emerald PUBLISHING Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal

Beyond Unsustainable Leadership: Critical Social Theory for Sustainable Leadership

Journal:	*Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*
Manuscript ID	SAMPJ-08-2016-0048.R2
Manuscript Type:	Research Paper
Keywords:	Sustainable Leadership, Sustainability Leadership, Leadership, Leadership Development, Critical Leadership

Beyond Unsustainable Leadership: Critical Social Theory for Sustainable Leadership

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to prepare the ground for a new conceptual framework for the future study of leadership for sustainable development. The paper demonstrates the relevance of Critical Leadership Studies to future research on sustainable development policies and practices. A critical approach is also applied to concepts of sustainable development, with three paradigms of thought described. The approach taken is an extensive literature review in fields of leadership and sustainable development, with a focus on some of the broad assumptions and assertions in those literatures.

A key finding is that leadership studies drawing from critical social theory can provide important insights into future research and education on leadership for sustainability. This literature shows that some assumptions about leadership may hinder opportunities for social or organisational change by distorting our analysis of factors in change, and by distorting the agency of those not deemed to be leaders. These limitations are summarised as 'seven unsustainabilities' of mainstream leadership research.

The implications for practice are that efforts to promote organisational contributions to sustainable development should not draw uncritically upon mainstream approaches to leadership or the training of leaders. Instead, the paper suggests that, in the emerging fields of sustainability leadership scholarship and practice, full weight be given to the possibilities, theoretical and practical, of salient individual action whose collective, emergent and episodic aspects might not yet be adequately comprised in prevailing accounts of leadership. The authors believe this to be the first paper to provide a synthesis of insights from Critical Leadership Studies for research in sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainable Leadership, Sustainability Leadership, Leadership, Leadership Development, Critical Leadership.

Classification: Conceptual paper

Introduction

In the face of limited progress on a range of social and environmental issues, many proponents and analysts of corporate action on sustainable development issues are calling for more leadership for sustainability (Redekop, 2010; Adams et al, 2011; Evans, 2011; Gallagher, 2012; Metcalf and Benn, 2013; Shriberg and MacDonald, 2013). Such calls reflect a desire for greater and swifter change, and in that context, researchers and educators can explore what is useful knowledge to enable such change. In this paper, we will argue that prevalent assumptions about the meaning of both the terms 'leadership' and 'sustainability' may hinder, not help, that interest in greater change.

We will demonstrate this limiting effect by placing both the concepts of leadership and sustainability under the scope of an analysis based on the primacy of discourse. We draw upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which starts from an awareness that the abuse, dominance, and inequality of power relations can be enacted, reproduced and, ultimately, resisted by text and talk (Fairclough, 1995). We will argue that the prevailing leadership imaginary, so far from supporting the transition to a sustainable society and economy, may actually hinder it and be itself unsustainable, in the sense that it depends on the discursive maintenance of power relations and a narrow range of organising possibilities (Gemmil and Oakley, 1992; Hurlow, 2008), and may thus discourage or disable more collective, collaborative or distributed forms of leadership, deliberation, organising and problem-solving (Hosking, 2006; Hurlow, 2008; Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012). If this is the case, more of the same 'leadership' will not help the goal of sustainability.

We share with Evans (2011) and Western (2008) the view that dominant paradigms of leadership are part of the cause of the current crisis of unsustainability and will develop that argument in this paper. Therefore, precisely because we are interested in sustainability, we address leadership per se rather than limit analysis to leadership on sustainability topics. Though it may be expected for scholarship in this field to focus on those persons who have responsibility for social or environmental topics, given the state of conceptual development, we assess that it could leave untenable concepts to be imported from those who analyse and promote leadership per se. For instance, the new and still small amount of scholarship on leadership for sustainability, cited in our opening sentence, appears to describe leaders and leadership in terms that emphasise exceptionalism, personal 'authenticity', an individual locus of action and a generalised other that is the object of leadership. There is also evidence of sustainability-infused leadership development programmes uncritically incorporating assumptions about leadership (for instance Peterlin, 2016).

Even those theorists who propose to break with mainstream notions of leadership may still repeat some of the ideas embedded in discourse. For example, the following statement may sound collaborative, but identifies leadership with a special individual who acts *upon* others: "[leadership is] a form of community praxis in which one coalesces and directs the energies of the group" (Evans, 2011: 2). Impressive and helpful people do exist, but this paper will show that the prevailing discourse on leadership can limit our understanding of the potential for creating the greater change that inspires the calls for more leadership for sustainability.

Therefore, rather than a detailed deconstruction of existing texts on leadership for sustainability, in this paper we provide a broad synthesis of relevant literatures that either use, or can inform, a more critical approach, drawing on a field now called 'Critical Leadership Studies' (CLS). We then re-locate our inquiry within the context of sustainability by applying the same critical discourse perspective to assumptions and narratives about 'sustainable development.' Given the level of knowledge on sustainable development of most readers of this journal, we do not focus on a detailed literature review of that field, but outline three different paradigms within which to consider social, economic and environmental dilemmas. We integrate these critiques by outlining 'seven unsustainabilities' of mainstream leadership thinking, as well as the relevant antidotes. At that point we offer a definition of 'sustainable leadership' and conclude by outlining some potential implications for the future of research, practice and education.

Our definition will be purposely tentative. Rather than offering a systematic construction of a new concept of 'sustainable leadership', we are placing existing concepts of leadership and sustainability in the context of dominant narratives of 'managerialism' (Enteman, 1993) that we will show limit an assessment of the potential types and locations of action on sustainability. This process of tilling the conceptual earth will, we believe, allow many new ideas to bloom, including those that deploy structured approaches to define 'sustainable leadership' and 'sustainability leadership' concepts and theories. Without such insights from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), attempts at rigorous concept development in the organisational sciences (Podsakoff, et al, 2016) may be limited by assumptions that reflect dominant discourse.

Our argument does not mean that a focus on understanding or evolving the behaviour of senior role holders, such as chief executives or politicians, is not necessary, but that the assumptions that leadership is theirs *alone* to express and that leadership by special individuals is the most salient matter in organisational or social change, are both unhelpful and yet widely promoted by current work on leadership, with major implications for sustainable development.

Defining Leadership and Sustainability

In this paper, we use the term 'sustainability' as short hand for the term 'sustainable development'. Since the adoption of the Brundtland Report by the UN General Assembly in 1987, 'sustainable development' has been promoted by many as an integrated way to address diverse dilemmas, such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, disease, discrimination, environmental degradation, crime, conflict and limited human rights or justice (WCED, 1987). That 'sustainable development' seems to offer all good things to all people has been one reason for its popularity and, some say, a reason for it leading to largely ineffectual activities on those dilemmas (Perez-Carmona, 2013).

Nevertheless, this "ambiguous compromise" (Purvis and Grainger, 2004: 6) has proved to be a resilient one. The adoption of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015 marks a renewed interest in the hope that governments, cities, firms and other organisations can achieve progress on social and economic factors while not degrading the environment. Although the SDGs or 'Global Goals' may seem like an advancement on mainstreaming environmental considerations when compared to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which they replaced, conversely, they represent a dilution of the primacy of environment in the early stages of the promotion of sustainable development. This reflects how, over the years, the emphasis on the development of nations needs to be within the environmental 'carrying capacity' of the nation and planet, has been side-lined as the pursuit of economic growth predominated worldwide (Purvis and Grainger, 2004; Perez-Carmona, 2013).

The global trends in poverty, inequality, biodiversity loss, water tables and climate change are not promising (Worldwatch, 2015). Enabling greater leadership for 'sustainable development' therefore means enabling significant action on the various shared dilemmas that are meant to be addressed under this ambiguous term. We call them shared "dilemmas" here, rather than challenges or problems, to reflect both their complexity and to recognise a growing worldview that no longer regards them as problems to solve (as we will discuss below). We call them 'shared', because they involve collective causation, affect the many (albeit differentially) and will need collective action to address or adapt to them.

The 'sustainable development' concept typically groups these dilemmas into social, environmental and economic domains, while some also include culture (Sachs, 2015). Within these domains, a great diversity of theoretical perspectives exists. For instance, on environmental issues, some argue for the sustainable use of natural resources whereas others include respect for the welfare of animals or the preservation of landscapes (Pepper, 1996). Some argue that technological advances will solve most environmental problems, whereas others ask more critical questions about industrialisation

within environmental limits (Jackson, 2009). On social progress, some focus on improving standards of living (Prahalad, 2004) where others focus on inequality, human rights, justice and good governance at various scales (Sen, 1999). On economic issues, there is a broad field of 'development economics' with differing emphases on the role of the state, of foreign direct investment, and about openness to international trade (Sachs, 1992). The 'sustainable development' framework is also applied to organisations within societies, such as business corporations, which has led to a variety of theories and initiatives in fields known as corporate social responsibility (Bendell, 2009), corporate accountability (Bendell, 2004), corporate sustainability (van Marrewijk, 2003) and social enterprise (Nicholls, 2006). To encourage self-awareness of participants in these arenas, in this paper we will be proposing three broad paradigms on sustainable development that people appear to be operating within.

Just as the terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' are deployed in quite different research and policy contexts and with different implied exclusions and inclusions, so the word 'leadership' is used to mean or imply quite different things while seeming to represent a common, monolithic, understanding (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Unpicking such usages may not have direct value in deliberation or action, but can help prepare the ground for people to navigate the plurality of possibilities for leadership and sustainability. Amongst the many definitions of leadership in management studies, we will use the following to begin our discussion:

"Leadership is any behaviour that has the effect of helping groups of people achieve something that the majority of them are pleased with and which we assess as significant and what they would not have otherwise achieved." (Bendell and Little, 2015: 15)

Key to this definition is recognising leadership as a behaviour rather than a position of authority. In addition, it reflects the relational quality of leadership so that acts need to be welcomed by a majority of those in a group. Moreover, the external observer plays a key role when categorising acts as leadership. Specifically:

"Leadership involves the ascription of significance to an act by us, the observer, where significance usually involves our assumptions or propositions about values and theories of change. If our theory of change is that the CEO has freedom of action and can impose change, then we would naturally look for leadership to be exhibited at that level. If our values are that profit-maximising for shareholders in the near term is a good goal, then we would not question a CEO's "leadership" if achieving such goals. We should note that these are rather big 'Ifs'." (ibid: 15)

By defining leadership in this way, we break with some of the mainstream assumptions in management and leadership scholarship and training, for instance, the idea that leadership exists as a quality that inheres in an individual. In the following section, we will explore how deep the criticisms go and the implications for enabling action on sustainable development.

Insights from Critical Leadership Studies

As attention to leadership and its development grows in both the popular publishing and academic arenas, the last decade has seen a counter-trend of scholars who seek to unpack what they consider unhelpful assumptions and directions in the 'mainstream' approach to leadership. The aim of Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) is to investigate "what is neglected, absent or deficient in mainstream leadership research" (Collinson, 2011: 181). This approach involves understanding and exposing the negative consequences of leadership, by examining patterns of power and domination enabled by overly hierarchical social relations: questioning these 'exclusionary and privileged' discourses, and investigating the problematic effects that they have on organisational functioning and individual well-being (Ford, 2010; Ford et al, 2008).

Some CLS scholars draw upon 'Critical Theory', being motivated by a general emancipatory project, or by the goal of empowering grassroots and oppressed groups against the self-harming discourses that they co-produce or that are promoted by elites. Such research challenges discourse in the field of management and leadership that may be distorted in favour of capital and the owners of capital, gender exclusion and other forms of social violence, and unsustainable forms of commerce and industry (Fanon, 1961; Blunt and Jones, 1996; Nkomo, 2011). A key theme in such work is the critique of a set of ideas called 'Managerialism,' which value professional managers and their characteristic forms of analysis, authority and control, and their tendency to bring ever more aspects of life into the orbit of management (Enteman, 1993; Alvesson, 1992, Parker, 2002). There are parallels here with some critiques of international 'development' that influence approaches to sustainability, which we will return to below. Before that, in the next sections we summarise some of the main elements of the critique made by CLS, with preliminary ideas on implications for leadership scholarship and leadership development work that is motivated by concern for various shared dilemmas.

The Individualist Mistake

The mainstream literature and practice of leadership development is largely addressed to the cultivation of a group already defined as leaders, rather than to the development of collective,

relational or dialogical leadership. Leaders are routinely described as needing to be authentic, visionary, driven and emotionally intelligent. The image of the leader that emerges from what Gosling and Bolden (2006) call the 'repeating refrain' of leadership competencies is of a deracinated superman (or, in a feminized variant that emphasizes collaboration, intuition and nurturing, a superwoman). This 'hero-focus' has received criticism over the past 15 years from within the mainstream management literature (Olssen, 2006; Palus et al, 2012). In such work the term "hero" is used as the contemporary dominant concept of special courageous person who saves others, rather than more mythic notions of hero, which we will discuss further below. We find that even the explicitly 'post-heroic' or egalitarian accounts of leadership as bottom-up or, variously, as distributed (Brown and Hosking, 1986; Woods et al, 2004), transformational (Bass, 1998), or 'servant' (Greenleaf, 1977) may not fully address the degree to which these ideas are undermined by lingering positional metaphors of hierarchy, or by their failure to address questions of gender or, worse, are co-opted by hierarchical, instrumentalist managerialism (Fletcher, 2004). The CLS analysis of the implicit hero focus of leadership studies provides a deeper critique in at least four key areas. We summarise these areas in turn, before discussing other dimensions of CLS.

First, CLS theorists have sought to investigate the 'dark side' of contemporary leadership practice, exploring issues such as domination, conformity, abuse of power, blind commitment, over-dependence and seduction (Conger, 1990; Calas and Smircich, 1991; Gemmil and Oakley, 1992; Whicker, 1996; Mellahi et al, 2002; Khoo and Burch, 2007; Marcuse, 2008; Schyns and Schilling, 2013; Sheard et al, 2013). They have coined terms such as 'toxic leadership' (Benson and Hogan, 2008; Pelletier, 2010); 'destructive leadership' (Einarsen et al 2007); 'leadership derailment' (Tepper, 2000); and, 'aversive leadership' (Bligh et al, 2007). Other scholars have discovered tendencies for narcissism and psychopathy amongst senior role holders and how that can be encouraged by popular discourses about leaders being special and powerful (de Vries and Miller, 1985; Bendell, 2002; Trethewey and Goodall, 2007; Vaktin, 2009; Gudmundsson & Southey, 2011). Evans (2011) characterises the prevailing model as 'exploitative leadership' and argues that such masculinised, hierarchical leadership reproduces in small the domination of nature by humanity. For scholars interested in the social dimension of sustainability, including matters of fairness, justice and wellbeing, these dark sides of leadership will be of concern.

The mainstream literature, to the extent that it makes or recognises this critique, responds not with a deepened critique of leadership but by offering in mitigation qualities like humility, authenticity, emotional intelligence or self-knowledge, while leaving unchallenged the assumption that 'leaders' pursue exclusively corporate goals by largely instrumental means (Collins, 2001; Adair, 2003;

George, 2003; Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Characteristically, this literature keeps up the search for an ideal trait description of the leader: lists of qualities, propensities, behaviours and habits proliferate, often including 'character' and authenticity, as we will examine in a moment (George, 2003; Gardner et al, 2011).

The second analytic turn in CLS aims in part to reveal the flaws of this traits-focus, and of secondary efforts to promote values and authenticity amongst leaders. We do not have space here to rehearse in detail the critiques of the trait approach but will summarise. To begin with, it is not unreasonable to argue that leadership is, of necessity, idiographic, episodic and situationally inflected, to the extent that no imaginable set of descriptors could apply to all potential leaders (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). Leadership trait lists tend merely to describe competent human beings, emphasising, for example, honesty and intelligence (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Zingheim et al, 1996). The effort to identify traits might itself be seen as serving the very bureaucratic impulse to which leadership, with its implied freedom of moral action, is the remedy. The reliability, stability and predictive value of trait descriptions are all in any case contested. The most telling critique of traits suggests that their pursuit is a circular process in which socially constructed discourses of leadership are interrogated from within the constraining assumptions of those same discourses (Burr, 1995). Traits are, from this view, not internal personal structures but "social processes realised on the site of the personal" (Gergen, 1994: 210).

One response to the dark sides of leadership has been to focus less on traits (real or imagined) than on helping people with senior responsibilities to reflect upon, clarify, articulate and live by their most important values, and, ostensibly, to help legitimise values-based behaviour in professional life. Courses under the heading 'Authentic Leadership' pursue that aim. Executives are encouraged to seek coherence between their life story and their seeking or holding a senior organisational role (George, et al, 2007). Potential benefits may include greater self-confidence, appearing more authentic in one's job, enhanced oratorical skill and higher levels of motivation from colleagues (Gardner et al, 2011; Leroy et al, 2015). Typically, participants in authentic leadership programmes are offered opportunities for systematic self-exploration; these processes, however, could be characterised as opportunities for self-justification, as exploration of self is framed by the aim of constructing narratives that explain one's right to seniority within a corporation – an almost 'divine' right to lead. Self-realisations that might undermine one's ability to work for certain firms, or transform the basis of one's self-worth, or challenge one's assumption of self-efficacy, do not appear to be encouraged (Bendell and Little, 2015). For scholars interested in transforming organisations so they reduce their harm on the environment and society, or increase their positive contributions, the

exploration of values in authentic leadership may seem like a start, but it could be unhelpfully limited.

Authentic Leadership scholarship and trainings may be ignoring the insights from critical sociology; on how our perspectives and senses of self are shaped by language and discourse (Gergen, 1994; Fairclough, 1995; Burr, 1995). Such insights challenge the view that we can achieve depths of 'self-awareness' by reflecting on our experiences and feelings without the benefit of perspectives from social theory. Authentic leadership builds on assumptions about the nature of the individual, including the assumption that our worth comes from our distinctiveness.[1] Meanwhile, Adorno (1973) has even claimed that the word 'authenticity' is simply jargon. He argues it is characteristic of a nostalgic post-Christian impulse to replace the 'authority of the absolute' (such as a God) with 'absolutised authority' (whether that is from an organisation, law or the rectitude of a leader).

