Consciousness models in action: comparisons

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Abstract

This paper discusses various theoretical models of the evolution of consciousness as well as critically evaluates and integrates the models into a single organising framework, which is then applied to leadership theory.
The construct of consciousness as described by the Spiral Dynamics (SD) model of Clare Graves is linked to the work of other developmental and consciousness theorists, namely Wilber, Gebser, Piaget, May, Kohlberg, Perry, Loevinger, Maslow and Kegan. The spiritual perspectives of Wilber, Myss, Tolle, Atmananda and Hurtak as well as the work of McTaggart, Pribram and Hawkins representing a physics perspective of consciousness development, are discussed. The spiritual and scientific perspectives are addressed to contextualise the consciousness models. In addition, current leadership theory which primarily seems to focus on individual, group and organisational behaviour, is reviewed from an integral perspective to emphasise the relevance of consciousness theory within the leadership domain.

1. Introduction

In this paper, the construct of “levels of consciousness” as used in psychology and consciousness theory, is closely linked to those of worldviews, perceptual frameworks, organising systems, value orientations, “intelligences” or “memes”, in terms of which people understand and respond to their worlds. It reflects levels of awareness, or the inclusiveness, extensiveness, the depth and breadth by which incoming information is interpreted. These levels of consciousness largely determine intellectual, emotional and behavioural aspects of human functioning.

The various theoretical models on the evolution of consciousness reflect common themes, principles and structures. These models have emerged from different study fields including philosophy, physics, sociology, psychology, economics and theology, and address consciousness, cognitive, moral, educational, physiological and spiritual development.

All the models that are mentioned in this paper are not discussed in detail, and the focus is primarily on the contributions of Graves, Wilber, May and Myss. Gebser’s and Piaget’s work is merely addressed in support of Wilber’s AQAL model. The views of educationalists Perry and Kohlberg are briefly discussed under the heading of intellectual, moral and ethical development (section 2.4). Psychological perspectives such as Loevinger’s model of ego-states; Maslow’s need hierarchy; and Kegan’s equilibrium stages are mentioned but not discussed in any detail. These models are, however, included in the final integrated framework as proposed in this paper (section 3). Additional views from the spiritual and physical domains are referred to in support of the general themes that characterise speculations on consciousness. The role of consciousness theory in complementing current leadership models and practices is explored in terms of an integral perspective of leadership.

2. Theoretical models on levels of consciousness

2.1. Graves’s Spiral Dynamics (SD) Model

The Spiral Dynamics model of Graves, also referred to as the Emergent Cyclic Levels of Existence Theory (ECLET), provides a profound and elegant system in terms of which human development can be understood (Wilber, 2001). Wilber also points out that subsequent research has validated and refined the ECLET or SD model.
According to Graves, humans respond to life conditions by developing certain adaptive views and capacities which he refers to as “levels of human existence”. These adaptive responses can be grouped into value systems which permeate the culture of groups, organisations and individuals. Each stage allows for the possible further development of “higher” stages or levels. The levels are not to be seen as fixed, but represent flowing waves, continuously overlapping with, and interweaving, each other.

A detailed explanation of the SD model can be found in Beck and Cowan’s “Spiral Dynamics Theory” (1996) and Cowan & Todorovic’s (2008) work.

The SD model, as adopted and applied by other authors, has undergone a number of conceptual changes. Beck and Cowan (1996), for example, extended the “value systems” language of Graves with the notion of “value memes”. The term meme was originally introduced by Dawkins to refer to a unit of cultural information. According to Wilber (2001), a “meme” can be seen as a stage of development that is expressed in behaviour. For purposes of clarity, Wilber recommended the use of the word “value system” as proposed by Graves.

The level of consciousness associated with each of these value systems, provides a perceptual framework, type of “intelligence” and worldview by which experiences are interpreted and responded to. A sense of flow results from the match between the person’s orientation and the contextual requirements.

The SD model is hierarchically organised and consecutive levels both incorporate and transcend preceding orientations. It is a soft hierarchy and growth may involve a person or group temporarily moving down on the hierarchy in response to a particular trauma or challenge, before transcending previously inadequate worldviews. Upward movement only takes place according to the hierarchical structure of the spiral and levels are therefore not skipped. This view on growth ties in with Wilber’s idea of “holons”. Holons depict the manner in which systems are organised and where evolution involves the emergence of more complex systems, each of which includes and transcends previous levels.

The initially proposed and rather cumbersome labelling technique of the Spiral Dynamics model, postulated the organisation of a double spiral in terms (a) the problem of existence: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H and (b) coping mechanisms: N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U to provide an: AN, BO, CP, DQ, ER, FS, GT, HU categorisation. It has since been replaced by using simple colour codes. Eight such colours are currently identified (with possible additions in future): Beige, Purple, Red, Blue, Orange, Green, Yellow and Turquoise. These colours represent ways of thinking that have far-reaching effects on an individual’s life and group adaptation.

The various value orientations, as represented by different colours, each has a particular credo referring to either an expressive, internally controlled “I” (the “warm” colours), or a self-sacrificing, externally anchored “we” side (the “cooler” colours). The eight “holons” as specified by the SD model represent a spiral structure.

The eight valuing systems can be divided into first and second tier consciousness. The first tier consciousness encompasses the first six colours (Beige, Purple, Red, Blue, Orange and Green). The first tier valuing systemstend to be emotionally driven. Perspectives based on
the lower level value systems in this first tier also do not necessarily accommodate for the existence of other valuing systems - although Green less so that the colours preceding it.

Second tier consciousness is reflected by the Yellow and Turquoise valuing systems and encompasses the first tier. Unlike first tier thinking, second tier awareness appreciates the necessity of the various other valuing systems. As Gardner (Wilber, 2001) observed, the whole course of human development can be viewed as a continuing decline in egocentrism.

The various value orientations of the SD model can briefly be described, as follows:

**Beige**
- The theme is that of “survival”
- The focus is on basic-instinctive reactions; subsistence needs; physical survival; physiological needs; capitalisation on instincts and habits
- It involves a reactive response to the environment
- There is little self-awareness
- Responses tend to be impulsive
- It is survivalist
- This value system can be found amongst the very young and old; as well as amongst ill, starving or traumatised people

**Purple**
- The theme here is “safety”
- This value system is associated with group dependence; tradition; an avoidance of change; an “us-and-them” orientation; a tendency to maintain family / in-group bonds; at times dogmatic beliefs / ideologies; the need for safety and protection; and a general fearfulness
- This orientation values group belonging and group boundaries; authority; respect; protection; obedience; familiarity, certainty and routine; what is sacred as well as observes rituals and customs
- Those who embrace a purple orientation often are ethnocentric, traditionalist and their relationships are largely role-based
- This worldview is associated with an external locus of control
- Learning is largely passive and there is a tendency to seeks guidance
- People espousing this value system tend to be self-sacrificial toward their in-group and antagonistic toward out-groups
- This value system can be found amongst paternalistic culture; where elders are valued; the superstitious; those who are highly patriotic; within dogmatic religions; in enmeshed families; where there is a belief in luck, blood oaths, ancient grudges, trance dancing, family rituals, gangs, corporate “tribes”; and it is inherent to old “school ties”, soaps and fanatical sports team support cultures.

**Red**
- The theme here is “power”
- This orientation can be described as: highly energetic, impulsive, dominant, active, achievement driven; critical; demanding; competitive; egocentric; defensive; dominant and power driven
There are tendencies to be expressive; not to be inhibited by guilt; to strive for respect and recognition; to seek excitement and sensual pleasure; and to fear shame; loss of face; and loss of autonomy.

Those who have adopted this orientation may come across as proud, assertive, energetic and/or imaginative.

There may be a tendencies to blame and take revenge; there is a scarcity mentality and expectation of threat.

The value system is associated with an emphasis on performance and results; a tough image and a “carrot-and-stick” leadership approach.

Those espousing this value orientation are results focused, energetic and normally obtain their goals.

Emotionally, it is associated with seeking impulse gratification; fear of failure; and avoidance of insult and pain.

Inherent to this worldview are beliefs such as “survival of the fittest”; “others are not to be trusted”; and “results can be achieved through hard work”.

It is important to impress, influence and conquer others, even though the means may be somewhat aggressive, exhausting, fanatical, exploitative or dogmatic.

Learning primarily takes place via reinforcement and conditioning.

It can be found in bravado; rebellious youths; frontier mentalities; fanatical groups; macho cultures; entrepreneurs and activities which require effort and control.

**Blue**

The theme here is “truth”.

It can be described in terms of: purposefulness; structure; seeking the truth; showing depth; reliability; being pedantic; a loyalist orientation; the tendency to conform and to avoid change; appreciation of quality and a sound work ethic.

Those adhering to this value system believe in order and are obedient to authority; they practice self-discipline and tend to differentiate between what they regard as right and wrong.

They seek security and are cautious.

They value integrity and ethical behaviour; observe laws and regulations and believe that hardship and self-discipline build character and moral fibre.

In addition there is a focus on controlling impulsivity; seeking stability and adhering to a code of conduct; being honourable; and being punctual and reliable.

It may also find expression in bureaucratic or hierarchical structures; totalitarian or dogmatic organisations; inflexible ideologies; and moralistic inclinations.

It involves learning from authority and decisions are based on ethics, facts and authority opinions.

It also follows tradition, convention and policy; values certainty, structure and order; is motivated by duty; is loyal; is responsible; is careful; and promotes fairness and traditions.

According to this value system, sacrifices need to be made for the greater good of all.

Stress is caused by ambiguity and uncertainty; chaos is feared; and change is avoided.

