

# Towards a Vision of Integral Leadership

## A QUADRIVIAL ANALYSIS OF EIGHT LEADERSHIP BOOKS

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This article presents a unique Integral research method using Integral Theory's quadrants to conduct literature reviews. In particular, I apply this method to analyze eight popular books on leadership. In so doing I am able to identify the quadrant focus to determine which aspect(s) of reality these books privilege. As a result of this thorough analysis the behavioral and systemic focus of the field of leadership is revealed and a vision of Integral leadership is highlighted. In conclusion this article discusses the reasons underlying the results as well as the implications they have on our collective understanding of leadership.

### Introduction

If anything can be said for certain about leadership it is that there are as many definitions of leadership as there are leaders and as many leadership frameworks as leadership writers. Leadership definitions are simple statements that encapsulate the core beliefs, values, and attitudes a person holds towards leadership. As such, their range of meaning is vast. According to Fred Kofman, "Leadership is a process by which a person sets a purpose for others to follow and motivates them to pursue it with effectiveness and full commitment."<sup>1</sup> For John Maxwell, leadership is defined simply as influence.<sup>2</sup> Peter Senge maintains if an organization is a ship the leader is not the captain, nor the navigator but rather the designer of that ship.<sup>3</sup> Jim Collins takes a different approach and defines leadership as what a leader does: maintains persistence, overcomes obstacles, attracts dedicated people, influences people towards goal achievement, and guides their companies through crucial episodes in their history.<sup>4</sup> With four leaders providing four different definitions—leadership as influence, leadership as an activity, leadership as design, and leadership as a process—it should come as little surprise that aspiring leaders are often left questioning which definition is right, which they should follow, and which they should seek to embody.

A similar discordant range of content is found in leadership frameworks as well. As such, they offer little assistance with a leader's questions. A leadership framework is an orienting map that describes the territory and work of leaders. If a leadership definition answers the question, "What is leadership?" a leadership framework, as commonly conceived, would address the question, "How do I actualize and embody that definition?" Senge's answer is the Fifth Discipline, a framework based primarily on systems thinking and used by leaders to develop a learning organization.<sup>5</sup> Daniel Goleman, who believes leadership is a primal, emotion-engaging affair, guides leaders with his emotional intelligence framework.<sup>6</sup> Bill Torbert postulates action inquiry—the practice of simultaneously conducting inquiry and productive action—as the secret to transformational leadership.<sup>7</sup> Again, leaders are left wondering which framework is best, which is right for them, and which should they implement.

The short answer is all of them. In the spirit of American philosopher Ken Wilber, it is more exact to say that each of them is true but also partial.<sup>8</sup> Over the last thirty years, Wilber has engaged in a process of integrating the enduring truths of seemingly disparate knowledge areas into an integral framework that honors partial truths and jettisons absolutistic claims and fallacies. His framework, called AQAL (pronounced “ah-qwul”), an acronym derived from “all-quadrants, all-levels,” consists of five core elements: quadrants, levels, lines, states, and types.<sup>9</sup> This article puts forth the quadrant component of the AQAL framework as the ideal foundation upon which a truly integrated framework for leaders can be built. It will be shown that the quadrants are the ideal basis for a concise yet inclusive map of the complex realities facing leaders as they navigate the territory of personal, interpersonal, and professional leadership. Not only are the quadrants a map but they can be a method used to analyze which perspectives are present in a context. In this case I use them to examine the popular literature of leadership.

This article assumes a working knowledge of the quadrants component of the AQAL framework on the part of the reader. If this is not the case, please refer to *An Introduction to Integral Theory and Practice* and *The Integral Vision*, both by Ken Wilber, for a thorough overview.<sup>10</sup> After briefly highlighting the important distinction between quadrants and quadrivia, we will turn to the results of a line-by-line quadrivial analysis of eight top leadership books. Then, after demonstrating the degree to which authors tend to privilege only certain aspects of reality, a discussion of the results offers insight into why leadership frameworks are less than fully inclusive of the quadratic nature of reality and what impact that has on our collective view of leadership. A future article will propose a functional definition of leadership, distinguish it from management, and build a leadership framework founded on the quadrant and level elements of the AQAL framework.

## Quadrants and Quadrivia

While often looked at singularly, it is of crucial importance to acknowledge that the quadrants arise simultaneously as four fundamental aspects of an individual’s being-in-the-world—the interior and exterior of their individual and collective dimensions. They tetra-arise in every moment as the four fundamental dimension of every event or occasion with each individual’s being intimately touching these four aspects of reality. Put differently, these four domains, or quadrants are the fundamental dimensions of any event or occasion. Alternately, an individual can look through the four quadrant-perspectives at any aspect of reality. Whether that aspect of reality is another person, an object, or an ecosystem, it can be looked at through the four quadrants. When this approach is undertaken, it is referred to as using *quadrivia* (quadrivia being the plural, or a singular *quadrivium* when the individual is referring to only one of the quadrant-perspectives). This distinction between quadrants and quadrivia may seem subtle, but it is of significant importance as illustrated by the following example.

Consider a CEO and leader of a midsize consulting firm who is thinking of a change to the company’s intellectual property policy, which would no longer allow employees joint ownership rights to new material that they have developed for use with company clients. Under the current policy, the company maintains all rights to material that it has developed for employee use, and joint ownership rights with employees for material developed by any employee. The proposed change came after market analysis revealed a substantial loss in market share to the company’s

primary competitor. Over the last three years several key employees left the company, became employed with the competitor, and exercised their rights to use some of the company's most successful programs, which were developed prior to their resignations. In facing this decision, the CEO first considers the quadrant-perspectives to ensure he is aware of all factors influencing his decision.

In looking through the Upper-Left (UL) quadrivium at how affected individuals may feel about this policy, he considers the personal perspectives and feelings of individual employees, members on his executive team, and the HR director.<sup>11</sup> Looking through the Lower Left (LL), he considers how the change might affect the company culture, including the different views held by the HR department, consultants, legal and executive teams. He also considers how the industry might view the suggested change. Through the Upper Right (UR), he considers the actions of the HR director that will be required to draft new contracts and announce the policy. And, through the Lower Right (LR), he considers the impact this change might have on employee retention and recruitment. Additionally, he reflects on both the wording of the new contracts and the likelihood of this shift leading to litigation. As one might expect, this is just a partial list of contributing factors meant only to illustrate the nature of applying a quadrivial analysis to a decision.

Next, the CEO considers the quadrant-dimensions: the aspects of himself arising in each of the quadrants. In the UL quadrant, he notices that his feelings are torn regarding this potential change. He feels strongly both that the company needs to protect itself and wrong about no longer supporting a progressive policy that he knows attracted top talent only years prior. In the UR, he sees the actions of others he must take into consideration regarding the change. Regardless of whether he supports the change or not, he will need to correspond, both in person and through e-mail, with legal, HR, and consultants. He also considers that he will most likely be the one to make the announcement and to field any resulting malcontent. In his LL, he feels the intersubjective resonance that as leader of the company he must support if the executive team's push to institute the policy change is going to succeed. In the LR, he experiences the many ways his position fits within the organizational hierarchy, such that the new policy cannot be implemented without his full backing. By completing a scan of the quadrant-dimensions arising in himself, others, and the organization, the CEO has a better, more inclusive understanding of the factors affecting the decision at hand.

This distinction between quadrants as perspectives (quadrivia) and quadrants as dimensions (quadrants) is an important one. The methodology presented here can use either or both in its analysis of textual content. For my purposes I have focused primarily on quadrants as perspectives, in part because a quadrivial analysis lends itself more easily to the study of an artifact such as a book or article. In contrast, a quadrant analysis has to be done on an individual holon (e.g., either myself or the author of a text). Such an analysis while interesting would not serve my purposes of examining the field of leadership.

