

Inter-leadership: Why and How Should We Think of Leadership and Followership Integrally?

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Abstract *This article raises questions about and provides meta-paradigmatic perspectives on an integral understanding of leadership. In view of the various shortcomings of conventional leadership discourse, an integral orientation considers that leadership research demands a comprehensive framework and multi-level approach suited for investigating the complex, interrelated processes involved. Correspondingly, the outlined integral framework of leadership covers the interdependent subjective, intersubjective and objective dimensions of leaders and leadership. Furthermore, developmental levels and lines – classified in a dynamic cycle – open up a processual understanding of leadership. Finally, theoretical and methodological implications are discussed and some avenues for future research and perspectives of integral leadership presented.*

Keywords *integral leadership; leadership discourse; leadership theory; meta-paradigm; multi-level model*

Introduction: Why think about leadership in an integral way?

The present context of leadership is situated in increasingly complex, uncertain and dynamic business environments with multiple, demanding realities based on various value systems and priorities. Different internal and external conditions, change processes and increasing pressures bring about new exigencies, modified roles and tasks as well as further challenging demands on leaders, followers and leadership. Additional specific factors, such as the rise of corporate crises and scandals, corporate frauds for example, and a growing stakeholder awareness of environmental, social and ethical issues, manifest a heightened uneasiness, inadequacies and the wish for another kind of more responsive and responsible leadership (Küpers, 2008; Mangham, 2004; Mitroff, 2003). With this there emerges an urgent need to expand and advance leadership concepts, methods, and the understanding of leading and following as such (Bass, 1985, 1990; Collinson & Grint, 2005; Offerman, 2004; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Yukl, 2006). This reorientation becomes more

requisite as prevailing leadership approaches seem to be bound to isolated or mutually exclusive paradigms or model parameters, and apparently lack a more inclusive orientation and enfoldment of leadership. Thus, leadership studies require different openings and discursive extensions (Barker, 2001; Rost, 1991; Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005) and even more so in our view a paradigmatic change of perspectives.

Metaphorically speaking, as a theoretical construction, the 'ship' of leadership studies might be characterized by highly differentiated but dismembered compartmentalization and specialization. From a meta-theoretical perspective we can see a dominant fragmentation that is bound to particularized but guiding assumptions and orientations. All this often results in a kind of sectarianism where the various schools and paradigms of leadership theory continue to live in their separate rooms or cabins of the ship and do not communicate synergistically with each other. But, in what direction is this 'ship' travelling, what course is it following and in which way is it serving what ends and for whom? Or do we perhaps need to think not only about one big ship but also about many smaller boats following their own singular passages? But, if so, then how would they be co-ordinated or interrelated?

As a general discourse, leadership research – like management and organization studies – reflects and is related to major trends and developments that have recently emerged in societal, socio-cultural and organizational realities, mirrored in social sciences. Correspondingly, various orientations try to find a place on that 'ship'. The contemporary epistemic odyssey of leadership science appears to be trying to find a passage between Scylla – the rocks of dogmatic modernity – and Caribdis – the whirlpool of dispersed post-modernity.

Apparently something seems to be at odds, missing, inadequate or non-integrated on this vessel and its course. Moreover, an incomplete or one-sided approach of leadership phenomena may lead to inappropriate investigations, simplistic understanding and erroneous conclusions and implications. In his article 'Bad Management Theories are Destroying Good Management Practices', Sumantra Ghoshal put forward the following: 'Many of the worst excesses of recent management practices have their roots in a set of ideas that have emerged from business school academics over the last 30 years' (2005: 76). Accordingly, many leadership concepts and 'research' programmes have been guided by simplistic, trivial or superficial ideas about management, and by academic consultants keen to peddle the latest pre-packaged list of essential qualities deemed necessary for individual leaders and as the prescribed solution and quick fixes to all leadership dilemmas. This article argues that to avoid over-simplifying and reductionistic perspectives, leadership studies require more expansive conceptual openings, discursive extensions and integration. Bringing the household on that ship 'to order' and governing it in an integrative way requires a turn to the genuine task of 'economics'. Originating from the Greek 'οικος' ('oikos': house) and 'νόμος' ('nomos': custom or law), hence 'rules of the household', economics refers to the knowledge about appropriate 'household' governance. Therefore, how can we develop a more integrative understanding of, and practice within, the manifold household of organization and leadership research (Küpers & Edwards, 2008)? How can we find our way in our ship with its many subsections? How can we understand the roles and functions of the different 'intellectual departments' which they carry out as part of the on-going journey? What

would be required for a 'household-ship' on which organization and its leadership sustain not only economic performances and produce goods and provide services, but also contribute to the well-being of its crew members and even more to the goals of civil society and its aspirations?

The question is how to navigate such a 'leader-ship' in the sea of uncertainties, setting out for unknown future horizons? What would be an appropriate vision acting as a compass for the course of that versatile ship, which can account for the *zeitgeists* winds and currents? All in all, how would such an integral 'leader-ship' be characterized?

Inspired by these questions, in the following we do not focus on particular leadership topics, but reflect the generation and status of theory itself as an 'object', the 'ship' as it were and its embedment. Moreover, we aim to open up new possibilities for integration and to outline a more comprehensive framework for leadership that contributes to theory building and offers areas and avenues for empirical research. We are not claiming to solve all inconclusive problems and quandaries, or to be giving answers on all these open questions. Rather, we propose an integral understanding and more comprehensive perspectives on leadership to address main patterns, domains and connecting zones between them. In our comprehension, 'integral' refers to the 'completeness' of a truly full-range approach (Avolio, 1999) in which the constituent 'parts' and 'wholes' of leadership are not seen as separated entities, and in which all its micro-dimensions and macro-dimensions, as well as its mutual interrelation, are brought together.

To develop such a well-founded integral orientation, the following will first present some limitations of conventional leadership discourse by summarizing briefly and only selectively some aspects of its problematic state of the art. We will then describe basic premises and ideas for an integral framework for leadership research. For this purpose, various domains of leadership and their interrelations as well as the developmental stages and lines of leaders are described. As these are embedded in a dynamic cycle, a processual interpretation will be offered. Finally, theoretical and methodological implications are presented and open horizons for future journeys of research on integral leadership discussed.

The shortcomings and limitations of conventional leadership discourse; or, why is leadership not yet integrally oriented?

While we do not and cannot attempt to bring all critical dimensions of conventional leadership phenomena exhaustively into play here, we will try to crystallize some important ones. Leadership discourse and its literature is characterized by several clusters of competing mappings, theories and approaches that emphasize different aspects of leadership and have various deficiencies and shortcomings (Grint, 2005; Weibler, 2001; Yukl, 2006).

As space constraints preclude a comprehensive review, the following discussion illustrates only some of the main patterns and orientations of traditional leadership approaches. First, conventional approaches, which dominate the discourses in leadership research, often take a '*person-centred and dyadic perspective*' (House & Aditya, 1997: 409) and follow a 'heroic leadership' stereotype (Meindl et al., 1985; Yukl, 1999, 2002). With this understanding, influence is mainly seen as unidirectional,

flowing from the individual leader to the individual follower and representing an entitative, egocentric and monological view (Brown & Hosking, 1986; Dachler & Hosking, 1995). In customary leadership-centred frames, leaders are positioned as knowing and structuring, and followers as subordinates of these processes. Consequently, for a long time little attention has been paid to followers (Collinson, 2006), as those who co-constitute leader(-ship) within a reciprocal interdependence of leadership and followership (Hollander, 1992a, 1992b). With this orientation there is only limited interest in describing or considering reciprocal influence processes of shared or distributed (super-)leadership (Ray et al., 2004; Sims & Lorenzi, 1992), non-hierarchical structures, or underlying influence processes (Yukl, 1999) as well as multiple stakeholders and competing demands on leaders.

Correspondingly, leadership has not been sufficiently considered as a relational (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and collective phenomenon (Drath & Palus, 1994); that is, as a 'communal capacity and a communal achievement' (Drath, 2001: xvi). Person- or dyadic-oriented approaches of direct interaction tend also to ignore indirect forms of group-level and organizational leadership (Hunt, 1991; Lord & Maher, 1991), such as complementing management systems, external arrangements or the use of structural or cultural forms (Yukl & Lepsinger, 2004).

