

Foundations and Resources of Integral Leadership

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LiFT Foundations & Resources Book – Chapter 4

The integral model of leadership – core dimension 1: Four quadrants/perspectives

So what is leadership in and beyond organizations in the context of the integral model? And how does it go beyond the concepts of holism in leadership and management which have been outlined before? After having framed the integral approach conceptually, this and the following chapter will present two core dimensions of the integral model, which appear to be particularly important to leadership theory and practice. This chapter presents and discusses the concept of four quadrants. Chapter 5 will highlight how perspectives, behaviors and modes of reasoning can develop in complexity as people grow and mature, and what implications this has in all of these quadrants or dimensions.

4.1 Structural foundations

As the overview of leadership research in chapter 1 has shown, the ways in which leadership has been understood, perceived and analyzed have changed over time, and have generally become more differentiated, integrating more and more dimensions of the phenomenon. The integral model of leadership is the most differentiated model available so far and provides a number of conceptual tools for mapping this complexity in a comprehensive, structured way.

4.1.1 Four dimensions of reality and its cognitive perception

The integral model holds that what we call “reality”, no matter in what domain, can be looked at from four basic analytical perspectives, each of which explores one specific dimension of reality. The concept of four quadrants, modelling the dimensions of reality and the typical perspectives of looking at them goes back to Ken Wilber’s “Theory of Everything” (2000) which has been spelled out first in 1995. When putting together his synthesis of global knowledge and wisdom, Wilber (1995, 2000, 2001a and 2001b) found that all of the approaches he found could be attributed to either of the four quadrants.

This distinction of four quadrants (realms or dimensions of reality) has later been further developed by Wilber, holding that each of them, again, has an inside and outside “zone” to it. It has also been taken up in multiple areas and fields, among these also in leadership theory (see Laske/Meister-Scheytt/Küpers, 2006, p. 77ff. and Deeg/Küpers/Weibler 2010, p. 121ff.). The model will be presented as such first, before looking at how it applies to leadership challenges in and beyond organizations.

Wilber’s model has emerged based on long-standing epistemological studies, in which he investigated and compared a variety of scientific disciplines, theories, epistemologies, methodologies and heuristics in view of their way of accessing reality and of the definition of their respective subject area. The development of the model also included an analysis of numerous Eastern and Western wisdom traditions, which also claim to make valid statements about “the world” and use certain methods and methodologies for doing that. Wilber’s overall aim was to represent and summarize the essence of all these theories and teachings in one model, in an as simple way as possible.

This brought Wilber to the conclusion that all the theories of knowledge he considered, as well as the theories about the world based on or derived from them can essentially be assigned to one of four

fundamental perspectives on reality. He also found that this is true no matter whether they are scientific in the narrow (science) or broad sense (wisdom), no matter in which discipline, what their core questions are and which methods they choose for their process of inquiry.

Furthermore, he noted that all approaches tend to outline and define their respective subject matters according to their respective perspectives. This also means that most of them only capture a limited view of "the reality", while they tend to (partially or completely) disregard all or most of the other dimensions. From this, Wilber deduces that a comprehensive, integral view of (leadership) reality must strive to involve all four dimensions if it wants to make sustainably valid, robust statements that are not reductionist and thus incomplete. As has been explained in Chapter 3.3, an integral approach can itself only be an approximation to comprehensiveness, and can never ultimately provide a final, complete picture. Neither does it claim to do so.

In particular, the model distinguishes between internal and external, as well as between individual and collective perspectives or subject areas/dimensions (see Wilber, 2001b, p. 161f., as well as Laske/Meister-Scheytt/Küpers 2006, p. 78). This distinction produces a four quadrant matrix (see fig. 4.1 below). Each quadrant illuminates a dimension (dimension or realm) of the phenomenon that is considered (usually a holon).

	Inner realms/perspectives/ dimensions of reality (Mind / psyche, perception, awareness)	Outer realms/perspectives/ dimensions of reality (surface structures, behavior)
Individual	Spiritual/mental realm/ dimension subjective perspective Upper Left Quadrant (ULQ)	Physical realm/dimension Objective/objectifying perspective Upper Right Quadrant (URQ)
Collective/ so- cial/trans-indi- vidual	Cultural mental realm/ dimension intersubjective perspective Lower Left Quadrant (LLQ)	Social mental realm/dimension interobjective perspective Lower Right Quadrant (LRQ)

Fig. 4.1: Four-quadrant model of viewing reality according to Wilber (2000, 2001)

The first important distinction is that between left and right quadrants which imply so-called "left-hand" quadrant and "right-hand" paths of knowledge generation (see below). While the latter describe the empirical-analytical sciences' approach, which observe their objects primarily from the outside (describe, count, measure, etc.), the former strive for an understanding of their objects from within, using hermeneutical, phenomenological, introspective and/or dialogical methods. In their view, "reality" can not be reduced to a physical universe (materialism), in which all inner experiences are considered as mere illusions. It is equally insufficient to reduce reality to something purely mental or spiritual (idealism). Nor can it be separated into two completely separate areas of matter and mind (dualism). To the extent that most phenomena (holons) can in principle be explored by both right-hand and left-hand approaches and methods (for examples see below), it is clear that limiting oneself to only one of these approaches would fade out at least some of the properties of the phenomenon (holons).

The second important distinction of the model is that between upper and lower quadrants. It contrasts individual properties of a phenomenon (holon), on the one hand, with its consideration as (part of) complex, systemic and/or functional connections on the other. Here again, the distinction is first and foremost a matter of which heuristic perspective one chooses, and less of a sharp distinction between "individual" and social/"collective" phenomena or properties of holons as such. For as explained before, most phenomena and all holons have both individual and social/collective/systemic properties, which, of course, only become visible once one actually looks out for them. Holons are by definition both wholes (holistic) and parts (partial).

The two upper quadrants thus comprise the properties of individual holons in their interior and exterior dimensions. The upper left quadrant refers to the internal psychic area of the subject (including perceptions, intentions, emotions, identities, motivations, etc.); the upper right quadrant includes its external manifestations, that is, bio-physical and behavioral characteristics of the individual (holon).

The two lower quadrants, in turn, focus on social or collective properties of any holon. This might be their embeddedness in cultural (lower left quadrant) or systemic (lower right quadrant) contexts, or it might be their own quality as systems of interconnected phenomena.

The lower left quadrant contains perspectives which look at interior dimensions of social phenomena, i.e. the inter-subjective bonds which characterize and shape a given community. These might remain implicit and not be directly visible, but they nevertheless have a strong, observable impact on the thinking and behavior of the members of the community, such as values, norms, rules of behavior, social roles and traditions, or generally the *culture*. At the same time, cultures usually do have material and other visible expressions and manifestations. These are depicted in the two right quadrants. The lower right quadrant includes externally visible or effective systemic-functional connections, including forms of social organization and institutions with their formalized structures, laws, and thus the external conditions (resources, freedoms and constraints) of individual action as well as of social life as a whole.

Two things are important for understanding and working with the four quadrants in the area of leadership:

1. First, the quadrants themselves have a double heuristic significance: as indicated, they help to distinguish both four basic perspectives of looking at reality and four areas of subject-matter which are usually derived from them, and which the respective (scientific) perspectives usually focus on. When analyzing leadership in and beyond organizations, the latter can be looked at as holons which, in turn, can be examined from all four perspectives. Integral leadership would consider an all-quadrant analysis as a minimum requirement for a valid integral account of whatever topic or phenomenon.
2. Second, the four quadrants are merely a heuristic, analytical distinction. In "reality", inner subjective qualities are not separated from bio-physical, cultural and social qualities, but all four dimensions are inseparably interwoven. The integral approach therefore strives to re-orient our thinking, which is accustomed to sharp analytical separations and category formation, in view of reconciling it with a more holistic – and thus more realistic perspective.

So, dealing with holons, these can now be described as units which are not only composed of parts and wholes, but these are also characterized by multiple and dynamic interrelations with each other. Moreover, each holon has both an inner dimension (perception, consciousness, relatedness) and an external dimension (size, form, objectivity). It thus consists of (inter-) subjective and (inter-) objective characteristics, properties and qualities.

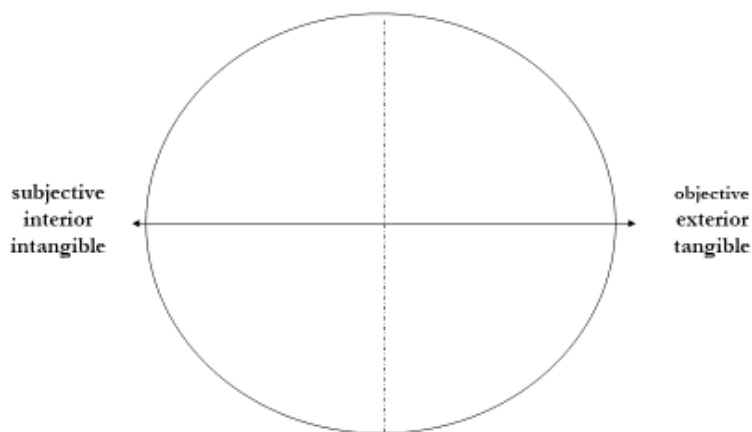


Fig. 4.2: Structure of a holon (according to Edwards, 2005, p. 278)

Organizations, as well as projects and other co-working contexts can be understood as social holons. They consist of their members (individual holons), who are connected within the social holon (organizational space) by certain structures and a particular mode of interaction. The more stable the context, the better

can sub-holons such as organizational units, departments, working groups, teams, etc. be identified. What is interesting for our purpose here is to look at how the interior of social holons can be located and described. As an inter-subjective interrelationship of persons, all perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and motivations within a social holon occur first and foremost inside of their members. The latter are the real holders of consciousness. However, a social holon (as well as each of its sub-holons) also has a kind of overlapping (inter-) subjective quality in the sense of its specific capability of perception, its intentions and grown culture which can not be reduced solely to those of the respective individual members. This does not mean that social holons are "meta-individual" quasi-organisms, which would control the actions of their members. Rather, they can be seen as collective structures with shared values, a common history and a common cultural horizon (see chapter 4.2.2). In addition, they usually form a separate system of objectives, functions and structures (see chapter 4.2.3).

So while the members of a social holon are part of its intersubjective field, they are thus parts of the social holon organization and its interorganizational interactions. At the same time, they also retain their relative independence and their assets as individual holons. In this sense, individual and social holons do not represent lower or higher levels of existence within a hierarchy. Rather, they are inter-related, interdependent aspects of each larger holon.

