Edinburgh Research Explorer

Proposals for the future of leadership scholarship

OPEN ACCESS

Proposals for the Future of Leadership Scholarship:
Suggestions in Phronesis

Scott J. Allen, David M. Rosch, Joanne B. Cuilla, John P. Dugan, Brad Jackson, Stefanie K. Johnson, Cindy Pace, Steve Kempster, Eric Guthey, Susan E. Murphy, Ron E. Riggio, Karen "Kat" Schrier, Wiley "Chip" Souba, and Chellie Spiller.

Abstract

"Phronesis" can be summarized as "wisdom in determining ends and the means of attaining them." This unique article originated from comments made by scholars on a podcast hosted by Dr. Scott Allen titled "Phronesis: Practical Wisdom for Leaders." Here, we propose ten specific agendas focused on the future of scholarship in the field of leadership studies, authored by some of these scholars. Topics include how to think about effective leadership in "the age of emotion" where truth can seem up for debate; specific topical suggestions for expanded study–such as more comprehensively studying place and space, indigenous wisdom, equity issues, games that teach, and focusing more on lifespan perspectives; better integrating scholarship with professional settings where leading occurs; and more effectively framing what it even means to lead and follow.

Scott J. Allen (sallen@jcu.edu) is an associate professor of management at John Carroll University. He is the co-founder of the Collegiate Leadership Competition and hosts the weekly podcast *Phronesis: Practical Wisdom for Leaders.*

David M. Rosch (dmrosch@illinois.edu) is an associate professor and director of the agricultural leadership, education and communications program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Introduction

The context in which leadership is practiced continues to shift as our understanding of the concept expands. Technologies enabling disruption, geo-political posturing, corruption, changes in positional leaders and how they are seen, inequity, and the problems associated with power—those seeking it and those protecting it—are ever-present in the tales of human history. As leadership scholars, we have a unique and critical opportunity to help make sense of our past, present, and future. The opportunities continually unfold to understand the changing conceptions of leadership, explore paths forward, and arm individuals and groups with the tools necessary to provide greater access to the resources and knowledge of leading needed to elevate the human experience.

The Phronesis podcast convenes leadership scholars and practitioners from across the globe. Since March 2020, more than 110 guests have shared their unique and diverse perspectives on leadership and how it intersects with many contextual shifts previously mentioned. Several guests have succinctly described suggestions regarding the future of leadership scholarship, and the present article highlights the thinking of some of these individuals.

We approached a diverse set of podcast guests to each author a 1000-word essay that highlights their perspective and elevates critical questions in the study of leadership for other

scholars to consider. Our goal in this work is to spark dialogue among colleagues and perhaps even lead to partnerships that advance the field. Furthermore, as some contributors suggest, we hope this work will impact practice and movement in the significant challenges facing us globally.

A natural inclination is to categorize the following ten essays in some manner. We have chosen not to do so. We hope that part of your experience of reviewing this curated collection of essays is that it takes you on a broad-ranging and eclectic journey that beautifully represents the current and potential future state leadership studies—a fascinating collection of ideas, perspectives, disciplines, world views, and priorities for us to make sense of. Perhaps most important, our hope is that *you* identify themes and potential paths forward in your own work.

We want to thank Dennis Tourish for creating space for a somewhat unique contribution in *Leadership* that does not fit within the confines of a traditional essay, empirical investigation, or other generally accepted formats for a journal of this nature.—Article editors Scott J. Allen and David M. Rosch

Leadership in the Age of Emotion

Dr. Joanne B. Ciulla, Professor and Director of the Institute for Ethical Leadership, Rutgers University
jciulla@business.rutgers.edu

What would the great philosophers from the Age of Reason think about leadership in the information age? From the 16th through the 18th centuries, writers such as Voltaire and Diderot were intellectual influencers who celebrated philosophy, science, and the arts and scorned ideas not based in reason. Meanwhile, philosophers like Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau were busy laying the groundwork for the social contract and, by extension, the obligations of leaders and citizens in society. Imagine their amazement at learning about a future where people could carry a device in their pocket that provided access to information on almost any imaginable and unimaginable topic. On the one hand, this future might appear a golden age where the enlightenment of the masses created more just and equitable societies. On the other hand, as astute observers of human nature, some Enlightenment thinkers might worry about democratizing access and dissemination of information because it could replace science with hearsay and superstition. They would be right on both counts.

Instead of giving rise to a golden age of reason and democratic leadership, the information age gave birth to the age of emotion. In the age of emotion, you cannot understand leadership, especially political leadership, without understanding emotions and their relationship to truth. While leadership scholars have extensively researched emotions in charismatic leadership and emotional intelligence, both are leader-centric approaches that focus on traits and abilities. In this essay, I argue that feelings are more than personal. They are social and epistemological constructions. At the political level, what people think or want to be true, not always the truth, shapes what they feel and who they follow.

We could pit the age of emotion against the age of reason, deride social media, ridicule those who believe in unfounded conspiracies, and rail against leaders who tell lies. Or we might shrug and take the post-modernist stance that truth is relative. None of these are helpful. Instead, we must understand emotions as a facet of rationality, shaped by information and epistemology. Falsehoods and demonstrable contradictions no longer matter when the truth is in the eye of the

beholder who verifies information by who says it and whether that person is "someone like me." The comedian Stephen Colbert called this "truthiness," which the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* defines as "seemingly truthful quality that is claimed for something not because of supporting facts or evidence but because of a feeling it is true or a desire for it to be true."

In the age of emotions, political leaders do not need to promote policies that benefit their followers. Instead, they manufacture information that cultivates and sustains some emotions. While this is not new, the speed of dissemination, the size of the audience, the multiplying effect of social media platforms, and the democratization of the production and consumption of knowledge are unprecedented. Leaders can manufacture individual and, more importantly, group emotions that are neither idiosyncratic nor ignorant.

Aristotle says society teaches us how to have emotions "too much or too little, and in either case wrongly; but to feel them when we ought, on what occasions, towards whom, why, and as, we should do, is the mean, or in other words the best state, and this is the property of virtue" (2003, Book II, Chapter 5). Since emotions are things we learn, we are also morally responsible for how, when, and why we have them. We learn how to feel from our social context and the information generated by leaders and groups. Even when information is demonstrably false, there is a rationality to people's emotional response. For example, in particular social contexts, it is reasonable to be outraged when your friends, neighbors, or trusted sources on social media, cable news or talk radio tell you that Bill Gates put microchips in COVID vaccines to spy on us.

Besides being a reaction to democratized information that is sometimes false, emotions play a more significant role in people's lives. Emotions are how we experience meaning, and we cannot have meaning without them. Solomon (1993) argues that life is only absurd if you feel nothing. Leaders who inspire intense feelings add meaning and sometimes excitement to followers' lives. For some, verifying what they read on social media does not matter if it makes them feel alive.

We need emotions to find meaning, but they also motivate us and help us distinguish right from wrong. Some feelings have different lasting effects. As Machiavelli said in *The Prince* and contemporary politicians and Facebook executives know, negative emotions like fear can be more expedient motivators than positive ones like love. However, instead of making followers fear themselves, leaders may provide followers with things to fear, like immigrants or anyone not like themselves. Today, some leaders cultivate the addictive power of resentment – a highly contagious, long-term feeling of injustice also nourished by social media (Ciulla, 2020). Hume (2000) believed our emotions or moral sentiments like disgust tell us what is unjust and wrong. Nietzsche warned us that the powerful could use emotions like resentment to invert values and make what we usually consider good, bad. In this age of emotions, negative feelings can cleave societies into the resenters and the resented (who become resenters).

The crucial leadership question in polarized societies is how to break the hold of emotions that prevent constructive social discourse and action concerning the well-being of society. Cogent arguments will not work when information is everywhere, and facts are subject to feelings and feelings to facts. Furthermore, when emotions become ends-in-themselves and leaders only ask followers to support them and oppose what they oppose, emotions become a distraction that allows leaders to increase their power and diminish democracy.

So, what does the leadership literature have to say about what is arguably the most urgent leadership problem in the age of emotions – a problem that threatens democracy and social coherence? Not much – however, if you go to Google Scholar and type in "leadership and emotional intelligence," you will find 1.48 million articles. Why? One reason is that leadership

scholars love theories and constructs with good questionnaires. Another is that leadership scholars find themselves consciously or unconsciously stuck in the "born or made" question and keep looking for outstanding abilities, traits, and leadership models. Lastly, most leadership research is in management journals, and emotional intelligence is a popular idea that focuses on individuals in organizations rather than the complex social context of democratic societies.