Methodologically, intensive discussions about *multiple-level approaches* emphasize the need to understand leadership processes at various levels of analysis to discern the complexities with which, and at which, leadership phenomena occur (Avolio & Yammarino, 2002; Dansereau et al., 1995; Dansereau & Yammarino, 1998a, 1998b; Hunt & Conger, 1999). Recently, levels of analytic issues and their corresponding measurement are becoming increasingly discussed in leadership studies (Dansereau et al., 1984; Dansereau et al., 1999; House et al., 1995; Klein et al., 1994; Rousseau, 1985; Yammarino, 1996; Yammarino & Bass, 1991; Yammarino & Dansereau, 2008). What becomes evident is that conducting leadership research at multiple levels of analysis is essential to advance the field (Lowe & Gardner, 2000). However, in a current state-of-the-science review, Yammarino et al. (2005: 882) find that 'the field of leadership falls short of explicitly dealing with multiple levels of analysis in the literature'.¹

Furthermore, another severe shortcoming of leadership is caused by being wedded to a rational model of human agents and action. Owing to this bias, leadership theory still lacks the ability to consider embodied and emotional dimensions involved as well as grounding in human development (Bennis & Thomas, 2002; Kegan, 1994). The body and embodiment (Küpers, 2005; Ropo & Parviainen, 2001) as well as feelings (George, 2000; Küpers, 2004a; Küpers & Weibler, 2005) have been neglected or marginalized in leadership research, while a disembodied rationality has been privileged (Putnam & Mumby, 1993). Many studies still focus on establishing relationships, often through a reduced number of cognitive (George, 2000) or behavioural variables (House & Aditya, 1997; Kisfalvi & Pitcher, 2003). However, the effectiveness of any individual characteristic depends in part on the overall pattern in which leadership as an individual and collective capacity appears to operate (Rost, 1991). Thus, ratings of individual abilities, traits, characteristics and behaviours via cause-effect relations are poorly suited for studying situated leadership as a dynamic process embedded in complex emotional, as well as social and institutional, and interrelational processes.

There are many more deficits: problem areas with regard to the chosen approaches and contents, the methodologies used, the relation to concrete business practice and many other non-integral orientations, which cannot be included or discussed here. However, in view of the challenges and inadequacies already mentioned, the following tries to open up possibilities for developing and employing an integral framework of leadership. Such an approach may enable a more comprehensive and inclusive approach that is suited for investigating and enacting the complex interrelated processes of leadership in organizations.

What would an outline of an integral framework for leadership look like?

Recognizing that the conventional perspectives and approaches are partial, limited and may be distorted, and to avoid reductionistic fallacies, the following asks what a more integral view of leadership would look like. For this, a 'holonic' understanding of reality will be a necessary ontological base. Holons are constitutive 'entities' as both wholes and parts of bigger wholes at the same time (Koestler, 1967). As emerging events they evolve to higher orders of whole/partness by virtue of specific patterns and the regulating 'laws' that they exhibit (Edwards, 2005). This means that holons are structures and processes that are simultaneously autonomous and dependent, characterized by differentiation (generation of variety) and integration (generation of coherence). Thus, 'holonic' refers to the 'both . . . and' character of the entities considered here to leaders and leadership simultaneously, as 'parts' as well as 'wholes'. Beyond this, both are also part of more complex holons such as organizations, industries, and countries. On one hand, a great deal of the work of a leader involves managing and dealing with the dynamics between individual parts and collective wholes. On the other hand, the part and whole of leadership are not separate, static structures but actively constitute each other; that is, they are primary enfolded and entangled in each other (Cooper, 2005). For example, leader(-ship) is a holonic part of follower(-ship) and vice versa: followership is integral of leadership. Therefore, both are interrelated phenomena best described as a holarchical² process, which is a more accurate and comprehensive conception (Küpers, 2007b). This understanding allows us to recognize that most people have, or may develop, roles as both a leader and as a follower in the same organization (Weibler, 1994, 2004a), which becomes especially relevant for the increasing number of (decentralized) organizations using self-managed teams, executive teams within flexible structures, partnering and joint ventures (Mehra, 2006; Yukl, 1999).

A holonic understanding of leadership is well suited to integrating different conceptual lenses for portraying the complex realities and relationships involved in leading and following in non-reductive terms, thus providing the very base for an integral understanding of leadership with its psycho-socio-cultural and structural realities.

Methodologically, using a holonic orientation and its integrative potential as a base demands a comprehensive multilevel analysis that takes the subjective, intersubjective and objective dimensions of leaders and leadership into account. In the following, we will build on an over-arching integral framework as developed largely by the philosopher Ken Wilber (Wilber, 1999, 2000a, 2000b). It represents a

theory-building endeavour which attempts to integrate as many valid systems of knowledge as possible into an inclusive, meta-theoretical concept. Acknowledging the multiplicity of perspectives, it represents a system of analytical lenses or critical frames of reference that can provide a clearer, more comprehensive picture of phenomena in general and of leadership in particular.

The integral framework has already found its first applications to leadership (Bradbury, 2003; Cacioppe, 2000a, 2000b; Mitroff & Denton, 1999; Pauchant, 2002, 2005; Prewitt, 2004; Reams, 2005; Rooke & Torbert, 1998; Volckmann, 2005; Young, 2002). Offering an inclusive, meta-theoretical framework and heuristic system of analytical lenses, integral theory claims to provide a clearer, more comprehensive picture of occasions of leadership, as it focuses on the specific, but interconnected, processes of intentional, behavioural, cultural and social-systemic domains.

With this broader orientation, the inner spheres of a leader and his or her external behavioural aspects, as well as the collective embedment of leadership within an organizational community and culture, and the structural–functional realms, can be assessed and all interrelated connections equally accommodated.

Two basic lenses which the integral framework differentiates are the interior–exterior dimension and the individual/collective (or agency–communal) dimension. The crossing of these lenses gives four quadrants or domains representing four different perspectives. These include the interior–agency or self-consciousness (the ‘I’), exterior agency or behaviour as enactment (the ‘my’ or ‘it’), interior–communal or culture (‘we’) and exterior–communal or system (the ‘our’ or ‘its’). The first quadrant involves the intra–personal or internal reality of a person; the second domain treats the behavioural aspects of the individual; the third quadrant encompasses all collective internal communal issues of social and cultural life; and, finally, the last domain covers the collective external aspects of structural or functional order, mechanisms and systemic conditions. To specify these different domains or quadrants and their interrelations, they are each outlined briefly as follows.

What do the different quadrants of leadership entail and how do they interrelate within an integral framework?

The first quadrant represents the individual/internal aspects of a person (leader or follower) and involves his or her intra–personal or internal reality. This includes personal values, attitude, intention and meanings, as well as various experiences. As the reality of ‘I’, the subjective world, it refers to specific self–relationships, a sense of confusion, raptures or vocation and visions, and is articulated by an internal language or other form of ‘intra–personal’ conversation, such as bodily sensations, images, sounds, feelings, and intuitions. Therefore, methodologically, it is only accessible through profound dialogues with a person, access to his or her private writing, speeches or other productions, or through interviews. In relation to the business context, it is the perceived ability, readiness for motivation and commitment to self or organizational goals. Level–wise the emphasis can be on a leader or a follower, or on how leaders or followers differ from one another. This can then be extended to dyads, or two individuals who are interdependent on a one–to–one basis, for example in superior–subordinate dyads, or leader–follower dyads. In this quadrant, the focus is on helping organizational leaders discern their leadership style

so that they acquire more insight into themselves and their impact on others. It also deals with the psychological, cognitive, emotional and volitional dimensions of an individual on the other hand – and how these impact on the organization and its development. As this realm reflects the self's personal experiences, being conscious and being modulated by levels of consciousness, it can be referred to as the 'consciousness quadrant', which has specific relevance for leadership (Chatterjee, 1998; Young, 2002). For example, a long-term study carried out by Torbert and Associates (2004) shows that the success of organizational transformation efforts is dependent upon the level of consciousness of leadership. However, leadership development and practice are most effective when the individual interior dimensions are linked and supported by external action and tangibles.

The second quadrant treats the individual external aspects of enacted leadership or followership. This is the 'it' area of individual knowledge, concrete skills and embodied action, accountability and performance levels of leaders and followers as agents that can be measured and refined. Training and development opportunities that support the development and enactment of competencies and peak performance are part of this quadrant, as well as coaching, planning, decision making, and any skill that develops individual effective acting and practice in the environment of an organization. The role of leading, to focus on this side, also requires the management and monitoring of specific tasks, knowledge, competencies and actions to achieve the larger goals of the organization. In this capacity the leader manages performance-related resources, staff and time efficiently, and checks that tasks and costs are on target and being carried out correctly. Furthermore, desired behaviours of followers, such as attendance, employee suggestions for improvements or good safety behaviours are reinforced through performance-management and reward systems.

Rooted in behaviourism, behavioural theories of leadership focus on the actions of leaders and the responses of followers, and not necessarily on mental qualities or internal states. Additionally, neo-behaviouristic studies consider the interaction between the individual and the environment. Furthermore, applications of hard sciences and empiricism investigating behaviour and action can be related to this domain.