## **A Map of the Leader's Territory**

Just as a leader of a mountaineering expedition relies on a territorial map to tell them where they are going, executive leaders rely on business maps to give them an orienting perspective to their

complex organizational environments. These maps take many forms: stock analysis, a market report, an organizational culture survey, or the hottest new leadership framework; yet they are functionally the same. Maps are symbolic representations of reality meant to communicate a distillation of complexity in a fashion that is summarizing, yet holistic and intuitive, without being overly simplistic. Ultimately, maps give leaders a picture of an important territory; be it the mountains, the market, or the complex territory of leadership itself. The quadrants component of the AQAL Integral framework is such map. But instead of being a representation of merely “culture building” or “employee motivation,” it is a map of the most essential and inclusive territory the leader encounters: self, other, and organization. The quadrants provide leaders with the most intuitive map of the most complex territory that they will face. Navigating the realm of psychology, behavior, culture, and society without such a map is doomed to a partial and ultimately less effective understanding of exactly what the leader is bound to encounter each and every day.

The quadrants represent the territory arising in those whom they lead, the organization in which the leadership is taking place, and in the leader themselves. They are fundamental, universal perspectives that cannot be escaped, sidestepped, overlooked, or otherwise not taken account of. A truly integral leader would not venture into this territory without a truly integral map, the first component of which would be the quadrants. Unfortunately, all too often, leaders work off less than complete maps, which guide them through less than complete investigations of the four worlds of leadership.

The following section details a quadrivial analysis of eight top leadership books that have presented leaders with maps aimed at helping them navigate the multifaceted territory of leadership. The study was not undertaken in hopes of finding articulations of the quadrants. Rather, because the quadrants represent fundamental aspects of reality, it was believed that all writings on leadership would touch, more or less, on every quadrant. The question was to what degree these leadership theorists covered the four irreducible aspects of a leader’s territory. It should be noted that while the Integral method introduced here is aimed at textual analysis it can be used by Integral researchers in other contexts.

## **A Quadrivial Analysis of Eight Popular Books on Leadership**

### **Overview of Research Questions and Methodology**

The quadrivial analysis was aimed at uncovering the degree to which popular leadership books focus on the four aspects of reality. Where do they focus the majority of their attention? Do they privilege certain quadrant-perspectives? Do they posit some facets of reality as more fundamental or important than others? If so, what might the consequences be if these books are taken as definitive maps describing the territory of leadership? Or, put differently, what features of reality have these books led readers to believe are most important? Lastly, the essence of this study was to get both a quantitative and qualitative perspective on where popular leadership literature stood in respect to the four quadrants. It was not, however, an attempt to gauge how well these books incorporated or discussed the other components of the AQAL framework.

The following books were analyzed for this study:

- *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap . . . and Others Don't* by Jim Collins
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change* by Stephen R. Covey
- *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* by Peter M. Senge
- *Leadership without Easy Answers* by Ronald A. Heifetz
- *Action Inquiry: The Secrets of Timely and Transforming Leadership* by Bill Torbert and Associates
- *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World* by Margaret J. Wheatley
- *Leadership and Self Deception: Getting Out of the Box* by The Arbing Institute
- *Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee

Barrett Brown, a colleague of mine at Integral Institute, developed the methodology used in this study when he pioneered this technique for a similar research study concerning popular sustainability literature.<sup>12</sup> The methodology is straightforward. I analyzed each line in every book while keeping track of which quadrants were being focused on. Afterwards, I divided the total number of quadrant references per book by the total number of lines to arrive at the percentage of lines referring to each quadrant. When assigning a quadrant to any particular line, it is important to distinguish which aspect of the statement is being analyzed. As Brown notes—drawing on Sean Esbjörn-Hargens's Who x How x What formula—it is the

ontological aspect of each statement: the “what” which is being focused on. I avoided trying to interpret the epistemological aspect (“who” was doing the looking: the author's worldview) and the methodological aspect (“how” sustainability was being perceived: with what methodology).<sup>13</sup>

To determine which quadrant any sentence should be assigned, I posed simple questions: “What aspect of reality is this sentence focusing on? Is it the interior or exterior? Then, is it the individual or collective?” These questions are repeated line-by-line, page-by-page, until totals are reached. In so doing, I am “looking at” the sentence to determine which quadrant it is focused on. Thereby making this a quadrivial analysis opposed to a quadratic one wherein I would either focus on my own quadrant-dimensions or those of the author.

The following section presents the results of this study for each book. Special emphasis is placed on the way each author and their frameworks relate to the four worlds of leadership.

## *Good to Great* by Jim Collins

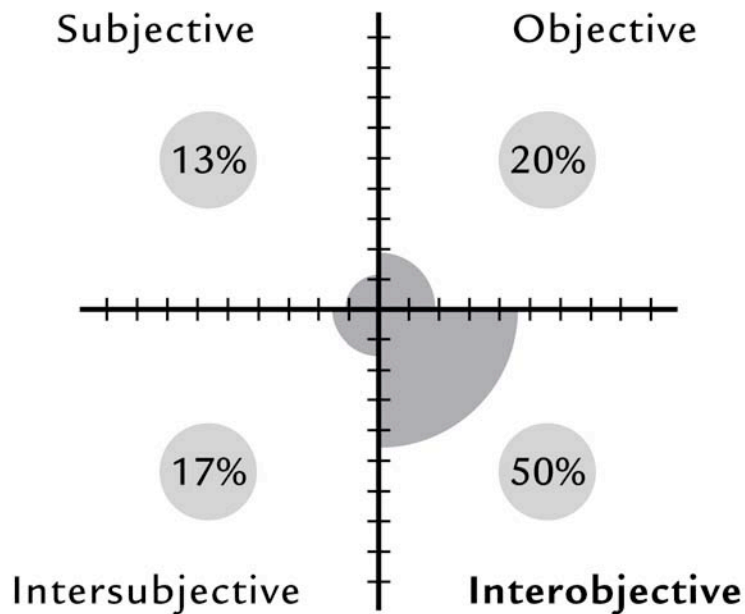


Figure 1. Quadrant Distribution for *Good to Great*

“Good is the enemy of great,” begins Jim Collins in *Good to Great*, his incredibly well-researched and thoroughly engaging book about how 11 companies outperformed the market by seven times during the 15-year period following their transitions from good companies to top performers.<sup>14</sup> Collins and his research team spent five years arriving at a three-stage, six-concept framework for helping leaders move their companies from good to great. After considering the quadrant distribution in figure 1, it is surprising to find a 50% focus on the Lower Right given that Collins’ stages 1 and 2—disciplined people and disciplined thought—are mostly UL and UR by nature.<sup>15</sup> Even more surprising is the fact that the UL and UR combined for only 33% of the focus.

In many ways, *Good to Great* is similar to Collins previous book, *Built to Last*, in that they are more a presentation of his research rather than an exploration of the steps a leader can take to make their company succeed.<sup>16</sup> This is true more so for *Built to Last*, but the 50% LR focus in *Good to Great* can be attributed to a similar research-based presentation that underemphasizes how to develop the leadership competencies needed to take a company to the level of great. For example, in concept 1 of stage 1, level 5 leaders are described as “a study in duality: modest and willful, humble and fearless.”<sup>17</sup> Collins describes two categories of people: those who have the potential to evolve into level 5 leaders and those who do not. He spends the majority of the chapter describing level five leaders found in his study rather than exploring the pathway of growth towards level 5 leadership abilities.