A third set of analyses shows how a focus on leader's values, charisma and other attributes serves to distract from and deproblematise issues of the legitimacy, or not, of power-wielding roles in organisations and societies. When we consider leadership, we are considering how groups of people decide how to act: addressing ancient questions of social and political organisation which are subjects of long, lively and diverse intellectual traditions. They are investigated today in fields as diverse as political philosophy, public policy studies, civil society studies, and international development studies. We cannot delve into these areas in this paper, but suffice to note that a recurring theme in these fields is that matters of decision-making involve reflection on processes that support the rights, dignity and contribution of all individuals in groups. Yet studies of leadership often render unproblematic modes of decision-making and patterns of power (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992; Western, 2008). Given that good governance is such a central question for sustainable development, this subtle side-lining of questions of accountable governance is a concern. This draws parallels with the comments from various scholars relating to the literal and linguistic separation of leader and follower. Learmonth and Morrell for example, suggest that the "institutionalised" usage of the terms leader/follower automatically construct a master/slave dialectic, reducing the capacity of "'followers' to question their leaders' basic authority" (2016: 2). In this then, it may be beneficial to reframe leadership language in a more open and less hierarchical manner. Fairhurst (2009) emphasises the term 'leadership actor' to cover the plurality of individuals who may be involved in

[1] Vedic philosophies provide critiques of, and explanations for, why we might enjoy a process of self-construction via self-reflection exercises. An emphasis on the 'authentic self' might be regarded as an effort to find a 'rock of safety against the cosmic and the infinite' (Aurobindo, 1972: 229). Aurobindo further argues that an aspect of our consciousness is 'not concerned with self-knowledge but with self-affirmation, desire, ego. It is therefore constantly acting on mind to build for it a mental structure of apparent self that will serve these purposes; our mind is persuaded to present to us and to others a partly fictitious representative figure of ourselves which supports our self-affirmation, justifies our desires and actions, nourishes our ego.' (p 229).

acts of leadership within an organisation. A fourth set of analyses in CLS looks at how the hero focus of mainstream leadership studies attributes responsibility for outcomes disproportionately to individuals occupying a hierarchal position at the apex of an organisation, thereby obscuring the importance of other situational and contextual factors and limiting our insight into how change happens. Psychological research since the 1980s has demonstrated that people, across cultures, tend to exaggerate the significance of the actions of individuals when compared to other factors shaping outcomes (Meindl et al, 1985). The researchers concluded that this was evidence that we are susceptible to seeing 'leadership' when it isn't necessarily there or important - a collectively constructed 'romantic discourse'. Their work reflects the 'false attribution effect', widely reported by social psychologists, as people's tendency to place an undue emphasis on internal characteristics to explain someone's behaviour, rather than considering external factors (Jones and Harris, 1967). Perhaps our susceptibility to this effect arises because we are brought up with stories of great leaders shaping history, and this myth is perpetuated in our business media today (Bendell and Little, 2015).

Drawing upon these insights, Gemmill and Oakley (1992) frame leadership itself as a 'social myth' which creates and reinforces the illusion that individual leaders are in control of events and organisational performance. That is, the existence and valorisation of leaders serves to repress uncomfortable needs, emotions and wishes that emerge when people work collaboratively (Gemmill, 1986; Gastil, 1994), and subsequently, individuals are able to project their worries and anxieties onto individual leaders, who are seen as omniscient and all-powerful. Members are therefore able to perceive themselves as free from anxiety, fears, struggles and the responsibility of autonomy (Bion, 1961), but may also fail to recognise that they are inducing their own learned helplessness and passivity: that is, they "willingly submit themselves to spoon feeding, preferring safe and easy security to the possible pains and uncertainty of learning by their own effort and mistakes" (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992: 98). For Gemmill and Oakley therefore, leadership – in the form widely assumed today - is dangerous and inherently unsustainable, leading to infantilization and mass deskilling. They stress the need to denaturalise take-for-granted assumptions in order to develop new theories of leadership which 'reskill' organisational members; encourage collaborative working environments; and do not rely on superhuman individuals.

Various other theorists (although not explicitly rooted in CLS) have reached similar conclusions. For example, Ashforth (1994) argues that authoritative leaders often engage in behaviours such as belittling of followers, self-aggrandisement, coercive conflict resolution, unnecessary punishments and the undermining of organisational goals. Schilling (2009) and Higgs (2009) also report that

leaders often exhibit behaviours which aim at obtaining purely personal (not organisational) goals, and may inflict damage on others through constant abuses of power. Finally, and in a similar vein to Gemmill and Oakley (1992), a number of theorists (Conger, 1990; Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser, 2007) proposed that the behaviour of 'followers' may also contribute to destructive practices- especially in regard to self-esteem issues, the playing of power games, and treating the leader as an idol.[2] As many scholars of sustainability in general, and 'leadership for sustainability' in particular, are interested in enhancing change, these disempowering effects of dominant assumptions about leadership should be a concern.

The four CLS critiques of the hero-focus of mainstream leadership studies all relate to a form of 'methodological individualism', assuming that significant insight into a social situation can be derived from analysing the motivations and actions of very few individuals (Basu, 2008). Their research has shown how focusing on an individual leader can enforce an *a-contextual* and short-termist view; one that pays little attention to broader socio-economic processes, planetary concerns or collective wellbeing. Whilst differences exist between the aims and objectives of the critical scholars cited thus far, at the heart of these debates is the notion that a reliance on overly hierarchical conceptualisations of leadership may have problematic impacts on organisational effectiveness, well-being, and broader social change: they are irreconcilable with creating sustainable societies (Evans, 2011; Gordon, 2010; Western, 2008; Sutherland et al, 2014; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). That is, for all their focus on attempting to achieve economically effective outcomes (which, indeed, is the primary 'selling point' of mainstream understandings, and the belief on which they are predicated), they fail to acknowledge the importance of long-term socially sustainable, efficacious and humane relationships between and among organisational actors.

Assuming Purpose

What is the purpose of leadership? Many case studies offered in leadership scholarship assume that the purpose of organisations is to achieve economic goals, rather than goals associated with equity, democracy and environmental sustainability (Jackson and Parry, 2008). A review of the assumed or proposed outcomes of leadership within twenty-five years of scholarship, showed that all types of outcome exist within an instrumentalist approach that concerns improving organisational performance, rather than considering the purpose of the organisation, the performance issue concerned, or the impact on stakeholders (Hiller, et al 2011). The mainstream corporate view of leadership is typically expressed in 'econophonic' and 'potensiphonic' terms – the taken-for-granted

[2] We must note that many scholars assume the word 'follower' as little more than the inverse of the word 'leader', a form of hypostatisation that tends to support the naturalisation of hierarchy, rather than it's questioning.

language that prioritises economic outcomes over all others and potency, power and performance over other human modalities (Promislo and Guccione, 2013). There has been little room for doubt and reflection on the purpose of business, work and economic progress within that leadership discourse. Thus, the challenging of econophonic and potensiphonic language in leadership studies can be an emancipatory activity, and key to nurturing "reciprocal, sustaining relationships among people and between humans and nature" (Evans, 2011: 2).

For some theorists, the prevalent assumptions of managerialism can be seen within an imperialist economic context – pointing toward the idea that under modern capitalist society, centralisation, hierarchy, domination, exploitation, manipulation, oppression and scapegoating are inherent features of life (Barker, 1997; Mannoni, 1956; Bhabha, 1994). If this is the context for one's analysis, then the 'social myth' of leadership we have described in this paper can be regarded as one of many nodal points in a discoursal web of ideas and practices whose effect is to infantilise and prepare mass audiences for compliance in their own exploitation. Other nodes being, for instance, discourses about the salience of the individual consumer; the universality of market mechanisms; the impracticality of challenging dominant discourses; or the pathological nature of opposition and the necessity for 'security'.

Despite our earlier criticisms of the assumptions and approaches within 'authentic leadership,' its focus on self-development *could* provide an opening for work on the deeper personal transformations that might allow for different types of purpose to be clarified and pursued through leadership acts.[3] In addition, the importance of purpose to leadership is receiving greater attention from leadership scholars, without that purpose being assumed to be congruent with narrowly defined corporate goals (Kempster, et al 2011). Growing interest in sustainability leadership or sustainable leadership can be seen in that context: an effort to plug the purpose gap in contemporary corporate life. A business rationale for corporate leaders to be clear on a purpose beyond narrow corporate goals is also developing as some researchers argue that firms with a clear public purpose do better financially over the longer term (Big Innovation Centre, 2016).

The concept of sustainability in these initiatives is, however, limited and potentially counter-productive, as we will discuss below. Therefore, unless the interest in purposeful business and purposeful leadership allows for a deeper exploration of sustainability than that which aligns simply

[3] It is worthy of note that authentic leadership and other approaches that focus on values have begun to be criticised from another perspective altogether: that they don't help managers' careers (Pfeffer, 2015). Such criticisms may provoke more debate in mainstream scholarship but are not aligned with the deeper questioning of purpose we explore here.

with existing corporate interests, it is unlikely to address this limitation to mainstream leadership approaches.

Beyond Critical Analysis

To address some of the shortcomings in mainstream leadership scholarship and training, some CLS scholars study and propose a more emergent, episodic and distributed form of leadership, involving acts that individuals may take to help groups achieve aims they otherwise might not (Bendell and Little, 2015; Western, 2008). The focus therefore shifts towards effective group processes, on which there is a range of scholarship to draw upon, within and beyond the CLS field.

Research on 'distributed leadership' has shown how leadership actors can emerge anywhere in an organisation and that leadership becomes a cultural trope around which motivated action accretes, a position supported theoretically by sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995), activity theory (Bedny et al, 2000), communities of practice theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and practice theory (Schatzki, 1996). Unfortunately, when it is presented as a practice that mitigates hierarchical power, especially in business organisations, distributed leadership sometimes becomes little more than a way of rhetorically extending employees' freedom of action (and weight of responsibility) while maintaining circumscriptive rules (Dainty et al, 2005; Woods et al, 2004). Thus, we conclude that the absence of a critical framework to deconstruct assumptions about leaders, goals, and legitimacy can hamper studies that explore post-heroic and distributed forms of leadership.

In recent years the term 'collective leadership' has emerged as "an umbrella concept that includes studies... applying the core insight of relationality to the key problems in [organisation and society]... Relationality reveals the individual as a node where multiple relationships intersect: people are relational beings" (Ospina and Foldy, 2015: 492). Some use the term to include distributed, shared, and co-leadership, due to an assessment that they all focus more on complex relations between individuals. "Collective leadership shifts attention from formal leaders and their influence on followers to the relational processes that produce leadership in a group, organization or system. Relationality motivates attention to the embeddedness of the leader-follower relationship in a broader system of relationships and to the meaning-making, communicative and organising processes that help define and constitute these relationships" (Ospina and Foldy, 2015: 492). Further than this, various scholars note the potential of more collective forms of leadership as a 'sustainable' organisational practice, given that it allows for empowerment, reduces alienation, and increases democracy and participation (Western, 2008; Evans, 2011).

Framed in this way, collective leadership could be viewed as an agenda that rises to the critiques from CLS. However, many studies and recommendations described as 'collective leadership' retain a belief in the salience of special individuals who can be identified as leaders, whether by role or by act. In addition, some studies of collective leadership efforts in organisations have found that it is used rhetorically by managers who pursue individual aims within inefficient bureaucracies (Davis and Jones, 2014). It is the more radical approaches within the collective leadership field, particularly concerning the non-profit sector, that resonate with the insights of CLS and could therefore be used in a new conception, theory and practice of sustainable leadership. However, what is equally important for such a new approach is to have the same critical perspective on sustainable development as we have offered on leadership.

Three Paradigms in Sustainability

In the same way that Critical Discourse Analysis can reveal limiting assumptions in the field of leadership, it can do that in the field of Sustainable Development. As described at the start of our paper, Sustainable Development and its related activities became established in the late 1980s. It was offered as a coherent agenda for governments around the post-Cold War world. It also coincided with the rise of another idea for public policy, called New Public Management (NPM), which regarded citizens as users of services and incorporated practices from the private sector (Schachter, 2014). Looking back, NPM (and its closely related tropes of leadership and entrepreneurialism) can be seen to have colonised the process of learning and change for sustainability, reducing it to a problem that can be solved by management and technology driven by leadership in a process dominated by capital (Bessant, et al 2015; Perez-Carmona, 2013; Steurer, 2007). Intentional or not, this colonisation was aided by the growth of voluntary corporate engagement with sustainability which then influenced the understandings of policy makers, experts and campaigners on how to approach social and environmental problems (Ball and Bebbington, 2008). A counter process was also occurring with the transfer of concepts of environmentalists and social justice campaigners into the private sector, thus leading to what Anderson and Mungal (2015) describe, albeit in a different sector, as the inter-sectoral transfer of discourses.

Critical Discourse Analysis reminds us that ideological effects work at the level of phrases. It invites us to question how a phrase can encourage certain perspectives and not others. One way that occurs is by 'collocation'. The term 'Sustainable Development' is a collocation; that is, two-words combined into a single term. It is a risk of collocations that they have the effect of de-problematising their constituent terms - in this case both 'Sustainable' and 'Development' - and replacing them with

a new ideologically-loaded term. One risk is that important questions of what is development is displaced by a focus instead on what might be distinctly "sustainable". Thus, when considering sustainability, we should attempt to uncover assumptions about development, including assumptions about 'social' progress. There is a long tradition of this fundamental questioning of progress in the anti-development or post-development fields, which typically argue that the development concept is an extension of colonialist and imperialist power relations in the global economy (Sachs, 1992; 1999: 2015: Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). Given that readers of this journal are likely to be well-versed in the literature on sustainability, we will not detail the critiques in the same way did with leadership, but instead offer a conceptual framework which draws upon them.

The framework of 'Three Paradigms in Sustainability' that we offer here makes broad generalisations to invite reflection on worldviews. Different countries, classes, genders, races and professions, amongst other categories one could identify, have different experiences of the diverse dilemmas touched upon by 'sustainability.' Our own generalising is intended to help broaden perspectives on what sustainability could mean, and what various interpretations and assumptions about it may be producing through us.

In this paper, we offer a simple categorisation of paradigms in sustainability thinking: Reformation, Revolution and Restoration: i.e. broad brush strokes on the ways of thinking about and approaching shared dilemmas. In doing so we seek to reveal some of the hidden ideological work that the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability' may have been doing in ways counterproductive to people's expressed interests.

Reformation

Many scholars of the history of sustainable development explain how the concept "was originally devised as a political ideal by conservationists to persuade the governments of developing countries to undertake less environmentally damaging development paths" (Purvis and Grainger,2004: 31). This led the early discourse on sustainable development to be quite precise about the environmental aspects of what an economy might aspire to, which was summarised well by Herman Daly (1990) in 5 principles (Table 1).

The Daly Principles
1. Limit the human scale to a level which, if not optimal, is at least within the carrying capacity and is therefore, sustainable.
2. Achieve technological change that increases efficiency and durability while limiting throughout.

3. Preserve the harvesting rate of renewable resources at a level below the regenerative capacity of the environment. 4. Preserve waste emission rates at a level below the assimilative capacity of the environment. 5. Restrict non-renewable resource use to levels equalled by the creation or accessing of renewable substitutes.

Table 1: The Daly Principles

The social elements to early views on sustainable development included the eradication of extreme poverty and malnutrition; the achievement of comprehensive literacy; and increasing average life expectancies to that of the industrialised Western nations. Education and employment were seen as the motors for these social advances. The concept of "development" was accepted as mostly a material phenomenon, rather than involving other aspects of human improvement, such as extending democratic rights and justice throughout all organs of society, or outcomes such as happiness and wellbeing (Sachs, 1999).

Apart from concern about the odious debts of poor governments, the early sustainable development approach did not look deeply at economic systems. Many people working in charities or development agencies struggled to say anything about the economic 'pillar' of sustainable development beyond the rule of law, corruption issues or the dangers of dumping subsidised products in poor markets (Purvis and Grainger, 2004). In most intergovernmental organisation reports and popular writings on sustainable development in the 80s and 90s, forms of regulated capitalist market economies were assumed as the norm, where a sustainably-developed economy would involve a mixture of enterprises, cooperatives, state owned companies, stock markets, private banks and single fiat currencies (Sachs, 1999). This was not surprising given the hope at the end of the Cold War that progress could be made without recourse to traditional left-right intellectual conflicts. Despite the absence of ideas on political economy, given the economic-focus of many government, business and civil society leaders in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the extent of poverty, pollution and habitat destruction, the social and environmental aims of sustainable development still represented a substantial reformation of capitalism.

Over the years this lack of an explicit perspective on economics provided the opportunity for powerful trends to influence what sustainability came to mean. Economic globalisation proceeded at pace, where international institutions forced market reforms in return for debt rescheduling, and international treaties were agreed to bring down barriers to trade and finance. The interests of multinational corporations and banks were a powerful force shaping the discourse of many

governments and the field of international cooperation (Bendell, 2004). Therefore, sustainable development increasingly came to mean sustaining economic growth in the medium term (Perez-Carmona, 2013). This process was effectively crowned when economic growth became central to some the new SDGs in 2015 (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, the mainstream discourse on sustainable development today may reflect a moral imagination but a weak Reformation Approach to our socioeconomic systems.

Revolution

Development Studies and Development Cooperation had existed for almost half a century before the Earth Summit made Sustainable Development more famous in 1992 (Sachs, 1992). Many scholars of development placed it in the context of centuries of past colonialism and imperialism, suggesting that "development" was the new face of attempts to dominate and expropriate wealth (Frank 1969). That tradition of radical critique of global capitalism, its corporations and banks, had influenced some of the earliest post-colonial independent nations across the global South. By the 1990s the policy influence of anti-imperialist development thinkers had waned.

Some advocates of sustainable development brought a strong rights-based agenda, with a focus on social justice, anti-corruption and greater democracy, including workplace democracy (Sachs, 1999). These interests are paralleled by Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) scholars who do not explicitly frame their work as concerning the social dimensions of sustainable development. But their focus on workplace practices and the role of management reminds us that social sustainability is not an abstract end-goal, but something that can be recursively built into practice on a day-to-day basis. This draws parallels with the notion of 'prefigurative politics' (Maeckelbergh, 2009), where means are seen to be *as important* as the ends; where they are inextricably linked and blurred, which rejects a focus on either means or ends at the expense of the other. Many of these analysts don't call for a revolution in capitalism to achieve workplace rights and democracy, but in comparison to those that ignore or misunderstand the human rights agenda within sustainable development, their views seem quite revolutionary.

The environmental aspect of the critique of international development (Jordan and O'Riordan 2000) has not appeared to influence many newly independent nations, with a modernist notion of social progress through industrialisation and consumer society being widely embraced (Bendell, 2004). Yet their fundamental question to those who believed it was possible to reform dominant socioeconomic systems has not gone away: How can economic growth be reconciled with environmental constraints, or meeting basic needs be prioritised over the endless potential desires of humankind?

Many grassroots movements around the world, including agricultural workers, unionists and representatives of indigenous groups, have kept the critique going. At times, the critique has gained international notoriety (Utting, 2015). The 'Anti-Globalisation Movement', came to world notice in 1999 due to protests at the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organisation, and then the 'Occupy Movement' again in 2011, beginning in Wall Street, New York. Neither of those movements clearly advocated a focused set of proposals for the rules of a different socioeconomic system or a strategy for how to implement it, instead, focusing on pluralising discussion beyond neo-liberal economics. That is not to say there are not a range of specific proposals made by people who engage in such activism, ranging from reforming laws on trade, corporations, taxation and monetary systems (Bendell, 2004).

In summary, despite efforts like the World Social Forum, a Revolutionary Approach to sustainable development has largely been restricted to critique and segmented in separate realms of concern such as environmental conservation or social development. Examples of government efforts to implement what some would call a 'left wing' approach to achieving sustainability, by transforming socioeconomic systems, are therefore difficult to find (Utting, 2015). Nevertheless, some still hope that a Revolutionary Approach is possible, perhaps inevitable. Crucially, they believe there is enough time, and that we can and should 'progress.'