Leadership scholars have research methods and literature that they can draw on that offer insights into the problems with information and truth facing leadership in the age of emotion. Here are three questions for future research:

- First, most of the literature on emotions focuses on individual leaders and followers. But emotions are also social constructions and should be studied as such. Research on how social and cultural problems, values, and information cultivate emotions that influence perceptions of truth makes certain kinds of leaders and followers possible.
- Second, researchers could take work on leader perceptions and implicit theories of leadership one step further to examine leaders' and followers' perceptions of truth with their perceptions of each other.
- Third, one of the critical but fraught leadership questions of our time is confronting false and unverified beliefs about what is true when emotions undercut verifiable information, logic, and scientific knowledge. Post-modernists might worry that that is positivism or domination of the powerful to control the truth. Granted, we may disagree on what is true, but this does not exempt anyone from logic and verifiable evidence for what they believe. It would be helpful to have theoretical and empirical research on how changing emotions affect perceptions of truth and how emotions influence our ideas about verification and epistemology (or how we know something is true).

Political theorists and pundits have critically discussed the dangers of social media and politics. Leadership scholars would enrich this conversation with empirical and theoretical research on the social construction of emotions and their relationship to democratized information and ideas about truth. Given the urgent threats to society and democracy in some places today, most recently with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, leadership researchers have an obligation to address problems that affect their world. We need to expand research on how to effectively lead in this age of emotions and contested notions of truth.

The Dangers of Echopraxia and Potential of Poiesis for Transforming Leadership Praxis and Scholarship

Dr. John P. Dugan, Executive Director, Youth Leadership Programs, Aspen Institute
john.dugan@aspeninstitute.org

Globally, authoritarianism is on the rise, along with tribalism and nationalism. This coincides with accelerating existential threats associated with climate change, resource scarcity, declining democratic principles, widening economic disparities, and diminishing social cohesion. These issues are rooted in the erosion of quality social exchanges and the weakening of our organizational structures. At their core, these are issues of leadership.

Bennis (2007) argued that contemporary society faced four core threats including "(a) nuclear or biological catastrophe…; (b) a worldwide epidemic; (c) tribalism and its cruel offspring, assimilation; and (d) the leadership of our human organizations" (p. 5). These threats are no longer hypothesized concerns but actual realities, the impacts of which permeate nearly

every aspect of society. Bennis stressed the urgency of studying leadership and that "leadership is never purely academic. It is not a matter that can be contemplated from afar with the dispassion that we reserve for things with little obvious impact on our daily lives" (p. 2). To what extent have we muted the impact of leadership development by positioning the primacy of research over practice? Do we have a problem of praxis?

What is Praxis?

Etymologically, praxis is defined as the practical application of theory and research. Often omitted is the belief that neither research nor practice should hold primacy over the other. Some scholars (e.g., Marx, Arendt) argued that practice holds primacy as the place of resolution for the theoretical. Other scholars (e.g., Freire) stressed the necessary dialectical interplay between theory and practice. My gross reduction of these bodies of thought omits nuance but surfaces a central tension: what is the balance of research and practice in leadership studies scholarship?

The Limitations of Praxis

At a recent academic symposium, a thought leader suggested we needed less research on leadership. Her point was that we have not adequately examined the application of extant knowledge to practice. I would argue that we barely engage those practicing leadership in the process of constructing knowledge about its practice. Far too much scholarship begins and ends with the "scholar" replicating power dynamics associated with knowledge production. "Scholars" are actively positioned as arbiters of knowledge and everyone else as consumers. Scholarship itself is commoditized and disassociated from its intended impact. What would it look like for this dynamic to shift? I propose a return to praxis in which the production of knowledge is co-constructed *within* community using the concepts of echopraxia and poiesis.

The Dangers of Echopraxia. Echopraxia describes the involuntarily and repetitive mimicry of the behaviors of another (e.g., you see someone scratch their ear, and you unconsciously scratch your ear). Applied here, echopraxia reflects the normalized set of acceptable behaviors mimicked in the socialization and reproduction of academic knowledge. Academic socialization consciously and unconsciously reproduces ways of knowing that erode praxis and center the scholar as creator, curator, and interpreter of knowledge.

Echopraxia impedes praxis as it rewards knowledge production that retains the status quo. For example, at the above convening meeting, even the mention of a critical theory approach to scholarship merited interruption and immediate dismissal for being too narrow and polemic. Note that power dynamics often play a role in echopraxia. A senior scholar spoke early in the discussion attacking the use of critical theory. Soon after, verbal and non-verbal mimicry of this senior scholar by those reliant on him for academic production or socialized with similar assumptions effectively shut down the conversation.

Let us take the implications of echopraxia a step further. After two decades in the academy, how can I legitimately claim that I am proximate enough to the populations and phenomena of study to credibly interpret data? If scholars are not deeply integrated in the "work" of the study (i.e., engaging in the process of leading themselves), how can they accurately interpret complex social relationships, power dynamics, and/or conscious and subconscious sensemaking and sensegiving at play?

To be clear, this is not a call for varied methods. A focus on methodological solutions is echopraxic. So, how do we address echopraxia? We must engage normative assumptions with curiosity for the opportunities they offer.

- *Individual*: Audit research designs for echopraxia. What practices are you mimicking because it is simply "how things are done"? Are you perpetuating the primacy of research over practice? Who has the closest proximity to the phenomena you are studying? How are they integrated into the research beyond being a data source?
- *Field*: The field of leadership studies is multidisciplinary and decentralized. This increases the responsibility of field-shaping organizations to disrupt echopraxia. These organizations must take a prominent role in disrupting normalized assumptions about the theory–research–practice cycle.

Toward Poiesis. The central goal of praxis is action, while the goal of poiesis is creation. Poiesis is the process of making or bringing into existence that which was hidden or did not previously exist. The classic example is a butterfly that emerges from the cocoon transformed from something that was into something new. Essential is the belief that the "object" of study often possesses the necessary solutions.

In the context of poiesis, praxis reflects the communion of research, theory, and practice in service of impact. It is not through praxis that something is "made." When praxis is the central framework for research, it increases the risk of echopraxia rather than producing new or transformed knowledge, limiting the impact of scholarship.

Shifting our starting point away from praxis and toward poeisis alters the fundamental questions we ask about how knowledge is constituted. It renders tensions around methodology and design as secondary to the process of creation, thus altering the form, substance, and impact of leadership research.

- *Individual*: Poiesis requires the co-creation of knowledge. When poiesis becomes the starting point, nearly every research strategy is reimagined. Praxis, then, becomes the process of co-sharing what was co-created *within* community via poiesis rather than the end goal in and of itself.
- *Field*: Co-creation of knowledge requires increased resources, altered reward systems, and a willingness to engage in the ambiguity of knowledge creation without a guarantee of praxis. We need revised standards of assessing scholarly impact that moves beyond self-congratulatory, academic impact statistics that too often reflect perceived productivity over material impact.

Poeisis demands we look at the full system through which research is produced, not just its natural start and end points. *Who are we as scholars to presume to know more about an experience than those experiencing it directly?* Who identified the "problem" of study? To what extent are actual stakeholders involved in problem identification and empirical design? As a scholar, when was the last time you were substantively immersed in the dynamics examined?

Research should not end with the acceptance and publication of a manuscript. Virtually no comprehensive rewards systems support scholarly efforts to move from ideas through potential solutions toward action. Academic journals allot less and less space for translational work that stimulates praxis. A focus on praxis actually places undue burden on the practitioner to manifest and implement the "praxis" presuming–of course–that the findings have some functional benefit.

Bennis (2007) captured well the urgent need for leadership research and practice while simultaneously disrupting the echopraxic tendency to compartmentalize the two concepts. He positioned leadership research as necessarily proximate to lived experiences. Living into this paradigm shift requires the will of academics to engage in critical self-reflection deep enough to rattle our assumptions and socialization. This must be coupled with a renewed demand for

increased material impact of leadership research beyond metrics that do little to change the complex, existential crises we face. We must begin our work with the goal of poiesis, dedicated attention to reducing echopraxia, and a revisioning of praxis. Anything short of this risks minimizing our collective impact as a field.

(All We Are Saying Is) Give Place A Chance

Dr. Brad Jackson, MBA Director at The University of Waikato
brad.jackson@waikato.ac.nz

I commenced my university studies as a Geographer, conducting spatial analysis in my undergraduate degree and interpreting place in my Master's degree. Pursuing my doctorate in Management after a ten-year hiatus I was staggered by the widespread disregard for either historic or geographic understanding within the management and organisational studies literature. Irrespective of ideological bent, the glittering prize was the deduction of the most current and universal insights, whether you were working for or against global capitalism. Where it happened and when it happened just did not seem to matter. If I hadn't known better, I would have assumed a global conspiracy to systematically forge an ahistoric and ageographic research perspective. 'Context' was grudgingly and apologetically referred to in the limitations of the study.

