



Coaching Report

November 2016

Directors' Corner

At our 2015 Annual Coaching Conference last year, one of the Research Sessions ended with a video of a huge flock of birds hypnotically flowing up and down and in all directions, in unimaginable synchronicity. Not one bird was out of synch, not one stood out from the group. This flight video was at the conclusion of Sean O'Connor's presentation, as a metaphor for the "Ripple Effect" – how coaching individuals resonates through a group or organization. The presentation was based on a study that Sean O'Connor and Michael Cavanagh had carried out the previous year, partly supported by a Harnisch grant from IOC. The findings from this study are elaborated in their article – [The coaching ripple effect: The effects of developmental coaching on well-being across organizational networks](#)¹. In our November Webinar, O'Connor will present new research and take these ideas further. The Webinar will expand our understanding of how coaching an individual can send ripples into the organizational relational networks, affecting not just the coachee, but also others, and how it can address the network cognitions (perceptions of social ties in the organization) of leaders and thus support their effectiveness.

Metaphors abound in our attempts to capture the power of relationships and the possibilities of relational realities. A new 2016 special issue of *Leadership Quarterly* approaches these topics from different perspectives, employing diverse ways of visualizing collectives, networks and relationships. They see leadership as "a property of the collective", as shared among the group. One article actually introduces the concept of ["flock leadership"](#)², and models how individuals coordinate with their peers. It asks how such ideas of emergent group behaviors change the role of leaders, and explores the implications for

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Predicting leadership relationships: The importance of collective identity

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Practices for Dialogically based Collaboration

- **WEBINARS:**

November 28th, 5:00-6:15pm

The Coaching Ripple effect: The Impact of Coaching on Leadership Networks and Organizational Effectiveness,

Sean Anthony O'Connor, PhD

December 8th, 10:00-11:15am

The Self as Multiplicity: A Challenge and Opportunity for Coaching,

Tatiana Bachkirova, PhD

practitioners. Employing also the metaphor of an orchestra, the article tells the story of the Von Karajan, the conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic, who conducted with minimal movements and directions. Instead, he would direct the orchestra's attention to particular musicians, and the members would continue playing by listening and coordinating with each other; creating music is beyond the simple sum of the individual players.

In this Coaching Report we feature in more detail another article from this special issue of *Leadership Quarterly* on collective and network approaches to leadership, exploring [collective identity](#)³, as well as the book [Relational Leading](#) - **Practices for Dialogically based Collaboration**⁴.

Coaching is usually associated with individual development through the one-on-one interaction with a coach. , This month's coaching report theme and the featured materials illustrate the relational nature not only of the coach-coachee dyad, but also of the non-linear reverberations that a particular coaching interaction can have through social networks.

1. O'Connor S, Cavanagh M. The coaching ripple effect: The effects of developmental coaching on wellbeing across organisational networks. *Psychology of Well-Being: Theory, Research and Practice* 2013;3:2.
2. Will TE. Flock Leadership: Understanding and influencing emergent collective behavior. *The Leadership Quarterly* 2016;27:261-79.
3. Chrobot-Mason D, Gerbasi A, Cullen-Lester KL. Predicting leadership relationships: The importance of collective identity. *The Leadership Quarterly* 2016;27:298-311.
4. Hersted L, Gergen KJ. *Relational Leading - Practices for Dialogically based Collaboration*: Taos Institute; 2013.



Irina Todorova, PhD, Director of Research
Institute of Coaching

HARNISCH GRANTS:

Next Grant Deadlines:

November 1st

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Research You Want to Know

Predicting leadership relationships: The importance of collective identity. By Chrobot-Mason, Gerbasi & Cullen-Lester in *The Leadership Quarterly*, 2016, 27(2), 298-311

Diverse literature that has been emerging on alternative, non-hierarchical conceptualizations of leadership – such as collective, network, plural, relational, distributed, shared - what is common to such understandings of leadership is that they “view leadership as a property of the collective, not the individual”. In light of this, a new [special issue](#) of the journal *Leadership Quarterly* recently brought together several articles which explore this shift in understandings of leadership.

The special issue includes articles that use different theories as a basis for such collective conceptualizations of leadership, as well as diverse methods for studying them. All of the articles in this issue of the 2016 *Leadership Quarterly* are thought provoking and are available in full text to members of the Institute of Coaching. From these we have selected one [article](#), which we will explore in greater detail.

This empirical study explores the relationships within an organization and how leadership can be understood as a network of informal leadership relationships, rather than just as stemming from formal individual leaders. Leadership is defined very specifically for this discussion – as “a social process for generating the direction, alignment and commitment needed by a group to accomplish collective goals”. Further, it proposes that how individuals in these networks construct their identity in relation to the team and the organization plays a role in such a collective understanding of leadership. For example, those whose self-concept includes the organization would be more likely to be seen as leaders, and to see others as leaders, whether they are formal leaders or not.

The research methods and assessments employed in the study are informed by this definition of leadership. For example in the network analysis participants in the organization were asked “to what extent is each of the following individuals a source of direction, alignment and commitment of your organizations’ goals”. They analyzed who the participant sees as a source of leadership, as well as is the participant seen as a source of leadership by the others, and thus identify the networks of these multidirectional “leadership ties”. They identified dyads and their degree of reciprocity – did both members of the dyad see the other member

also as a leader; as well as more complex relationships within the networks.

