept clarity, and person-role merger he or she experiences, and provides followers with cues for assessing leader authenticity. Shamir and Eilam conclude with an intriguing discussion of the implications of the life stories approach for the study and development of authentic leaders.

Complementing the life stories approach advanced by Shamir and Eilam (2005) is Sparrowe's (2005) application of hermeneutic philosophy to explain the narrative process whereby a leader's authentic self emerges. The foundations for this perspective are provided by the philosophy of Ricoeur (1992), who conceives of the self as a "narrative project" through which individuals interpret the disparate actions, events and motivations they experience to construct a unifying life story for themselves. After reviewing common elements found in existing theories of authentic leadership, Sparrowe explains how the narrative self perspective can be applied to address the limitations of contemporary theories of leadership and development. Sparrowe's narrative approach, like Shamir and Eilam's, helps to both describe what constitutes authentic leadership, and to provide a deeper understanding of what motivates its development.

In contrast to the cognitive focus of the preceding conceptions of authentic leadership, Michie and Gooty (2005) explore the effects of values and emotions on leader authenticity. Specifically, they assert that self-transcendent values (e.g., universal values, such as social justice, equality and broadminded-ness; benevolent values, such as honesty, loyalty and responsibility) and positive other-directed emotions (e.g., gratitude, goodwill, appreciation and concern for others) play a fundamental role in the emergence and development of authentic leadership. Michie and Gooty's central thesis is that positive other-directed emotions, such as gratitude and appreciation, will motivate authentic leaders to behave in ways that reflect self-transcendent values, such as honesty, loyalty and equality. In light of emerging empirical evidence of the importance of such emotions to leadership processes (Ashkanasy & Daus, 2002; Ashkanasy & Tse, 2000; George, 2000), we consider this novel and intriguing perspective on the development of authentic leadership to be highly promising. It brings to the forefront of theory building the importance of emotions to understanding leadership and followership.

Next, Eagly (2005) explores some of the boundary conditions for authentic leadership theory. Specifically, she considers cases where leaders who transparently expressed and acted upon their core values, nonetheless failed to achieve what she calls relational authenticity with followers. Possible reasons for such failures include the articulation of values that are not shared by followers and/or the

reluctance among followers to accord the leader the legitimacy to promote such values on their behalf. In such cases, persons who exhibit authenticity in an attempt to lead may nevertheless fail to elicit the personal and social identification required to secure follower trust and commitment. Eagly goes on to argue that women and other "outsiders" who have not traditionally had access to certain leadership roles, may find it difficult to achieve relational authenticity because they are not accorded the same level of legitimacy as leaders. Drawing upon role incongruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002), she suggests that the interactive effects of gender role and leader role requirements help to explain why this occurs. Eagly does see some encouraging developments, as trends toward participative decision making and transformational leadership produce changes in leader role requirements that in fact can make it easier for female leaders to achieve relational authenticity.

Given the nascent state of the authentic leadership construct, it is not surprising that, with one exception, the articles included in this special issue present original conceptual perspectives. The exception is the final article by Cooper et al. (2005) that provides a thoughtful critique of the initial conceptual work on authentic leadership and its development, and cautions scholars in this emerging area to learn from the past and avoid the mistakes that have plagued other areas of leadership research.

They also caution against rushing to develop authentic leaders and leadership, which we endorse. Indeed, our position is that the best way to test any theory of leadership is to show how it develops what it supposedly attempts to explain in terms of core theoretical propositions. For example, Burns (1978) argued that transforming leaders develop followers into leaders. To test this causal proposition, it would seem most useful to examine the authentic leadership developmental process(es) that encompasses this transformational process. Indeed, almost any proposed casual link in theories of leadership could and should be tested by "bringing them to life" via some form of experimental intervention usually involving development, whereby development is related to essential core theoretical constructs.

## 2. Conceptual foundations and definitions

In this section, we trace the theoretical roots and foundations that underpin current conceptions of authentic leadership theory. In addition, we present definitions for the constructs of authenticity, authentic leaders, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development, several of which are introduced in this special issue, with the intent of clarifying these constructs at the very earliest stages of theory development.

### 2.1. Authenticity

The concept of authenticity has its roots in Greek philosophy ("To thine own self be true"). Excellent reviews of the origins and history of authenticity within the fields of philosophy and psychology are provided by Harter (2002) and Erickson (1995). Particularly relevant to our focus are the writings of the humanistic psychologists Carl Rogers (1959, 1963) and Maslow (1968, 1971). Rogers and Maslow focused attention on the development of fully functioning or self actualized persons, i.e., individuals who are "in tune" with their basic nature and clearly and accurately see themselves and their lives. Because fully functioning persons are unencumbered by others' expectations for them, they can make more sound personal choices. Interestingly, Maslow (1971, p. 346) conceives of self-actualizing people

as having strong ethical convictions. As we will see, these ideas from humanistic psychology provide the intellectual heritage for thinking about authentic leadership development.

Although definitions of authenticity abound, many suffer from the common mistake of confusing authenticity with sincerity (Erickson, 1995). In *Sincerity and Authenticity* (1972, p. 4), Linonel Trilling defines sincerity as "a congruence between avowal and actual feeling"; that is, sincerity refers to the extent to which one's outward expression of feelings and thoughts are aligned with the reality experienced by the self. This definition implies that one is interacting with an "other" besides oneself. One's sincerity is therefore judged by the extent to which the self is represented accurately and honestly to others, rather than the extent to which one is true to the self (Erickson, 1995; Trilling, 1972). The later construct falls under the domain of authenticity, or, "one's relationship with oneself" (Erickson, 1995, p. 124). The term authenticity as used here refers to "owning one's personal experiences, be they thoughts, emotions, needs, wants, preferences, or beliefs, processes captured by the injunction to 'know oneself'" and "further implies that one *acts* in accord with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings" (Harter, 2002, p. 382).

