



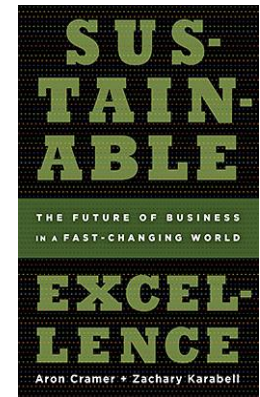
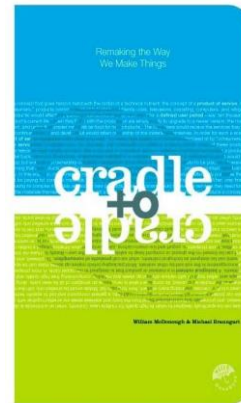
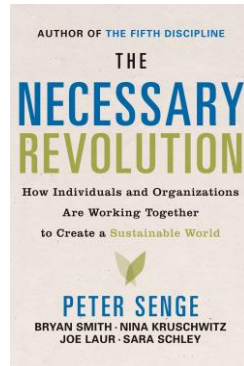
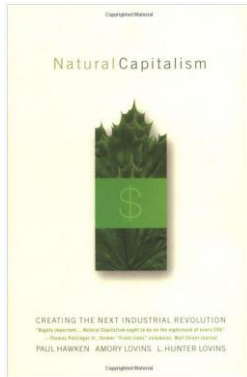
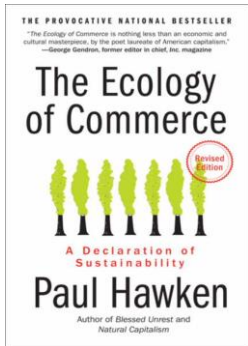
Ecological Worldviews: A Missing Perspective to Advance Sustainability Leadership

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Southern Oregon University

Corporate Sustainability Research at the Organizational Level

A significant body of research has emerged in recent years focused on best green business practices and corporate sustainability at the organizational level.

However the literature has not paid enough attention to sustainability leadership at the individual level.



Corporate Sustainability Research Focused on Individual Psychological Level

As a result, little is known about the deeper psychological motivations of sustainability leaders and how this may relate to their capacity to lead transformational change.



THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Ecological
Worldview
Literatures

Developmental
Theory

Interior
Leadership

Sustainability
Leadership

Ecological Worldview Literatures



Deep Ecology

- Drengron, A. & Inoue, Y. (Eds.). (1995). The deep ecology movement; An introductory anthology. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books

Ecopsychology

- Kahn, P. (1999). The Human relationship with nature: Development and culture. Boston, MA: MIT Press,
- Roszak, T., Gomes, M., & Kanner, A., (Eds.). (1995). Eco-psychology; Restoring the earth healing the mind. Berkeley, CA: Sierra Club Books.

Ecological Economics

- Daly, H. (1996). Beyond growth. Boston, MA: Beacon Publishing
- Dietz, R., & O'Neill, D. (2013). Enough is enough; Building a sustainable economy in a world of finite resources. San Francisco, CA: Berrett Koehler.

Environmental Sociology

- Kempton, W. (1996). Environmental values in American culture. Boston, MA: MIT.
- Dunlap, R. (2008). The new ecological paradigm scale: From marginality to worldwide use. *The Journal of Environmental Education*, 40(1), pp. 3-18

Indigenous Studies

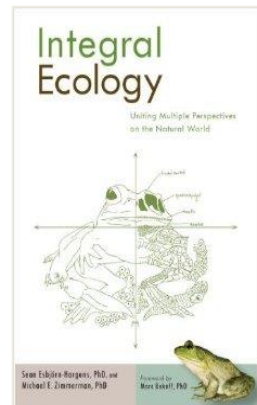
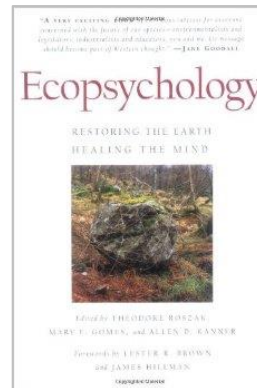
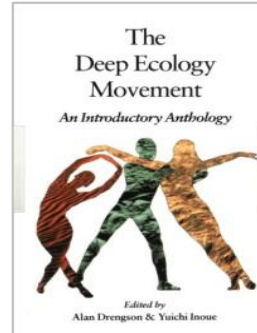
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Integral Ecology

