# 1. Introduction on leadership and turbulence

**Harry Garretsen and Janka I. Stoker**

## WHAT THE BOOK IS ABOUT

These are turbulent times, and in order to deal with them, this book argues that effective leadership is crucial. The world is allegedly changing rapidly, and uncertainty about the future is omnipresent. After the COVID-19 pandemic had just about ended, a war broke out in Europe and the Middle East. Meanwhile, in a climate of increasing economic and political fragmentation, the list of major challenges was already quite long. The challenges facing both societies and individual organizations regarding climate change, healthcare, aging, migration, diversity, or structural scarcity of labor and other resources are not only numerous, but seem unprecedented as well. Moreover, these crises and challenges are interdependent and can reinforce each other; a situation of turbulence that the historian Adam Tooze[1] defined as a *polycrisis* (Tooze, 2022). The idea that the world is currently facing a prolonged polycrisis is not just some abstract academic concept, but it already informs and guides what decision-makers and policymakers are doing (World Bank, 2024).

Following Northouse (2021), we see leadership as a "process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal" (p. 43).[2] Abundant research has shown that effective leadership depends on the context (see, for an overview, Oc, 2018). In this book, this context is the increased turbulence. The main presumption of our book is that especially in such turbulent times, there is a strong need for effective leadership that provides a way forward. Moreover, such a context gives leaders high levels of managerial discretion—the range of actions and choices available to a decision-maker within a specific context (Hambrick & Finkelstein, 1987)—to make strategic choices (Haleblian & Finkelstein, 1993). Thus, turbulence also enables leaders to exert more influence.

At the same time, crises and the lack of progress with transitional changes are—at least partly—also caused by inadequate leadership or dysfunctional



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leaders. Deficient leadership has strong effects, such as the fact that overall trust in leaders is declining. In their yearly barometer, Edelman (2024) concludes that in 2024, 63% of the 32,000 respondents from 28 countries worry that their government leaders are "purposely trying to mislead people by saying things they know are false or gross exaggerations," and 61% have the same worry for business leaders. In the US, only 23% of the respondents strongly agree with the statement that they trust the leadership of their organization (Gallup, 2024). In the EU countries, trust in national institutions and leaders is also subject to erosion, not to mention trust in the EU itself, aka "Brussels" (Eurofound, 2023). Or, as a final example, the OECD (2024) demonstrates across 30 OECD countries in 2023 that no or low trust in government outweighs trust. Trust in leaders and institutions is important because it can be seen as the "lubricating oil" on which an organization or country runs: it is important for individual and group performance, organizational change, entrepreneurship, strategic alliances, economic growth, and even for national health (Fulmer & Gelfand, 2012). At the same time, trust in leaders is a fragile gem that breaks easily and, once lost, is difficult to regain. Research shows that restoring trust is mainly influenced by leadership behaviors (Sitkin & Roth, 1993). This finding foreshadows what will turn out to be an overarching theme for the whole book: when it comes down to the question of whether and how leaders can effectively deal with turbulent times, we will time and again see that the answer boils down to their behaviors.

So, leaders matter, but certainly not only for the better! The turbulent times make clear that for leaders, a "business as usual" attitude, where the future is not really different from the past, will no longer do. Dealing with turbulence requires leaders to explore and take truly new directions, which necessitates structural adjustments and fundamental change. At the same time, they also need to ensure that their organizations keep performing in the here and now. Additionally, they have to cater to the needs of followers who experience uncertainty and look for leadership. Without effective leaders and leadership, societies and organizations will not be able to adjust to turbulence, nor grasp the opportunities to which turbulence also gives rise.

This book is not merely about the "doom and gloom" of leading in turbulent times. On the contrary, based on a wealth of academic research, our book will offer insights and tools that help understand what turbulence does to leaders and their organizations, and crucially also what kind of leadership is effective in times of turbulent change. Leaders do not need to be mere bystanders to the turbulence with which they are confronted. Effective leadership in turbulent times is very much about actively using turbulent change for the better.

Although not all forms of turbulence apply equally to every leader, whether it concerns a political leader of a nation, the CEO of a large firm, or a middle manager in a private or public organization, turbulent change affects them

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all. How to deal with geopolitical fragmentation and associated risks keeps political leaders busier than the proverbial shop manager. Similarly, how swift technological change might disrupt the business and organizational model of an organization is not something that political leaders fret about on a daily basis. Our book aims to cover all of the above and thereby to give insights into how to effectively deal with turbulence irrespective of the type of leadership position, organization, or the particular kind of turbulence that leaders and their organizations face.

