Learning from the Impasse in Western Leadership: Implications of a critical perspective for non-Western scholarship

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Abstract

Whilst 'leadership' remains a ubiquitous term in both academic theory and organisational practice, it continues to be a widely contested concept. For many, the term conjures up images of special individuals; single-handedly capable of transforming organisations with their inherent capabilities and skills. However, in the past 15 years there has been a growing backlash against this 'belief in the power of one' (Gronn, 2002: 319), largely spearheaded by scholars now associated with Critical Leadership Studies (CLS). Broadly speaking, CLS aims to de-naturalise and challenge taken-for-granted assumptions of mainstream, functionalist perspectives, which have arisen from predominantly Western scholarship. They do this by simultaneously examining the 'dark side' of

leadership practice; questioning notions of authenticity; illuminating issues surrounding power and control; and the problematics of relying on single, stable and hierarchically-positioned leaders. As such, CLS provides a deeper critique of the "heroic leader" approach than that found in some mainstream scholarship and training (Palus et al, 2012). This paper argues that the future of leadership scholarship, advice and education in parts of the non-Western world, including within Asia, can benefit from the growing recognition of an impasse in the mainstream of work on leadership that has been highly influenced by Western traditions and examples. The paper also responds to the interest of CLS scholars in moving beyond critiquing dominant understandings and working toward new directions for leadership practice. It argues that some research outside the corporate sphere on "collective leadership" (Ospina and Foldy, 2015) holds potential to break the impasse. The paper does not review research on non-Western, including Asian, approaches to leadership but invites dialogue towards a more critical internationalist approach to leadership scholarship – something that has remained a marginal topic in much CLS work.

Introduction

'The words you speak become the house you live in'

Hafez (1325–1389)

'Leadership' is a term widely used in descriptions of popular management publications and courses. Its ubiquity may lead one to suppose that the meaning of the term is settled when, in fact, it is used, without elaboration, to mean or to imply quite different things. The confusion that follows is characteristic of the term generally, and of the ease with which it is recruited to different educational, academic or developmental purposes (Jackson and Parry, 2008).

It may, for example, be used in the description of advice or courses intended for people who manage people or aspire to do so, whether in business, civil society or government; or to suggest a body of advice or a course is at an advanced level for a specific practice. In other uses it may describe advice or courses on professional practice issues that also include a focus on personal development. Still other uses describe advice and courses on social, political or organisational change. Only rarely is it used to describe advice or courses on the concept of 'leadership' itself and how it can be misunderstood, mis-constructed or rethought. These five ways of relating to leadership also involve different motivations for understanding and for sharing that understanding. Some seek to help aspiring managers to progress their careers; others aim to improve the performance of a professional practice. Some seek to encourage personal development; others seek

to enable people to create positive change in society, no matter what role a person might have. Then there are those who seek to question the use of the term leadership in social and political discourses, motivated by intellectual curiosity or, perhaps, by concern about the negative social and political effects of the idea of leadership itself.

In this paper our aim is to communicate usefully with people using any or all of these uses of the leadership term and for all such motivations, and particularly with those who approach this topic from a non-Western context. That is because, on the one hand, we believe there is an impasse in the mainstream of leadership scholarship and the development of leaders, an impasse that arises from growing awareness of the flawed assumptions of that mainstream, assumptions that can have a counterproductive effect on people's organisational lives and negative consequences for social justice and environmental sustainability in society. We start from the view that it is not just the specificity of the cultures being explored but the culturally specific way in which they have been explored that limits our understanding of leadership practices throughout the world (Jackson & Parry, 2008: 82). In this paper w use the term 'Western' to describe mainstream approaches in order to reflect the fact of the dominance in old and new thinking about leadership, and in contemporary examples, of the 'Western Hemisphere' of North American, European and Australasian countries.[1] The term is also widely recognised to describe an ideology of limited electoral democracies operating variants of capitalism, one that has spread via globalisation since the end of the Cold War.

The paper responds to the changing nature and location of power in the world, particularly since the Western financial crisis that began in 2007. It is no surprise that since that crisis there has been a dramatic rise in use of both the terms 'Western Leadership' and 'Asian Leadership' as shown in a Google trends analysis (Figure 1). The term 'Asian Leadership' is a collocation; that is, two-words combined into a single term. It is a risk of collocations that they can have the effect of de-problematising one or another of the words, in this case both 'Asian' and 'leadership'. One risk is that important questions of whether or not leadership is a useful category of analysis for producing organisational and social effects, or more useful than other categories such as management, organisation, and group deliberation, are displaced by a focus instead on what might be distinctly Asian. In the field of leadership it is typical for academics, writers and consultants to invent new terms by inserting an adjective in front of leadership, thereby occulting problematic assumptions

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[1]The term 'West' derives from centuries ago when Christendom was discovering cultures to its East. The Western world and Western culture are imagined today often as typified by rationalism, science, freedom of thought, individualism, human rights, electoral democratic values, and either Christianity or secularism. It is a problematic term as these values are not geographically bound. The foundations of contemporary rational thought and mathematics are found in ancient conceptual developments in the Middle East. Not only did Christianity arise from the Middle East but it arrived and thrived in India even before it took hold in Rome (Said 1994). Nevertheless, the term is widely used today in popular and academic discourse.

about the modified term 'leadership'. Another risk is that the concept of 'Asian' can be deproblematised, as an emphasis on distinguishing it from 'non-Asian' downplays diversities within the category 'Asia'. The same risk applies to the use of Western in this paper, and we do so with caution.[2] Our attention here to collocations and assumed meanings is one method of Critical Discourse Analysis which is sometimes used by Critical Leadership Scholars (CLS) for reasons we will elaborate in this paper.