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Systems Thinking

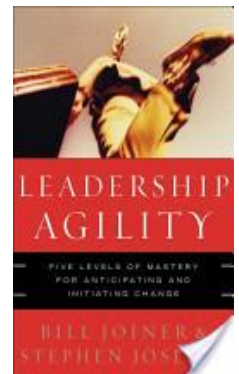
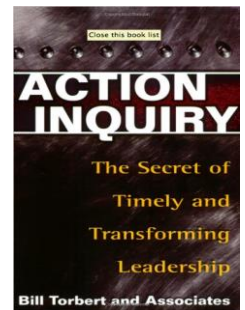
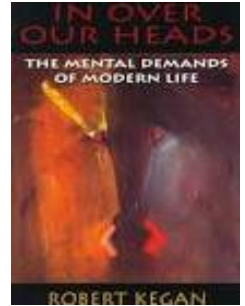
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- Meadows, D. H. (2008). Thinking in systems: A primer. White River: Chelsea Green Publishing



Developmental Theory



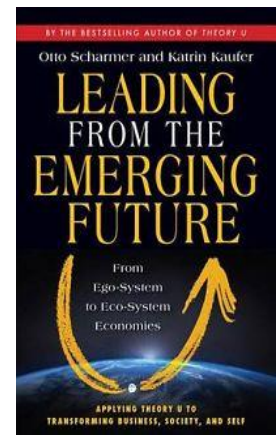
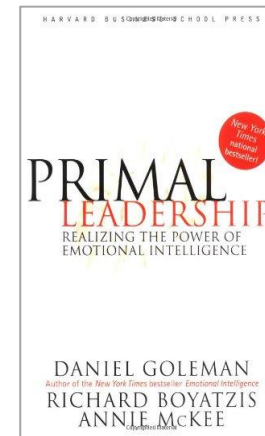
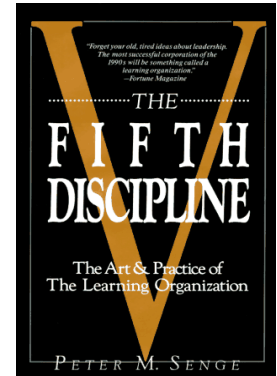
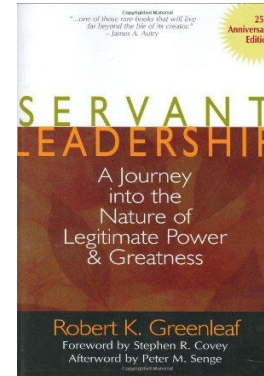
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- Kegan, R. (1994). In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life. Boston, MA: Harvard University Press
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- Cook-Greuter, S. R. (2004). Making the case for a developmental perspective. Industrial and Commercial Training, 36(6/7), 275.
- Torbert, W. (2004). Developmental action inquiry. San Francisco, CA: Berrett Koehler
- Rooke, D., & Torbert, W. R. (2005). Seven transformations of leadership, Harvard Business Review, 83, 66.
- Joiner, B., & Josephs, S. (2007). Leadership agility; Five levels of mastery for anticipating and initiating change. San Francisco, CA Jossey-Bass