The same is found throughout the book. Almost exclusively, he presents on what great companies do, how they behave, how they use technology, how they create cultures of discipline

and less on how a striving leader can develop herself and her company towards greatness. This pervasive discussion of the actions of collectives accounts for the 50% LR focus. Research aside, Collins' presentation of the characteristics of great companies touches on every quadrant to some degree. He does not reduce one quadrant to another, nor does he posit one aspect of reality as more important or more fundamental. With this, Collins has done a decent job of exploring the four worlds of leadership. Why might this be? Well, with the quadrants being fundamental aspects of reality, and Collins starting first with research and not with a conceptual framework, he looked thoroughly at the territory as it arose for eleven companies and their leaders and saw it for what it was: a single reality with interiors and exteriors of individuals and collectives. Of course, he did not phrase it in such a manner, but he touched on the quadrants nonetheless.

***The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* by Stephen Covey**

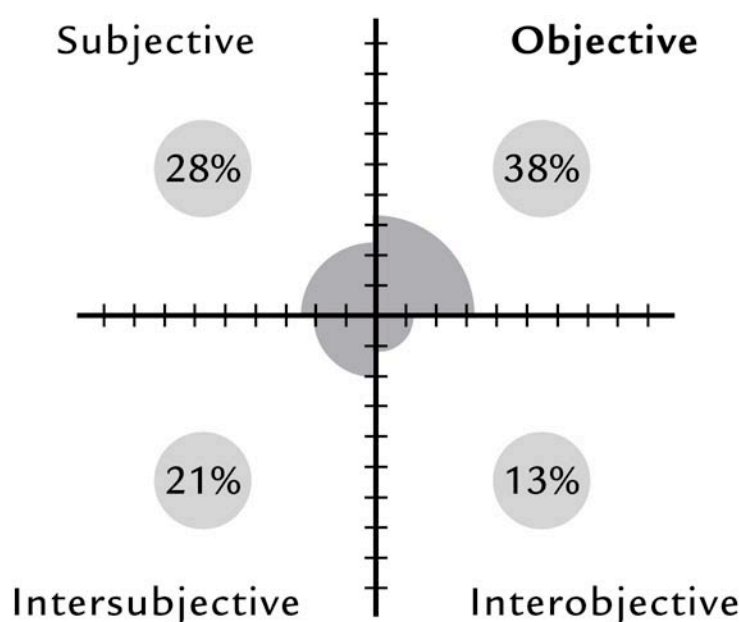


Figure 2. Quadrant Distribution for *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*

As one of the top-selling leadership books of all times, Stephen Covey's, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* was a must read for this study.<sup>18</sup> Covey is oftentimes written off as merely a pop writer, but with sales numbers over 15 million, this book has tremendous potential to influence the quadrant focus of aspiring leaders. Fortunately, this book features one of the most balanced treatments of the four worlds of leadership of any book in this study. This balance might be one of the reasons this book has been so well received. Covey's treatise, as the percentages in figure 2 show, covers the personal, behavioral, cultural and social aspects of personal growth and leadership. The slightly lower numbers in the collective quadrants result from Covey speaking primarily to and about individuals.

From the start, Covey's implicit intention to give a solid tour of the four worlds is made clear to informed readers. Everything from his treatment of the character versus personality ethic to his talk of bridging the gap between the way things are and the way we feel they should be, point in

this direction.<sup>19</sup> The seven habits are a quadratic tour as well: (1) personal vision, commitment, and being proactive (UL/UR); (2) personal mission and having a principle-focused center (UL); (3) organized and meaningful planning and action (UR); (4) personal interaction, intention, negotiating for win/win outcomes in relationships (LR, LL); (5) empathetic communication (LL, LR); (6) synergistic cooperation (LR); and (7) self-renewal (UL, UR).

Covey's work touches beautifully on many of the crucial aspects of the four worlds of leadership. However, the integration of his map could be well served by an added quadratic explicitness. His seven habits diagram is not much more than an abstract arrangement of one's progression through the habits. It has no theoretical basis and therefore does not hang together or communicate as coherently as it would if consideration were given to the meta-framework within which the seven habits operate. This critique aside, Covey's work demonstrates a solid understanding of the pieces of such a map. With his many decades of experience in personal and professional growth technologies, Covey covers the fundamental aspects of reality arising within him and each person he was worked with, even without explicitly naming the quadrants.

### ***The Fifth Discipline* by Peter Senge**

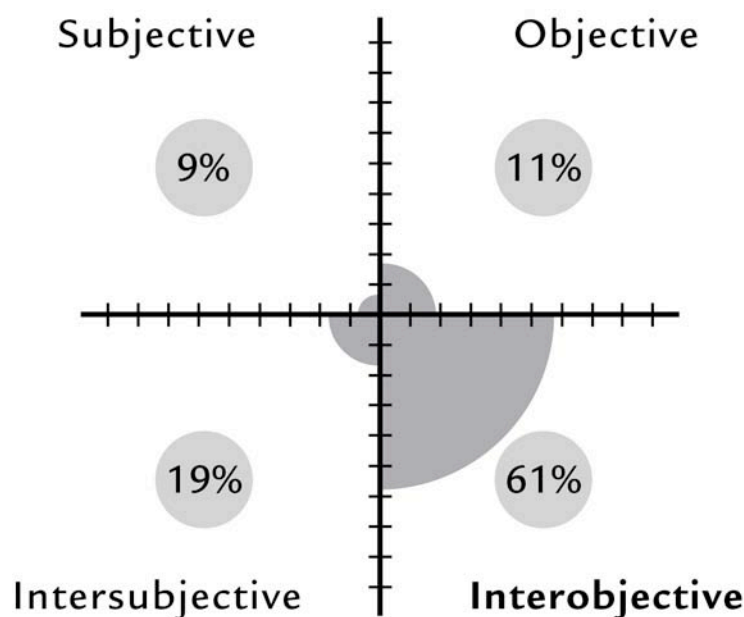


Figure 3. Quadrant Distribution for *The Fifth Discipline*

Subtle reductionism is the concept to describe the direction in which Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline*, steers its readers.<sup>20</sup> The book puts forth the LR quadrant, or systems, as more fundamental or more important than the other quadrants.<sup>21</sup> While *The Fifth Discipline* is far from the most extreme case of subtle reductionism, with 61% of the text focusing on the LR aspect of reality, Senge nevertheless sells readers an unbalanced map of the leader's territory. This is not to say that the book has nothing to offer. In fact, Senge's articulation of the system dynamics (LR) underlying organizational behavior is unsurpassed, and the lesson he teaches leaders is critical to an integrated approach to leadership. It just is not the final or only word.

From the outset, *The Fifth Discipline* appeared as if it would offer a more balanced, more quadratic perspective. Centered around five learning disciplines, Senge's map covers the quadrants quite well: systems thinking (LR, UR), personal mastery (UL, UR), mental models (LL, UL), building shared vision (LL), and team learning (LR). As it turns out, personal mastery gets covered in less than 10% of the book's total pages and the UL gets only 9% of the focus while systems thinking, on average, is covered about five times more thoroughly. While Senge shines in his explanation of how learning system archetypes trains one's ability to perceive the underlying structure of complex behaviors, he barely scratches the surface on how to develop the interior quadrants.<sup>22</sup> Personal mastery is defined as clarifying one's personal vision and learning to use creative tension—the gap between reality and our vision—to propel us towards that vision. Senge says leaders need to have personal mastery, which brings an increased sense of being-ness and awareness of the moment, but he does not indicate how to develop it. Learning system archetypes is put forth as chief in training a leader's awareness of the systems thinking discipline, but “commitment to the truth” is all the guidance readers get in developing personal mastery.<sup>23</sup> Nothing resembling a solid set of actionable practices is mentioned.