As this sphere covers particularly overt behaviour with others and can be approached by empirical observation, rigour measurement and analysis, it can be designated the 'behavioural quadrant'.

The third quadrant deals with the intersubjective space of mutual recognition and internal collective aspects of leadership. The intersubjective world of shared history, myths, stories, values and norms are all part of this quadrant, so it encompasses cultural dimensions such as dealing with group identity and meaning-making issues. Correspondingly, it is also the domain of unwritten beliefs, shared meanings and worldviews. As such it includes taboos and informal norms that can be discerned from how people justify and explain what they think and do together in terms of leading and following. This area of culture calls for a focus on the deeper significance of collective aspirations, valuing and meaning making for example in rituals, ceremonies and symbols, socio-cultural purposes and visions. Approaching this realm allows us to not only tap into what is held by individuals, but also to access and create a composite of what is held collectively (Paulson, 2002).

In this quadrant, crucial ingredients for sustainable organizational success, such

as organizational integrity and morale, are also addressed. As a world of the 'we', this sphere is characterized by a common language and signs that can be understood, communicated and shared with others. The focus here is on groups or teams as a collection of individuals who are interdependent and interact on a face-to-face or virtual basis. Furthermore, with this perspective, human beings in organizations are interpreted as collectives. The focus is on clusters of individuals that are larger than dyads or groups, or a set of common or shared expectations such as departments, functional areas and strategic business units. The quadrant also includes corresponding levels of consciousness expressed at the collective cultural level. On one hand, leadership exerts various influences upon this area; on the other hand, it is very much co-determined by this social life-world. However, a leader cannot manipulate this sphere directly, because to a great extent it is determined and controlled by the members of the organization. Both leaders and followers reproduce existing norms and values through daily interrelating and acting, thereby legitimizing their relationships. As a form of 'people management', leadership can require coaching and working with employees to ensure they cultivate teamwork and communication – via accurate and timely feedback – so that they feel valued, and at the same time they are developing their contribution to the team and to the organization. Furthermore, leadership here may take new collective forms such as organizational story (Parry & Hansen, 2007) or those of shared or distributed team leadership (Barry, 1991; Mehra, 2006). Theoretical and often qualitatively oriented empirical approaches can be related to hermeneutics, cultural theory and cultural anthropology or ethnomethodology applied to leadership phenomena. As all the outlined dimensions are part of the organization's culture, this sphere can be titled 'culture quadrant'.

The forth quadrant covers the collective external aspects of leadership. This is the world of 'its'; that is, of resources, tools, technologies, organizational designs, strategic plans, workflow procedures or formal policies and rules. It is also formed by institutional conditions, external constraints and influences such as natural resources, and climate and all financial processes and compensation programmes, as well as quantities and qualities of outputs, productivity and efficiency. In other words, this is where thinking about the organization as a performance system is important. The leadership-related focus of this area is on issues such as how to design the organization to perform at higher levels, or how the creative force of the leadership (including expected followership) shows in the way the organization operates. For this purpose it covers managerial functions, such as the structuring of management and organizational processes, financial strategies, organizing means of production, and techniques of marketing, information and communication technologies. Comprising the relationships to the external world of markets and stakeholders, this realm also includes relations and negotiating with the next level of the organization or with industrial stakeholders and issues of occupation to obtain resources and factors relevant for the organization. This also includes maintaining contact with customers and ensuring that the services and products meet their needs. As this realm can be apprehended from the outside, this collective world refers to that which is tangible, measurable and quantifiable.

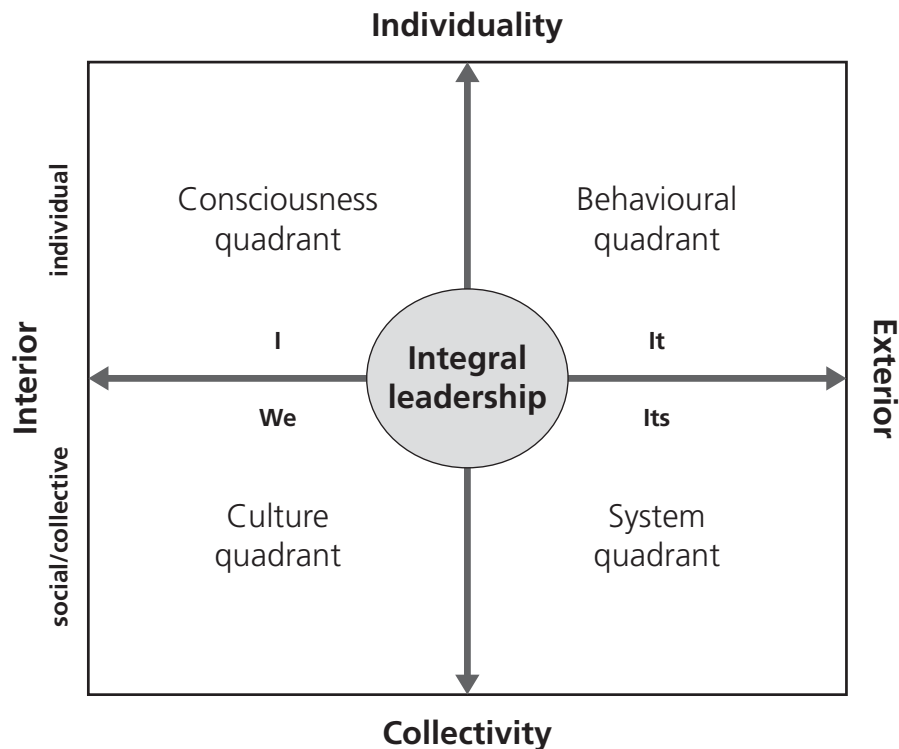
Chaos, evolution, change or system theories become relevant here (Kellert, 1993; Wheatley, 2006) as these allow investigations of regularly or more complex, non-linear and dynamic dimensions of organizations, or of dissipative or discontinuous

organizational processes. Accordingly, leadership here is more likely to be associated with a transforming system. As such it is characterized by irreversible, progressive contexts and not by repetitive ones (Overman, 1996) within an emerging order. This implies that chaos and complexity are not problems to be solved, but the triggers of evolution, adaptation and renewal in organizations. As this quadrant relates to various systemic functions, structures and conditions, it represents the 'system quadrant'. Both collective spheres allow thinking not only of individual leaders or followers, but of leadership in groups, supported by structural processes or formed by the system as such in its own right.

Figure 1 shows the four spheres or domains of integral leadership, constituted through the horizontal axis, marking a continuum between 'internal' and 'external' realities and the vertical axis, reflecting a continuum between 'individual' and 'collective' realities.

We suppose that each of these four spheres of leadership, including leading and following, depends on the others for its development. What is therefore needed is an approach that considers all quadrants, to show that leadership practices and developments are carried and played out within and between all these four domains. Correspondingly, an integral approach explores the embeddings of these various realms and the degree to which the levels mutually influence or constrain each other. If the interrelations of these different domains are investigated carefully and critically, an

Figure 1 *Multidimensional and multilevel model of integral leadership (see Wilber, 1999, 2000a)*



integral approach is able to reveal how leading and leadership play a fundamental role in rendering aspects of existence and of what is thinkable, desirable and amenable. Additionally, using an integral inquiry can diagnose various problems, pathologies and conflicts concerning processes of leading and following as well as providing ways for dealing with them. Practically speaking, the challenging task of an enacted integral leadership will be to consider all four spheres and co-ordinate the assumed interrelations of all spheres and corresponding developmental processes.

Before discussing specific developmental levels and lines of leadership, the following provides some interpretations of leadership theory in relation to the outlined framework.

What does an integral interpretation of leadership theory (development) and methodology show?

There have been theoretical conceptualizations that aspired to embrace a multitude of approaches to leadership. For example, *The Quest for a General Theory of Leadership* (Goethals & Sorenson, 2006) manifests an attempt to find integrative ways of the many concepts, challenges, and realities of leadership (Burns et al., 2001).

The holonic four-quadrant model of the integral framework can provide a useful way to look at 1) how specific orientations in the development of leadership theory have emerged over time, 2) showing where and how they can be situated in an overarching comprehension, 3) which arrangements should be taken in all quadrants to secure the success of an organizationally relevant decision. Historically, with regard to leadership discourse, we can see repeating tensions between internal and external and between individual (agency) and collective (communality) aspects of leadership. In many leadership studies, the focus on the leader's character and traits emphasizes the upper left quadrant, or the intentional realm. On one hand, *trait theories* are often criticized as inadequate means for understanding leadership (Rost, 1991), while on the other hand leadership scholars are continuously flailing away at mounds of traits (Fleishman et al., 1991) and reviving and refining the idea of investigating individuals and their innate, intentional qualities. This also spills over to practitioner-oriented texts, which repeats the refrains of leaders as artists, performers and anti-heroes (Turnbull, 2006). Another example related to this domain are psychoanalytical approaches considering the unconsciousness of leaders or auditing the personality (Kets de Vries et al., 2006), putting leaders on the couch (Kets de Vries & Coutu, 2004).