Interior Theories on Leadership



- Greenleaf, R. (1977) Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press.
- Senge, P. (1990). The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization. New, NY: Bantam Doubleday Dell
- Goleman, D. (2002) Primal Leadership: Realizing the power of emotional intelligence. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press
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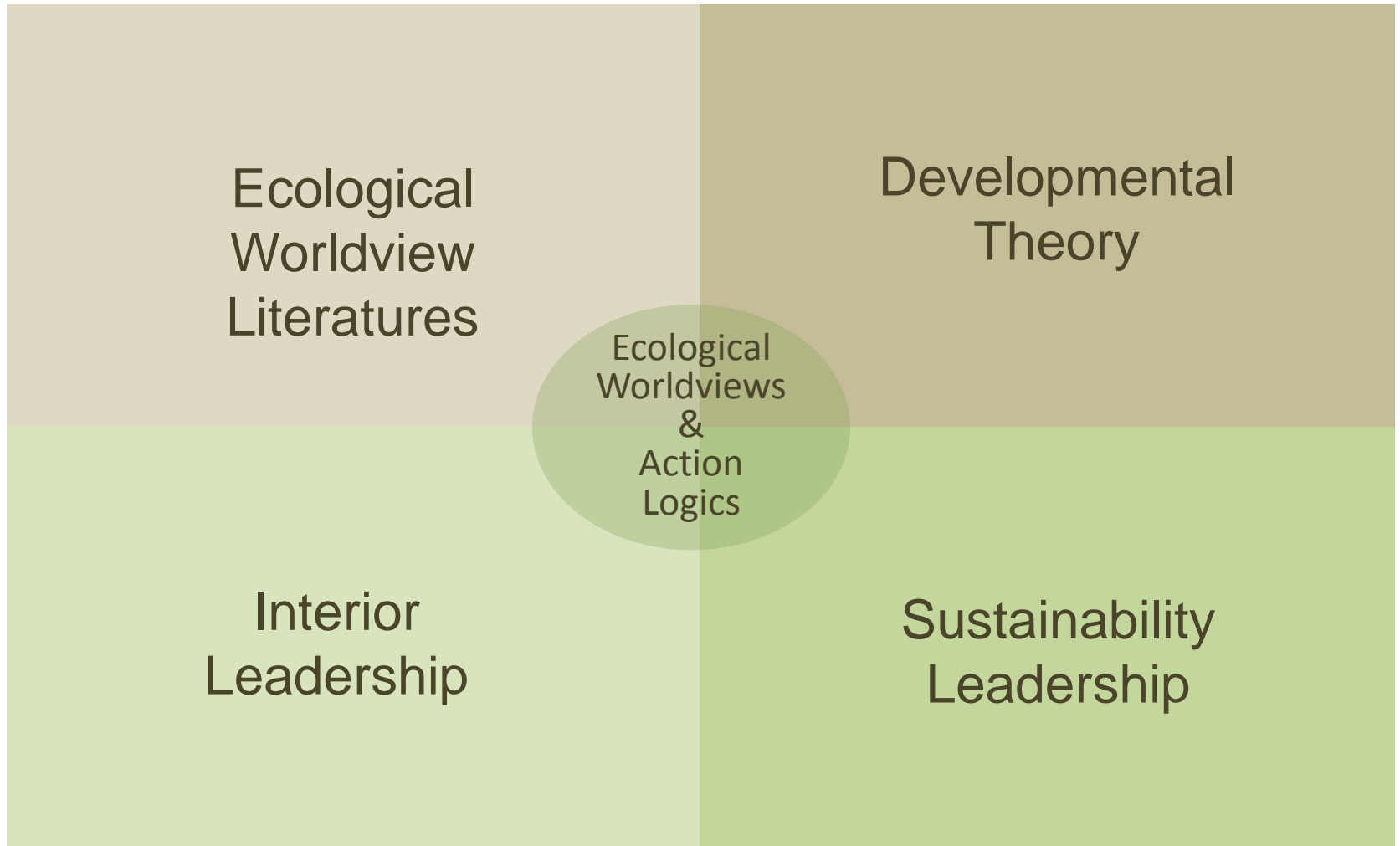


Sustainability Leadership Literature



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- Ferdig, M. (2007). *Journal of Change Management*, 1(7), 25-35
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THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK



Ecological Worldviews



Can be thought of as the deep mental patterns for how we see the natural world

They are the cognitive, perceptual, and affective maps that we continuously use to make sense of our natural environment

They are usually unconscious and taken for granted as the way things are

They can limit or enhance our perception of the natural world

Anthropocentric



'MIDDLE EAST OF EDEN'

Ecocentric



(Esbjorn Hargens & Zimmerman; 2009; Hart, 2010; Hedlund de-Witt, 2012; Kahn, 1999)

Action Logic / Developmental Theory

How adults construct knowledge through specific hierarchical stages of increasing complexity

The frame through which people translate their thoughts, feelings, and perceptions into actions

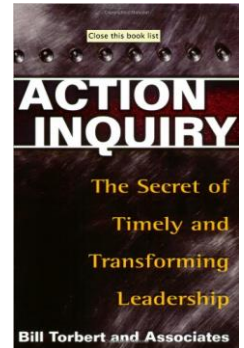
Stage of development effects what we can be aware of, reflect on, and act on

Conventional and *Post-conventional* refer to two broad stages of development

Conventional action logic is characterized by conformance with social conventions and achieving expertise and efficiency

Post-conventional is characterized by an attempt to reframe problems with a broader understanding of complexity and interdependency of systems

Research has shown that leaders with post-conventional action logic have greater capacity to lead transformational change



(Brown, 2012; Cook-Greuter, 2004; Kegan & Lahey, 2008; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 2004)

Action-Logics

Pre-Conventional
(13%)

Opportunist

- Short time horizon, flouts power and sexuality, rejects feedback, hostile humor, deceptive, manipulative, externalizes blame, punishes, views luck as central, punishment rules, views rules as loss of freedom, "eye for an eye" ethic.