Figure 1: Trends in Search Terms on Google in 10 Years prior to Dec 1st 2015
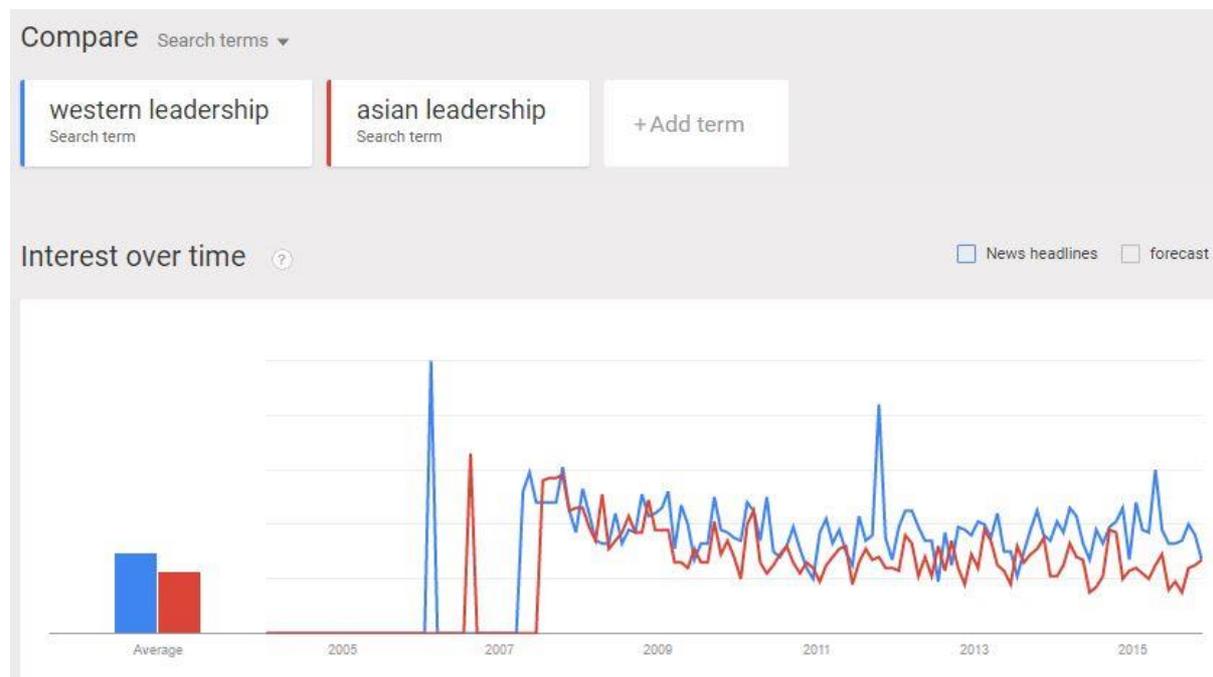
It appears that the range of advice and courses on leadership will continue to grow, worldwide, and offer the potential for important insights on matters of purpose and change to be shared. Much of this growth in attention to leadership is occurring across the Global South, with Western publishers, trainers and universities having significant influence, for good or ill. Not only are concepts and practices of leadership important to the future of non-Western regions around the world, but what happens in those regions is increasingly important to the world as a whole, possibly due to shifts in economic and political power. Meanwhile, the salience of questions of leadership in discussion of

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[2]Our own collocation of 'Western Leadership' is intended for a counter-hegemonic reason, to particularise mainstream concepts on leadership on the basis of the cultures, and often geographies, from which they have arisen and garner support. We do it for reasons that we will explain in this paper, where the spread of these ideas can be seen viewed as exploitative of peoples in Western and non-Western cultures alike.

common threats such as pollution, habitat loss, climate change, conflict, poverty and disease requires us to seek commonality of understanding.

Although research on leadership is becoming more diverse and multi-cultural (Jackson and Parry, 2008), we consider that the realm of scholarship that we share in this paper - Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) - rarely reaches beyond a subset of leadership academics (mostly British, Australian and Kiwi). Therefore our aim is to offer readers the opportunity to become better informed about CLS, and thus better able to explore approaches arising from and appropriate to non-Western approaches and creating a more vibrant intercultural understanding, rather than a 'global' leadership approach based on a foundation of mainstream Western thinking. If you have been bitten by mainstream leadership ideas, this may be your anti-venom. Cured of limiting assumptions, you may generate new insights from your own leadership scholarship and efforts.

The paper begins by introducing CLS, explaining some of the key facets of this approach and speculates on some preliminary implications for non-Western scholarship on leadership and on the development of leaders and leadership capacity. It reviews the latest directions of CLS, before summarising some recommendations for future research and practice for non-Western approaches. The paper does not provide a deep analysis of the history of Western thought (for instance, no Greek philosophy). Nor does the paper report on a literature review of non-Western approaches to leadership. The critiques we summarise are not intended to suggest that non-Western approaches do not warrant similar criticisms. Though we did not research non-Western leadership, we are aware of, for instance, the reported dominance of paternalistic approaches to leadership in East Asia (Cheng et al, 2014). Moreover, we almost certainly overlooked some important non-Western work done that parallels the critical ideas we share here. Our paper is intended as a call out to those who are conducting critical approaches in non-Western contexts. We conclude with enthusiasm for some of the emerging work on "collective leadership" that draws lessons from non-profit and public sectors worldwide, as well as activist leadership in social movements, which we propose provide insights beyond the impasse.

What is '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 term 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 oft-unmasked 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 this has on organisational functioning and individual well-being (Ford, 2010: 48; Ford, 2007; Ford et al, 2008). Given the dominance of Western-published and Western-focused literature on leadership, both popular and academic, we argue that this critical questioning of assumptions is especially important for non-Western approaches to the subject, lest they inadvertently reproduce uncritical constructions of the topic of leadership and miss the opportunity to leapfrog the Western mainstream.