Some approaches inspired by the integral model also use the notion of "worlds" or "spheres" for describing the realms of perception that the four dimensions represent for the actors or entities which operate within them. The two upper dimensions, the consciousness and the behavioral spaces can be considered as "inner world" and the "physical and behavioral sphere" respectively. The two lower dimensions in the model can be considered as the intersubjective world as viewed when one experiences being part of a particular community and that of the objective external environment. In this book, I will remain with the simpler terminology of "realms" or dimensions.

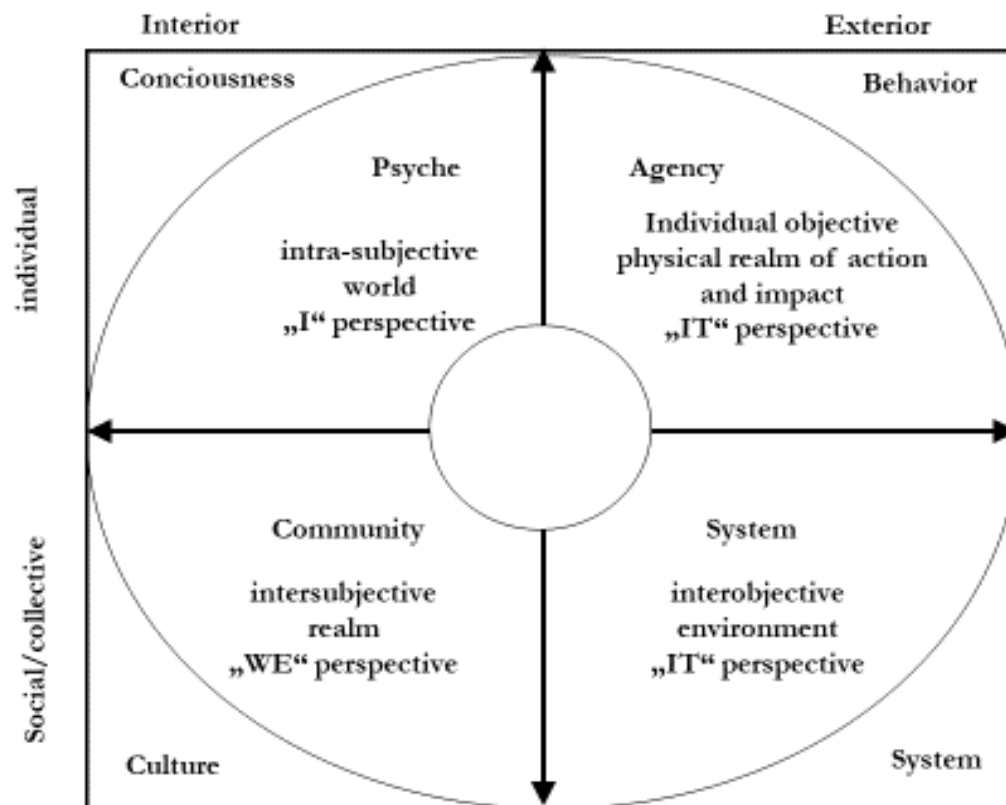


Fig. 4.3: The four quadrants and dimensions of the integral model (adapted from Deeg/Küppers/Weibler, 2010)

Since the concept of "worlds of perception" refers to the different perspectives through which "reality" is framed as one looks at one of the subject areas, Wilber has assigned specific personal pronouns to these four ideal-type perspectives. These are:

- the **I-perspective** in the inner world of the psyche
- the **we**-perspective experiencing itself in community
- The **it-perspective** in the physical realm of individual action and
- the impersonal **it/one perspective** in the environmental realm of the system.

Subject areas and investigating perspectives are thus closely linked with each other (see section 4.1.2 below.) From this follows that each object or phenomenon suggests or even requires a corresponding perspective in order to be adequately investigated. I will therefore now consider

Applying this model to a leadership situation, for instance to one of the workshops within **the LiFT project**, we can distinguish:

- the **external environment**, represented, for instance by the funding system and the overall hosting context (i.e. country, organization) as the formal context within which the project is operating (lower right quadrant)
- the **physical and behavioral factors** on site (time, space, number of participants etc.) as part of the more concrete local setting in which a workshop is taking place (upper right quadrant)
- the **intersubjective space** of the relevant cultures, including values, patterns of communication etc. of the hosting organization, the group of participants, and the facilitators, as well as the fields and dynamics of mutual awareness and interaction as they occur during the process (lower left quadrant)
- the **subjective mindsets and psycho-emotional states** of being of each participant, including the facilitator(s) at various moments in the process (upper left quadrant).

which specific **approaches of inquiry** correspond best to these (ideal-typical) analytic perspectives – and thus take a look at the heuristic dimension of the quadrant model.

4.1.2 Quadrant-adequate heuristics and methodologies, right-hand and left-hand approaches

As shown before, the distinction of the four quadrants of the integral model is essentially an epistemological, analytic one, referring to different dimensions of reality. Since each of them focuses on specific aspects of a phenomenon, it is obvious that approaches interested in specific quadrants also prefer corresponding heuristics and methodologies in order to analytically explore and illuminate their respective focal aspects in an optimal way. The two basic methodological positions underlying the model can, for the most part, be described with Wilhelm Windelband (1894) as ideographic and nomothetic. Ken Wilber called these two basic research orientations "right-hand" and "left-hand" paths. I will now take a moment to outline their respective properties in an ideal-typical way (for a short overview see the figure 4.4 below).

In view of our overall question, in what sense the integral model goes beyond other approaches to "holism", the quadrant model helps to illustrate one of Wilber's most important critiques of modern western society, namely that it has developed a pathological, one-hand focus on the exterior or objective perspectives. Such perspectives value only what can be externally measured and tested in a laboratory, but tend to deny or marginalize the interior (left-hand, subjectivity, individual experience, feelings, values) as *unproven* or having *no meaning*. Wilber identifies this as a fundamental cause of society's malaise (which he calls "flatland") and consequently urges for a systematic integration of inner and outer dimensions in a balanced, integral approach. But let us first look at what each approach has to offer as such.

Nomothetical or right-hand research approaches (from Greek *nomos*: 'law' and *thesis*: 'to build') look for laws or patterns which determine, for example, how individuals or organizations generally behave, based on objectively given factors (positivism, determinism). In this research orientation, the goal is to describe and *explain* reality in generally valid ways. Methodologically, this position is based on scientific, experimental and deductive approaches (hypothesis, verification, falsification). As a rule, these are well-established explanation-oriented, linear and/or (mono-) causal cause-effect analyzes, and data are usually collected by using quantitative methods, often abstracting from individual cases or phenomena. Typical empirical research methods in this area are, for example, comprehensive cross-sectional studies with statistical evaluation.

In contrast, ideographic or left-hand research approaches (from Greek *idios*: 'own' and *graphein*: 'describe') focus on understanding individual cases, including specific actions or complex situations, which are generally regarded as unpredictable and contingent (*voluntarism*). Their aim is to provide a comprehensive analysis of concrete objects or phenomena which are unique in terms of time and space. This approach is typical in most of the humanities and the more qualitative social sciences. They therefore tend to use qualitative methods of data collection and analysis, for instance in the form of longitudinal case studies, where the researcher goes into the field with an as unbiased as possible attitude and being able to identify and bracket pre-existing hypothesis as much as possible. She then develops theories inductively on the basis of concrete empirical findings. For example, participant observation allows to generate authentic impressions of the lifeworld of specific social actors.

Left-hand paths (focusing on interiors)	Right-hand paths (focusing on exteriors)
• ideographic (individual case)	• nomothetic (general laws)
• understanding-oriented	• explanation-oriented
• introspective, hermeneutic	• (neo-)positivistisch, beschreibend
• interpretative, dialogically observing	• monologically observing
• mainly qualitative approaches	• mainly quantitative approaches
• intentional-voluntaristic	• deterministic
• prefers inductive approaches	• approaches deduktives approaches
• looks at single cases	• looks at large number of cases
• Focus on individual phenomena, interpreting their meaning	• Focus on causal relations, observing phenomena and explaining them by capturing determining laws

Fig. 4.4: Overview of methodological approaches (see also Bea/Göbel, 2006, p. 242)

Due to their different methodological choices, the two overall approaches are characterized by **specific validity criteria and validity claims**. Validity is understood here as the conditions for an utterance or piece knowledge to be accepted as valid or “true” (cf. Habermas, 1981).

These conditions determine the rules or criteria that have to be met or understood, in order to obtain intersubjective consensus among adequately informed researchers of agreed upon objective validity.

The **quantitative approach** is usually based on testing existing hypothesis. In view of an exact verification of validity, representativeness and reliability are considered as the relevant quality criteria. **Qualitative research** has meanwhile also developed a number of quality criteria for determining validity (see, for example, Mayring, 2003, pp. 109ff.). Due to the context sensitive nature of qualitative research, its quality criteria are also designed quite flexibly. They must, for instance, take into account the rather limited possibility of formalizing and standardizing research activities and instruments here. One of the most frequently cited criteria therefore is “traceability”. It is to be achieved and improved by a detailed documentation of the research process, by inter-collegial controls and codified procedures (see Lincoln/Guba, 1985, p. 292, Steinke, 2000, pp. 323f.).

Qualitative research such as most of LiFT’s action research, also uses empirical data, both for generating and reviewing theories. Since in this case, the researcher is usually an integral part of the research process, his subjectivity is also addressed as part of the methodological approach. By reflecting his/her subjectivity, it is aimed to assess the extent to which the latter might influence the results and theory building (see Steinke, 1999, pp. 231ff.).

The different validity criteria of research following left and right-sided approaches are closely related to the fact that these positions look at different aspects of the phenomena in question – and thus usually only favor one of the four dimensions of the quadrant model. Therefore, these different viewpoints come with specific advantages and disadvantages (see also Bea/Göbel, 2006, p. 243) which can be made visible using the integral model. In particular, it can be shown with the help of this model, where a specific research approach has its focus and which other dimensions tend to be neglected. Although from an integral perspective, right- and left-hand approaches are somewhat reductionist in themselves, they can be viewed as complementary and put into the service of a more comprehensive, holistic and integral view when combined. The integral approach thus emphasizes the need to take

In the LiFT project, we have used a combination of both approaches, with a focus on comprehensively understanding individual cases rather than large numbers of cases.

into account both paths in the context of an integrative, meta-theoretical methodology, and to always carry out an "all quadrant research" (Wilber, 2001b, p. 63 and 65).