Restoration

In the past decade, a view has emerged in the West that suggests neither a Reformation or Revolution of our socioeconomic systems is a sensible aspiration when faced with our current predicament. That analysis is based, in particular, on the latest climate science and the absence of significant global emissions reductions. Some consider that a 'near term collapse' in socioeconomic systems is inevitable and possible in the lifetime of today's children (Mulgan, 2011; Jamieson, 2014; Foster, 2015). Others go further in questioning the survival of the species itself beyond this century. Parallel to this debate is the rise to prominence of the 'anthropocene' concept with its defining acceptance that human beings have set in motion a mass extinction as major as any produced by Earth-system changes over geological time (Hamilton et al, 2015).

From these perspectives 'sustainable development' is seen as a concept that has already failed, and was destined to fail as it ignored the inherent contradictions between our form of economic development and the achievement of environmental sustainability or social equity. Sustainable Development is therefore argued by Foster (2015) as the concoction of a delusional mind-set which assumed that progress, in particular technological progress, is inevitable and always desirable. Some argue this progressivist mind-set comes from a subconscious attachment to having something

important to contribute to that outlives us, given a decline in the experience of a cosmic sense to life (e.g. God) or of nature as sacred. Advocates of this view also critique the assumption that humans can control their destiny on planet Earth, or beyond.

From this standpoint, climate change is viewed as a tragedy, not just a problem to be solved. The focus of these analysts and activists becomes one of adaptation to the coming catastrophes, including cultural and psychological adaptation. One of the leading academic commentators on this approach calls for "a therapeutic politics of retrieval, renewing kinds of deep resilience which these communities have progressively lost, along with a recovered sense of realistic human possibility and an acknowledgement of the tragedy in which we have involved ourselves and the planet" (Foster, 2015: 1).

This paradigm resonates with and extends a century and more of critical sociology, including Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) on the commodification of life and Jurgen Habermas (1984) on how both bureaucratic and market systems colonise the 'lifeworld' of communities. The paradigm also reflects a depth of critiques of economic development, and therefore sustainable development, that have been made previously by representatives of indigenous peoples who challenged the processes that are destroying their traditional ways of life, such as in tropical rainforests. For instance, the Pachamama Alliance involve Ecuadorean forest peoples who call for people with modern lifestyles to "change the dream" by which they live by.

The Restoration Approach to collective dilemmas can involve at least four elements: the restoration of humility, wildness, of wholeness and of resilience. First, the restoration of humility, recognising the hubris that humans could control nature or each-other comprehensively and indefinitely. Connected to this is an emphasis on the restoration of 'wildness'. In the environmental sphere that involves greater emphasis on working with natural processes, such as the rewilding of landscapes. In the social sphere this concept is being used to invite us to consider how a less domesticated approach to our own lives might look as well as suggesting we need to become more awake to our interdependence with nature (Foster, 2015).

This awareness connects to a third element, which is the restoration of our wholeness: the assumed separation of nature and humans is challenged as causal in our malaise, and thus transcended. There are variants on this theme, with differing emphases on how we understand and talk about nature and humans within that (Perez de Vega, 2015). Some draw upon both ancient wisdom traditions and new sciences to explain the limits of viewing humans as separate from and manipulating of 'other' life (Eisenstein, 2011).

These three elements culminate in the socio-economic arena with the restoration of resilience. That has been defined as "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change, so as still to retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks" (Hopkins, 2008: 54). For instance, a town can be regarded as a system that can grow resilience as changes to its supplies of energy and sustenance change. Others draw inspiration for human communities from how some living systems bounce back from disruptions with a stronger system, such as organisms that overcome some infections (Taleb, 2012).

Some use the term 'retrieval' for describing what this approach to our predicament implies, returning to aspects of what we have progressively lost since the start of the European Enlightenment (Foster, 2015). The argument is not that everything pre-modern is positive or needs to be restored, but that much is to be retrieved from past cultures, philosophies, and technologies. We adopt the term 'Restoration' to describe this approach, as it foretells this as a major social movement and potentially a new era. We have explained this approach - or antithesis - to Sustainable Development, in more detail than either Reformation or Revolution as it is more recent and marginal in discourses on policy and organisations.

The youth of the Restoration Approach is one reason why its social dimensions have not been widely discussed. What will human rights, fairness, justice, power and governance look like in societies that take this approach? Given how some efforts to revive past approaches to life and culture can involve a brutal rejection of compassion-based values in the exuberance of fundamentalism, the social dimension of the Restoration Approach will be important to engage.

Working Across Paradigms

Given that the Sun will explode one day in the future, infinite 'sustainable development' of human society on Planet Earth is unachievable and so the term is a linguistic device to provide a meeting place for different people and ideas to work on the shared dilemmas of our time. Sustainable development may have been attractive at helping us to cooperate on diverse dilemmas while suspending controversies over religion and political economy. Existing theories of exploitation of poorer countries by imperial powers could be side-lined, along with critiques of capitalism at a time of hope after the Cold War. Differing religious motivations for caring about the other could be silenced with emphasis on the shared values and targets that delegates could state agreement on. If keeping people talking was the aim, sustainable development has been successful.

Many involved in intergovernmental processes today argue that it is pragmatic to maintain this approach in order to arrive at agreement on such initiatives as the SDGs. However, as such limited

progress is made on critical issues like climate change, the avoidance of deeper questions of political economy and of belief may not have been so pragmatic after all.

What approach to sustainability is most relevant today? Reformation, Revolution or Restoration? In this paper, we have not discussed the latest data on a range of shared dilemmas or the scale and rate of effective response. We think that there is much cause for concern. But we also recognise that each approach can frame and inform helpful action, while each approach can marginalise important considerations or justify poor action. So rather than assessing which paradigm is the most accurate starting point, after all they are all just social constructions, what is important is to help people consider what each might imply if pursued with rigour and creativity. From this perspective, sustainability leadership must begin with helping people to think about their thinking about sustainability.

Implications for Sustainable Leadership

Combining our critique of prevalent approaches to both leadership and sustainability, seven main 'unsustainabilities' in mainstream leadership can now be proposed (Table 2). This prepares the conceptual ground for the development of new approaches to sustainable leadership research, practice and education.

Table 2: The Seven Unsustainabilities of Leadership

1. *Ignoring purpose, or assuming the primary purpose to be the benefit of an employer;*
2. *Assuming or believing a senior role holder to be most salient to organisational or social change;*
3. *Ignoring the political and moral aspects of an exclusive focus on enhancing the agency of senior role holders;*
4. *Assuming that 'leader' is a continuing quality of a person rather than a label;*
5. *Assuming that the value of an individual lies mostly in their confidence in their distinctiveness;*
6. *Assuming that leadership development is about learning more rather than about unlearning;*
7. *Believing that material progress is always possible and best.*

Clearly critique in itself is not a sufficient contribution. Western (2008: 21), for example, suggests that "critical theorists must go beyond identifying 'bad leadership practice' and aim to create and support successful ethical frameworks for leadership", and Sutherland et al (2014) argue that attention should be paid to understanding "how organisational alternatives *to* mainstream

understandings of leadership might be constituted" (Sutherland et al, 2013: 16). Therefore, we can flip the seven criticisms into the following seven recommendations for more sustainable leadership:

1. Explore purpose and meaning as central to personal and professional action. By doing so, enable individuals to clarify their provisional understanding of personal aims and how they may, or may not, relate to existing organisational aims, to support a more holistic assessment of personal and organisational performance.

2. Recognise that organisational or social change is affected by people at all levels and through social processes, so knowledge about collective action is key. By doing so, encourage people to learn more about how groups can function more effectively through enhanced collaboration.

3. Consider the political and moral aspects of authority and bases for legitimacy of leadership acts. By doing so, encourage a focus on how one's potential actions relate to the needs of the collective, stakeholders and wider society.

4. Recognise that 'leader' is a label and people can take acts of leadership without it meaning they are permanent and stable 'leaders'. Understanding this provides a valuable opportunity for developing overall leadership capacity within organisations, rather than mistakenly seeing it as the domain of a chosen, or emergent, few.

5. Appreciate the value of an individual is as much through their similarities and connectedness to others and all life, as through their distinctiveness. Doing so allows a move away from seeing organisations as natural hierarchies, towards pluralistic sites characterised by ongoing debate, discussion and deliberation.

6. Understand that leadership development is about both learning new ideas and unlearning existing ones. In this regard, practitioners can be encouraged to let go of limiting assumptions as they develop critical consciousness, and therefore simultaneously oppose practices as well as propose new approaches.

7. Realise that personal purpose and meaning can ultimately transcend notions of material progress in any form or the associated means of control. Doing so challenges the consequentialist, means-end philosophies of contemporary business and organisation, and instead promotes an ideology centred on compassion and creating a new world in the shell of the old (Gordon, 2010)

Although these recommendations are about leadership, they indicate we must go beyond a narrow focus on individual leader's abilities, skills, attributes and behaviours (Bendell and Little, 2015), and

toward developing all organisational actors' critical thinking skills (Brookfield, 1987), and creating spaces in which to discuss future possibilities for sustainability (Evans, 2011). Although the recommendations are about 'sustainability,' the seventh is important for allowing a new perspective to emerge, considering what we have described as a 'Restoration Approach,' currently being triggered by the latest environmental science. As described above, such a paradigm challenges the progressivist and modernist assumptions in both the prevalent ideas of leadership and sustainability that are unlikely to help us consider coping with severe disturbance, rather than more 'progress' through greater control (Foster, 2015).

In social studies, we appreciate how theoretical development can take many forms and does not require making predictions based on a theory (Abend, 2009). Instead, our main theoretical contribution is to provide a framework for interpretation of claims about leadership for sustainability. Affecting people by revealing limiting assumptions embedded in, and reproduced by, leadership discourse has been documented in areas beyond sustainability (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). Therefore, our work has practical implication in that synthesising critiques and making them available to people and scholars engaged in sustainability may reduce the influence of limiting concepts. Therefore, we limit our predictions to this process of consciousness-raising. We contend that professionals who avoid the seven unsustainabilities of leadership will enable more positive (or less negative) change; that organisations which promote avoidance of the seven unsustainabilities of leadership will witness more positive (or less negative) change, and; if designers or commissioners of leadership development avoid the seven unsustainabilities of leadership then they will encourage more effective change-enabling capabilities from their participants.

At this point we can offer a tentative definition:

Sustainable leadership is any ethical behaviour that has the intention and effect of helping groups of people address shared dilemmas in significant ways not otherwise achieved.

We regard the concept of sustainable leadership to include seven necessary conditions (Podsakoff, et al, 2016). First, that leadership involves a behaviour, or act, which can also include an intentional non-action. Second, that the act is ethical, according to a framework held by the person and capable of being understood by observers. Third that the behaviour helps groups of people achieve something. Fourth, that the achievement relates to addressing shared dilemmas, such as economic, social, environmental or cultural problems that affect many people. Fifth, that the change is significant, according to both the group affected and the observers, including people who wish to describe leadership, like ourselves. This recognises the subjective nature of ascribing leadership.

Sixth, that the behaviour created an effect that was additional, whereby if it had not occurred then the outcome would not likely have been achieved. We recognise this element is based on our theories of change and is a difficult element to assess. Seventh that the person exhibiting the behaviour intended to pursue positive change on the dilemma. We hope that the definition of sustainable leadership serves to remind us that leadership is about change involving acts rather than positional power, sustainability is about dilemmas which might not be solved, that both intention and effect are important to consider, and that the significance of acts will be attributed by observers based on their own values and assumptions.

For the reasons explained in the introduction, our paper does not provide a systematic review of the prior use of the term 'sustainable leadership' in either academic publications or contemporary public discourse. However, some brief comments on how our concept relates to other interpretations will help clarify what we mean and what we do not. First, we note that the term "sustainable leadership" has been used to refer to leadership whose positive effects are sustained, or whose effectiveness does not fade over the tenure of the individual concerned (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004). Although the longevity of an impact of an action is an interesting consideration, by not questioning aims and outcomes, nor the salience of the individual compared to other factors, this conception of sustainable leadership falls short of our purposes in encouraging a spectrum of action on social and environmental dilemmas.

Second, there have been magazine articles and blogs that interpret sustainable leadership as involving the quality of personal resilience and openness in dealing with complex challenges (Glaser and Entine, 2014). In academia, variants of this approach include those that argue that heightened complexity and interconnectedness of economy and society today means that senior managers need to cultivate mind-sets to be better able to interpret their organisational environment (Tideman et al, 2013). While it is important to consider personal wellbeing and mind-sets in any analysis of leadership, we do not consider the resilience and open mindedness of a senior manager to be sufficient elements in a construct that would be relevant to significant action on social and environmental dilemmas.

Third, there is a conception of sustainable leadership which defines it as the opposite of exploitative leadership, where the former involves a person, with earned authority, helping groups of people achieve the progress they desire on sustainability issues (Evans, 2011). Our proposed concept of sustainable leadership shares much in common with this perspective but we do not think it helpful to imply leadership is a quality cohering in one person, instead seeing it as more emergent, episodic

and distributed. We aim to avoid reification, and regard leadership as simply a word, not an actual quality of one person.

A fourth approach also seeks to make a connection between environmental consciousness and an approach to leadership. Western (2008) regards human society as an element within our ecology, and thus views organisations and communities as complex living systems. Therefore, sustainable leadership can be viewed as a systems-conscious approach, as the Cambridge Centre for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) has advocated (Bendell and Little, 2015). Given the complex and dynamic interdependence found in the natural environment, it is a stimulating metaphor for reflection on organisations and societies. However, to argue that we can read off from nature insights for a better form of leadership might distract us from how such views remain our interpretations of nature and thus are socially constructed and could embody and exert power relations in themselves.

Fifth, there is a literature which regards sustainable leadership as an approach by senior managers to the design of organisational change processes to address sustainability issues profitably (Avery, and Bergsteiner, 2011; Galpin and Whittington, 2012). This is an important area of work, but could reinforce limiting assumptions about the locus of change, that even a focus on organisational culture for inspiring staff initiative may be unable to counteract.

In future, further work could be done to develop hypotheses about sustainable leadership and even how to measure it. That would involve the development of a 'nomological network' of terms related to conditions within the definition we propose. However, in line with the interest in promoting change for sustainability through research, we think our research can be built upon by considering the following five broad knowledge needs:

- The extent and form of limiting assumptions within prevalent approaches to both leadership and sustainability, in both scholarship and practice, including within the emerging fields of 'sustainability leadership' or 'sustainable leadership'.
- Inter-disciplinary insights on organisational and social change processes that address shared dilemmas and relate to individual practices. In particular, drawing on ideas from social movements and other change processes often overlooked by mainstream approaches to leadership.
- Insights on effective collective leadership to address shared dilemmas in society. In particular, knowledge on group dynamics for democratic deliberation and decision-making.

- The content and effectiveness of alternative pedagogies for leadership development, which draw on at least some of the seven recommendations for sustainable leadership described above. Including non-classroom based approaches.
- The cultural specificities versus commonalities of approaches to leadership and sustainability, especially in non-Western contexts.

The Papers in this Issue

One of the implications of Critical Leadership Studies is the likely benefit to scholarship, practice, and education of drawing upon theories and experiences from outside the corporate sphere. We respond to that view in this special issue on sustainable leadership, with papers that explore such leadership from different academic disciplines and in non-corporate settings. Each paper draws upon the field of leadership studies, but incorporates it with another discipline. One paper draws on psychology, focusing on environmental activists. The other papers draw on education studies and focus on those who work with children. With both their subject matter and the theories mobilised, we hope the field for future research on sustainable leadership is usefully broadened.

In the following paper, Nadine Andrews' explores the "Psychosocial factors influencing the experience of sustainability professionals" as they try to lead change towards pro-environmental decision-making in their organisations. Her method of "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis" offers us an up-close look at the mental frames and motivations of leaders working on sustainability. The findings help us see how psychological theories and research are useful to understanding how the contemporary sustainability professional copes with the challenges and tragedies of our environmental situation. It points to an area that will require more focus in sustainability management as people gravitate towards a 'Restoration Approach' to sustainability that includes recognition of forthcoming loss and tragedy.

An element of Andrews paper is the wellbeing of the professional engaged in leadership for sustainability. Professional wellbeing is also a theme in Kaz Stuart's paper which researches the practice of people who work with children. "It may be obvious from the word itself that 'sustainability' is about the future. Therefore, as a policy paradigm, it invites attention to children alive today, as well as more abstract notions of future generations," notes Stuart. Moreover, "despite their centrality to sustainability policy, children and young people have not had a comprehensive place in corporate sustainability practice or research." With the last two papers in this special issue we seek to address that, as both include case studies on working with young people. Stuart uses concepts of distributed leadership (Woods et al, 2004) and system leadership

(Senge et al, 2015) to structure an exploration of how people managing children's centres in the UK are addressing difficult challenges brought on by austerity.

Stuart finds that the model is helpful for leaders of children's centres. In such contexts, it is normal for managers to be motivated by values, which provides a suitable context for increasing delegation of decisions and collaboration on improving professional practice at large. The relevance of these findings for management and leadership in other organisations and sectors may therefore depend on the sense of purpose that staff hold.

Readers may note some similarities between 'system leadership' and the idea of collective leadership that we described earlier in this paper. The emphasis within 'system leadership' narratives is on creating broader changes in contexts by focusing on root causes and wider relations. The concept appears, therefore, to hold potential for sustainability management in general. While it focuses on relatedness and collectives, time will show whether it involves some of the problems with mainstream refrains of leadership, such as an assumption of the special salience of an individual for organisational and social change. Perhaps a paradox will emerge in system leadership, given the emphasis on both system and individual. Going forward, we see opportunities for more research on the use of systems methods of organisational change, such as soft systems methodology (Checkland, 2001), within the system leadership field.

As we have criticised current orthodoxies in leadership studies, we wish to avoid any new orthodoxies in our critical field. One benefit from Critical Leadership Studies is that it may encourage a new synthesis, as mainstream ideas are adapted. Criticism of "heroic" approaches to leadership is one area where this dialectic may be possible. In "Heroic ecologies: embodied heroic leadership and sustainable futures", Olivia Efthimiou moves beyond contemporary notions of heroes as exceptionally brave saviours, so as to revive and reapply the cultural notion of a "hero's journey" that is open to us all. That is, a journey of challenge, trauma, triumph and transcendence that contributes to a community. Efthimiou explores connections between that idea of heroism, sustainability, embodied leadership and wellbeing. She makes the case for how a revised understanding of heroism may be considered as an embodied system of sustainable leadership. She synthesises the claims made by practitioners who use the hero's journey with young people, to suggest that a whole model of heroic sustainable leadership development could be deployed.