Recognition of the self-referential nature of authenticity is critical to understanding the construct. That is, in contrast to sincerity, authenticity does not involve any explicit consideration of "others"; instead, the authentic self is seen as "existing wholly by the laws of its own being" (Erickson, 1995, p. 125). As social creatures, the meanings we assign to the self are clearly influenced by the "reflected appraisals" of others (Cooley, 1902). Such appraisals do not substitute, however, for the meanings we attribute to the self. As such, a focus on authenticity requires attention to a sense of self experienced by the actor (Goffman, 1963). Without denying the crucial and continuing influence of social relations on the contents of the self, this perspective recognizes that at times the actor experiences these contents as if they are embedded within an autonomous self (Erickson, 1995). That is, the self operates as a social force in its own right that is actively involved in the social construction of reality, rather than a mere reflection of that reality (Hewitt, 1989). Hence, the self both shapes and is shaped by social exchanges with others. "It is our emotional reaction to the maintenance of such commitments that comprise the heart of our feelings of relative authenticity, and our reaction to their violations—feelings of relative inauthenticity" (Erickson, 1995, p. 127).

Note that Erickson (1995) qualifies her references to authenticity and inauthenticity with the adjective "relative". She and Heidegger (1962) describe authenticity as not an either/or condition, i.e., people are never entirely authentic or inauthentic. Instead, they can more accurately be described as achieving levels of authenticity.

## 2.2. Authentic leaders, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development

Some of the first applications of the construct of authenticity to leadership emerged within the fields of sociology and education (see Hannah & Chan, 2004 for a review). Rather than emphasizing authenticity per say, the sociologist Seeman (1960) focused his conceptual and empirical attention on inauthenticity, which he viewed as an excessive plasticity on the part of an actor (leader) seeking to comply with perceived demands arising from public roles. Although Seeman developed a scale for measuring inauthenticity, its construct validity was questioned (Brumbaugh, 1971), and the construct fell out of favor. Henderson and Hoy (1983) subsequently revived the construct within the field of educational leadership, and revised the Seeman scale through the addition of new items. They define a

leader as being inauthentic when he or she is overly compliant with stereotypes and demands related to the leader role.

In contrast to this early focus on inauthenticity, current conceptions of authentic leadership reflect their conceptual roots in positive psychology and adopt a more positive focus on what constitutes authentic leadership development (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). An examination of the articles appearing in this special issue indicates there is some disagreement about how to best define the constructs of authentic leader, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development.

Avolio, Luthans, and Walumbwa (2004, p. 4) define authentic leaders as "those who are deeply aware of how they think and behave and are perceived by others as being aware of their own and others' values/moral perspectives, knowledge, and strengths; aware of the context in which they operate; and who are confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, and of high moral character" (as cited in Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004). The related construct of authentic leadership in organizations is defined by Luthans and Avolio (2003, p. 243) "as a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development."

As the contributors to this special issue worked to refine theory, several took issue with the breadth of these definitions. For instance, Cooper et al. (2005) point out that our "initial conceptualization is obviously multi-dimensional. It contains elements from diverse domains—traits, states, behaviors, contexts, and attributions. Moreover, the observers or perspectives involved vary from the leader, to followers (at various 'distances'), to possibly additional observers." They also express concern that authentic leadership is posited to operate at the individual, team, and organizational levels, among others. Cooper et al. point out a number of measurement difficulties that may arise from the adoption of such broad definitions. These authors are absolutely correct that challenging measurement issues lie ahead, but in our view that is the nature of what is required to fully understand what constitutes authentic leadership development.

One of the initial intents in defining authentic leadership as a construct was to make it multi-dimensional and multi-level (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Although this poses difficulties for measuring it, starting with this broader and more inclusive definition seemed to make sense given prior criticisms of leadership constructs for not adequately recognizing the complexity of the phenomenon, including ignoring the context in which it was embedded (Bass, 1990; Rost, 1991; Yukl, 2002). In our lead article we narrow our focus to zero in on the self-awareness and self-regulatory processes whereby leaders and followers achieve authenticity and authentic relationships (Gardner et al., 2005), which we deem as being an essential starting point for discussing ALD.

Shamir and Eilam (2005) also express concern about the breadth of initial conceptions of the authentic leader, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development constructs. To address their concerns, they advance a narrower focus with their definitions. They posit the following four characteristics of authentic leaders: (1) rather than faking their leadership, authentic leaders are true to themselves (rather than conforming to the expectations of others); (2) authentic leaders are motivated by personal convictions, rather than to attain status, honors, or other personal benefits; (3) "authentic leaders are originals, not copies" (pp. xx); that is, they lead from their own personal point of view; and (4) the actions of authentic leaders are based on their personal values and convictions. Equally important to Shamir and Eilam's conception of authentic leaders are the factors they omit from their definition. Specifically, they purposefully refrain from describing the leader's style or the content of the leader's values or convictions. Here, their perspective differs from our conception of authentic leadership, which

we view as encompassing a positive moral perspective (Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May, Chan, Hodges, & Avolio, 2003).