Focusing on forms of activities – that is, on what leaders do and how they enact their knowledge and learning as well as in relation to followers – has moved leadership theory to focus on the upper right behavioural quadrant. For example, besides emphasizing the leader–follower relationship through its focus on the level of motivation of the follower, *path-goal theory* (House, 1996; House & Mitchell, 1974) sees that appropriate behaviour can be taught and is thus less dependent on the traits of the leader and is more amenable to training. Many critics argue that the behavioural model still dominates both research and practice (Bryman, 1996; Yukl, 2006). In particular, approaches focusing on *leadership style* and competencies shift attention to this external quadrant. However, such orientations tend to be fragmented and

isolated by not connecting the interior aspects of leadership with the exterior behavioural and collective domains.

For example, the '*implicit leadership theory*' (Lord & Maher, 1991) demonstrates that individuals hold inherent schemas of prototypical leadership (external) traits and behaviours. However, the theoretical foundation of the implicit leadership theory is strongly embedded in the information processing paradigm and this makes it difficult to draw valid conclusions about the motivational and emotional processes underlying subjects' responses and behaviour and about the embedded interrelationship between leaders and followers.

Taking both relationship and tasks as influential categories of leader behaviour into consideration, *classical leadership approaches* (Ohio State Studies; Blake & Mouton, 1982) expand into further dimensions. In contrast to the individual-focused trait or style approaches, other leadership studies investigate the role of *group dynamics* in leadership (Hawthorn Studies up to neo-human relations approaches). This move towards the collective domain reflects the conditions of 'shared meaning' (Smircich, 1983) and the role and influences of group processes upon, or as, leadership. Accordingly, *team-leadership* (Hackman, 2002; Zaccaro et al., 2001) and '*inter-group leadership*' (Pittinsky & Simon, 2007), dealing with issues such as implicit or explicit group norms, values, dynamics and role expectations become relevant.

Methodologically, various qualitative and interpretative designs are relevant for approaching the tales of this field, including (meta-)ethnography (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1995; Noblit & Hare, 1988; van Maanen, 1988), conversation and discourse analysis (Clifton, 2006), narrative inquiry (Schall et al., 2004) or participatory action research (Reason, 1994; Reason & Bradbury, 2001) as well as many more giving voice (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; Tierney, 1996). Furthermore, a social relations analysis of leadership (Livi et al.; 2008) could be placed here. Additionally, the various influences and impacts of organizational culture on leadership (Bryman, 1996; Schein, 2004) focus attention on the communal 'lower left' cultural quadrant.

In view of the limitations of explaining all leadership by emphasizing either the individual or the group, *situational approaches* (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969) marked yet another shift. Based on the premise that different situations demand different kinds of leadership, these theories attempt first to assess the development level of subordinates (task or psychological maturity). They then match perceived maturity to a leadership style and practice with various directive or supportive elements to the needs of subordinates in given external situations. Accordingly, these approaches include the lower right quadrant as well as the behavioural. Similar to these situational theories, the influential *contingency theory* (Fiedler, 1964) also aims at matching the traits, preferred styles and orientations of leaders (upper left quadrant) with the situational context or right setting (lower right quadrant) to determine the leader's effectiveness. Typical situational parameters are included, such as the nature of the task, hierarchy, formal roles and the organizational environment. Furthermore, approaches focusing on organizational structure and external context (Osborn et al., 2002), or on functional or resource-related orientations, as well as different systems theories (Charlton & Andras, 2004; Luhmann, 1995; Stacey, 1992, 2001), also generally emphasize the 'lower right' or systemic quadrant. Appropriate research methodologies for investigating leadership in and as a complex adaptive system may include

simulation or computer modelling (Hazy, 2007). Dynamic systems simulation (investigating emergent interactive variables at various system levels and the evolution of the system over time) or artificial neural networks (using pattern recognition algorithms) (Schneider & Somers, 2006) or dynamic network analysis methodology (combining techniques of social network analysis with multi-agent simulations) (Carley, 2003) are all included in this rubric.

Although all of the research traditions and developments and methodologies in leadership studies mentioned here have made tremendous contributions to our understanding of leadership, each has specific limitations, particularly in terms of modelling, assessing and developing integral leadership.

With their theoretical restrictions and methodological narrowness, conventional approaches tend to perceive leadership only in selective fields, and thus often misplace leadership (Wood, 2005). What happens is that they focus on a particular feature or causal process of leadership and then – implicitly or explicitly – often assert that this is the main or only causal factor, thereby excluding what seemingly is not part of the theoretical or empirical position taken. Basically, each approach is in a way ‘true’ but only partially. Therefore, the question is: how can we work out how to fit these partial truths together, without losing the knowing of the respective findings? In other words, how can the different perspectives be integrated inclusively and not pick one at the expense of the others? Consequently, what is required is refining and applying the aforementioned meta-framework for exploring different perspectives and their relationships inclusively in order to avoid being attached to any single view and be open to an arrangement of interrelated approaches and interpretations.

From paradigm war to fruitful integration: a meta-framework of integral leadership

The various further developments of leadership theory referred to earlier have not yet been grounded in a meta-framework that is able to contextualize and understand the value of each aspect of, and approach to, leadership, as well as their relationships to each other. This may also cover the margins of their overlap and bridging between older views of leadership and new developments in an inclusive manner. The challenge will be to link various elements that have been addressed separately within a deliberate and explicit integration, because this integral theory does not assume that the paradigms behind the chosen quadrants are mutually exclusive. Even if the underlying paradigms are based on a set of apparently opposing meta-theoretical assumptions, an integral meta-paradigm can accommodate conflicting knowledge and disparities. Using second-order constructs, integral meta-theorizing provides a reference system for linking disparate representations (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). This position is in contrast to Burrell and Morgan (1979) who advocate ‘paradigmatic closure’ and ‘isolationism’ between paradigms (p. 398), taking radical humanist, radical structuralist, interpretive and functionalist paradigms as ‘mutually exclusive views of the social world’ (p. viii). In contrast, an integral perspective of holonic complementarities questions this assumed incommensurability and, even more, enables research strategies that transcend the incommensurability argument (Hassard & Keleman, 2002).

An integral approach to leadership allows operations in more than one paradigm and for the consideration of opposing approaches at any given point in time by juxtaposing them and illustrating the nature of their understanding and representations. By encompassing various multi-paradigm research combinations, an integral orientation provides a more accommodating framework that mirrors the plurality and complexity of leadership. In this regard, integral research may reveal seemingly disparate, but interdependent, facets of leadership phenomena. An integral approach allows a paradigm mapping; that is, it offers a new path to transcending the debilitating binary arguments in which bivalent either/or antinomies encourage a black and white reductionism. Theorizing and the parts of various paradigms are co-determined and neither is coherent outside their mutuality, complementarity and integral connection.

An integral rationale enables the exploration of varied paradigm orientations from within, which may imply differing linguistic and methodological norms and social practices. Such immersion and constant re-examining and questioning of fundamental assumptions of various theories and practices enables experiential learning that elevates paradigm consciousness further. This in turn protects self-reflective researchers from becoming trapped within a peripheral vision or a limited range of conceptual possibilities (Brocklesby, 1997) and helps them to understand leadership in a more integral fashion.

An integral paradigm imbeds and does not eliminate preceding paradigms and theories nor does it lead to an eclecticism. By transcending, but including, various theories, methodologies and insights, they can find their place in a broader, integrally probable scheme holonistically. Therefore, paradigms are indeed different, yet are mutually constitutive and interdependently interconnected in an evolutionary holarchy of knowledge and methodologies characterized by a both/and notion of complementarities. For example, the presence of the subject-object dialectic in the structure of a holon provides an opportunity for disclosing and integrating subjective, interpretive data as well as objective, behavioural data in understanding leadership.

Additionally, with its multi- and meta-paradigmatic capacity, the integral model encourages greater awareness of theoretical and methodological alternatives. Thereby it facilitates discourse and/or inquiry across paradigms (paradigm interplay), fostering greater understanding within pluralist and even paradoxical organizational and leadership contexts (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002).