## A Disclaimer: The "Everything Always Changes" Illusion

People always tend to think that the times in which they live are truly unique, and that their current context stands between an outdated past and an as-yet-unknown but somehow radically different future. Futurologists and management gurus are only too happy to sell us the message that "everything will be different this time!" According to them, we permanently live in unprecedentedly turbulent times. Whether it concerns matters as diverse as labor relations, healthcare, energy supply, (geo)politics, or ordering a plumber or a taxi, nothing will be the same in a few years. But the prediction that we live in truly special times, with the present squeezed between an outdated history and a completely different future, can always be heard; each individual sees themselves as a crucial and unique pivot point between present, past, and future.

The world is undoubtedly changing, but research shows that we typically tend to give insufficient weight to the lessons that our own history offers. Moreover, we conclude too quickly that everything will change and will thus be different from now on. The tendency to forget history and to overestimate change is remarkably associated with an underestimation of future changes when it comes to one's own individual position. This has been coined as "the end of history illusion" (Quoidbach et al., 2013). In a survey of more than 19,000 people in the age category of 18–68 years, a wealth of information was collected about individual preferences, values and preferences. The central question was to what extent people themselves had changed or expected to change compared to the past ten years and the next ten years. The most important finding was that most people, regardless of their age, indicated that they: (1) had changed a lot in the past ten years; and (2) expected little change in the future. By the time of interrogation, everyone had already become the person they would remain for the rest of their lives. While this may hold on an individual level, the belief that both young and old share this view is difficult to reconcile; it also reflects a somewhat ahistorical perspective on their own existence. After all, it is a perspective in which changes lie exclusively in the past, and the future is only a continuation of the "present me": "Both teenagers and grandparents seem to believe that the pace of personal change has come

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to a crawl and that they have recently become the people they will remain. History, it seems, is always ending today" (Quoidbach et al., 2013, p. 98). The underestimation of change when it concerns your own position and life is paradoxically accompanied by the same tendency to largely overestimate the structural or contextual changes in the outside world.

## Point Taken, But Do We Then Live in Unprecedented Times?

As stated above, the occurrence of crises is far from new. Therefore, we first need to establish that we are indeed living in turbulent times. Wars, pandemics, economic recessions, political upheaval, or revolutions are not a twenty-first-century invention, far from it. The same goes for large-scale demographic, technological, or economic changes that affect the way people work and live and how organizations function; just think of the way in which societies and organizations were transformed during the first Industrial Revolution in the second half of the nineteenth century. Or, think about the way in which modern communication technology has changed the way we live and work since the mass use of the internet and mobile phones, or how the rise of AI is changing how we collect and digest information (and write books). A historical lens helps to put the current degree of turbulence into perspective. As the historian Peter Frankopan aptly states:

> History can help provide a context, then, that sobers up the wilder claims made by excitable commentators of where a world in flux is or may be headed. In that sense, one might reasonably suggest that while references to the past can be useful, they might not be considered helpful for hyperbole and hype. But those who lived in previous decades, centuries and millennia lived through crises, and polycrises, that were at least as bad, and in many cases were far worse.
>
> (Frankopan, 2025, p. 252)

Nevertheless, as we will argue throughout the book, our current era of turbulence is special, not so much for the individual turbulence ingredients per se, but for the simultaneity of its speed, scale, and simultaneity. This is why Tooze (2022) has coined our current turbulent era as a polycrisis, where multiple (potential) crises and shocks interact and reinforce each other and where the turbulence is visible at multiple levels at the same time, globally but also within countries and organizations. In Chapter 2, Sjoerd Beugelsdijk will identify five specific and interlocking concurrent challenges that constitute our turbulent era, which together call for action from both political and organizational leaders.