Moving into leadership studies in the early 2000s, I assumed that this field would naturally be more concerned with the distinctiveness of place. With notable exceptions (e.g. Gibney and Collinge, 2015; Ropo et al, 2015: Sotarauta and Beer, 2017), neither space nor place have been significant preoccupations. Recently, however, I have been encouraged by the Call for Papers for the Special Issue of Leadership ('Putting Leadership in its Place,' Sutherland et al, 2020) which builds on the International Studying Leadership Conference held at the University of West England in 2019. It seems that we are finally building momentum in exploring the critical but long-neglected inter-relationship between leadership and place (Jackson, 2019).

The COVID pandemic has made where you and where you are not a primary preoccupation for many people over the past two years. Place has become highly politicised through the legislation of national and regional lockdowns; managed isolation; vaccination programmes and the selective geographic exclusion of the non-vaccinated. The pandemic has revealed a 'crisis of leadership' (Tourish, 2020) among national and international entities that have not fully appreciated the power of place-based leadership. On a more positive note, restricted mobility has fostered for many of us a strong physical re-connection with the local places we immediately inhabit.

COP-26 further highlighted the impotence of our formally appointed leaders to lead a concerted global effort towards carbon neutrality. Irrespective of where we are in the world our current and future place is our most immediate concern. As leadership scholars, it is imperative that we recognise and leverage local place-based small actions to generate sustainable systemic change (Grint, 2021).

I have elsewhere suggested that place should not only be considered but actively foregrounded as a crucial concern for public leadership research, development and practice to create and enhance public value (Jackson, 2019). More recently, Steve Kempster and I have argued that place has a central role to play in business leadership as companies strive to shift from a well-entrenched preoccupation with shareholders to a broader engagement with their stakeholders. Guided by a responsibility lens, business leaders should be as much concerned

about where they lead as they are about what, why, and for whom they lead (Kempster and Jackson, 2021)

In considering how to conceptualise the inter-relationship between place and leadership, I have been profoundly influenced by indigenous leadership philosophies and practices, many of which were foregrounded in another special issue of this journal (Wolfgram et al, 2015). 'Kaupapa Māori' makes the stewardship of the land, sky, and sea a primary responsibility for leadership that is guided by the Whakapapa, a taxonomic framework linking all animate and inanimate, known and unknown phenomena in the terrestrial and spiritual worlds (Spiller et al, 2020). With this in mind, rather than making place an afterthought or a sidebar in our leadership research, how do we make the shift from place-based leadership to place-driven leadership in our research and development of leadership so that we be actively guided by the environment to sustain inter-generational, cross-sectoral and systemic collective leadership practices?

To gain the rich and nuanced understanding of place and its relationship with leadership, we can be guided by both indigenous knowledge and a wide range of disciplinary perspectives and methodologies that have traditionally made important contributions to the understanding of place including most crucially, Geography. In doing this, place leadership might serve to accelerate the long-promised but rarely actualised inter-disciplinary thrust for leadership studies. Perhaps a 'Geography of Leadership' might provide a compelling focus for this work?

Another key task moving forward is to find novel and sustainable ways to develop place leadership capability to 'glocally' respond to a wide range of global challenges (Worrall and Kjaerulf, 2019). Place leadership emphasises how better-integrated public, private and political leadership can engage people to co-create public value through a wide array of online and face-to-face arenas (Bryson et al, 2021). This has been the primary focus of our work with the Community and Enterprise Leadership Programme here at the University of Waikato (https://www.celf.org.nz).

While I have actively championed the cause of place leadership, it's important to add a cautionary note. Place can provide a fundamentally humane, and responsible way to approach larger questions of environmental prudence and social justice but unfortunately this perspective has all too frequently been associated with exclusion, xenophobia, prejudice, conflict, violence, and in extreme situations, genocide. A preoccupation with place not only generates ontological and epistemological complexity, it also brings to the fore profound ethical and moral concerns which require due consideration.

Bearing these concerns in mind, imagine if leadership scholars began to recognise place as a 'true leader' in our future research, teaching, and practice (Parry and Hansen, 2007). For a start, place considerations would move from the marginal 'limitations' sections of our articles to the beginning so that we could provide rich accounts of the places which gave birth to our research questions as well as the leadership practices that we are investigating. Building on the theme of this journal's special issue on place and leadership, published in February 2022, we can and should move beyond the important goal of putting leadership in its place to a broader more ambitious goal that puts place into leadership. Isn't it time that we gave place a chance in leadership?

All Leadership Must be Inclusive and Equitable

Dr. Stefanie K. Johnson, Associate Professor, University of Colorado Boulder
Dr. Cindy Pace, Vice President, Global Chief Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Officer at MetLife
stefanie.johnson@colorado.edu

cpace2@metlife.com

Massive social change precipitated by the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements have fundamentally altered the way people view diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace and have heightened the need to explore inclusive leadership in new ways. In organizations, the addition of equity as part of the diversity and inclusion strategy is on the rise. While the definitions of equity are varied, a consideration is that equity is focused on inclusiveness, uniqueness, and belonging by providing people with what they need to be successful. This means refinement of theory to incorporate equity but also added effort by researchers to determine how to best test whether leaders in their study are leading everyone effectively. In this essay, we provide five opportunities for advancing research and theory on inclusive leadership in today's context.

Opportunity 1: Replicate past leadership research related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in today's context.

Dramatic social changes demand that we retest the assumptions of our current theoretical models in today's context. For example, Eagly and colleagues (2020) show that, over the last 70 years, the belief that women are less competent than men has declined and possibly even reversed. At least two studies show that the gender pay gap has reversed for high potential women (Dreher, Carter, and Dworkin, 2019; Leslie et al., 2017) and that women may advance through the executive ranks more quickly than their male counterparts (Bonet, Cappelli, and Hamori, 2020). Another study showed that board members from underrepresented groups might be more resilient to the corporate scandals in earning additional board seats given their in-demand status (Naumovska, Wernicke, and Zajac, 2020). Likewise, anti-gay attitudes have declined over time (Westgate et al., 2015). The point is, existing leadership theories may not capture today's realities and should be refined.

Opportunity 2: Ensure that a diverse range of voices are heard when building theory around inclusive leadership.

In addition to updating theory, leadership research needs to use more diverse samples to address these changes. In Nishii's (2013) article on inclusive culture, 81% of the participants identified as White. The samples used in Chung et al.'s (2020) study on inclusion were more diverse. Only about half of participants identifying as White but the representation of Black and African American participants was still less than 5%. These missing voices create the opportunity to replicate these studies with more diverse participant samples. Work in this area might return to the basics with qualitative interviews on the experiences of persons with different and intersectional identities to ensure that their experiences are captured in our current theories of inclusion.

Opportunity 3: Identify the behaviors that are most strongly associated with important outcomes for inclusive leaders.

It is also the case that the isolation of specific leader behaviors associated with inclusive leadership needs refinement. There are an array of leader behaviors identified as inclusive leader behaviors, including voice, shared decision making, and fairness. For organizations, the identification of inclusive leader behaviors can be incorporated in organizational values, leadership assessments, and feedback tools to assist in the shaping of an inclusive culture and the

development of leaders at every level. But first, we need to know which leader behaviors are the most important.

Opportunity 4: Test whether LMX differentiation is falling along race and gender lines.

We challenge all leadership researchers to consider identity-based gaps in follower outcomes (ratings of their leader, success, retention) as a leadership outcome. In our experience, leadership has been measured as the "average," with little attention paid to differences between followers. But those differences often reflect the failure of leaders to engage all employees on their teams. Of course, the literature on LMX shows that leaders do, in fact, differentiate between employees and that this can be functional or dysfunctional. But differentiation can also create inequality, and we have seen many instances where the LMX differentiation for leaders falls along race or gender lines. Regardless of what "theory" of leadership one employs, all leaders should be held to a standard of ensuring equity for their followers on protected classes under the EEOC guidelines. Anything short of that should not be considered effective leadership.

Opportunity 5: Explore the role social power and influence plays in leading change across gender, race, and ethnicity

Finally, we need to consider how power fits into the conversation around leadership. There is a paucity of leadership research on diversity, intersectionality, and power. We have learned about women and power mainly from feminists and social justice scholars. In this literature, there has been a focus on transformational leadership, gender, and power. We can learn and apply from these researchers' insights on how power is achieved individually (power to and within) and collectively (power with) through social movements and more fully explore in our research the role of leadership, power dynamics, and political savvy across gender, race, and ethnicity.