Efthimiou's paper reminds us of the usefulness of personal orientations towards truth-seeking, collective consciousness, meaning-making, courage to uphold principles, courage to unlearn and, ultimately, to allow one's reinvention. A critical discourse lens would encourage future analysis of

what is gained and lost through using the term and concept "hero" to describe and promote these orientations in people, as well the labelling of these as qualities especially for "leaders". A question must remain whether dominant contemporary ideas on heroism could encourage people on heroic leadership training to aspire to be recognised for moments of special bravery and potency, with problematic consequences.

All three papers explore personal issues and wellbeing, reflecting how discussions of sustainable leadership invite us to consider how the professional challenges we all work on ultimately involve very personal processes. They remind us of the enduring relevance and power of a focus on leadership and its development, despite the various pitfalls we have discussed in our paper.

Conclusions

From drawing upon sociologically-informed critiques of both 'leadership' and 'sustainability', we have argued that prevalent notions of these concepts are unhelpful to either practitioner or researcher engagement with the shared dilemmas of our time. We have explained how the idea of leadership, as a myth of potent individual action, has been deployed in the service of unsustainable growth and exploitation. Those who suggest that the world needs bigger and bolder leadership in the transition to a just and sustainable world must ask whether or not the leadership they imagine is the product of wishful thinking fed by an infantilising managerial dispositif (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992). Instead, we have argued that the idea of leadership must be disentangled in its discoursal function in the service of oppression before it can be reconfigured as a modality of democracy and placed in the service of justice and sustainability.

By applying the same critical stance to the mainstream discourse on sustainable development, we outlined three major paradigms, which we argued are key to be aware of to locate one's own efforts or scholarship on this topic. We integrated and summarised these critiques by stating Seven Unsustainabilities of Leadership and therefore made seven recommendations for more sustainable leadership. We choose the term sustainable leadership due to it emphasising that dominant notions of leadership are unsustainable as well as our current planetary predicament.

Given the urgency and scale of contemporary shared dilemmas, new research and education on such sustainable leadership is required in at least the five areas we identified. That future knowledge may help people who operate from within any of the paradigms of sustainability.

References

Abend, G. (2008) "The Meaning of 'Theory'", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, pp 173–199

Adorno, T. (1973), *The Jargon of Authenticity*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Alvesson, M. (1992), *Critical Management Studies*, Sage, London.

Alvesson, M. and Spicer, A. (2012), "Critical Leadership Studies: The case for critical performativity". *Human Relations*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 367-390.

Anderson, G. and Mungal A. S. (2015) "Discourse analysis and the study of educational leadership", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 29 Issue 7, pp. 807 - 818

Ashforth, B. (1994), "Petty Tyranny in Organisations", *Human Relations*, Vol. 47, No. 7, pp. 755-778.

Avery, G.C. and Bergsteiner, H. (2011) "Sustainable leadership practices for enhancing business resilience and performance," *Strategy and Leadership*, Vol. 39 No. 3, pp. 5-15.

Aurobindo (1972), "The Life Divine", *Centenary Library*, Vol. 18, Book 1, p. 229. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India.

Ball, A. and J. Bebbington (2008) Editorial: Accounting and Reporting for Sustainable Development in Public Service Organizations, Public Money & Management, Vol. 28, Issue 6.

Barker, R. (1997), "How can we train leaders if we do not know what leadership is?", *Human Relations*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 343-362.

Basu, K. (2008), "Methodological Individualism", in Durlauf, S. N. and Blume, L. E. (eds), *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics, 2nd Edition*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Bedny, G. Z., Seglin and M. H., Meister, D. (2000), "Activity theory: History, research and application", *Theoretical Issues in Ergonomics Science*, Vol. 1, No. 2. pp. 168-206.

Bendell, J. (2002), "Psychos in Suits", *Open Democracy,* 24th July. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/theme_7-corporations/article_260.jsp

Bendell, J. (2004) *Barricades and Boardrooms: A Contemporary History of the Corporate Accountability Movement*, Programme Paper 13, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD): Geneva

Bendell, J. (ed.) (2009) *The Corporate Responsibility Movement*, Greenleaf Publishing: Sheffield, UK.

Bendell, J. and Little, R. (2015) 'Seeking Sustainability Leadership', *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Issue 60, pp. 13-26

Benson, M. and Hogan, R. (2008), "How Dark Side Leadership personality destroys trust and degrades organisational effectiveness", Organisations and People, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 10-18.

Bessant, S.E.F., Robinson, Z.P. and Ormerod, R.M. (2015) "Neoliberalism, new public management and the sustainable development agenda of higher education: history, contradictions and synergies", *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 21, Issue 3: Environmental Education in a Neoliberal Climate, pp. 417-432

Bhabha, H. K. (1994) "The Postcolonial and Postmodern: The Question of Agency." In The Location of Culture. London: Routledge.

Big Innovation Centre (2016) *The Purposeful Company Interim Report*, 15th May 2016.

Bligh, M., Pillai, R. and Uhl-Bien, M. (2007), "The social construction of a legacy: Summarising and extending follower-centred perspectives on leadership", in Shamir, B., Pillai, R. and Bligh, M. (Eds.) *Follower-centred perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl*. Information Age, Charlotte, NC, pp. 265-27.

Blunt, P. and Jones, M. L. (1996), "Exploring the limits of Western leadership theory in East Asia and Africa", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1/2.

Bolden, R. and Gosling, J. (2006) "Leadership Competencies: time to change the tune?", *Leadership,* Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 147-63.

Burr, V. (1995), *Social Constructionism,* Routledge, Hove.

Calas, M. and Smircich, L. (1991), "Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership", *Organisation Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 567-601.

Checkland, P.B. (2001) "Soft Systems Methodology", in J. Rosenhead and J. Mingers (eds), *Rational Analysis for a Problematic World Revisited*. Wiley, Chichester.

Collinson D. (2011), "Critical leadership studies", in Bryman, A., Collinson, D., Grint, K., Jackson, B. and Uhl-Bien, M. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Leadership*. Sage, London, pp. 179-192.

Conger, J. (1990), "The Dark Side of Leadership", *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 44-55.

Cronin, S. ed. (2008), *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, Routledge, US & Canada.

Dainty, A., Bryman, A., Price, A., Greasley, K., Soetanto, R. and King, N. (2005), "Project affinity: the role of emotional attachment in construction projects", *Construction Management and Economics*. Vol. 23, No. 3. 241-244.

Davis, H. and Jones, S. (2014), "The work of leadership in higher education management", *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, Vol. 36, No. 4. pp. 367–370.

Denis, J-L., Langley, A., Sergi, V. (2012) "Leadership in the Plural", *Academy of Management Annals* Vol. 6, No. 1.

De Vries, K. and Miller, D. (1985), "Narcissism and Leadership: An Object Relations Perspective", *Human Relations*, Vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 583-601.

Einarsen, S. Aasland, M. and Skogstad, A. (2007), "Destructive Leadership behaviour: A definition and conceptual model", *The Leadership Quarterly*, No. 18, pp. 207-216.

Enteman, W. F. (1993), *Managerialism: The Emergence of a New Ideology*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.

Evans, T. (2011), "Leadership without domination? Toward restoring the Human and Natural World", *Journal of Sustainability Education*, No. 2, pp. 1-16.

Fairclough, N. (1995), *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Longman, London.

Fairhurst, G. (2009) '*Discursive Leadership: In conversation with Leadership Psychology*' Sage: London

Fanon, F. (1961), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Weidenfeld, New York.

Fletcher, J. (2004), "The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 647–661.

Ford, J. (2010), "Studying Leadership Critically: A psychosocial lens on leadership identities'", *Leadership*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 1-19.

Ford, J. Harding, N. and Learmonth, M. (2008), *Leadership as identity: Constructions and Deconstructions*, Palgrave, Basingstoke.

Fox, E. M., L. and Urwick, L. (1940) *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*, Pitman: London.

Gallagher, D.R ed. (2012), *Environmental Leadership: A Reference Handbook*, Sage, UK.

Galpin, T. and Whittington, L. J. (2012) "Sustainability leadership: from strategy to results," *Journal of Business Strategy*, Vol. 33 Issue 4, pp 40-48

Gardner, W. L., Cogliser, C. C., Davis, K. M., and Dickens, M. P. (2011) "Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda," *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 22 Issue 6, pp 1120-1145.

Gastil, J. (1994), "A Definition and Illustration of Democratic Leadership", *Human Relations*, Vol. 47, No. 8, Sage, London.

Gemmill, G. (1986), "The mythology of the leader role in small groups", *Small Group Behaviour*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 41-50.

Gemmill, G. and Oakley, J. (1992), "Leadership: An Alienating Social Myth?", *Human Relations,* Vol. 45, No.2, pp. 113-129.

Gergen, K. J. (1994), *Realities and Relationships, Soundings in Social Construction*, Harvard University Press.

Glaser, J. E. and Entine, E. (2014) "Sustainable Leadership", *Huffington Post*, July 7th.

Gordon, U. (2010), *Anarchy Alive! Anti-authoritarian politics from practice to theory',* Pluto Press, London.

Grint, K. (1997) (Ed.) *Leadership: Classical, Contemporary and Critical Approaches*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Gudmundsson, A. and Southey, G. (2011), *Leadership and the rise of the corporate psychopath: What can business schools do about the 'snakes inside'?* QUT Business School Queensland University of Technology, Queensland.

Habermas, J. (1984/7), *The Theory of Communicative Action, (I) Reason and the Rationalization of Society; (II) Lifeworld and System*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. (2004) *Change over time? A report of educational change over 30 years in eight U.S. and Canadian schools*, Spencer Foundation, Chicago.

Higgs, M. (2009), "The good, the bad and the ugly: leadership and narcissism", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 165-178.

Hiller, N. J., DeChurch, L. A., Murase, T., and Doty, D. (2011) "Searching for outcomes of leadership: A 25-year review," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 37, Issue 4, pp 1137-1177.

Hosking, D. M. (2006) "Not Leaders, Not Followers." In B. Shamir, R. Pillai, M. Bligh and M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *Follower-centred perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl*, Information Age Publishing, Greenwich, USA.

Hurlow, S. (2008) *Language of leadership*, PhD Thesis, Cardiff University. http://orca.cf.ac.uk/55760/

Jackson, B. and Parry, K. (2008) *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying leadership*, Sage publications, London.

Jackson, T. (2009) *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for A Finite Planet*, Routledge, UK.

Khoo, H. and Burch, G. (2007), "The 'dark side' of leadership personality and transformational leadership: An exploratory study", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 44, pp. 86-97.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991), *Situated Learning*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Learmonth, M. and Morrell, K. (2016) 'Is critical leadership studies 'critical'?' *Leadership* [online]

Leroy, H., Anseel, F., Gardner, W. L., and Sels, L. (2015) "Authentic Leadership, Authentic Followership, Basic Need Satisfaction, and Work Role Performance A Cross-Level Study," *Journal of Management*, Volume 41 Issue 6, pp 1677-1697.

Mannoni, O. (1956) Prospero and Caliban. London: Methuen.

Marcuse, H. (2008), *A study on authority,* Verso, London.

van Marrewijk, M. (2003), "Concepts and Definitions of CSR and Corporate Sustainability: Between Agency and Communion", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 95-105.

Meindl, J., Sanford, B., Ehrlich, B. and Dukerich, J. (1985), "The Romance of Leadership" *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 78-102.

Mellahi, K. Jackson, P. and Sparks, L. (2002), "An Exploratory study into failure in successful organisations: The case of Marks and Spencer", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 13, No.1, pp. 15-30.

Nicholls, A. (2006), *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Nkomo, S. M. (2011), "A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of 'African' leadership and management in organization studies: Tensions, contradictions and possibilities", *Organization*, Vol. 18, No. 3.

Olsson, S. (2006) "We Don't Need Another Hero! Organisational Storytelling as a Vehicle for Communicating a Female Archetype of Workplace Leadership". in M. Barrett and M. J. Davidson, *Gender and Communication at Work*, Ashgate, Aldershot.

Ospina, S. and E. G. Foldy (2015), "Enacting Collective Leadership in a Shared-power world", in Perry J. and R. K. Christensen (Eds), *Handbook of Public Administration*, 3rd Edition, Jossey-Bass, UK.

Padilla, A. Hogan, R. and Kaiser, R. (2007), "The toxic triangle: Destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 18, pp. 176-194.

Palus, C.J. McGuire, J.B., and Ernst, C. (2012), "Developing interdependent leadership", in Snook, S., Nohria, N. & Khurana, R. (Eds) *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being*, Sage Publications with the Harvard Business School. Chapter 28, 467-492.

Parker, M. (2002) *Against Management* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Peterlin, J. (2016) "Incorporation of sustainability into leadership development," *Economic and Business Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp 31-53.

Pelletier, K. (2010), "Leader toxicity: An empirical investigation of toxic behaviour and rhetoric", *Leadership*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 373-389.

Pepper, D. (1996), *Modern environmentalism: an introduction,* Routledge, London.

Perez-Carmona, A. (2013) "Growth: A Discussion of the Margins of Economic and Ecological Thought" in Meuleman, L. (ed.) *Transgovernance. Advancing Sustainability Governance,* Springer: Heidelberg.

Perez de Vega, E. (2015) *Thinking the Ecological Present*, Unpublished discussion paper. Available at: http://www.academia.edu/2964186/Thinking_The_Ecological_Present

Pfeffer, J. (2015), *Leadership BS: Fixing Workplaces and Careers One Truth at a Time*, Harper Business, USA.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2016) "Recommendations for creating better concept definitions in the organizational, behavioral, and social sciences," *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, pp 159-203.

Prahalad, C.K. (2004), Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits, Wharton School Publishing, USA.

Purvis, M. and A. Grainger (Eds) (2004), *Exploring Sustainable Development: Geographical Perspectives*, Earthscan, UK.

Rahnema, M. and Bawtree, V. (eds.) (1997) The Post-Development Reader, Zed Books: London.

Redekop, B. W. (2010), *Leadership for Environmental Sustainability,* Routledge Studies in Business Ethics 1st Edition, London.

Sachs, J. (2015), *The Age of Sustainable Development*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Sachs, W. (ed.) (1992), *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Zed Books, London.

Sachs, W. (1999), *Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development*, Zed Books, London.

Schachter, H. (2014) "New Public Management and Principals' Roles in Organizational Governance: What Can a Corporate Issue Tell us About Public Sector Management?" *Public Organization Review,* Vol. 14 Issue 4 pp 517-531.

Schatzki, T. R. (1996) *Social practices: a Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Schilling, J. (2009), 'From ineffectiveness to destruction: A qualitative study on the meaning of negative leadership', *Leadership*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 102-128.

Shriberg, M. & MacDonald, L. (2013), "Sustainability leadership programs: emerging goals, methods & best practices", *Journal of Sustainability Education*, Volume 5, May 2013

Schyns, B. and Schilling, J. (2013) "How bad are the effects of bad leaders? A meta-analysis of destructive leadership and its outcomes," *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 24, Issue 1.

Sen, A. (1999), *Development As Freedom*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Senge, P., Hamilton, H., Kania, J. (2015), "The Dawn of System Leadership," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015, Stanford.Sheard, G., Kakabadse, N. and Kakabadse, A. (2013) "Visceral behaviours and leadership: a dark side of boardroom life?" *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, pp. 18-35.

Steurer, R. (2007) From government strategies to strategic public management: an exploratory outlook on the pursuit of cross-sectoral policy integration, *Environmental Policy and Governance*, Vol. 17, Issue 3, pp. 201–214.

Sutherland, N., Land, C. and Bohm, S. (2013), "Anti-leaders(hip) in Social Movement Organisations: The case of autonomous grassroots groups", *Organisation, Organization,* Vol. 21, No. 6, pp. 759-781.

Taleb, N. N. (2012), *Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder*, Random House, US.

Tepper, B. (2000), "Consequences of abusive supervision", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 2, pp. 178-190.

Terry, R. W. (1993) *Authentic Leadership: Courage in action*,Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Tideman, S G., Arts, M C. and Zandee, D P. (2013) "Sustainable Leadership: Towards a Workable Definition", *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Number 49, pp. 17-33(17)

Tonnies, F. (1887), *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Leipzig, Germany.

Trethewey, A. and Goodall, H. L. (2007) "Leadership Reconsidered as Historical Subject," *Leadership* Vol. 3 Issue 4.

United Nations (2015), "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", *UN General Assembly* A/RES/70/1. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

Utting, P. (2015), "Revisiting Sustainable Development", *UNRISD Classics*, Vol. III. Available at: http://www.unrisd.org

Vaktin, S. (2009), *Narcissistic and Psychopathic Leaders*, Lidija Rangelovska, Prague.

WCED (1987) *Our Common Future*. World Commission on Environment and Development, New York.

Weick, K. E. (1995), *Sensemaking in Organisations*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Western, S. (2008), *Leadership: A Critical Text*, Sage publications, Los Angeles, CA.

Woods, P. A., Bennett, N., Harvey, J. A., Wise, C. (2004), "Variabilities and Dualities in Distributed Leadership: Findings from a Systematic Literature Review", *Educational Management Administration Leadership*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 439-457.

Worldwatch (2015), *State of the World 2015: Confronting Hidden Threats to Sustainability*, Island Press, Washington.

Zingheim, P. K. et al (1996), "Competencies And Competency Models: Does One Size Fit All?" *ACA Journal,* Vol. 5, No. 1

Beyond Unsustainable Leadership: Critical Social Theory for Sustainable Leadership

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to prepare the ground for a new conceptual framework for the future study of leadership for sustainable development. The paper demonstrates the relevance of Critical Leadership Studies to future research on sustainable development policies and practices. A critical approach is also applied to concepts of sustainable development, with three paradigms of thought described. The approach taken is an extensive literature review in fields of leadership and sustainable development, with a focus on some of the broad assumptions and assertions in those literatures.

A key finding is that leadership studies drawing from critical social theory can provide important insights into future research and education on leadership for sustainability. This literature shows that some assumptions about leadership may hinder opportunities for social or organisational change by distorting our analysis of factors in change, and by distorting the agency of those not deemed to be leaders. These limitations are summarised as 'seven unsustainabilities' of mainstream leadership research.

The implications for practice are that efforts to promote organisational contributions to sustainable development should not draw uncritically upon mainstream approaches to leadership or the training of leaders. Instead, the paper suggests that, in the emerging fields of sustainability leadership scholarship and practice, full weight be given to the possibilities, theoretical and practical, of salient individual action whose collective, emergent and episodic aspects might not yet be adequately comprised in prevailing accounts of leadership. The authors believe this to be the first paper to provide a synthesis of insights from Critical Leadership Studies for research in sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainable Leadership, Sustainability Leadership, Leadership, Leadership Development, Critical Leadership.

Classification: Conceptual paper

Introduction

In the face of limited progress on a range of social and environmental issues, many proponents and analysts of corporate action on sustainable development issues are calling for more leadership for sustainability (Redekop, 2010; Adams et al, 2011; Evans, 2011; Gallagher, 2012; Metcalf and Benn, 2013; Shriberg and MacDonald, 2013). Such calls ~~for leadership~~ reflect a desire for greater and swifter change, and ~~i~~In that context, researchers and educators can explore what is useful knowledge to enable such change. In this paper, we will argue that prevalent assumptions about the meaning of both the terms 'leadership' and 'sustainability' may hinder, not help, that interest in greater change.

