The transmutation of leader meaning-making: an exploration of conative capability at postconventional leader development levels, in complex dynamic environments.

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“Everything rests on the tip of one’s motivation” - Tibetan saying
Outline

• Definitions
• Research question
• Design and methodology
• Results and findings
• New model of integrative leader development
• Further research proposals
• Questions/Discussion
1. Value-system
2. Motivational processes
3. Volitional processes
4. Reflexivity
Definitions

• “Conation is the ability to **persistently** and protractedly **focus one’s intellectual energy** in order to successfully confront complex situations requiring a **considerable time** and mental energy, to solve a problem, to complete a task, or **to attain a goal**” (TenHouten 2013 p224).

• Wallace (2009) noted that **conative intelligence** is the **higher order ability** to discern which desires and intentions truly lead to one’s own and others’ well-being and then to adopt them, while also realizing what desires and intentions might undermine one’s own and others’ wellbeing.

• Hannah, Avolio & May (2011 p664): **moral conation** – “the capacity to generate **responsibility** and **motivation** to take moral action in the face of adversity and **persevere** through challenges.”

• Conation: Goals – Motives – Volition – Persistence - Reflexivity
Research question

“What are the identifiable differences in lived experiences of the key components of conative capability as articulated by leaders at conventional and postconventional tiers of development?”

Leadership Development Levels (LDLs) are development levels of maturity that shape the mental and moral capacities of the leader (Eigel & Kuhnert 2005).
Research design and methods

• Hermeneutic phenomenology – a *description* but also an *interpretation*
• Pauchant (2005): “proceed retrospectively” with criterion sampling of leaders
• Sentence Completion Test (SCT – Hy & Loevinger, 1996)
• Leadership Development Profile (LDP – Rooke & Torbert, 2009)
## Research design and methods

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Model

1. Conative Intelligence (CI)
   1.1 Value system
   - For good
   - Utilitarianism: Moral complexity
   - Independence: Definition of autonomy
   - Organization-wide: "Interest in acting"
   - LDL4 For the greater good
   - LDL5 Disontology
   - LDL5 Inter-independence

   1.2 Locus-of-concern
   - Self, team, others
   - LDL4 Society, systems, planet

2. Conative Complexity (CCX)
   2.1 Motivation
   - Present-day growth: Development motive
   - Achieve more: Learning goal-orientation
   - Mastery goal-orientation: Development self-efficacy
   - Growth mindset: Purposefulness
   - Extrinsic motivation: Intrinsic motivation
   - Current commitments
     - Current, short-term: Persistence over time
     - Course commitment: Goal engagement
   - LDL4 Cross-temporal aspirations
   - LDL5 Longer-term horizons
   - LDL5 Course correction

   2.2 Volition
   - Proximal self
     - Single-loop learning: Self-observation
     - Ego-embedded: Self-investment
     - Lack of critique: Self-compassion
   - LDL4 Distal self
   - LDL4 Double-loop learning
   - LDL4 More ego-aware
   - LDL5 Praxis

   2.3 Reflexivity
   - Cognitive complexity
   - Socio-emotional Intelligence
   - Leader self-system - ego development level variables
   - Elevated sensemaking and sensegiving capability
   - Leader behavioural complexity
Conclusions

1. Over-consideration of cognition to the exclusion of conation in the research
2. Individual meaning-making (conative) and sensemaking capability (cognitive)
3. Individual leader development and operating context relationship
4. Four key areas of consideration for development to or at postconventional leader development levels (LDLs)

Thank you: Professor Margaret Linehan and Professor Irene Sheridan, Cork Institute of Technology (CIT), Ireland.

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