To illustrate and substantiate the idea that we live in a turbulent era, Figure 1.1 shows the World Uncertainty Index for the period 1990–2024. This index has been initially developed (see, for details, Ahir, Bloom & Furcery, 2022) by

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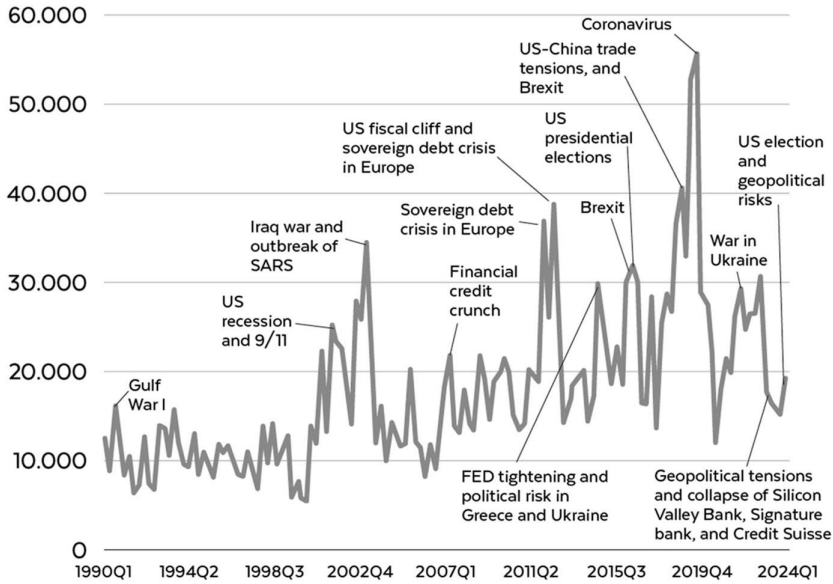


*Note:* The WUI is computed by counting the percentage of the word "uncertain" (or its variant) in the Economist Intelligence Unit country reports. The WUI is then rescaled by multiplying by 1,000,000. A higher number means higher uncertainty and vice versa. For example, an index of 200 corresponds to the word uncertainty accounting for 0.02% of all words, which—given the EIU reports are on average about 10,000 words long—means about 2 words per report. Source: https://worlduncertaintyindex.com/data/; see also: https://www.nber.org/papers/w29763 (=NBER WP 29763, Ahir, Bloom & Furceri, 2022).
*Source:* https://worlduncertaintyindex.com/data/.

*Figure 1.1 The World Uncertainty Index*

making use of the country reports produced by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).[3] Counting the percentage of the word "uncertain" (or its variant) in these reports, an individual country score is given over time; by weighing the country scores against their respective GDPs, one arrives at the World Uncertainty Index shown by Figure 1.1. Two findings are relevant for our book. The first one is that the average level of the World Uncertainty Index has clearly increased over time. The second one is that in the 30+ year period since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the entry of China into the global economy around 1990, we see increases in the frequency of spikes or episodes of heightened uncertainty. Taken together, the Uncertainty Index supports the notion that we currently live in relatively turbulent times.

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Though the terminology differs somewhat, be it polycrisis, global challenges (see Chapter 2), or a "confluence of crisis" (see Chapter 10), and also discounting the idea that only "our own times" are truly special, the evidence presented throughout the book does justify the idea (visualized by Figure 1.1) that we are indeed witnessing a turbulent era. That said, buying into the notion of a "turbulent era" is a necessary but not sufficient condition for writing our book. The other leg of the book is that leadership matters when the context changes, as in our change-ridden, turbulent era. When we say that leadership matters, the basic assumption is that leadership can be a force for good. That is to say, effective leadership helps deal with turbulence in a way that makes societies, organizations, and individuals better off. Indeed, as we will show using state-of-the-art academic research and real-world examples, we know quite well both the "what" and the "how" aspects of effective leadership and what effective ways there are to deal with turbulence. At the same time, there is nothing intrinsically "good" about leaders or leadership. On the contrary, as will become (painfully) clear in various chapters, leaders can also have rather detrimental effects on societies, organizations, and individuals. Stronger still, think about the recent rise of authoritarian or outright autocratic leaders in many countries (Applebaum, 2024; Repucci & Slipowitz, 2021), it can be argued that "bad" leadership often implies increased turbulence and vice versa.

Up till now, in this introductory chapter, we have referred to turbulence and leadership at the societal as well as the organizational level. The distinction matters because the type of turbulence and the possible leadership implications differ substantially between these levels. As will be explained in Part I of the book, turbulence at the societal level is often more fuzzy and carries more uncertainty than turbulence at the organizational level, where changes are typically (but not always) more demarcated and surrounded by less uncertainty. To give some examples at the societal level: with the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, a main or even the dominant task for national political leaders was to reduce uncertainty. Similarly, when confronted with the invasion by Russia in February 2022, a key "overnight" priority for the political leadership in Ukraine and other (central) European countries was to reduce the uncertainty of its citizens by showing a credible way forward so as to protect their livelihood.