Formatted: Font: (Default) +Body (Calibri), 11 pt, Font color: Auto, Pattern: Clear

We will demonstrate this limiting effect by placing both the concepts of leadership and sustainability under the scope of an analysis based on the primacy of discourse. We draw upon Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which starts from an awareness that the abuse, dominance, and inequality of power relations can be enacted, reproduced and, ultimately, resisted by text and talk (Fairclough, 1995). We will argue that the prevailing leadership imaginary, so far from supporting the transition to a sustainable society and economy, may actually hinder it and be itself unsustainable, in the sense that it depends on the ~~discoursal~~ discursive maintenance of power relations and a narrow range of organising possibilities (Gemmil and Oakley, 1992; Hurlow, 2008), and may thus discourage or disable more collective, collaborative or distributed forms of leadership, deliberation, organising and problem-solving (Hosking, 2006; Hurlow, 2008; Denis, Langley and Sergi, 2012). If this is the case, more of the same 'leadership' will not help the goal of sustainability.

We share with Evans (2011) and Western (2008) the view that dominant paradigms of leadership are part of the cause of the current crisis of unsustainability and will develop that argument in this paper. Therefore, precisely because we are interested in sustainability, we address leadership per se rather than limit analysis to leadership on sustainability topics. Though it may be expected for scholarship in this field to focus on those persons who have responsibility for social or environmental topics, given the state of conceptual development, we assess that it could leave untenable concepts to be imported from those who analyse and promote leadership per se. For instance, the new and still small amount of scholarship on leadership for sustainability, cited in our opening sentence, appears to describe leaders and leadership in terms that emphasise exceptionalism, personal 'authenticity', an individual locus of action and a generalised other that is the object of leadership. There is also evidence of sustainability-infused leadership development programmes uncritically incorporating assumptions about leadership (for instance Peterlin, 2016).

Even those theorists who propose to break with mainstream notions of leadership may still repeat some of the ideas embedded in discourse. For example, the following statement may sound collaborative, but identifies leadership with a special individual who acts *upon* ~~a group~~others: "[leadership is] a form of community praxis in which one coalesces and directs the energies of the group" (Evans, 2011: 2). Impressive and helpful people do exist, but this paper will show that the prevailing discourse on leadership can limit our understanding of the potential for creating the greater ~~change which~~change that inspires the calls for more leadership for sustainability.

Therefore, rather than a detailed deconstruction of existing texts on leadership for sustainability, in this paper we provide a broad synthesis of relevant literatures that either use, or can inform, a more critical approach, drawing on a field now called 'Critical Leadership Studies' (CLS). We then re-locate our inquiry within the context of sustainability by applying the same critical discourse perspective to assumptions and narratives about 'sustainable development.' Given the level of knowledge on sustainable development of most readers of this journal, we do not focus on a detailed literature review of that field, but outline three different paradigms within which to consider social, economic and environmental dilemmas. We integrate these critiques by outlining 'seven unsustainabilities' of mainstream leadership thinking, ~~and the antidotes that are relevant to sustainability~~as well as the relevant antidotes. At that point we offer a definition of 'sustainable leadership' and conclude by outlining some potential implications for the future of research, practice and education.

Our definition will be purposely tentative. Rather than offering a systematic construction of a new concept of 'sustainable leadership', we are placing existing concepts of leadership and sustainability in the context of dominant narratives of 'managerialism' (Enteman, 1993) that we will show limit an assessment of the potential types and locations of action on sustainability. This process of tilling the conceptual earth will, we believe, allow many new ideas to bloom, including those that deploy structured approaches to define 'sustainable leadership' and 'sustainability leadership' concepts and theories. Without such insights from Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), attempts at rigorous concept development in the organisational sciences (Podsakoff, et al, 2016) may be limited by assumptions that reflect dominant discourse.

Our argument does not mean that a focus on understanding or evolving the behaviour of senior role holders, such as chief executives or politicians, is not necessary, but that the assumptions that leadership is theirs *alone* to express and that leadership by special individuals is the most salient matter in organisational or social change, are both unhelpful and yet widely promoted by current work on leadership, with major implications for sustainable development.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Formatted: Font: Italic

Defining Leadership and Sustainability

In this paper, we use the term 'sustainability' as short hand for the term 'sSustainable dDevelopment'. Since the adoption of the Brundtland Report by the UN General Assembly in 1987, 'sustainable development' has been promoted by many as an integrated way to address diverse dilemmas, such as poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, disease, discrimination, environmental degradation, crime, conflict and limited human rights or justice (WCED, 1987). That 'ssustainable ddevelopment' seems to offer all good things to all people has been one reason for its popularity and, some say, a reason for it leading to largely ineffectual activities on those dilemmas (Perez-Carmona, 2013).

Nevertheless, this "ambiguous compromise" (Purvis and Grainger, 2004: 6) has proved to be a resilient one. The adoption of seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations in 2015 marks a renewed interest in the hope that governments, cities, firms and other organisations can achieve progress on social and economic factors while not degrading the environment. Although the SDGs or 'Global Goals' may seem like an advancement on mainstreaming environmental considerations when compared to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which they replaced, conversely, they represent a dilution of the primacy of environment in the early stages of the promotion of n sustainable development. This reflects how, over the years, the emphasis on how the development of nations needs to be within the environmental 'carrying capacity' of the nation and planet, has been side-lined as the pursuit of economic growth predominated worldwide (Purvis and Grainger, 2004; Perez-Carmona, 2013).

The global trends in poverty, inequality, biodiversity loss, water tables and climate change are not promising (Worldwatch, 2015). Enabling greater leadership for 'sustainable development' therefore means enabling significant action on the various shared dilemmas that are meant to be addressed under this ambiguous term. We call them shared "dilemmas" here, rather than challenges or problems, to reflect both their complexity and to recognise a growing worldview that no longer regards them as problems to solve (as we will discuss below). We call them 'shared', because they involve collective causation, affect the many (albeit differentially) and will need collective action to address or adapt to them.

The 'sustainable development' concept typically groups these dilemmas in-to social, environmental and economic domains, while some also include culture (Sachs, 2015). Within these domains, a great diversity of theoretical perspectives exists. For instance, on environmental issues, some argue for the sustainable use of natural resources whereas others include respect for the welfare of animals or the preservation of landscapes (Pepper, 1996). Some argue that technological advances will solve

most environmental problems, whereas others ask more critical questions about industrialisation within environmental limits (Jackson, 2009). On social progress, some focus on improving standards of living (Prahalad, 2004) where others focus on inequality, human rights, justice and good governance at various scales (Sen, 1999). On economic issues, there is a broad field of 'development economics' with differing emphases on the role of the state, of foreign direct investment, and about openness to international trade (Sachs, 1992). The 'sustainable development' framework is also applied to organisations within societies, such as business corporations, which has led to a variety of theories and initiatives in fields known as corporate social responsibility (Bendell, 2009), corporate accountability (Bendell, 2004), corporate sustainability (van Marrewijk, 2003) and social enterprise (Nicholls, 2006). To encourage self-awareness of participants in these arenas, in this paper we will be proposing three broad paradigms on sustainable development that people appear to be operating within.

Just as the terms 'sustainability' and 'sustainable development' are deployed in quite different research and policy contexts and with different implied exclusions and inclusions, so the word 'leadership' is used to mean or imply quite different things ~~(Jackson & Parry, 2008)~~ while seeming to represent a common, monolithic, understanding (Jackson & Parry, 2008). Unpicking such usages may not have direct value in deliberation or action, but can help prepare the ground for people to navigate the plurality of possibilities for leadership and sustainability. Amongst the many definitions of leadership in management studies, we will use the following to begin our discussion:

"Leadership is any behaviour that has the effect of helping groups of people achieve something that the majority of them are pleased with and which we assess as significant and what they would not have otherwise achieved." (Bendell and Little, 2015: 15)

Key to this definition is recognising leadership as a behaviour rather than a position of authority. In addition, it reflects the relational quality of leadership so that acts need to be welcomed by a majority of those in a group. Moreover, the external observer plays a key role when categorising acts as leadership. Specifically:

"L~~l~~eadership involves the ascription of significance to an act by us, the observer, where significance usually involves our assumptions or propositions about values and theories of change. If our theory of change is that the CEO has freedom of action and can impose change, then we would naturally look for leadership to be exhibited at that level. If our values are that profit-maximising for shareholders in the near term is a good goal, then we would not question a CEO's "leadership" if achieving such goals. We should note that these are rather big 'Ifs'." (ibid: 15)

By defining leadership in this way, we break with some of the mainstream assumptions in management and leadership scholarship and training, for instance, the idea that leadership ~~being~~ exists as a quality that inheres in an individual. In the following section, we will explore how deep the criticisms go and the implications for enabling action on sustainable development.

Insights from Critical Leadership Studies

As attention to leadership and its development grows in both the popular publishing and academic arenas, the last decade has seen a counter-trend of scholars who seek to unpack what they consider unhelpful assumptions and directions in ~~what they identify as~~ the 'mainstream' approach to leadership. The aim of Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) is to investigate "what is neglected, absent or deficient in mainstream leadership research" (Collinson, 2011: 181). This approach involves understanding and exposing the negative consequences of leadership, by examining patterns of power and domination enabled by overly hierarchical social relations: questioning these 'exclusionary and privileged' discourses, and investigating the problematic effects that they~~is~~ have~~s~~ on organisational functioning and individual well-being (Ford, 2010; Ford et al, 2008).

Some ~~scholars in the critical leadership~~CLS scholars ~~field~~ draw upon 'Critical Theory', being ~~. Their work is~~ motivated by a general emancipatory project, or by the goal of empowering grassroots and oppressed groups against the self-harming discourses that they co-produce or that are promoted by elites. Such research challenges discourse in the field of management and leadership that may be distorted in favour of capital and the owners of capital, gender exclusion and other forms of social violence, and unsustainable forms of commerce and industry (Fanon, 1961; Blunt and Jones, 1996; Nkomo, 2011). A key theme in such work is the critique of a set of ideas called 'Managerialism,' which value professional managers and their characteristic forms of analysis, authority and control, and their tendency to bring ever more aspects of life into the orbit of management (Enteman, 1993; Alvesson, 1992, Parker, 2002). There are parallels here with some critiques of international 'development' that influence approaches to sustainability, which we will return to below. Before that, in the next sections we summarise some of the main elements of the critique made by ~~critical leadership studies~~CLS, with preliminary ideas on implications for leadership scholarship and leadership development work that is motivated by concern for various shared dilemmas.

The Individualist Mistake

The mainstream literature and practice of leadership development is largely addressed to the cultivation of a group already defined as leaders, rather than to the development of collective,

relational or dialogical leadership. Leaders are routinely described as needing to be authentic, visionary, driven and emotionally intelligent. The image of the leader that emerges from what Gosling and Bolden (2006) call the 'repeating refrain' of leadership competencies is of a deracinated superman (or, in a feminized variant that emphasizes collaboration, intuition and nurturing, a superwoman). This 'hero-focus' has received criticism over the past 15 years from within the mainstream management literature (Olssen, 2006; Palus et al, 2012). In such work the term "hero" is used as the contemporary dominant concept of special courageous person who saves others, rather than more mythic notions of hero, which we will discuss further below. We find that even the ~~However, even~~ explicitly 'post-heroic' or egalitarian accounts of leadership as bottom-up or, variously, as distributed (Brown and Hosking, 1986; Woods et al, 2004~~Gronn, 2000; Leithwood et al, 2009~~), transformational (Bass, 1998), or 'servant' (Greenleaf, 1977) may not fully address the degree to which these ideas are undermined by lingering positional metaphors of hierarchy, or by their failure to address questions of gender or, worse, are co-opted by hierarchical, instrumentalist managerialism (Fletcher, 2004). The CLS analysis of the implicit hero focus of leadership studies provides a deeper critique in at least four key areas. We summarise these areas in turn, before discussing other dimensions of CLS.

First, CLS theorists have sought to investigate the 'dark side' of contemporary leadership practice, exploring issues such as domination, conformity, abuse of power, blind commitment, over-dependence and seduction (Conger, 1990; Calas and Smircich, 1991; Gemmil and Oakley, 1992; Whicker, 1996; Mellahi et al, 2002; Khoo and Burch, 2007; Marcuse, 2008; Schyns and Schilling, 2013; Sheard et al, 2013). They have coined terms such as 'toxic leadership' (Benson and Hogan, 2008; Pelletier, 2010); 'destructive leadership' (Einarsen et al 2007); 'leadership derailment' (Tepper, 2000); and, 'aversive leadership' (Bligh et al, 2007). Other scholars have discovered tendencies for narcissism and psychopathy amongst senior role holders and how that can be encouraged by popular discourses about leaders being special and powerful (de Vries and Miller, 1985; Bendell, 2002; Trethewey and Goodall, 2007; Vaktin, 2009; Gudmundsson & Southey, 2011). Evans (2011) characterises the prevailing model as 'exploitative leadership' and argues that such masculinised, hierarchical leadership reproduces in small the domination of nature by humanity. For scholars interested in the social dimension of sustainability, including matters of fairness, ~~rights~~ justice and wellbeing, these dark sides of leadership will be of concern.

The mainstream literature, to the extent that it makes or recognises this critique, responds not with a deepened critique of leadership but by offering in mitigation qualities like humility, authenticity, emotional intelligence or self-knowledge, while leaving unchallenged the assumption that 'leaders'

pursue exclusively corporate goals by largely instrumental means (Collins, 2001; Adair, 2003; George, 2003; Kouzes and Posner, 2003). Characteristically, this literature keeps up the search for an ideal trait description of the leader: lists of qualities, propensities, behaviours and habits proliferate, often including 'character' and authenticity, as we will examine in a moment (George, 2003; Gardner~~Cooper~~ et al, 2011~~07~~).

The second analytic turn in CLS aims in part to reveal the flaws of this traits-focus, and of secondary efforts to promote values and authenticity amongst leaders. We do not have space here to rehearse in detail the critiques of the trait approach but will summarise. To begin~~ing~~ with, it is not unreasonable to argue that leadership is, of necessity, idiographic, episodic and situationally inflected, to the extent that no imaginable set of descriptors could apply to all potential leaders (Fairhurst and Grant, 2010). Leadership trait lists tend merely to describe competent human beings, emphasising, for example, honesty and intelligence (Kirkpatrick and Locke, 1991; Zingheim et al, 1996). The effort to identify traits might itself be seen as serving the very bureaucratic impulse to which leadership, with its implied freedom of moral action, is the remedy. The reliability, stability and predictive value of trait descriptions are all in any case contested. The most telling critique of traits suggests that their pursuit is a circular process in which socially constructed discourses of leadership are interrogated from within the constraining assumptions of those same discourses (Burr, 1995). Traits are, from this view, not internal personal structures but "social processes realised on the site of the personal" (Gergen, 1994: 210).

One response to the dark sides of leadership has been to focus less on traits (r~~,~~ real or imagined) ~~,~~ than on helping people with senior responsibilities to reflect upon, clarify, articulate and live by their most important values, and, ostensibly, to help legitimise values-based behaviour in professional life. Courses under the heading 'Authentic Leadership' pursue that aim. Executives are encouraged to seek coherence between their life story and their seeking or holding a senior organisational role (George, et al, 2007). Potential benefits may include greater self-confidence, appearing more authentic in one's job, enhanced oratorical skill and higher levels of motivation from colleagues (Gardner et al, 2011; Leroy et al, 2015). Typically, participants in authentic leadership programmes are offered opportunities for systematic self-exploration; these processes, however, could be characterised as opportunities for self-justification, as exploration of self is framed by the aim of constructing narratives that explain one's right to seniority within a corporation – an almost 'divine' right to lead. Self-realisations that might undermine one's ability to work for certain firms, or transform the basis of one's self-worth, or challenge one's assumption of self-efficacy, do not appear to be encouraged (Bendell and Little, 2015). For scholars interested in transforming organisations so

they reduce their harm on the environment and society, or increase their positive contributions, the exploration of values in authentic leadership ~~-~~may seem like a start, but it could be unhelpfully limited.

Authentic Leadership scholarship and trainings may be ignoring the insights from critical sociology~~;~~ on how our perspectives and senses of self are shaped by language and discourse (Gergen, 1994; Fairclough, 1995; Burr, 1995). Such insights challenge the view that we can achieve depths of 'self-awareness' by reflecting on our experiences and feelings without the benefit of perspectives from social theory. Authentic leadership builds on assumptions about the nature of the individual, including the assumption that our worth comes from our distinctiveness.[1] Meanwhile, Adorno (1973) has even claimed that the word 'authenticity' is simply jargon. He argues it is characteristic of a nostalgic post-Christian impulse to replace the 'authority of the absolute' (such as a God) with 'absolutised authority' (whether that is from an organisation, law or the rectitude of a leader).

A third set of analyses shows how a focus on leader's values, charisma and other attributes serves to distract from and deproblematise issues of the legitimacy, or not, of power-wielding roles in organisations and societies. When we consider leadership, we are considering how groups of people decide how to act: ~~we~~ addressing ancient questions of social and political organisation which are subjects of long, lively and diverse intellectual traditions. They are investigated today in fields as diverse as political philosophy, public policy studies, civil society studies, and international development studies. We cannot delve into these areas in this paper, but suffice to note that a recurring theme in these fields is that matters of ~~decision-making~~decision-making involve reflection on processes that support the rights, dignity and contribution of all individuals in groups. Yet studies of leadership often render unproblematic modes of ~~decision-making~~decision-making and patterns of power (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992; Western, 2008). Given that good governance is such a central question for s~~S~~ustainable d~~D~~evelopment, this subtle side-lining of questions of accountable governance is a concern. This draws parallels with the comments from various scholars relating to the literal and linguistic separation of leader and follower. Learmonth and Morrell for example, suggest that the "institutionalised" usage of the terms leader/follower automatically construct a master/slave dialectic, reducing the capacity of "'followers' to question their leaders' basic authority" (2016: 2). In this then, it may be beneficial to reframe leadership language in a more open

[1] Vedic philosophies provide critiques of, and explanations for, why we might enjoy a process of self-construction via self-reflection exercises. An emphasis on the 'authentic self' might be regarded as an effort to find a 'rock of safety against the cosmic and the infinite' (Aurobindo, 1972: 229). Aurobindo further argues that an aspect of our consciousness is 'not concerned with self-knowledge but with self-affirmation, desire, ego. It is therefore constantly acting on mind to build for it a mental structure of apparent self that will serve these purposes; our mind is persuaded to present to us and to others a partly fictitious representative figure of ourselves which supports our self-affirmation, justifies our desires and actions, nourishes our ego.' (p 229).

and less hierarchical manner. Fairhurst (2009) emphasises the term 'leadership actor' to cover the plurality of individuals who may be involved in acts of leadership within an organisation.