Building shared vision, or common direction and reason for being, is left in a similar predicament. Senge discusses why shared visions are important along with several types of enrollment and compliance, but the only mention of how to develop a shared vision is that they emerge from personal visions and that “personal mastery is the bedrock for developing shared visions.”<sup>24</sup> This presents an obvious problem. If the actions required to develop personal mastery are somewhat unclear and building shared vision relies upon them, then the issue is compounded in that leaders are left with helping a collective develop a core skill that is not fleshed out on the individual level. With only 19% of the focus and 8% of the pages, a fuller treatment of the LL is not to be expected.

Again, Senge's work with systems thinking is unsurpassed, but the book would be far more effective if it presented only that aspect of a leader's work. By presenting a map that covered the four worlds of leadership adequately and then spending the majority of the time discussing one, readers get the message that one world is more important. And they are getting this message from a map that claims to be holistic and complete. In the end, it is a case of an extremely valid and important partial truth trying to make itself appear like the whole truth. Unfortunately, readers who mistake a partial truth for something greater can be led to cease their explorations for a truly integral map of the leader's territory, leaving themselves with a fundamentally fragmented view.

### ***Leadership Without Easy Answers* by Ron Heifetz**

When discussing theories of leadership in his book *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, Ron Heifetz argues that traditional theories on leadership—trait, situational, and transactional approaches—claim to define leadership objectively, without value judgments, while in fact containing hidden value sets that lead to a host of potential implications.<sup>25</sup> Leadership, he says, is a normative idea, which represents a set of orienting values that vary across cultures.<sup>26</sup> Leadership engages our values and therefore should include them in theoretical descriptions. Towards this aim, he proposes a prescriptive definition of leadership which utilizes four criteria: (1) the definition must resemble current cultural assumptions, (2) it should be practical, (3) it

should point towards socially useful activities, and (4) the socially useful activities should be defined broadly.<sup>27</sup>

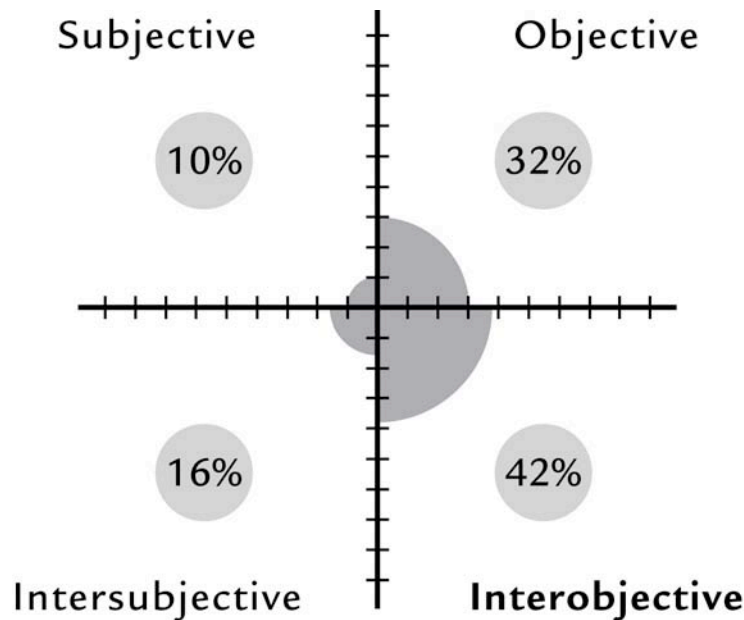


Figure 4. Quadrant Distribution for *Leadership Without Easy Answers*

Heifetz’s movement beyond traditional theories towards a prescriptive definition contributes directly to the book’s 74% Right-Hand quadrant focus (see figure 4). The book is primarily a historical account of great leaders’ actions throughout recent history. This is true to the extent that Heifetz only presents two core concepts: the difference between adaptive and technical challenges and leading with formal or informal authority. The remainder of the book is dedicated to a thorough and stimulating account of real leaders’ work in these areas. Such a reporting of individual’s actions while leading organizations, movements, and governments tends to have an almost exclusive “It/s” quadrant focus. The discussion of authority was mostly LL/LR while the discussion of technical challenge vs. adaptive challenge—the former defined as solving a problem that calls on already known skills, and the latter defined as one that requires learning or a change in values to solve—was primarily UR/UL in focus.

While *Leadership Without Easy Answers*, was not the most shining example of a balanced treatment of the four quadrants, what it did accomplish was equally important. It presented well the ideas that it sought to present. Unlike *The Fifth Discipline*, it did not overstep its bounds, it treated every aspect of the map it proposed as important, and it did not inadvertently make itself out to be more than it was. This book presents a partial picture of the four worlds of leadership, but it does so in a manner that demonstrates an implicit understanding that it is presenting a specialized albeit partial view. Contributing a piece to an Integral map without saying it is the entire Integral map is certainly commendable.

## *Action Inquiry* by Bill Torbert and Associates

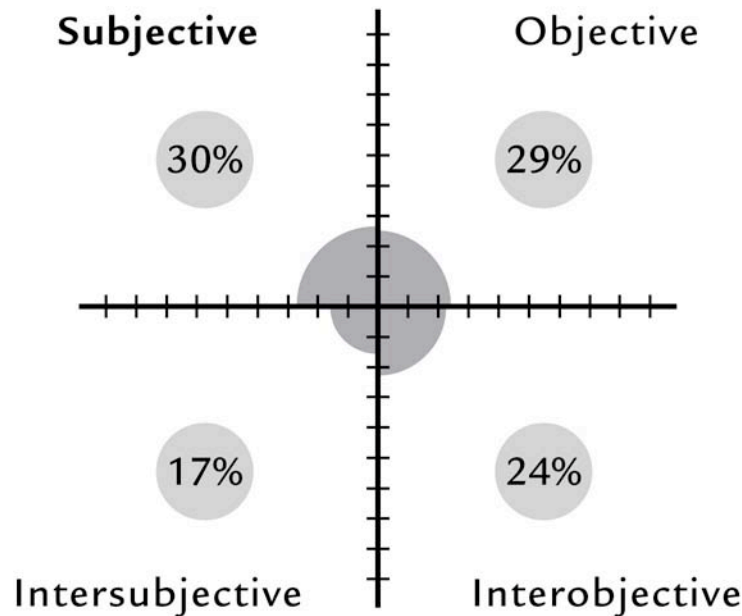


Figure 5. Quadrant Distribution for *Action Inquiry*

Action Inquiry—the practice of simultaneously conducting action and inquiry as a method to increase the effectiveness of our actions—as explained in Bill Torbert’s book by the same name, professes three primary aims that cover the quadrants in a balanced manner.<sup>28</sup> Integrity, the first aim, is generated by a continual inquiry into the gaps between the results we intended (UL) and the results our performance generated (UR). Mutuality, the second aim, is generated through inquiry into the play of power in relationships (LL) and creative actions (UR and LR) aimed at developing shared visions (LL), which can take place after the play of power is recognized. The third aim, sustainability, concerns the development of organizing structures (LR) like laws, policies, and networks, which encourage effectiveness, integrity, and mutuality.<sup>29</sup> These primary aims along with a defining quality—the desire to “...interweave subjective, intersubjective and objective data”—sets action inquiry apart from other leadership maps as one of the most quadratically explicit.