Pragmatically, an integral approach aids the exploration and facilitation of the development of an understanding that is more in tune with the diversity, complexity and ambiguity of organizational life and corresponding intricacies of leadership practices. By applying varied lenses and perspectives, integral researchers are more adequately equipped to shed light on tensions that accompany leadership practices, by exposing conflicting demands on leaders as complementary, and by demonstrating that apparently opposing interests are actually interwoven in a process. With this orientation, an integral conception is not a 'harmony' model because it considers relations, disparities and conflict. Although the model generates quite a degree of complexity, this does not exclude specific focus and investigation of particularities nor of disharmonious and conflictual realities. Rather, it provides an adequate meta-theoretical approach for recognizing multiple perspectives and guiding a more

fruitful confrontation and meaningful communication between various perspectives of different realities.

To take an example, an integral understanding of influence and power in leadership would include a phenomenological analysis of this dimension on the subjective meaning and projections of individuals ('consciousness quadrant') and empirical observations of the enactments of the individuals' behaviours ('behavioural quadrant'). However, there would also be an ethnographic investigation and prompting of the tools and processes used and realized at the collective level, for example into group resistance processes or norms within organizational culture ('culture quadrant'). Furthermore, it would consider researching the functional and structural aspects or resources needed within a systemic embedment design ('system quadrant'). Moreover, the interrelationship between these different quadrants would reveal the interwoven complexities of influence and power processes. The same quadrant-specific and interrelational investigations could be applied to various other leadership- and followership-related phenomena.

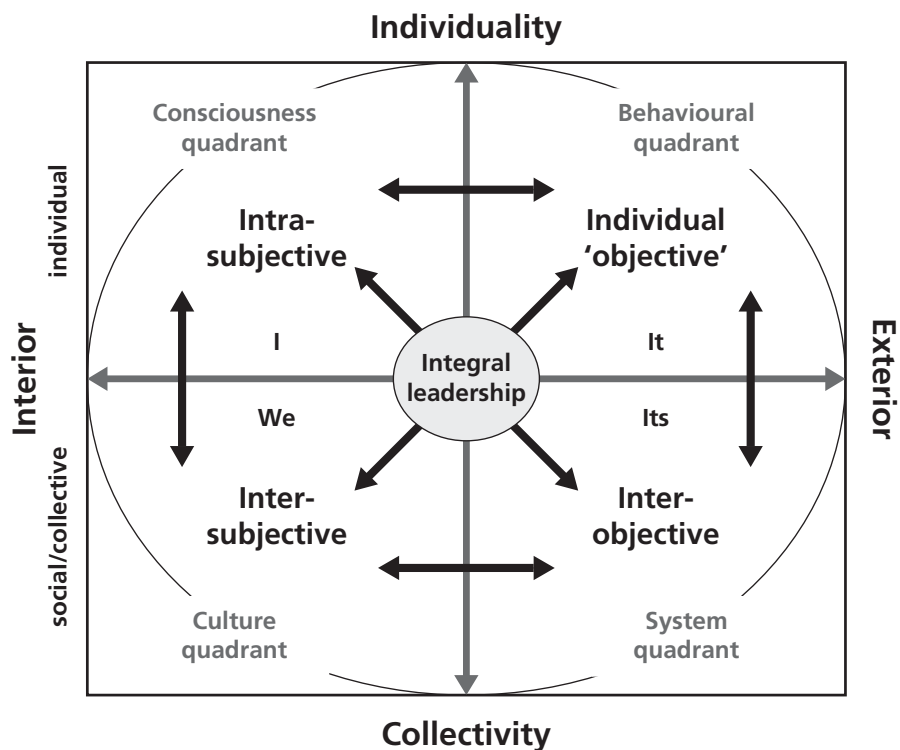
The lenses used in an integral approach can be used for the entire spectrum of relationships in leadership, ranging from the micro-world of the individual, to the dyadic world of two people in a relationship, to the meso-world of the group, to the macro world of the larger collective and acting within a system. Additionally, using an integral inquiry of this type can diagnose various problems, pathologies and conflicts, as well as provide ways for dealing with them.

All in all, by applying a multi- and meta-paradigmatic integral framework, researchers may develop multi-sided and clearly arranged accounts that depict the diversity and complexity from a plural and meta-vantage point (Gioia & Pitre, 1990). Even though integral theorists cannot shed their predispositions, they can contrast or relate their preferred representations to those of other paradigms. With this capacity, an integral perspective strives for an expanded range, allowing alternatives to co-exist and engage in potentially more insightful and creative orientations and interactions. Being critically self-reflective, integral theorists learn to view and depict paradigms as detailing different layers of meanings, which also facilitates a more reflexive exploration of leadership and organizational practice (Lewis & Kelemen, 2002).

From an integral perspective, all dimensions of the leadership practice co-create each other and unfold and develop together holonistically. Thus, specific dimensions of leadership are not narrowly located in one quadrant but need to be studied from the perspective of each quadrant, as well as from their complex interrelations. Therefore, the different spheres between the individual and communal, and subjective and objective identities need to be seen as an interwoven nexus, as shown in Figure 2.

Both the exterior and objective perspectives on individual and collective behaviour ('it' and 'its') have become the prevailing canon in dominant functionalist approaches in leadership studies. However, to understand leadership as a holonic 'four-quadrant affair' requires us to embrace the left interior dimensions as well, including inner meanings. Conversely, the often neglected inner lives of leaders as well as of followers and the collective spheres of leadership must also be seen as equiprimordially relevant and co-determined by behavioural and exterior dimensions. To privilege one quadrant over another is to disturb the delicate integration,

Figure 2 Multidimensional and multilevel model of integral leadership



sometimes even co-evolutionary developed relationality and interconnectedness of effective leadership practice. Recognizing the underlying principle of fundamental interconnectedness as an integral approach allows understanding that problems or pathologies in any quadrant will reverberate through all other domains.

As organizations make the transition to meet today's challenges, they must consider which aspects of the leader's consciousness, behaviour and domains of culture and system as part of the entire leadership practice are being impacted in order to set priorities and ensure they are enacted. With this, an 'all-quadrant' approach covering all of the outlined domains is an essential presupposition and guiding orientation for creating and maintaining effective leadership practice, particularly in times of change. Accordingly, organizations and leadership, embarking on comprehensive and sustainable change and transformation, must address and consider each quadrant and the holonic interrelation between them (Landrum & Gardner, 2005), although the exact weight of relevance of each sector in a given time might be hard to detect.

However, actual experience, and leadership and followership practice, always encompasses not only all four quadrants as basic lenses that frame perception along certain perspectives, but also its embedment and dynamics via developmental levels and lines. These refer to a 'very specific set of developmental capacities that transcends how leadership has been seen up until now' (Reams, 2005: 127), as outlined in the following.

Which developmental levels and lines of leaders and followers and leadership (followership) can be differentiated within an integral cycle?

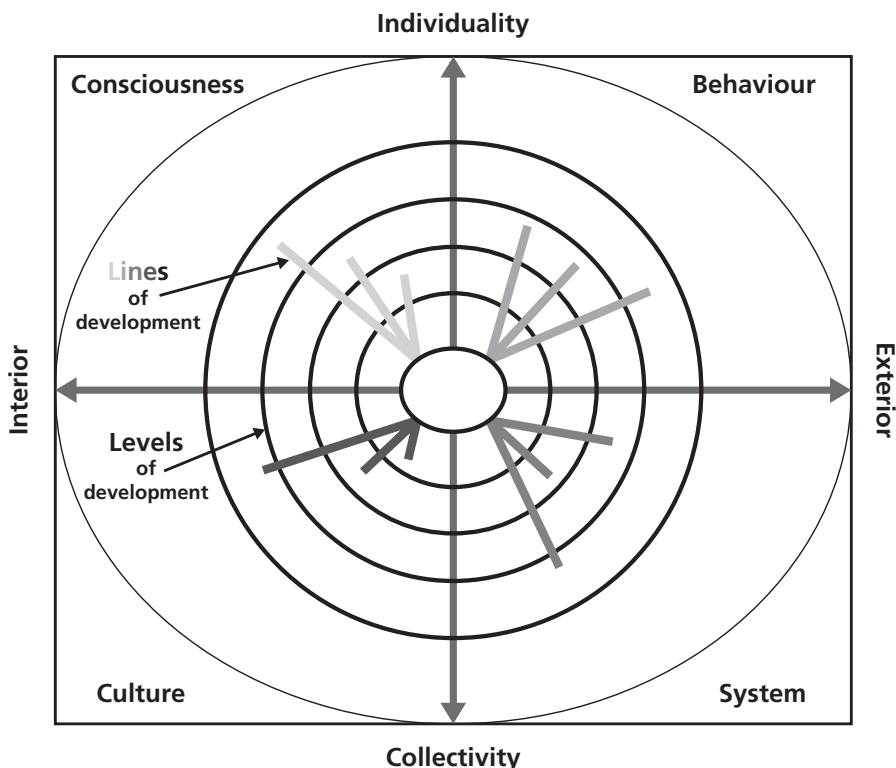
All of the outlined four quadrants of leadership show growth, development or evolution. That is, they all show some levels of development, not as rigid rungs in a ladder but unfolding as fluid and flowing waves. Thus, the quadrant model can be extended dynamically by a series of different developmental levels and lines of development of leaders and leadership. Many theories of psychological development (Gardner, 1983; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kohlberg, 1981; Loevinger, 1976; Piaget, 1977; Wade, 1996; Wilber, 2000b) have proposed stage-based models to explain the emergence through the life-span of basic components of human functioning and overall growth. These stages represent levels of organization and complexity. The word 'level' is not meant in a rigid or exclusionary fashion, but simply to indicate that there are important emergent qualities that tend to come into being in a discrete fashion, and these developmental levels are important aspects of many natural phenomena.