This value orientation finds expression via patriotism; codes of chivalry and honour; boy and girl scouts; traditional schools, certain family practices and churches.
Orange

- The theme here is “value creation”
- This orientation can be described as strategic; somewhat materialistic; opportunistic; individualistic; achievement oriented; flexible; resilient and politically astute
- It is associated with an abundance mindset; the exercise of freedom of choice; and self-interest
- Individuals who have adopted this value system enjoy playing the game; having autonomy; manipulating outcomes; are optimistic, practical, take risks and are self-reliant and resilient
- They tend to look for opportunity; strategise; take initiative; are competitive; are normally interested in technology; and feel deserving of success, prosperity and abundance
- It supports entrepreneurial activities; goal setting and achievement; tough negotiations; and business strategy formulation
- At times it may deteriorate into narcissistic, inconsiderate and materialistic tendencies and become exploitative and short-sighted
- Learning takes place via experimentation, mentors, guides or experts
- Motivation is rooted in the achievement of material rewards and the possibility of opportunity
- It values competition, ambition, affluence, image and continuous improvement
- Stress is caused by setbacks; goals not being realised; and obstacles
- This orientation provides the flexibility and skill to reframe setbacks, though
- It encompasses a logical, efficient, flexible and competitive style
- This orientation finds expression in colonialism; the fashion industry; prosperity ministries; the emerging middle classes; the advertising industry; mining cartels; go-getter cultures; venture capitalists activities; a large proportion of generation Y and the corporate culture in general

Green

- The theme here is “communitarian” and “relating”
- It can be described as sensitive; humanistic; theoretical; emotional; compassionate; relativistic; and is often characterised by inner peace whilst exploring the caring dimensions of community
- There is a strong interest in other points of view / theories
- This value system promotes equal opportunities to all; kind interpersonal relations; and a charitable orientation towards the oppressed
- Decision-making takes place via reconciliation and consensus
- There is a genuine concern for others and personal goals involve spiritual awareness; interpersonal harmony and human development
- Learning is based on exploring feelings; sharing experiences and ideas; as well as interaction with others
- Decisions are based on being just and reasonable toward everyone involved, but decision making is complicated by many conflicting considerations which may require compromise and collaboration
- Stress is created by rage, discord, extinctions, contamination, group separation and lack of consideration
- The associated leadership style involves a democratic approach; it is consultative
- Management strategies include being humanistic; demonstrating emotions; care for the group; an emphasis on consensus and a listening orientation
- This value system finds expression in “Doctors without Borders”; sensitivity training; animal rights groups; Regerian counselling; philanthropic and humanistic intentions; and theoretical and academic endeavours

Yellow

- The theme here is “systemic”
- It can be described as an integrative approach; seeking of learning experiences; living responsibly, and the emphasis is on flexibility, functionality, simplicity and spontaneity
- Here knowledge, understanding, competence and intuition supersedes rank, position status symbols and power
- There is an appreciation of dynamic factors and natural flows; variety; context; holistic perspectives; and the value of simplicity and functionality
- The associated psychological disposition is that of individualistic; independent-mindedness; self-actualisation; and freedom of choice
- Learning is sought in varied experience, observation, knowledge, and involves an intuitive process
- Factors such as structure and order are to some extent irrelevant
- Stress is caused by stagnant, rigid, dull, rule-based contexts that are not stimulating or challenging
- Emotionally this orientation is associated with a significant degree of integration which may at times be interpreted as distanciation
- This value system finds expression in principles of systems thinking; learning organisations; chaos theory; and eco-industrial parks

Turquoise

- The themes here are “holistic” and “transcendent”
- This orientation can be described as existential-philosophical; living in the “now”; depth of awareness; a spiritually inclination; and it is focused on the meaningfulness of human endeavours
- It is associated with a concern about the proliferation of life; experiencing the wholeness of existence through mind and spirit; accessing the collective mindset; connection and transcendence
- The world is regarded as a single, dynamic organism with its own collective mindwhere everything is connected
- There is an emphasis on holistic, intuitive thinking and cooperative actions
- It finds expression in ideas such as Gandhi’s pluralistic harmony, Tolle’s work on consciousness; and the theories of David Bohn

The hierarchical ordering of the various value systems is “soft”, or dynamic, and should not be interpreted strictly in terms as “higher is better”. The suitability and desirability of each of the value systems depend on contextual factors. The ranking and ordering of these value systems should therefore not be taken too literally or seen as a fixed, linear, step-by-step progressions. This is emphasised by Wilber (2001) who indicated that development is not a
linear ladder but a fluid and flowing affair, with spirals, swirls, streams, and waves – and what appears to be an almost infinite number of modalities.

Particular value systems or worldviews, representing levels of consciousness, are generally associated with the manifestations of certain clusters of cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural tendencies (referred to by Wilber as “lines” of development). The expanded awareness of each consecutive level of consciousness, allows for greater connection to self, others and the world. Progressively inclusive worldviews accommodate increasingly complex cognitive processing, for example.

**The leadership implications of the SD model**

Given the current emphasis of organisational psychology on Leadership, the SD view of leadership will briefly be addressed. Graves, Beck and Cowan have explored this topic by specifying the different leadership assumptions associated with each of the valuing systems. However, according to Graves there is no blueprint for leadership: how one views effective leadership is to some degree contingent on one’s position on the spiral, as well as the context.

Graves’s ideas on work-related leadership assumptions and styles associated with each of the orientations, can be summarised, primarily in behavioural terms, as follows:

**Purple**

- People seek a paternalistic environment and are bound to the group; in-group reciprocity is important
- The organisation is like a parent providing security; traditional ways are important
- Nepotism is accepted; group loyalty and coherence are promoted; in-group-out-group polarisation is common; the leader should come from the in-group

**Red**

- People need to be coerced in order to perform; they need strong leadership; nobody is to be trusted; people respond to the “carrot-stick” approach
- Work must provide basic needs for people to comply; people’s natural goals are seen as in conflict with that of the organisation
- Strong, directive leadership; strong pecking order; emphasis on power and rank

**Blue**

- People need structure and order; they need to be told to do things the right way; being dutiful and correct provides meaning
- Discipline is strict; inequality is natural and for everyone there is a purpose or role; the organisation must provide order and security
- Higher authority rules by rightful compliance; avoidance of innovation and risk taking; moralistic and prescriptive
Orange

- People are motivated by achievement and material rewards as well as by “playing the game”; “value add” has inherent motivational value; personal responsibility or accountability is important
- Competition is important for productivity; the first priority is the viability of the organisation
- Performance is evaluated continually; rewards are accorded to those most successful; administration is pragmatic; appointments are based on objective criteria

Green

- People are motivated by human contact and want to maintain harmonious relationships; emotions need to be addressed; diversity is accommodated for
- Sharing and participating is better than competition; involvement of all is valued; diversity in approach enriches outputs
- The emphasis is on consensus; compromise; and facilitation of processes rather than directives; open communication is stressed

Yellow

- People need to do things that will provide self-actualisation; learning and understanding is intrinsically rewarding
- Change in the organisation is inevitable; the organisation must capitalise on the diversity of the workforce; contextualisation and functionality is focused on
- The emphasis is on access to knowledge and information

Turquoise

- All is interconnected; human connection is via spiritual and experiential bonds; awareness of contextualised changes is important; personal purpose is highly regarded
- Work must be meaningful to the overall health of all; emphasis on the importance of enhancing Life (according to the principles of Life)
- Social and environmental responsibility is emphasised; all previous approaches are integrated and transcended

Even though the first Beige value system of the SD model is most relevant in the modern world, it has been excluded given the current focus on leadership.

According to Beck & Cowan (1996), three different categories of leaders can be identified, namely: meme wizards / systems wizards, change wizards and spiral wizards.

Meme wizards understand a given value system and know intuitively how to lead others who share this value system. Change wizards appreciate the transition between different
valuesystems and spiral wizards (Yellow and Turquoise) display an understanding of the entire spectrum of value systems: they can appreciate a wide range of views and react to a number of systems simultaneously. Diversity and a certain degree of chaos energise rather than inhibit these leaders (Beck & Cowan, 1996).

Spiral wizard also tend to spot connections and patterns not noticed by others; think in terms of open systems rather than final states; identify trends and may have an intuitive understanding of timing. They sense the needs of other valuing systems (and also “speak the language” of these other value systems); respect the integrity of other value systems; can mediate amongst conflicting value systems in that they focus on both the detail and the bigger picture. Their solutions go beyond quick fixes and linear reasoning to arrive at an integrative, holistic understanding of situations.

Although the spiral wizard normally has insights and capabilities beyond that of meme wizards and change wizards, it would be overly simplistic to dismiss the latter two categories. In fact, leadership can’t be isolated from “followership” and factors such as the nature of the job and the values of the followers defy any crude or one-dimensional recommendation of any specific type of leader.

Graves also identified three principles underlying a healthy leadership style, namely: politeness, openness and autocracy (POA). These characteristics cater for the value orientations and emotional needs of all the colours of the SD spectrum (see Table 1).

Table 1: The impact of leadership principles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Principles</th>
<th>Effects on individuals with different value orientation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politeness</strong></td>
<td>- Purple will feel safe and included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Red will sense some respect and may feel less defensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Blue will appreciate the decency</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Orange will appreciate the diplomacy and tact</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Green will appreciate the empathy and compassion</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Yellow will notice the positive climate as well as non-intrusiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Turquoise will feel free to explore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Openness</strong></td>
<td>- Purple will feel safe to express fears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Red will feel appreciated and not judged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Blue can take a moral stand and discuss objections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Orange feels free to disagree and act autonomously</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Green feels reassured as everyone is legitimised</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Yellow has the freedom to innovate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Turquoise will appreciate the full range of insights</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Autocracy
(takes charge, accepts responsibility, shows willingness to put oneself on the line)

- **Purple** prefers a strong leader from within the “clan”
- **Red** appreciates assertiveness
- **Blue** respects the voice of (righteous) higher authority
- **Orange** respects individual initiative
- **Green** accepts such leadership if it benefits all involved
- **Yellow** appreciates competency-driven systems
- **Turquoise** appreciate the nature of reality and the value of commitment

Useful to consider in this regard, are the “rules of thumb for leaders” as indicated by Beck & Cowan (1996):

- It can be problematic if the value orientations of followers are more complex than that of the leaders
- The leader must show some potential for change – if not, he/she will not be able to deal with changes in the life conditions of the organisation
- When a follower’s potential for change is absent (or severely obstructed), the leadership approach must approximate this specific level
- The leader should not be too far ahead on the spiral - if so, followers will have little or no understanding of him/her and alienation may follow
- When the group is diversified, the leader should preferably come from the most complex system available in the group.

Graves also provided theoretical guidelines for change and growth (Beck & Cowan, 1996):

- The impetus for change can be either external or internal
- The individual requires the necessary discomfort as well as energy to change
- The potential for change must be present as not all individuals are equally open to change
- Neither serious, unresolved problems, nor the existence of complete comfort with the current value orientation is conducive to change interventions
- To change, an individual must know where he/she is in terms of value orientations, his/her own value orientation and why it is no longer appropriate, as well as available alternatives
- Both external and internal obstacles to change need to be analysed
- For change to be consolidated, support needs to be provided during the process of transitions
- There is no blueprint in terms of the method of change. The method used needs to take the valuing system a person adheres to into consideration

Graves identified five steps in the sequence of such value changes:

- Alpha which is a stable and balanced state
- Beta, the stage of uncertainty, discomfort and questioning
- Flex, which involves looking for opportunities for change
- Gamma, a period of anger and confusion and feeling trapped
- Delta, a time of inspired enthusiasm
Grave’s model, which provides a most useful framework for the understanding of individual and collective consciousness, largely overlaps with that of May.