Some scholars in the critical leadership field draw upon 'Critical Theory': 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 social theory is informed by an anti-imperialist tradition and thus may have special resonance in the exploration of non-Western approaches. Such research challenges discourses 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).

The extent to which non-Western researchers on leadership and its development might resonate with such an approach may depend, in part, on their own sense of identity and their views of the historical contexts to the contemporary challenges facing the groups with which they identify. Rather than exploring analyses of those contexts, this paper aims to demonstrate some of the logic of critical deconstruction of discourses of leadership, so that researchers may consider further exploration of the field of CLS.

The corollary of this critical approach to the topic of leadership is a more critical view of mainstream methods for teaching and research. In research, many CLS scholars challenge the domination of reductionist, deterministic or narrowly empiricist science and utilise other methods such as critical discourse analysis, action research, and auto-ethnography (Speedy, 2008; Trahar, 2009; Stringer, 2004).

Critical pedagogies may challenge over-reliance on classroom-based learning, and seek to provide contexts whereby students can let go of routine preoccupations and thus more easily *unlearn* limiting assumptions. At times, this can involve nature-based and heritage-based experiences, as we discuss later in this paper.

In the next section we summarise some of the main elements of the critique made by critical leadership studies, with preliminary ideas on implications for non-Western leadership scholarship and leadership development work.

The Limits of the Special One

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 (Palus, et al 2012). However, post-heroic approaches can still assume the leader to be a special individual, who is particularly significant to outcomes and needs to be more collaborative to achieve their goals (Fletcher, 2004). The CLS analysis of the implicit hero focus of leadership studies provides a deeper critique in at least four key areas..

One analytic turn questions the character and behaviour of senior leaders to reveal recurring problematic characteristics. In answer to this critique, mainstream leadership thinking addresses perceived shortfalls in 'authenticity' or adherence to 'values'. A second direction of analysis reveals flaws in the very nature of thinking about traits like 'authenticity'; especially its tendency to rely on unsafe attributions that give rise in turn to an unwarranted exceptionalism. A third shows how a focus on leader's values, charisma and other attributes serves to distract from and deproblematise issues of the legitimacy of power-wielding roles in organisations and societies: when a totalitarian leader resorts to meditation, is meditation really the salient issue for study? A fourth analysis in CLS looks at how the conflation of leadership action with senior leaders might interfere with our understanding of agency that falls short of leadership and of collective deliberation and action for significant change. 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, Jackson and Sparks, 2002; Khoo and Burch, 2007; Marcuse, 2008), coining terms such as 'toxic leadership' (Benson and Hogan, 2008; Pelletier, 2010); 'destructive leadership' (Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad, 2007); 'leadership derailment' (Tepper, 2000); and, 'aversive leadership' (Bligh et al, 2007). Other scholars have discovered tendencies for narcissism &

psychopathy amongst senior role holders and how that can be encouraged by popular discourses about leaders being special and powerful (Kets de Vries, 1985; Bendell, 2001; Vaktin, 2009; Gudmundsson & Southey, 2011). Atkins (2008) offers the example of former Australian Prime Minister John Howard in a study that posits a tendency in some leaders to ignore or deny complexity and uncertainty while retaining a high level of self-protection. The subjects of these studies are predominantly Western but clearly that does not imply that narcissism and psychopathy are absent in non-Western contexts. A range of the literature on leadership from Asian contexts has focused on different value systems and perspectives on individualism. However, insights from the research on the 'dark side' of leadership imply that these are problems related to human psychology that lie beyond cultural factors and that tend to flourish in hierarchies, which exist everywhere. Future research might usefully explore similar issues in non-Western cultures.

The mainstream literature responds to news of this 'dark side' not with a deepened critique of leadership but by arguing for remedial adjustments to the selection of future leaders. This leads inexorably to a fruitless search - the stock-in-trade of business media chatter - for an ideal combination of leadership personality traits, capabilities or dispositional factors.

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. We do not have space here to rehearse in detail arguments about the trait approach, and will only sketch in some headings. It is, for one thing, 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. Marginally viable leadership trait lists tend merely to describe competent human beings, emphasising, for example, honesty and intelligence (Kirkpatrick & 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, indeed personality are, on this view, not internal personal structures but 'social processes realised on the site of the personal' (Gergen, 1994).

Another 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. Development 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 and enhanced oratorical skill. 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). Authentic Leadership development processes ignore critical sociology that suggests that our perspectives and sense of self are shaped by language and discourse (Fairclough, 1989; 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. 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, p229). 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). Adorno (1973) claims that the word 'authenticity' is jargon, a word that carries a false aura of numinousness, characteristic of a nostalgic post-Christian impulse to replace the 'authority of the absolute' with 'absolutised authority'. Adorno's critique is rarely adduced in critical leadership studies, but has an 'ironising' effect for the reader of popular literature, which can reach near-religious intensity of leader-worship.

These deep philosophical critiques of 'authentic leadership' arise from an interest in the personal development of individuals, and a concern for the direction of humanity. However, 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).In that it does not question the purpose of work or the discourse of leadership, this critique is not part of CL but it adds to the sense that mainstream Western leadership thought has reached an impasse in the relation between values and work.

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 address ancient questions of social and political organisation which are subjects of a long, lively and diverse intellectual tradition. 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 field is that matters of decision making involve reflection on processes that support the rights, dignity and contribution of all individuals in groups. Studies of leadership often render unproblematic modes of decision making and patterns of power (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992; Western 2008).

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 particular 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. 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 infantilisation 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 reported 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. 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.

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 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: 2151; Gordon, 2010; Western, 2008; Sutherland et al, 2014; Alvesson and Spicer, 2010). 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.