This is not to say that fundamental uncertainty does not play out at the organizational level, but it is a matter of degree. Take, for instance, the meteoric rise of the use of AI in organizations. What AI will imply for the future of work is also still clouded by uncertainty (see Chapter 5), but, when compared to outright wars or pandemics, such technological developments are far less of an immediate existential nature. This is not to say that the rise of AI or the rise of hybrid working will not be fundamental or invasive for many leaders

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or managers and their followers. Our main point is that turbulence plays out differently at different (societal and organizational) levels and consequently, the potential leadership or managerial implications are also different. Political leadership at the societal level is able to look upon turbulence not only as a given but also as something that can (at least partly) be shaped or influenced by their own leadership behaviors and decisions. At that level, turbulence is less of an exogenous factor than it is for individual organizations, where turbulence—particularly in the organization's external environment—is often simply a reality that leaders must respond to or adapt to. In order to structure the relationship between leadership and turbulence, we offer a framework in which we combine the multi-level feature (societal versus organizational) with the "scale and scope" feature of turbulence.

## A BASIC FRAMEWORK FOR TURBULENCE

Based on a large literature in the physical and social sciences, turbulence can be defined as "a condition of dynamic, unexpected, interacting change" (Ansell & Trondal, 2018). This definition not only applies to physical phenomena such as weather systems, but also to social phenomena, such as how societies and organizations are impacted by turbulent change.[4] Building on, for instance, the public governance literature (see, e.g., Ansell et al., 2024; Ansell & Trondal, 2018), turbulence can be seen as a multi-faceted phenomenon characterized by three dimensions. The first is that the changes are *dynamic* or temporal; they unfold over time and often at a differentiated speed in an unexpected, highly non-linear manner. Second, from a societal or organizational perspective, various key resources are *shifting*; once-stable relationships between certain variables are undergoing a fundamental and often unexpected change. This shifting can refer to changes in institutions, as well as interactions between and within organizations. The third dimension is the *interconnectedness* of the changes, between institutions and organizations, but also between the shifting parameters themselves. For example, the way a crisis (such as COVID-19) or the sudden rise of AI is managed by the national government significantly affects how these forms of turbulence impact individual organizations. Conversely, how individual organizations respond to such turbulence also influences the challenges national institutions face. Within organizations, shifting preferences around work–life balance or organizational goals (such as sustainability) are interconnected with technological advancements (which enable new ways of organizing work) and the need for, or external pressure on, organizations to change their resource usage.

Crucially, turbulence can differ in severity and magnitude. At one extreme, there are large-scale crises (such as wars, pandemics, climate change) as turbulence manifestations. These events pose an existential threat and are

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accompanied by fundamental uncertainty; "we" (society/institutions/organizations) are in uncharted waters and leaders have to act in the face of insufficient information or even no information at all. At the other end of this axis, turbulence is still fundamental or systemic but does not pose an outright existential threat. The notion of turbulence thus overlaps with the phenomenon of a crisis, but is more general and not confined to crises/existential threats only (see again Ansell et al., 2024). Based on this, the first element of our framework is labeled as "the scale and scope" of turbulence. This is an axis or continuum that goes from "low turbulence"—think of the potentially far-reaching but more gradual changes brought upon by technological changes—to "high turbulence"—think existential crises/threats like a war or pandemic. A situation of high "scale and scope" of turbulence thus refers to a situation where turbulence is not limited to a few organizations or people but potentially affects everything and everyone (=scale), and it does so across various diverse mechanisms and channels (=scope).

In economics and in management sciences, the idea that organizations can grow or change over time by scale or scope is well established (see, e.g., Chandler, 1990). Scale often refers to the question of whether a certain rise in the inputs in the production process of an organization gives rise to more than a proportionate rise in production. If so, the organization becomes more efficient because average costs decrease. Scope refers to the possibility that, with the same level of inputs, via the production of a more diverse range of outputs, average costs could also fall. Translated into the concept of turbulence, the scale of turbulence is then about the size or magnitude of the change: what would happen to society or organizations in terms of outcomes like production, employment, employee well-being, etc., if one would double the "size" of a pandemic, war, corporate scandal, or whatever particular turbulent change and its consequences one is interested in. Similarly, the scope of turbulence is about the ways a *given* amount of turbulence can play out differently for societies and organizations if the channels through which turbulence impacts are allowed to vary. Any given turbulent change, say a pandemic, can play out differently at various organizational and societal levels, depending on how the pandemic interacts with whether and how people (are allowed to) interact in their work or private lives in the wake of the pandemic.

