

Planetary Futures of Leadership & Governance

Leadership and Governance are needed to address the “progressive acceleration of change” (Poli, 2019). Governance is defined as system of “all processes of governing ... [with a focus] on social practices and activities” (Bevir, 2012) – including governmentality as the “art of government” (Foucault, 1991). Leadership is described as process of influencing within both formal and informal relationships between various stakeholders (Northouse, 2021); (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2003). Both concepts complement each other in helping people and organizations create and make sense of change. It seems appropriate to explore the futures and futures-orientation of leadership and governance in this handbook.

Leadership education and development programs often focus on quick fixes and approaches that were successful in the past. Times of exponential changes require innovative and long-term approaches to leadership from and for the future. In *Leadership for the Future* (Mengel, 2021) twenty authors from around the globe discuss what may be needed for leadership theory and practice that is futures ready.

After first “harvesting” the development of leadership theory (Part I), the authors explore “the ‘value shift’ (Paine, 2003) discernable in current approaches of leadership for the future...[and they] critically discuss how this shift may have contributed to an equalization of leadership in theory and practice” (Part II; p. XIII). Authors introduce values-oriented, mindful, and networked leadership from a feminist lens and then describe the turn to intercultural and social justice perspectives.

Part III draws from the “field of futures-studies and foresight to present and discuss a variety of approaches for what leadership in and for the future might look like” (p. XIV). Several members of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) have contributed their perspective on how futures-studies might inform “leadership for the future”.

In chapter 10, Thomas Mengel presents leadership perspectives for the future based on an exploratory review of leadership literature and a computer aided content analysis of a science fiction trilogy. Mengel proposes a multidimensional model of post-contemporary leadership characterized by various co-existing values, states, and modes (e.g., trans spatial, trans gender, disruptive, integrative, plastic, emergence, system(s), resisting, and leading). This model, and accompanying examples, “may help ... communities exploring meaningful futures

together” (p. 211). Next, in chapter 11, Tyler Mongan proposes six pillars as core building blocks of leadership future intelligence: “(1) context (mindset and physiology), (2) past mental models and memories, (3) present perception, (4) focus and attention, (5) evaluation and values (6) future anticipation and scenarios” (p. 217). Chapters 12 through 14 discuss the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and knowledge in leadership processes for the future. Roger Spitz and Rauli Nykaenen explore the nature of decision-making in the future and the agency of AI within a suggested existential framework for leadership (Chapter 12). Elissa Farrow discusses how organizations and leaders need to adapt for AI futures (Chapter 13). Tom Meylan compares leader-centred with knowledge-driven leadership considering “the Unexpected” (Chapter 14). Finally, Chapters 15 through 17 shed light on applications of foresight in the context of leadership. Verne Wheelwright offers foresight guidelines and recommendations to small businesses (Chapter 15) and Jan Klakurka and Candice Chow discuss values-infused foresight as core requirement of good governance (Chapter 16). In the final chapter of this book (Chapter 17), Mengel summarizes his earlier work on exploring meaningful futures by offering an integrative framework of guidelines and recommendations for values- and futures-oriented leadership that may help individuals, organizations, and communities to jointly imagine and create a meaningful future” (Mengel, 2021, p. XIV). He combines values- and futures-oriented leadership with a games and systems approach, and explores futures scenarios, the futures beam (cone), the futures wheel, and narratives for potential futures.

In this book the authors make the compelling argument that leadership for the future needs to go beyond solving problems of the past or even the present: it needs to include futures-oriented perspectives and tools that help stakeholders navigate and adapt to the increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity of their planetary environment. Values-orientation, networking, feminist perspectives, shared and distributed leadership, AI supported decision-making, and co-creative community development are suggested as core components of leadership for the future.

The volume *Reimagining Leadership on the Commons* (Singh, Thompson, & Curran, 2021) was published in parallel to *Leadership for the Future* and it has since strongly influenced thinking about futures-ready leadership. Similar to focus on co-creative and values-oriented community development and leadership, this volume (re-) introduces the concept of the commons as “open adaptive system ... in sharp contrast to capitalism and ... intended to support a more ethical, equitable, and just world” (p. 1), suggesting a major paradigm shift in leadership and governance whereby common resources are pooled and successfully governed by a

community (Ostrom, 1990) (Baggio, et al., 2016). Ostrom’s “design principles”, they claim, “co-occur more frequently with successful governance of shared resources... [and they] include clearly defined boundaries of the resource and eligible resource users, active monitoring and sanctioning, and inclusion of resource users in defining institutional arrangements to govern the commons” (p. xx).

