power to lead, educate, and guide (whether in political, economic, intellectual of spiritual manners), while most people welcome others exercising it, as long as it is not abused (See Baskin, 2006; Foucault, 1978). This field of relational power (Deleuze, 1986) is further modified as new knowledge infuses society. From this point of view, leadership emerges as people seek power or have it thrust on them, thus Abigail Adam's comment, "Great necessities call forth great leaders." Leadership, then, is not so much a personal quality as it is a quality that becomes manifest in relationship, in specific interactions in specific historical circumstances.

Such a view suggests that any 'paradigm', as used in conventional discussions of leadership, is misleadingly constraining. Rather, the behavior of any leader will reflect the time and culture he or she arises in, the accidents of his/her personality, and the power relationships of those he/she is called on to lead. Stalin controlled and terrified his followers; Gandhi led with a combination of moral example and political pressure that is difficult to imagine in the West; William L. Knight made 3M a great company by encouraging the creative entrepreneurialism of those who worked for him. From this point of view, leadership *cannot* be taught, but must emerge from the conditions in which it arises.

Perhaps it is unfair to expect (or even hope for) this kind of thinking from a book like Parks's. For, while she hints at a sense of such principles as emergence and social phase transition, she appears to be unfamiliar with complexity thinking, avoiding any substantial discussion of its principles. Moreover, the purpose of this book is not to examine leadership with new eyes, and the chapter on the paradigm shift seems more an appendix than an integral part of the book. When examining her central purpose in this book, the teaching methodology of Heifetz, Parks gives us much to think about, an object lesson in how to teach the skills of a subject that, in itself, may be unteachable.

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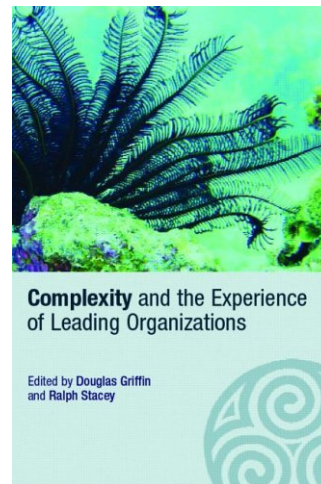
A Review of *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations*

edited by Douglas Griffiths and Ralph Stacey
reviewed by Alice MacGillivray
published by Routledge
ISBN 0415366933 (2005)

Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations is the latest in a five book series on "Complexity as the *Experience* of Organizing" (emphasis added). The book reminds me of an engaging collection of Harvard Business School instructor perspectives, written during their transition from lecturing to discussion leadership, and collected in a 1991 volume entitled *Education for Judgement*. Many chapter authors in *Complexity and the Experience of Leading Organizations* include meta-text that parallels other content, e.g., "The perspective of moving power differentials helps my understanding of my experience in the moments of deciding whether or not to intervene in David's presentation." The shared history of the authors generates cohesiveness, which is complemented by the diversity of their experiences and styles.

Chapter 1 – *Introduction: Leading in a Complex World* – is written by book editors Ralph Stacey and Douglas Griffin. The chapter begins by positioning the book in the series, and ends by giving an overview of the chapters. Sandwiched between is a quick walk through their foundational ideas followed by an interesting list of leadership implications shaped by a complex responsive processes perspective. In general, this list seems to fit most strongly with trait theories of leadership (e.g., "One recognized as leader will normally be one who displays greater spontaneity than others.") However, the authors emphasize that one cannot predict effectiveness by identifying 'attributes' because recognition and responses also influence performance.

Chapter 2 – *Leadership and the Role of Conflict in Processes of Mutual Recognition: The Emergence of Ethics* – is written by editor Douglas Griffin and draws on key ideas in his 2002 leadership book. This is a foundational chapter, which touches on considerable content from a 30,000' view. It presents several challenges and topics related to leadership, e.g., "A 'reductionist' concept of paradox leads to an ethics whereby individuals are required to submit themselves to the visions and values revealed to them by their leaders, or democratically chosen by them as empowered individuals." Griffin frequently links his ideas to seminal work by Kant, Prigogine and others, rooting the evolution of ideas in historical contexts.

Chapter 3 – *Leadership, Power and Problems of Relating in Processes of Organizational Change* – is written by Richard Williams as the CEO of a British college. His chapter is a first person account of a stressful period in which he learned about, and reflected on power, perceptions and identity in a system where performance has become the dominant focus.

Chapter 4 – *The Role of the Leader and the Paradox of Detached Involvement* – is written by hospital CEO John Tobin. Tobin explores the intertwined nature of the emotional and rational aspects of humans and of leadership. He critiques the individualistic nature of Goleman's emotional intelligence work and draws of the work of George Mead, Damasio and Elias to present the concept of detached involvement, through which a leader sees more possibilities and "attunes him or herself emotionally" without becoming distracted by group dynamics.