To define authentic leadership, Shamir and Eilam (2005) introduce the construct of authentic followership, which is achieved by "followers who follow leaders for authentic reasons and have an authentic relationship with the leader" (p. x). In the Gardner et al. (2005) lead article, we likewise introduce the concept of authentic followership, arguing that it "mirrors the developmental processes of authentic leadership" and is characterized by "heightened levels of followers' self-awareness and self-regulation leading to positive follower development and outcomes" (p. z). Hence, authentic followers are posited to display internalized regulatory processes, balanced processing of information, relational transparency, and authentic behavior paralleling what we describe as characterizing authentic leaders.

The primary focus of Shamir and Eilam's (2005) article is devoted to the development of authentic leaders, rather than authentic leadership development, which is more complicated, because it involves the development of an authentic relationship between leaders and followers. We agree that authentic leadership development involves complex processes, and that it is unlikely to be achieved simply through a training program. As noted above, we do not view authentic leadership development as a program, unless we were to broadly label it as "life's program" (Avolio, 2005). To the contrary, authentic leadership development involves ongoing processes whereby leaders and followers gain self-awareness and establish open, transparent, trusting and genuine relationships, which in part may be shaped and impacted by planned interventions such as training (Avolio, 2005).

## 3. Components of authentic leadership development

In this section we identify and discuss the components of authentic leadership encompassed by our own (Avolio, Garner et al., 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May et al., 2003) and related perspectives (Ilies et al., 2005), as summarized in Table 1. Our purpose here is not to reiterate discussions of authentic leadership that appear elsewhere, including this special issue. Instead, we seek to map the emerging theoretical territory for authentic leadership research, and highlight some of the differences in scope and contents that separate alternative perspectives. To do so, we have grouped the key components of authentic leadership development reflected in the initial conceptualizations under the major row headings in Table 1.

We have purposefully kept these headings general to facilitate comparisons with other theoretical perspectives including transformational leadership, charismatic leadership, servant leadership, and spiritual leadership, which constitute the columns. In the body of the table we provide a solid black check mark if the other theories included these components as core parts of their models/discussions and a qualified, light gray, check mark if it was referred to but not a core focus. We explain the rationale for including each of these components of authentic leadership in prior models below.

### 3.1. Positive psychological capital

In their initial framework of authentic leadership, Luthans and Avolio (2003) identified the positive psychological capacities of confidence, optimism, hope and resiliency as personal resources of the authentic leader. When combined with a positive organizational context and certain trigger events/

Table 1
Comparison of authentic leadership development theory with transformational, charismatic, servant, and spiritual leadership theories

| Components of authentic leadership development theory | TL | CL(B) | CL(SC) | SVT | SP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive psychological capital | D | D | D | | D |
| Positive moral perspective | F | F | F | F | F |
| Leader self-awareness | | | | | |
|    Values | F | F | F | F | F |
|    Cognitions | F | F | F | F | F |
|    Emotions | F | F | F | F | F |
| Leader self-regulation | | | | | |
|    Internalized | F | | F | | F |
|    Balanced processing | F | | | | |
|    Relational transparency | F | | | | |
|    Authentic behavior | D | D | D | F | |
| Leadership processes/behaviors | | | | | |
|    Positive modeling | F | F | F | F | D |
|    Personal and social identification | F | F | F | D | D |
|    Emotional contagion | | | | | |
|    Supporting self-determination | F | F | D | F | F |
|    Positive social exchanges | F | D | D | D | D |
| Follower self-awareness | | | | | |
|    Values | F | | F | F | F |
|    Cognitions | F | | F | | F |
|    Emotions | F | | F | | F |
| Follower self-regulation | | | | | |
|    Internalized | F | F | F | D | F |
|    Balanced processing | F | | | | |
|    Relational transparency | D | | D | | |
|    Authentic behavior | D | | D | | D |
| Follower development | | | | F | F |
| Organizational context | | | | | |
|    Uncertainty | F | D | D | | |
|    Inclusion | F | | | | F |
|    Ethical | F | | | | |
|    Positive, strengths-based | | | | D | |
| Performance | | | | | |
|    Veritable | | | | | |
|    Sustained | F | F | | | |
|    Beyond expectations | F | F | | | F |

Note: ♟—Focal Component.
♟—Discussed.
Key: TL—Transformational Leadership Theory.
CL(B)—Behavioral Theory of Charismatic Leadership.
CL(SC)—Self-Concept Based Theory of Charismatic Leadership.
SVT—Servant Leadership Theory.
SP—Spiritual Leadership Theory.

challenges, these positive psychological states are posited to heighten the self-awareness and self-regulatory behaviors of the leader as part of a process of positive self-development. Recent work in positive psychology, positive organizational behavior (POB), and positive psychological capital (Luthans, Luthans, & Luthans, 2004), suggests that these positive psychological capacities have theoretical and psychometric support for being state-like (open to development and change) and thus can play a crucial role in developing individuals, teams, organizations, and communities to flourish and prosper (e.g., see Luthans, 2002a, 2002b; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

## 3.2. Positive moral perspective

Luthans and Avolio (2003) also assert that authentic leadership and its development encompasses an inherent ethical/moral component. May et al. (2003) provide an extensive discussion of this moral component, describing an ethical and transparent decision making process whereby authentic leaders develop and draw upon reserves of moral capacity, efficacy, courage, and resiliency to address ethical issues and achieve authentic and sustained moral actions.