The *levels of development* refer to what is being developed (matter, body, mind, soul and 'spirit') as generalized 'waves' of existence. Thus, the levels are stages of development through which human beings proceed via a transcending, but also including, embracement and enfoldment (Torbert & Associates, 2004). With this facility, the levels mark out new capacities and emergent qualities through the lives of leaders or followers situated in the leadership respectively follower context, for example acquiring, competing, conforming, achieving, including and visioning. Furthermore, these basic levels of consciousness unfold at different rates and can be seen as overlapping waves in a spectrum of consciousness.

The *'lines of development'* reflect innate capacities and functions within the stages. As such, they co-determine a person's ability to learn and perform successfully in various circumstances. The developmental lines concern complex developments, such as cognitive (e.g. strategic thinking), emotional (e.g. emotional intelligence), interpersonal (e.g. social awareness, empathy), behavioural (e.g. managerial acting), knowledge and learning developments or ethical/moral lines of leaders as well as followers and the leadership processes itself. Moreover, aesthetic competencies (musical, artistic, bodily-kinesthetic), among many others (Wilber, 2001), are also part of this developmental process.

Most of these lines develop in a relatively independent fashion at their own rate with their own dynamics. Some lines are necessary but not sufficient for the development of others; while some develop closely together (Wilber, 2000a). Developmental researchers have found that each of these modalities unfolds in a similar pattern. As consciousness increases in a developmental line, it progresses to a higher stage in the overall spectrum. Accordingly, the lines develop over time through increasing complex levels of maturity, education and skill. But there are also 'lagging lines' of development that represent specific areas of weaknesses or non-strengths of leaders respectively followers or leadership or followership processes. These underdeveloped capacities may be a limiting factor for the effectiveness or success of leaders/followers and leadership/followership processes. Both levels and lines of development are essential aspects that, for instance, leaders need to understand for themselves as well as for influencing and motivating followers and vice versa. In addition,

Figure 3 *Levels and lines of development and domains of integral leadership (Edwards, 2005, modified)*



holonistically they can also be applied for collective spheres like groups or entire organizations related to leadership and followership as a process. Figure 3 presents a holonic representation of various developmental levels and lines in the context of the domains of consciousness, behaviour, culture and system.

As characterizations of leadership capacities, the lines of development also influence how well leaders or followers, groups and organizations perform. These developmental lines can therefore be measured using 'levels of proficiency'. For example, a leader may possess a high 'level' of proficiency in cognitive ability (e.g. high IQ) but may have a low level of proficiency at interpersonal skills (e.g. low EQ). With this there is the need to identify and assess as well as measure levels of proficiency on each major line of development of leaders, as well as of their followers, like in integral psycho- and socio-graphs (Wilber, 2000b). Knowing about these lines helps leaders to be better informed about how best to delegate, support and coach team members on the basis of their specific configurations of capacities, or to determine the need for training to strengthen proficiency on selected lines. On the other hand, knowing enables the follower to estimate his or her possibilities of co-acting with the leader and to support him or her specifically.

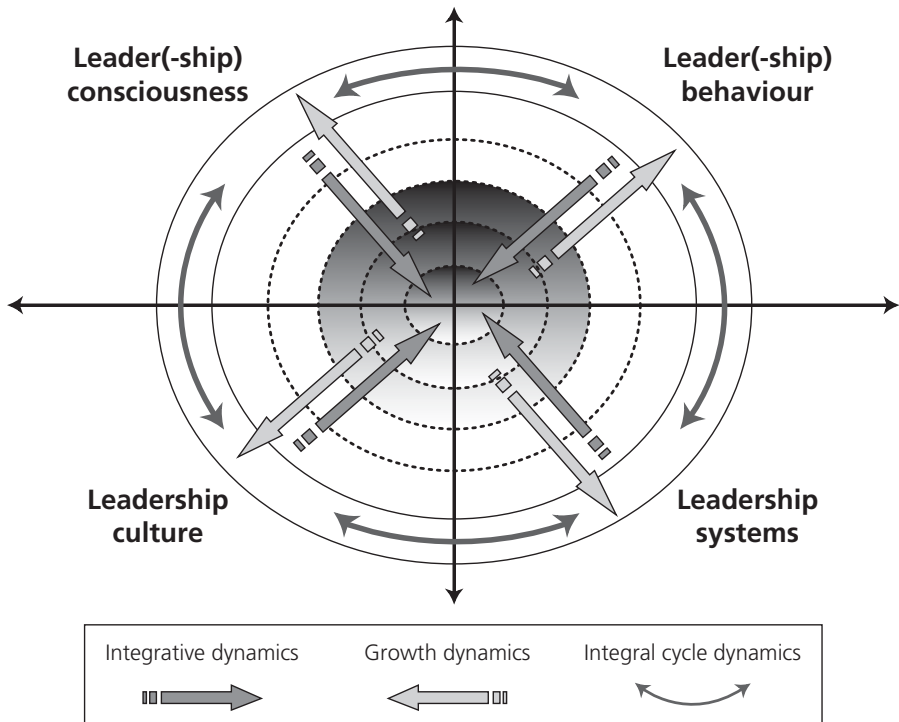
An integral level of development of a leader and/or a follower is more adaptive to fundamental change without threat to personal identity; enabling them to support the

self-development of others and to understand themselves in a multi-perspective way. Furthermore, the levels, lines and quadrants are energized by the dynamics of growth and integration within an ‘integral cycle’ (Cacioppe & Edwards, 2005a, 2005b; Edwards, 2005), which keeps all these elements hanging together in a coherent and dynamic system and co-ordinates the interaction between the four quadrants and the holonic developmental levels and lines. With its capacity to analyze, categorize and synthesize, the concept of an integral cycle is a way of representing the mutual interpenetration of the quadrants. Furthermore, the integral cycle covers the constituent structures and the integrative and growth dynamics relationship that exist between the domains and its involutionary and evolutionary pathways (see Figure 4).

Taken together, the four quadrants and the various developmental levels and lines within the integral cycle lead to an ‘All Quadrants, All Levels, All Lines’ (AQAL) (Wilber, 1999, 2000a, 2000b) approach of leadership. This ‘AQAL’-framework of quadrants, levels, lines and dynamics can be flexibly applied to individual leaders and followers, but also to teams with their non-reducible realities all the way up to complete organizations and even larger social entities.

Each of the holons – that is, the inner and the outer and the individual and the collective dimensions of leading and leadership – together with the developmental processes develop simultaneously through all four quadrants, co-creating, sometimes even co-evolving, in an intimate cycle of mutual interpenetration. All four quadrants, with all their realities and developmental dynamics, mutually interact

Figure 4 Integral cycle of leadership (Edwards, 2005)



– they ‘tetra-interact’ and ‘tetra-evolve’; that is, develop in four-folded ways. This understanding allows an appreciation and analysis of the dynamic interpenetration of all involved processes, which occurs at each level and line of development within a field of dynamic interdependence of co-relation by which these co-create each other.

To understand how these spheres are interrelated dynamically and ‘holonomically’, we need to follow a processual turn and relational orientation (Küpers, 2008) by which it can then be called ‘*inter-leadership*’. This can be interpreted as a becomingness (Wood, 2005); that is, an interrelational event in which the fixity of ephemeral arrangements conversely comes and goes,³ which has far-reaching implications.⁴

Taking a relational perspective means enacting a constellation of research values and interests in which organizational phenomena and the researcher’s relationships with these phenomena are conceived of as interdependent and impacted (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000). Such a relational approach sees leading and leadership as an emerging event; that is, as a dispersed and inherently indeterminate process, which is continually reconfiguring itself. *Inter-leadership* then develops out of a complex set of interactions or interrelations between subjects and objects as an ongoing event of relating and responding processed within a relational and reversible nexus of dynamic constellations. It is the decentred relational ‘space between’ (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000) or intermediating realm and therein unfolding in-tensions (Cooper & Law, 1995), in which all parties involved in the leadership process meet in an on-going interwoven way. By recognizing the primacy of interrelational processes, these become transforming media, in which leading, following, and leadership are continuously created and changed in the course of being practised. Thus, leading, leader, their situation, and those who are led interrelate and co-create and are incorporated with each other within an ‘inter-world’ of consciousness, behaviour, community and system.