The second element of our framework runs from the organizational to the societal level and can also be seen as an axis, with the low organizational aggregation level referring to individual organizations or even units (teams) within organizations, and the high societal level referring to the national or international level. At the level of the individual organization, be it public or private, many aspects of turbulence are external or given and hence beyond their (leaders') direct control or sphere of influence. Within organizations, the organization of work (e.g., the rise of hybrid working) or the production

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process more widely (e.g., the use of AI or a switch to more sustainable business models) can be seen as cases of dynamic and often unexpected change, but they are quite far removed from the acute crises and fundamental uncertainties that exist at the societal level. Here, turbulence is less of a given and the national governments and political leaders have more agency to shape or co-determine turbulence itself and the strategies to deal with its outcome or consequences. The two elements of our framework and turbulence manifestations are visualized in Figure 1.2 below.

The horizontal axis gives *the "scale and scope"* of turbulence, ranging from fundamental or systemic change to crises or threats. The vertical axis gives the *aggregation level* of turbulence. In Figure 1.2, we give two examples of turbulence manifestations to illustrate how one could position them in terms of their "scale and scope" and the aggregation level. A war or pandemic is categorized as "high–high": a threat with high levels of "scale and scope," at a high aggregation level. Such a threat can also have implications at lower aggregation levels, namely at the organizational level. For example, in the case of a pandemic, there are severe consequences for how work in organizations can be done, such as an increase in working from home (WFH). As a second example, at a lower level of "scale and scope," the development of AI can severely impact the labor market at the societal level. At the organizational level, this

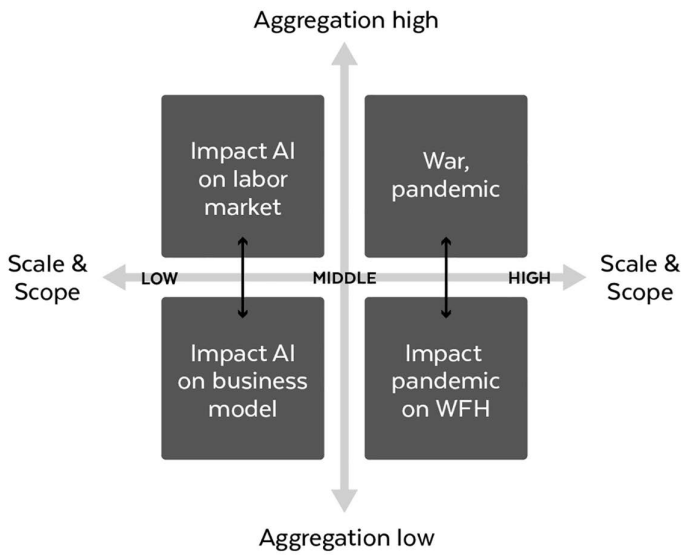


*Figure 1.2 Framework for turbulence*

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same AI development can lead to fundamental changes in the business model, which is a "low–low" example.

Note that the events in both examples are also interrelated (see the black vertical arrows), which indicates that thinking about turbulence typically calls for a multi-level perspective. Moreover, one can easily think of ways in which changes are interconnected along the "scale and scope" axis. A pandemic like the COVID-19 crisis can reshape the use of technology at both societal and organizational levels, influencing how work is organized (e.g., encouraging hybrid work models). Conversely, the rise of hybrid working enhanced by new technologies may change how a crisis threat like a pandemic impacts society or organizations (e.g., more working from home, less commuting, and consequently fewer human interactions). Next to interrelatedness, the dynamic nature and the "shifting" parameters are, as we argued above, also two other important dimensions of turbulence. The dynamic nature refers to the fact that turbulent change by definition plays out over time. Depending on the type of turbulence, the change may be quite abrupt (a war), non-linear and disruptive (rise of AI), or more gradual (energy transition) (Ansell et al., 2024; Ansell & Trondal, 2018).