### 2.2. May’s model of the development of consciousness

Mary May’s “Whirl Model” also focuses on the development of consciousness. She identifies three modes of consciousness, each consisting of 2 levels of awareness characterised by particular sets of perceptions and emotional objectives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3 modes of Consciousness</th>
<th>6 levels of awareness</th>
<th>Descriptions and behavioural characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reactive</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>- outer-directed</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- world as story</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- tribal/family customs</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- ethics: fear of punishment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- focus on separate tangible elements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal / external</td>
<td></td>
<td>- outer-directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>source of “involuntary”</td>
<td></td>
<td>- either-or; right-wrong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>control</td>
<td>Rule-bound</td>
<td>- linear causality and dualistic logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- tangible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- laws are predictable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- tradition, community, nationalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentional</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>- inner-directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice of internal /</td>
<td></td>
<td>- both-and possibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>external focus</td>
<td></td>
<td>- relative facts and laws</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>- egocentric</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>- relies on personal experience and intellect</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- focus on self-respect and ego issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- considers interactions between tangible systems components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consciousness models</td>
<td>Interdependent</td>
<td>Integrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                       | - inner- and outer-directed  
|                       | - both-and possibilities  
|                       | - contextualization  
|                       | - web-like connections  
|                       | - common good of all  
|                       | - laws that protect all optimally  
|                       | - focus on intangibles across systems  | Active levels of consciousness  | - self-awareness and reflection  
|                       |                                           |                       | - uses all cognitive systems  
|                       |                                           |                       | - uses all previous phases  
|                       |                                           |                       | - multi-dimensional, multi-phased, integrative, logical, holistic approach  
|                       |                                           |                       | - awareness of world in constant flux  
|                       |                                           |                       | - guided by authentic, altruistic attitude  | - unbiased awareness  
|                       |                                           |                       | - openness to the Now  
|                       |                                           |                       | - completely present, moment to moment awareness  
|                       |                                           |                       | - all-encompassing mystical perspective  
|                       |                                           |                       | - loving connection to all creation  
|                       |                                           |                       | - awareness of emergence of non-consequential patterns in the intangible / chaotic / philosophical dimension |

To May, the transition to a higher order phase is usually triggered by what she refers to as “rubs”: a person may start experiencing dissonance when his/her current perceptions or worldviews fail to explain occurrences. Such dissonance, although a source of discomfort, may lead the way to further development in that alternative worldviews are explored.

It is important to note that the idea of “rubs”, disequilibrium or dissonance as catalysts for growth has a long tradition and is fairly widely recognised in scholarly literature. This idea was, for example, masterly explored and conceptualised by Arnold Mindell as part of his “Process Oriented Psychology”. The notion of “rubs” also echoes the Beta and Gamma phases of Spiral Dynamics. In fact, the broad similarities between May’s model and Spiral Dynamics are obvious (albeit that these two theoretical approaches were arrived at independently).
To May, higher levels of awareness are a prerequisite for effective leadership. An impulsive and egocentric approach, focusing on immediate gratification of needs without being able to accommodate the perspectives of others, cannot support effective leadership. It may also result in counter-productive drive and aggression.

A rule bound leadership approach, aimed at establishing authority and creating certainty, security and structure, may be more effective than an impulsive approach, especially where interpersonal factors come into play, but only under certain circumstances and usually only temporarily. It is best suited to environments characterised by team playing and support roles.

Individualistic leaders show independent thinking and normally play a variety of roles. They generally function autonomously and are not defined and limited by their roles. These leaders are most effective in hard driving and competitive environments where logical strategies are required. Their focus may be somewhat egocentric though.

The emergence of interdependent awareness brings greater wisdom. It is more flexible, less fearful and less egocentric than previous stages. This level of consciousness enables the leader to accommodate vagueness, complexity and change.

May’s “integrative” levels of awareness, can be linked to Wilber’s concept of “integral”; to Graves’s second order levels of consciousness, and Loevinger’s autonomous and integrated stages. It involves a flexible identity, adaptive behavioural tendencies and the capacity to embrace complexity and paradox (in a way which transcends pure intellect), multi-paradigm understanding and contextualisation of perspectives and behaviour.

Wilber and May, but also a number of the above mentioned theorists, touch on the issue of spiritual awareness, which Myss, in particular, has explored further.

Ken Wilber’s (2000) Integral approach, as an elaboration on Graves’s and Piaget’s models, and overlapping with that of May, will now be discussed.

### 2.3. Wilber’s AQAL model as linked to the work of Gebser and Piaget

#### 2.3.1 Wilber’s AQAL model

Another theoretical perspective on the levels of consciousness is that of Ken Wilber. Wilber’s “Integral Model” as described in “A Theory of Everything” (2001) and “Sex, Ecology and Spirituality” (2000) represents an encompassing “all-quadrant, all-level” (AQAL) conception of human existence. It overlaps with other consciousness theories.

His integrative AQAL model represents four dimensions of the cosmos, the exterior and the interior as well as the individual and the collective. He refers to the various quadrants as the “I”, “We”, “Its”, “It” (Wilber, 2000). The AQAL can briefly be summarised as follows:

**The Interior Micro** (Individual):

- This is the “I” or the “Intentional” of the left-upper quadrant
Evolution along this spectrum starts at “prehension” which progressively develops into “irritability”, “sensation”, “perception”, “impulse”, “emotion”, “symbols”, “concepts”, “conop” (concrete operations), “formop” (formal operations) and “vision-logic”.

The left cannot be “seen” and must be interpreted. Disciplines focusing on this spectrum are hermeneutics or the art and science of interpretation.

The Exterior Micro (Individual):
- This is the “IT”, or the “Behavioural” of the right-upper quadrant
- The emerging holons are “atoms”, “molecules”, “prokaryotes”, “eukaryotes”, “neuronal organisms”, “neural cord”, “reptilian brainstem”, “limbic system”, “neocortex”, and “complex neocortex”
- The systems of the “right” quadrants can be “seen” and are studied by “atomists” and “wholelists”

The Interior Macro (Collective / Communal):
- This is the “WE” or the “Cultural” worldspace of the lower-left quadrant
- Its about shared interior meanings
- Emerging levels here are the “physical-pleromatic”, “protoplasmic”, “vegetative”, “locomotive”, “uroboric”, “typhonic”, “archaic”, “magic”, “mythic”, “rational” and “centauric”
- Here, the focus is on cultural analysis, such as the work of Berger (phenomenology), Douglas (cultural anthropology), Foucault (structuralism), and Habermas (critical theory)

The Exterior Macro (Collective / Communal):
- This is the “ITS” referring to socialsystems of the lower-right quadrant
- Evolving holons include “galaxies”, “planets”, “Gaia system”, “heterotrophic ecosystems”, “societies with labour division”, “groups/families”, “tribes”, “tribal/village”, “empire”, “nation/state” and “planetary” systems
- This is studied by sociologists, who also focus on certain aspects of the lower-left quadrant as it is interactive with the lower-right quadrant

Wilber’s conceptualisation of the I, We and It (or Its), can be linked to Plato’s interpretation of “value” in terms of: the True (propositional truth referring to an objective state of affairs (I)); the Good (the cultural justices and appropriateness (We)); and the Beautiful (the individual aesthetic dimension – (I)). It can also be linked to the three “jewels” of Buddhism, namely: Buddha as the ultimate I; Dharma as the ultimate It and Sangha as the ultimate We (Wilber, 2000). From a Christian perspective it probably reflects: hope (I), love (We) and faith (It).

According to Habermastoo, the human experience is inevitably positioned within the context of the “big three”, each of which has its own validity claims, its own standards, and none of which can be reduced to the others (Wilber, 2000).
Wilber sees cognitive evolution taking place in terms of increasing awareness, depth, differentiation and integration. The process of consciousness development can be differentiated in terms of:

- Levels or stages
- Waves as fluid, interpenetrating and overlapping levels of consciousness flowing from the subconscious to the super-conscious
- Streams as the various developmental lines including cognitive, moral, psychosexual, affective, interpersonal, and spiritual aspects which develop independently through the waves. In other words, a person can for example be at a high level cognitively and a low level morally. These streams or lines describe the Individual quadrants of the AQAL model of both the internal and external quadrants.
- States/traits which he sees as the altered states of consciousness, which mostly manifest as brief experiences of a transpersonal nature. For transpersonal development to take place, these states must be converted to traits, or structures of consciousness
- Self as the core system that navigates the waves, streams and states. The self-sense, identity, or ego, thus climbs the ladder of levels or stages of consciousness, alternatively referred to as fulcrums, or centres of gravity.

The upper-left quadrant or “The Individual – Interior”, indicates the intension and the consciousness of the individual, and is of particular interest for present purposes.

Seeing that the proposed four quadrants form the fundamental dimensions of any event or occasion, Wilber proposes a quadratic view of leadership in terms of the capacity to address all quadrants at all levels. Leadership thus involves resonating with others, regardless of where they are, to awaken in each (interior individual, or UL quadrant) a passion to transcend their current awareness, as well as to touch and develop the shared stories and values of the collective (interior collective or LL quadrant) given certain exterior It/Its (micro or individual and macro or collective) quadrant considerations. Wilber’s four quadrant model forms the theoretical foundation of the integral approach which will be applied to consciousness as well as leadership theory in section 5.

Wilber’s taxonomy overlaps with a number of theorists, including Graves, Gebser and Piaget.

The SD value systems of Graves are linearly ordered on the upper-left axis (See Figure 1). To Graves’s eight levels, and to Piaget’s phase of formal operations Wilber, however, added further levels, namely that of vision-logic and the transpersonal or spiritual levels (represented by the psychic, subtle, causal and non-dual levels).

Wilber (2000) also linked these views of the holonic progression of consciousness structures to the work of Jean Gebser (1953) who explored the evolution of structures of human consciousness.

**2.3.2. Gebser’s structures of human consciousness**
Gebser identified four major epochs of human evolution, each anchored in a particular structure (level) of consciousness. These are the:

a) archaic  

b) magic  

c) mythic  

d) mental and  

e) integral epochs

These structures of consciousness can be linked to various modes of economic development, namely:

a) foraging  

b) horticultural  

c) agrarian  

d) industrial  

e) informational

Each of these structures of consciousness entails a specific experience of space and time. The mythical structure, for example, experiences time as cyclical and rhythmic whereas for the mental structure time is linear, directed and “progressive”. As each consciousness structure emerges, it also becomes deficient. Gebser held that previous consciousness structures should ideally continue to operate in parallel with emergent structures. The transformation of consciousness involves structural changes in body and mind that Gebser refers to as “mutations” which are of a radical emergent nature.