The Critical and The Collective To address these 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). The focus shifts towards effective group processes. Western remarks that 'sustainable leadership formation relates to a holistic process, working at a collective idea of leadership rather than focus on the development of individual leaders', and thus, 'individuals and teams [...] would all take some responsibility for their own formation' (2008: 206), through collectively and reflexively paying attention to sustainable structures, cultures and practices. This analysis emphasises individual actions, but we argue that it is more deeply connected to an awareness of group dynamics, something we return to below when discussing new directions in CLS.

We focus in this paper on findings from CLS, though some similar arguments are found in management research which does not draw upon critical social theory. For instance, work on 'distributed leadership' has shown how leadership actors can emerge anywhere in an organisation and leadership become a cultural trope around which motivated action accretes, a position supported theoretically by sensemaking theory (Weick, 1995), activity theory (Bedny et al, 2000) and communities of practice theory (Lave and Wenger 1991). 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: 492).

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 actually pursue individual aims within inefficient bureaucracies (Davis and Jones, 2014).The more radical approaches within the collective leadership field, particularly concerning the non profit sector, are more interesting for CLS, particularly in implications for designing leadership development activities, as we shall discuss later.

There are some immediate implications of CLS for non-Western leadership research and development which can now be stated. First, there is limited intellectual or practical value in adopting or conducting comparative analysis of existing approaches to leadership that focus on individual traits and values of senior role holders. Second, there is limited intellectual or practical value in adopting models of organisational and social change based on the potency of senior leaders: other approaches to understanding change should be explored. Third, the sources of legitimacy for authority and power are still an important question for research (pace Weber and Foucault). We return to the matter of implications for research later, but first, it is important to locate what we have called the "mainstream" within its context.

Leadership Discourse as Imperialist Managerialism

One might ask why mainstream approaches to leadership have, by and large, taken the form we describe in this paper. One view is that in isolating and celebrating the committed and visionary individual, contemporary popular discourses of business leadership are mitigating or humanising what might otherwise be seen as a dry, bureaucratic and heartless science of management. After all, most people referred to as 'leaders' are also managers, professionally constrained and confined within the limits of a positional authority. They may, in that literature, (for example, Buckingham and Coffman, 1999; Semler, 1993; Sharma, 2010) be held dialectically to embody otherwise contradictory impulses – the one to order, control, command and coordinate, the other to inspire, to permit, to give meaning to work and valorise the efforts of employees or 'followers': in short, to transcend the limits of management. Behind the rhetoric of leadership there lies, in many

organisations, a reality of ever-closer managerial control of work that is exploitative and degrading (Gemmill, and Oakley, 1992; Western, 2008).

'Managerialism' is a term used to describe a belief in the value of professional managers and their characteristic forms of analysis, authority and control, and the tendency to bring ever more aspects of life into the orbit of management (Enteman, 1993, Alvesson, 1992). This managerial belief has grown steadily over the past hundred years. It has been facilitated by progressively more effective technologies of surveillance and control, a progress punctuated by emancipatory reversions, for example, the 'human relations' movement of the 1930s (Mayo, 1933), the discussion of 'emotional labour' (Hochschild, 1983; Wharton, 2009) or of leadership as subversive of bureaucracy (Peters and Waterman, 1982). Yet, it is a characteristic of the totalising character of managerialism that it has quickly absorbed these ideas, not to mitigate, but to enhance technologies of control. We may say now that the panoptic nature of managerialism is being operationalised by digitalisation (and that it may eventually be perfected as scopocratic digital managerialism if no brakes are applied to progress in the development of artificial intelligence).

For some theorists, the rise of managerialism needs to be seen within an imperialist economic context – pointing toward the idea that under modern capitalist society, centralisation, hierarchy, domination, exploitation, manipulation and oppression are inherent features of life (Marcuse, 1964; Barker, 1997). 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, the pathological nature of opposition and the necessity for 'security'. Scholarship on these discursive aspects of contemporary imperialism draw upon a century and more of critical sociology, including Ferdinand Tonnies (1887) on the commodification of life, Habermas (1984) on 'lifeworld' and 'system' and Michel Foucault (1977) on mechanisms of social control. Contemporary sociologists add to these critiques in the context of the control of cyberspace (Barlow, 1996), and in the use of concepts of imminent threat by authorities to justify perpetual suspension or erosion of rights and values developed over centuries (Agamben, 2005). We should repeat at this point that we do not wish to seem to denigrate scholarship from the 'West', rather our concern is that a significant portion of the West's leadership scholarship that is travelling first class around the world is largely facile and self-serving.

One problem with the rapid dissemination of these ideas in an era of globalisation is the largely unquestioned enabling of growth in systems of production and consumption that threaten the balance of global environmental systems that maintain life, including humanity. Economic progress has increased standards of living of hundreds of millions of people worldwide but in so doing has created systems that are highly resource-intensive and polluting, thereby threatening that initial progress. The mainstream leadership approach generally has focused on organisations achieving narrow economic goals, rather than matters of equity, democracy and environmental sustainability (Jackson and Parry, 2008). The mainstream corporate view of leadership is 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 in this leadership discourse. Instead In the para-literature of leadership development this refrain is given an acceleratory twist – leadership is nothing if it is not very, as in: 'Good leaders create a vision, passionately articulate the vision, and relentlessly drive the vision to completion' (Constantino, 2013); or this from Sharma:

'A leader … always has the difficult conversations that weaker and less excellent people shy away from. They always communicate in a way that is strikingly direct and stunningly real. … Because of the superior ability (of the best leaders) to create success and lasting positive results, they end up having far more joy and delight than most of us will ever know' (Sharma, 2010).