As with all simple frameworks, not all nuances—in our case of turbulent change—can be covered. But as the reader will hopefully discover, the framework does provide a useful analyzing tool for the rest of the book. The primary aim of this book is not to analyze turbulence itself, but rather to examine the implications of our turbulent era for leadership. Finally, there are two important characteristics with respect to the use of our framework. First, we will focus mainly on the "high/high" and the "low/low" situations of turbulence. That is to say, we will primarily (but not exclusively) discuss the (societal) leadership implications of high "scale and scope" turbulent changes for societies (the upper right quadrant of Figure 1.2) as well as the (organizational or business unit) leadership implications for examples of turbulence of relatively low "scale and scope" levels (the lower left quadrant of Figure 1.2). We do so because, in terms of value added, some of the most relevant and pressing leadership implications of our turbulent era play out in these two areas. Moreover, although turbulent change at high levels of "scale and scope" is also important at lower aggregation levels (the organizational level), this area of "high–low" turbulence has already been quite well and extensively covered by other scholars and researchers in strategic management and innovation studies (Ross et al., 2023; Zaccaro et al., 2018). Similarly, situations of low "scale and scope" turbulence combined with high aggregation levels are, for example, situations where technological change affects national labor market policies (Autor, 2022; Bürgisser, 2023), or where environmental and sustainability challenges have consequences for urban and regional infrastructure plans and policies (Ahad et al., 2020; Ferrer et al., 2018). Such "low–high" cases are already the

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domain of a vast amount of (applied) research in economics and other social sciences like geography or public administration. We feel that our comparative advantage as leadership scholars especially lies with the "high–high" and "low–low" cases.

Second, throughout the book, the focus lies quite heavily on the "threat" aspect of turbulence because, as our book will make clear, many features of our turbulent era are first and foremost perceived as threats by leaders and their followers. However, it's important to recognize that turbulence can also create opportunities (Chattopadhyay et al., 2001). At the societal level, a crisis like a war or a pandemic may make it easier for (new) leaders to change a country's institutions for the better if the institutions were dominated by vested interests; as such, a systemic shock or crisis can create an opportunity for more effective leadership that breaks the institutional deadlock of those in power (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2012). At the organizational level, a crisis may also create opportunities. Climate change can, for instance, rightly be seen as a global crisis in the making, but for the leadership of organizations with a strategy aimed at dealing with climate change to begin with, the transition toward a more sustainable business model is an opportunity to prosper (Bocken et al., 2014). So, please keep in mind that crises or turbulence need not be associated with threats only, since they also bring opportunities for more effective leadership and for leaders to deal with the consequences of such events (Hernes et al., 2024).

## POSITIONING THE BOOK: WHAT THE BOOK IS NOT ABOUT

The book covers a lot of ground. We will examine the relevance of turbulent change—our primary contextual variable—for leadership across multiple levels, covering a broad range of topics and drawing from various disciplines. When it comes to levels, every chapter will offer examples and research to back up the analysis from a micro and macro level (and anything in between). This means that we will sometimes deal with the relationship between turbulence and leadership from the perspective of the individual leader only, whereas in other cases we will be mainly concerned with this relationship at a much higher level of aggregation, like the way turbulence affects the workings of a national political system and its leadership. In the same way, the selection of topics is guided by the question of whether discussing a particular subject will help the reader understand the interaction between turbulence and leadership and what insights current academic research provides in this regard. Finally, we draw on research that stems from various (sub)disciplines, notably leadership research but also topical research from the fields of management, economics, psychology, political science, and public administration.

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But… we can't cover everything. The key factor in deciding what to include and what to leave out for the book was whether particular topics and the underlying research help to build an overarching and systematic narrative about the various ways that turbulence and leadership are connected. The selection of particular topics and research is ours, and very much in the service of the book as a whole. This also means that for every topic and research introduced and discussed, there is invariably a lot of research that could not be mentioned or included. This is not only done for the sake of brevity but, more importantly, because our goal is not to offer full-fledged reviews of a particular field or research area. We will introduce the basics of certain research areas or sub-fields, but in each and every case, there is undoubtedly more that can be said. Where available, we will direct interested readers to comprehensive reviews or meta-analyses. This disclaimer holds, in particular, for Part I of the book (Chapters 2–6), where we will pick and choose from a range of topics and research disciplines to build a larger picture of what effective leadership entails in our turbulent era. In doing so, we will thus deliberately be selective.

