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## The Leadership Quarterly

Volume 13, Issue 4, August 2002, Pages 423-451

### Distributed leadership as a unit of analysis

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[https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843\(02\)00120-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1048-9843(02)00120-0)

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#### Abstract

This article proposes a new unit of analysis in the study of leadership. As an alternative to the current focus, which is primarily on the deeds of individual leaders, the article proposes distributed leadership. The article shows how conventional constructs of leadership have difficulty accommodating changes in the division of labor in the workplace, especially, new patterns of interdependence and coordination which have given rise to distributed practice. A number of forms of distributed leadership are then outlined, in particular, three varieties of concertive action in which a key defining criterion is conjoint agency. These forms provide the basis for a taxonomy of distributed leadership and a review of examples in the literature. The article concludes with a consideration of some implications of the adoption of a revised unit of analysis, particularly for recent work on levels of analysis and for future research into leadership as a process.



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A much earlier version of this article was presented as a paper to the Organisation Theory Special Interest Group at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Montreal, Canada, April 1999. The author wishes to thank Alan Bryman, Peter Ribbins, Graham Sewell, and two anonymous *LQ* reviewers for their helpful comments in reworking the original manuscript.

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