Both methodological orientations are widely used in **leadership research** in and beyond organizational contexts, with different theories and corresponding research practices preferring either one or the other orientation. Much of the more "classical" empirical research on both leadership and organizations uses **nomothetic approaches**. Organizational research has for a long time been dominated by a methodological understanding that conceived organizations as defined by their goals, functions and formal structures. Focusing on the effectiveness and efficiency of an organization, it generally studied selected goal-means relations via standardized questionnaires, internet surveys, network analyzes or computer simulations, as well as by quantitative comparative studies and statistical evaluation. In this context, the organization was understood as an objective reality in which generalizable laws and causalities could be identified by isolating single organizational variables and their determinants, which were conceived as objective knowledge (see Johnson/Duberley, 2000, pp. 8f.).

With the advent of organizational culture research in the early 1980s, however, **qualitative approaches** also gained importance. Cases of paradoxical or dysfunctional organizational development have drawn researchers' attention to informal and unintentional actions, phenomena, effects and structures. Organizations have increasingly been described as a place of encounter of different actors with their respective own rationalities, interests and power plays. Taking the perspective of the acting subject made it possible to take into account unexpected phenomena and thus to explore subjective and intersubjective processes within organizations. The reality of organizations was thus no longer understood as an "objective truth", independent of time and space, but as a result of subjective and intersubjective perceptions, interpretations and interactions in the context of everyday (working) life. Instead of isolating individual causalities, complex systems of meaning are reconstructed (for interpretative organizational research, see Walter Busch, 2004). The methods used here are, for example, open and non-standardized instruments which allow a deep access to individual phenomena, as well as to personal interpretations and evaluations of the social actors involved. Ethnographic studies, in the course of which social events are witnessed and experienced first hand by participant observers over a longer period of time, have also played a role here (see, for example, Helmers, 1993, Neuberger/Kompa, 1987, Gellner/Hirsch, 2001). Analyzing ceremonies, rituals, myths or taboos within an organization or working context thus allows a deeper understanding of shared meanings and rationalities (Kieser, 1991, Wittel, 1997).

In addition to specialized research designs, organizational research is now also becoming increasingly **pluralistic**, combining both nomothetical/quantitative and ideographical/qualitative methods.

The next section therefore further differentiates this outline of quadrant-adequate heuristics beyond the distinction between right- and the left-hand research orientations. Moreover, we can identify specific, typical or particularly appropriate heuristic approaches and methodologies for exploring all four quadrants of "reality". Many of these have also played a role in LiFT's own action research. Figure 4.5 shows some typical areas, procedures and focuses of knowledge in each quadrant.

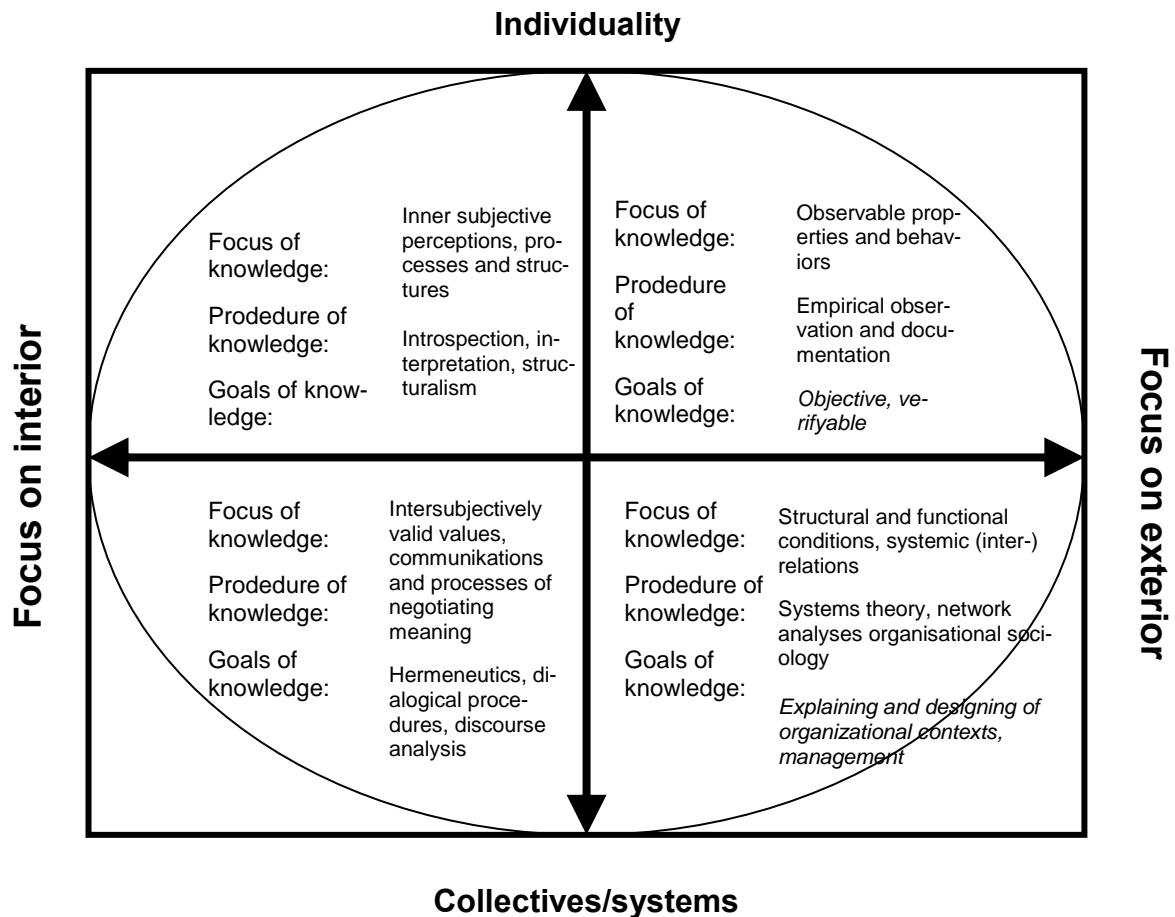


Fig. 4.5: Areas and modes of knowledge generation in the integral model (adapted from Deeg/Küpers/Weibler, 2010, fig. 47)

In view of analyzing leadership in and beyond organizations, research questions such as the following are typically asked in the respective quadrants:

Upper left quadrant:

- Who am I?
- What do I feel, think, want?
- What is my identity/self image?
- What are my values?
- How do I experience myself in this moment?
- How am I different?
- How can I develop?

Upper right quadrant:

- What does actor x do?
- What does actor x know?
- What competences does actor x have?
- How does x solve problem Y?
- What are the impacts of actor x's behavior?
- How good is x in comparison to y?
- How can y be improved?

Lower left quadrant:

<http://leadership-for-transition.eu/>

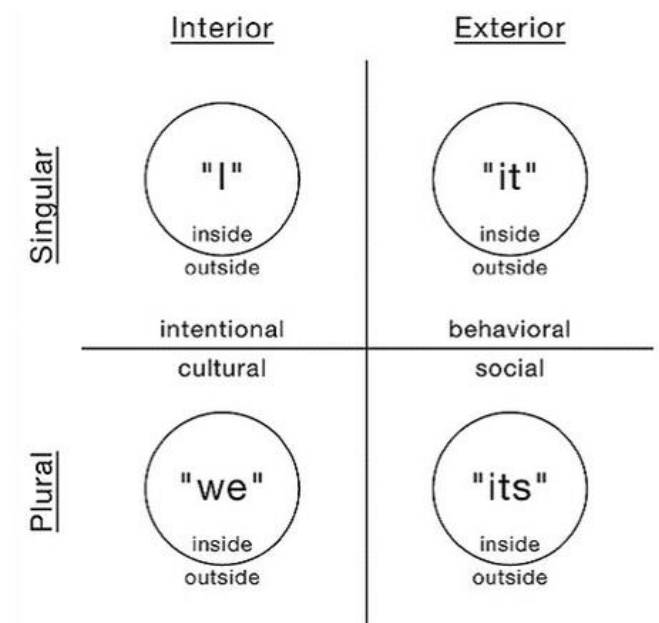


Fig. 4.6a, zones of inquiry, taken from integralesleben.org

- Who are we as a community?
- What are our values?
- How are we different from others?
- What is our common problem (with x)?
- Why do others not understand us?
- (How) does x fit (to) us?
- What shall we do?
- How can we develop/grow together?

Lower right quadrant:

- How does this system/process work?
- How do these structures function?
- How can it be explained and measured?
- How can performance be raised or improved?
- How can the organization as a system be developed or restructured?

In Wilber's more recent writings, another distinction has been added between an inner and an outer perspective within all individual quadrants (Wilber, 2006). The distinction between what he calls two different "zones" takes into account the fact that one and the same phenomenon within a quadrant can again be viewed from within and from outside. For example, while phenomenological introspection and structuralist developmental psychology both deal with the individual psyche, the first looks at it "from the inside", i.e. by taking the inner perspective of the subject in question, and the second looks at it from the point of view of an external observer. The latter describes the respective inner processes as experienced and articulated by the individual by looking for patterns and structures that may not be conscious to the individual concerned.

The same applies to the other quadrants. Accordingly, the subject area of each quadrant can be viewed either from inside or from outside. In simple terms, there is a participant perspective on the one hand, which focuses on the corresponding experience, and a more objectifying, analytical perspective of an external observer on the other hand. The next section will explain this in some more detail for each of the individual quadrants.

The Upper Left Quadrant: Its subject area is the contents of individual consciousness in a broad and comprehensive sense. This includes both the concrete contents themselves (e.g. perceptions, thoughts, emotions, but also contents that are drawn from books, magazines, TV transmissions, etc.), the dynamics of psychological processes, and the patterns, structures and mechanisms in which they are processed.

As already mentioned, the contents of individual consciousness can be observed phenomenologically, that is, by **introspection**, as it happens, for example, in meditation or scientific phenomenology in systematic ways. In this context, we need to bear in mind that inner subjective experiences, as a rule, cannot be fully articulated verbally and thus made accessible to research. However, phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Amadeo Girogi have worked to bring rigor to the methods for investigating this realm.