In sum, we suggest that times are changing and that diversity, equity, and inclusion should be centered in research on leadership. Our existing theories need to be updated, and greater attention needs to be paid to issues like power and equity as they relate to leadership. If we really want to change the state of the field, we should incorporate equity into all theories of leadership. Leaders who are seen by those who share their identity as charismatic, transformational, humble, or ethical but *not* seen as effective by those of a different identity can no longer be accepted as effective leaders. Leadership is about everyone, and the bare minimum requirement for all leaders should be that you are *not* creating greater inequity in this world.

Leadership for Human Flourishing
Dr. Steve Kempster, Professor of Leadership Learning and Development, Lancaster University
Dr. Eric Guthey, Associate Professor, Copenhagen Business School
s.kempster@lancaster.ac.uk
eg.msc@cbs.dk

An editor recently asked Steve to review a manuscript offering a revised version of a 25-year-old leadership framework that promised to reveal how leaders can motivate followers to produce desired outcomes. As leadership scholars, we know we should take an interest, but it just feels like more of the same. We have heard so much about styles of leading, traits, authentic behaviours, relational dyads, and balancing transactional and transformational behaviours. All of these quantitatively validated constructs promise to produce 'desired outcomes.' That's fine, but

leadership researchers haven't spent nearly enough time discussing *what* those outcomes should be or what leadership is really for. For this reason, we will take a moment here to explore the purposes and responsibilities of leading.

Steve, Brad Jackson, and Merv Conroy (2011) have argued that *purpose* has been a very elusive concept in leadership studies – often heralded (in the guise of vision) but rarely explored in earnest. Eric Guthey (2016) has chimed in that responsible leadership needs to negotiate between the multiple purposes that stakeholders consider important. Brad and Steve have challenged leadership scholars on this score, insisting that "we need to offer some leadership ourselves in shaping our endeavours to provide the requisite support to the challenge of undertaking responsible leadership to enable businesses to generate value for all: shareholders, employees, supply chains, communities, the environment and indeed humanity" (2021: 62).

But if we are going to achieve this, we need to pay critical attention to the broader context of our research. In November 2021, the climate change conference COP 26 provided a glimmer of hope that we nudge humanity toward limiting the global temperature rise to 2.4C. This is just one of the many interrelated local and global grand challenges we face—poverty, food scarcity, education, health and housing, political extremism, threats to democratic governance. Responsibility for addressing such challenges has traditionally resided with governments, NGOs, charities, and social enterprises. But this arrangement doesn't take account of the contemporary realities of corporate size and influence. If we count both countries and businesses as entities, then 150 of the largest 200 entities in the world are businesses (largest reflects the comparison of corporate revenue with country GDP). Walmart towers over Belgium, and Amazon dwarfs New Zealand. Those who sit at the top of these corporate entities wield enormous power, resources, and reach.

Imagine if leadership researchers raised their sights away from finding the silver bullet that can motivate followers, and focused instead on convincing those with corporate power to swap out profit for pro-social outcomes at the heart of the business model–reframing value creation as social impact. *This would change everything*. Redirecting our research efforts in this manner could slowly transform the way society understands the role of business leadership and the role of leadership courses and business schools in transforming that society. Our work might actually influence policy-makers and shape policy, stimulate debate about the role of business leadership in society, or inform efforts to build a regenerative economy.

For our research to have this level of impact, our task as scholars is to understand and provide insight, to challenge and critique, to offer frameworks and tools, and to partner in the research agenda across disciplines:

- *Understand and provide insight* – Leadership research hasn't asked those in crucial leadership positions what they really think their responsibilities are–or why do they do what they do. Leadership scholars need to engage with leaders at all levels to find this out–for example by co-constructing auto-ethnographies of leadership. And we need to take care to not just focus on the usual suspects but instead compare and contrast across antecedents, processes, and outcomes.
- *Challenge and critique* – To get at these kinds of issues, scholarly inquiry needs to be appreciative, but also critical. Research needs to make visible the taken-for-granted assumptions, interests, ethical rationalizations, and power relations that shape perceptions of leadership responsibility, and expose how neo-liberal assumptions about governance and the purpose of economic activity have pushed leadership scholarship to reinforce unequal power relations. Critical perspectives can catalyse a much-needed ethical debate

about the power of the unelected few to shape the lives of so many, about the governance of local communities, about who gets to decide how we tackle grand challenges, and about the role of business in society and human flourishing.

- *Offer frameworks and tools* – With understanding and critique providing sure foundations, we should construct pragmatic and workable frameworks to interlink micro, meso, and macro concerns, empowering those seeking to lead and the communities and stakeholders to whom they answer.
- *Partner in the research agenda across disciplines* – If leadership scholars are going to help bend the power of leadership influence to enhance humanity, we need to embrace an interdisciplinary community and develop new theory and new frameworks for leading with purpose. This requires engaging with colleagues throughout our business schools and indeed other faculties too. The question "leadership for what?" transcends disciplinary and university boundaries and requires a close engagement with practitioners and policymakers.

We leadership scholars like to think that our work has been, for the most part, thoughtful, sometimes interesting (at least to other academics), once in a rare while provocative, and occasionally helpful to practitioners. But our efforts have not yielded a sufficient dividend for humanity. This requires a renewed focus on purposes and responsibilities. We need to structure our contributions in new ways and connect to research and interventions in unrelated fields. If we can do this, leadership studies will become a very different field—open to new research approaches, grappling with more significant challenges, and tackling them with new partners and fellow travelers. Society at large might take more notice, utilize our research, and work to help us succeed. The task of the leadership scholar will become more like leadership itself, which will be challenging but also very worthwhile.

'Two roads diverged in a yellow wood … Yet knowing how way leads on to way…I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference' (Robert Frost)

Leader Development Across the Lifespan
Dr. Susan Elaine Murphy, Chair in Leadership Development, University of Edinburgh
Susan.Murphy@ed.ac.uk

Organizations spend a substantial portion of their learning and development budgets on activities to develop skills for the ever-evolving workforce. Leader development is a costly addition as it requires developing a complex set of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and specific organization management skills that affect many workplace outcomes. The design of these developmental activities, whether formal 'classroom' training, action learning activities, or job assignments, rarely consider the context of the leader's life stage. Leader development that focuses on a lifespan approach may be the key to improving leader development efforts. However, little research has consistently incorporated this approach to understanding leader development.

Lifespan developmental psychology focuses on human development that occurs from birth to death within unique historical contexts and focuses on various age-specific developmental tasks (McCormick, Kuo, and Masten, 2011). Day, Harrison, and Halpin's (2009) work was one of the first to incorporate a strong adult developmental focus in leader development. Other researchers have extended this work by also incorporating childhood and adolescent development aspects in

understanding leadership (Lui et al., 2020). Overall, this lifespan approach can inform leader development research in several ways.

First, for many individuals, leadership (and followership) skills development is a life-long process, and much of today's leader development does not take into account the development that has occurred earlier in one's life. Whether it is previous skill acquisition, implicit theories held about effective leaders, or an understanding of their own internal leader identity, often when individuals take their first jobs and enroll in leadership development these programmes do not capitalize on past leader development activities, nor leaders' experiences (Murphy, 2018).

Second, leadership tasks become more complex as individuals take on larger leadership roles and require a commensurate change in skills and leader identity (Murphy and Johnson, 2011). These complex skills require a foundation of advanced problem-solving skills, tolerance of ambiguity, and the ability to handle paradox, for a start. Cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal skills must be developed across the lifespan to accommodate advancing levels of leadership. Moreover, there may be developmental windows during which certain advanced leadership skills must be developed, similar to what research finds about language development.

And third, the context of one's life stage, situated in time across different social identities can affect both values and leadership styles. Leaders at early stages lead differently than those who have gained experience and wisdom in later years. Generational differences, often exaggerated by the media (Lyons and Kuron, 2013), suggest that changes in society, technology, and work itself means that new generations of workers will adopt different leadership styles than their predecessors. Yet the content of current leader development activities has remained focused on many of the same concepts and techniques used as far back as 40 years ago.

What does a lifespan perspective mean in terms of future research across these three areas? From a researcher's perspective, developmental aspects of the lifespan provide rich areas for further research in leader development for both theory building and designing leader development interventions. Of course, studying leader development across the lifespan is difficult because it often requires longitudinal studies. For example, studies such as the Fullerton Study show how early leadership experiences and associated personality characteristics from birth predicted the emergence of leadership 30 years later (Reichard, et al., 2011).