## OUTLINE OF THE BOOK

The book consists of two parts. In Part I, we set the scene for the linkage between turbulent times and leadership by offering three building blocks or sources of evidence. These building blocks lead to an extended version of our framework for turbulence (see Figure 1.3).

The *first building block*, covered mainly in Chapter 2 (by Sjoerd Beugelsdijk), deals with the important challenges or drivers of the turbulent era in which we find ourselves nowadays. Many of these drivers are external and simply given for an individual organization or even society at large. Changes in the globalization narrative, geopolitical shifts, demographic changes, changes in cultural norms and values, increased sustainability demands, or the arrival of new technologies, separately and simultaneously, provide fundamental challenges for organizations and their leaders.

Against this background, the leadership implications of turbulence constitute the *second and third building blocks* of Part I (written by the book's editors). In Chapters 3 and 4, we discuss how leaders (and their followers) are affected by the turbulent times to which these challenges give rise. In model terms, these chapters examine leadership as the *outcome* variable, with turbulence as the primary explanatory variable. In Chapter 3, we focus on the effects of crises and also on systemic changes on leaders at both the managerial and political levels. In Chapter 4, we explain how turbulence creates a seductive call for "new" leaders—and why this call is often misleading. In Chapters 5 and 6, the tables are turned because in these chapters, (dealing with) turbulence is the dependent variable and leadership converts into the antecedent by

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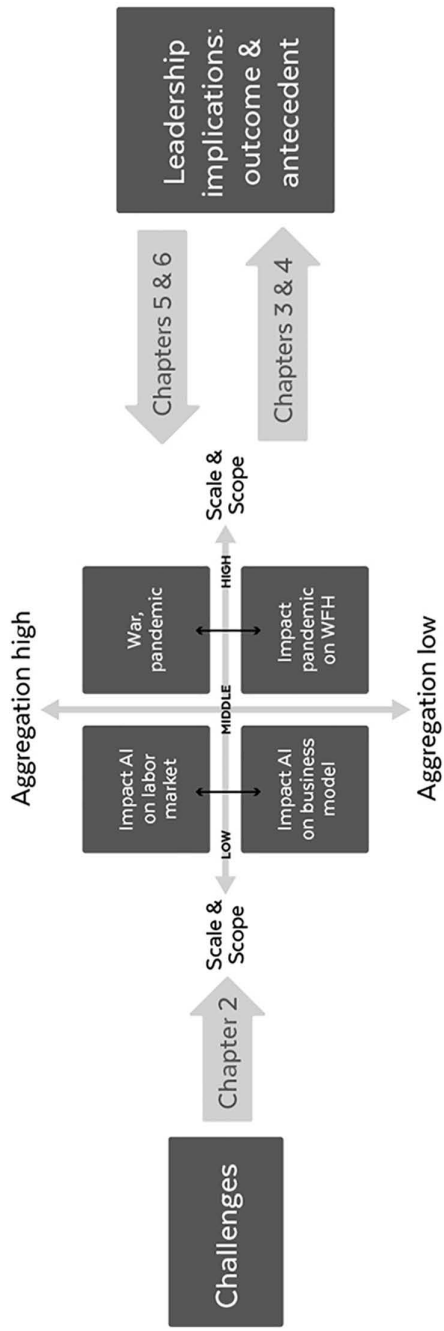


*Figure 1.3 Framework for turbulence and leadership implications*

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examining how both political and organizational leadership can effectively address and navigate periods of turbulence. Chapter 5 discusses the "what and how" of effective leadership in turbulent times. In Chapter 6, we explain why organizations, and leaders more specifically, find it so difficult to change their leadership.

Based on the findings in Chapters 2–6, Chapter 7 summarizes ten main leadership implications and, based on those implications, provides five pieces of specific leadership advice. Each of these pieces of advice will be a starting point for the five subsequent chapters in Part II of the book (Chapters 8–12). As editors of the book, we invited academic experts on each of our five specific pieces of leadership advice to explain and clarify how this advice plays out, based on, and partly on their own, state-of-the-art research.