On the other hand, consciousness contents can also be described with regard to their **structural, typical characteristics**, i.e., as it were, analyzed from the outside. This presupposes certain verbal expressions, either originating from phenomenological introspection, interrogations, or everyday contexts, where the individual in question has made already documented utterances. In each case, the context

of data collection and its potential influence on the data itself must be taken into account (see the quality criteria of qualitative research). Developmental psychologists such as Piaget, Kohlberg, Kegan, and others are investigating the structures of cognition, moral development, or ego identity by means of individual expressions generated in special procedures. The aim is to recognize typical cognitive patterns and their functioning, and to build general theories on this basis (see chapter 5).

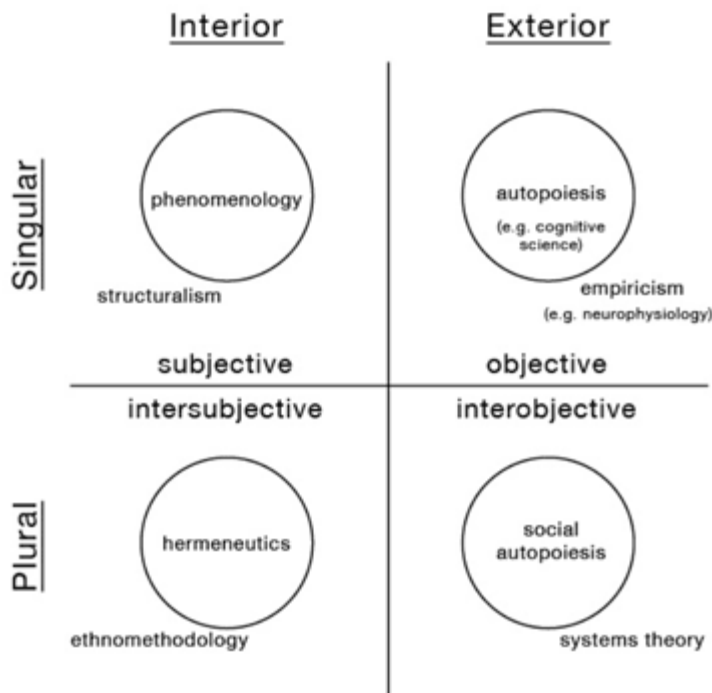


Fig. 4.6b, zones of inquiry, taken from integralesleben.org

experience, as well as his student Gadamer's concepts of "Wirkungsgeschichte (history of action)" and of the "controlled merging of horizons of understanding" (Figal/Gander, 2005).

Phenomena of intersubjective meaning-making can also be observed from the outside and described from an analytical, objectivizing perspective. As with the phenomena of the upper left quadrant, the latter presupposes that the phenomena are already documented in some form, that is, as a rule, verbalized and/or transcribed. If the analytical observation then looks for patterns, structures, and regularities within intersubjective communication, as ethnology, anthropology, and sociological discourse analysis do, this is systematic theorizing and, thus, a perspective on, and sometimes a comparative look at intersubjective inner phenomena.

The Upper Right Quadrant is dealing with the visible and materially present properties of objects and/or social actors. While classical behavioral sciences have traditionally studied only the directly visible behavior of the object or actor in question, and thus their exterior, more recent fields of research, such as the neurosciences, increasingly aim at also exploring what is observable (externally) within an object. The question asked here is what the respective object/actor demonstrably perceives, how it does so and what consequences this has. For example, neurobiology and cognitive sciences investigate how the perception and transmission of stimuli are related. They speak of *autopoiesis* when looking at how different components of an individual living system work together to ensure its continuity, thus taking a systemic perspective in the realm of biology. According to this, man (like other mammals) is

an autopoietic system which constantly re-creates itself independently. Based on the research by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1975, 1980, 1990), autopoietic theories are interested in the processes of self-preservation of biological systems, as well as in the specific forms of organization within which these happen.

The Lower Right Quadrant: Autopoietic processes are also of great importance in the context of social systems. They have therefore been intensively investigated and discussed in the context of sociological systems theory (see chapter 2.2). While classical systems theory mainly analyzes the external behavior of a system and its components, i.e. the reaction of different segments of a society to internal or external shocks, social autopoiesis has emerged as a new research direction here too, asking what holds systems together internally, how they constantly evolve and recreate themselves, and what mechanisms are at work here. This perspective thus looks into the interior of social systems from the outside, so to speak, using an objectifying lens. Metaphorically speaking, the observer "takes a seat inside the system, and observes the ongoing processes and procedures" (www.integralesleben.org). The already mentioned sociological systems theorist Niklas Luhmann is an important representative of this research perspective.

Put differently, research in the lower right quadrant, on the one hand, addresses the question of how certain social subsystems (e.g. politics, economics, law, science, religion, etc.) react to particular external or internal changes themselves. On the other hand, they look at how the multiple reciprocal interactions of several of these processes influence the stability or instability of the system, e.g. society as a whole.

4.1.3 Consequences: Integral methodological pluralism

"There is only one wrong view: the conviction that my perspective is the only right view." (Shankara)

Summing up, from an integral point of view, at least eight ideal-typical perspectives for analyzing "reality" can be distinguished. This general distinction also applies when analyzing leadership in and beyond organizations of course. Each of these perspectives appears appropriate for exploring a specific subject area or aspect thereof within a quadrant. In view of obtaining a comprehensive understanding of a complex phenomenon such as leadership, single ones of these perspectives alone are therefore not sufficient, but would be rather reductionist. The integral approach attempts to avoid such reductionisms, which tend to provide one-sided, or even strongly distorted understandings of reality:

- For example, limiting one's perspective to the subjective inner or consciousness dimension leads to a so-called "**solipsism**", i.e. a one-sided mentalism or subjectivism ("the world only exists in my individual mind").
- If all other realms are reduced to the intersubjective socio-cultural dimension, this might lead to **cultural constructivism**, often associated with relativism. Everything then appears to be culturally constructed, which is usually accompanied by turning a blind eye on differences of values which are all regarded as equivalent.
- Isolating the dimension of external action or behavior tends to reduce the view by disregarding subjective aspects such as intentions and motivations, as it is the case, for example, in **behaviorism** or **materialism**.

- Limiting one's perspective to the outer objective system dimension can also lead to subtle reductionism. For even though it recognizes a systemically structured and functioning web of interrelations, the way these are investigated tends to remain purely external, technical and materialistic, and thus, again, disregard aspects of "heart and soul", so to speak. For such an approach excludes subjective and intersubjective experiences and their influence on the behavior of systems or at least devaluates them by their own rather one-sided, **technical functionalism**.

From the perspective of an **integral methodological pluralism** (IMP) as proposed by Wilber, organizations, their members and other leadership contexts are neither simply given, i.e. unchanging external realities, nor contingent constructs. Neither can they be explained only by functional laws and causalities, nor just as individual cases. Moreover, from an integral perspective, the different methodological approaches all have their relative meaning and validity. All of them are, as a rule, in a certain way suitable or "true", but these tend to be only partial truths. In contrast to whatever kind of more selective methodology, the integral approach views the diverse existing research orientations and methodologies as not only compatible, but also as complementary in view of a more comprehensive (integral) understanding of the phenomena in question.

Integral leadership research is concerned with capturing as many different aspects of leadership practice as possible, as well as with revealing core patterns and relationships. Therefore, it strives to take into account both the right-hand and left-hand methods, both individual and collective, cultural or systemic aspects of the phenomena in question within an integrative research design. It also integrates rational insights with empirical findings. Furthermore, in an integral research design, new theoretical approaches do not simply replace older ones, which would thus become superfluous, but they are rather viewed as an extension of the perspective by which the complex realities within and beyond organizations can be understood. Which methodological tools are selected and used is decided based on the phenomena that are to be examined, the research question, and the given field of observation.

In the course of this, it can of course make sense to triangulate or integrate several methods, i.e. to simultaneously use them in a structured (for example a time-shifted) and coordinated way. This triangulation and integration of method helps, on the one hand, to obtain complementary insights into the object of research by gathering different kinds of data and perspectives. On the other hand, it also serves the cumulative validation of methods and results (see Kelle/Erzberger, 2000, p. 302f.). By integrating and reviewing different methodologies, the integral epistemology and methodology, first, builds upon scientific discourse and standards in the relevant area. At the same time, however, it also strives to go beyond, or even overcome the widespread idea of a scientific and epistemological opposition between the investigating subject and the investigated object.

The integral approach thus tries to offer a paradigmatic shift by going beyond the still predominant dichotomy between subject(ivism) and object(ivism) which also continues to play a role in parts of leadership studies (see Deeg, 2005, pp. 31ff.). For with the "paralogical", a-perspectival approach of the integral framework, the existing plurality of methodological approaches is deliberately made productive use of, while the associated tensions are accepted and addressed in view of ways to integrate them productively (Czarniawska, 2001, p. 19, Deeg, 2005, p. 17).

Even though this kind of integral methodology is not yet widely used even in comparatively open research designs (see Lüders, 2000, p. 393f.), it contains promising potentials, especially for research on complex leadership challenges in and beyond organizations. These are now spelled out in a more detailed with regard to all four quadrants of the integral model.

4.2 Analyzing the four quadrants of leadership in and beyond organizations

The most important leadership challenge in and beyond organizations are the people involved themselves who are part of the respective setting. They can be understood as individual holons. As to the surplus value of the integral model, as mentioned before, one of its most important contributions to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexity of leadership is probably its systematic integration of the two inner dimensions (left quadrants). When going through all quadrants now, I will follow a modification to the Wilberian model that is particularly pertinent in view of analyzing leadership and that Marc Lucas has proposed¹. He suggests to consider the Upper Right one (behavior and activity) as the core locus of leadership action and to model it as a “resultant” of the other three quadrants, since it needs to take into account all of the former when putting it into practice. I will begin with the inner dimensions which are so often neglected in more conventional leadership approaches.

4.2.1 Upper Left Quadrant (ULQ): *Consciousness, perception and psyche*

The intra-subjective dimension (realm) is crucial for analysing leadership because it describes, on the one hand, the leader’s personality and state of being and, on the other hand, the multiple factors defining the conscious and unconscious inner worlds of all other individuals involved, which are usually at the heart of tensions, frictions, and conflicts in the life of an organization or a project. This realm thus encompasses the personal inner world(s) (subjectivity) of any involved individual (whether employee or executive, regardless of their role within an organization or project). Since a lot of this quadrant’s content tends to remain unconscious to the individuals in question, this dimension is often neglected in more traditional, especially in the right-hand-oriented leadership theories. Here, this realm essentially comprises any content of consciousness, i.e. cognition, perception, emotion and inner states, whether or not these are consciously reflected by the persons concerned. Therefore, it can not be fully grasped methodically. The phenomena explored in this quadrant include in particular:

- perceptions
- sensations
- feelings,
- thoughts

as well as psychic phenomena derived therefrom and condensed within the framework of personality such as

- needs
- Potentials (willingness) and internal dispositions
- attitudes and
- identities.