Researchers not interested in longitudinal studies might focus their efforts on collecting data retrospectively to better understand these early leadership experiences. Many colleges and universities make good use of student inventories of past experiences and evidence of leader development. McCall's (2010) research on leadership experience has identified those experiences from which advanced learning can occur. Perhaps, comparing the effects of leader development activities for those with different levels and types of previous leadership experiences and varying levels of leadership identity development could highlight the different development needs for each of these groups and help tailor leader development programmes in higher education and later in the workplace. More broadly, this research would focus on understanding what is gained from past leadership experience and brought to bear later throughout adulthood.

When incorporating the lifespan approach, researchers might also consider the different strengths exhibited by leaders at various life stages and focus on identifying developmental activities that maximize effectiveness for these different groups of leaders. Research directly incorporating the employee lifecycle (e.g., new hire to approaching retirement) embedded within phases of life (e.g., first job, marriage, starting a family, buying a house, raising children, etc.) will help in the design of bespoke leader developmental activities.

The lifespan approach also allows for incorporating aspects of diverse leaders and intersectionality in the leader development journey. For example, a black woman's leadership development journey will be different from someone not sharing those social identities. Much research has focused on women's leadership development, but more about what motivates young girls to develop their leadership would be important for understanding leader development. Some past research suggests that the leader ideals promoted by the media or businesses dissuade young people, especially young people of color, from seeing themselves as leaders and taking on leadership roles.

These many differences in leader backgrounds across the lifespan then call for understanding leader development as an individualized developmental journey affected by changing implicit leadership theories. Researchers interested in how implicit theories of leadership affect an individual's propensity to develop as a leader would reveal that these prototypes of the ideal leader that we hold in our mind are dictated by culture and context. Consider too that implicit theories underlying an individual's leader identity can change over time. We found in one study that age was a significant determinant of more tyrannical leadership beliefs at a younger age, but older individuals viewed effective leaders as more collaborative. And a recent study found some evidence that implicit leadership theories were becoming less associated with prototypic white and male ideals of leadership (Ubaka, Lu, and Gutierrez, 2022).

In summary, the movement toward individualized product solutions for customers is being widely applied to leader development. Many companies offer mobile leader development apps that use assessments and individual development plans to "nudge" leaders to develop their underdeveloped skills. This uniquely derived and curated leader development is focused on a thorough understanding of individual development needs. Solid research incorporating notions of leader development across the lifespan gives important context for continued improvement of these individualized leader development solutions and helps establish theories that capture the complexity of leader development.

Focusing on the Follower

Dr. Ronald E. Riggio, Henry R. Kravis Professor of Leadership and Organizational Psychology
ronald.riggio@claremontmckenna.edu

Nearly every time I get together with leadership scholar colleagues who are interested in the topic of followers and followership, someone will inevitably object to using the term "follower." Given the almost obsessive focus of the public on leaders – the "romance of leadership" (i.e., the fact that everyone wants to be a leader and no one wants to be a follower) – it is not surprising that there are so many negative connotations associated with "follower." In the academic literature, however, we are seeing the term "follower" used more and more. In past years, when researching the leadership process, followers were referred to as "direct reports," "employees," "subordinates," or "team members." That is changing. The problem, however, is not with what we call followers. It's that we need to take the "leader" out of leadership. We are so leader-centric in our thinking and research that we give leaders far too much credit for their role in creating leadership in teams and organizations. We know that leadership is co-created by leaders and followers working together to produce it (in context, of course). But we give nearly all of our attention to leaders. Take leadership development, for instance. Estimates of the amount of money spent on leader development each year is in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

Comparatively only a very small amount is spent on developing followers, so we are missing out.

So, what is the way forward for research on followers and followership? Here are four approaches:

- **Reversing the Lens** – We need to focus on characteristics of good and bad followers in the same way that we have studied just about every aspect of the leader – traits, competencies, roles, styles. We have numerous (too many?) theories that try to explain the leader's role in leadership, but very few theories of exemplary followership. We need to thoroughly investigate follower role(s), competencies, and key behaviors, in the same way that we understand leaders. There is a need to develop theories of effective followership and test these.
- **Understand the Role That Followers Play in the Leadership Process** – But reversing the lens only goes so far (Uhl-Bien, et al., 2014). It helps us better understand followers, but we need to understand the entire leadership process, and the role that followers play in that. An important approach is to focus on leadership as a relational process of leaders and followers co-creating leadership. In much of the traditional approach to leadership, leaders are viewed as acting on followers – directing them, influencing them, motivating them – to achieve desired outcomes. But in an actual leader-follower relationship, influence can go both ways. Followers can choose to follow, not follow, and can even actively work against the leader's wishes. This is captured nicely in the subtitle of Ira Chaleff's (2009) book on courageous followership. Sometimes followers stand up for their leaders and follow along, but if the collective is going in the wrong direction, the courageous follower needs to "stand up to" the leader and resist or suggest an alternative course of action. Thus, the influence process is multi-directional, with all parties sometimes leading and sometimes following. Research needs to better represent the mutual influence processes of leaders and followers and explore when followers actually enact leadership and when, how, and why leaders engage in followership. For example, Jaser's (2021) edited book highlights how leaders follow while serving concurrently as leaders. We need more of this type of research.
- **Consider Outcomes That Focus on Leaders and Followers Working Together** – Given the fact that followers can choose not to follow the leader, it is interesting to note that in the predominant perspective regarding effective leadership, when goals are not achieved the leader is blamed. The outcome, however, could be due to a number of factors – lack of follower capacity/skills, follower resistance, a breakdown in the leader-follower relationship, the context (i.e., factors external to the collective), or some combination.

That brings us to a discussion of leadership outcomes. The traditional view sees leaders as a sort of "lever" that activates follower performance and attitudes. Typical outcomes focus almost exclusively on what followers do. The team works toward goals, and we measure collective performance/productivity. We may also assess quality, but that mostly focuses on what the followers do (e.g., customer service, product quality). We routinely use follower ratings of the leader as a measure of leadership effectiveness, and we may assess follower rates of turnover, or intentions to leave, and relate that back to the leader as a measure of leader effectiveness. But, as we have already seen, there are mutual influence processes at work emanating from both the leader and the followers, as well as some "synergy" and "chemistry" inherent in the quality of

the leader-follower relationship. We need to do a better job of assessing leadership outcomes that includes not just what followers do, but also the actions of the leader and the relationship quality throughout the process. Our own research (Todorova, et al., 2021) has begun to explore these joint leader-follower outcomes, and we hope that others will join us and follow our lead (puns intended).

- **Include Followers in Leadership Development Programs (and Teaching)** – As mentioned at the outset, we obsess over leaders, we spend huge sums of money trying to identify leaders, select them for leadership positions in organizations, and developing their leader capabilities. We give almost no attention to follower development. When we do focus on individuals who are in team member positions, it is usually done with an eye toward developing those members – those identified as "high potentials"–into future leaders. We need legitimate programs in follower development that strive to develop critical skills required for exemplary followership. Some of these have been identified. We know, for instance, that followers need to take initiative and responsibility. They need to fully understand the follower role, and develop and embrace a strong follower identity. Followers need to know when and how to support the leader and the team, and, importantly, when to challenge the leader. Although we know some of the attributes of good followers, it will take additional research to fully understand the elements that make up exemplary followership.

As educators, we need to spend less time on teaching about leaders and leadership and more time focusing on followers, followership, and the true complexity of the leader–follower–context equation. Barbara Kellerman (2012) laments the enormous number of courses on leadership, with only a handful of courses devoted to followership. Those who teach courses on leadership need to balance things out by devoting more time to the role of followers as well as emphasizing that it is legitimate to aspire to be an exemplary follower with no intentions of securing an identified position of "leader."

Whether we are discussing research on followers, the development of followers, or educating about them, we can and should do so much more.

Getting Serious About Games in Leadership Studies
Dr. Karen "Kat" Schrier, Associate Professor, Director of the Play Innovation Lab, and Director of the Games and Emerging Media Program, Marist College
Karen.Schrier@marist.edu

Games help us to better understand the nature of leadership.

You may be surprised by that statement.

Maybe you think that it's because games are competitive, loud, and action-packed. But games are not just about winning, collecting coins, or being on the top of the leaderboard.

Games can help players authentically listen to others and interact within complex systems. Games can help people work together as a team to solve problems and develop leadership skills. Through games, we can not only research the activity of leading but also better understand the process of developing leaders.