The relentless repetition of this kind of fantasy displaces those alternative discourses around which democratic or collectivized forms of social choice and organizational action might accrete and holds in place an image of the leader that requires a world of infantilised followers.

The resonance between critiques of managerialism and critiques of imperialism from the fields of subaltern studies (Cronin, 2008), post-colonial studies (Sharp, 2008) and post-development studies (Sidaway, 2007), is important to note and explore. These schools of thought use the concept of imperialism to describe a system of domination and subordination organised with an imperial centre over a periphery (Said, 1994), and see contemporary processes of economic globalisation in the context of centuries of colonial and post-colonial exploitation. Subaltern studies seek to give voice to those who are socially, politically and geographically outside of a 'hegemonic' power structure. The term subaltern is derived from Antonio Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony, which described how some people were excluded from having a voice in their society. Similarly, post-colonial scholarship has described how Western intellectuals demote other, non-Western (African, Asian, Middle Eastern) forms of knowing to the margins, by suggesting they are unscientific, idiosyncratic, folklore

or myth (Sharp, 2008). Such scholars show how, in order to be heard and known, the oppressed have had to adopt Western ways of reasoning and language. In a related vein, post-development theory (also anti-development) posits that the whole concept of international development is a reflection of, and project for, Western hegemony over the rest of the world (Sidaway, 2007).

These broad frameworks rarely find an audience within business or management schools around the world, with a typical response being that they sound political and impractical to matters of business and management. However, they provide frameworks for understanding the economic and political contexts for companies and organisations, including the crucial matter of where power and profit accrues. The view that business and management schools and scholarship are focused on technical issues without a political framework does not mean that such a framework does not exist but that it is being assumed. Revealed assumptions embedded in discourses should be a basic element of any educational process. Thus, critical perspectives on the nature of international relations over time provide a theoretical frame around managerialism, where it could be seen as one discoursal element of Western hegemony, an Imperialist Managerialism. As such, some scholars may see it as natural to challenge leadership discourses connected to managerialism due to their own commitment to the protection or advancement of certain non-Western places or an internationalist support for the dignity of all. It means that challenging econophonic and potensiphonic language in leadership studies is an emancipatory activity, and key in order to 'nurture reciprocal, sustaining relationships among people and between humans and nature' (Evans, 2011).

New Directions in Critical Leadership Studies

Although the utility of leadership studies in creating positive social change has been seriously questioned by CLS, the field of leadership studies and leadership development could offer a space to explore many theories of positive change in ways that could be acted upon by individuals in professional contexts. It is important therefore to note that whilst we have seen swathes of researchers and theorists critiquing mainstream conceptualisations of leadership – heroic, dominant and authoritarian forms – there has been less written on concrete, practical and actionable alternatives to this.

More recently, there has been a move within CLS to progress from critique and opposition to *proposing* new, alternative, sustainable forms of social organisation and leadership. Western, for example, suggests that 'critical theorists must go beyond identifying 'bad leadership practice' and aim to create and support successful ethical frameworks for leadership' (2008: 21), 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).This can be aligned with the move toward 'critical performativity' (Spicer et al, 2009; Alvesson and Spicer, 2012) within CLS, which aims to simultaneously critique and dismantle 'existing managerial approaches, but also [to] try to construct new and hopefully more liberating ways of organising' (Spicer et al, 2009: 555). In their writings, Alvesson and Spicer promote openness of thinking amongst critical researchers, particularly focusing on the need for an *affirmative* stance, and emphasising present and future *potentialities*. In regard to the former, it is suggested that rather than *only* presenting a one-sided case against the dark side of leadership practice, scholars should instead seek to find new ways of engaging with leadership discourses. One method of achieving this, perhaps, is through exploring existing alternatives; 'creat[ing] a sense of what could be' and demonstrating that 'leadership can play an important role in facilitating progressive social change' (Alvesson and Spicer, 2012: 337-381) - in order to produce useful, relevant, and actionable knowledge that can practically aid actors in their internal organising and goals, and constructing more socially sustainable forms of leadership. In fact, the authors note that a performative engagement with the phenomenon of leadership involves drawing out its 'emancipatory potential'; that is, showing that it can be 'compatible with emancipatory goals' (2012: 368-369).

Few have taken on this task empirically and theoretically but attention to the area is increasing, and recent years have seen various leadership researchers exploring the myriad organisational alternatives that currently exist and that work. By-and-large, this movement has been born from the discussions around the development of more relational forms of leadership which are based around participatory democracy and the de-differentiation of leaders and followers (Gordon, 2010; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Bolden, 2003; Sutherland et al, 2014), as opposed to the power-laden forms promoted by mainstream leadership texts. Some research and training from the deeper sides of the collective leadership field pursues this agenda, predominantly from work with the non profit and local government sectors (Ospina and Foldy, 2015).

Some research on social movement organisations is taking this agenda further still. For example, Sutherland et al (2014) explore how activists are working toward constructing socially sustainable forms of organisation that do not rely on individual leaders, but are rather built upon the radically democratic values of participation, decentralisation mutual aid and cooperation. Doing so, it is proposed, enables an avoidance of the problems associated with relying on single, fixed, individual leaders, and toward more sustainable processes, where domination, exploitation and manipulation

are minimised, and instead all organisational actors are involved and 're-skilled' (Gemmill and Oakley, 1992).

Examining these kinds of alternatives, arguably, allows the potential for thinking about 'creating new forms of organisation'; 'creating and enacting networks based on principles of sustainable democracy' in order to 'reinvent daily life as a whole' (Graeber, 2008: 45). By eschewing and 'un-learning' (Grey, 2009; Kramer, 2012) the taken-for-granted assumption that leadership and hierarchy are synonymous, inevitable and natural (Fournier and Grey, 2000), and opening up discussions around the potential for different types of leadership, it is possible that more sustainable, equitable and compassionate forms of organisation can be developed (Raelin, 1993). This practical shift to emancipatory leadership repositions leadership as a potential modality of and for participatory democracy (Gastil, 1983; Starhawk, 1990).