In Chapter 8, *Arjen Van Witteloostuijn* explains how institutions and organizations can be prepared for turbulence by showing ambidextrous behavior, aided by also creating resilience and slack and having effective leadership. Chapter 9 by *Jill W. Paine* and *Sara Soderstrom* covers the topic of vision. The authors describe why it is important to develop a change narrative for political and organizational leaders and what a change vision in turbulent times could entail. This chapter is followed by Chapter 10 on how leaders communicate the change narrative. Here, *Benedikt E. Kratzer* and *Rolf Van Dick* argue that "identity leadership" is crucial in turbulent times. In Chapter 11, *Susan Ashford* and *Katleen De Stobbeleir* explain which mindsets and practices can stimulate leader development in turbulent times. The final chapter of Part II, written by *Sarosh Asad*, covers the topic of power balance. Here, we learn that having the right power balance is a prerequisite for effective leadership in turbulent times. The book ends with a concluding chapter. In this chapter, we use and synthesize the lessons from Part II to extend and finalize our framework for turbulence and leadership.

## TO CONCLUDE: WHAT CAN READERS LEARN FROM THE BOOK

Obviously, as editors, we have inside information on the remainder of the book, but the five takeaways below are what we hope readers will get out of our book:

1. *Understanding the two-way linkage between leadership and turbulence*: The book defines turbulence as a multi-level phenomenon affecting both societies and organizations, where crises interact and amplify uncertainty. It explains how turbulence affects (the need for) leadership, but crucially also what leaders can do to effectively deal with turbulence.

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2. *Debunking common leadership myths*: Readers will explore numerous illusions when it comes to the role and relevance of leadership in turbulent times, such as the stereotype of the strong leader needed in such uncertain circumstances.
3. *Framework for turbulent contexts*: A foundational framework helps readers differentiate turbulence by scale, scope, and level of impact, covering existential threats (e.g., wars) and systemic, gradual shifts (e.g., technological changes).
4. *Leadership strategies in turbulent times*: Through research and real-world examples, the book offers insights into the behaviors, mindsets, and practices effective leaders need during simultaneous crises, or more generally, turbulent times. It includes guidance on adaptive leadership styles that foster resilience, identity, and vision in turbulent contexts.
5. *A dual approach for theory and practice*: Academic research underpins practical advice for navigating crises and leading organizational change, making the book valuable for scholars and practitioners alike.

Before we start with Chapter 2, we close this introductory chapter with the words of John F. Kennedy, who was president of the US from 1961 to the end of 1963, at the height of the Cold War—truly extremely uncertain times. His inaugural speech, where he spoke the renowned sentence "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country," is widely regarded as a clear example of what leadership in a turbulent era entails.[5] But the speeches of Kennedy have more insights about leadership to offer, such as the following quote from the speech that he was supposed to deliver in Dallas on November 22, 1963, the day he was murdered. However, the content of the speech to the annual meeting of the Dallas Citizens Council has been preserved. This speech stressed the importance of learning for leaders because "[l]eadership and learning are indispensable to each other."[6] Leadership is not innate and it is not a gift, but one can and, in turbulent times, must learn leadership—which is exactly why we wrote this book.

## NOTES

1. https://adamtooze.substack.com/p/chartbook-130-defining-polycrisis.
2. One can fill a quite sizeable library with different definitions of leadership, including the discussion of how management is different from leadership, and whether leaders and managers are fundamentally different species (e.g., Bennis, 1989). Our book is not about this debate, but we follow Henry Mintzberg, who proposes to "end the belief that leadership is separate from management, and superior to it." Leadership is not something that can be separated from

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management, and it is certainly also not of a higher rank per se. Throughout our book, "leadership" does not only refer to visionary or inspiring leaders but certainly also to the more down-to-earth managers who have to make sure that their organization is able to perform amidst turbulent change. We will therefore use the words leaders and managers interchangeably.

3. The EIU is a division of The Economist Newspaper Group (see www.eiu.com /n/) and it, inter alia, produces country reports on the economic-political state of affairs and outlook for more than 140 countries.
4. For more literature about what crisis and, in particular, turbulence means for management/leadership, see also the useful work of: Karim et al. (2016); James and Wooten (2005); Paine et al. (2024); and Ford et al. (2021). This work will also be covered in Part II of the book.
5. www.ushistory.org/documents/ask-not.htm.
6. Kennedy's full speech is worth reading, if only for the following part of his text: "In a world of complex and continuing problems, in a world full of frustrations and irritations, America's leadership must be guided by the lights of learning and reason or else those who confuse rhetoric with reality and the plausible with the possible will gain the popular ascendancy with their apparently swift and simple solutions to every world problem." For the full speech, see, www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/dallas-tx-trade-mart-undelivered-19631122.

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