In everyday communication in and beyond organizations

- intentions (as goals) and
- motivations (as values) of the individual

¹ Personal communication, 2014.

<http://leadership-for-transition.eu/>

are also significant.

These subjective (psychic) phenomena inside the individual can be investigated by various methods, as described in section 4.1.2. What is important here, however, is to take their inner complexity as well as the manifold interactions between these sub-dimensions of self and cognition into account. For between different mental dimensions, there can be both synergies and contradictions or seemingly paradoxical constellations. Wilber's model differentiates between different so-called "lines" of development, including, for example, cognitive, emotional/interpersonal, and spiritual intelligence and several other domains of personal skill, each of which can be developed to very different degrees in an individual at one point in time.

Adult cognitive development research (see chapter 5) has also identified different areas of personality development that are partly interdependent. Yet, in many respects, they appear to be independent developmental variables and therefore have to be analyzed in their own right. For example, the relationship between cognition, social perspective taking ("emotional intelligence"), moral judgment and concepts of the self (identities) has been described as one of the interdependencies, inasmuch as the first-mentioned dimensions are necessary but not sufficient presuppositions of the latter. This means, for example, that a top manager with high degree of cognitive-strategic competence is not necessarily also a good team worker or a leader. They might, for instance, lack social-emotional intelligence and thus be perceived as cold, selfish or distant.

Personality profiles, which are created with the help of appropriate, sufficiently differentiated methods, can help to determine the strengths and weaknesses of individual leaders and team members more precisely. On this basis, they can also propose measures for employee and team development, as well as for conflict resolution in and beyond organizational contexts.

This more comprehensive exploration of individual inner worlds undertaken in the integral approach also promotes a more complete perception of the individual as a person, and can thus support their feeling of being seen and taken seriously. For this dimension is defined as the entire realm of inner experiences by which individuals also experience themselves as both subjects and members of a larger holon (i.e. organization) or actively construct themselves as such, and from which they ultimately derive their actions (see Chapter 4.2.4, Upper Right Quadrant).

Moreover, a systematic conceptual consideration of personal consciousness goes far beyond the widespread view that organizations and other cooperative contexts, their purposes and structures are built and kept alive solely on the basis of rational considerations. By also integrating various kinds of psychodynamics, some of which might even remain un- (sub-) conscious to the respective individuals (cf. Carr/Gabriel, 2001, Sievers et al., 2004), seemingly "irrational" or "emotional" behaviors can be made comprehensible and manageable. Moreover, the integral perspective can explain and help to understand the inner logics and consistency of certain behavioral strategies based on the underlying personality profiles, identity concepts or structures of perception and processing information.

As leadership studies have increasingly recognized, social action in organizations (and elsewhere) happens on the basis of very different factors, such as emotional conditioning, affects and motivations, which usually escape simple, linear and causal explanations. Not only does the psychological dimension of individual consciousness influence social actors' behavior in organizations, working groups or other communities. Interactions within the latter also influence the former. Moreover, in the integral four-quadrant model, the subjective inner dimension shapes the individual's behavior, their willingness and ability to build communities with others and to act in them (URQ), as well as the way in which the individual can be integrated into systemic structures beyond the individual. Thus, the subjective inner

realm is an essential personal foundation for all external action, for their "fit" with communities and the outside environment. Accordingly, this realm can be defined as a highly individual, but not as an originally "private" one, given its close direct and indirect relationships with the other realms.

It is therefore not surprising that the analysis of cognitive processes, but also of emotions, identities, and other dimensions of individual consciousness, is gaining increasing attention in research and practice (see Küpers/Weibler, 2005). Making individual "inner worlds" conscious and explicit is highly relevant for identifying and understanding psychological patterns and motivations behind concrete actions and behaviors of individuals in and beyond organizations that leadership has to take into account.

With its empirical investigation of phenomena in the upper left quadrant, the integral approach clearly goes beyond mere theoretical claims about "human nature", as they are often formulated in certain theories about leadership, but equally often remain implicit and unreflected in leadership practice. Since similar assumptions usually represent general claims about the essence, needs, behaviors etc. of "all humans", they tend to turn into behavioral norms once such ideas become culturally dominant.

Understandings of man can of course be very different. The spectrum that can be found in the literature extends from the simple assumption of man as being a "rational" economic actor, to man as a "social being" to more complex notions such as man being in constant development (see Schein, 1980, pp. 50ff.). Among the more well-known examples of personality concepts based on certain ideas of man are Maslow's motivation theory of self-realization (see Maslow, 1954) or McGregor's theory X and Y (see McGregor, 1960) and Argyris's maturity model (see Argyris, 1964).

The integral approach's idea of man is that of a highly complex, and as such hardly fully comprehensible being, who is capable of self-transformation and development (for the dimension of personal development, see chapter 5 below) and the inner complexity of whom eludes simple theoretical descriptions. Therefore, individual humans need to be explored empirically with regard to both their inner psychological states and their external, collective and systemic relations (see also sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3). The integral model also provides a heuristic tool for analyzing similar ideas of man as they occur in leadership research and practice in view of their respective strengths, weaknesses and blind spots.

4.2.2 The Lower Left Quadrant (LLQ): Community – Culture – Value structures

Identifying which values and ideas of man prevail in a specific leadership context, including the guiding principles of leadership and organization that are at work, points to the intersubjective dimension of the integral model. It focuses on the community aspects and the cultures that are shared in a specific collective setting. This is the interpersonal (intersubjective) dimension of the implicit, cultural frameworks which shape individual and organizational activity in a particular social context. It encompasses the totality of the values, norms and attitudes which are generally shared in an organization or group and which influence both the behavior of its members (including motivation, performance, the general sense of purpose and the way things are getting done), as well as the way the organization is perceived from the outside (Pümpin/Kobi/Wüthrich, 1985, Heinen/Dill, 1990). The values, conventions, beliefs and rules inside an organization can either be traditionally observed or brought in by the members, teams or working groups (individual holons) themselves. In addition to specific everyday practices, an organizational culture is usually also accompanied by a corresponding identity, a shared view of what the organization or group and their members jointly work towards (mission, vision etc.).

The concept of culture describes, in particular (although not exclusively), those values and behavioral patterns which are shared by group members implicitly. It can thus be described as the sum of everything that is held to be self-evident (Hinterhuber/Krauthammer, 1998). As a kind of "social grammar" of interorganizational thinking and action (cf. Martin/Behrends, 1999, p. 83f), culture also plays a role as a stabilizer of a group's or organization's structures and functioning. Just as the grammar of a language makes communication possible without defining the contents of what can be said, culture also regulates social behavior in an indirect, invisible manner. It can be characterized with Foucault as the "order of truth" prevailing in a particular (organizational) community as an intersubjective space (Foucault, 1978), and according to which certain utterances, practices, and values are considered to be "true", while others are considered "untrue," wrong or simply unsuitable. Ken Wilber has described the character and quality of the intersubjective spaces in the lower left quadrant as follows:

"Whether I agree with my culture or criticize it – first of all I need it for intersubjective meaning to be able to arise at all. If my thought is not in accordance with culture, I am perhaps a genius who has risen above the conventions; but perhaps I am also a psychotic who has lost all relationship with his fellow human beings. The criterion of validity in the lower left quadrant is, in any case, not so much truth or truthfulness, but consistency and appropriateness: not whether I am subjectively sincere, but whether I have the right, adequate intersubjective agreement, whether I am within the cultural interpersonal value space (...) whether you and I can come to a mutual understanding. Not objectively, not subjectively, but intersubjectively "(Wilber 2001, p. 180, *my translation*).

Seen in this way, the intersubjective dimension is, above all, an interpretative community of values. For values and interpretations of the reality in and beyond organizations must be conveyed communicatively between individuals. In this way, the organization is, as it were, are "produced and consolidated communicatively" (see Kieser, 1988). Looking at the lower left quadrant from the inside and from the outside, the spaces it describes functions both in identity-building and in structuring ways.

From the inner viewpoint, as interpretive communities, the realm of organizational cultures can be explored through "narrative practices," myths, and so forth (see, among other things, Czarniawska 1997; Gabriel, 2000) and through symbolic practices (cf. e.g. the symbolic interactionism, Mead 1978; Blumer, 1973; Hall, 2008). Narrative representations of organizational everyday life (the same refers to teams, working groups and projects) can be a source of collective self-construction, identification and thus integration via shared stories and experiences. A common cultural identity space is thus built up which reduces perceived organizational complexity, thereby reducing anxieties and uncertainties while at the same time strengthening common ground and a sense of belonging (Steinmann/Schreyögg, 2005, p. 711). In this sense, narratives and meaningful stories can be building blocks of a "social map" which serves members' orientation within the respective organization. In addition, they also offer a framework of interpretation of what is happening outside the organization (see Schein, 1985, Neuberger/Kompa, 1987, Turner, 1990). Moreover, a uniform, clearly visible, "strong" culture is often strived for as an attractive USP, because a specific profile can directly or indirectly determine the success of an organization (compare Deal/Kennedy, 1982). Inversely, strong organizational cultures may also tend to exclude criticism, devalue new orientations, and to an obsession with traditional success patterns, which can turn into change barriers (see Saffold, 1988). To sum up, narrative and symbolic representations can be a medium through which a group's values, meaning and beliefs are not only produced and legitimized, but can also be reproduced, changed and further developed.

It should be emphasized that the idea of a unified, self-contained culture is always a fiction that is never (completely) given, neither in open and globalized societies nor in organizations, milieus and groups which act inside it (see Lotmann, 1990). In fact, the cultural space of an organization is usually characterized by diverse, conflicting subcultures (see Gregory, 1983, Sackmann, 1992), some of which can even act as countercultures to the “mainstream” culture of the organization (see Martin/Siehl, 1983, p. 52 et seq.). This leads to a juxtaposition of different symbolic and value systems (see Dierkes, 1988, p. 563) and thus, in some cases, to contradictions, tensions and conflicts between different functional areas due to different cultural standards. Subcultural orientations can arise, for example, as a result of differences of status or area. For instance, workers, employees and managers can develop their own subcultures within the same company. If promoted in an authoritarian (top-down) way, company goals, expectations or values can therefore create conflict with contrasting needs for participatory processes around goals and expectations (bottom up). The same is true for cultural differences between marketing, strategic planning, R&D or accounting cultures within a company, which can lead to competition and conflict. If these are not addressed adequately, dysfunctional interrelations and interactions between the affected areas can cause subsequent problems.

