

Eco-Leadership: towards a new paradigm

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Where there is no vision, the people
will perish

Proverb 29:18

There is yet Faith
Ts Eliot

What is Leadership?

"She was a courageous leader"

"An innovative leadership culture flourished in the company"

"The company board showed great leadership"

"Scandinavia takes a lead on social welfare"

These statements show that leadership is not just the property of an individual figure.

Leadership is much more.

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What is Leadership?

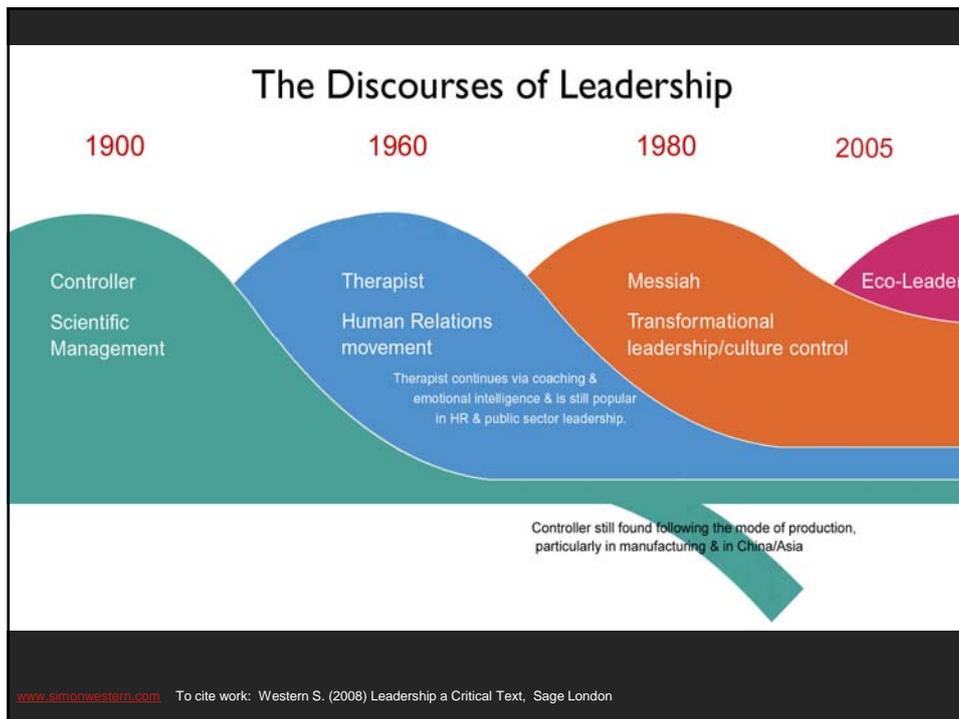
Leadership can be

- *Formal or Informal*
- *Explicit or Hidden*
- *Authoritarian or Democratic*
- *Charismatic or Contemplative*

.....or many other things

Leadership is an enigma, difficult to grasp and often reduced to its simplest form 'the individual hero' in order to avoid facing this complexity

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Controller Leadership Discourse

Scientific rationalism and efficiency



The Controller Discourse underlying assumption is that the leadership will focus on maximizing efficiency and control to increase output. Employees are treated in a functional way as replaceable human resources', cogs in the wheel of the efficient machine. This leadership assumption gained credence from the cultural belief in modernism and scientific rationalism highlighted by Taylorism and the 'efficiency craze' in the management field. The Controller Discourse remains with us especially in manufacturing and finance departments where control is useful. However whilst in demise, a recent reversion to target and audit culture shows that the discourse of the Controller is still a powerful influence.

Therapist Leadership Discourse

Happy workers are more productive workers



The Therapist leadership assumption is to work on human relations and motivation. It emerged in the post-war culture, to create a society fit for heroes and to democratise and humanise the workplace. By the 1960s personal growth and the rise of individualism dominated a changing culture. 'Therapist' leaders encouraged employees to self-actualize through their work, so that people '*come to work to work on themselves*' (N. Rose).

Key influences were Ed Mayo, Maslow, K Lewin, Carl Rogers, and the Tavistock institute (the Human Relations Movement). Phillip Rieff (1965) calls this social period 'the triumph of the Therapeutic'. Personnel departments were established to achieve these 'therapeutic goals'. This discourse remains very popular in education and the public and voluntary sector, HR OD departments and 'people focused' organizations.