According to Gebser, the **archaic** epoch includes all structures of consciousness up to, and including, the first hominids.

The **magical** epoch involves a relatively undifferentiated body and mind. Here identity is based on the body as well as collective factors. The symbolic representation of reality becomes possible. Although “close to nature”, there is little or no reverence for the environment, which is often exploited in a destructive manner. The interest is on immediate advantage.

The collective identity of tribal kinship, however, progressed from being based on a common ancestor to that of common rules, which leads to the emergence of mythology.

During the **mythic** stage a transition from the tribal identity to an abstract identity takes place. Gebser describes mythic membership as socio-centric or ethnocentric. It involves identification with a ruler who claims access to mythological powers. These societies are characterised by role identity and a common political ruler whose legitimacy is based on his relation to mythical gods.

The **mythic-rational** structure is reflective of the rationality of “concrete operations” (as specified by Piaget and used by Wilber as well) where thinking about thinking emerges. Capability to take different perspectives; formulate hypothetical possibilities; and introspection, becomes possible. This rationality enables the emergence of a global planetary network. (In transitioning from the mythical to the rational, and given the
inherent clash between myth and reason, the mythological is justified rationally – hence the emergence of the “mythic-rational” space.)

The mythic-rational enables the emergence of a global, planetary consciousness. This global tendency is expressed by extending a particular mythology to world-embracing dimensions via military power, for example. In the past this gave rise to the emergence of great empires such as those of the Incas and Romans. The rational justification of the mythologies of such empires, also resulted in the emergence of rational philosophy and science.

Based on the rational, empires give way to states; the state and the church become separated; a market economy emerges; theoretical and practical challenges become the focus; and ego-identity replaces role-identity. Gebser regards the “rational” as a deficient form of the “mental” structure. The rational structure of awareness denies the other structures with its claim that humans are exclusively rational. It focuses on technology and fact, and resulted in industrialisation and world wars.

With the integral consciousness structure, dualism and categorical thinking give way to “transparency”. Here, the distinct categories of past, present and future are replaced by systemic thinking. Time is also viewed as an indivisible whole. The “whole” and “purpose” thus become important. To Gebser, integral consciousness transcends rationality and introduces a transpersonal dimension.

### 2.3.3. An integration of the work of Wilber, Graves and Gebser

In “A theory of everything”, Wilber (2000) integrates the work of the theorists, Graves and Gebser, as well as that of Piaget, on various axes of his AQAL model.

He organises the various levels of consciousness as specified by the SD model (as well as Piaget’s levels of cognitive development), hierarchically on the “I” consciousness/intentional subjective axis (UL). Gebser’s social systems are organised on the “ITS” social inter-objective axis (LR) and also populate the “WE”, cultural and inter-subjective axis (LL).

Figure 1 applies Wilber’s four quadrant structure to human functioning (Wilber, 2000 & 2001).

**Figure 1: Wilber’s AQAL model applied to human functioning**
Wilber also capitalised on the work of Piaget, but added additional levels of consciousness to that of Piaget’s spectrum of cognitive development.

2.4. Models of intellectual, moral and ethical development

2.4.1 Piaget’s model of cognitive development

In AQAL terms, Piaget focused on the cognitive stream of development. Wilber pointed out that Piaget’s proposed stages, which appear universally, involve “deep structure” whereas culture can be regarded as a “surface structure”.

Piaget proposed four broad stages of cognitive development, which are related to levels of biological maturation associated with specific ages, namely the:

- sensorimotor (0-2 years old)
- pre-operational or “preop” (2-7 years old)
- concrete operational or “conop” (7-11 years old) and
Wilber (2000, 2001) interprets these developmental phases in terms of the transition from egocentrism to perspectivism; from realism to reciprocity and mutuality; and from absolutism to relativity.

He also links Piaget’s sensorimotor stage to Gebser’s archaic and archaic-magic stages. Here the self is material and embedded in the physiosphere. It can be linked to the sensory-physical stage of the AQAL. At the end of this phase the mind begins to emerge pre-operationally.

The pre-operational phase reflects the magic (early “preop”) and magic-mythic (late “preop”) stages of Gebser and the “phantasmic-emotional” and “reptilian mind” of the AQAL. Here the archaic fusion state is transcended and a grounded physical self emerges. At age 3 the child normally has developed a stable and coherent physical self and an emotional self. Magical cognitions dominate during the early pre-operational period. Around 4 years of age magical thinking becomes insufficient and is transferred to others, such as parents or other authority figures. Rituals become important.

Piaget’s concrete operational stage reflects the themes of Gebser’s mythic and mythic-rational phase and “rule/role mind” of the AQAL. It involves the capacity to start taking roles and is socio-centric. It can be compared to Kohlberg’s “conventional stage” of morality; the “belonging” needs of Maslow; the “conformist” mode specified by Loevinger; and May’s reactive: rule-based stage.

The transformation from “conop” to “formop” during the mythic stage, involves a transformation from role-identity to ego-identity. To Piaget, Freud, Habermas and Wilber, the “ego” refers to a rational, individuated sense of self, differentiated from the external world and its social roles (Freud’s concept of superego), and differentiated from the internal nature (Freud’s concept of id). In terms of the development of the ego, the subconscious ego (pre-egoic, pre-persona, pre-rational) develops into the self-conscious ego (egoic, personal, rational), which makes way for the superconscious ego (trans-egoic, transpersonal, transrational). With each of these phases there is a lessening of egocentrism as one moves closer to the pure Self (Wilber, 2000).

Piaget’s formal operational stage is also rule-based, but the creative imagination emerges. It can be compared to the “formal reflexive” stage of the AQAL and reflects the “mental” and “integral” consciousness structures of Gebser as well as May’s intentional: individualistic stage.

During the “formop” stage, “mindmaps” are created which specify different elements, interrelationships and possibilities. “Formop” awareness provides the capacity for holistic perception; an understanding of relativity; the generation of creative ideas, and is described as “ecological”.

Many theorists have indicated the possibility of further evolvement of Piaget’s formal operations, which the AQAL model does. However, Piaget’s model focuses on cognitive
development, whereas Wilber’s more holistic model extends beyond that of Piaget’s formal operations to include higher levels of awareness, namely the vision-logic level, which is followed by transpersonal evolvement operating within the theosphere. It is discussed in section 2.6.2.

Piaget’s work on cognitive structure; May’s model of consciousness development (section 2.2); Loevinger’s ego-states; Perry’s structures of consciousness and Kohlberg’s model on the development of moral awareness, are complimentary.

2.4.2 Kohlberg’s model of moral development

Kohlberg’s (1981) six stages of moral development can be organised according to three broader levels, namely the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional. These levels or stages are hierarchically organised, where consecutive levels or stages become more comprehensive, inclusive and differentiated than their predecessors. Regression from higher to lower levels seldomly occurs.

Kohlberg’s first, **pre-conventional** level involves two stages, namely:
- an obedience and punishment avoidance orientation; and
- a self-interest orientation

His second, **conventional** level involves:
- interpersonal accord and conformity where the emphasis is on social norms; and
- authority and a social-order maintenance orientation which reflects a law and order morality

The third level is referred to as the **post-conventional**, and includes:
- a social contract orientation; and
- universal ethical principles

The **pre-conventional** level involves judging the morality of an action by its direct consequences. It is primarily concerned with the self in an egocentric manner and focuses on the external consequences of behaviour. The self-interest stage defines what is “right” in terms of whether it serves the individual’s own interests. This level of moral reasoning is typical of children.

Many adolescents and adults, however, show the **conventional** level of moral reasoning. Here morality is judged in terms of generally accepted perspectives and expectations. At this level an individual obeys rules and follows societal norms almost rigidly and unquestioningly even though there may not be any consequences for wrong doing. Stage three of conformity involves role-based behaviour to win the approval of others. The morality of an action is judged in terms of its relationship consequences. Rules are maintained only to support social roles. Intentions of actors become important (“she means well”). During stage four, characterised by obedience to authority and social-order maintenance, morality involves the following of laws, rules and social conventions to support societal functioning. There is a duty to uphold laws and rules. Most members of society remain at stage four,
where morality is still dictated by external factors. This conventional phase enables Perry’s stage of dualistic thinking.

During the post-conventional, or principled level, there is a growing realisation that individuals are separate entities from society. The individual’s opinions are regarded as more important than the society’s requirements. Principles concerning human rights, liberty, and justice are interpreted and adhered to. Post-conventional morality may regard rules as useful but adaptable as opposed to absolute dictates. Most members of society never achieve this level of moral development. The post-conventional phase enables Perry’s stage of relativistic thinking.

During stage five, which is social contract driven, there is an acceptance of opinions, rights and values, which are mutually respected. Laws are regarded as social contracts. In stage six, driven by universal ethical principles, morality is based on abstract reasoning. Laws are valid only insofar as they are grounded in justice. Action is less a means than an end in itself; the individual acts because it is right, and not because it is instrumental, expected, legal, or previously agreed upon. Stage six functioning is rare to find.

Kohlberg suggested that there may be a seventh stage of transcendental morality, linking spiritual principles with moral reasoning.

Moral development is reliant on realizing the limitations of current perspectives. Each progressive stage is more adequate than the last. The process is therefore considered to be constructive, as it is consciously created by the individual as opposed to an innate disposition.

Kohlberg’s work on moral development largely overlaps with Perry’s views on intellectual and ethical development.

2.4.3 Perry’s model of intellectual and ethical development

William Perry proposed a model of intellectual and ethical development which is based on his findings regarding the moral orientations of students (Perry, 1981; Rapaport, 1986).

The first stage of his model involves “authoritarian” beliefs and complete acceptance of the opinions of authority figures. This overlaps with “dualistic thinking” according to which knowledge is regarded as fixed and certain, and categorised as either right or wrong. This reflects Kohlberg’s conventional and May’s reactive: rule-based stages.