As previously indicated, however, other authors, including Cooper et al. (2005), Shamir and Eilam (2005), and Sparrowe (2005) in this special issue, have expressed concerns about defining authentic leadership as encompassing these positive psychological resources. They worry that the meaning of the descriptor "authentic" will be diluted, making it difficult to operationalize the construct in subsequent research. Hence, a fundamental difference in these perspectives is that while we conceive of positive psychological capacities and a positive moral perspective as inherent qualities of authentic leadership, others see these resources as at best possible antecedents and/or consequences of authentic leadership.

We believe the inclusion of a positive moral perspective is crucial to the emerging work on authentic leadership development. Indeed, we liken this starting point to Burns (1978) notion of transforming leadership, where he clearly invoked a positive moral perspective for such leaders, which Bass (1990) later agreed to after leaving it out of his ground breaking model of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985).

## 3.3. Leader self-awareness

Fundamental to our conception of authentic leadership, as well as others presented in this special issue (e.g., Ilies et al., 2005; Shamir & Eilam, 2005), is the notion that authenticity and hence authentic leadership requires heightened levels of self-awareness. Indeed, despite some dissension (e.g., Sparrowe, 2005), we appear to be approaching a consensus that a leader's self-awareness is an appropriate starting point for interpreting what constitutes authentic leadership development.

Such self-awareness occurs when individuals are cognizant of their own existence, and what constitutes that existence within the context within which they operate over time (Silvia & Duval, 2001). Self-awareness is not a destination point, but rather an emerging process where one continually comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and desires. It can include having a basic and fundamental awareness of one's knowledge, experience, and capabilities (Day, 2000; George, 2003; London, 2002). In our lead article, we identify four elements of self-awareness that we posit are especially relevant to the development of authentic leadership: values, cognitions regarding identity, emotions, and motives/goals (Gardner et al., 2005). We focus on values,

cognitions and emotions in Table 1, as they are more broadly defined in the prior literature and helpful in comparing ALD to earlier models of leadership.

## 3.4. Leader self-regulation

Self-regulation involves the processes whereby people exert self-control by (a) setting internal (either existing or newly formulated) standards, (b) assessing discrepancies between these standards and actual or expected outcomes, and (c) identifying intended actions for reconciling these discrepancies (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998). Hence, self-regulation is the process through which authentic leaders align their values with their intentions and actions. In our lead article, we explore in detail the self-regulatory processes whereby leaders achieve this alignment, thereby making their authentic selves (e.g., values, motives, goals) transparent to followers. To do so, we rely heavily on two theoretical perspectives: (a) Deci and Ryan's (1995, 2000) self-determination theory, which contends that authenticity is achieved through internally driven regulatory processes, as opposed to external standards or consequences; and (b) the previously discussed arguments advanced by Kernis (2003) that authenticity involves unbiased (balanced) processing, relational transparency/authenticity, and authentic behavior. These four components of authentic leader self-regulation are listed in Table 1.

Although several contributors to this special issue also see authentic self-regulatory processes as a fundamental element of authentic leadership, their perspectives on these processes vary. Most similar to our view is Ilies et al.'s (2005) model, the theoretical foundations of which are likewise anchored in part by the work of Kernis (2003) and Deci and Ryan (1995, 2000). In contrast, Sparrowe (2005) argues that the self-regulatory process of prototype matching described in our models (observed behavior is evaluated with respect to its consistency with identifiable qualities of the leader's true self) is limited because it fails to adequately account for the dynamic nature of the self. Instead, he advocates a narrative approach whereby "consistency is the outcome of successfully narrating how the self is the same self through the disparate events of one's life so that the unity of character becomes evident" (p. x). Moreover, "[b]ecause narrative is so well suited for representing the relationships between intentions, choices, and outcomes, it offers an especially effective means for self-regulation" (p. y). We believe the constructs of the working self-concept and possible selves (Lord & Brown, 2004; Markus & Nurius, 1986; Markus & Wurf, 1987) likewise reconcile any apparent contradiction between the consistency implied by authenticity and the dynamic self-regulatory processes to which Sparrowe alludes.

## 3.5. Leadership processes/behaviors

At this early stage in the development of authentic leadership theory, a number of processes through which leaders influence followers' and their development have been proposed (see Table 1). For instance, Avolio, Gardner et al. (2004), Avolio, Luthans et al. (2004), Gardner et al. (2005), and Ilies et al. (2005) each describe personal and social identification processes whereby followers come to identify with authentic leaders and their values. In addition, positive modeling of the various components of authenticity including self-awareness, self-regulatory processes, positive psychological states, and/or a positive moral perspective has been consistently identified as a primary mechanism whereby authentic leaders influence and develop their followers (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005; Ilies et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003; May et al., 2003; Shamir & Eilam, 2005).

Indeed, authentic leaders are described as "leading by example" as they demonstrate transparent decision making, confidence, optimism, hope and resilience, and consistency between their words and deeds. Furthermore, Gardner et al. (2005) and Ilies et al. (2005) both argue that authentic leaders seek to develop associates by modeling and supporting self-determination (i.e., internalized self-regulation). Two additional processes whereby authentic leaders influence followers and their development that have been implied by other authors (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Michie & Gooty, 2005) but not explicitly articulated are described by Ilies et al.: emotional contagion and positive social exchanges.

With respect to emotional contagion, they base their arguments on two theoretical foundations. The first is Frederickson's (2003) broaden-and-build model which suggests that a leader's positive emotions may be particularly infectious and create positive upward spirals in organizational learning and transformation. The second is provided by Kernis' (2003) assertion that authenticity (through self-awareness and relational transparency) fosters positive affective states. It follows that the positive emotions experienced by authentic leaders will spread and reverberate through social contagion processes to positively foster the emotional and cognitive development of other organizational members. The identification of emotional contagion as a process whereby authentic leadership influences followers and their development is a particularly noteworthy and unique contribution to ALD theory because such processes are not explicitly considered by related theories of transformational, charismatic, servant and spiritual leadership, as shown in Table 1.