This is precisely why, in an integral perspective, understanding the different (sub-)cultures in organizations and beyond is of central importance. An organizational culture prescribed from above misses its integrative purpose if it is not based on the consent of subcultures, status groups and individual employees, or is at least compatible with them. So in view of existing subcultures, it appears inappropriate to assume that organizational cultures can easily be managed, governed or technocratically administered from above (cf. Bardmann/Franzpötter, 1990, p. 434). It is true that leadership has to ensure that common, overarching patterns ensure a minimum degree of homogeneity and cohesion (see Trice/Beyer, 1993, p. 184). At the same time, however, it must also be conceptually capable of understanding and appreciating the different ways of thinking and the value systems which characterize the respective subcultures in order to be able to integrate them constructively into decision-making processes, taking their respective potentials, needs and interests into account.

In this respect, the integral understanding of "culture" presented here also includes a vertical dimension of analysis, which is explained in more detail in chapter 5 below. The latter also looks at organizational cultures with regard to the structural complexity of how internal and external processes are perceived, interpreted and organized, as well as to the complexity of their guiding principles and their recommendations for action derived from them. The dimension of structural complexity is a decisive criterion of integral leadership theory and analysis and, consequently, of integral leadership capacity.

For only this multi-dimensional view of culture (content and structure, horizontal and vertical complexity) allows for dealing adequately with the variety of stakeholders, and with their differently structured needs, expectations and subcultures, as well as for creating maximum synergies between them.

To deal appropriately with different subcultures means, in particular, to adapt one's own leadership behavior to the needs of the respective cultural field, in order to be able to communicate successfully and to engage diverse members in constructive ways. It also means to accept, tolerate and actively work with different individual histories and identities, to tolerate ambiguous and sometimes paradoxical realities and interpretations and to appreciate existing tensions as sources and building blocks of creative, mutually enriching strategies of problem solving.

Integral leadership generally aims to put the different stakeholders, team members and contributors in service of far-sighted, productive and co-creative processes, within or beyond specific project or organizational structures, in order to achieve superior goals. As a rule, this also invites individual and organizational learning and development, and can increase problem-solving capacities of the members

and stakeholders involved. It thus also helps them to deal with tensions and conflicts in their respective areas of work or functioning. On these grounds, integral leadership can become a powerful tool for creating spaces which positively “influence” the behavior of individuals and teams, as well as the relationships between them in constructive and synergetic ways.

Organizational cultures thus have to be perceived as highly dynamic and emergent entities that are subject to constant change. Practices of interpretation and communication should therefore be conceived as open-ended, although context-specific and subject to time. In this sense, culture is both a process and its (ever changing) result.

Because of its fundamental overarching character and its both formal and informal aspects, the dimension of culture ultimately forms a unique bridge to the other dimensions of the integral model. I will look at some of the interrelations between the quadrants in more detail later (see chapter 4.3). At this point, simply note that the cultural dimension – i.e. the norms, values and habits which govern various kinds of communities do influence the feeling and thinking, as well as the capabilities and behavior of its individual members and the character and functioning of the institutional and systemic setting all of this is embedded in. While the other dimensions contribute to generating culture as an intersubjective experience, the interactions between them make the meaning of culture fully visible and understandable for the organization. Therefore, culture can also serve as a bridge between the subjective and the objective dimensions, which is the focus of the next sub-chapter.

4.2.3 The Lower Right Quadrant (LRQ) – systems, institutions and organization

As an inter-objective domain, the lower right quadrant describes the structural, institutional and systemic parameters and conditions in which leadership takes place, and thus the broader organizational and social environment. It is called “inter-objective”, because it is about abstract, i.e. general, binding, mostly institutionalized rules, which define the relationships between individual objects and entities in a social context. The LRQ thus contains the “consolidated”, formalized results of processes of interpretation and negotiation, which take place in the lower left quadrant. As social entities, organizational systems and other institutions define specific qualities and characteristics of the respective social horizon. Besides structures and functional interrelations, this might include systematically generated artefacts, i.e. visible, material products and expressions of institutional functions (for example schools, administrative buildings, production sites). For these acquire their actual inter-objective function and meaning only within the respective systemic or organizational context.

A system’s or organization’s resources, such as shared knowledge, competence pools, organizational structures and procedures established for their optimal use are also part of this dimension, as well as the physical and technological infrastructure (in a company, above all, machinery, information and communication technology, i.e. the working and production conditions). Taken together, these aspects constitute the external environment of leadership in its specific context. The inter-objective realm thus represents the visible “incarnation” of that context, i.e. and organization.

As a rule, the lower right quadrant deals with structures, resources, agreements and physical and technical conditions which provide or produce binding, permanent and impersonal (formalized) patterns for organizing the (working) relations between the individuals who are organized in the respective institutional space (see Scott, 1998, p. 17). The result of such permanent patterns is a long-term functional structure organizing the parts (persons) in relation to the whole (organization) (see Mayntz, 1969, p. 81). It can thus be seen as a key instrument which organizations use to frame, direct and

oftentimes control the behavior and interactions of their members with regard to the achievement of their goals (cf. Schanz, 1994, p. 74). Binding organizational objectives can therefore also be part of the contextual conditions, as long as they frame and contribute to shaping the behavior of the members as permanent guidelines and measures for evaluating individual and collective behavior and performance. At the same time, the functioning of institutions generally also depends on the members' observance of the respective rules.

Comparing the lower right quadrant to the lower left one, it becomes clear that the ways in which order is formed and preserved here is characterized by a high degree of formalization, standardization and consequently objective verifiability, in contrast to the more implicit and informal guidelines and norms in LLQ (community/culture). While the inter-subjective realm of (organizational) culture is the place where (implicit) orders emerge or are reaffirmed, the inter-objective realm provides stronger means to ensure compliance with that order and its rules (cf. von der Oelsnitz, 2000, p. 25).

So far, our description of the Lower Right quadrant mainly illustrated it in a rather general way, focusing on what happens in organizations, given that these represent the common context in which leadership takes place in the area of business. Yet, when considering leadership beyond organizations, for instance by looking at the multiple governance levels that political leadership is dealing with, the latter also has to take into account the existing systemic, i.e. state or institutional, legal and constitutional preconditions, limits and parameters in which it can take action. Note that nowadays, many of these systemic parameters are no longer national but subject to international and global governance rules and mechanisms.

In some sense, a Collaboratory workshop also uses LRQ elements, for instance, when providing a clear framing to the process, defining certain rules and roles and making them explicit.

The functions of a formalized system include:

- **Providing behavioral information:** channeling the spectrum of accepted behavior by reducing the range of possible or tolerated behaviors to what is desired, since behavior always follows or at least takes into account the existing, directly perceptible structures (Schanz, 1994, p. 74).
- **Defining (hierarchical) positions and roles:** behavioral expectations are often further specified by assigning positions which, in the case of organizations, are usually fixed in writing and linked to certain "objective task complexes" (see Staehle, 1999) , p. 698) and role expectations, for example in a job description. This has a prescriptive character for the behavior of the respective job holder.
- Formal rules also serve to **evaluate, justify and control the behavior** of the members of the organization and the handling of conflicts related to the rules in question.
- **Reducing conflicts:** As rules formalize the handling of potential conflict situations, they represent an apersonal authority which abstracts from concrete persons and current conflicts. For instance, they offer structured and binding communication processes in which the interpretation of the rules takes place (examples are the codes of procedure of the different courts.) This reduces the amount of necessary communication work. "Rules are (borrowed) power. Anyone who succeeds in anchoring, or at least citing appropriate rules, saves relational and justification work" (Neuberger, 2006b, p. 82). In addition to this, rules also protect against arbitrariness of hierarchies and limit unauthorized access to exclusive individual fields of action (Neuberger, 2006, p. 82f.).
- **Reducing uncertainty:** The more explicit, stable, visible and lasting the rules and conditions of (organizational) action, the more clarity members and participants can have about procedures and expectations, and the less energy they have to devote to organizational processes. This

supports efficiency, productivity, and ideally also the creativity of the organization's members and units.

- **Identity building:** Especially formalized rules are usually an expression of a certain consensus about the ways in which life and co-operation should be organized within an organization, and on what values and guidelines it should be based.

To sum up, organizational structures can function as a means to achieve certain goals via particular institutions or functional roles. At the same time, a certain order is expressed, implemented and confirmed by them. Behavioral expectations are codified and their observance rewarded, while non-observance leads to sanctions. The way in which this is done depends, of course, on numerous parameters, especially in the lower left quadrant which indicate the prevailing complexity of the thinking, behavior and of the guiding values of those involved.

As indicated above (see chapter 1), organizations in today's understanding (including modern companies) are, on the one hand, a product of modern differentiation, rationalization and bureaucratization processes. On the other hand, the guiding principles of leadership in and beyond organizations have changed considerably over the last decades, especially as a result of cultural change, postmodern impulses and theory developments (cf. chapter 1.3). This implies, among other things, an increasing reflexivity of both leadership and the structures, within which it takes place. Previous "ideal types" are increasingly understood as too rigid and inflexible while more agile and dynamic structures, open for and adaptive to changing environments, gain importance. In the course of this changing view of leadership in and beyond organizations, practices and rules become more flexible too. Employees are judged less by their degree of conformity to existing rules, but are increasingly invited to engage in critical thinking and to actively participate in further developing the organization as a whole

Moreover, a postmodern (and an integral) understanding will emphasize the context-dependent, constructed, and hence fundamentally changeable nature even of supposedly stable systems and structures. An integral perspective furthermore considers that existing organizations and institutions are not always the result of a purposeful "design process" but more often than not "organically grown entities" whose development and transformation are at least partially due to various interacting contextual influences. Therefore, they tend to withdraw from being (fully) controlled by whatever kind of leadership.