This is followed by the recognition of “multiplicity” where the rigid structure of the previous stage is replaced by a realisation of uncertainty and truth as essentially subjective. Students thus come to recognize that opinions need to be evaluated in terms of appropriate criteria to determine the usefulness and validity of the knowledge claims. Such criteria include empirical evidence, the methodological approach, the predictive power of the findings, logical consistency and positive versus normative conclusions. It overlaps with May’s intentional: individualistic phase.
Perry described the next phase as “contextual-relativism” during which students may come to recognise that the world is a place of uncertainty and relativity. Certain choices, however, need to be made about premises, frameworks, hypotheses, theories or policies. Although decisions require critical thinking, no conclusions are necessarily applicable across the board. It may be linked to May’s intentional: interdependent stage.

During the “context-appropriate” phase students realise that choices are based on both intellectual analysis as well as personal values. Seeing that knowledge, theories, and methods are imperfect and uncertain, decision making and personal choice are rooted in worldview, values and an awareness of personal responsibility. This approach thus involves commitment to a relativistic world. It overlaps with Kohlberg’s post-conventional stage.

Perry’s ideas on intellectual and ethical evolvement of students, resonates with that of the educationalist Loevinger, on ego development.

2.5. Models of psychological development

2.5.1. Loevinger’s model of ego-state development

Jane Loevinger’s (1976) stages of ego development is based on Erikson’s psychosocial model. Her model also largely corresponds to that of May (section 2.2) and Kohlberg and to some extent with Perry’s. She regards the ego as a dynamic process involving nine sequential perspectives on oneself in relation to one’s world. An individual can plateau at any of these levels, which are organised hierarchically. Development entails greater ego-integration and ego-differentiation. These nine stages can briefly be described as follows:

The pre-social stage in infancy, is focused on need gratification and is autistic and delusional. This develops into a symbiotic relationship with the caregiver. This phase involves a realisation of the constancy and stability of objects.

The impulsive stage involves an egocentric assertion of self and a pre-occupation with immediate physical and emotional needs.

During the self-protective stage some degree of self-control emerges. There is a need for clarity, rules, structure and order. Morality becomes a matter of anticipation of reward or punishment.

The conformist stage involves the internalisation of inflexible rules and a dualistic mindset. Punishment is avoided and a sense of group belonging becomes important.

The self-aware stage, otherwise referred to as “conscientious-conformist”, involves an increase in self-awareness and the capacity to evaluate and criticise the self. This phase is also characterised by a deepened interest in interpersonal relationships.

During the conscientious stage internalised rules are re-evaluated and applied in a more flexible manner. Goals, ideals and responsibilities become important. The perspective on the social context widens and separation from the group is possible.

The individualistic stage involves a focus on self, individual differences, interpersonal relationships and circumstances. The individualistic ego shows tolerance of and respect for the autonomy of both self and others. Subjective experience is differentiated from objective
reality and inner reality from outward appearance. At this stage, awareness of psychological factors emerge.

The autonomous stage involves a liberation from the limiting demands of the conscience; a questioning of limiting self-definitions; and an increase in self-acceptance. Self-actualisation becomes important and conceptual challenges are sought. The integration of polarity and complexity increasingly takes place.

Not many achieve the integrated stage characterised by wisdom and compassion. Here, self-actualisation and acceptance of one’s destiny becomes possible.

The development of ego-states as postulated by Loevinger, from a level of dependence (driven by physiological and security needs) to a level of self-awareness and independence, can further be illuminated in terms of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs which progress from physical and security needs to that of belonging and self-actualisation, all of which are important for psychological growth.

2.5.2. Maslow’s hierarchy of needs

Maslow’s work is well known and will only be mentioned here. His model will, however, be integrated with that of other theorists in section 3 of this paper.

Maslow developed a hierarchical structure of human needs consisting of two tiers. The bottom layers he refers to as “deficiency needs”. Included are physical, security, love and friendship needs. Should these needs not be met, the person may experience anxiety and further psychological growth may be obstructed. The secondary, or higher level needs, referred to by Maslow as the meta-motivational levels, or “being” needs, include the need for self-esteem, self-actualisation and self-transcendence.

The dynamics of Maslow’s (1943) proposed hierarchy is complex and many different needs may operate simultaneously and interactively. He describes the various needs as follows:

**Physiological needs** have to be met in order to survive. Air, water, and as well as physical protection and shelter is required.

**Safety needs** emerge once physiological needs have been met. These may include the need for personal security, financial security and health.

**Love and belonging** needs emerge next. These are of an interpersonal nature and involve the availability, warmth, caring and support of others. It may be met via friendship, intimacy, family or within social groups.

The need for **self-esteem** presents as the desire to be accepted and valued by others. It may take the form of respect from others via fame and prestige, or may be a more internally anchored sense of confidence and independence.

The need to **self-actualize** one’s potential, emerges next. The content of this need differs from person to person.

The need for **self-transcendence** revolves around meaning and connection.
The themes inherent to a number of the above developmental models are echoed by Kegan’s contributions on psychological development.

2.5.3. Kegan’s and Torbert’s models of psychological development

As in the case of Maslow, Kegan’s work on psychological development, is well recognised and will therefore not be discussed in any depth in this paper. Kegan’s model corresponds to that of May, Wilber and Loevinger, amongst others.

In “The Evolving Self”, Kegan (1982) proposes a model of psychological development in terms of six “equilibrium stages”, namely the incorporative stage, the impulsive stage, the imperial stage, the interpersonal stage, the institutional stage, and the inter-individual stage.

According to Kegan, two related personality structures are involved in psychological development, namely the sense of self as a subject and an object. He specifies the subject and object of each of the stages and regards the object of each stage as the subject of the preceding stage. The relationship between the subject and object is dynamic and evolves in various dimensions. Life-long development involves a succession of qualitative differentiations of the self from the world. During periods of relative stability the self can identify with a particular level or order of consciousness.

The various equilibrium stages can briefly be summarised as follows:

Stage 0: **Incorporative** stage
- Subject: reflexes
- Object: nothing

Stage 1: **Impulsive** stage
- Subject: impulses, perceptions
- Object: reflexes

Stage 2: **Imperial** stage
- Subject: needs, interests, desires
- Object: impulses, perceptions

Stage 3: **Interpersonal** stage
- Subject: interpersonal relationships, mutuality
- Object: needs, interests, desires

Stage 4: **Institutional** stage
- Subject: authorship, identity, ideology
- Object: interpersonal relationships, mutuality

Stage 5: **Inter-individual** stage
Subject: "the inter-penetrability of self-systems"
Object: authorship, identity, ideology

Kegan’s ideas are further expanded by Bill Torbert’s (2004) “action-logics” model. Torbert identifies eight levels of development that he refers to as action-logics. Every new developmental stage involves the emergence of a new organising principle, or action-logic. At the first, impulsive level, impulses rule behaviour, then needs rule impulses, making an object out of what was the self as subject. Next, norms from society rule needs, followed by the norms of society as an object, which is ruled by a craft logic, or expert mentality. A person moves to level five when the self as subject operates through system effectiveness, and has craft logic as an object to relate to, followed by the capacity for reflexive awareness that rules the need for system effectiveness. At the seventh level a self-amending principle rules reflexive awareness, and at level eight, process rules over the self-amending principle. The “more extensive object” Kegan refers to reflects expansion of what one is capable of having a relationship to rather than being embedded in.

As mentioned, the topic of consciousness has been addressed from various academic disciplines. In addition to May, Loevinger, Maslow and Kegan’s contributions in this regard, models of spiritual awareness and growth, such as those proposed by Myss, Wilber and others, are of particular interest.

### 2.4. Models of spiritual development

#### 2.6.1. Myss’s integration of the wisdom / spiritual traditions

Caroline Myss, a theologian, journalist, author, teacher and mystic, better known for her work as a medical intuitive, integrated consciousness themes reflected by the Hindu Chakras, the Christian Sacraments and the Kabbalah’s Ten Serifot or Tree of Life (specifying ten divine energies) by linking each to the “seven sacred truths” they share, and used these insights for her explanation of aspects such as energy, motivation, power and health.

Her summary (1996, 2004) clearly indicates the common ground between the notion of energy centres (with their respective psychological themes) and the development phases frequently identified in the literature on consciousness. These themes fundamentally impact on leadership in general and cognition in particular. The themes will not be discussed in detail here, but a very brief summary appears in Table 2.

**Table 2: The energy themes as represented by the Chakras.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energy Themes and Chakras</th>
<th>Psychological energy related to:</th>
<th>Relevance to psychological well-being</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groundedness Root chakra</td>
<td>The sense of safety in the physical world. This is the centre of abundance, survival issues and physical vitality</td>
<td>Feeling safe and secure in the world, one can apply one’s energy in the physical world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chakra</td>
<td>Issues</td>
<td>Trusting the inner self (i.e. being 'centred') is a prerequisite for applying the self in the physical and social environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Performance** | Issues of power and control in the material/external world, including money, sex and the control of other people. This is the centre of stability, creativity and sexual energy | **Identity**                                                            | A sense of selfhood and personal power. This is the centre of reactive emotions.  
| Sacral Chakra   |                                                                        | Personal power, fear and self-esteem issues, as well as the experience of unrefined reactive emotions (fear, jealousy, hatred).  
|                 |                                                                        | It involves a sense of self.                                                                                     |
|                 |                                                                        | **Compassion**                                                          | Issues involving love and compassion. This is the centre of love, affection, compassion, devotion and spiritual growth.  
|                 |                                                                        | The capacity to project love and acceptance towards others represents a transition from the personal to the more universal realms of the higher chakras.  
|                 |                                                                        | It involves seeking harmony and equilibrium.                                                                      |
|                 |                                                                        | **Self-Expression**                                                     | Issues of personal expression. This is the centre of communication and self-expression.  
|                 |                                                                        | The sense of the right to express own feelings, ideas, etc. contributes to the development of will-power.           |
|                 |                                                                        | **Wisdom**                                                              | Insight and wisdom. This is the centre of intuition, telepathy and intellect.  
|                 |                                                                        | Via thinking one finds meaning and insight relating to the significance of one’s own life and of life itself.        |
|                 |                                                                        | **Connection**                                                          | The essence of “being” and the overall meaning of life. This is the centre of spiritual and collective connection.  
|                 |                                                                        | The capacity to move beyond rational comprehension to access an understanding of ‘being’.                           |
| **Solar plexus**|                                                                        | **Throat Chakra**                                                       |                                                                        |
| **Chakra**      |                                                                        | **Heart Chakra**                                                        |                                                                        |
|                 |                                                                        | **Brow Chakra**                                                         |                                                                        |
|                 |                                                                        | **Crown Chakra**                                                        |                                                                        |

Myss’s spiritual categories, and her work on personal power in particular, can also be linked to the SD model.