A fourth set of analyses in CLS looks at how the hero focus of mainstream leadership studies attributes responsibility for outcomes disproportionately to individuals occupying a hierarchal position at the apex of an organisation, thereby obscuring the importance of other situational and contextual factors and limiting our insight into how change happens. Psychological research since the 1980s has demonstrated that people, across cultures, tend to exaggerate the significance of the actions of individuals~~,~~ when compared to other factors shaping outcomes (Meindl et al, 1985). The researchers concluded that this was evidence that we are susceptible to seeing 'leadership' when it isn't necessarily there or important - a collectively constructed 'romantic discourse'. Their work reflects the 'false attribution effect', widely reported by social psychologists, as people's tendency to place an undue emphasis on internal characteristics to explain someone's behaviour, rather than considering external factors (Jones and Harris, 1967). Perhaps our susceptibility to this effect arises because we are brought up with stories of great leaders shaping history ~~(it is easier to tell stories that way)~~, and this myth is perpetuated in our business media today (Bendell and Little, 2015).

Drawing upon these insights, Gemmill and Oakley (1992) frame leadership itself as a 'social myth' which creates and reinforces the illusion that individual leaders are in control of events and organisational performance. ~~We will briefly explore facets of this critique. T~~That is, the existence and valorisation of leaders serves to repress uncomfortable needs, emotions and wishes that emerge when people work collaboratively (Gemmill, 1986; Gastil, 1994), and subsequently, individuals are able to project their worries and anxieties onto individual leaders, who are seen as omniscient and all-powerful. Members are therefore able to perceive themselves as free from anxiety, fears, struggles and the responsibility of autonomy (Bion, 1961), but may also fail to recognise that they are inducing their own learned helplessness and passivity: that is, they "willingly submit themselves to spoon feeding, preferring safe and easy security to the possible pains and uncertainty of learning by their own effort and mistakes" (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992: 98). For Gemmill and Oakley therefore, leadership – in the form widely assumed today - is dangerous and inherently unsustainable, leading to infantilization and mass deskilling. They stress the need to denaturalise take-for-granted assumptions in order to develop new theories of leadership which 'reskill' organisational members; encourage collaborative working environments; and do not rely on superhuman individuals.

Various other theorists (although not explicitly rooted in CLS) have reached similar conclusions. For example, Ashforth (1994) argues that authoritative leaders often engage in behaviours such as belittling of followers, self-aggrandisement, coercive conflict resolution, unnecessary punishments and the undermining of organisational goals. Schilling (2009) and Higgs (2009) also report~~ed~~ that leaders often exhibit behaviours which aim at obtaining purely personal (not organisational) goals, and may inflict damage on others through constant abuses of power. Finally, and in a similar vein to Gemmill and Oakley (1992), a number of theorists (Conger, 1990; Padilla, Hogan and Kaiser, 2007) proposed that the behaviour of 'followers' may also contribute to destructive practices- especially in regard to self-esteem issues, the playing of power games, and treating the leader as an idol.[2] As many scholars of sustainability in general, and 'leadership for sustainability' in particular, are interested in enhancing change, these disempowering effects of dominant assumptions about leadership should be a concern.

The four CLS critiques of the hero-focus of mainstream leadership studies all relate to a form of 'methodological individualism', assuming that significant insight into a social situation can be derived from analysing the motivations and actions of very few individuals (Basu, 2008). Their research has shown how focusing on an individual leader can enforce an *a-contextual* and short-termist view; one that~~which~~ pays little attention to broader socio-economic processes, planetary concerns~~,~~ or collective wellbeing. Whilst differences exist between the aims and objectives of the critical scholars cited thus far, at the heart of these debates is the notion that a reliance on overly hierarchical conceptualisations of leadership may have problematic impacts on organisational effectiveness, well-being, and broader social change: they are irreconcilable with creating sustainable societies (Evans, 2011; Gordon, 2010; Western, 2008; Sutherland et al, 2014; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). That is, for all their focus on attempting to achieve economically effective outcomes (which, indeed, is the primary 'selling point' of mainstream understandings, and the belief on which they are predicated), they fail to acknowledge the importance of long-term socially sustainable, efficacious and humane relationships between and among organisational actors.

Assuming Purpose

What is the purpose of leadership? Many case studies offered in leadership scholarship assume that the purpose of organisations is to achieve economic goals, rather than goals associated with equity, democracy and environmental sustainability (Jackson and Parry, 2008). A review of the assumed or proposed outcomes of leadership within twenty-five years of scholarship, showed that all types of

[2] We must note that many scholars assume the word 'follower' as little more than the inverse of the word 'leader', a form of hypostatisation that tends to support the naturalisation of hierarchy, rather than it's questioning.

outcome exist within an instrumentalist approach that concerns improving organisational performance, rather than considering the purpose of the organisation, the performance issue concerned, or the impact on stakeholders (Hiller, et al 2011). The mainstream corporate view of leadership is typically expressed in 'econophonic' and 'potensiphonic' terms – the taken-for-granted language that prioritises economic outcomes over all others and potency, power and performance over other human modalities (Promislo and Guccione, ~~-~~2013). There has been little room for doubt and reflection on the purpose of business, work and economic progress within that leadership discourse. Thus, the challenging of econophonic and potensiphonic language in leadership studies can be an emancipatory activity, and key to nurturing "reciprocal, sustaining relationships among people and between humans and nature" (Evans, 2011: 2).

For some theorists, the prevalent assumptions of managerialism can be seen within an imperialist economic context – pointing toward the idea that under modern capitalist society, centralisation, hierarchy, domination, exploitation, manipulation, oppression and scapegoating are inherent features of life (Barker, 1997; Mannoni, 1956; Bhabha, 1994). If this is the context for one's analysis, then the 'social myth' of leadership we have described in this paper can be regarded as one of many nodal points in a discoursal web of ideas and practices whose effect is to infantilise and prepare mass audiences for compliance in their own exploitation. Other nodes being, for instance, discourses about the salience of the individual consumer; ~~,~~ the universality of market mechanisms; ~~,~~ the impracticality of challenging dominant discourses; or ~~,~~ the pathological nature of opposition and the necessity for 'security'.

Despite our earlier criticisms of the assumptions and approaches within 'authentic leadership,' its focus on self-development *could* provide an opening for work on the deeper personal transformations that might allow for different types of purpose to be clarified and pursued through leadership acts.[3] In addition, the importance of purpose to leadership is receiving greater attention from leadership scholars, without that purpose being assumed to be congruent with narrowly defined corporate goals (Kempster, et al 2011). Growing interest in sustainability leadership or sustainable leadership can be seen in that context: an effort to plug the purpose gap in contemporary corporate life. A business rationale for corporate leaders to be clear on a purpose beyond narrow corporate goals is also developing as some researchers argue~~ing~~ that firms with a clear public purpose do better financially over the longer term (Big Innovation ~~Group~~Centre, 2016).

Formatted: Font: Italic

[3] It is worthy of note that authentic leadership and other approaches that focus on values have begun to be criticised from another perspective altogether: that they don't help managers' careers (Pfeffer, 2015). Such criticisms may provoke more debate in mainstream scholarship but are not aligned with the deeper questioning of purpose we explore here.

The concept of sustainability in these initiatives is, however, limited and potentially counter-productive, as we will discuss below. Therefore, unless the interest in purposeful business and purposeful leadership allows for a deeper exploration of sustainability than that which aligns simply with existing corporate interests, it is unlikely to address this limitation to mainstream leadership approaches.

Beyond Critical Analysis

To address some of the shortcomings in mainstream leadership scholarship and training, some CLS scholars study and propose a more emergent, episodic and distributed form of leadership, involving acts that individuals may take to help groups achieve aims they otherwise might not (Bendell and Little, 2015; Western, 2008). The focus therefore shifts towards effective group processes, on which there is a range of scholarship to draw upon, within and beyond the CLS field.

Research on 'distributed leadership' has shown how leadership actors can emerge anywhere in an organisation and that leadership becomes a cultural trope around which motivated action accretes, a position supported theoretically by sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995), activity theory (Bedny et al, 2000), communities of practice theory (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and practice theory (Schatzki, 1996~~; Nicolini, 2012~~). Unfortunately, when it is presented as a practice that mitigates hierarchical power, especially in business organisations, distributed leadership sometimes becomes little more than a way of rhetorically extending employees' freedom of action (and weight of responsibility) while maintaining circumscriptive rules (Dainty et al, 2005; Woods et al, 2004). Thus, we conclude that the absence of a critical framework to deconstruct assumptions about leaders, goals, and legitimacy can hamper studies that explore post-heroic and distributed forms of leadership.

In recent years the term 'collective leadership' has emerged as "an umbrella concept that includes studies... applying the core insight of relationality to the key problems in [organisation and society]... Relationality reveals the individual as a node where multiple relationships intersect: people are relational beings" (Ospina and Foldy, 2015: 492). Some use the term to include distributed, shared, and co-leadership, due to an assessment that they all focus more on complex relations between individuals. "Collective leadership shifts attention from formal leaders and their influence on followers to the relational processes that produce leadership in a group, organization or system. Relationality motivates attention to the embeddedness of the leader-follower relationship in a broader system of relationships and to the meaning-making, communicative and organising processes that help define and constitute these relationships" (Ospina and Foldy, 2015: 492). Further than this, various scholars note the potential of more collective forms of leadership as a

'sustainable' organisational practice, given that it allows for empowerment, reduces alienation, and increases democracy and participation (Western, 2008; Evans, 2011).

Framed in this way, collective leadership could be viewed as an agenda that rises to the critiques from CLS. However, many studies and recommendations described as 'collective leadership' retain a belief in the salience of special individuals who can be identified as leaders, whether by role or by act. In addition, some studies of collective leadership efforts in organisations have found that it is used rhetorically by managers who pursue individual aims within inefficient bureaucracies (Davis and Jones, 2014). It is the more radical approaches within the collective leadership field, particularly concerning the non-profit sector, that resonate with the insights of CLS and could therefore be used in a new conception, theory and practice of sustainable leadership. However, what is equally important for such a new approach is to have the same critical perspective on sustainable development as we have offered on leadership.

Three Paradigms in Sustainability

In the same way that Critical Discourse Analysis can reveal limiting assumptions in the field of leadership, it can do that in the field of Sustainable Development. As described at the start of our paper, Sustainable Development and its related activities became established in the late 1980s. It was offered as a coherent agenda for governments around the post-Cold War world. It also coincided with the rise of another idea for public policy, called New Public Management (NPM), which regarded citizens as users of services and incorporated practices from the private sector (Schachter, 2014). Looking back, NPM (and its closely related tropes of leadership and entrepreneurialism), can be seen to have colonised the process of learning and change for sustainability, reducing it to a problem that can be solved by management and technology driven by leadership in a process dominated by capital (Bessant, et al 2015; Perez-Carmona, 2013; Steurer, 2007). Intentional or not, this colonisation was aided by the growth of voluntary corporate engagement with sustainability which then influenced the understandings of policy makers, experts and campaigners on how to approach social and environmental problems (Ball and Bebbington, 2008). A counter process was also occurring with the transfer of concepts of environmentalists and social justice campaigners into the private sector, thus leading to what Anderson and Mungal (2015) describe, albeit in a different sector, as the inter-sectoral transfer of discourses.

Critical Discourse Analysis reminds us that ideological effects work at the level of phrases. It invites us to question how a phrase can encourage certain perspectives and not others. One way that

occurs is by 'collocation'. The term 'Sustainable Development' is a collocation; that is, two-words combined into a single term. It is a risk of collocations that they have the effect of de-problematising their constituent terms - in this case both 'Sustainable' and 'Development' - and replacing them with a new ideologically-loaded term. One risk is that important questions of what is development is displaced by a focus instead on what might be distinctly "sustainable". Thus, when considering sustainability, we should attempt to uncover assumptions about development, including assumptions about 'social' progress. There is a long tradition of this fundamental questioning of progress in the anti-development or post-development fields, which typically argue that the development concept is an extension of colonialist and imperialist power relations in the global economy (Sachs, 1992; 1999: 2015: Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). Given that readers of this journal are likely to be well-versed in the literature on sustainability, we will not detail the critiques in the same way did with leadership, but instead offer a conceptual framework which draws upon them.

The framework of 'Three Paradigms in Sustainability' that we offer here ~~,~~ makes broad generalisations to invite reflection on worldviews. Different countries, classes, genders, races and professions, amongst other categories one could identify, have different experiences of the diverse dilemmas touched upon by 'sustainability.' Our own generalising is intended to help broaden perspectives on what sustainability could mean, and what various interpretations and assumptions about it may be producing through us.

In this paper, we offer a simple categorisation of paradigms in sustainability thinking: Reformation, Revolution and Restoration~~:~~ i.e. broad brush strokes on the ways of thinking about and approaching shared dilemmas. In doing so we seek to reveal some of the hidden ideological work that the terms 'sustainable development' and 'sustainability' may have ~~being~~ been doing in ways counterproductive to people's expressed interests.

Reformation

Many scholars of the history of sustainable development explain how the concept "was originally devised as a political ideal by conservationists to persuade the governments of developing countries to undertake less environmentally damaging development paths" (Purvis and Grainger,2004: 31). This led the early discourse on sustainable development to be quite precise about the environmental aspects of what an economy might aspire to, which was summarised well by Herman Daly (1990) in 5 principles (Table 1).

The Daly Principles
1. Limit the human scale to a level which, if not optimal, is at least

within the carrying capacity and is therefore, sustainable.
2. Achieve technological change that increases efficiency and durability while limiting throughout.
3. Preserve the harvesting rate of renewable resources at a level below the regenerative capacity of the environment.
4. Preserve waste emission rates at a level below the assimilative capacity of the environment.
5. Restrict non-renewable resource use to levels equalled by the creation or accessing of renewable substitutes.

Table 1: The Daly Principles

The social elements to early views on sustainable development included the eradication of extreme poverty and malnutrition; the achievement of comprehensive literacy; and increasing average life expectancies to that of the industrialised Western nations. Education and employment were seen as the motors for these social advances. The concept of "development" was accepted as mostly a material phenomenon, rather than involving other aspects of human improvement, such as extending democratic rights and justice throughout all organs of society, or outcomes such as happiness and wellbeing (Sachs, 1999).

Apart from concern about the odious debts of poor governments, the early sustainable development approach did not look deeply at economic systems. Many people working in charities or development agencies struggled to say anything about the economic 'pillar' of sustainable development beyond the rule of law, corruption issues or the dangers of dumping subsidised products in poor markets (Purvis and Grainger, 2004). In most intergovernmental organisation reports and popular writings on sustainable development in the 80s and 90s, forms of regulated capitalist market economies were assumed as the norm, where a sustainably-developed economy would involve a mixture of enterprises, cooperatives, state owned companies, stock markets, private banks and single fiat currencies (Sachs, 1999). This was not surprising given the hope at the end of the Cold War that progress could be made without recourse to traditional left-right intellectual conflicts.

Despite the absence of ideas on political economy, given the economic-focus of many government, business and civil society leaders in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and the extent of poverty, pollution and habitat destruction, the social and environmental aims of sustainable development still represented a substantial reformation of capitalism.

Over the years this lack of an explicit perspective on economics provided the opportunity for powerful trends to influence what sustainability came to mean. Economic globalisation proceeded at pace, where international institutions forced market reforms in return for debt rescheduling, and international treaties were agreed to bring down barriers to trade and finance. The interests of multinational corporations and banks were a powerful force shaping the discourse of many governments and the field of international cooperation (Bendell, 2004). Therefore, sustainable development increasingly came to mean sustaining economic growth in the medium term (Perez-Carmona, 2013). This process was effectively crowned when economic growth became central to some the new SDGs in 2015 (United Nations, 2015). Therefore, the mainstream discourse on sustainable development today may reflect a moral imagination but a weak Reformation Approach to our socioeconomic systems.

Revolution

Development Studies and Development Cooperation had existed for almost half a century before the Earth Summit made Sustainable Development more famous in 1992 (Sachs, 1992). Many scholars of development placed it in the context of centuries of past colonialism and imperialism, suggesting that "development" was the new face of attempts to dominate and expropriate wealth (Frank 1969). That tradition of radical critique of global capitalism, its corporations and banks, had influenced some of the earliest post-colonial independent nations across the global South. By the 1990s the policy influence of anti-imperialist development thinkers had waned.

Some advocates of sustainable development brought a strong rights-based agenda, with a focus on social justice, anti-corruption and greater democracy, including workplace democracy (Sachs, 1999). These interests are paralleled by ~~those of scholars in~~ Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) scholars who do not explicitly frame their work as concerning the social dimensions of sustainable development. But their focus on workplace practices and the role of management reminds us that social sustainability is not an abstract end-goal, but something that can be recursively built into practice on a day-to-day basis. This draws parallels with the notion of 'prefigurative politics' (Maeckelbergh, 2009), where means are seen to be *as important* as the ends; where they are inextricably linked and blurred, which rejects a focus on either means or ends at the expense of the other. Many of these analysts don't call for a revolution in capitalism to achieve workplace rights and democracy, but in comparison to those that ignore or misunderstand the human rights agenda within sustainable development, their views seem quite revolutionary.

The environmental aspect of the critique of international development (Jordan and O'Riordan 2000) has not appeared to influence many newly independent nations, with a modernist notion of social

progress through industrialisation and consumer society being widely embraced (Bendell, 2004). Yet their fundamental question to those who believed it was possible to reform dominant socioeconomic systems has not gone away: How can economic growth be reconciled with environmental constraints, or meeting basic needs be prioritised over the endless potential desires of humankind?

Many grassroots movements around the world, including agricultural workers, unionists and representatives of indigenous groups, have kept the critique going. At times, the critique has gained international notoriety (Utting, 2015). The '"Anti-Globalisation Movement'", came to world notice in 1999 due to protests at the Seattle meeting of the World Trade Organisation, and then the 'Occupy Movement' again in 2011, beginning in Wall Street, New York. Neither of those movements clearly advocated a focused set of proposals for the rules of a different socioeconomic system or a strategy for how to implement it, instead, focusing on pluralising discussion beyond neo-liberal economics. That is not to say there are not a range of specific proposals made by people who engage in such activism, ranging from reforming laws on trade, corporations, taxation and monetary systems (Bendell, 2004).

In summary, despite efforts like the World Social Forum, a Revolutionary AApproach to sSustainable dDevelopment has largely been restricted to critique and segmented in separate realms of concern such as environmental conservation or social development. Examples of government efforts to implement what some would call a 'left wing' approach to achieving sustainability, by transforming socioeconomic systems, are therefore difficult to find (Utting, 2015). Nevertheless, some still hope that a Revolutionary AApproach is possible, perhaps inevitable. Crucially, they believe there is enough time, and that we can and should 'progress.'