As the percentages in figure 5 contest, this introduction is only the beginning of *Action Inquiry*’s balanced exposition. The four worlds of leadership are adequately covered in the remainder of the book as well. The four territories of experience, while not a perfect quadratic expression, attempt to parse reality into experiential or lived aspects much like the quadrants as dimensions. Outside events (territory 1) focuses on the objective UR and LR aspects of reality; our sensed performance (territory 2) on our subjective (UL) sense of our objective (UR) actions; action logics, our developmentally unfolding ways of making meaning (territory 3), focuses on self-development (UL) and interpretation (LL); and intentional attention, what Torbert calls super-vision (fourth territory), focuses on our awareness of the other territories as they are unfolding. Integral Theory would distinguish between super-vision as a state and as a territory (i.e., stabilized trait). As Torbert explains it, the fourth territory explores UL phenomena.<sup>30</sup> This four-

territory framework extends to other parts of the book as awareness of it is operationalized in acts of speech. The four parts of speech—framing, advocating, illustrating, inquiring—draw their content from the four territories of experience—fourth, third, second, and first, respectively.<sup>31</sup>

The remainder of the book is an unparalleled account of both individual and organizational development through what Torbert calls action logics. In AQAL terms, the content of these chapters specifically concerns the levels component. But, since every quadrant unfolds in levels, Torbert’s discussion of individual developmental levels and their associated behaviors is an UL and UR affair, respectively. Organizational development unfolds in LR structures that correspond to a probability of finding particular LL shared beliefs at particular organizational structures. Again, as you see, the content of this book covers the four worlds of leadership in a balanced and inclusive manner.

***Leadership and the New Science* by Margaret Wheatley**

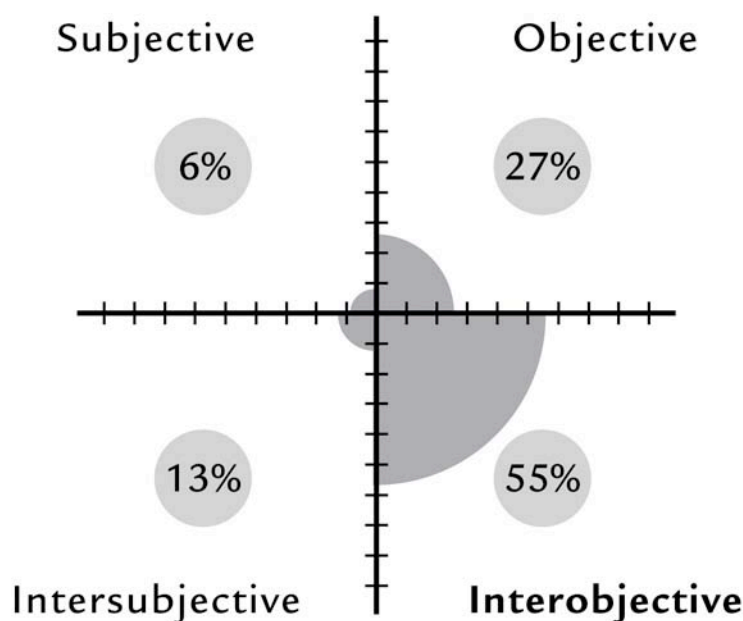


Figure 6. Quadrant Distribution for *Leadership and the New Science*

Margaret Wheatley’s *Leadership and the New Science* is light on the leadership and heavy on a misapplication of the new science. In an attempt to free us from the hegemonic, 17<sup>th</sup> century worldview of the Newtonian-Cartesian paradigm, Wheatley offers a thoroughly reductionist, new paradigm view that posits networks of interrelated “Its” as the basic organizing unit of life.<sup>32</sup> Considering the 55% LR focus which combines to create an 82% Right-Hand quadrant focus, the following statement, taken from the introduction, struggles to reconcile with the data in figure 6.

In every organization, we need to look internally, to see one another as the critical resources on this voyage of discovery. We need to learn how to engage the creativity that exists everywhere in our organizations. Second, the new physics cogently explains that there is no objective reality out there waiting to reveal its

secrets. There are no recipes or formulas, no checklists or expert advice that describe “reality.” If context is as crucial as the science explains, then nothing really transfers; everything is always new and different and unique to each of us. We must engage with each other, experiment to find what works for us, and support one another as the true inventors we are.<sup>33</sup>

The main ideas expressed in this introductory passage do not show up in any substantial degree throughout the rest of the book. The intersubjective components of creativity and interpersonal organizational relationships are reduced to the LR leaving only a 13% LL prevalence. The new physics explains that there is no objective reality yet the book speaks of objectivity’s singular and plural form 82% of the time. There is no expert advice that describes reality, except for this book, which is describing a new version of reality from an arguably expert position. If nothing transfers and everything is interpreted as new by each individual because of context (LL), then why is that aspect of reality not discussed? Lastly, if we must engage in supportive relationships aimed at discovering what works, why are shared interiors—a central component to supportive relationships—reduced to LR networks of interaction.

During rare breaks from the science lessons, Wheatley describes in new age ways her new science based insights for organizational functioning. Ideas like organizational vision are conceived as fields—the same as electromagnetic fields—which “move off the walls and into the corridors, seeking out every employee, every recess in the organization,” making it possible to organize into coherent, effective forms.<sup>34</sup> This is another example of reducing LL aspects (shared ideas and meaning) into LR forces or fields. What she fails to see is that the LL and LR arise simultaneously in correlation at the same level of complexity. So, it is not so much her conclusions that are off base but rather the methods through which she arrives at them.

While the previous example reduces interiors to exteriors, Wheatley organizational connections also reduce individuals to collectives. Likening individuals to electrons, Wheatley implies that during certain organizational collaborations, individual qualities become indistinguishable as parts are drawn together into wholes, just as subatomic particles merge to create new systems in a process described as relational holism.<sup>35</sup> Both individuals and collectives are fundamental, irreducible aspects of reality. When individuals create social holons, emergent collective properties form but individuals retain their unique consciousness, characteristics, and qualities.<sup>36</sup> At the non-quantum level, individuality is not lost in relational holism. Product design teams do not become leviathans with a singular locus of awareness. It comes down to this: individuals are not electrons, and Wheatley’s quantum lessons for leadership are not recommended as the basis for a functional map of the leaders territory.

### ***Leadership and Self-Deception by the Arbinger Institute***

At first glance, the results for *Leadership and Self-Deception* seem a bit unbalanced: 16% focus on the collective compared to 84% focus on the individual.<sup>37</sup> Despite these results, the Arbinger Institute is not caught up in even a hint of reductionism. Rather, the individual focus is a result of the book’s first-person narrative format. It is about the individual learning of a newly hired senior manager at a fictional company called Zagrum whose organizational culture has passed down a secret teaching that solves “people problems.”<sup>38</sup>

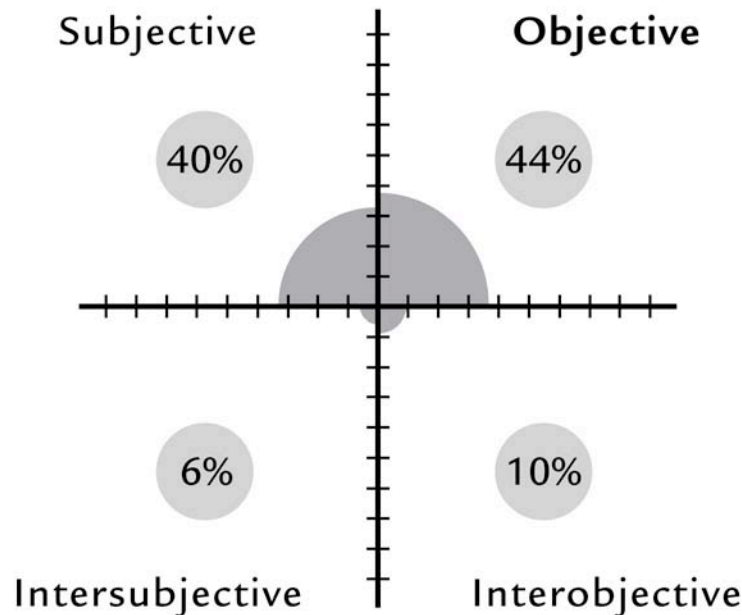


Figure 7. Quadrant Distribution for *Leadership and Self-Deception*

According to Zagrum’s teaching, the root of all people problems is self-deception, or the inability to see that you have a problem. Self-deception, they teach, puts people in the box, and it is from inside the box that people have a distorted view of reality. In the box, we see other people as objects.<sup>39</sup> Outside the box, other people are viewed and treated as human.