According to Myss (2004), a key existential task for each human being is learning to constructively exercise his/her personal power in the world. This very challenge also is a prerequisite for personal growth, self-actualisation and the development of consciousness. She described “seven seats of personal power”.

Consciousness models
Myss postulates that human development within diverse environmental contexts results in the emergence of relatively unique "centres of gravity" or psychological orientations. As part of this process, particular "power centres" become activated. In other words, one's personality orientation; cognitive approach; sense of personal purpose; specific set of interests and skills; values; motivational drivers, all interact to create a predisposition for the activation of particular types of power and creativity. The activating mechanism for growth in this regard is personal choice.

Although a person can exercise various forms of power, and learn to acquire a variety of behavioural skills, the power centre that one can tap into naturally, appears more sincere and creates trust in those that share the orientation. It thus makes sense to pinpoint the specific power centre(s) an individual can capitalize on most effectively.

For maximum effectiveness in exercising personal power, the degree to which the actor is "in flow" with contextual requirements, or is contextually attuned, counts. According to Myss, it is an issue of resonance of an energy nature. Intuition is therefore involved, as it leverages off the alignment of energy. By suppressing intuitive insights, and by forcing a certain approach, congruence is lost, and therefore resonance. Intuition, congruence and resonance can be regarded as "insurance" for the intentional impact of behaviour.

This approach encourages an openness to and reliance on the wealth that the subconscious mind offers. Myss points out that most people, including leaders, tend to suppress the subconscious and collective dimensions. The average person is unlikely to achieve a sense of "being in flow"; of living his/her personal purpose; or of acquiring the skill of discriminating between the extremely subtle difference of intuitive insight versus mere assumption - the latter of which cannot be over-emphasised. Attunement to the metaphysical energy domain thus largely determines a person’s behavioural impact.

Each of the power centres also has "light" and "shadow" sides, which leaves room for the further calibration and refinement of the potential power of a particular orientation.

Myss describes the different "seats of power" and creativity by exploring the underlying psychological theme of each chakra that can be capitalised on in exercising personal power. Her views in this regard are most useful within the leadership context. For present purposes her model has been linked to the Spiral Dynamics (SD or ECLET) model of Graves. Each of these worldviews is characterized by its very own language culture, potential contributions, paradigms/mental models and energy sources.

The "root chakra" is characterized by the psychological theme of "belonging". It closely correlates with the Purple value orientation of the SD model. It is related to a person’s social and cultural foundation as well as potential for physical survival.

If the power of this chakra is blocked, untapped and unresolved, a sense of alienation, low energy, helplessness and powerlessness may develop. For further growth a sense of belonging and security is necessary to take on the challenges of the external environment.

The "sacral chakra" is characterized by the psychological theme of "power in the external world". It closely correlates with both the Blue and Red value orientation of the SD model. This energy system is heavily invested in the external world of work, production, and interaction with people. Performance, achievement, results, structure, discipline,
commitment and work ethic are central issues. There also is an emotional and pleasure seeking theme. Here, one tends to exercise one’s power in striving to be a provider.

Depression may result from blocking this energy. Failure in achieving these goals may also result in rigidity, a need for control and certain health implications. Growth depends on a sense of achievement and self-esteem.

“Solar plexus” energy is characterised by the psychological theme of “personal identity” and closely correlates with the Red value orientation of the SD model. The development of self-esteem is an important requirement of this energy point. The focus is on personal identity, self-esteem, ego-integration, personal power, honour and personal standards.

Whereas the root and sacral chakras focus on the external environment, this solar plexus chakra involves a strong internal foundation for external effectiveness. Personal power is exercised in creatively actualising oneself. The need for self-actualization may result in a somewhat egocentric approach.

If the power and creative energy of this chakra is blocked, untapped or unresolved, the inability to actualize oneself may result in an egocentric orientation; even debilitating narcissism; anger; passive and active aggression; self-sabotage; an excessive need for recognition and fame; and general fearfulness. Intuition may be reduced to impulsivity. Blockage of this energy system may also have certain health implications.

The “heart chakra” is characterised by the psychological theme of “compassion”. It closely correlates with the Greenvalue orientation of the SD model. Self-esteem is a prerequisite for the emergence of this chakra energy.

This chakra represents the center of emotional well-being and involves both the physical and the spiritual dimensions of human awareness. It is here that the body, the ego, the mind and the spirit are integrated. It manifests as a conviction to make a profound difference to the lives of others. The conscious focus is on understanding and awareness. Here the sphere of influence broadens: it is not just a focus on one’s own friends, family and colleagues, but on humanity. Exercising the power of this chakra normally results in personal transformation for self and others. Cognitively this centre is mostly associated with cognitive complexity, open-mindedness and curiosity and a people focus. Here a tangible focus makes way for a more subtle appreciation of factual, theoretical and interpersonal factors.

If the power and creative energy of this chakra becomes blocked through failure to enact compassion and achieve understanding of others, it may result in doubting one’s own intuitive insights; a counter-productive, relativistic attitude; gullibility; difficulty to make decisions and commitments; passive aggression; invisible sabotage of self and others; personal insecurity and a deep need for acceptance from others. It may also have certain health implications. A prerequisite for further growth is “acceptance” in general. This acceptance and open-mindedness needs to be balanced with the capacity to achieve closure, and make decisions and commitments as well.

The “throat chakra” is characterised by the psychological theme of “intention” and closely correlates with the Orangevalue orientation of the SD model.
Prerequisites for the development of this seat of power are: an awareness of personal “freedom of choice” as well as the necessary personal responsibility and sense of vision or purpose, for oneself. These three aspects enable the realisation of the power of intention.

This seat of power resides in a sense of determination, will, purpose, intention and personal discipline. It involves both the heart and the mind. It is the centre of choice and the realization of personal responsibility, or an appreciation of consequences.

Being blocked in this regard may result in an unbalanced focus on self-expression as opposed to taking responsibility; counter-productive individualism; independence at the cost of interdependence; dishonesty and manipulation; defensive intellectualizing (as a way of emotional expression); excessive ambition and control; a diversion of energy from personal purpose to justification of easier options; and “talk” at the expense of “walk”. It may also be associated with unrealistic and idealistic personal aims, but insufficient will power and consistency to follow these through.

The SD theory, however, positions this “Orange”, or “performance” value orientation before the “Green”, “relating” value orientation. The SD theory also describes this orientation in terms of strategic orientation, flexibility, high expectations, a sense of empowerment, possibly materialistic tendencies and manipulative skills. Personal responsibility, an internal locus of control and the drive to add value, are also associated with this SD orientation.

The “brow chakra”, or “third eye” is characterised by the psychological theme of “wisdom” (as opposed to intelligence) and closely correlates with the Yellow value orientation of the SD model.

This seat of power involves wisdom, intuition and optimism. It is where the psyche and the soul are integrated. Wisdom develops via the process of integration of the “choice” and “effort” of the throat chakra. It involves a sense of wonder in appreciating the holistic, contextualized, systemic and dynamic nature of life. From this perspective, the “self” is seen as interdependent and integrated with the world and others – it therefore acts responsibly. Cognitively this orientation is characterized by “simplicity after complexity”, a systems perspective and the identification of leverage, continuous learning and exploration.

It involves little appetite for symbols of power, and achievement. Here, openness and receptiveness allow for experience to become the teacher. No longer are intense emotions likely to derail progress in the direction of personal purpose. Here, emotions are integrated with understanding and life is characterised by intuitive insights.

Not many individuals achieve this level of awareness. Arrest at this level of consciousness may, however, turn into disinterest, withdrawal, carelessness, inadequate commitment; dissociation and a counter-productive negation of cultural practices and perspectives. Intuition may make way for intellectualisation and even arrogance. This may have certain health implications.

The SD theory describe this Yellow valuing system in terms of a life-long need for learning and exploration; pursuance of understanding; a holistic systems perspective; an appreciation of complexity; a tendency to work with simplicity after complexity; practicality and functionality; the contextualisation of solutions and a highly integrated approach.
The “crown chakra” is characterized by the psychological theme of “transcendence” and closely correlates with the Turquoise value orientation of the SD model.

Prerequisite for the emergence of this power center include: practical functionality as based on contextualized perceptions; learning; and a holistic philosophical framework. Here self-transcendence through wisdom and connection become possible.

Within this chakra, power is exercised via faith. Faith becomes the mechanism which connects the human and spiritual aspects of our nature and allows access to intuitive resources. The crown chakra is characterised by the seemingly contradictory characteristics of detachment from material and emotional realities (transcendence), while living in the “now” (consciousness and awareness). It is realised via a deep level of honesty and consciousness. Power and creativity are exercised via service through humility, faith, prayer and action. An appreciation of deep ecology supports Life in all its diversity.

Unresolved, untapped or blocked at this level: the person may be unaware of, or deny his/her own subconscious, the collective subconscious, a higher Being, the value of the human experience per se; and reject the spiritual / metaphysical realm. Connection, meaning and purpose may be lost. This too, has implications for physical health.

Myss also linked these Chakra-based psychological themes to those reflected by other wisdom traditions. These can be linked to the SD categories as indicated in Table 3.

### Table 3: An integration of taxonomies from various wisdom traditions as linked to the SD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiral Dynamics model (Consciousness)</th>
<th>Christian Sacraments</th>
<th>Ten Serifot – Kabbalah (10 divine energies)</th>
<th>Hindu Chakras (energy points)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purple: family, “us and them”</td>
<td>Baptism: taking responsibility for family</td>
<td>Shekhinah: mystical community of humanity</td>
<td>Family / root chakra: blood bond, bonding, loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue: survival in the physical world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purple: union, self-sacrifice for group</td>
<td>Communion: union with others in God</td>
<td>Yesod: foundation, procreative force of God, source of prophesy</td>
<td>Partnership / sacral chakra: integrity, honour, ethics, sacred union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue: ethics, honour, truth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Green: relationship, caring, compassion</td>
<td>Marriage: love and care</td>
<td>Tiferet: beauty, compassion, harmony</td>
<td>Emotional / heart power: love, forgiveness, compassion, kindness, generosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange: exploring purpose, exercising will, self-discipline and strategy</td>
<td>Confession: clearing the spirit of negative acts of will</td>
<td>Gevurah: power, judgement, punishment Hesed: love, mercy of God</td>
<td>Willpower / throat chakra: comes from alignment with God’s will, never act out of fear, surrender to synchronicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow: systems approach, learning, process orientation</td>
<td>Ordination: bestow grace to make one’s path of service sacred</td>
<td>Hockmah: wisdom, contact between divine and human mind</td>
<td>Mind / brow chakra: wisdom, seeking answers to mysteries, becoming a vessel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The various spiritual traditions thus reflect common psychological themes that can be linked to the SD model, as to the other consciousness models discussed in this paper.