What are the theoretical and methodological implications of an integral understanding?

As we have seen, integral leadership is a multifaceted construct and thus calls for multifaceted, multi- and meta-paradigmatic research designs covering the different dimensions for an integral investigation. Leadership researchers, therefore, need to engage with ideas from different inquiry paradigms that are characterized by different assumptions about actors and relations (Bryman, 1996, 2004). Correspondingly, a meta-methods approach involves the reflexive study of the discipline’s various methods, while meta-data analysis takes as its subject a range of studies of a given phenomena and seeks to gain an overall sense of them and to aggregate the data in order to come to a more general conclusion about a given issue. To grow into a more multi-, meta- and interdisciplinary endeavour, future leadership research needs to break the largely univocal narrative and open up to multiple and innovative methods. For this to happen, approaches and methods from disciplines outside the scope of management studies, social psychology or social sciences in general, and non-traditional disciplines also need to be re(dis)covered. These other approaches then need to be juxtaposed against one another and against the field’s traditional narrative

(Lowe and Gardner, 2000). As Gordon and Yukl (2004: 364) state in a programmatic article on the future of leadership research:

Leadership researchers need to branch out beyond the safe and comfortable survey method to capture the truly dynamic qualities of leadership. We recommend more carefully planned research that includes a variety of methods, such as field experiments, simulations, and a greater use of qualitative methods.

Assessing and investigating the outlined quadrants, developmental stages and lines of leaders and leadership requires a further developed integral methodology. For this, it will be necessary to investigate and integrate various perspectives on leadership systematically. A more comprehensive theory of leadership and conclusive judgements will not be possible without considering and incorporating various levels of analysis in theory, measurement, data analysis and interpretation (Yammarino et al., 2005).

This also implies first-, second- and third-person perspectives (singular and plural forms) with each of their inherent methodologies or modes of inquiry. They can all help to inform the way research seeks out different approaches for understanding the complex dimensions of leadership and its followership connection (Küpers, 2007b) in organizations. The 'first-person' perspective – related to subjective awareness and meaning of personal experience and action – can be assessed via self-reporting or biographic methodologies. For approaching the 'second-person', that is the interpersonal perspective, the use of dialogue and direct communication, and methodologically qualitative interviews, are ways to disclose multiple voices and an understanding of individual and collective sense-making.

Finally, for the 'third-person', empirical observation and methods of behavioural or systemic sciences can be used for investigating quantitative data with rigor. An integral methodology recognizes the validity of behavioural, functionalist and reductive analyses and quantitative investigations. Bringing these perspectives together highlights the different possibilities that exist for investigating how they might interrelate for a better understanding of leadership in organizations.

Furthermore, the outlined premises and arguments make it possible to view leadership research as a process of social construction itself, and to view research as part of the investigated and narrated relational process. Hence, the research process can be interpreted as a way of going on in a relationship, constructing knowledge and social validation. To facilitate multi-voicing ways of relating (Hosking, 2006; Hosking et al., 1995), the research methodology of participatory action research (Reason, 1994; Reason & Bradbury, 2001) and the deployment of further interpretive research strategies, with a strong situational focus (Alvesson, 1996), and case study methodologies (Yin, 1994) seem particularly suitable. In particular, further developed qualitatively oriented research practice will become increasingly important for a better understanding of complex embedded interrelated phenomena as contextually rich as leadership is (see Alvesson, 1996; Bryman, 2004; Bryman et al., 1996; Conger, 1998). Moreover, from an integral perspective, quantitative and qualitative research can be mutually informative and illuminating in the study of leadership and can also be combined (Bryman, 1988, 1992, 2004). By studying a topic simultaneously or concurrently with both methods at the same time or in cycles, depending on the problem, it can be better understood. In a similar way to

meta-triangulation (Lewis & Grimes, 1999), an integral orientation may help theorists to gain an appreciation of possible knowledges and reduce their commitment to a favoured and 'provincial' point of view. Furthermore, an integral research orientation facilitates a shift from a narrowed view towards a more rich, contextualized and multidimensional theory building, offering a greater explanatory and interpretative potential. For realizing this research practice, the integral framework needs to be methodologically operationalized in detail. This concerns determining constructs and variables, setting and testing propositions or hypotheses, antecedents, moderators, mediators, outcomes and their relations, but also preparing designs for qualitative field work.

Exploring leadership as a processual event implies a methodological focus on relations, connections, dependences and reciprocities investigating specific encounters, relational issues, social networks or situations (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Wood, 2005).

Following an integral methodological pluralism and epistemology, the integral framework not only provides a shared language for addressing the basic patterns and problems of leadership practices, but can also be used as a functional guideline that is careful not to reduce, oversimplify, isolate or fragment our understanding of leadership. Offering multidimensional perspectives and developmental orientations, the integral framework is capable of illuminating blind spots, reductionistic pictures of reality and mistaken or only partially true assumptions.

An integral modelling helps to generate sensitivity to contextual factors and innovative conceptual flexibility and leverage in leadership studies, and to develop empirically supported new ideas and theories by in-depth and longitudinal explorations of leadership phenomena. It also contributes to more relevance and development for practitioners, thus facilitating a corresponding integral practice.

Approached holonically and integrally, theory and practice are both essential parts of a whole that have become artificially separated and have evolved into more narrow meanings. However, theory without data is empty, and without the constant test of practice is liable to be dogmatic and formulaic or just plain wrong. Similarly, data and practice without theory that is critical reflection is blind or falls into a mere action-driven practice. Conversely, an integration of theory and practice may help to bridge the divide between practitioner and academic perspectives towards co-research (Hartley & Benington, 2000) and an effective symbiosis (Zaccaro & Horn, 2003).

What further perspectives and conclusions are there?

Our contribution has argued and tried to show that an integral framework could enable a more inclusive understanding of leadership, offering important implications for a different leadership discourse and practice. Taking the outlined dimensions and influences into account permits the development of reflexive and comprehensive investigations of complex leadership phenomena. Furthermore, dynamic processes of leaders and leadership – as well as followers and followership – can be assessed more systemically by considering stages and lines of development in an integral cycle. In this way, an integral framework provides the base for a substantial theoretical advancement of the leadership discourse.

However, understanding leadership and the leader-followership as an integral

capacity while moving on various levels means that corresponding practice and development are more complex and difficult to design and implement (van Velsor & McCauley, 2003). To realize such an extended understanding and a corresponding sustainable practice of an integral leadership requires an even deeper comprehension of the role of personal, interpersonal socio-cultural and systemic interrelations in organizations which needs further research.

Because we are in the early stages of moving into an integral leadership paradigm, there are many open questions and fields of applications to be explored. Further detailed mapping is required for moving through the conceptual landscape of an integral leadership. There is a need to examine the contingency between the interior dimensions of individuals (leaders and followers) and their external tasks and actions, as well as their relation to collective spheres. Research may further investigate ways in which diversely situated individuals and their behaviour, as well as groups in various interrelational arrangements and systemic organizational settings, constitute, experience, enact and process inter-leadership practices. Conversely, influencing conditions and factors of both socio-cultural and systemic spheres, such as relations between individuals or groups to formal organizations and the 'space in-between' (Bradbury & Lichtenstein, 2000), needs to be thoroughly investigated.

It might be useful to investigate the effect that power and socio-political tensions and conflicts have on the connections between inner processes, such as feelings or emotional dissonances and their external enactment at both individual and collective levels of leadership, and often disparate developmental lines of leaders and followers (Küpers, 2007b).

Research could also examine how the interaction between individual and organizational priorities and dynamic and relational aspects of organizational contexts (Porter & McLaughlin, 2006) affects and impacts also indirectly the character and development of various experiences and important processes involved. These may also include communicational, improvisational and aesthetic dimensions (Hansen et al., 2007; Küpers, 2002, 2004b) or ethical issues (Bell & Bryman, 2007; Weibler, 2004b) present in practices of interrelated leadership. The conceptual integrated framework presented in this article can support research along those avenues for exploratory research.

The non-reductive integral framework for inter-leadership proposed here provides the bedrock for a more dynamic theory building, respectively testing, and further empirical studies. By examining all four dimensions and further inside or outside perspectives in each of the quadrants in an integrated fashion, research arrives at a more comprehensive understanding of the causes, developments and effects of leadership, including ways of evaluating them.