Diplomat

- Observes rules, avoids inner and outer conflict, conforms, suppresses own desires, loyalty to group, seeks membership, right versus wrong attitude, appearance/status conscious, tends towards clichés, works to group standard.

Expert

- Interested in problem solving via data, critical of others and self, chooses efficiency over effectiveness, perfectionist, values decisions based on merit, wants own performance to stand out, aware of alternative constructions in problem resolution but can be dogmatic, accepts feedback only from "objective" craft masters.

Conventional
(80%)

Achiever

- Results and effectiveness oriented, long term goals, concerned with issues of ethics and justice, deliberately prioritizes work tasks, future inspires, drawn to learning, seeks mutuality in relations, aware of personal patterns of behavior, feels guilt if does not meet own standards, blind to own shadow, chases time.

Redefining

- Collaborative, tolerant of individual difference, aware of context and contingency, may challenge group norms, aware of owning a perspective, inquiring and open to feedback, seeks independent, creative work, attracted by difference and change, may become something of a maverick, focuses on present and historical context.

Post-Conventional
(7%)

Transforming

- Process and goal oriented, strategic time horizon, systems conscious, enjoys a variety of roles, recognizes importance of principle and judgment, engaged in complex interweave of relationships, aware of own personal traits and shadow, high value on individuality, growth, self fulfilment, unique market niches, particular historical moments.

Alchemical

- Alert to the theatre of action, embraces common humanity, disturbs paradigms of thought and action, dispels notions of heroic action, deeply internalized sense of self-knowledge held with empty mind, sees light and dark, order and mess, treats time and events as symbolic, analogical, metaphorical (not merely linear, digital, literal).

Gaps in Sustainability Leadership Research

There have been only a few *theoretical* studies that have attempted to integrate ecological worldviews and action logics in the context of sustainability leadership.

(Esbjorn Hargen & Zimmerman, 2009, Boiral et. al 2009)

In terms of *empirical* research, there have been even fewer studies. Those that have been conducted have been based on small sample sizes.

(Brown, 2012; Hedlund de-Witt, 2012; Rogers, 2011)

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: *How do sustainability leaders describe their worldviews and motivation for their work?*

Q2: *Do the descriptions by sustainability leaders of their worldviews and their motivation for sustainability reflect specific action logics?*

The background of the slide is an aerial photograph of the ocean. The water is a deep, vibrant blue, and the surface is covered in small, rhythmic ripples that catch the light, creating a textured appearance. The perspective is from directly above, looking down at the water's surface. The entire image is framed by a thin white border.

THE STUDY

Qualitative Methodology

Multi-phase Qualitative Design

- Semi-structured interviews allowed for a wider range of data collection
- Provided for a deeper picture than the variable based correlations of quantitative studies
- Qualitative studies are increasingly used to study interior dimensions of leadership
- Tested quantitative instruments as part of my pilot study
- Based on my constructivist and transformative stance, a qualitative study best captured the spirit of my research

(Creswell 2009; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Silverman, 2006)

Data Collection

- Purposive and snowball sampling strategy to recruit leaders from multinational corporations, environmental NGOs, private corporations, and consultants
- Semi-structured phone and face-to-face interviews were conducted with sample of sustainability leaders
- Interviews typically lasted from thirty to forty-five minutes and were transcribed during or after the interview
- Two phases of data collection using different sets of questions as interview guides

(Babbie, 2002; Creswell, 2009; Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Description of Participants

SECTOR / TITLE	# OF PARTICIPANTS (N=65)	PERCENTAGE
Multinational Corporations		
Chairman and CEO	2	3%
Chief Sustainability Officer	6	9%
Vice-President	12	19%
Director	18	28%
Manager	7	11%
Private Company Presidents	6	9%
Environmental NGO CEO's	6	9%
Sustainability Consultants	8	12%
Total Participants	65	100%