The essence of this realization is profoundly simple, yet very powerful. From a quadratic perspective, Arbinger’s secret teaching is that people have interiors. When someone is self-deceived, they treat others as exclusively UR arisings, or objects. When they are out of the box, the UL comes back on line. According to Arbinger, self-betrayal—acting contrary to what you feel you should do for another person—is how you get in the box.<sup>40</sup> Interpreted integrally, they are referring to an UR action that is contrary to an UL well-meaning intention. While this does not seem like the only way someone might come to view another person as an object, it is a simple way of communicating how someone might not fully and completely honor another individual’s interior.

While the territory of leadership is oftentimes overwhelmingly complex, worthwhile maps of important aspects of that territory can be quite simple. *Leadership and Self-Deception* beautifully illustrates this point despite the text’s Upper quadrant focus. The acknowledgement that people have interiors is an implicit acknowledgement that it is possible to enter into LL relationship with them. From that place, a leader can deeply understand those with whom they work and deeply serve those with whom they lead. The acknowledgement of people’s interiors is as fundamental a mandate for leaders as the UL is fundamental to the quadrants.

## *Primal Leadership* by Daniel Goleman and Associates

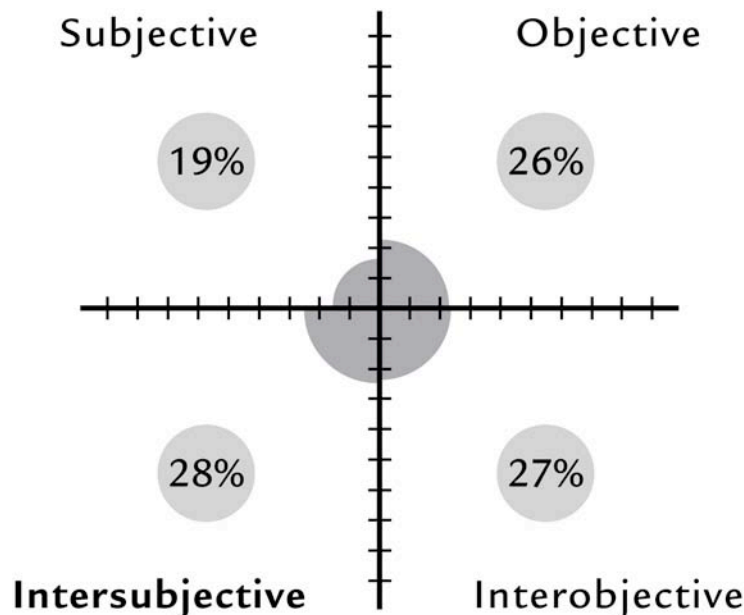


Figure 8. Quadrant Distribution for *Primal Leadership*

*Primal Leadership*, written by Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee, stands alone as the most quadratically balanced book in this study.<sup>41</sup> Goleman is not AQAL explicit in his discourse on learning to lead with emotional intelligence (EI), but his four EI domains—self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management—overlay the quadrants with near perfection.<sup>42</sup> Focusing on the UL is self-awareness, which Goleman defines as a deep understanding of one’s emotions, strengths, limitations, values, and motives.<sup>43</sup> Covering the UR, is self-management or emotional self-control coupled with honest behavior, flexibility, a drive to improve, and readiness to act.<sup>44</sup> Despite having social—which, in Integral Theory, is reserved for the LR—in its title, social-awareness is a LL competency that concerns empathy and emotional attunement to the interiors of others. Goleman correctly asserts that it is this type of awareness that drives resonance.<sup>45</sup> Lastly, focusing on the LR, is the domain of relationship management, which covers the act of cultivating relationships, team building, collaboration, conflict management, and negotiating.<sup>46</sup>

In Goleman’s view, leadership is primal because it is fundamentally driven by and concerned with emotions. In the preface, he describes the fundamental task of leaders as priming good feeling in those they lead by creating resonance. While this appears to have a heavy Left-Hand quadrant focus, as the data shows, Goleman’s treatment of the subject is balanced. In order to achieve resonance, great leaders will draw upon different sets of coordinated activities that comprise particular leadership styles. From commanding to visionary, Goleman describes how each style of leadership approaches resonance building, what effect they have on a culture, and when and with whom they are appropriate. In the language of Integral Theory, these leadership styles would be construed as UL types or different modes of being that exist on a spectrum of expression from healthy to unhealthy.<sup>47</sup> Types are available for all individuals and an integral

leader, as Goleman suggests, would draw on the most appropriate style given the leadership challenge they face in a given situation.

In a move often left out by other theorists, the authors provide a set of practices readers can employ if they are hoping to become a resonant or primal leader. Successful leaders cycle through a series of five stages or discoveries by engaging these practices. The stages are: (1) discover the ideal self (UL); (2) uncover the real self (UR, UL); (3) develop a learning agenda that helps build on strengths and reduce gap between real and ideal self (UR); (4) master a set of new skills, behaviors, thoughts, and feelings (UR, UL); and (5) create supportive relationships that make change possible (LL, LR).<sup>48</sup> Goleman offers a framework of theory and practice, which, while not quadrant explicit, covers the four worlds of leadership in a manner far more balanced and thorough than any other book in this study.

### Cumulative Results of the Quadrivial Analysis of Popular Leadership Books

Even more meaningful than the individual book results is the combined totals for these 8 leadership books. Even though some books were balanced in their treatment of the quadrants, the substantial LR focus of several others skewed the results towards the interobjective world of leadership.

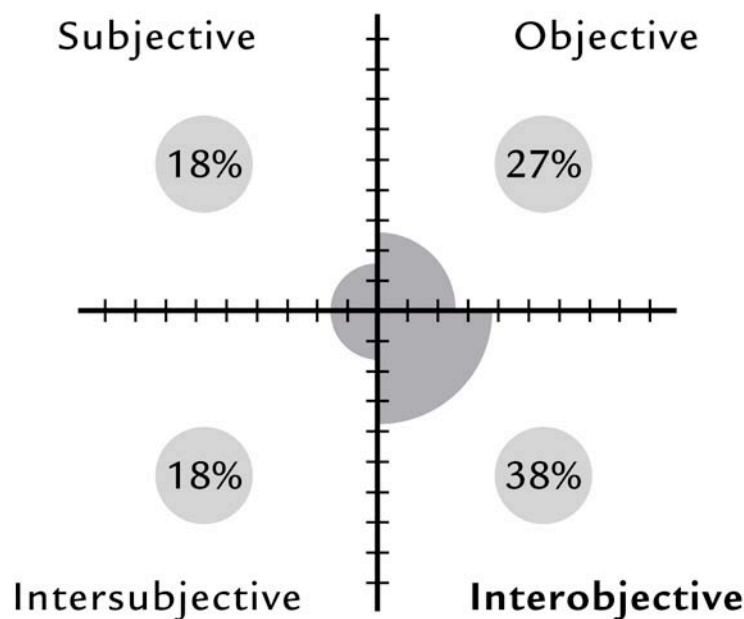


Figure 9. Cumulative Quadrant Distribution of 8 Popular Leadership Books

Figure 9 shows several important characterizations of the quadrant focus of top leadership literature. The LR quadrant perspective of interobjective, systems, shared behaviors, and organizational dynamics was the object of focus for 38% of the 57,306 total lines. The Right-Hand quadrant perspectives of measurable, observable phenomena such as behavior received 65% of focus, and the collective-orientated lower quadrants received 55% of the focus.