As the new era of leadership research tends and evolves more and more into one of converging evidence and integration (van Seters & Field, 1990), the challenge will be to synthesize accumulated knowledge and develop further knowledge in such a way that we can begin to construct hybrid approaches covering diverse perspectives. Because leadership studies are, by their very nature, broadly multi-, inter-, trans-, and meta-disciplinary activities, they are well suited to the conscious use of a more inclusive and integral framework.

By using a meta-theoretical and integral approach, researchers and members of the organization can not only categorize existing concepts but also use the

diagnostic, prognostic and interpretative qualities of an integral approach, as well as evaluate alternative concepts practically.⁵

As a differentiated reminder of the multifaceted wholeness and tremendous multi-dimensionality of leadership, further integral investigations and implementation are likely to serve as a helpful antidote to short-term orientations, biased approaches and one-sided orientations. Therefore, integral thinking protects against an ideological narrowness of knowledge acquisition. Employing the proposed framework in an emerging integral leadership theory (Pauchant, 2005) and corresponding practice could possibly provide a base on which to build a more sustainable and rewarding life-world of organizations. In other words, effective and successful leaders and leadership processes of the 21st century will be those that understand, foster and help to create and enact a more integral way of leading and following.

This kind of leadership will also be one that realizes a revived form of practical wisdom (Srivastva & Cooperrider, 1998; Sternberg, 1998). Such a 'wise' leadership as a practice comprises and enacts influencing and developing individuals, teams and organizations and their various relevant dimensions integrally (Küpers, 2007a). Striving for an integrity of being, knowing, doing and effectuating these supports processes authentically (George, 2003; Walumba et al., 2008) is a worthwhile purpose that meets present and future needs, and with this contributes to the 'well-be(com)ing' of all members and stakeholders of organizations (Küpers, 2005). In addition to such contributions, the outlined integral framework offers challenging grounds that may guide further explorations towards a more comprehensive understanding and appropriate research, as well as to corresponding practices of the complex nexus of leadership and its embedments.

In view of the fact that integral research has only just commenced, an integral approach towards leadership still needs to establish itself as an area of scholarship in its own right. However, the time seems ripe for a corresponding research practice, including detailed empirical work, on delineating the antecedents, factors, processes and outcomes of an integral practice of leadership. Further conceptualizing integral thinking is a process that requires a '*disciplined imagination*' (Weick, 1989: 516), opening up our imaginations and hypotheses generation or explorative approaches to create a richer view of what is possible in leadership and doing this in a disciplined way.

'Theory is insightful when it surprises, when it allows us to see profoundly, imaginatively, unconventionally into phenomena we thought we understood' (Mintzberg, 2005: 10). Reaching across previously separate realms, an integral leadership orientation is an open invitation helping to find new ways to view problems, ask questions, conduct research, construct new theories and create innovative solutions, and thereby moving and enacting a deeper, richer and infinitely more subtly interconnected conceptualization and understanding of what leadership entails as a theoretical and practical affair.

Integral modelling provides a space of creative inquiry and ranges of possible discovery, which brings about a new step and level of maturation of leadership science and its corresponding practice as well as beyond.

However, there is much work from transferring this meta-framework into practice-oriented organizational leadership questions. Surely, the integral leadership approach provides a powerful strategic 'map of the territory' for developing a multidimensional

understanding and corresponding performance of leadership dynamics. While integral leadership and corresponding development are strategically important, both are also laborious, expensive and time-consuming. Thus, the process of developing integral leadership in practice is a long-term project that requires much effort, time, learning, continual updating, modification and feedback. This is not an easy agenda in times of increasingly strong performance pressures, stresses and strains faced by practitioners.

Nonetheless, if the evolution of the paradigms and theories in leadership studies reflects the interwoven economic, technological and social changes and cultural development that have and will take place, then an integral thinking of leadership helps to find a relevant, timely but also and future-oriented, more sustainable course for the 'ship' with an integrally organized household to sail, setting a different course and exploring new worlds.

Notes

1. They found that 'slightly less than 30 per cent of conceptual and empirical publications in the leadership realms explicitly addressed levels-of-analysis issues. This means that a bit more than 70 per cent of these publications only implicitly considered levels, ignored levels, or the levels of analysis were indeterminable. This '3 out of 10 success rate' indicates to us that theory formulation and integration have been inhibited and are incomplete. More specifically, only 9 per cent addressed levels-of-analysis issues appropriately in all addressed areas of theory and hypothesis formulation, measurement, data analysis and inference drawing, whereas about 91 per cent of reviewed contributions do not address adequately levels-of-analysis issues' (Yammarino et al., 2005: 902–3).
2. Holarchy refers to a hierarchy of holons, denoting also the growth of nested hierarchies, i.e. an increasing order of wholeness.
3. This processual turn (an explication is beyond the scope of this article) contributes to overcoming the dualistic orientation still at work in the differentiations referred to earlier, and to developing a more dynamic and relational approach. Relationally, it becomes possible to overcome a 'possessive individualism' or 'obsessive objectivism', by which leadership is seen as an identifiable entity *sui generis* based on the individual, or made objectively measurable. Alternatively, with a relational intelligibility in place, we can shift our attention from what is 'contained' within individuals, to what transpires between people and 'artefacts'. With this, leadership becomes factually based on relational processes that are joint or 'dialogically' structured activities as a kind of responsive action (Shotter, 1984; Stacey, 2001). As an ongoing event of relating and responding, leadership develops out of a complex set of interactions between 'subjects' and 'objects' by which experiences and meanings are continually created, re-created, questioned and re-negotiated through a weaved systemic inter-network of 'to-and-fro influences' (Cooper, 1976: 1001). Accordingly, individuals do not 'possess' leadership; leadership happens when people participate in collaborative forms of thought and action. Moreover, if there is an individual leader, the actions that this person takes are an aspect of participation in the process of leadership (Drath, 2001). Thus, for a relational understanding, the complex interrelationships among leaders, followers, contexts and tasks become central (Hosking et al., 1995; Murrell, 1997). With this, the focus shifts towards the processual space in-between (Bradbury and Lichtenstein, 2000), the intermediate field and interplay, where all parties involved can meet in mutual admiration and respect in an on-goingness of relating, within embedded interrelational 'con-+-texts' (Küpers, 2008).
4. Methodologically, a relational and processual approach takes a shift of mind to seeing

interrelationships in their connections rather than linear cause–effect chains, and seeing processes of non-linear change rather than regarding snapshots for control and predictability. The relationalist methodology emphasizes conditions of possibility and recognizes the multiplicity of causal forces of leadership rather than simple ‘causal explanation’. That is, in the ‘space between’, agency, action and structures have (poly-)causal interdependence and intertwine and co-generate ‘individual’, ‘social’ and ‘objective’ interdependencies and interrelations. This genealogical and processual approach allows overcoming of the inherent problems and limits of an atomistic and mechanistic substantialist perspective with its codifying and essentialist interpretations. A methodological process orientation of this kind can be concretized by an extended emphasis on the role of time in research. If leadership is ‘essentially a relational process unfolding over time’ (Den Hartog & Koopman, 2001: 182), more leadership research needs to be conducted from a longitudinal perspective. Rather than focusing on cross-sectional correlations, a corresponding process research calls for an evaluation of how a phenomenon develops over time. Appropriate strategies can be employed for this, such as the use of narrative, visual mapping of variable and grounded theory, by examining the stories and patterns involved (Gordon & Yukl: 2004).

5. In practical terms, the integral leadership approach provides a powerful strategic ‘map of the territory’ for developing a multidimensional understanding and corresponding performance of leadership dynamics. Using the integral model can help to navigate strategically through all relevant spheres. With this, integral leadership has the capacity to engage and leverage all dimensions of an organization in an effective way while driving differentiation and achieving desired results (Landrum & Gardner, 2005). To accomplish an integral leadership practice there are tasks, interventions, and measurements that can be applied to each of the quadrants in the integrated model on a situation-specific basis. Furthermore, central for an integral leadership practice is co-ordination between various interventions and its interrelation throughout the entire nexus. Moreover, determining practical imperatives and requirements for integral leadership allows the derivation of important practical implications for leadership education and development (Küpers, 2004b; Laske, 2003). Thus, the integral framework not only helps to generate innovative conceptual leverage in leadership studies, it also facilitates a corresponding practice. What will be needed for this are integral oriented feedback-systems (Cacioppe & Albrecht, 2000) and responsive evaluations (van der Haar & Hosking, 2004) to assess expenses and benefits as well as to create a ‘chain of impact’ that connects integral leadership development to relevant organizational outcomes (Martineau & Hannum, 2003).

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