This emphasis on collective deliberation does not imply that there aren't important questions of legitimacy concerning who is able to discuss what, when and with what consequence. For instance, there must be limits on the extent of distributed, emergent, and episodic leadership in government bureaucracies. Otherwise, government organisations might overly respond to the cultural and class biases and interest of their staff, rather than elected officials and the public. Cultures of horizontal democratic deliberation within organisations need to be conscious of their accountabilities and mandates (Ospina and Foldy, 2015).

An emphasis on collective deliberation does not imply a lesser importance for some individual's creative and contrarian ideas and advocacy. Neither does it imply that there are not certain individuals more able to develop and advocate such insights than others. However, it does mean that a collective context gave rise to an individual's ideas and that collectives need to be engaged in the further deliberation and decision-making about them. If a person becomes recognised as a "thought leader", this does not mean they are the arbiter of all new ideas related to those they became known for, or that all their views are significant. Acts of thought leadership are episodic and not guaranteed for life. Some may wonder whether this emphasis on democractic approaches to organisations and leadership is relevant in the non-Western context. The origins of contemporary democratic thought are widely regarded to be derived from Western traditions, although there are antecedents of the principle of self-governance in many cultures worldwide. Moreover, post-colonial nations may have more recent memories of the struggle for liberty. The Malaysian politician and scholar Anwar Ibrahim (1996) has reflected on these various traditions and reminds us that the struggles against colonialism in Asia and that 'independence would not have been possible without the prior cultivation of the spirit of liberty and nurturing of the aspiration for a just social order.' One

of the most eloquent summaries of the interface between rationalism, freedom, spirituality and progress was made by Filipino José Rizal in 1883, when he told a Spanish audience that 'humanity will not be redeemed while reason is not free, while faith would want to impose itself against the facts, while whims are laws and where there are nations that subjugate others.' He echoed the unequivocal declaration of Pi i Margall, President of the first Spanish Republic in 1873: 'Every man who has power over another is a tyrant' (Margall, 1854). Democracy was thriving in many countries in the East before it was established in Spain. Therefore we agree with Ibrahim's assertion that "it is altogether shameful, if ingenious, to cite Asian values as an excuse for autocratic practices and denial of basic rights and civil liberties. To say that freedom is Western or un-Asian is to negate our own traditions, as well as our forefathers who gave their lives in the struggle against tyranny and injustice." It is an accusation that can be widely applied. Mouer and Sugimoto (1986) argued that, in post-war Japan, pre-modern cultural remnants were deployed, although not wholly successfully, in evidence against democratic and equalitarian social relations. Ibrahim (1996) argued that even the religion most often cited as justifying forms of hierarchy, Confucianism, does not provide a rebuttal of the need for personal freedom. Confucius advocated the primacy of the self, the individual and the community as *sine qua non* for human flourishing. In Latin America there is a strong tradition of liberation theology and liberatory education (Freire, 1970), which has influenced political movements as well as civil society and some entrepreneurs (Rowland, 2007).

The reconstitution of leadership as a matter of enabling legitimate and effective collective action raises a central question for future work on leadership and its development: 'what kind of intervention by an individual serves to improve collective deliberation, decision-making and policy-making without undue reliance on positional authority and without concretising into the performance of an extended semi-informal leadership role'? The issue is then to explore how to research answers to such questions and how to promote such behaviours through education and training.

On methodology, CLS invites a broader range of methods than the reductionist, deterministic or narrowly empiricist science that dominate many of the top management journals. Methods such as critical discourse analysis (Philipps and Jorgensen, 2002), action research (Torbert, 1972, 1991), Argyris et al, 1985; Argyris and Schon, 1996), and auto-ethnography are welcomed as well as a greater focus on how to study effective pedagogy. Therefore the implications of CLS for training and education are beginning to be discussed (Bendell and Little, 2015; Collinson and Tourish, 2015). At a minimum, Collinson and Tourish (2015) recommend that leadership courses include content relevant to CLS, such as the deconstruction of leadership reviewed in this paper, sociology of power

and the dynamics of followership. They also recommend drawing upon insights from non-corporate leaders and forms of leadership, including that within non-profit organisations and activist networks. They question the continued uncritical use of existing content in case studies that while encouraging student discussion frame issues within the context of assuming corporate purpose and leader salience. Like most contemporary post graduate educators, they encourage reflective dialogue amongst participants in learning.

At the Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS), some of the postgraduate qualifications are designed on the basis of CLS. Therefore studying 'leadership' is understood as providing participants with opportunities for personal development and enhancing capabilities for contributing to legitimate and significant change, all in the context of contemporary challenges of society, economy and the environment. That necessarily involves a sober analysis of what has and has not been achieved via business leadership for the common good in the past twenty years, in the context of the history of capitalism and globalisation. The aim of these courses is not for participants to know the kind of ideas and literatures in this paper, but to support them to better take acts of leadership for the common good, create organisational cultures and processes that enable others to do the same, and, for some, understand how to deliver educational experiences that resonate with these ideas. There is a strong emphasis on enabling critical consciousness, reflective practice and unlearning assumptions that may arise from everyday life. Therefore experiential learning is used, with various processes, role-plays and games. Not all education is classroom-based, as nature-based and heritage-based experiences, are believed to be helpful in enabling participants to let go of preoccupations from their typical routines, to expand their sense of connection to time and space, and thus more easily unlearn limiting assumptions. A Harvard-style classroom, with little or no natural light, would be anathema to this form of learning, as would aggressive timetabling or volume of homework (Bendell and Little, 2015). One of the lessons for this approach to education is that non-Western Universities could increasingly look to their local heritage, environment and organisations, to find ways of weaving them in to the educational process in both content and location.