Drawing on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960; Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Liden, Sparrowe, & Wayne, 1997), Ilies et al. (2005) used the principles of reciprocity and value congruence to explain the processes whereby authentic leaders establish positive social exchanges with followers. Specifically, they argue that when leaders display unbiased processing of self-relevant information, personal integrity, and an authentic relational orientation, leader–follower relationships will be characterized by high levels of respect, positive affect, and trust. High quality and close relationships will in turn foster greater value congruence and follower reciprocation in the form of behavior that is consistent with the leader's values. Such reciprocity is posited to result in greater authenticity, and well-being, among followers.

Together, the processes of identification, positive modeling, emotional contagion, supporting self-determination, and positive social exchanges go a long ways toward explaining how authentic leaders influence followers, i.e., the leadership component of authentic leadership. Without them, we are left with descriptions of authentic persons who happen to occupy leader and follower roles, as opposed to authentic leadership and authentic followership. We believe the emerging consensus regarding the importance of these processes, and their articulation in this special issue, represent particularly promising developments in the evolution of authentic leadership development theory.

## 3.6. Follower self-awareness/regulation

The preceding section described assorted influence processes whereby authentic leaders are posited to heighten the self-awareness and shape the self-regulatory processes of followers. Through these processes, followers develop greater clarity about their values, identity, and emotions and, in turn, move towards internalized regulatory processes, balanced information processing, transparent relations with the leader and associates, and authentic behavior (Gardner et al., 2005). They come to know and accept themselves and self-regulate their behavior to achieve goals that are, in part, derived from and

congruent with those of the leader. Hence, we expect an authentic relationship between the leader and followers to emerge which is characterized by open and positive exchanges as they pursue shared and complementary goals that reflect deeply held and overlapping values.

### 3.7. Follower development

One of the central premises of ALD is that both leaders and followers are developed over time as the relationship between them becomes more authentic (Gardner et al., 2005). As followers internalize values and beliefs espoused by the leader their conception of what constitutes their actual and possible selves are expected to change and develop over time. As followers come to know who they are, they in turn will be more transparent with the leader, who in turn will benefit in terms of his or her own development.

Where ALD theory may differ from say transformational leadership theory (Avolio, 2005; Bass, 1985), is that the leader may not actively set out to transform the follower into a leader, but may do so simply by being role model for followers. Moreover, we view the developmental process here as being much more relational, where both follower and leader are shaped in their respective development.

### 3.8. Organizational context

Because all leadership interactions occur in a dynamic, emerging context, it is important for researchers to incorporate the context into their predictions of leadership development and effectiveness (Avolio, 2005; Day, 2000; House & Aditya, 1997; London, 2002). By including the moderating role of a positive organizational context within the authentic leadership–performance link (Gardner et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003), there is recognition of the opportunity for authentic leadership to be sustained and integrated into the context (a context we see as varying in terms of turbulence, uncertainty and challenge), while also altering the context itself to make it more authentic (Avolio, 2003).

Many years ago, Perrow (1970, p. 6) succinctly stated: "leadership style is a dependent variable which depends on something else." That "something else" is "the historic context in which they [leaders] arise, the setting in which they function... They are an integral part of the system, subject to the forces that affect the system... In the process leaders shape and are shaped" (Gardner, 1993, p. 1). As Table 1 indicates, we propose that four important dimensions of the organizational context moderate the authentic leadership–performance relationship and can directly contribute to the leader's and followers' self-awareness: uncertainty, and an inclusive, ethical and positively oriented strength-based culture/climate.

We propose environments that provide open access to information, resources, support, and equal opportunity for everyone to learn and develop will empower and enable leaders and their associates to accomplish their work more effectively. This suggests that for leaders and followers to be effective, leaders must promote an inclusive organizational climate that enables themselves and followers to continually learn and grow (Gardner et al., 2005; Luthans & Avolio, 2003). This context will in part be affected by the uncertainty characterizing the broader environmental context— a major premise we have used as a precipitating condition for the emergence of discussions surrounding authentic leaders and authentic leadership development.

*3.9. Veritable and sustained performance beyond expectations*

The terms sustainable superior performance and sustainable competitive advantage are often used interchangeably in the strategic management literature (Porter, 1985; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). A firm is said to have a "sustainable competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy" (Barney, 1991, pp. 99–120). Hence, it is the inability of current and potential competitors to duplicate the strategy that makes a competitive advantage sustainable.

A firm's competitive advantage is normally inferred from sustained periods of above-average performance (Rouse & Daellenbach, 1999). Drawing on this definition, we view sustained performance as the organization's ability to achieve persistently high performance and growth over a long period of time (Roberts & Dowling, 2002). The qualifier using the term "veritable" refers to the genuine and ethical values used to attain sustained performance and growth (Watson, 2003), even at the sacrifice of more immediate performance or financial gains (Beer, 2001). Veritable sustained performance is defined to include financial (Roberts & Dowling, 2002), human (Lepak & Sneill, 1999), social (Adler & Kwon, 2002) and psychological (Luthans & Youssef, 2004) capital returns. We suggest that creating veritable sustained performance involves non-financial intangibles and tacit knowledge, including building human, social and psychological capital, and considering how the organization is fundamentally run, including psychological contracts with employees (Rousseau, 1995). Veritable, sustained performance growth is genuine organic growth with respect to these various metrics representing what we consider to be essential elements of organizational performance.