### 2.6.2 Wilber on spiritual development

Wilber’s model of consciousness development, as plotted in his AQAL model (section 2.3.1.), capitalises on Piaget’s ideas of cognitive development. To Piaget’s taxonomy Wilber has added a vision-logic as well as several spiritual or transpersonal levels of development.

Wilber’s **vision-logic** or, planetary phase, operates according to rational principles and can be described as dialectic, creative synthetic, and post-formal. This vision-logic has the capability to deal with contradictions, ambiguities, dissonance and opposites and is nonlinear. It integrates many different perspectives. Vision-logic enables the emergence of a planetary culture.

Wilber refers to the worldview or world space of the vision-logic as “existential” or “centauric” where the centauric involves the integration of body and mind, the biosphere and noosphere. It creates space for the emergence of planetary consciousness, ecological balance and world citizenship.

Small pockets of leading edge consciousness with the potential for centauric vision-logic are currently emerging to take a stand on planetary awareness and look for global existential meaning. This reflects the collective emergence of a new structure of consciousness. Vision-logic paves the way for spiritual awareness.

A further level of consciousness thus proposed by Wilber (2000, 2001, 2007), is that of **transpersonal** consciousness. Very few people enter into the transpersonal domain. The transpersonal finds expression in contemplative practices which transcends cultural boundaries. Wilber identifies four general stages of contemplative awareness, namely the:

- psychic: nature mysticism
- subtle: deity mysticism
- causal: formless mysticism and
- nondual: nondual mysticism levels.

Wilber’s work in this regard is, amongst others, informed by that of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Saint Teresa of Avila, Meister Eckhart and Sri Ramana Maharshi.
The **psychic** level which can be compared to the “we experience”, or turquoise level of the SD, involves recognising the self in others. This process is not personal or social, but impersonal. It starts with the awakening of an inner observer or “witness” that transcends the subjective self. It loses interest in personal history and becomes silent and receptive to wisdom, the universal self, universal beauty and cosmic consciousness. Here lies the only source of true compassion.

The **subtle** level involves a divine union of “soul” and “spirit”. St Theresa’s “Interior Castle” describes subtle development via 7 stages, anchored in: humility, prayer, meditation and study; moral discipline; transpersonal grace and the opening up of a deeper interior space; a fundamental transformation involving the death of the ego and the emergence of soul; absorption where the soul merges with God; direct apprehension or experience of God and the union of the soul and God. This seventh subtle level enables the emergence of the causal level.

At the **causal** level the connection between soul and God are transcended and pure formless awareness, or pure consciousness, or the pure Self as pure Spirit, emerges. Eckhardt (Wilber, 2000) describes it as an “abyss, unborn, formless, primordial origin, emptiness, nothingness”. It is free of thought - a state of forgetfulness and absolute silence. Here the soul is stripped of all mind and is liberated from qualities. This awareness can be described in terms of perfect clarity and perfect consciousness, in which the manifest world ceases to arise.

At the **nondual** level, and following the causal absorption in pure unmanifest spirit, the entire manifest world arises again, but this time as a perfect expression of Spirit as Spirit. The formless and forms, the pure emptiness and the cosmos are, however, seen as nondual. The inner witness is seen to be everything that is witnessed.

In conceptualising the spiritual levels of evolvement, Wilber has capitalised on Perennial philosophy (which provides universal truths on the nature of reality, humanity and consciousness and underlies and transcends specific religious orientations), and insight from specific religious and spiritual frameworks. This has also been the case for Tolle and Hurtak, whereas Atmananda voices general Hindu beliefs – all of which are complimentary.

### 2.6.3 The views of Tolle, Hurtak and Atmananda

The currently arising interest in spiritual consciousness as is globally experienced, is not merely an interest in a new belief system, religion, ideology or mythology, but can be explained in terms of an awakening in the evolution of human consciousness, which transcends mind and thought.

Ekhart Tolle, author of various best sellers on consciousness, “The Power of Now” (1999) and “The New Earth” (2005) in particular, has significantly contributed to this global interest and awareness of transcendent consciousness. According to Tolle, ultimate consciousness is from within, and already there for anyone to access.
He regards the ego as the blueprint for dysfunction and an obstacle in realising deeper levels of awareness. This view clearly resonates with that of most of the other consciousness theorists who agree that understanding this “fundamental defect” (the ego) is the first step towards the transformation of human consciousness.

Ego-identification creates attachment to form, or material things and recognition. It creates a vicious circle of increasing multiplication of these objectives. By transcending the ego and the mind (where thinking is regarded as only a tiny aspect of consciousness), a greater inner power arises which according to Tolle (2005) may enable man’s ultimate purpose of bringing power into the world. He explains that only the “presence” of living in the “now” can free man from ego. This is because emotions and thoughts are depersonalised via awareness. “Peace” he sees as the end of all ego.

Not only the ego, but the mind also needs to be transcended. In fact, to move beyond thought is a prerequisite for the emergence of a new consciousness. He refers to “heaven”, not as a location, but the inner realm of consciousness, and “earth” as the outward manifestation of the inner. Tolle too, regards the ego (which is a symptom of a predominantly unconscious state) as an illusion which identifies with roles thereby obscuring the presence of the Self or the “I” (as reflective of ultimate consciousness).

A person’s levels of awareness determines the way in which the world is experienced. Here Tolle refers to the text in the Upanishads (part of the Vedas Hindu scriptures on which the Bhagavad Gita is based), that regards this awareness – not as what the eye sees or the ear hears, but by which the eye sees and the ear hears.

Hurtak is a controversial writer on consciousness, science and spirituality. His views are based on diverse ancient scriptures as well as personal spiritual experiences and revelations. In his 1977 publication, “The keys of Enoch”, he addresses issues that seem unusual within the context of traditional academia, but may add to this discussion of consciousness.

To Hurtak, man is an “energy life vehicle” involved in the process of unfolding “Light” into the reality of this planet - which he regards as a fallen planet. Man’s role is to connect the present network of consciousness with that of a universal network. Those who deny the Light, will return to the consciousness of the “flesh”. Those who become recipients of higher consciousness, otherwise referred to as the indwelling consciousness of God, have to go through certain transformations of consciousness. This involves turning the mind from the affairs of the world to arouse feelings of joy and to connect with a body of Light and spiritual intelligence that will guide the mind through the interplay of the higher and lower worlds.

According to Hurtak, the goal of the evolution of consciousness is to benefit all beings; to transform the planet; to transcend the “consciousness of death”; and become aware of the power of Love.
Hurtak also identifies twelve dimensions of consciousness of spiritual man – adding further chakras to those explained by Myss. He emphasises the concepts of light and vibrational energy – particularly that which he refers to as “truth vibration”.

Although written in a completely different style from that of the other theorists mentioned in this paper, Hurtak’s ideas echo the philosophies of all the wisdom traditions.

Sri Atmananda, in his book “Manifesting the Divine”, encapsulates the core messages of Hindu philosophy as revealed in the Upanishads, and explores their implications for consciousness development. According to Atmananda, man’s role is to make a collective decision about the consciousness on earth. He explains that the challenges man faces, lie within, and states that man has for a millennium put the emphasis on the expansion of matter and ignored the expansion of spirit. This results in the emergence of global challenges.

Atmananda advocates the transcendence of the limitations of what is human and to go beyond the compelling urges of individual expansion and liberation. Instead, man has to awaken to his own divinity – or the cosmic force within. This is achieved by opening up the individual system to a universal force that is descending. This opening up of the system involves the psychic, the mind, the vital and the physical – of which the psychic is first.

According to the principle of “ascend and descend”, Atmananda indicates that once an individual has achieved a transcendent level of spiritual consciousness, and therefore “carry the vibration that will manifest universal love” (p. 26), the return to a vigorous interest in the world of matter and mind is called for – but this time from a different vantage point. This process is bound to quicken spiritual awakening in many other “individual forms” just as a scientist’s findings in a laboratory can benefit thousands. According to Atmananda, human beings are called and chosen to develop a level of consciousness within themselves through which the consciousness of mankind can be elevated.

The spiritual path is thus not about seeking liberation or emancipation but seeking the manifestation of the Truth and of divine Love on earth. To open up to the divine Love, requires a transcendence of the mind and choosing a life of compassion. Here Atmananda quotes verses 99-100 of the Srimad Bhagavad Gita: “when your intellect will be free from the mire of delusion you will be indifferent to what you hear and to what is yet to be heard”.

In order to develop awareness, intellect and emotional desire need to be conquered. Atmananda refers to the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita (verses 109 – 110) “…From attachment comes desire and from desire comes anger. From anger comes delusion and from delusion, confusion of memory, … reasoning is clouded and one loses the capacity to discriminate. When this capacity is lost one is completely ruined”.

The ideas voiced by Atmananda are well aligned with those of Wilber, Graves, May and other consciousness theorists as well as that of Tolle. In fact most of the spiritual traditions,
including the Perennial philosophy, resonate with the central themes of the consciousness models which, at sequentially higher levels, emphasise the diminishing impact of egocentrism and increasing self-transcendence, compassion, connection and integration, realisation of freedom of choice; awareness of personal responsibility and power as well as the transcendence of the intellect. The move towards a more abstract “bigger picture”, however, is followed by a move back towards experience and simplicity (but this time “simplicity after complexity”); living an ordinary life within the “now”; and spiritual awareness.

The spiritual perspectives on consciousness thus unashamedly emphasise love and compassion as core growth mechanism. Here, compassion refers to a oneness with self, others, the world, collective consciousness and transcendent consciousness. Wilber also indicates a decline of egocentrism as a key characteristic of emerging consciousness.

Scientific views from biology, neurology and physics, in particular, on the energetic nature of living beings, further support the above speculations on consciousness.

2.7. Scientific perspectives on consciousness: the work of McTaggart, Pribram and Hawkins

Lynn McTaggart (2003) provides scientific evidence regarding the existence of a vibrational energy field, the “zero point field” which connects everything in the universe in a vast, dynamic and integrated whole. This scientific angle bridges the divide between the physical and metaphysical or mental domains which is a necessary step in transcending the limited empirical foundation of many scientific endeavours.

McTaggart (2003) describes the human being as essentially, and “at its most elemental level, not a chemical reaction, but an energetic charge” (p.xv). According to her, living beings exist within a field of energy where everything is connected. “[T]his field is the force,... our only fundamental truth is our relationship with it” (p. xvi).