The findings from this study illustrate a relational view of leadership. For example, reciprocity was confirmed in the sense that if one person was seen as a leader, this person also tended to acknowledge others as leaders. Maybe not surprising, people in formal leadership positions were seen by others as leaders, but they themselves tended not to see other team members as leaders. People who create identities through valuing and working toward organizational goals tend to be viewed by others as leaders. Similarly, those that have a collective identity regarding the organization, also tend to be more likely to view others as leaders, independent of whether they have a formal leadership position or not.

In summary, collective identity is associated with a relational view of leadership in the organization; the article concludes that for an organization to espouse shared or distributed leadership, people need to identify with its goals and values. Coaching often is focused on developing a strong personal identity of individual leaders, while this article suggests that in addition to that, a collective identity might be associated with successful leadership, understood broadly. Leadership coaching can explore how the coachee identifies with the organization and supports such identification. This can lead to more egalitarian organizations, in which everyone's leadership skills and contributions are acknowledged and valued. Additionally, such a view in which everyone is seen as a leader is also an egalitarian view of leadership coaching – in which everyone has the right to receive and benefit from coaching.

An Important Book for Coaches

[Relational Leading](#) - **Practices for Dialogically based Collaboration** by Lone Hersted and Kenneth J. Gergen
Taos Institute Publications, 2013 **ISBN:** 978-1-938552-06-9

The focus of this book, *Relational Leading*, is on how the vitality and viability of the organization rely on communicative practices. In contemporary world conditions—where rapid flows of information, ambiguity, and risk prevail—relational process becomes pivotal. New practices of leadership are required, most significantly, skills in dialogue. After sketching the emergence of relational leading and key concepts in dialogue analysis, the book provides a rich range of practical dialogic challenges. The authors work with the reader in deliberating on “best practices,” thus

sharpening the reader's consciousness and preparing him or her for efficacy in relational leading. (From the publishers)

An excerpt from the Introduction states: "Meaning does not reside in the work or in the soul of the speaker or in the soul of the listener. Meaning is the effect of interaction between speaker and listener...". With this shift to a participatory view of communication, we also move away from training leaders to be "good listeners" or "good speakers". The crucial ingredient of leading is *skillful participation in the process of coordinated action*. "

Author Bios:

Born in Denmark, Lone Hersted was initially educated in the field of theater, as an actress and a dramaturg. Later she became an organizational consultant and a specialist in leadership and organizational development. She is currently a lecturer and Ph.D fellow at the Institute of Learning and Philosophy at Aalborg University.

Ken Gergen began his career as a social psychologist at Harvard University. Currently he is Senior Research Professor at Swarthmore College, and serves as the President of the Taos Institute. His major works include *An Invitation to Social Construction*, *the Saturated Self*, and *Relational Being*.

Live Webinars for IOC members

[View our Calendar section](#) for all our latest events and offerings.

November

The Coaching Ripple effect: The Impact of Coaching on Leadership Networks and Organizational Effectiveness with Sean O'Connor

Date: Monday, November 28th

Time: 5:00 - 6:15 pm EST

Presenter: Sean Anthony O'Connor, PhD

Given that leaders are embedded in complex networks of interaction it may be important to consider the potential for broader level systemic impact of change that begins at the individual cognitions of a leader. Preliminary research has shown that cognitive behavioral coaching can have an impact on the well-being of members, beyond those coached directly, through the coaching ripple effect (O'Connor & Cavanagh, 2013). Additionally, certain types of leaders have more effective perceptions of

existing network ties within the organization (i.e. network cognitions), which can be related to team effectiveness. In this webinar we will present recent research on changes observed in the relational networks of an organization following a coaching and will discuss individual leader network cognitions with particular attention to implication for coaching practice. Insights will be shared on the potential for cognitive behavioral coaching to improve leadership effectiveness by working directly with the network cognitions of leaders.

December

The Self as Multiplicity: A Challenge and Opportunity for Coaching with Tatiana Bachkivorva

Date: Thursday, December 8th

Time: 10:00 - 11:15 am EST

Presenter: Tatiana Bachkivorva, PhD

In this session we will consider how we understand ourselves as coaches – and what challenges and difficulties our self-understanding may introduce and foster in our practice. A non-traditional and therefore challenging view on the self will be proposed together with case examples from coaching that illustrate the issues the coaches regularly face. There will be an opportunity to discuss and experiment with different perspectives on the self.

Call for Papers

The new, peer-reviewed academic journal in the coaching space, titled 'Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal' has published its first issue and is making a call for the second issue. The journal accepts papers from practitioners, researchers, educators and others in the field of coaching.

We invite the following kinds of submission:

- Research Papers (5,000 words approx.) that bring together multiple, well-researched perspectives on a given topic
- Position Papers (3,000 words approx.) that articulate a single, well-researched perspective on a given topic
- Response Papers (1,000 words approx.) that take up and respond to ideas expressed in articles published in Issue 1 of *Philosophy of Coaching* (available at philosophyofcoaching.org); and

- Book Reviews (1,000-2,000 words approx.) of books published in the past 12 months that are relevant to coaches.

Deadline for submissions is February 1st, 2017 for publication June 1st 2017.

For more information, visit philosophyofcoaching.org or contact julian@philosophyofcoaching.org, Editor

Save the Dates!

Our next Annual Coaching in Healthcare and Leadership Conference – the “conference that never ends” – is set for **October 13-14, 2017**. Save the date and join us in Boston, MA for this one-of-a-kind 10th anniversary event!

Offerings for IOC Members

Not a member? Join us! The Institute of Coaching provides the best tools (thousands of on-line resources, webinars, coaching reports/digests, a sell-out annual conference and more), thought leaders and community to advance your coaching practice. Join our growing international community.

[Learn more about IOC membership](#)