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Messiah Leadership Discourse

Charismatic Leaders and Strong Cultures



The Messiah discourse arose in the 1980s following an economic slump in the USA. The Asian tiger economies excelled and challenged US dominance, drawing upon their collectivist cultures to engage employees in improving productivity. In response, Transformational Leadership (Bass/Burns) became the business school fad, trying to mimic the strong cultures of Japan (Ouchi 1981). Charismatic leaders offered vision and values, engineering 'strong cultures' (Kunda 1992) to encourage loyalty to the company. Personal success and identity become linked to the company. Internalizing the company culture leads to self and peer surveillance (in open plan offices) which replaces hierarchical or coercive control. Messiah Leadership offers hope in the face of despair, order from chaos, and arises at times of crisis when a saviour is welcomed. However, in the long-term Messiah leadership creates conformist cultures and dependency. Strong aligned cultures produce solidarity, but expel difference, undermining creativity and independent thinking. Innovation and ethics become secondary to loyalty and uniformity. Unquestioning employees lead to Enron and worse.

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Messiah Leadership: Conformist Cultures



Isolated elements swimming in the same direction for the purpose of understanding.

Damien Hirst (1991)

Individually cased, Hirst's fish swim blindly in the same direction without interaction. It's a cold and clinical metaphor for society without conflict. A utopian ideal of a harmony that comes at an unthinkable cost of sameness and emotional confinement.

From the Damien Hirst Collection Saatchi Gallery London 2003

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Eco-leadership

The contemporary organizational challenge is to realise our connectivity and inter-dependence. Organizations must liberate creativity and distribute leadership to be successful, whilst at the same time addressing issues of social responsibility and sustainability.

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Unilever are a leader in the field of sustainability:

There is no conflict between sustainable consumption and business growth. Quite the opposite, in fact. There is a compelling case for sustainable growth - retailers and consumers demand it and it saves us money

Paul Polman, Chief Executive, Unilever

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The Eco-leadership Discourse

From Machine to Eco-system



The Four Qualities of Eco-leadership

- 1 **Connectivity:** Eco-leadership is founded on connectivity, recognizing the network society and our inter-dependence with all things. Eco-leadership begins by addressing the relationships within the eco-systems and networks (technical, social and natural) in which we work and live.
- 2 **Systemic ethics:** Eco-leadership is concerned with acting ethically in the human realm *and* protecting the natural environment. It addresses systemic and structural ethical issues that go beyond company values and leader morality.
- 3 **Leadership Spirit:** Eco-leadership acknowledges the importance of the human spirit. It extends its values beyond material gain, paying attention to; mythos and logos, the unconscious and non-rational, creativity and imagination, community and friendship. It draws upon the dynamic vitality within human relationships, and between humanity and the natural world.
- 4 **Organizational Belonging:** Eco-leaders locate and commit their organizations to the 'place and space' they belong, developing kinship ties. Place refers to local habitat and community. Space to the virtual-real networks and global flows their organizations inhabit. To belong is to participate in the joys and challenges faced by communities, and to take responsibility for the local and global impacts of our organizations.

The Eco-leadership Discourse

Paradigm shifts

Three core paradigm shifts underpin this new discourse which emerged around 2000:

- 1) **Quantum Physics and new science replaced Newtonian Physics**
Challenged the dualistic, binary machinic worldview to a more holistic ecological worldview
- 2) **Globalisation and technological advances**
Make the world smaller, and connected. Technology transforms are ability to communicate and interact, shifting notions of time and space. There is no-longer any escape from our inter-dependence.
- 3) **Environmental social movement**
From a marginal movement to centre stage, climate change and finite natural resources are a major concern to governments and business. Social activists have led the way in developing new organizational forms, organising non-hierachically in self managed systems, using IT and open source technology to challenge powerful institutions. These adaptive organizations point the way for new organizational forms in other 'sectors'.

The Eco-leadership Discourse

From Machine to Eco-system



Eco-leadership is the emergent response to leading complex, global, interdependent, digitalized organizations. The internet presents us with our mirror; we work in vast networked, real and virtual spaces. New organizational forms emerge that require new forms leadership.

The Network society undoes leadership and management theory of the past century. Linear hierarchies, fixed structures and roles are not 'fit for purpose' in this new environment.