The introduction defines “commons... as social systems comprised of self-organized communities of commoners who create and/or use and/or protect and/or share natural, human-made, or abstract commonwealth governed and sustained by the practice of communing which infuses the community with distinctive values, processes, and actions that differ from those of the state and private sector” (p. 3). Further, “Commons are generally considered to be communities based on care, responsibility, sharing, provisioning, and sustainability, in which decisions are made collectively” (p. 6). In this context, “facilitative leadership [will] bring people together for difficult conversations ... [and] various leadership roles maintain the dynamism, creativity, resilience, and adaptability of the network” (p. 7).

Similarly, “distributed leadership is exercised in nature...and is critical for living organisms for the following three reasons: First, distributive leadership provides leadership and initiative at all levels of the organization that can be used to serve the larger organization.... Second, it provides bench strength, continually developing the next generation of leadership and management.... And third, it recognizes and supports more individual capacity and individual initiative (self-organizing) at all levels which increases the organization’s adaptive capacity, flexibility, and agility... adaptive living systems framework... based on the values commons hold dear” (p. 9).

In summary, the authors of this book claim that the “global order is undergoing the process of a radical transformation to a commons-centric society” (p. 1) and present “approaches to leadership that challenge the underlying paradigm of the self-maximizing economic man. They have based their leadership on a far more communal, open relational paradigm based on care, compassion, and responsibility toward others and toward the more-than-human [environment]” (p. xxvii). This also aligns with (Mengel, 2021)’s research about the values-orientation of “homo humanus”, who requires a sense of meaning rather than a Leviathan controlling them.

Interestingly sociocracy – the governance system many communities around the globe are using to govern themselves – very well delivers on these approaches to leadership for the commons and on Ostrom’s design principles for governance of the commons (Rau, 2022). These principles of communal leadership and dynamic governance are currently being implemented within the community of Killick Ecovillage in Portugal Cove-St. Philip’s, NL, Canada as an innovative approach to overcoming the affordable housing crisis and to futures-ready communal living (Mengel & Reid Fairhurst, in press). Mengel strongly concurs with the authors of this volume (Singh, Thompson, & Curran, 2021), in that we “hope that the leadership approaches proposed by the authors will prove useful whatever the future presents, and that leadership on the commons can provide the world a path toward a more ethical, equitable, and just world – the kind of world we yearn for. That possibility may be in our own hands to create” (p. xxvii).

In *Beyond Knowledge* (Halal, 2021), WFSF member William E. Halal, Professor Emeritus of Management, Technology & Innovation at George Washington University, elaborates on his thesis that “the technology revolution [with AI as its main force] is driving an unrecognized social upheaval from ‘knowledge’ to ‘consciousness’”. He presents the development of consciousness across five levels from bodily perception to spiritual awareness and vision.

Inspired by the Jesuit priest and interdisciplinary scholar, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), Halal claims that we clearly need a “global level of consciousness” and, because we are increasingly interdependent, we need to become “global citizens”. Further, he states that the looming global crises can only be overcome on a global level and by a unified consciousness. He sees consciousness as “the inner terrain in which we live our lives, and ... [that] is changing rapidly to cope with the slightly crazed demands of high-tech life” (p. 24).

The unified and global level of consciousness are needed, Halal claims, to transform societies and their institutional building blocks. He then discusses “technologies of consciousness (ToCs) that we use to change our state of mind. They may be thought of as tools, techniques or practices, but the term ‘technologies’ is remarkable because it highlights their power to shape consciousness” (p. 65).

Finally, building on Hegel’s Dialectic, and following the “thesis” of information revolution and the “antithesis” of the developing mega-crisis, Halal sees the coming transformation towards a planetary and unified consciousness as the only

opportunity to resolve the looming crisis and to create a “synthesis” that becomes the new status quo – a “unified global order”. As the most likely scenario he sees “the flowering of the human spirit – 2030... [leading to a] functioning Global Order along these lines [which] is likely to appear at about 2050 +/- 10 years” (p. 157). “Then”, he concludes, “it’s on to Space Age” (p. 165). In summary, Halal’s book makes an optimistic but compelling case for a technology (AI) driven leap towards a unified consciousness that serves as prerequisite for a new, unified planetary governance in about thirty years.