Partial List of Companies

3M

General Electric

Price Waterhouse
Coopers

AMD

Green Mountain
Coffee

SC Johnson

AT&T

Hewlett-Packard

Seventh Generation

Aveda

Mattel

Shaklee

Ben and Jerry's/
Unilever

Microsoft

Starbucks

Clorox

Miller-Coors

Sprint

Coca-Cola

Motorola

Sun Microsystems

Ford

Nike

Waste Management

Partial List of Titles

Chief Sustainability Officer

Director of Stakeholder Mobilization

V.P. of Global Citizenship

Director of Corporate Consciousness

V.P. of Environment and Water

Director of Natural Resources

Director of Social Mission
Manager of Product Integrity

Director of Coffee Community
Outreach

Director of Sustainability and
and Stewardship

Director of Sustainability Initiatives

Semi-structured Interview Questions

- How or why did you become involved with sustainability within your organization?
- Where do you think your deeper motivation comes from in regards to sustainability?
- How has sustainability influenced your approach to leadership?
- How do you think your work in sustainability has impacted your worldview?
- How would you describe your ecological worldview?
- What comes up for you when you think about your relationship with nature?
- Looking back, can you point to any transitions or events that caused you to look differently at the world, yourself, and nature, or is this a worldview that you have held for a long time?

DATA ANALYSIS

Multi-step thematic analysis and hermeneutic methodology was utilized to analyze approximately 40,000 words of text

- Color-coded key words, phrases, and expressions
- Margin notes led to identification of initial sub-themes
- Hermeneutic methodology catalyzed a greater awareness of multiple contexts during the thematic analysis
- Additional rounds of analysis evolved into descriptive findings and themes
- Findings were organized under three major themes that were supported by more than 100 interview quotations as evidence
- Themes and findings were connected into a narrative storyline

THE FINDINGS





THEME ONE

***Experiences that
Shape Ecological
Worldviews Across
the Lifespan***

- Family of Origin and Childhoods in Nature
- Environmental Education, Teachers & Mentors
- Seeing Poverty and Environmental Degradation in Developing Countries
- Perceiving Capitalism as a Vehicle for Environmental Activism
- Through a Sense of Spirituality and Service



THEME TWO

***Expressions of
Ecocentric
Worldviews***

- Awareness of Ecological Embeddedness
- Awareness of the Fragility of Planetary Ecosystems
- A Belief in the Intrinsic Value of Nature



THEME THREE

***EXPRESSIONS OF
POST-CONVENTIONAL
ACTION LOGICS***

- Awareness of Diverse Worldviews and Contexts
- Thinking in Longer Time Horizons
- Enhanced Systems Consciousness
- Planet-centric Circles of Identity and Care
- Inquiring Stance and Increased Vulnerability
- Highly Collaborative Approaches to Leadership
 - Leading from the Middle
 - Influencing without Control
 - Collective Wisdom

IMPLICATIONS

A landscape photograph featuring a central dirt road that recedes into the distance. To the left of the road is a vast field of bright yellow rapeseed flowers. To the right is a field of lush green crops. In the background, several white wind turbines are visible against a bright blue sky filled with scattered white clouds. The overall scene suggests a rural, agricultural setting integrated with renewable energy infrastructure.

Implications for Sustainability Leadership Practice

Based on a worldwide sample of 1847 corporate leaders, they found that although nearly two thirds rate social and environmental issues as significant, less than ten percent report that their corporations are addressing them thoroughly.

The researchers attribute this gap to a *“disconnect between thought and action.”*

(Kiron et al., 2013, p. 3).



BY SHOWING EVIDENCE FOR HOW A GROUP OF SENIOR EXECUTIVES:

- EXPRESS HIGHLY DEVELOPED ECOLOGICAL WORLDVIEWS
- CONNECT THEIR ECOLOGICAL WORLDVIEWS WITH THEIR MOTIVATION
- EXPRESS POST-CONVENTIONAL ACTION LOGICS
- PRACTICE HIGHLY COLLABORATIVE FORMS OF LEADERSHIP

THE FINDINGS OFFER NEW WAYS TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN THOUGHT AND ACTION

Future Research Questions

- Is the practice of sustainability driving human development?
- Do individuals with post-conventional action logics self-select for sustainability leadership?
- How can an understanding of ecological worldviews and post-conventional action logics be integrated into sustainability leadership development programs?
- How can ecological worldviews and post-conventional action logics be leveraged by sustainability leaders to enhance their effectiveness in their organizations?
- How can existing assessment instruments be modified to enhance our understanding of the ecological worldviews of sustainability leaders?
- How do the ecological worldviews and action logics of sustainability leaders vary across age group and gender?
- How do ecological worldviews and action logics of sustainability leaders vary across nationality and culture?