The organizational metaphor changes from the *machine* e.g. getting leadership tools, fixing a problem, maximizing efficiency, to that of an *eco-system* where leaders work in inter-dependent systems of connecting networks. Organizational Eco-systems merge technology and people, virtual and real space, machines and texts, systems and processes, architecture and nature.

The Eco-leaders task is to think spatially and work across these networks to influence them, rather than trying to control from top down.

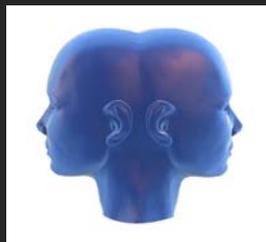
Eco-leaders create connections and spaces that encourage others to lead from the edge, accessing talent, creativity and collective wisdom to deal with organizational complexity.

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Eco-Leadership

Connectivity, Inter-dependence and Ethics

Organizational
eco-system



External
environment

- Eco-leadership faces both ways, focusing on the *internal organizational ecosystem*. Eco-leaders build networks, bridge silos and create organizational architectures that encourage leadership to flourish everywhere. Leadership at the edge, means feeding back knowledge and creativity to the centre, thus creating adaptive organizations that build in emergent capacity to deal with change.
- Eco-leaders also focus on the *external environment*, e.g. stakeholders, competitors, political and environmental trends, to ensure their organization adapts to changes within the external eco-system.
- At the heart of Eco-leadership in both realms are: Ethics, social responsibility, and sustainability: Caring for People and Planet

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The Eco-leadership Discourse

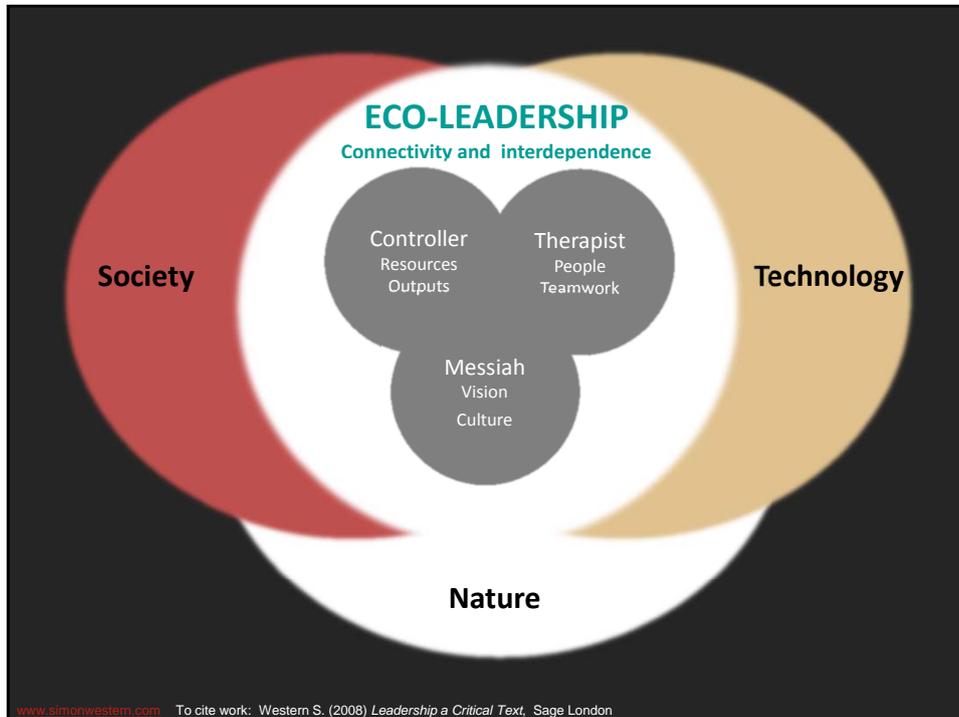
Ethics and Success

Eco-leadership demands that a new business ethic evolves. Eco-leadership means aligning organizational success with social justice and environmental concern

Taking an Ethical stance is not only altruistic it is also good for business.

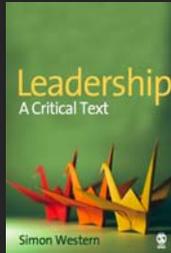
- **Protecting the brand** against social activism and negative consumer voices
- **Efficiency savings** by reducing energy bills and waste
- **Talent attracted and retained** ethical practice and socially responsible companies are more attractive to bright minds
- **Employee engagement and brand loyalty:** employees and customers respond to companies that align good business with doing good.
- **Anticipating regulation** as natural resources decline and climate change increases, international and national regulation will increase. Eco-leaders lead rather than follow these moves, anticipating change.
- **Emergent capability** Engaging all employees in tackling the big issues creates unexpected opportunities. Emergence means to see the patterns and opportunities that emerge from the unexpected.