We also include here reference to 'performance beyond expectations', which emerged out of the original conceptual work of Bass (1985) on transformational leadership. Specifically, we are interested in examining what constitutes sustainable, typical performance and also performance that simply goes beyond everyone's wildest expectations, thus including the full range of performance in our comparisons to earlier models.

# 4. Differentiating authentic leadership from related leadership theories

As noted above, a key differentiation of ALD from currently popular leadership theories is that authentic leadership is more generic and represents what we would term a "root construct" (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Gardner et al., 2005). We use the term root construct to mean that it forms the basis for what then constitutes other forms of positive leadership. For example, many of the "new theories" of leadership such as transformational, charismatic, servant and spiritual leadership include "vision" as a central component (Bryman, 1992).

A leader can be seen as visionary for her ability to articulate a highly desirable future state, which followers identify with and commit to over time. And if she is an authentic visionary leader, than what the leader suggests as being the vision is the leader's best and most accurate articulation of what she believes is future potential, which does not make it so. Authenticity does not guarantee accuracy of prediction, but it does over time provide the impetus for followers to be more engaged, aware and intelligent about the direction being set so that they can contribute their best views and questions

about the desired future state. However, if the leader is more (we see authenticity as constituting a range) inauthentic, then the vision may be a ruse to manipulate followers to achieve personal aims or goals, and at some point those followers will discover the ruse, become disengaged and long-term performance will suffer.

Authentic leadership can incorporate transformational, charismatic, servant, spiritual or other forms of positive leadership. However, in contrast to transformational leadership in particular, authentic leadership may or may not be charismatic, as noted by George (2003). Such leaders build enduring relationships, work hard, and lead with purpose, meaning and values, but are not necessarily described as charismatic by others, which has been defined as the core component of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985).

By defining authentic leadership as a root construct our goal from the outset was to better explain some of the basic component processes, such as self-awareness, that underlie all positive forms of leadership. Moreover, we focus on these processes not to merely describe what constitutes various forms of positively-oriented leadership, but to understand and explain how best to develop the base of leadership that promotes veritable, sustainable performance.

The differentiation between authentic and related leadership perspectives becomes important to our theory building of authentic leadership development in supporting conceptual independence and for building a case for construct validation. That is, there should be convergent validity between charismatic, visionary, servant, and/or especially transformational and authentic leadership, but it is important that we build the case for discriminant validity as well. Below, we revisit Table 1 as we go further to discuss similarities and differences between authentic leadership development theory and related perspectives.

## 4.1. Differentiating authentic and transformational leadership

Authentic leadership theory includes an in-depth focus on leader and follower self-awareness/ regulation, positive psychological capital, and the moderating role of a positive organizational climate[1]. Although transformational leadership theorists have directly or indirectly referred to these concepts, as Table 1 indicates, our goal was to not only make them more explicit with respect to defining leadership, but also to show how they contribute to our understanding of "genuine" leadership development.

To further differentiate authentic from transformational leadership, it should be noted that transformational leaders have indeed been described as being optimistic, hopeful, developmentally-oriented and of high moral character (Bass, 1998), all of which would also be manifestations of authentic leadership. Once again, to be viewed as transformational by both the definitions of Bass' (1985) and Burns' (1978) necessitates that a leader be authentic; importantly, however, being an authentic leader does not necessarily mean that the leader is transformational. For example, authentic leaders may or may not be actively or proactively focused on developing followers into leaders, even though they have a positive impact on them via role modeling.

We believe the key distinction is that authentic leaders are anchored by their own deep sense of self; they know where they stand on important issues, values and beliefs. With that base they stay their course and convey to others, oftentimes through actions, not just words, what they represent in terms of

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[1] This comparison was informed in part by a comparison of these theories provided by Cooper et al. (2005) in an early draft of their manuscript.

principles, values and ethics. Transformational leaders may also have this deep sense of self joining our two views of leadership, or they may be able to transform others and organizations, through a powerful, positive vision, an intellectually stimulating idea, attention to uplifting the needs of followers and by having a clear sense of purpose.

Accompanying the basic meaning of authentic leadership outlined above is the notion that the leaders' espoused values/beliefs and their actions become aligned over time and across varying situational challenges. Associates come to learn what such leaders identify with and the importance they give to certain ways of interacting with each other, which would contribute to their development as noted above. For example, authentic leaders' confidence, hope and optimism stems from their strong beliefs in themselves, in their positive psychological capital (e.g., Luthans et al., 2004; Luthans & Youssef, 2004), and in making clear to associates exactly what they need from them in order to achieve sustainable growth and performance at individual, team, and/or organizational levels. Such leaders also recognize that they have weaknesses, which they work to accommodate by surrounding themselves with extremely capable followers and building an inclusive and engaged positive organizational context. Such contexts support followers for being actively involved in performing their job roles and responsibilities, as well as in contributing to the leader's own development.

Before moving forward, we urge researchers and practitioners to consider that our starting point in conceptualizing ALD was to focus on leadership development, as opposed to addressing development after the fact, which has characterized the development of most theories of leadership. Our hope and expectation is that by pursuing this course we can ignite a conversation around what constitutes a general theory of leadership development, one that includes the follower front and center.