Values-orientation and meaning-making have already been major topics in the intersection of futures studies and leadership. “‘Meaning-making’ also was identified as key element of navigating volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA) environments in this earlier book about *Visionary Leadership in a Turbulent World* by leadership scholars and practitioners (Elkington, Van der Steege, Glick-Smith, & Moss Breen, 2017).

They suggest a new mindset (consisting of ethical leadership based on universal ethics; resilience aiming at meaning-making; and flow-based leadership resulting in better decision-making); a new skillset (consisting of change management, innovation, and collaboration); and a new knowledge-set (consisting of systems-thinking, systems-coaching, and cultural intelligence). These elements will help us thrive, they claim, “in the New VUCA Context”.

In summary, the authors’ perspectives on leadership in a VUCA world have strongly influenced the discussions of leadership for the future in recent years. They have made another compelling case for the significance of universal ethics, collaborative skills, change management, and systems-thinking as core components of futures-ready leadership. (Mengel, *Leadership for the Future: Lessons from the Past, Current Approaches, and Future Insights*, 2021) work on “values-oriented leadership” reinforces their focus on “meaning-making” as means of strengthening resilience of communities and organizations for the future.

Part one of the edited book *The Study and Practice of Global Leadership* (Perucci, 2022) examines how globalization is impacting human relations in the new millennium. Managing intercultural conflict and increasing collaboration across the cultural divide are discussed as key issues in Global Leadership. The authors suggest that maybe we are experiencing the rise of the “homo ubuntu” at the transnational level, a reference to the traditional African perspective of communitarianism.

Parts two and three explore global leadership study programs and examine leadership practices in various global contexts and from different perspectives. They conclude that new skills and a new language are needed to develop adaptive transformational systems, while at the same time exhibiting a complex “global consciousness” that includes the perspectives of “global women leaders...[who] are emerging as important players ... [on the field of] leadership at the edge of experience”. In summary, while confirming claims and principles highlighted in volumes reviewed before, we support the editor’s hope that “this book will serve as a path forward to explore the possibilities that await us!” (p. 18).

We have explored the futures and futures-orientation of leadership and governance. We have reviewed five exemplary books that examined leadership (the process of influencing relationships) and governance (processes, practices, and the art of governing) with and from a forward-looking, futures-oriented perspective.

The following have emerged as descriptors of the planetary futures of leadership and governance:

- Futures-oriented leadership and governance are values-oriented, networked, distributed, and co-created often within and for a communal context.
- They require a radical transformation towards an adaptive commons-centric society that is self-governed cooperatively and that facilitates difficult conversations with an ethics of care within a community, in society, and on a systemic, planetary level.
- They also depend on a new level of planetary consciousness highlighting the complex interdependencies of human and technological systems within even larger ecological and planetary contexts.
- This new level of consciousness, while ever evolving, will help us make sense, discover meaning, and realize communal values within a VUCA environment.
- Models of planetary communitarianism must allow for collaboration across cultural divides; their implementations must help develop the skills and language that enable communities to develop and continuously adapt the emerging transformational and planetary systems.

We recommend that these elements and their systemic interplay are further explored and monitored to validate a potential model of planetary futures of leadership and governance that can help make sense of potential or even preposterous futures and that might serve as a tool to describe a set of preferred

futures and to help co-create a communal “future we want” (United Nations, 2020).

Planetary/Global Futures Index

Today’s information overloaded world needs coherence, frameworks, and context to get a sense of the big picture of how we are doing and foreseeable prospects. Since 1997, The Millennium Project has published 19 editions of *The State of Future* in various languages. The State of the Future Version 19.1 brings together an extraordinarily diverse set of data, information, intelligence, and, hopefully, some wisdom about the future. It provides a context or framework to help make better decisions than is commonly offered today (Glenn, Florescu, & Millenium Project Team, 2017).

So, taken all together, how are we doing? Is the future in general getting better or worse? To answer this, The Millennium Project with its Nodes around the world and the experts selected by Nodes have tracked progress and regress on 15 Global Challenges (GC) facing humanity or over 20 years and created a State of the Future Index, whose latest results are contained in SOF v19.1. Taken together, the overviews of the 15 GC contained in the SOF 19.1 offer a systemic framework for understanding global change. Figure 2 shows these 15 Global Challenges.

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