The Need for Critical Leadership in the Global South

We did not conduct a literature review of non-Western leadership scholarship for this paper, as it is just our first step in opening a dialogue for a more critical internationalist approach to leadership scholarship. Therefore we will have overlooked some relevant leadership scholarship from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Given experience in teaching many African executives, we are aware of

some of the critique by African scholars that Western management and leadership education and practices is a contemporary manifestation of Western hegemony (Mbigi, 2005). As critical social theory is an important aspect of non-Western scholarship on society, culture, economics and politics (as we described earlier), we anticipate a diverse range of critical leadership scholarship from the non-Western world to exist or be about to flourish.

In the African context, Vanessa Iwowo (2015) calls for more creative interplay between ideas and approaches that are indigenous to Africa, and what is globally popular, whether Western-originated or not. Additional to that we recommend a critical perspective, so that all ideas are deconstructed with a view to reveal the interests they may or may not be serving. Iwowo (2015) warns against a form of self-orientalism, whether that is either a superficial local cultural dressing to a western main course or romanticising what is considered indigenous to a place or culture. All identities are socially constructed and involve imaginary boundaries. We should avoid the trap of describing regions or concepts like 'East' and 'West' as entirely separate and internally coherent entities, as by distinguishing one from the other we may deny aspects of both that are universal, and restrict their identity to past forms, rather than an unfolding of possibilities.

Though we did not review Asian leadership scholarship for this paper, the risks of self-orientalism may be evident in some of the more prominent work called "paternalistic leadership," which has been "claimed to be one dominant leadership style in Asia... [with] elements of authoritarian, benevolent, and moral character leadership... [It] combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity couched in a personalized atmosphere" (Cheng et al, 2014: 82). As a framework, Paternalistic Leadership is even claimed to have "offered a comprehensive understanding of leadership outside the Western world" (ibid). Its occurrence is often argued to be a cultural reality rather than a socially constructed concept that serves some interests and not others. This view is sometimes aided by recourse to religion: "paternalistic leadership in East Asia is rooted in Confucian philosophy shared by many East Asian cultures" (Cheng, et al, 2014: 83). Given our earlier mention of Confucianism and "Asian values" not necessarily implying uncontested hierarchies in society, we could question whether the practice and concept of "paternalistic leadership" is more rooted in existing power hierarchies and the proximity of researchers to elites in those hierarchies. Thus CLS might provide useful new perspectives on the "paternal" discourses expressed by researchers and those researched, including who and what may be served by dominant discourses.

A new trend beginning to be described by sociologists is relevant here, and may provide a perspective for future study. It is the view that there are multiple sources, across time and place, of ideas about 'progress' and of the 'good' in life, and so there is a value in a conscious mixing of such

multiple ideas (old and new, East and West, North and South), to embody and enable more conscious living and working:

'This belief system shares with Modernism the idea that societies can and should progress, that greater knowledge is part of that progress, and that personal emancipation is part of such progress. However, it rejects assumptions of one form of linear progress or one positivist approach to knowledge. In that, this world-view shares with Postmodernism a more plural view of knowledge. However, it moves beyond critique, or the nihilism that can arise from a rejection of progress, or an over-reliance on irony in communication. Instead, it seeks a mixing of multiple ideas about progress and knowledge for a useful social purpose. One term for this worldview can be 'transmodernism.'' (Bendell and Thomas, 2014).

Enrique Dussel draws on anti-imperialist traditions to articulate a view of this transmodernism where public and intellectual attitudes embrace spirituality, diversity, ecology and interconnectedness, with some evidence this is gaining currency in Latin American sociology (Cole, 2007). The benefit of transmodernism is that is recognises that ideas that are labelled 'Western' or 'modern' have a valuable though partial place in our current understanding of life.

There are some clear implications for leadership in Asia and beyond. It suggests that leadership scholars in Asia can reject the temptation to add to the mainstream Western model of heroic, rational, individualistic and hierarchical nature of leadership, with some a few cultural memes that suit elites, such as deference or graciousness. They can also reject an acceptance of corporations as the supreme universal institution for organising affairs. They can approach the huge diversity of cultural traditions and philosophies across Asia with a critical and creative curiosity that does not romanticise nor juxtapose with the West. The Vedic and Daoist traditions have great depth for exploring multiple transmodern Asian forms of leadership. The work of Lee et al (2008) in exploring implications of Daoist teachings for life and leadership shows the potential of this field.

This approach is partially mobilised in recent work on world or worldly leadership (Turnbull, et al 2012), as differentiated from global leadership (Osland et al, 2014). The latter approach has grown out of the interest of global corporations to better enable their senior managers to operate internationally. That has resulted, thus far, in a minimal questioning of purpose and authority or the salience of leadership in shaping outcomes. The last paragraph from the editors of a 2014 volume on Global Leadership research stated the need for a more socially engaged approach:

'There has been growing recognition of the need for global leaders to deal with the complex challenges currently facing the public, private, and non-profit sectors. The field of global leadership

will become even more important in light of the complicated global problems looming on the horizon. We have a responsibility to help prepare global leaders who are equipped to resolve thorny issues, such as water scarcity, rising sea levels, pollution, pandemics, income inequality, to name just a few, that have the potential to impact all three sectors and a large part of the globes population' (Osland et al 2014, p 373-374).