Restoration

In the past decade, a view has emerged in the West that suggests neither a Reformation or Revolution of our socioeconomic systems is a sensible aspiration when faced with our current predicament. That analysis is based, in particular, on the latest climate science and the absence of significant global emissions reductions. Some consider that a 'near term collapse' in socioeconomic systems is inevitable and possible in the lifetime of today's children (Mulgan, 2011; Jamieson, 2014; Foster, 2015). Others go further in questioning the survival of the species itself beyond this century. Parallel to this debate is the rise to prominence of the 'anthropocene' concept with its defining acceptance that human beings have set in motion a mass extinction as major as any produced by Earth-system changes over geological time (Hamilton et al, 2015).

From these perspectives 'sustainable development' is seen as a concept that has already failed, and was destined to fail as it ignored the inherent contradictions between our form of economic development and the achievement of environmental sustainability or social equity. Sustainable Development is therefore argued by Foster (2015) as the concoction of a delusional ~~mindset~~mind-set which assumed that progress, in particular technological progress, is inevitable and always desirable. Some argue this progressivist ~~mindset~~mind-set comes from a subconscious attachment to having something important to contribute to that outlives ~~one~~us, given a decline in the experience of a cosmic sense to life (e.g. God) or of nature as sacred. Advocates of this view also critique the assumption that humans can control their destiny on planet Earth, ~~(~~or beyond~~it)~~.

From this standpoint, climate change is viewed as a tragedy, not just a problem to be solved. The focus of these analysts and activists becomes one of adaptation to the coming catastrophes, including cultural and psychological adaptation. One of the leading academic commentators on this approach calls for "a therapeutic politics of retrieval, renewing kinds of deep resilience which these communities have progressively lost, along with a recovered sense of realistic human possibility and an acknowledgement of the tragedy in which we have involved ourselves and the planet" (Foster, 2015: 1).

This paradigm resonates with and extends a century and more of critical sociology, including Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) on the commodification of life and Jurgen Habermas (1984) on how both bureaucratic and market systems colonise the 'lifeworld' of communities. The paradigm also reflects a depth of critiques of economic development, and therefore sustainable development, that have been made previously by representatives of indigenous peoples who challenged the processes that are destroying their traditional ways of life, such as in tropical rainforests. For instance, the Pachamama Alliance involve Ecuadorean forest peoples who call for people with modern lifestyles to "change the dream" by which they live by.

The Restoration Approach to collective dilemmas can involve at least four elements: the restoration of humility, wildness, of wholeness and ~~,~~of resilience. ~~and of wildness.~~ First, the restoration of humility, recognising the hubris that humans could control nature or each-other comprehensively and indefinitely. Connected to this is an emphasis on the restoration of 'wildness'. In the environmental sphere that involves greater emphasis on working with natural processes, such as the rewilding of landscapes. In the social sphere this concept is being used to invite us to consider how a less domesticated approach to our own lives might look as well as suggesting we need to become more awake to our interdependence with nature (Foster, 2015).

This awareness connects to a third element, which is the restoration of our wholeness: the assumed separation of nature and humans is challenged as causal in our malaise, and thus transcended. There are variants on this theme, with differing emphases on how we understand and talk about nature and humans within that (Perez de Vega, 2015). Some draw upon both ancient wisdom traditions and new sciences to explain the limits of viewing humans as separate from and manipulating of 'other' life (Eisenstein, 2011).

These three elements culminate in the socio-economic arena with the restoration of resilience. That has been defined as "the capacity of a system to absorb disturbance and reorganise while undergoing change, so as still to retain essentially the same function, structure, identity and feedbacks" (Hopkins, 2008: 54). For instance, a town can be regarded as a system that can grow resilience as changes to its supplies of energy and sustenance change. Others draw inspiration for human communities from how some living systems bounce back from disruptions with a stronger system, such as organisms that overcome some infections (Taleb, 2012).

Some use the term 'retrieval' for describing what this approach to our predicament implies, returning to aspects of what we have progressively lost since the start of the European Enlightenment (Foster, 2015). The argument is not that everything pre-modern is positive or needs to be restored, but that much is to be retrieved from past cultures, philosophies, and technologies. We adopt the term 'Restoration' to describe this approach, as it foretells this as a major social movement and potentially a new era. We have explained this approach - or antithesis - to Sustainable Development, in more detail than either Reformation or Revolution as it is more recent and marginal in discourses on policy and organisations.

The youth of the Restoration Approach is one reason why its social dimensions have not been widely discussed. What will human rights, fairness, justice, power and governance look like in societies that take this approach? Given how some efforts to revive past approaches to life and culture can involve a brutal rejection of compassion-based values in the exuberance of fundamentalism, the social dimension of the Restoration Approach will be important to engage.

Working Across Paradigms

Given that the Sun will explode one day in the future, infinite '"sustainable development'" of human society on Planet Earth is unachievable and so the term is a linguistic device to provide a meeting place for different people and ideas to work on the shared dilemmas of our time. Sustainable dDevelopment may have been attractive at helping us to cooperate on diverse dilemmas while suspending controversies over religion and political economy. Existing theories of exploitation of

poorer countries by imperial powers could be side-lined, along with critiques of capitalism at a time of hope after the Cold War. Differing religious motivations for caring about the other could be silenced with emphasis on the shared values and targets that delegates could state agreement on. If keeping people talking was the aim, sustainable development has been successful.

Many involved in intergovernmental processes today argue that it is pragmatic to maintain this approach in order to arrive at agreement on such initiatives as the SDGs. However, as such limited progress is made on critical issues like climate change, the avoidance of deeper questions of political economy and of belief may not have been so pragmatic after all.

What approach to sustainability is most relevant today? Reformation, Revolution or Restoration? In this paper, we have not discussed the latest data on a range of shared dilemmas or the scale and rate of effective response. We think ~~there~~ that there is much cause for concern. But we also recognise that each approach can frame and inform helpful action, while each approach can marginalise important considerations or justify poor action. So rather than assessing which paradigm is the most accurate starting point, after all they are all just social constructions, what is important is to help people consider what each might imply if pursued with rigour and creativity. From this perspective, sustainability leadership must begin with helping people to think about their thinking about sustainability.

Implications for Sustainable Leadership

Combining our critique of prevalent approaches to both leadership and sustainability, seven main 'unsustainabilities' in mainstream leadership can now be proposed (Table 2). This prepares the conceptual ground for the development of new approaches to sustainable leadership research, practice and education.

Table 2: The Seven Unsustainabilities of Leadership

1. *Ignoring purpose, or assuming the primary purpose to be the benefit of an employer;*
2. *Assuming or believing a senior role holder to be most salient to organisational or social change;*
3. *Ignoring the political and moral aspects of an exclusive focus on enhancing the agency of senior role holders;*
4. *Assuming that 'leader' is a continuing quality of a person rather than a label;*
5. *Assuming that the value of an individual lies mostly in their confidence in their distinctiveness;*
6. *Assuming that leadership development is about learning more rather than about unlearning;*

7. Believing that material progress is always possible and best.

Clearly critique in itself is not a sufficient contribution. Western (2008: 21), for example, suggests that "critical theorists must go beyond identifying 'bad leadership practice' and aim to create and support successful ethical frameworks for leadership", and Sutherland et al (2014) argue that attention should be paid to understanding "how organisational alternatives *to* mainstream understandings of leadership might be constituted" (Sutherland et al, 2013: 16). Therefore, we can flip the seven criticisms into the following seven recommendations for more sustainable leadership:

1. Explore purpose and meaning as central to personal and professional action. By doing so, enable individuals to clarify their provisional understanding of personal aims and how they may, or may not, relate to existing organisational aims, to support a more holistic assessment of personal and organisational performance.

2. Recognise that organisational or social change is affected by people at all levels and through social processes, so knowledge about collective action is key. By doing so, encourage people to learn more about how groups can function more effectively through enhanced collaboration.

3. Consider the political and moral aspects of authority and bases for legitimacy of leadership acts. By doing so, encourage a focus on how one's potential actions relate to the needs of the collective, stakeholders and wider society.

4. Recognise that 'leader' is a label and people can take acts of leadership without it meaning they are permanent and stable~~henceforth~~ 'leaders'. Understanding this provides a valuable opportunity for developing overall leadership capacity within organisations, rather than mistakenly seeing it as the domain of a chosen, or emergent, few.

5. Appreciate the value of an individual is as much through their similarities and connectedness to others and all life, as through their distinctiveness. Doing so allows a move away from seeing organisations as natural hierarchies, towards pluralistic sites characterised by ongoing debate, discussion and deliberation.

6. Understand that leadership development is about both learning new ideas and unlearning existing ones. In this regard, practitioners can be encouraged to let go of limiting assumptions as they develop critical consciousness, and therefore simultaneously oppose practices as well as propose new approaches.

7. Realise that personal purpose and meaning can ultimately transcend notions of material progress in any form or the associated means of control. Doing so challenges the consequentialist, means-end philosophies of contemporary business and organisation, and instead promotes an ideology centred on compassion and creating a new world in the shell of the old (Gordon, 2010)

Although these recommendations are about leadership, they indicate we must go beyond a narrow focus on individual leader's abilities, skills, attributes and behaviours (Bendell and Little, 2015), and toward developing all organisational actors' critical thinking skills (Brookfield, 1987~~; Mezirow, 2000~~), and creating spaces in which to discuss future possibilities for sustainability (Evans, 2011). Although the recommendations are about 'sustainability,' the seventh is important for allowing a new perspective to emerge, considering what we have described as a 'R~~r~~estoration A~~a~~pproach,' currently being triggered by the latest environmental science. As ~~we~~ described above, such a paradigm challenges the progressivist and modernist assumptions in both the prevalent ideas of leadership and sustainability that are unlikely to help us consider coping with severe disturbance, rather than more 'progress' through greater control (Foster, 2015).

In social studies, we appreciate how theoretical development can take many forms and does not require making predictions based on a theory (Abend, 2009). Instead, our main theoretical contribution is to provide a framework for interpretation of claims about leadership for sustainability. Affecting people by revealing limiting assumptions embedded in, and reproduced by, leadership discourse has been documented in areas beyond sustainability (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012). Therefore, our work has practical implication in that synthesising critiques and making them available to people and scholars engaged in sustainability may reduce the influence of limiting concepts. Therefore, we limit our predictions to this process of consciousness-raising. We contend that professionals who avoid the seven unsustainabilities of leadership will enable more positive (or less negative) change; that organisations which promote avoidance of the seven unsustainabilities of leadership will witness more positive (or less negative) change, and; if designers or commissioners of leadership development avoid the seven unsustainabilities of leadership then they will encourage more effective change-enabling capabilities from their participants.

At this point we can offer a tentative definition:

Sustainable leadership is any ethical behaviour that has the intention and effect of helping groups of people address shared dilemmas in significant ways not otherwise achieved.

We regard the concept of sustainable leadership to include seven necessary conditions (Podsakoff, et al, 2016). First, that leadership involves a behaviour, or act, which can also include an intentional

non-action. Second, that the act is ethical, according to a framework held by the person and capable of being understood by observers. Third that the behaviour helps groups of people achieve something. Fourth, that the achievement relates to addressing shared dilemmas, such as economic, social, environmental or cultural problems that affect many people. Fifth, that the change is significant, according to both the group affected and the observers, including people who wish to describe leadership, like ourselves. This recognises the subjective nature of ascribing leadership. Sixth, that the behaviour created an effect that was additional, whereby if it had not occurred then the outcome would not likely have been achieved. We recognise this element is based on our theories of change and is a difficult element to assess. Seventh that the person exhibiting the behaviour intended to pursue positive change on the dilemma. We hope that the definition of sustainable leadership serves to remind us that leadership is about change involving acts rather than positional power, sustainability is about dilemmas which might not be solved, that both intention and effect are important to consider, and that the significance of acts will be attributed by observers based on their own values and assumptions.

For the reasons explained in the introduction, our paper does not provide a systematic review of the prior use of the term 'sustainable leadership' in either academic publications or contemporary public discourse. However, some brief comments on how our concept relates to other interpretations will help clarify what we mean and what we do not. First, we note that the term "sustainable leadership" has been used to refer to leadership whose positive effects are sustained, or whose effectiveness does not fade over the tenure of the individual concerned (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2004). Although the longevity of an impact of an action is an interesting consideration, by not questioning aims and outcomes, nor the salience of the individual compared to other factors, this conception of sustainable leadership falls short of our purposes in encouraging a spectrum of action on social and environmental dilemmas.

Second, there have been magazine articles and blogs that interpret sustainable leadership as involving the quality of personal resilience and openness in dealing with complex challenges (Glaser and Entine, 2014). In academia, variants of this approach include those that argue that heightened complexity and interconnectedness of economy and society today means that senior managers need to cultivate ~~mindsets~~mind-sets to be better able to interpret their organisational environment (Tideman et al, 2013). While it is important to consider personal wellbeing and ~~mindsets~~mind-sets in any analysis of leadership, we do not consider the resilience and open mindedness of a senior manager to be sufficient elements in a construct that would be relevant to significant action on social and environmental dilemmas.

Third, there is a conception of sustainable leadership which defines it as the opposite of exploitative leadership, where the former involves a person, with earned authority, helping groups of people achieve the progress they desire on sustainability issues (Evans, 2011). Our proposed concept of sustainable leadership shares much in common with this perspective but we do not think it helpful to imply leadership is a quality cohering in one person, instead seeing it as more emergent, episodic and distributed. We aim to avoid reification, and regard leadership as simply a word, not an actual quality of one person.

A fourth approach also seeks to make a connection between environmental consciousness and an approach to leadership. Western (2008) regards human society as an element within our ecology, and thus views organisations and communities as complex living systems. Therefore, sustainable leadership can be viewed as a systems-conscious approach, as the Cambridge Centre for Sustainability Leadership (CISL) has advocated (Bendell and Little, 2015). Given the complex and dynamic interdependence found in the natural environment, it is a stimulating metaphor for reflection on organisations and societies. However, to argue that we can read off from nature insights for a better form of leadership might distract us from how such views remain our interpretations of nature and thus are socially constructed and could embody and exert power relations in themselves.

Fifth, there is a literature which regards sustainable leadership as an approach by senior managers to the design of organisational change processes to address sustainability issues profitably (Avery, and Bergsteiner, 2011; Galpin and Whittington, 2012). This is an important area of work, but could reinforce limiting assumptions about the locus of change, that even a focus on organisational culture for inspiring staff initiative may be unable to counteract.

In future, further work could be done to develop hypotheses about sustainable leadership and even how to measure it. That would involve the development of a 'nomological network' of terms related to conditions within the definition we propose. However, in line with the interest in promoting change for sustainability through research, we think our research can be built upon by considering the following five broad knowledge needs:

- The extent and form of limiting assumptions within prevalent approaches to both leadership and sustainability, in both scholarship and practice, including within the emerging fields of 'sustainability leadership' or 'sustainable leadership'.
- Inter-disciplinary insights on organisational and social change processes that address shared dilemmas and relate to individual practices. In particular, drawing on ideas from social

movements and other change processes often overlooked by ~~prevalent~~ mainstream approaches to leadership.

- Insights on effective collective leadership to address shared dilemmas in society. In particular, knowledge on group dynamics for democratic deliberation and ~~decision making~~decision-making.
- The content and effectiveness of alternative pedagogies for leadership development, which draw on at least some of the seven recommendations for sustainable leadership described above. Including non-classroom based approaches.
- The cultural specificities versus commonalities of approaches to leadership and sustainability, especially in non-Western contexts.

The Papers in this Issue

Formatted: Heading 2

One of the implications of Critical Leadership Studies is the likely benefit to scholarship, practice, and education of drawing upon theories and experiences from outside the corporate sphere. We respond to that view in this special issue on sustainability leadership, with papers that explore such leadership from different academic disciplines and in non-corporate settings. Each paper draws upon the field of leadership studies, but incorporates it with another discipline. One paper draws on psychology, focusing on environmental activists. The other papers draw on education studies and focus on those who work with children. With both their subject matter and the theories mobilised, we hope the field for future research on sustainability leadership is usefully broadened.

In the following paper, Nadine Andrews' explores the "Psychosocial factors influencing the experience of sustainability professionals" as they try to lead change towards pro-environmental decision-making in their organisations. Her method of "Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis" offers us an up-close look at the mental frames and motivations of sustainability leaders. The findings help us see how psychological theories and research are useful to understanding how the contemporary sustainability professional copes with the challenges and tragedies of our environmental situation. It points to an area that will require more focus in sustainability management as people gravitate towards a 'Restoration Approach' to sustainability that includes recognition of forthcoming loss and tragedy.

An element of Andrews paper is the wellbeing of the professional engaged in sustainability leadership. Professional wellbeing is also a theme in Kaz Stuart's paper which researches the practice of people who work with children. "It may be obvious from the word itself that 'sustainability' is about the future. Therefore, as a policy paradigm, it invites attention to children alive today, as well as more abstract notions of future generations," notes Stuart. Moreover,

"despite their centrality to sustainability policy, children and young people have not had a comprehensive place in corporate sustainability practice or research." With the last two papers in this special issue we seek to address that, as both include case studies on working with young people. Stuart uses concepts of distributed leadership (Woods et al, 2004) and system leadership (Senge et al, 2015) to structure an exploration of how people managing children's centres in the UK are addressing difficult challenges brought on by austerity.

Stuart finds that the model is helpful for leaders of children's centres. In such contexts, it is normal for managers to be motivated by values, which provides a suitable context for increasing delegation of decisions and collaboration on improving professional practice at large. The relevance of these findings for management and leadership in other organisations and sectors may therefore depend on the sense of purpose that staff hold.

Readers may note some similarities between 'system leadership' and the idea of collective leadership that we described earlier in this paper. The emphasis within 'system leadership' narratives is on creating broader changes in contexts by focusing on root causes and wider relations. The concept appears, therefore, to hold potential for sustainability management in general. While it focuses on relatedness and collectives, time will show whether it involves some of the problems with mainstream refrains of leadership, such as an assumption of the special salience of an individual for organisational and social change. Perhaps a paradox will emerge in system leadership, given the emphasis on both system and individual. Going forward, we see opportunities for more research on the use of systems methods of organisational change, such as soft systems methodology (Checkland, 2001), within the system leadership field.

As we have criticised current orthodoxies in leadership studies, we wish to avoid any new orthodoxies in our critical field. One benefit from Critical Leadership Studies is that it may encourage a new synthesis, as mainstream ideas are adapted. Criticism of "heroic" approaches to leadership is one area where this dialectic may be possible. In "Heroic ecologies: embodied heroic leadership and sustainable futures", Olivia Efthimiou moves beyond contemporary notions of heroes as exceptionally brave saviours, so as to revive and reapply the cultural notion of a "hero's journey" that is open to us all. That is, a journey of challenge, trauma, triumph and transcendence that contributes to a community. Efthimiou explores connections between that idea of heroism, sustainability, embodied leadership and wellbeing. She makes the case for how a revised understanding of heroism may be considered as an embodied system of sustainable leadership. She synthesises the claims made by practitioners who use the hero's journey with young people, to suggest that a whole model of heroic sustainable leadership development could be deployed.