Also, in an integral leadership context (for instance, a holacratic organization), critical or divergent behaviors which deviate from certain (unwritten) norms, for instance, are not per se perceived as threats to the organizational structure to be punished, but rather as indicators of dysfunctionalities to which the organization should react in its own interest. Therefore, traditional and modern descriptions of the interplay between organizational structure, rules and roles must be modified in several respects from an integral point of view. For example, while modern organizations tend to "appoint certain members as supervisors of others, providing them with authority to instruct them" (Kieser/Kubicek, 1992, p. 456), there are no supervisors in the strict, hierarchical sense in a holacratic (integral) organization, only holders of roles which have been jointly defined at a certain moment in time (see Robertson, 2015, Fein, 2009, Wittrock, 2007). Also, "positions" are conceived much more flexibly here than in a modern bureaucratic understanding. Yet, even in integral organizations, rules and structures, even though much more flexible, are an important element of the organization.

This points to the multiple interrelations between the quadrants/realms of the integral model. Structures do restrict individual thinking and acting, but can inversely also be used actively in order to pursue certain goals. The stable patterns and relations created by the organizational structure, on the one

hand, frame what is possible in the other realms. On the other hand, no behavior in organizations is completely determined by structures and roles (see Walgenbach, 2000, p. 94). Rather, the latter usually open up spaces for individual action and thus create possibilities for design and co-creation, which can ultimately also transform the structures themselves. In this sense, there is a close interaction between structures, psyche, cultures and communities, as well as the behavior of individual members inside them, which the next sub-chapter will now look at. For the behavior of leaders (and other members of the respective organization or collaborative context) plays a key role in view of understanding integral leadership which (as any other type of leadership) describes a specific relation between the individuals involved.

4.2.4 The Upper Right Quadrant (URQ) – The realm of physical observables, behavior and impact

The subject area of this quadrant (realm) encompasses the physical/material and objective basis and the visible expression of individual actions and behavior in and beyond organizations. In the perspective of the upper right quadrant of the integral model, individual action is regarded in its externally observable dimensions which can be more or less objectively described.

In order to characterize the specificity of this realm, it is helpful to first **distinguish the concepts of behavior and action**. *Behavior* is the most common term for any activity or reaction of an organism. The term includes physical and muscular responses (e.g., lifting an arm) as well as the activities of the central nervous system, or the processes controlled by it (e.g., thinking as nervous stimulation). In this perspective, behaviors are initiated by inner and outer stimuli. The dimension of consciousness as a subjective reality essentially remains excluded in the perspective of this quadrant.

In contrast, *action* is generally defined as intentional, goal-oriented and meaningful behavior, and thus as a "subset" of behavior (see, for example, Wiswede, 1998, p. 44, Schimank, 2000, p. 23). In its delimitation from the concept of behavior, the concept of action emphasizes the peculiarity of human (inter) acting as compared to animal behavior. At the center of the sociological concept of action is therefore the human ability to speak, as well as the quest for meaning and giving meaning to one's actions. Unlike animals, humans are characterized by their ability to shape their lives through speech. By exchanging and consulting with others about their situation, they give their experience a subjective and sometimes intersubjectively shared meaning.

In the course of socialization, they, on the one hand, acquire the meanings that are shared in their respective cultural environment (cf. Schreyögg, 1995, p. 222, Hurrelmann, 2012). On the other hand, they also participate in (re)constructing shared, intersubjective meaning and culturally important knowledge themselves by being members of their respective community. Insofar as the observable behavior of humans consciously or unconsciously refers to meaning, or is even a result of a certain reflection on meaning, we speak of action. The sociologist Max Weber defines action as "a human behavior (...), if and in so far as the individual actor (...) connects a subjective meaning to it. 'Social' action, however, is an action the meaning of which is related to the behavior of others and which is oriented towards it." (Weber, 1922, p. 1, own translation). So by definition, the concept of action is always associated with meaning and, consequently, with a certain degree of intentionality or consciousness. Insofar as consciousness is a gradual phenomenon (reference to social norms and systems of meaning can, for example, also happen in unreflected ways), a clear distinction between action and behavior is empirically difficult.

So this quadrant offers a perspective on individual action which considers the latter above all as *behavior*, that is to say independently of its conscious dimensions. Since individual (social) action as a comprehensive phenomenon cannot be understood independently of subjective and intersubjective dimensions and influences though, it can not be analytically situated exclusively in this quadrant. While its subjective content is the subject in the Upper Left Quadrant, the focus of URQ is directed towards its objective aspects. I will come back to the complexity of the phenomenon of action, in particular in relation to leadership, shortly (cf. chapter 4.3).

Note that in the context of leadership in and beyond organizations, we speak of actors both with regard to leaders and other members of the respective context, regardless of their specific roles or positions in the system or hierarchy in question. The sociological concept of action refers to both individual and collective actors (cf. Neuberger, 1997, p. 493), and often disregards specific individual properties or social conditions. In the integral quadrant model of leadership, however, these do come into focus and are given systematic consideration.

Among the objective variables which can be observed in this quadrant with respect to the behavior of individuals in leadership situations (in and beyond organizations) are, for example,

- a) concrete perceptible utterances and visible actions
- b) behavioral patterns and habits
- c) formal characteristics of the people leadership is dealing with (most often: members of an organization or working context)
- d) the personal characteristics of these individuals (for example members of the organization), which might allow inferences with regard to various aspects of their performance in important dimensions of the working context (for example, objectively quantifiable knowledge, specific competencies and abilities which manifest themselves in measurable elements of action)
- e) motivating and decision-making practices
- f) observable leadership styles.

Among the verbal and non-verbal actions and behavioral patterns, the following can be observed and determined externally:

- The extent, frequency, and nature of an individual's interaction with others
- The scope, frequency and nature of verbal communication with others
- the duration of various observable activities an individual performs for the organization
- The nature and extent of an individual's presence at a certain location (i.e. the organization's office).

The last two factors can also be used as criteria for determining who should actually be considered as a member of an organization (see Scott, 1998, p. 19).

Note that none of these have to do with assessing the quality of any aspect on these lists. Rather, perspectives in this quadrant's realm of observable facts and things, would explore certain formal characteristics of the people of interest. These might be about

- the type of their formal membership or affiliation with the organization or working context concerned (kind of employment, contractual or voluntary basis, partner status, shareholders, etc.)
- in relation to this, the degree of their (financial, legal, etc.) dependence on the organization
- the hierarchical position they occupy or function they hold and the rights, duties and behavioral roles associated with that

- their affiliation with certain subholons, such as departments, working groups, teams, but also informal networks, etc.

Furthermore, the perspective of this quadrant observes the competences, skills and qualifications of the people involved, inasmuch they are important for their performance in collaborative processes and thus, for the functioning of the respective organization or working context. The concept of competence is used in many different ways and with different meanings in the literature. It sometimes combines both (more formal) competences or responsibilities and specific qualifications, abilities or a more general "know-how" (for uses in the domain of personnel development area, see Heyse/Erpenbeck, 1997 and Geißler/Orthey, 1998). Since the integral model locates purely formal competences in the domain of the lower right quadrant (of institutionalized roles), the term competency is used here primarily as a combination of the actual capabilities, knowledge and dispositions available to the individual and which become visible (observable) as results of their capacity for purposeful action (see also Hendrich, 2000, p. 33). However, in order to measure these in an objective way, formal training and qualifications are not sufficient. Therefore, methods for determining so-called soft skills (see chapter 5) appear more interesting.

To sum up, in this quadrant, "objectively" existing or emerging individual skills and competencies become visible, effective and investigable by looking at observable behavior and action. Moreover, typical behavioral practices can be observed particularly well in specific leadership or decision-making situations. This applies both to „leaders“ themselves and to their collaborators or subordinates, who are both part of the leadership relationship.

So the dimension of observable facts, behaviors and impact represents the place where intentions and purposeful action of individuals are realized, as well as their interaction with others while completing certain roles or tasks. Note that the interrelation between interior and exterior realms also goes the other way round, since behaviors and actions can also have an impact on consciousness. In other words, experiences in the external domain often stimulate reflection, lead to insights etc. in the interior realm. In fact, this reciprocal nature of this interaction is a core of action research, or action inquiry.

The fact that human behavior as a meaningful endeavor is always at the same time an *action*, and that this always takes place within intersubjective, social relations and references makes it clear that the dimension of individual action is always closely connected with the subjective dimension of the psyche, as well as with the cultural and social dimensions. Only on the basis of subjective intentions can action be understood as meaningful. And it is only through cultural and social contexts that social roles, tasks, and identities emerge, within which individuals act as participants, members or employees of organizations.

This also shows that the upper right quadrant can only represent a certain part of organizational activity, while the (re)sources which inspire it and the contextual conditions along which it is defined refer to human action's close interrelations with the two collective quadrants. Since human action (in all its complexity) plays a central role in the integral model of leadership, the "conventional" integral four-quadrant model will now be complemented by an additional concept, which places human action in the center. The latter tries to conceive leadership as a comprehensive, complex phenomenon which draws on all the three other dimensions.

4.3 Human action as a result of the dimensions of the integral model – the interdependence between the quadrants

As the previous sub-chapter have shown, leadership action, including both that of "simple" members of an organization or project and of leaders in a more narrow sense, essentially draws on three sources. As an intentional and meaningful phenomenon, it is inspired, **first**, by the ULQ, the dimension of subjective inner perception, experience and cognition and the structures and patterns it has developed for generating and processing emotions, motives, intentions etc. In the course of the subjective process of sense-making, individual action is embedded in these operations of interpreting those motives, intentions, etc. (see the definition of Weber, 1922). From an integral point of view, it must be stressed in this context, that action always includes unconscious parts, which are equally important for the emergence of specific actions. In western cultures, emotional components of behavior often part of this unconscious area, and so are many of the cognitive patterns, which pre-structure thought and action without being reflected by the acting individual. With its open, curious look at *all* elements of consciousness (including the unconscious ones), the integral perspective thus clearly goes beyond classical theories of action, which sometimes postulate only certain aspects of the psyche as being relevant for human action and thus or only take these into consideration while disregarding the whole spectrum.

Second, the culturally framed intersubjective meanings in which someone is embedded play a role for how individual action comes into being. These act as a guiding and routine knowledge and are both (passively) experienced and actively (re-) interpreted and then implemented appropriately by the individual. Cultural influences include, in particular, social values and associated implicit social rules and behavioral patterns, which are often not institutionalized, but nevertheless have a strongly binding character. Although concrete action can articulate itself as a protest or opposition behavior with regard to existing rules, it (directly or indirectly) always refers to social roles, conventions and the associated (more or less explicit) expectations of the social and cultural environment. With regard analyzing cultural influences, the integral perspective takes a particularly differentiated view on subcultural "tangled situations" as they result, among other things, from conflicts between values, patterns and practices of interpretation and communication which structurally differ in their complexity (for more detail see Chapter 5).