Chapter 5 – *Values, Spirituality and Organizations: A Complex Responsive Process Perspective* – is written by Ralph Stacey. As the title suggests, there is little explicit reference to leadership, but related issues, such as the use of values and norms in the workplace, are explored. Stacey approaches much of this exploration, but presenting arguments against the conclusions or approaches of authors including Wheatley, Schein and Senge. For example, Stacey describes some of Lewin and Regine's ideas about the soul at work, writing "Here again we see the use of the natural complexity sciences to justify particular cult values without any interpretation of what the insights of those sciences may mean in human terms or any attempt to explain how such cult values are functionalized in daily life." This might have been the chapter in which to include critiques or affirmations of leadership authors such as Covey, Greenleaf, Hodgkinson and De Pree.

Chapter 6 – *Leadership and Cult Values: Moving From the Idealized to the Experienced* – is written by another hospital CEO, James Taylor. Taylor uses reflective narrative to paint pictures of his experiences as a formal leader dealing with health care dynamics and issues. Although the book's editors provided some context for the paragraph in an introduction, I was imagining how effective it could have been to have parts of chapters such as this one presented as two columns, with narrative – and analysis of the narrative linking back to theory. Taylor concludes the chapter by making strong connections between interactions, sense-making and leadership.

Chapter 7 – *Executive Coaching and Leading* – is by human resources director and executive coach Andrew Lee. This chapter is a rich, reflective narrative which weaves together emerging insights about the nature of management, leadership, coaching and complexity. Lee's experiential learning is portrayed through comments about coaching such as "Previously I would have attended to the overall goals of the program and to the desired outcomes for each session. I would have exerted some control over the direction of the conversation in order to 'help' the client get closer to our agreed destination. I would not have been as focused on the intricacies of our relating in the moment."

Chapter 8 – *Leadership, Learning and Skill Development* – is written by Irish Institute of Man-

agement director Michael Shiel. This concluding chapter draws on Stacey's ideas that complex responsive processes account well for the emergence of novelty, and that communicative interactions cannot be controlled from outside a system. Shiel draws on his experience with leadership development to draw comparisons between teaching and leading in complex environments. I like the way Shiel describes pervasive management concepts, such as *strategy*, as being in competition with attention on lived experience in organizations.

Like all readers approaching an interesting trans-disciplinary book, I had expectations, and these did not always mesh with the book's approach. I personally found the book had an insular quality. All authors are associated with University of Hertfordshire complexity research programs. There are certain core references, such as work by the book's editors and other authors including Norbert Elias, George Herbert Mead and Antonio Damasio, which chapter authors cite repeatedly.

This insularity concerned me for two reasons. Diversity is important in complex systems, and the choice of chapter authors limited the potential diversity in the book (which would be fine if the book were subtitled *A University of Hertfordshire Anthology...*). Secondly, the title implies that the volume explores the intersection of complexity and leadership. In practice, I sensed that the authors were deeply interested in complexity, but had less exposure to leadership research and literature. In the book's introduction, the editors set the stage to refute traditional thinking about leadership by citing Edgar Schein and Peter Senge. I would have been very interested in their perspectives on a broader range of traditional leadership models and authors. As examples, there may have been opportunities for synergies and/or debates with early transformational leadership theories in which people help each other to learn and improve, servant leadership, and/or distributed leadership models. The book's introduction might have also been strengthened by recognizing work by authors such as Bill McKelvey who have written about the complexity-leadership interface. Despite their focus on complexity, it was interesting that the authors often seemed to think of *leader* in the singular, and to associate leadership with positional authority.

Because of the experiential nature of the series, some concepts are presented as insights rather than through multi-directional exploration. For example, James Taylor writes that some researchers differentiate between leadership and management (terms that seem to be used almost interchangeably elsewhere in the book) but that the distinction is an artificial reification because "both are about people working together and the roles that emerge as they do so." I thought about John Kotter's differentiations – leadership being about change and management about stability – and was left wondering whether adoption of Taylor's sensible argument could hinder progress towards recognition of the value of complexity thinking. I also noticed that repetition of a concept, such as paradox, gives the correct impression that the concept emerges in the literature of both complexity and leadership, even if this common ground is not explicitly explored.

Perhaps because the book makes frequent reference to the power dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, I found myself observing what could be power dynamics. Most program graduates freely revealed their personal experiences, and they often referenced published authors as background, as in Tobin's comment: "Awareness of our own feelings is essential to effective social interaction, collaboration and coordination. In Mead's gesture-response dialectic, our gesture calls out in ourselves a similar response that we intend to call out in the other(s) to which our gesture is directed..." Throughout the book, I did not get any sense of the experiential learning of Stacey or Griffin, and noted that as faculty they often used citations to show a version of reality, truth or theory, as in Stacey's "What part does a leader play in all of this? Leadership arises in social processes of recognition (Griffin, 2002) in which, in imagination, the leader may be recognized as embodying the whole... Leadership is a social object and a cult value."

I also found myself looking for practical guidance around some of the complexity concepts emphasized by other theorists. How do leaders work with adaptive tensions, fitness landscapes, and diversity in organizational cultures obsessed by alignment?

I value the fact that chapter authors bring first hand experience from important and relevant complex environments such as health care and education. One of the book's strengths, especially for newcomers to complexity, is that it grounds perspectives about complexity and leadership in

real-work settings, and relays them in plain language. Novices should be aware though, that links between leadership and complexity are often implicit. The book also models elements of behavioral leadership by giving voice to several alumni of the Hertfordshire research program.