## 4.2. Differentiating authentic leadership from charismatic leadership theories

There are several notable differences between our perspective of authentic leadership and prevailing theories of behavioral, social and attributional views of charismatic leadership (Conger & Kanugo, 1987, 1998; Kark & Shamir, 2002; Shamir, 1991; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). For instance, the attention to leader and follower self-awareness/regulation is missing from Conger and Kanungo's (1987, 1998) behavioral theory of charismatic theory. Both perspectives reflect multi-level analyses as they specify the effects of leadership at the individual, group and/or organizational levels. While the self-concept based theory of charismatic leadership devotes considerable attention to explicating the leader behaviors and motivational mechanisms whereby follower self-concepts are transformed as they come to identify with the leader and internalize his or her values, the role of leader self-awareness/regulation in this process is not fully explored. Neither is the role of positive psychological capital, nor the relationship of leadership to veritable and sustainable performance.

Distinguishing again between authentic and charismatic leaders, we expect that authentic leaders will influence follower self-awareness of values/moral perspective, more based on their individual character, personal example, and dedication, than on inspirational appeals, dramatic presentations, or other forms of impression management (Gardner & Avolio, 1998). For example, while charismatic leaders employ rhetoric to persuade, influence, and mobilize followers, an authentic leader energizes followers by creating meaning and positively socially constructing reality for themselves and followers.

### 4.3. Differentiating authentic leadership from servant and spiritual leadership

Like authentic leadership, both servant and spiritual leadership include either explicit or implicit recognition of the role of leader self-awareness/regulation. For example, prevailing theories of servant leadership (e.g., Greenleaf, 1977; Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004; Spears, 1995, 1998; Spears, Lawrence, & Blanchard, 2001) include discussions of leader awareness, empathy, conceptualization, and foresight (vision). However, in contrast to our authentic leadership development perspective which draws from the clinical, positive and social psychology literatures for our discussion of self-awareness/ regulation (Bandura, 1986, 1997, 2000; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), the discussion of these constructs within servant leadership theory has been largely atheoretical and not grounded or supported by empirical research. Also largely missing from servant leadership theory is explicit recognition of the mediating role of follower self-awareness and regulation, as well as positive psychological capital, and a positive organizational context. Finally, contributions of servant leadership to sustainable and veritable performance are not currently articulated.

The theory of spiritual leadership advanced by Fry (2003) likewise includes an implicit recognition of the role of leader self-awareness with a focus on vision and leader values and attitudes that are broadly classified as altruistic love and hope/faith. Interestingly, these values/attitudes are also described as leader behaviors, producing some confusion regarding these constructs and their role in spiritual leadership. Areas of overlap between the authentic and spiritual leadership theories include their focus on integrity, trust, courage, hope, and perseverance (resilience). Once again, however, the discussion of these topics is not well integrated with available theory and research on the self-systems of leaders and followers (Hoyle, Kernis, Leary, & Baldwin, 1999; Kernis, 2003) or positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002), and consideration of self regulation and the moderating role of the organizational context is missing.

## 5. Authentic leadership theory revisited

Recently, Hunt (2004) set out to answer the question, "What is Leadership?" He concluded that the answer depends on the ontological (the nature or essence of phenomenon being studied) and epistemological (how one goes about understanding the phenomenon and communicating such knowledge to others) assumptions one makes about the definition and purpose of leadership. We address below six points noted by Hunt (2004), including definition, purpose, historical context, levels of analysis, relational, and dynamic aspects of leadership.

### 5.1. Purpose

Our purpose for focusing on authentic leadership development was articulated early in the write up on this topic here and in prior papers (Avolio, Gardner et al., 2004; Luthans & Avolio, 2003): we believe authentic leadership can make a fundamental difference in organizations by helping people find meaning and connection at work through greater self-awareness; by restoring and building optimism, confidence and hope; by promoting transparent relationships and decision making that builds trust and commitment among followers; and by fostering inclusive structures and positive ethical climates. Moreover, we have adopted a developmental focus as we seek to understand and explain how authentic leadership, authentic

followership, authentic leader–follower relationships, and positive organizational climates promote sustained and veritable performance.

## 5.2. Definitions

Our definitions of authentic leaders, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development presented earlier reflect the preceding objectives. We also acknowledge there are differences regarding the scope and focus of authentic leadership, as the articles included in this special issue make clear. Indeed, the purpose of the inaugural Gallup Leadership Institute Summit on Authentic Leadership Development was to attract and encourage diverse viewpoints and theoretical approaches to studying the topic. Given the breadth of perspectives presented and reflected in this special issue, we think the Summit clearly succeeded in fulfilling this goal and that as noted in this special issue there are also considerable points of convergence.

## 5.3. Historical roots and context

With respect to the history of authentic leadership development theory, we have briefly discussed some of the conceptual roots (e.g., humanistic psychology) and theoretical foundations (e.g., positive psychology) for the constructs of authenticity, authentic leadership, and authentic leadership development. However, we also readily acknowledge that the conceptual roots of authenticity can be traced deeper into the rich history of philosophy (Heidegger, 1962; Sartre, 1943) and psychology (Cooley, 1902; James, 1890; Maslow, 1968, 1971; Mead, 1934; Rogers, 1959, 1963). While a discussion of these philosophical and psychological treatments of authenticity is beyond the scope of this article, interested readers are again referred to work of Harter (2002) and Erickson (1995).