Time will tell whether, in the face of such global challenges that often have been accentuated by the senior management they analyse and enable, whether global leadership scholars will consider their field to have reached an impasse. If not, we may see the problematic extension of managerialism into efforts at creating social change for the common good. In explaining the need for a different approach to leadership in order to address contemporary sustainable development challenges Bendell and Little (2015) argue:

'[W]e should not simply seek to add more sustainability to leadership or add more leadership to sustainability, but challenge assumptions about 'leadership' that have added to the persistent social and environmental problems we experience today.'

We recognise the paradox of, on the one hand, our intention to reduce the unhelpful influence of mainstream western scholarship and discourse on leadership, while drawing on lots of western scholarship to make our case. Yet it is paralleled by union activists, for instance, who live in the West and act in solidarity with non -Western activists to challenge the activities of Western corporations around the world. Having recognised the paradox, we now extend it by making suggestions for the future of non-Western research into leadership and its development:

1. If you intend comparative study, to test, apply or adapt a mainstream Western leadership concept in a non-Western context, then seek to do so in a way that does not accept the terms as assumed in the original theory but question them as part of the research.
2. Consider testing, applying or adapting concepts from the field of Critical Leadership Studies.
3. Consider greater transdisciplinary research, drawing upon humanities, philosophy, social psychology, sociology, and development studies, as well as non-Western cultural ideas, in exploring the ideas that lie underneath the label leadership such as matters of identity, purpose, power, and change.
4. Given that it has developed from a predominant focus on international corporations and associated Western assumptions about leadership, avoid conflating research on 'global leadership' with the goal of balancing leadership research with non-Western approaches,

and approach inter-cultural issues without a sole focus on supporting international corporations.

5. Given that concepts like Eastern, Western, Asian, African, Latin, and so forth, are social constructions from centuries of political processes, avoid a preoccupation with defining any essential nature of leadership in any of these contexts, such as traits of 'Asian Leadership.' (For instance, this paper demonstrates that Western scholarship on leadership involves both corporatist and critical approaches, and only uses the term Western to enter conversations with leadership scholars from around the world, rather than define any essential nature of Western leadership).

6. Develop and promote academic journals that are not owned and edited by West-based or West-educated people and organisations and seek to profile research on matters of management and leadership that have their conceptual bases in knowledge from diverse traditions and disciplines.

7. Avoid the temptation of approaching research with the prime concern of career-development and instead seek to explore meaning and arrive at significant insights for supporting emancipation of yourself and those you identify with or wish to support.

Critically Assessing Leadership Advice or Training

The arguments in this paper may seem challenging to operationalise. To help we have developed a 'Critical Leadership Lens' to support people who procure or receive advice or training on leadership. It provides 10 questions that can be asked of any leadership training or advice in order to expose any restrictive or unsustainable assumptions or assertions. The aim is to help inform choices on leadership development offerings and providers as well as improve the Leadership Development Programmes (LDPs) that may already be underway, by informing evaluations of them. This framework is not intended as a full evaluation framework, as it focuses on questions arising specifically from Critical Leadership Studies and the implied unsustainable assumptions of much leadership praxis and its development.

The scoring system offered in the 'Critical Leadership Lens' is not an endorsement of reductionist approaches to evaluation, but aims to trigger insights and discussion on the merits or otherwise of existing leadership advice and training that is likely influence by the flawed Western mainstream we have described in this paper.

How does the leadership advice or training…	Not At All (0)	Mentioned (1)	Addressed (2)	Integrated as Key (3)
Make clear the differences between a leader and leadership?				
Make clear the need for, and availability of, evidence for its propositions?				
Explore the relationship between leadership and various factors in organisational and social change?				
Make explicit the need to develop understanding of group dynamics and processes for effective collaboration?				
Make explicit the complex responsibilities and pitfalls that arise from enhancing one's confidence and one's ability to gain others' confidence?				
Seek to develop critical consciousness, by helping us understand the social and cultural processes that shape our sense of self and society, including assumptions around normality, success, legitimacy and progress?				
Incorporate diverse philosophical traditions and perspectives on how to approach life, and the implications for work?				
Respond to the predicament of humanity and the planet today?				
Mobilise multiple ways of knowing and experiencing, to help insights emerge from outside the normal routines of life and work?				
Heighten our ability to reflect on our praxis to learn, unlearn and change in an ongoing way?				
TOTAL OUT OF 30:				

Total less than 10 = the leadership ideas or trainings are fundamentally flawed and possibly could be counter-productive to the person, organisation and wider community.

Total less than 20 = the leadership ideas or trainings contain a range of assumptions that will limit their positive impact on the person, organisation and wider community.

Total more than 20 = the leadership ideas or trainings are likely to support personal and professional development and practice, depending on content and mode of delivery.

Conclusions

The future of leadership scholarship, advice and education in parts of the non-Western world, including within Asia, can benefit from responding the growing recognition of an impasse in the mainstream of work on leadership that has been highly influenced by Western traditions and contemporary Western examples. The field of Critical Leadership Studies (CLS) provides crucial insight for helping non-Western scholars to avoid some of the mistakes of the mainstream. It suggests that such scholars do not uncritically adopt or adapt concepts on leadership from the Western-framed mainstream. Contextualising contemporary management discourses, including discourses on leadership, within historical processes of imperialism and colonialism can provide additional depth and relevance to the critiques from CLS. Interactions between the more radical of the "collective leadership" scholars, particularly drawing from non profit, social movement and community arenas, and CLS scholars working on critically-informed leadership development, could help break the Impasse in Western Leadership outlined in this paper. The implications for the future of research and education on leadership in both the non-Western and Western contexts are many, and involve quite different approaches than those adopted by mainstream business schools at this time. Therefore, to enable a rapid integration of these critiques in the evaluation and improvement of leadership research, advice or education, a Critical Leadership Lens is offered. The paper hopefully enables more interaction between CLS scholars in the West and leadership scholars worldwide.

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