My colleagues and I have studied how **games and gaming communities can support leadership skills such as communication and teamwork** (Schrier, 2021). Studying multiplayer games like MMOs (Massively Multiplayer Online games) or eSports help us to understand

collaboration, deliberation, and how to lead a team to victory (Lipovaya, et al, 2018). We need to know more about how games enhance effective nonverbal and verbal communication, listening, and quiet contemplation. We might even learn *from* game players how to better observe and reflect. For instance, in a game based on Thoreau's *Walden*, players listen to the land, reflect, and communicate with nature by exploring virtual woods and lakes.

We have also studied how **games support sound decision-making and strategic thinking skills**. We know that game players make meaningful choices in games (Schrier, 2021). We also know that games are designed as systems (models of our reality) and can help us to understand that our decisions may affect different variables and outcomes. We should continue to research the specific circumstances under which games enhance decision-making capabilities or ethical thinking (Sparrow, et al., 2021). By studying players and how they think through choices or share responsibility, we will likely learn more about effective leadership outside of the gaming environment. For instance, in the game *Fortnite*, players need to gather resources and make successful decisions to survive and win the game.

Interestingly, we also found that games enable perspective-taking by employing immersive worlds, stories, and role-playing (Schrier, 2021; Farber, 2021). **Games may even help to reduce biases**–when designed properly. But we need research that uncovers *how* games may be transformative (Gray and Leonard, 2018). For example, games can illustrate inclusive leadership; versions of the classic game, *Dungeons & Dragons*, intentionally enable open, supportive communication among leaders and players (Sidhu and Carter, 2020).

For readers less familiar with the landscape of gaming, some concrete areas ripe for academic inquiry include:

- **eSports and live-streaming.** Like competitive sports like football, baseball, basketball, or soccer, people compete in online video games (eSports), where many more observe the action in real-time. Some eSports tournaments are streamed online, just like football might be shown on broadcast television. This area is ripe for leadership researchers to investigate. For instance: what are the models of leadership for eSports and live-streaming? How do players in competitive games communicate and manage their teams?
- **Community management.** Games are communities, and like any community, there is the possibility of cruelty, as well as compassion. We are at the beginning stages of understanding how to ensure our virtual communities motivate caring behaviors. As we start to ponder the Metaverse, we need to research what leadership looks like in our digital spaces and how we ensure empowerment both offline and virtually.
- **Knowledge games.** Games currently exist to create new vaccines and treatments for HIV and cancer and even identify software bugs. These games often rely on crowdsourcing–or inviting data and information from people around the world. We need to research how to use these games effectively and ethically to solve the big problems of our time. How might we learn about problem-solving, data analysis, or teamwork from the people who are playing these games?
- **Learning from games.** Negative biases about games might be keeping leadership scholars from seeing them as valuable avenues for research. Yet, games can help them better understand how people create change, work with new systems (such as cryptocurrency or quantum computing), and learn how to press "pause" and reflect. To truly innovate, we need to enable more people–and players–to show us how they lead.

The research on the intersection of leadership and gaming is limited, but I see so many opportunities for scholars. Eighty-three percent of online gamers surveyed in 2021 experienced

harassment in an online game, while 99 percent of online gamers also experienced positive social behavior in the games they were playing (ADL, 2021). We have an opportunity to research ways to enhance prosocial leadership not only in games but beyond games. By studying what works in gaming communities, we can better understand leadership and how games already develop behaviors associated with leadership.

The Need for Definitions and Shared Understandings
Wiley "Chip" Souba, M.D. Surgical Oncologist. Dean of Ohio State University School of Medicine (2006-2010), Dean of Dartmouth University's Geisel School of Medicine (2010-2014)
wiley.w.souba.jr@dartmouth.edu

A shared understanding (shared meaning) begins with a shared language–the vocabulary, colloquialisms, and jargon people use to communicate and collaborate. Take the words "leader" and "leadership." What do they mean? Each of us has an implicit leadership theory, but it is veiled, difficult to unwrap, and often not shared. In this article, I hope to show that an updated, more contemporary, more broadly shared understanding of the meaning of the terms "leader" and "leadership" will enhance leadership scholarship, teaching, practice, and service.

Take the world of academic medicine, a world I have lived inside of for many years, serving as a division chief, a department chair, and a medical school dean (twice). In medicine, we tend to think of leadership as being about a person in charge who stands apart and wields clout. The word "leader" may bring to mind vivid images: the technically-gifted surgeon; the brilliant researcher; the superb diagnostician and teacher; the charismatic, larger-than-life department chair. For most of the 20th century, our concept of leadership has centered around visible individuals and their talents, contributions, and achievements.

This implicit leadership theory – leadership equated with a person in charge who stands out – is pervasive (Souba, 2016). We learned to think this way from our superiors and role models. This way of thinking about and exercising leadership happens without much conscious intent and thus is difficult to challenge or even discuss. It has become woven seamlessly into the fabric of academic medicine's culture and is exceedingly difficult to unravel.

This leader-centric view of leadership is not wrong, but it is limited. For one thing, the immense challenges that confront us are so complex and unpredictable that one person can't accomplish the work of leadership alone. But more importantly, it sends the message that to lead, you need authority and the control that comes with it. Our learners and the general public still very much link leadership with authority, if not power. Right away, this mindset excludes a large segment of people who presume they can't lead because they have no formal authority. This is a learned on-the-job mental model. Our students and residents often become indoctrinated in this way of understanding leadership, and most take for granted that to "lead," one must have authority (control).

Point One: *A leader is any person who exercises (good) leadership*. A leader need not have a title, a rank, or a reserved parking space. If we broaden our understanding of leadership as something that everybody can exercise, it makes room for the janitor, the desk clerk, and the receptionist.

This brings us to the term "leadership." What is the relationship between a leader and leadership? If leadership is not about a person in charge, what is it? How can we access this thing called leadership?

First, leadership is not a possession of a selected few. It is not something like a title or position that you someday will not have. Leadership is created ongoingly, where people need to experience for themselves, in their day-to-day work, that they are contributing to shaping culture. Said another way, how each of us "shows up" matters more than anything else.

A narrative commonly shared regarding the founding of the United States was the expression that leadership was not solely a person in charge but also about a collection of processes and practices (e.g., trust, transparency, dialogue) intended to define how people lived as they collectively charted the future. A successful nation, or any successful organization for that matter, would cultivate leadership as a systemic capacity, as a kind of energy that flowed in its bloodstream.

Point two: *Leadership is best thought of as a property of a living system, an organizational capacity that requires constant cultivation*. Leadership is an organizational capacity (e.g., energy, force, activity) that emerges as people work together. It is both a process and an outcome, an activity, and a result. It is less about a person in charge and more about a property of a living system and its relational connections. This emerging view of leadership contends that language, as opposed to authority, is the leader's most valuable resource.

Access to our life/world is achieved through (granted by) language. This fact has enormous implications for leadership because when you are a leader and exercising leadership, you will function in the sphere of language. Guignon (1983: 119) says it this way, "We can never encounter a world as it is in itself, untouched by the constituting activity of linguistic schematizations…On this constitutive view, then, the language in which we find ourselves generates the template through which we come to understand ourselves and the world" (p. 119)

Language, however, is far from perfect. When one thinks about the language spoken in our daily activities, it is hard to disregard that much of what is said is unclear, vague, or open to interpretation. Comments such as "He's a great leader" often rest heavily on opinion with little solid evidence to support the assertion. Moreover, language divides the inseparable whole into component parts and grants identity to each part by giving it a name. It creates us vs. them, good vs. bad, and black vs. white. These shortcomings and the inability of language to fully capture reality and our natural tendency to hear only what fits with our existing frames of reference point to the need to continuously revisit the assumptions that make up our shared understanding of leadership (Souba, 2018).

Perfect agreement about what leadership is and who a leader is understood to be is not what we want. We need those who research, teach, and practice leadership to do so as their natural self-expression, from their perspectives, and using different approaches. Joanne Ciulla (1995) points out that we should worry less about forging a definition of leadership and be more interested in looking at the assumptions behind how we go about researching and teaching leadership. Shared meaning does not mean that people see things the same way but that they understand each other's perspectives well enough to accept them.

A clearer shared understanding of the meaning of the terms "leader" and "leadership" will open up new doors for leadership scholarship, teaching, and practice. One of our primary responsibilities as leadership scholars is to make our experiences, insights, and research findings available to the public arena, where leadership is needed more than ever and must be the responsibility of everyone. When our work remains in the confines of universities and academic journals, we are not serving the public or our stakeholders.

Timeless Currents: Indigenous wisdom

Dr. Chellie Spiller, Professor of Management and Leadership, University of Waikato
chellie.spiller@waikato.ac.nz

Collectively, if we, as a united field of leadership researchers and scholars, students, and practitioners, focused our intention on being stewards dedicated to creating healthier communities and ecologies, we would have a transformative impact. Indigenous cultures have long modeled the way and demonstrated the action required for us to be paradigm warriors (Spiller et al., 2020) who step forward and show leadership ourselves. It takes courage. It takes humility. It takes intergenerational belief.