With regard to the historical context for authentic leadership development theory within the field of leadership, we believe our discussion extends prior work (Henderson & Hoy, 1983; Hoy & Henderson, 1983; Seeman, 1960, 1966) into some new and interesting domains of inquiry. For example, Luthans and Avolio (2003) make a concerted effort to integrate models emerging in the field of positive psychology including hope, resiliency and optimism (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Snyder & Lopez, 2002), positive organizational behavior (Luthans, 2002a, 2002b), transformational/full-range leadership theory (Avolio, 1999, 2003; Bass, 1985, 1998), and ethical and moral perspective-taking (Schulman, 2002), to broaden what constituted an emerging theory of authentic leadership development. Moreover, focusing on the root construct of authentic leadership at this point in the evolution of leadership theory is particularly promising because doing so may potentially enrich our understanding of more specific forms of leadership. For instance, we believe the effectiveness of participative, achievement-oriented, transactional, supportive and other forms of leadership are likely enhanced if the leader's actions are genuine and focused on the development of the self and others.

## 5.4. Relational aspects of leadership

We pointed out that authenticity, by definition, involves being true to oneself, not others. When the focus shifts to authentic leadership, however, it shifts to the leader's relations with others because all leadership is relational at its core as expressed by the various authors in this special issue. Hence, we and

the other contributors to this special issue have emphasized the relational nature of authentic leadership, and focused on the development of authentic relationships, which is a core component process in authentic leadership development.

## 5.5. Dynamic and processual approach

As the model of authentic leader and authentic follower development presented in our lead article (Gardner et al., 2005) indicates, we view authentic leadership, authentic followership, and their development as inherently dynamic processes. The other contributors to this special issue have likewise focused attention on the dynamic and evolving nature of authentic relationships between leaders and followers. For instance, the narrative perspective on the authentic self proposed by Sparrowe (2005) and the life stories approach to authentic leader development presented by Shamir and Eilam (2005) both emphasize the dynamic process whereby leaders use narrative to achieve authenticity. Similarly, Ilies et al. (2005) describe the dynamic processes whereby authentic leaders promote follower-well being, while Michie and Gooty (2005) discuss the dynamic interplay between self-transcendent values, positive other-directed emotions, and authentic leadership. Eagly (2005) describes dynamic forces, including gender and leader role requirements, that may interact to impede the efforts of female leaders and other "outsiders" to achieve authenticity, and in so doing, also includes the organizational and larger societal context.

## 5.6. Level of analysis and temporality

From the outset, we have viewed authentic leadership as operating at multiple levels of analysis, including the individual, dyad, group and organizational levels (Dansereau & Yammarino, 1998; Dansereau, Yammarino, & Markham, 1995; Klein, Dansereau, & Hall, 1994). Nevertheless, as Cooper et al. (2005) warn, ambiguity remains about the levels at which authentic leadership and its development operates, as well as the cross-level effects from the individual, to the group, to the organizational level that are implicit in our model. The contributions to this special issue provide some insight in this regard. For example, the emotional contagion effects described by Ilies et al. (2005) help to clarify how the effects of authentic leadership can spread from the dyad to group and organizational levels.

We have also included a temporal component as we focus on the contributions of authentic leadership to *sustainable* performance. Many questions remain, however, such as the timing and nature of trigger events (planned and unplanned) that contribute to the development of authentic leadership, the immediacy and duration of its effects, and the rapidity and extent to which subsequent inauthentic leader actions can undermine prior positive effects. Emerging perspectives for studying the role of temporality in organizational research (Barkema, Baum, & Mannix, 2002; Dansereau, Yammarino, & Kohles, 1999; Goodman, Ancona, Lawrence, & Tushman, 2001; Ropo & Hunt, 1999) offer potential theoretical and methodological guidance for answering these questions.

## 6. Conclusions and implications for future research

We have reviewed and extended an emerging perspective on authentic leadership development and performance that helps to explain the underlying processes and factors by which authentic leaders and

their followers can positively impact sustained performance. In doing so, we believe the perspective advanced makes several important contributions and suggests additional directions for future theory building and research.

First, our review suggests the need for research on the relationship between authentic leadership and the levels of self-awareness of leaders and followers. For example, can authentic leaders singularly (or simultaneously) activate and contribute to the enhancement of themselves and the "selves" representing followers, and then to what extent do they jointly (and/or independently) contribute to sustained performance? Second, future research is needed to assess the direct effect of the leader's positive psychological capital (e.g., hope, resiliency, and optimism) on followers and their mediating effects on sustained performance.

Third, our review suggests that it would be beneficial to conduct research on whether positive organizational contextual variables such as an inclusive and engaged culture/climate have a direct effect on followers and moderating effects on the authentic leadership-sustained performance relationship. For example, we suggest that while authentic leadership can help develop and shape a strength-based organization, it is also possible that the relationship between authentic leadership and sustained performance is moderated and shaped by the organizational context. By strength-based organizations we mean organizations that emphasize the importance of selecting and placing individuals in positions that provide them with daily opportunities to work within their areas of strength, and focus growth and development around objectively assessed talents (Buckingham & Coffman, 1999).

In sum, we believe that the emerging literature in this area, including the articles appearing in this special issue, have considerable potential for explaining how authentic leadership and its development can relate to sustainable performance. We believe that continued theory building and systematic testing of the propositions advanced in this special issue will enhance the understanding, prediction, and application of the positive impact that authentic leadership development can have on meeting today's and tomorrow's challenges of meaningful sustainable performance. Yet, if authentic leadership over time is shown as simply highlighting the processes nested in more traditional models of leadership such as ethical or transformational, then emerging theory in this area would have served to enhance the importance of self-awareness in explaining the highest forms and impact of leadership on sustained, veritable performance.

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