When viewed jointly, the data shows a simple yet important conclusion. These popular leadership books prefer to write about the collective more than the individual and the exterior

more than the interior. It could also be put like this: Popular leadership books put forth collective and objective realities as more important or more fundamental than other aspects of a leader's territory.

### Quadrant Focus of 19 other Leadership Books and Articles

As a supplement to this study, 19 additional books and articles on leadership were reviewed to determine which quadrants their authors directed the majority of focus. The eight books discussed previously were analyzed with both qualitative and quantitative measures while the quadrant focus of the additional sources was gauged through qualitative means alone. While this is arguably less accurate, the results are still significant in that it is easy to determine the primary chapter-by-chapter focus of a given book by asking the same questions utilized in the more robust method. The results of this analysis appear in figure 10, below.

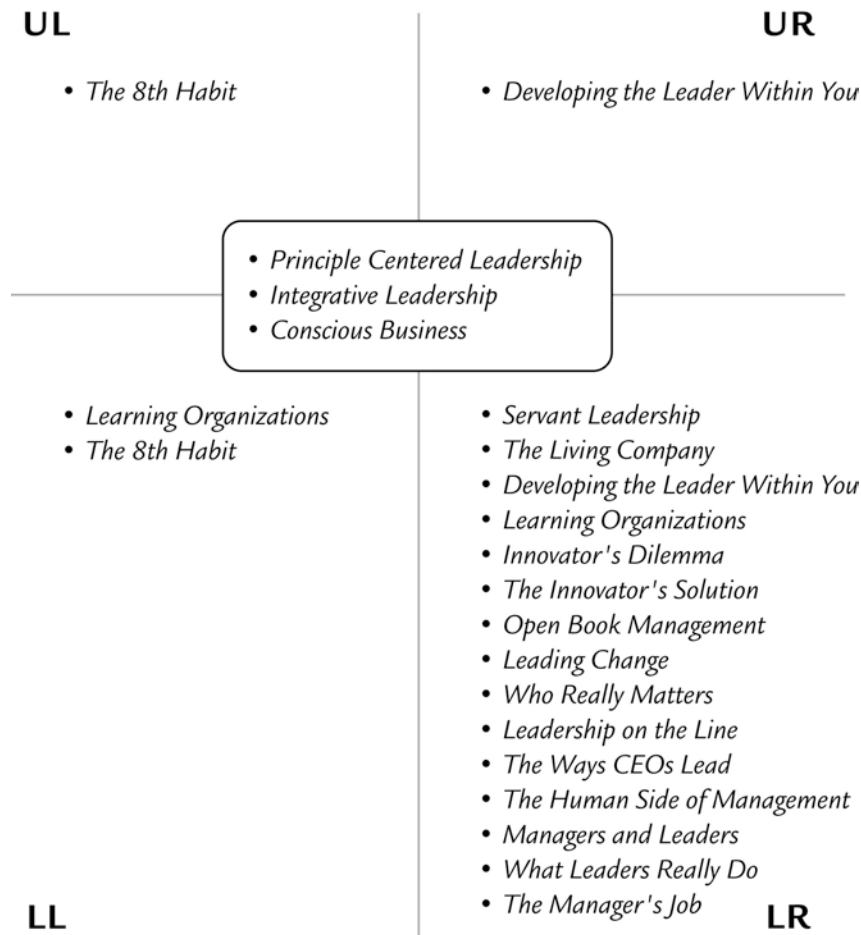


Figure 10. Quadrant Focus of 19 Additional Books and Articles<sup>49</sup>

The overwhelming subjective sense of the quadrant focus imparted by these additional books and articles is in line with the results of the line-by-line quadrivial analysis study. The Lower-Right quadrant was chief amongst all topics of discussion in almost every additional source reviewed.

This is not to say that these books spent no time discussing other quadrants, however. Similar to the eight reviewed earlier, each of these sources covered to varying degrees the three other quadrants, but they clearly spent the majority of their energy privileging LR aspects of leadership. Several books, including *Principle Centered Leadership*, by Stephen Covey, *Conscious Business*, by Fred Kofman, and *Integrative Leadership*, by Lilas and R. J. Hatas, scored as balanced. The more explicitly balanced books were not reviewed in the primary study because they have a negligible impact on a popular or academic view of leadership at this time.

Why is it that current leadership literature focuses primarily on the Right-Hand and collective quadrants? Why do the majority of books privilege the LR in particular? What implications do these results have on our collective view of leadership? Finally, what does the Integral vision offer aspiring leaders? The data makes questions such as these quite relevant, but yet it says little as to the nature of their answers. Elucidated by an interpretive look through an Integral lens, the reasons underlying this unbalanced treatment points towards the unified territory that emerging Integral leaders must authentically confront.

## Conclusion

As I have attempted to show, the term “exterior” refers to the objective world and those measurable aspects of reality. As leaders face the daunting task of understanding and influencing the complexity of organizational dynamics, they have a choice as to what data to take into account. Compared to exteriors, interiors are far more elusive. To “see” them requires introspection and interaction—and they are also more difficult to change. Given that, it is not surprising that leaders and leadership literature focuses to a large degree on the exterior. Observable behaviors, and the results that they produce are simpler to interpret. Even the complex interactions of organizational systems and collective behaviors are comprised of observable components. Ultimately, this provides leaders with an easily derived understanding of what it is they need to change, influence, or lead, and a more definitive sense of what results their changes produced. An organizational restructuring can be easily linked to greater productivity and greater profits, as both the change and the results are observable through the UR and LR quadrant-perspectives. A culture building effort, on the other hand, produces less tangible results observable primarily through a LL perspective. Complicating the matter further is the fact that LL results are difficult to succinctly connect with LR changes in productivity and profit.

The greater focus on the collective quadrants (and even there, of the LR in particular) over the individual quadrants stems from a similar source. As holders of the most authority, leaders have responsibility for motivating, empowering, and influencing a group or organization. Because of this, it is possible that leaders feel more responsible to the organization than they do to any of the individuals comprising the collective. The LR shared behavior of a group is viewed as representative of the individuals. Under this mindset, a leader can effectively lighten her load by allowing the LR components of their work speak as generalizations of pertinent individual realities. While this is true to a degree, it does not follow that the LR is more fundamental, more important, or all that a leader has to take into account.

A Lower-Right heavy message about the nature and practice of leadership has powerful implications on our collective view of leadership. Foremost amongst these is that it promulgates a flatland or reductionist view of the true territory of leadership. Such a view gives exteriors a primacy over interiors, which are treated as nothing more than epiphenomena of exterior manifestations.<sup>50</sup> Every behavior has an associated intention but it is the behavior manifested that is more fundamental and more important to a leader. This naive view fails to see that interiors and exteriors—behaviors and intentions—co-arise and that both are of equal importance.

A flatland view also fails to see that individuals are not reducible to collectives such that groups do not have a super-agency over the individuals that comprise them. This mistake has profound implications for our view of leadership. It fails to distinguish accurately between leaders and that which, or whom, they lead. It is true that a leader's work oftentimes concerns group and system behavior, but it also concerns two other equally important aspects: the leader as an individual and the individuals that are being led. An overemphasis on the LR, leads to an under emphasis on the growth work a leader must do to develop the capacity to lead. This is a uniquely individual affair and, as the data shows, it is not nearly covered with the rigor that the LR receives. Personal development and individual intentions, motivations, vision, feelings (UL) and how they manifest in behavior (UR) are too often overlooked as critical aspects in the development of an individual's ability to work effectively in a system, or to become a leader in their own right. Both of these directly affect, or arise simultaneously with, the LR manifestations that leaders are viewing as more fundamental. The result is a lopsided view of a leader's work, which fails to acknowledge accurately the role of individual leaders and those whom they lead. The consequences are a collective reliance on incomplete maps, and a collective acknowledgement of only a portion of the territory in which all leaders are enmeshed.