Thirdly, individual action is based on certain context conditions, which might be social or legal institutions, or other frameworks and structures which social actors are embedded in, be it inside organizations, working groups, projects or other broader systems. These context conditions mostly consist of codified roles, rules, institutions and structures that individuals are bound to deal with (e.g. government authorities, bureaucratic guidelines, regulations, laws, etc.) as well as the embedding higher-level systems in which all of the former are involved, such as political, economic and ecological governance systems, international trade regulations, etc. The same is true for larger macro-level developments and trends beyond their own influence (such as globalization etc.). These are, as it were, situational factors which restrict or enable individual (and organizational) action and, as such, have to be taken into account, even if this might not always happen fully consciously (see the ULQ). In this regard, the integral perspective sees itself as a consistently systemic view, or more precisely as a metasystem(at)ic perspective, which also takes into account the interactions and interdependencies between all of the involved dimensions and sub-systems. At the same time, it must take into account that the logics and dynamics of the individual (sub-)systems can reinforce, amplify, entangle or contradict one another, thus leading to dilemmatic situations and contradictory developments. For example, the market strategy chosen by an organization based on certain values can contradict long-term economic

trends. Consequently, leadership and decision-making may be confronted with dilemmas resulting from this.

The behavior of leaders and any other individual in and beyond organizations – whether in a leadership or subordinate position – must therefore be viewed as the result of these three influencing variables. However, this does not mean that individual (leadership) action could be exactly described or predicted on the basis of these factors. It merely means that from an integral point of view, these three dimensions must be considered when analyzing concrete actions in order to obtain any appropriate picture.

Considering that the first three quadrants inform and feed human behavior/action as the fourth one, and if we understand action in this more comprehensive sense (going beyond mere behavior), it is the result of intertwined influences from the other three dimensions. This, of course, is not yet a description as to how his influence takes place in detail, i.e. which concrete cultural values and norms, which context conditions and which structures affect the concrete actions of a concrete individual in what way. This can ultimately only be investigated empirically, that is, in a particular case, taking into account the empirical information in each area. This makes clear that and why simple, one-dimensional or linear theories and methodologies appear insufficient from the point of view of the integral, meta-systematic perspective.

Another factor that appears important in view of how action emerges is the relation between conscious and unconscious aspects (...). For as emphasized previously, the degree of consciousness of one's action is a gradual variable, which can differ in different individuals and even in the same individual in different areas of life. As a rule, individual action cannot consciously be based on all potentially relevant influencing factors, because no individual knows all of these in detail and can consequently process them appropriately. This is why the much-discussed fiction of the omniscient *homo oeconomicus* has also been much criticized. Rather, individual cognitive coping capacities are naturally limited. Moreover, as an expression and result of the individual's cognitive system, they are themselves one of the three decisive determinants for analyzing action. Consequently, when analyzing empirical individual action, we must ask how the acting individual perceives, interprets and makes sense/use of specific normative, cultural and social-institutional constraints and possibilities. And how all of this happens can be looked at based on their own presuppositions, needs, motives, interests and so forth, as well as in response to the actions of others which, in turn might again transform the ways in which certain actions appear possible, necessary or desirable.

For example, studies of present-day working worlds conclude that the ongoing internationalization, globalization, interweaving and increasing complexity of economic relations (LRQ) have generally increased competitive pressure. This, on the one hand, contributes to strengthen values like achievement, effectiveness and competition itself (LLQ). On the level of the individual (ULQ and URQ), these developments have often led to psychological problems and so-called "civilization diseases" among those people who have either internalized these values while neglecting others, or have not been able to escape them in their personal life. On the other hand, however, this has also led to increasing criticism of an economic system that puts the logic of profit over certain basic (immaterial) human needs and interests, such as health and fulfilling social relations. This insight has inspired other people to think about alternative life concepts, social and corporate designs and in some cases even to implement them.

This means that when acting, individuals – especially if they act consciously – are always faced with the choice between different options, which is often preceded by an (often unconscious) choice of

what is possible, conceivable or feasible in practice, before choosing which of them they want to realize. In principle, they can either adopt known strategies that have proven to work for them or invent new ones. For the latter, it might be necessary to learn new techniques of problem solving and conflict management in organizational settings and beyond. These can be seen as creative adaptations of both individual and potentially also organizational patterns of thinking and acting which are thereby (re)created, preserved and changed. This points to the dimension of development and transformation in all of the realms of the integral model, which chapter 1 has looked at to some degree (for the lower quadrants) and will take a closer look at in the following chapter 5 for the realm of individual cognitive development.

But before, the conceptual significance of *action* as a phenomenon at the intersection of personal, cultural and systemic-organizational factors deserves some special attention again. A corresponding model for integrating the first three dimensions of the model and their mutual interrelations has been presented by the American stress researcher **Joseph E. McGrath** at the beginning of the 1980s. He writes:

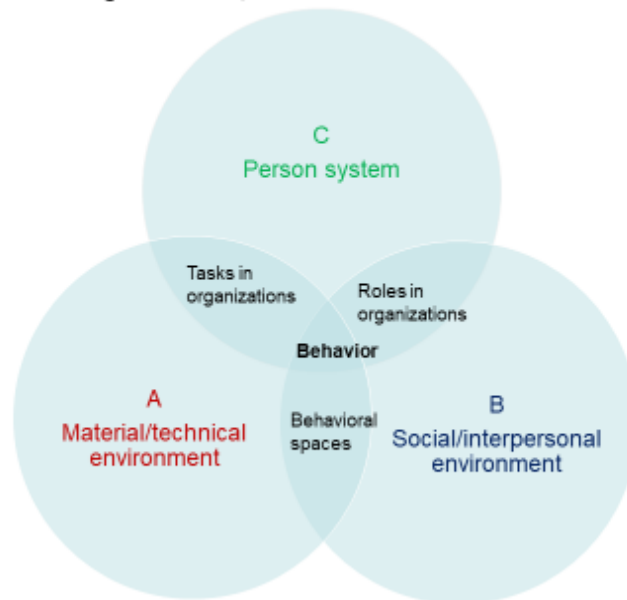
„We assume that [leadership] behavior in organizations is a particular sub-category of human behavior. We also assume that 'behaviors in organizations' are not characterized by different, specific forms of behavior, but rather by their occurring in a context whose parameters (...) characterize the social institutions that we (...) call 'organizations'. We also assume that we can regard behavior as the interaction of three theoretically independent systems, namely:

- a) the material and technological environment in which the behavior takes place;
 - b) the social milieu or the patterns of interpersonal relationships within which the behavior occurs; and
 - c) the 'persons system' or 'self-system' of the person whose behavior is under investigation
- (McGrath 1981, p. 458).
-

In other words, McGrath describes the first three dimensions of the integral model, whereas the fourth one, behavior, is resolved in a broader concept of action, and as such is put into the center of the model. McGrath has illustrated these relationships, as well as the resulting intersections between the quadrants graphically in the model below.

McGrath not only emphasizes the fact that the three systems a), b) and c) "interact or overlap" (McGrath, 1981, p. 458), but he also describes their intersections and interactions more closely. In his model, the three systems which human action draws on, are intertwined in such a way that two of them each form an intersection. In addition, an intersection of all three arises in the center. The former form three functional "constellations" that McGrath calls "behavioral spaces", "task constellations" and "role patterns" (McGrath, 1981, p. 461). At the very center of the model, human action (in and beyond organizations) as a comprehensive phenomenon emerges as a product or resultant of all three influencing systems, as well as of their functional intersections. Note that McGrath does not distinguish between action and behavior here, but uses "behavior" itself as a broad term, which also includes the consciousness dimension of the personal system. The other three intersections are specified by McGrath as follows:

Framework systems of action in organizations, according to McGrath, 1981



- The "**behavioral space**" is defined as the intersection of the material/technological environment (URQ) and the socio-cultural/interpersonal environment (LLQ), which determines what kind of behavior is actually possible and culturally acceptable in a given context. He refers to Barker's concept of "behavior setting" which describes the conditions that are composed of the "concurrence of material conditions with 'established patterns of behavior' which we call social behavioral patterns" (McGrath, 1981, p. 459).
- The intersection of the material/technological environment (URQ) and the personal system (ULQ) contains the specific **tasks** that emerge in a given organizational environment, with a focus on the technical aspect of behavior.
- The intersection of the personal system and the socio-cultural/interpersonal environment (LLQ) finally takes into consideration **social roles**, emphasizing the relational aspects and the interpersonal influences, which go beyond the more technical tasks described before.

Each of these intersections of two systems thus lacks one dimension in view of action actually becoming effective: behavioral spaces without persons are only passive potentials. Tasks without a specific socio-cultural purpose are meaningless. And roles without a specific temporal, spatial and material context remain abstract entities. So **human action as a whole "only occurs as an interaction of task, role and behavior"** (McGrath, 1981, p. 459). Depending on more specific questions and perspectives of analysis, however, focusing on one of the partial dimensions can also be useful.

The intersections and functional spaces of analysis as described by McGrath can be used for both practical and analytical purposes. They will be elucidated in more detail in the LiFT Methods and Case Books, using numerous examples from the LiFT project.

Summing up – and coming back to the initial questions, the integral model defines a comprehensive, complex perspective on leadership in and beyond organizations, as an approach which strives to include all four dimensions of the quadrant model. It thereby aims to make robust statements that are not reductionist and thus incomplete. This goes beyond the more conventional concepts of holism in leadership and management thinking outlined earlier in two regards. First, the integral model systematically puts its focus also on **both individual and collective inner dimensions**. In other words, all of the four dimensions are an integral part of the model's heuristic. No quadrant must be left out of the analysis at any moment. In practical regard, this means that integral leadership is an ongoing exercise of perspective taking, seeking and coordinating, which then leads to a dynamic of adaptive interaction of the "leader(s)" (or, in LiFT's case, the Collaboratory facilitators) with their actual – and potentially ever changing environment over the course of the whole process.

Second, it takes a **holonic perspective** (see chapters 2 and 3), i.e. it integrates elements in a structured way, taking into account their own structural characteristics and developmental complexity. In fact, the activity of perspective taking, seeking and coordination has shown to be a personal competence and skill that leaders can, and actually have to develop – and which to develop might need substantial time, focus and effort. The next chapter will look more closely into what leadership development means, what the value of it is, for instance in view of facilitating collaborative processes, and how it can be scaffolded.

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