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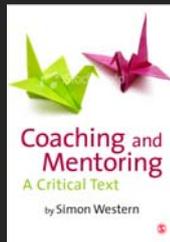
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Eco-leadership Publications



'In a highly original way, taking "Critical Theory" as a point of departure, Dr. Western helps us to obtain greater insight into the enigma of leadership.'

*Manfred Kets de Vries
Director INSEAD Global Leadership Center*



I see a lot of books on Coaching, and this is without doubt the most stimulating, original, thoughtful and well-founded account... this is an authoritative, well researched, critical and appreciative account of coaching that has at its heart a profound concern for people...

Professor of Leadership Studies, University of Exeter.

Three Principles Five steps for Eco-Leadership organization development

Re-thinking what organizational success means
in terms of Eco-leadership concepts

Innovating new business models
that give business success and are socially responsible and environmentally sustainable

Developing Eco-leaders through Leadership Formation

Re-designing organizational architectures
so they are fit to deliver 21st century success (systems, processes, aesthetics, geographies, buildings, hierarchies, responsibilities etc)

Unleashing talent and creativity
through breaking down conformist cultures and encouraging diversity

Building Eco-leadership Capacity Leadership Formation

Leadership Formation challenges contemporary leadership development because it focuses on leadership and leaders. Eco-leadership means to take Leadership Development beyond the skills and competencies of an individual.

Formation of individuals (leaders) Formation of a collective (leadership)

When spending time in a Benedictine monastery I observed the monks and gained a simple but profound insight; a monk is not trained in monk skills but undergoes a 'spiritual formation'. Both an individual monk and the monastic community are continually shaped and formed by their context, by what they call 'the life'. This is the liturgy, the prayer cycle, the silence, and the manual work. New monks have a spiritual director to lead this formation process and with the support of monastery, their particular charism (gift) is revealed.

If you ask leaders they say the same; they are formed by their life and work experience, by a particular mentor, by their context.

However, organizations unlike monasteries, pay scant regard to how their context forms and shapes their employees and leaders; it is mostly an ad-hoc process.



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Building Eco-leadership Capacity Leadership Formation

"Leaders cannot be trained but are formed through multiple experiences. The radical task for contemporary organizations is to create a formation process and spaces in the organizational architecture to enable leaders and leadership to flourish." Western S. 2008 *Leadership a critical text* Sage

Leadership Formation has 7 principles

- 1) No personal development without organizational development
- 2) Leaders learn more from each other than from trainers
- 3) Leaders learn more from work experience than from classrooms
- 4) Leaders are formed by their context and the organizational culture
- 5) Leadership is an emergent process, requiring a generative and generous culture.
- 6) Leadership formation requires both a formal and informal process
- 7) Leadership formation and emergent cultures require 'containing structures' that encourage reflective, creative and developmental activity to thrive.

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Coaching new leaders for new times



Analytic-Network
Coaching

Coaching leaders to act in 'Good Faith,
to create the 'Good Society'

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Five frames of A-NcP©

Coaching the Self

1. Depth Analysis
2. Relational Analysis
3. Leadership Analysis

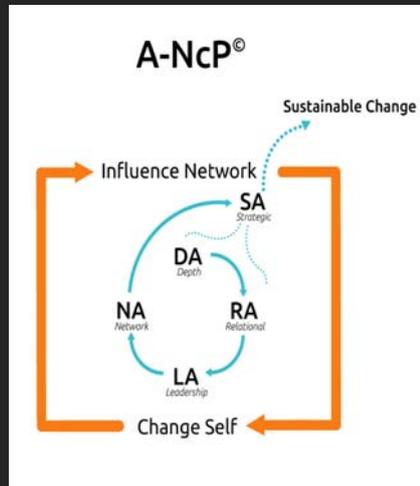
1. Work from the 'authentic self'
2. Understand relational dynamics

Influencing the network

4. Network Analysis
5. Strategic Analysis

4. Reveal their network: influence change
5. Create emergent strategy for self and work

Analytic-Network Coaching Process



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