Efthimiou's paper reminds us of the usefulness of personal orientations towards truth-seeking, collective consciousness, meaning-making, courage to uphold principles, courage to unlearn and, ultimately, to allow one's reinvention. A critical discourse lens would encourage future analysis of what is gained and lost through using the term and concept "hero" to describe and promote these orientations in people, as well the labelling of these as qualities especially for "leaders". A question must remain whether dominant contemporary ideas on heroism could encourage people on heroic leadership training to aspire to be recognised for moments of special bravery and potency, with problematic consequences.

All three papers explore personal issues and wellbeing, reflecting how discussions of sustainable leadership invite us to consider how the professional challenges we all work on ultimately involve very personal processes. They remind us of the enduring relevance and power of a focus on leadership and its development, despite the various pitfalls we have discussed in our paper.

Formatted: Normal, No bullets or numbering

Conclusions

From drawing upon sociologically-informed critiques of both 'leadership' and 'sustainability', we have argued that prevalent notions of these concepts are unhelpful to either practitioner or researcher engagement with the shared dilemmas of our time. We have explained how the idea of leadership, as a myth of potent individual action, has been deployed in the service of unsustainable growth and exploitation. Those who suggest that the world needs bigger and bolder leadership in the transition to a just and sustainable world must ask whether or not the leadership they imagine is the product of wishful thinking fed by an infantilising managerial dispositif (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992). Instead, we have argued that the idea of leadership must be disentangled in its discoursal function in the service of oppression before it can be reconfigured as a modality of democracy and placed in the service of justice and sustainability.

By applying the same critical stance to the mainstream discourse on ss~~S~~ustainable dd~~D~~evelopment, we outlined three major paradigms, which we argued are key to be aware of to locate one's own efforts or scholarship on this topic. We integrated and summarised these critiques by stating Seven Unsustainabilities of Leadership and therefore made seven recommendations for more sustainable leadership. We choose the term sustainable leadership due to it emphasising that dominant notions of leadership are unsustainable as well as our current planetary predicament.

Given the urgency and scale of contemporary shared dilemmas, new research and education on such sustainable leadership is required in at least the five areas we identified. That future knowledge may help people who operate from within any of the paradigms of sustainability.

References

Abend, G. (2008) "The Meaning of 'Theory'", *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, pp 173–199

Adorno, T. (1973), *The Jargon of Authenticity*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London.

Alvesson, M. (1992), *Critical Management Studies*, Sage, London.

Alvesson, M. and Spicer, A. (2012), "Critical Leadership Studies: The case for critical performativity". *Human Relations*, Vol. 65, No. 3, pp. 367-390.

Anderson, G. and Mungal A. S. (2015) "Discourse analysis and the study of educational leadership", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 29 Issue 7, pp. 807 - 818

Ashforth, B. (1994), "Petty Tyranny in Organisations", *Human Relations*, Vol. 47, No. 7, pp. 755-778.

Avery, G.C. and Bergsteiner, H. (2011) "Sustainable leadership practices for enhancing business resilience and performance," *Strategy and Leadership*, Vol. 39 No. 3, pp. 5-15.

Aurobindo (1972), "The Life Divine", *Centenary Library*, Vol. 18, Book 1, p. 229. Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, India.

Ball, A. and J. Bebbington (2008) Editorial: Accounting and Reporting for Sustainable Development in Public Service Organizations, Public Money & Management, Vol. 28, Issue 6.

Barker, R. (1997), "How can we train leaders if we do not know what leadership is?", *Human Relations*, Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 343-362.

Basu, K. (2008), "Methodological Individualism", in Durlauf, S. N. and Blume, L. E. (eds), *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics, 2nd Edition*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

Bedny, G. Z., Seglin and M. H., Meister, D. (2000), "Activity theory: History, research and application", *Theoretical Issues in Ergonomics Science*, Vol. 1, No. 2. pp. 168-206.

Bendell, J. (2002), "Psychos in Suits", *Open Democracy,* 24th July. Available at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/theme_7-corporations/article_260.jsp

Bendell, J. (2004) *Barricades and Boardrooms: A Contemporary History of the Corporate Accountability Movement*, Programme Paper 13, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD): Geneva

Bendell, J. (ed.) (2009) *The Corporate Responsibility Movement*, Greenleaf Publishing: Sheffield, UK.

Bendell, J. and Little, R. (2015) 'Seeking Sustainability Leadership', *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Issue 60, pp. 13-26

Benson, M. and Hogan, R. (2008), "How Dark Side Leadership personality destroys trust and degrades organisational effectiveness", Organisations and People, Vol. 15, No. 3, pp. 10-18.

Bessant, S.E.F., Robinson, Z.P. and Ormerod, R.M. (2015) "Neoliberalism, new public management and the sustainable development agenda of higher education: history, contradictions and synergies", *Environmental Education Research*, Vol. 21, Issue 3: Environmental Education in a Neoliberal Climate, pp. 417-432

Bhabha, H. K. (1994) "The Postcolonial and Postmodern: The Question of Agency." In The Location of Culture. London: Routledge.

Big Innovation Centre (2016) *The Purposeful Company Interim Report*, 15th May 2016.

Bligh, M., Pillai, R. and Uhl-Bien, M. (2007), "The social construction of a legacy: Summarising and extending follower-centred perspectives on leadership", in Shamir, B., Pillai, R. and Bligh, M. (Eds.) *Follower-centred perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl*. Information Age, Charlotte, NC, pp. 265-27.

Blunt, P. and Jones, M. L. (1996), "Exploring the limits of Western leadership theory in East Asia and Africa", *Personnel Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1/2.

Bolden, R. and Gosling, J. (2006) "Leadership Competencies: time to change the tune?", *Leadership,* Vol. 2, No. 2, pp. 147-63.

Burr, V. (1995), *Social Constructionism,* Routledge, Hove.

Calas, M. and Smircich, L. (1991), "Voicing Seduction to Silence Leadership", *Organisation Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4, pp. 567-601.

Checkland, P.B. (2001) "Soft Systems Methodology", in J. Rosenhead and J. Mingers (eds), *Rational Analysis for a Problematic World Revisited*. Wiley, Chichester.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Formatted: Font: Italic

Collinson D. (2011), "Critical leadership studies", in Bryman, A., Collinson, D., Grint, K., Jackson, B. and Uhl-Bien, M. (Eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Leadership*. Sage, London, pp. 179-192.

Conger, J. (1990), "The Dark Side of Leadership", *Organizational Dynamics*, Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 44-55.

Cronin, S. ed. (2008), *Subalterns and Social Protest: History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, Routledge, US & Canada.

Dainty, A., Bryman, A., Price, A., Greasley, K., Soetanto, R. and King, N. (2005), "Project affinity: the role of emotional attachment in construction projects", *Construction Management and Economics*. Vol. 23, No. 3. 241-244.

Davis, H. and Jones, S. (2014), "The work of leadership in higher education management", *Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management*, Vol. 36, No. 4. pp. 367–370.

Denis, J-L., Langley, A., Sergi, V. (2012) "Leadership in the Plural", *Academy of Management Annals* Vol. 6, No. 1.

De Vries, K. and Miller, D. (1985), "Narcissism and Leadership: An Object Relations Perspective", *Human Relations*, Vol. 38, No. 6, pp. 583-601.

Einarsen, S. Aasland, M. and Skogstad, A. (2007), "Destructive Leadership behaviour: A definition and conceptual model", *The Leadership Quarterly*, No. 18, pp. 207-216.

Enteman, W. F. (1993), *Managerialism: The Emergence of a New Ideology*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison.

Evans, T. (2011), "Leadership without domination? Toward restoring the Human and Natural World", *Journal of Sustainability Education*, No. 2, pp. 1-16.

Fairclough, N. (1995), *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Longman, London.

Fairhurst, G. (2009) *'Discursive Leadership: In conversation with Leadership Psychology'* Sage: London

Fanon, F. (1961), *The Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Weidenfeld, New York.

Fletcher, J. (2004), "The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 5, pp. 647–661.

Ford, J. (2010), "Studying Leadership Critically: A psychosocial lens on leadership identities'", *Leadership*, Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 1-19.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Ford, J. Harding, N. and Learmonth, M. (2008), *Leadership as identity: Constructions and Deconstructions*, Palgrave, Basingstoke.

Fox, E. M., L. and Urwick, L. (1940) *Dynamic Administration: The Collected Papers of Mary Parker Follett*, Pitman: London.

Gallagher, D.R ed. (2012), *Environmental Leadership: A Reference Handbook*, Sage, UK.

Galpin, T. and Whittington, L. J. (2012) "Sustainability leadership: from strategy to results," *Journal of Business Strategy*, Vol. 33 Issue 4, pp 40-48

Gardner, W. L., Cogliser, C. C., Davis, K. M., and Dickens, M. P. (2011) "Authentic leadership: A review of the literature and research agenda," *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 22 Issue 6, pp 1120-1145.

Gastil, J. (1994), "A Definition and Illustration of Democratic Leadership", *Human Relations*, Vol. 47, No. 8, Sage, London.

Gemmill, G. (1986), "The mythology of the leader role in small groups", *Small Group Behaviour*, Vol. 17, No. 1, pp. 41-50.

Gemmill, G. and Oakley, J. (1992), "Leadership: An Alienating Social Myth?", *Human Relations,* Vol. 45, No.2, pp. 113-129.

Gergen, K. J. (1994), *Realities and Relationships, Soundings in Social Construction*, Harvard University Press.

Glaser, J. E. and Entine, E. (2014) "Sustainable Leadership", *Huffington Post*, July 7th.

Gordon, U. (2010), *Anarchy Alive! Anti-authoritarian politics from practice to theory',* Pluto Press, London.

Grint, K. (1997) (Ed.) *Leadership: Classical, Contemporary and Critical Approaches*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.

Gudmundsson, A. and Southey, G. (2011), *Leadership and the rise of the corporate psychopath: What can business schools do about the 'snakes inside'?* QUT Business School Queensland University of Technology, Queensland.

Habermas, J. (1984/7), *The Theory of Communicative Action, (I) Reason and the Rationalization of Society; (II) Lifeworld and System*, Beacon Press, Boston.

Hargreaves, A. and Goodson, I. (2004) *Change over time? A report of educational change over 30 years in eight U.S. and Canadian schools*, Spencer Foundation, Chicago.

Higgs, M. (2009), "The good, the bad and the ugly: leadership and narcissism", *Journal of Change Management*, Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 165-178.

Hiller, N. J., DeChurch, L. A., Murase, T., and Doty, D. (2011) "Searching for outcomes of leadership: A 25-year review," *Journal of Management*, Vol. 37, Issue 4, pp 1137-1177.

Hosking, D. M. (2006) "Not Leaders, Not Followers." In B. Shamir, R. Pillai, M. Bligh and M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *Follower-centred perspectives on leadership: A tribute to the memory of James R. Meindl*, Information Age Publishing, Greenwich, USA.

Hurlow, S. (2008) *Language of leadership*, PhD Thesis, Cardiff University. http://orca.cf.ac.uk/55760/

Jackson, B. and Parry, K. (2008) *A very short, fairly interesting and reasonably cheap book about studying leadership*, Sage publications, London.

Jackson, T. (2009) *Prosperity Without Growth: Economics for A Finite Planet*, Routledge, UK.

Khoo, H. and Burch, G. (2007), "The 'dark side' of leadership personality and transformational leadership: An exploratory study", *Personality and Individual Differences*, Vol. 44, pp. 86-97.

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991), *Situated Learning*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Learmonth, M. and Morrell, K. (2016) 'Is critical leadership studies 'critical'?' *Leadership* [online]

Leroy, H., Anseel, F., Gardner, W. L., and Sels, L. (2015) "Authentic Leadership, Authentic Followership, Basic Need Satisfaction, and Work Role Performance A Cross-Level Study," *Journal of Management*, Volume 41 Issue 6, pp 1677-1697.

Mannoni, O. (1956) Prospero and Caliban. London: Methuen.

Marcuse, H. (2008), *A study on authority,* Verso, London.

van Marrewijk, M. (2003), "Concepts and Definitions of CSR and Corporate Sustainability: Between Agency and Communion", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 95-105.

Meindl, J., Sanford, B., Ehrlich, B. and Dukerich, J. (1985), "The Romance of Leadership" *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1, pp. 78-102.

Formatted: Font: Italic

Mellahi, K. Jackson, P. and Sparks, L. (2002), "An Exploratory study into failure in successful organisations: The case of Marks and Spencer", *British Journal of Management*, Vol. 13, No.1, pp. 15-30.

Nicholls, A. (2006), *Social Entrepreneurship: New Models of Sustainable Social Change*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Nkomo, S. M. (2011), "A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of 'African' leadership and management in organization studies: Tensions, contradictions and possibilities", *Organization*, Vol. 18, No. 3.

Olsson, S. (2006) "We Don't Need Another Hero! Organisational Storytelling as a Vehicle for Communicating a Female Archetype of Workplace Leadership". in M. Barrett and M. J. Davidson, *Gender and Communication at Work*, Ashgate, Aldershot.

Ospina, S. and E. G. Foldy (2015), "Enacting Collective Leadership in a Shared-power world", in Perry J. and R. K. Christensen (Eds), *Handbook of Public Administration*, 3rd Edition, Jossey-Bass, UK.

Padilla, A. Hogan, R. and Kaiser, R. (2007), "The toxic triangle: Destructive leaders, susceptible followers, and conducive environments", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 18, pp. 176-194.

Palus, C.J. McGuire, J.B., and Ernst, C. (2012), "Developing interdependent leadership", in Snook, S., Nohria, N. & Khurana, R. (Eds) *The Handbook for Teaching Leadership: Knowing, Doing, and Being*, Sage Publications with the Harvard Business School. Chapter 28, 467-492.

Parker, M. (2002) *Against Management* Polity Press, Cambridge.

Peterlin, J. (2016) "Incorporation of sustainability into leadership development," *Economic and Business Review*, Vol. 18, No. 1, pp 31-53.

Pelletier, K. (2010), "Leader toxicity: An empirical investigation of toxic behaviour and rhetoric", *Leadership*, Vol. 6, No. 4, pp. 373-389.

Pepper, D. (1996), *Modern environmentalism: an introduction,* Routledge, London.

Perez-Carmona, A. (2013) "Growth: A Discussion of the Margins of Economic and Ecological Thought" in Meuleman, L. (ed.) *Transgovernance. Advancing Sustainability Governance,* Springer: Heidelberg.

Perez de Vega, E. (2015) *Thinking the Ecological Present*, Unpublished discussion paper. Available at: http://www.academia.edu/2964186/Thinking_The_Ecological_Present

Pfeffer, J. (2015), *Leadership BS: Fixing Workplaces and Careers One Truth at a Time*, Harper Business, USA.

Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2016) "Recommendations for creating better concept definitions in the organizational, behavioral, and social sciences," *Organizational Research Methods*, Vol. 19, Issue 2, pp 159-203.

Prahalad, C.K. (2004), Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid: Eradicating Poverty through Profits, Wharton School Publishing, USA.

Purvis, M. and A. Grainger (Eds) (2004), *Exploring Sustainable Development: Geographical Perspectives*, Earthscan, UK.

Rahnema, M. and Bawtree, V. (eds.) (1997) The Post-Development Reader, Zed Books: London.

Redekop, B. W. (2010), *Leadership for Environmental Sustainability,* Routledge Studies in Business Ethics 1st Edition, London.

Sachs, J. (2015), *The Age of Sustainable Development*, Columbia University Press, New York.

Sachs, W. (ed.) (1992), *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power*, Zed Books, London.

Sachs, W. (1999), *Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development*, Zed Books, London.

Schachter, H. (2014) "New Public Management and Principals' Roles in Organizational Governance: What Can a Corporate Issue Tell us About Public Sector Management?" *Public Organization Review,* Vol. 14 Issue 4 pp 517-531.

Schatzki, T. R. (1996) *Social practices: a Wittgensteinian approach to human activity and the social*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Schilling, J. (2009), 'From ineffectiveness to destruction: A qualitative study on the meaning of negative leadership', *Leadership*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 102-128.

Shriberg, M. & MacDonald, L. (2013), "Sustainability leadership programs: emerging goals, methods & best practices", *Journal of Sustainability Education*, Volume 5, May 2013

Formatted: Font: Italic

Schyns, B. and Schilling, J. (2013) "How bad are the effects of bad leaders? A meta-analysis of destructive leadership and its outcomes," *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 24, Issue 1.

Sen, A. (1999), *Development As Freedom*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Senge, P., Hamilton, H., Kania, J. (2015), "The Dawn of System Leadership," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2015, Stanford.

Sheard, G., Kakabadse, N. and Kakabadse, A. (2013) "Visceral behaviours and leadership: a dark side of boardroom life?" *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 32, Issue 1, pp. 18-35.

Steurer, R. (2007) From government strategies to strategic public management: an exploratory outlook on the pursuit of cross-sectoral policy integration, *Environmental Policy and Governance*, Vol. 17, Issue 3, pp. 201–214.

Sutherland, N., Land, C. and Bohm, S. (2013), "Anti-leaders(hip) in Social Movement Organisations: The case of autonomous grassroots groups", *Organisation, Organization,* Vol. 21, No. 6, pp. 759-781.

Taleb, N. N. (2012), *Antifragile: Things That Gain From Disorder*, Random House, US.

Tepper, B. (2000), "Consequences of abusive supervision", *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 43, No. 2, pp. 178-190.

Terry, R. W. (1993) *Authentic Leadership: Courage in action*,Jossey-Bass: San Francisco.

Tideman, S G., Arts, M C. and Zandee, D P. (2013) "Sustainable Leadership: Towards a Workable Definition", *Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, Number 49, pp. 17-33(17)

Tonnies, F. (1887), *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*, Leipzig, Germany.

Trethewey, A. and Goodall, H. L. (2007) "Leadership Reconsidered as Historical Subject," *Leadership* Vol. 3 Issue 4.

United Nations (2015), "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", *UN General Assembly* A/RES/70/1. Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

Utting, P. (2015), "Revisiting Sustainable Development", *UNRISD Classics*, Vol. III. Available at: http://www.unrisd.org

Vaktin, S. (2009), *Narcissistic and Psychopathic Leaders*, Lidija Rangelovska, Prague.

Formatted: Font: Italic

WCED (1987) *Our Common Future*. World Commission on Environment and Development, New York.

Weick, K. E. (1995), *Sensemaking in Organisations*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.

Western, S. (2008), *Leadership: A Critical Text*, Sage publications, Los Angeles, CA.

Woods, P. A., Bennett, N., Harvey, J. A., Wise, C. (2004), "Variabilities and Dualities in Distributed Leadership: Findings from a Systematic Literature Review", *Educational Management Administration Leadership*, Vol. 32, No. 4, pp. 439-457.

Worldwatch (2015), *State of the World 2015: Confronting Hidden Threats to Sustainability*, Island Press, Washington.

Zingheim, P. K. et al (1996), "Competencies And Competency Models: Does One Size Fit All?" *ACA Journal,* Vol. 5, No. 1

Formatted: Font: Italic