We would transform not only the future of leadership studies, we would transform the future.

Because the future is here now.

It's in each choice we make.

I present four Indigenously informed wisdom practices to guide our choices and the future state of our field:

Shape a collective wellbeing purpose

Become a kaitiaki steward

Think like an ancestor

Write like a sphere

Shape a collective wellbeing purpose.

The New Zealand Treasury has developed a Living Standards Framework around four capitals: financial/physical, natural, human, and social (NZ Treasury, 2021a). Accordingly, the government's Wellbeing Budget is committed to developing and manifesting a wellbeing economy.

Alongside the Western-styled NZ Treasury version, indigenous Māori have developed wellbeing models from within our worldview, and the Treasury is working to incorporate these conceptualisations and develop meaningful measures. At the centre of a Māori wellbeing model is wairua – spirituality (NZ Treasury, 2021b).

Let that sink in for a moment. Spirituality is at the centre of a Māori wellbeing economy that influences conceptualisations of wellbeing at a national level.

A spiritual centre reflects how many Indigenous peoples view prosperity. Across Indigenous cultures is a belief in sacred, symbiotic kinship with all of creation. We see ourselves as inhabiting a relational universe in which we are interconnected to rocks, trees, waterways, everything. That outlook changes the way leadership, governance and decision-making are carried out. It's about tending to place and people. Leaders acting collectively with others may need to make compromises. But they do that consciously. It's not rampant, unfettered economic growth. If national governments can do it, I believe it's within our collective power as leadership experts to take active, deliberate aim at shaping a wellbeing purpose that permeates our field and guides our actions.

Become a kaitiaki steward.

In a Māori worldview we are born as a kaitiaki, a caretaker, divinely endowed with obligations, and empowered with the agency to care, respect, and create mauri ora, wellbeing in the world. Kaitiakitanga, to practice stewardship, is one of the most well-known Māori values in NZ and has been enshrined in various pieces of legislation. It also shows up in organizational values statements across New Zealand. Māori values such as manaakitanga (offering warm

generosity), wairuatanga (spirituality) and kotahitanga (unity) are some of the enduring values that form a holistic system, practised through millennia, that teaches us to be in deep intimacy with the world.

To be a kaitiaki is more radical than simply being a steward in terms of human rights to be an overlord, or, to account for multiple bottom lines. Or even build a circular economy. It is in terms of an ecosystem's right to be well as a living entity. It's a recentring towards wairua, spirituality where we care about not just the tangible aspects but also embrace the intangible. It reflects a deep sense of belonging to not only our families, our friends, our communities, but belonging to a place and belonging to the planet.

Think like an ancestor.

Indigenous leadership is vested in the collective. It's relational, oriented to group accomplishment, and where we are each a movement through time and "success is succession" (Spiller, Barclay-Kerr and Panoho, 2015), and leadership distributed across the community is committed to making the next generation better than themselves. The whole complexity of interwoven actions of the many, not the few, help achieve freedom from ravages such as racism, trauma, deprivation, mental health afflictions, and addictions.

Indigenous communities and organisations think and act intergenerationally because it's vital that as ancestors of tomorrow, we're handing over an environment, community, social fabric, culture, and economic means in better shape than when we received it.

What will be our leadership legacy individually and collectively? The people we choose to research and the stories about them that we tell–why we choose to accept one article and reject another. The tone and content of reviewer feedback that both marginalises Indigenous wisdom and simultaneously constructs an isomorphic leadership field geared to dominant Westernised norms. It is to cease showcasing leaders who turn heads and turn a profit defined in narrow monetary terms. We need to stop valorising leaders cut from conquistador cloth who build glittering corporate citadels on sands of promise as they clandestinely sequester wealth for themselves.

Write like a sphere.

In Wayfinding Leadership (Spiller et al., 2015: 41), we explain that the sphere inhabits a multi-dimensional world of interiority as well as exteriority. While two-dimensional 'square intelligence' (conventional rationalistic logic) dominates much of leadership:

> …an expanded sphere intelligence approach transforms the conventional approach. A sphere's world is commitment to seeing the whole and obtaining a well-rounded perspective. It includes: recognition of multiple ways of knowing; roundedness and holism; appreciation of a process of unfolding and a cyclic approach, not just the linear; capacity to be with uncertainty, mystery, and the unknown; attention to process; and understanding the relationships between things

Indigenous wisdom embraces vitalism, life-force, mystery, signs, and meaning–ideas so endemic in a Māori worldview yet so extirpated in the Western. We need to stop perpetuating a science that removes us from our environment and communities and heal ourselves from the illusions of this so-called rupture. Josephson-Storm details in The Myth of Disenchantment (2017:5) that "enchanted ontologies and spiritualized orientations to nature" were never evicted from the Western world–they were expunged from science–including the human sciences (Geisteswissenschaften) that emerged as an academic discipline in the nineteenth century. He has

highlighted many philosophers from Spinoza, Leibniz, Goethe to Thoreau, Bergson, de Chardin, and Whitehead who " argued that the material universe should be thought of as thoroughly animated or possessed of mind and awareness" (p. 305).

Charting a practical path forward.

Stop, pause, and discern would be the first practical step. Amidst the pressure to teach and publish, carve out some waypoints on your journey and take time to learn about Indigenous Wisdom. Curiosity called each of us to be scholars of leadership, and opening to other ways of knowing opens new vistas. There is a vast body of work by Indigenous leadership scholars across multiple disciplines. Take time to read and dwell in these works. Include these works in your teaching content with discernment and respect. Engage with what is happening in Indigenous communities in your area: attend the events, go to the exhibitions and theatre, watch Indigenous documentaries. Learn and listen–not teach and talk.

Research and showcase the kaitiaki stewards who bravely take conscious action to create healthier societies and ecologies. Become a paradigm warrior yourself. Reframe who the 'leader' is, as it is usually a group of people working collaboratively towards a vision of a better future. Learn about Indigenous methodologies. Be an ancestor of the future whose present actions will make the future a better place for all our descendants. Take an intergenerational view in your research and work with people who are too. Embrace 'success and succession' and take young people with you.

Refuse to default to narrow corridors of rationalistic, reductionist approaches–but crack it open, be bold, affirm and illuminate the multiple intelligences in yourself, your students, and the people with whom you collaborate with. Finally, in my professional experience, people of all walks of organisational life yearn to bring their whole self, including their spiritual self, to work. Let's make that safe, starting with ourselves.

Conclusion

We are thankful for the passionate team of scholars who have contributed to this article. Phronesis rests upon the capacity to choose and act wisely in advancing towards one's future. These ten essays represent to the author team some of the most practically and conceptually significant suggestions for shaping the near future of scholarship dedicated to better understanding and practicing leadership. Some help expand our focus on the concepts of leadership and some address how to more effectively integrate the study of leadership with its practice in society. It seems a truism to suggest that change occurs more quickly today than yesterday or will occur even more rapidly tomorrow. Even so, our role as scholars has always been and continues to be, providing clarity—clarity of theory and concepts and clarity for effective practice. We suggest these proposals can, in part, serve as guides for clarity to advance the field of leadership studies. —Scott and David

References

ADL (2021) Hate is no game: Harassment and positive social experiences in online games 2021. Available at: https://www.adl.org/hateisnogame (accessed 26 February 2022)

Aristotle (2003). *Nichomachean ethics*. Trans. DP Chase. Project Gutenberg eBook #8438. Available at: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/8438/8438-h/8438-h.htm#chap02 (accessed 10 January, 2022).

Bennis W (2007) The challenges of leadership in the modern world: Introduction to the special issue. *American psychologist* 62(1): 2.

Bonet R, Cappelli P and Hamori M (2020) Gender differences in speed of advancement: an empirical examination of top executives in the fortune 100 firms. *Strategic Management Journal* 41(4): 708-737.

Bryson J, Barberg B, Crosby B and Quinn Patton M (2021) Leading social transformations: Creating public value and advancing the common good. *Journal of Change Management* 21(2): 1-23.

Chaleff I (2009) *The Courageous Follower: Standing Up To and For Our Leaders* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.

Chung BG, Ehrhart KH, Shore LM, Randel AE, Dean MA, and Kedharnath U (2020) Work group inclusion: Test of a scale and model. *Group & Organization Management* 45(1): 75-102.

Ciulla JB (1995) Leadership ethics: Mapping the territory. *Business Ethics Quarterly* 5(1): 5-28.