The Integral gift to leadership is an expansion in two directions, clearly visible using the AQAL model. Using Integral Theory will not represent a *replacement* of current frameworks, but it will represent a horizontal *expansion* of leadership's breadth of inquiry, and of the "toolbox" of available perspectives from which it can conduct that inquiry. In addition, it's a vertical expansion that adds emergent features while including and honoring the most enduring truths from all other frameworks.

The AQAL model provides the theoretical components needed for the development of a truly integrated vision of leadership that honors the fundamental perspectives available to individuals, perspectives which they can look through at themselves, others, and organizations. The quadrants outline these perspectives, and as such, are the foundational component of a truly Integral leadership framework. Levels, lines, states, and types exist in each quadrant and must ultimately be included in a truly comprehensive map as well.

The quadrant component of the AQAL map honors and includes the essential native aspects of reality—interior, exterior, individual, and collective—that must be recognized as inescapable facets of the territory in which all leaders work. By fully acknowledging and working to engage nothing less than these four irreducible domains, leaders will begin to manifest a vision that transcends and includes all current organizationally-derived and mission-specific visions of leadership. By practicing leadership informed by an Integral framework, leaders can return to order the unbalanced results of this study. Doing so will allow them to manifest a vision that

honors the integral nature of our shared humanness. Invoking a qualitative shift in our approach to leadership theory and practice through its acceptance of the nature of reality, this vision will allow for more meaningful and effective work as leaders in both our personal and professional lives.

I submit to you that honoring the quadrants is the first necessary step in manifesting this vision. Next, leaders must acknowledge, understand, and include developmental lines and levels in each of their analyses. I am currently working on a comprehensive treatment of an Integral leadership map that does just this entitled *A Map for the Integral Leader*.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Kofman, *Conscious business: How to build values through values*, 2006, p. 9
- <sup>2</sup> Maxwell, *Developing the leader within you*, 1993, p. 1
- <sup>3</sup> Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*, 1990, p. 341
- <sup>4</sup> Collins, *Built to last: successful habits of visionary companies*, 2002, p. 32
- <sup>5</sup> Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*, 1990
- <sup>6</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002
- <sup>7</sup> Torbert, *Action inquiry: the secret of timely and transforming leadership*, 2004
- <sup>8</sup> Wilber, *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science and spirituality*, 2000b, pp. 108-135.
- <sup>9</sup> I will refer to the AQAL Integral Framework as the AQAL framework, AQAL, Integral Theory, and the Integral framework synonymously. For more information on AQAL, please refer to Wilber, "Introduction to integral theory and practice: IOS basic and the AQAL map," 2006b.
- <sup>10</sup> Wilber, "Introduction to integral theory and practice: IOS basic and the AQAL map," 2006b, and *The integral vision: A very short introduction to the revolutionary integral approach to life, god, the universe, and everything*, 2007.
- <sup>11</sup> This example is purposely succinct. Many more factors would be revealed through each quadrivia. The factors mentioned are meant only as highlight.
- <sup>12</sup> Brown, "The four worlds of sustainability: Drawing upon four universal perspectives to support sustainability initiatives," n.d.
- <sup>13</sup> Brown, "The four worlds of sustainability: Drawing upon four universal perspectives to support sustainability initiatives," n.d.
- <sup>14</sup> Collins, *From good to great: why some companies make the leap and others don't*, 2001
- <sup>15</sup> Collins, *From good to great: why some companies make the leap and others don't*, 2001, pp. 12-14
- <sup>16</sup> Collins, *Built to last: successful habits of visionary companies*, 2002
- <sup>17</sup> Collins, *From good to great: why some companies make the leap and others don't*, 2001, pp. 22
- <sup>18</sup> Covey, *The 7 habits of highly effective people*, 2004, pp. 66-307
- <sup>19</sup> Covey, *The 7 habits of highly effective people*, 2004, pp. 96
- <sup>20</sup> Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*, 1990
- <sup>21</sup> Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: the spirit of evolution*, 1995, p. 151
- <sup>22</sup> Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*, 1990, pp. 93-96
- <sup>23</sup> Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*, 1990, pp. 159
- <sup>24</sup> Senge, *The fifth discipline: the art and practice of the learning organization*, 1990, pp. 211
- <sup>25</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without easy answers*, 1994, pp. 17-18
- <sup>26</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without easy answers*, 1994, pp. 13 & 18
- <sup>27</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without easy answers*, 1994, pp. 19
- <sup>28</sup> Torbert, *Action inquiry: the secret of timely and transforming leadership*, 2004, pp. 1-2
- <sup>29</sup> Torbert, *Action inquiry: the secret of timely and transforming leadership*, 2004, pp. 7-8
- <sup>30</sup> Torbert, *Action inquiry: the secret of timely and transforming leadership*, 2004, pp. 22-23
- <sup>31</sup> Torbert, *Action inquiry: the secret of timely and transforming leadership*, 2004, pp. 30
- <sup>32</sup> Wheatley, *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*, 1999

- <sup>33</sup> Wheatley, *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*, 1999, p. 9
- <sup>34</sup> Wheatley, *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*, 1999, pp. 57
- <sup>35</sup> Wheatley, *Leadership and the new science: Discovering order in a chaotic world*, 1999, p. 111
- <sup>36</sup> Wilber, *Integral spirituality: A startling new role for religion in the modern and postmodern world*, 2006a, pp. 142-149
- <sup>37</sup> The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and self-deception: Getting out of the box*, 2002,
- <sup>38</sup> The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and self-deception: Getting out of the box*, 2002, p. 3
- <sup>39</sup> The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and self-deception: Getting out of the box*, 2002, p. 35
- <sup>40</sup> The Arbinger Institute, *Leadership and self-deception: Getting out of the box*, 2002, p. 65
- <sup>41</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002
- <sup>42</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002, p. 38
- <sup>43</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002, p. 40
- <sup>44</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002, pp. 39 & 45
- <sup>45</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002, p. 49
- <sup>46</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002, p. 39, 51-52
- <sup>47</sup> Wilber, *Integral psychology: consciousness, spirit, psychology, therapy*, 2000a, pp. 53-54
- <sup>48</sup> Goleman, *Primal leadership: learning to lead with emotional intelligence*, 2002, pp. 111-112
- <sup>49</sup> Books featured in this figure include: Covey, *The 8th Habit: from effectiveness to greatness*, 2004; Covey, *Principle-centered leadership*, 1990; Hatala, *Integrative leadership: building a foundation for personal, interpersonal and organizational success*, 2005; Kofman, *Conscious business: How to build values through values*, 2006; Chawla, *Learning organizations: developing cultures for tomorrow's workplace*, 1995; Maxwell, *Developing the leader within you*, 1993; Greenleaf, *Servant leadership: a journey into the nature of legitimate power and greatness*, 2002; Geus, *The living company: habits for survival in a turbulent business environment*, 1997; Christensen, *The innovators dilemma*, 1997; Christensen, *The innovators solutions: Creating and sustaining successful growth*, 2003; Case, *Open-book management: the coming business revolution*, 1995; Kotter, *Leading change*, 1996; Kleiner, *Who really matters: the core group theory of power*, 2003; Heifetz, *Leadership on the line: Staying alive through the dangers of leadership*, 2002; Frakas, *The ways chief executive offices lead*, 1998; Teal, *The human side of management*, 1998; Zaleznik, *Managers and leaders: Are they different?* 1998; Kotter, *What leaders really do*, 1998; Mintzberg, *The managers job: Foklore and fact*, 1998
- <sup>50</sup> For a full discussion of flatland, see Wilber, *Sex, ecology, spirituality: the spirit of evolution*, 1995, pp. 419-478.

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