Ciulla JB (2020) Leadership and the power of resentment/resentiment. *Leadership* 16(1): 25-38.

Day DV, Harrison MM and Halpin SM (2009) *An Integrative Approach to Leader Development: Connecting Adult Development, Identity, and Expertise*. New York, Psychology Press.

Dreher GF, Carter NM, and Dworkin T (2019) The pay premium for high-potential women: A constructive replication and refinement. *Personnel Psychology* 72(4): 495-511.

Eagly AH, Nater C, Miller DI, Kaufmann M and Sczesny S (2020) Gender stereotypes have changed: A cross-temporal meta-analysis of US public opinion polls from 1946 to 2018. *American Psychologist* 75(3): 301.

Farber M (2021) *Gaming SEL: Games as Transformational to Social and Emotional Learning*. New York: Peter Lang Verlag.

Ferguson, C and Wang JCK (2019) Aggressive video games are not a risk factor for future aggression in youth: A longitudinal study. *Journal of Youth & Adolescence* 48: 1439-1451.

Frost R (1915). A group of poems. Available at: https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1915/08/a-group-of-poems/306620/ (accessed 02 February 2022)

Gibney J and Collinge C (2015) *Leadership and Place*. London: Routledge.

Gray K and Leonard D (2018) *Woke Gaming*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.

Grint K (2021) Leadership and the God of Small Things. Available at https://ilaglobalnetwork.org/leadership-and-the-god-of-small-things (accessed 26 February 2022)

Guignon C (1983) *Heidegger and the Problem of Knowledge*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.

Guthey, E (2016) Romanticism, antimodernism, and a pluralistic perspective on responsible leadership. In S Kempster & B Carroll (eds), *Responsible Leadership: Realism and Romanticism.* Routledge, Abingdon, Routledge Studies in Leadership Research, no. 4, pp. 203-214.

Hume D, Norton DF and Norton MJ (2000) *A Treatise of Human Nature (Oxford Philosophical Texts)* (New Ed). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jackson B (2019) The power of place in public leadership research and development. *International Journal of Public Leadership* 15(4): 209-223.

Jaser Z (2021) *The Connecting Leader: Serving Concurrently As a Leader and a Follower.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age

Josephson-Storm JA and Storm JAJ (2017) *The Myth of Disenchantment*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kellerman B (2012) *The End of Leadership*. New York: Harper Collins.

Kempster S, Jackson B, and Conroy M (2011) Leadership as purpose: Exploring the role of purpose in leadership practice. *Leadership*, 7(3): 317–334.

Kempster S and Jackson B (2021) Leadership for what, why, for whom and where? A responsibility perspective. *Journal of Change Management*: *Reframing Leadership and Organizational Practice*, 21(1): 45-65.

Lipovaya V, Lima Y, Grillo P, Barbosa CE, Souza JM, Duarte F (2018) Coordination, Communication, and Competition in eSports: A Comparative Analysis of Teams in Two Action Games. In *Proceedings of 16th European Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work-Exploratory Papers*. European Society for Socially Embedded Technologies (EUSSET).

Liu Z, Venkatesh S, Murphy SE and Riggio, RE (2021) Leader development across the lifespan: A dynamic experiences-grounded approach. *The Leadership Quarterly* 32(5): 101382.

Lyons, S. and Kuron, L. (2014). Generational differences in the workplace: A review of the evidence and directions for future research. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 35*(S1), 139-157. https://doi.org/10.1002/job.1913.

McCall M (2010) Peeling the onion: Getting inside experience-based leadership development. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice* 3(1): 61-68.

McCormick CM, Kuo, SI-C and Masten AS (2011) Developmental tasks across the life span. In KL Fingerman, CA Berg, J Smith, and TC Antonucci (Eds.), *Handbook of Life-Span Development* (pp. 117–139). Warren, MI: Springer Publishing Company.

Murphy SE and Johnson SK (2011) The benefits of a long-lens approach to leader development: Understanding the seeds of leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly* 22(3): 459-470.

Murphy SE (2018) Leadership development starts earlier than we think: Capturing the capacity of new leaders to address the leader talent shortage. In Riggio RE (ed). *What's Wrong With Leadership*? London: Routledge.

Naumovska I, Wernicke G and Zajac EJ (2020) Last to come and last to go? The complex role of gender and ethnicity in the reputational penalties for directors linked to corporate fraud. *Academy of Management Journal* 63(3): 881-902.

Nietzsche F (1989) Ecce homo. In: *Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo* (trans. Kaufmann W). New York: Vintage Books.

Nishii, LH (2013) The benefits of climate for inclusion for gender-diverse groups. *Academy of Management Journal* 56(6):1754-1774.

NZ Treasury (2021a) The Treasury's Living Standards Framework at a Glance. Available at: https://www.treasury.govt.nz/sites/default/files/2019-12/lsf-as-poster.pdf (accessed 26 February 2022)

NZ Treasury (2021b) He Ara Waiora. Available at: https://www.treasury.govt.nz/information-and-services/nz-economy/higher-living-standards/he-ara-waiora (accessed 26 February 2022)

Parry K and Hansen H (2007) The organizational story as leadership. *Leadership* 3(3):

281-300.

Reichard, RJ, Riggio, RE, Guerin DW, Oliver PH, Gottfried AW, and Gottfried, AE (2011) A longitudinal analysis of relationships between adolescent personality and intelligence with adult leader emergence and transformational leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly* 22(3):471-481.

Ropo A, Salovaara P, Sauer E and De Paoli D (2015) *Leadership in Spaces and Places*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Schrier K (2021) *We the Gamers: How Games Teach Ethics and Civics*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sidhu P and Carter M (2020) The critical role of media representations, reduced stigma, and increased access in D&D's resurgence. Available at https://marcuscarter.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Critical-Role-of-Media-Representations-Reduced-Stigma-and-Increased-Access-in-DnD's-Resurgence-1.pdf (accessed 26 February 2022)

Solomon RC (1993) *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (2nd ed.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc.

Souba W and Souba, M (2016) Leadership and the limitations of language. *Open Journal of Leadership* 5: 39-50.

Souba W and Souba M (2018) Challenging your implicit leadership theory. *Journal of Leadership Education 17*(4). Available at https://journalofleadershiped.org/jole_articles/challenging-your-implicit-leadership-theory/ (accessed 26 February 2022)

Souba W (2021) Leading oneself: The journey within. *The Pharos* (Autumn): 2-8.

Sotarauta M and Beer A (2017) Governance, agency and place leadership: Lessons from a cross-national analysis. *Regional Studies* 52(2): 210-223

Sparrow L, Gibbs M and Arnold M (2021) Ludic ethics: The ethical negotiations of players in online multiplayer games. *Games & Culture* 16(6):719–742.

Spiller C, Barclay-Kerr H and Panoho J (2015) *Wayfinding Leadership: Ground-Breaking Wisdom for Developing Leaders*. Wellington, NZ: Huia Publishers.

Spiller C, Wolfgramm R, Henry E and Pouwhare R (2020) Paradigm warriors: Advancing a radical ecosystems view of collective leadership from an Indigenous Māori perspective. *Human Relations* 73(4): 516-543.

Sutherland N, Edwards G, Schedlitzki D and Bolden R (2020) Call for papers: Special issue of leadership: Putting leadership in its place. *Leadership* 16(1): 122-138.

Todorova G, Beenen G, Pichler S, and Riggio RE (2021, submitted). Reconceptualizing multilevel shared leader-follower outcomes.

Tourish D (2020) Introduction to the special issue: Why the coronavirus is also a crisis of leadership. *Leadership* 16(3): 261-272.

"Truthiness." *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*. Available at https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/truthiness (accessed 10 January 2022)

Ubaka A, Lu X, and Gutierrez L (2022) Testing the generalizability of the white leadership standard in the post-Obama era. *The Leadership Quarterly*. Available at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2021.101591 (accessed 26 February 2022)

Uhl-Bien M, Riggio RE, Lowe KB, and Carsten MK (2014) Followership theory: A review and research agenda. *The Leadership Quarterly* 25(1): 83-104.

Westgate E, Riskind R, and Nosek B (2015) Implicit preferences for straight people over lesbian women and gay men weakened from 2006 to 2013. *Collabra: Psychology*, 1(1): 1-10.

Wolfgramm R, Spiller C and Voyageur C (2016) Special issue: Indigenous leadership – Editors Introduction, *Leadership* 12(3): 263-269.

Worrall R and Kjaerulf F (2019) Transforming minds, people and places: Leadership coalition building as catalyst for intersectoral collaboratives in urban violence prevention. *Aggression and Violent Behaviour* 27: 282-292.