She also capitalises on the groundbreaking scientific notion of “non-locality”, which refers to the instantaneous influence of quantum particles on one another over distance and without any exchange of force, to explain the field of influence of the self on the world and vice versa. This has significant implications for consciousness theory, specifically the collective nature of emerging consciousness.

In terms of the phenomenon of non-locality, the substructure of the universe can thus be described as “a sea of quantum fields”, where a field can be described as a region of influence (McTaggart, 2003). A number of researchers such as Jahn (McTaggart, 2003) the neuropsychologist Pribram (1993), Hamerhoff (1987) and others agree that at the “depth” of quantum levels the distinction between the mental and the physical dissolves, and are unified.
In fact, Pribram (1986) clarifies the mind-brain controversy in terms of this finding. He interprets the use of the constructs “mind” as opposed to “brain” as a function of the perspective of the observer, seeing that the information structures inherent to these two seemingly different manifestations, largely overlap. He states that the underlying structural composition of the electromagnetic and chemical nature of brain functioning is no different from the information structure which underlies mental functioning.

According to Pribram (1993) consciousness results from subatomic coherence.

Pribram and McTaggart also contrast “entropy” (as the movement of the inanimate world - which is towards chaos and disorder), with the coherence of consciousness which creates order.

This view is to some extent supported by Braud’s examination of interpersonal connection. Braud (MacTaggart, 2003, p. 180) has indicated that human interaction result in the synchronisation of brainwave patterns and that the person with the most cohesive pattern has the greatest influence on the EEG patterns of others.

While human consciousness is tuned to frequencies of the zero point field, individual capacity in this regard is strictly limited (Pribram, 1993). With reference to this, Laszlo (1995) indicates that altered states of consciousness, such as that achieved via meditation, seem to relax these limitations to “expand the bandwith” and therefore provide access to a wider range of frequencies.

These findings and ideas have profound implications for the development and study of consciousness. No longer is only the individual, or even the social context involved, but energy exchange within the universe, which includes the collective consciousness.

To Hawkins (2002) and many others, evolution as such can be described in terms of an ever increasing manifestation of consciousness. His ideas are discussed in his PhD thesis titled “A qualitative and quantitative analysis and calibration of levels of human consciousness”, as well as in the more popular versions of his insights in “Power versus Force” (1995) and “the Eye of the I” (2001),

Like McTaggart, Hawkins also uses the concept of “attractor fields” which underlie that which seems random and chaotic. These attractor fields are hidden energy fields which extend beyond time and space. According to Hawkins the “non-material realms of existence which are composed of energy bodies at various frequency levels” congregate around attractor fields. Within consciousness theory, these fields reveal specific clusters of attitudes, thoughts, emotions and mental contents.

Hawkins measures these energy fields via kinesiology tests and orders the various levels of consciousness linearly in a way not unlike that of the other theorists discussed in this paper. In addition, he analysed EEG frequencies and found that advanced states of consciousness
are primarily associated with slow theta waves, as compared to the predominant alpha waves that are associated with meditational states, and the beta waves of ordinary mind states.

3. An organising framework for the comparison of consciousness models

The basic structure of various consciousness models from different disciplines, ranging from physics to psychology, philosophy and the spiritual traditions, all seem to confirm one another and reflect an intuitively appealing pattern of progression.

An organising framework is proposed for the comparison of the various consciousness models in terms of complimentary developmental themes (see Table 4).

Table 4: An organising framework for the comparison of consciousness and developmental models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graves memes / world views</th>
<th>Wilber’s (&amp; Gebser’s) Integral AQAL model</th>
<th>Maslow’s need hierarchy</th>
<th>Loewinger’s stages of ego development</th>
<th>Kohlberg stages of moral development</th>
<th>Perry’s model on cognitive and ethical development</th>
<th>Kegan six equilibrium stages of evolving self</th>
<th>May’s Whirl model on consciousness development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I survive Beige</td>
<td>Sensori-physical</td>
<td>Physiological</td>
<td>Pre-social (autistic &amp; symbiotic)</td>
<td>Pre-moral (magic wish)</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Incorporative (reflexes)</td>
<td>Reactive: impulsive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Instinctual</td>
<td></td>
<td>Impulsive (bodily feelings, impulses, needs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Impulsive (impulses, perceptions)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We belong Purple</td>
<td>Phantasmic-emotional</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>Impulsive</td>
<td>Pre-conventional (punishment, hedonism)</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Impulsive (rule bound)</td>
<td>Reactive: rule bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reptilian mind (Magic)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-protective (need-based)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We belong Purple</td>
<td>Rule/role mind (Mythic)</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Conformist (social approval)</td>
<td>Conventional (approval of others; law &amp; order)</td>
<td>Authoritarian</td>
<td>Imperial (needs, interests desires)</td>
<td>Reactive: rule bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We conform Blue</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-aware (own choices but limited deeper awareness)</td>
<td>Conscientious (responsibility, principles,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consciousness models
### 3. A critical evaluation of consciousness models

The convergence and overlapping nature of all the above models may appear as evidence for the validity of their premises.

However, Popper (Taleb, 2010) regards “scepticism” as an important scientific method – especially in the social sciences which are characterised by a degree of predictive power which he regards as comparable to that of aesthetics. Popper’s well known “falsification” idea stresses the importance of continuous attempts to find theory lacking. Taleb agrees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I control</th>
<th>Egocentric (Mental)</th>
<th>Self-esteem</th>
<th>Individualistic (individuality, self-awareness, relationship)</th>
<th>Conventional</th>
<th>Multiplicity</th>
<th>Imperial</th>
<th>Intentional: Individualistic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I perform</td>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>Individualistic</td>
<td>Post-conventional (individual rights, individual principles)</td>
<td>Multiplicity</td>
<td>Relativistic</td>
<td>Imperial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Formal reflexive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Commitment in a relativistic world</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieving self</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Mental to Integral)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We relate</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Self-actualisation</td>
<td>Autonomous (respect &amp; tolerance)</td>
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that negative instances offer a more effective strategy to arrive at the truth than verification does.

The critical perspectives thus taken in this section of the paper involves an evaluation of the scientific status of the field, the coherence of consciousness models, their constructs, the methodologies involved, and their pragmatic value.

**The scientific status of Psychology**

In terms of the scientific status of various disciplines such as the social sciences, natural sciences and the spiritual traditions in particular, Royce & Powell (1983) have identified four stages of scientific development, namely that of (a) pre-scientific philosophical speculation; (b) empirical exploration; (c) sophistication of methods of controlled observation and quantification; and (d) theoretical formalisation and unification.

The consciousness models referred to in this paper are descriptive, although some degree of empirical exploration does take place – particularly in the case of the cognitive and moral development models. The objectives and “methods” of the spiritual traditions, however, differ qualitatively from that of the scientific endeavours and are largely experiential. The scientific findings mentioned in section 2.7 involve stages (a), (b) and (c) and can be regarded as both descriptive and, to some extent, explanatory.

**Methodology**

In the case of speculative and descriptive sciences, the analysis of the proposed constructs largely depend on the ingenuity of the theorist or researcher. This allows considerable freedom for model building.

The operationalisation of the consciousness constructs for purposes of quantifiability and measurement thus remains a priority for future research as it will enable a more systematic analysis of the proposed models.

The formulation of the consciousness models lack scientific rigour and involves a significant degree of speculation.

**The Explanatory power of consciousness models**

The goal of model building is to understand the field. However, it seem that much progress in the field of consciousness is required before an understanding of the phenomena involved, will be possible.

The social sciences are largely of a qualitative nature. Constructs are often regarded as “networks”, where networks can be described in terms of an architecture of interconnectivity around critical points. In the case of consciousness models these networks form “holons” (Wilber, 2000) of increasing complexity and inclusivity.
Taleb (2010) points out that “social sciences laws” reflect these critical points. The dynamics of the critical points are, however, independent of the underlying dynamic system. There may even be commonality among the exponents of the critical points of different systems although the systems may differ. This incompleteness of information largely derails the predictive power of the models.

Taleb thus rejects predictive claims of these types of models, based on what he refers to as a “pretense of science” and suggests it being a “sophisticated craft” at most. To him the premises are much more important than the model seeing that theoretical elegance often is indicative of “platonicity” and thus theoretical weakness. He goes as far as to refer to “theorising as a disease to resist” (p. 285) and he criticises a philosophy “whose curiosity is focused on regimented on-the-shelf topics…” (p. 285). In fact, to Taleb “it is contagion that determines the fate of a theory in science, not its validity” (p. 277) and in this regard refers to a number of scientific writers who explain processes that create “avalanches, social contagions and what they call information cascades” (p 267).

However, regardless of the methodological and theoretical weaknesses of consciousness theories, model building in this arena should nevertheless be undertaken given its heuristic and pragmatic value.

**Theory development in the social sciences**

The development of theoretical models with predictive power, thus remains an important scientific goal.

According to Taleb (2010) this goal is pursued by either looking at the world in terms of averages (where outliers are ignored) or in terms of exceptions (where extremes count). The subject material will determine the most valid approach.

In the case of averaging, equilibrium forces are at work which negate randomness. This is typical in the case of statistics where the bell curve and standard deviation reign supreme. The bell curve transforms single observations to a completely abstract level, close to an average. Taleb regards it as a reductionistic approach which is only applicable within certain contexts. In the case of qualitative differences between constructs, as in the social sciences, normal curves and linear progressions largely fail. A different kind of theoretical approach is required to deal with randomness.

Human functioning is as an irregular affair, the randomness of which can be compared to natural phenomena. The latter (e.g. a landscape) may appear completely different from a distance (the generalised, abstract perspective comparable to a theoretical model) than what it looks like under a microscope (the experience, the “source code” and/or the immediate real-life manifestation), for example.

In an effort to capture the randomness of nature, or consciousness as in this case, averaging and categorisation as scientific techniques are thus inadequate, as these involve arriving at certainties by adding up and averaging uncertainties. Taleb (2010) refers to it as a
“masquerading problem” where what one sees is less relevant than what one does not see. He also refers to categorisation and averaging as “platonifying” and points out that it cannot access the true nature of a phenomenon. This criticism may well apply to consciousness models.

Categorisation should thus at best be regarded as a means to an end as opposed to a primary theoretical goal. Simple answers may provide emotional security and certainty to the theorist, but are not sufficient to explain uncertainty.

Although the models based on this scientific approach seem to confirm reality, its underlying dynamics are not accounted for. Such models simply cannot be predictive - as in the case of history, where patterns can be identified, but predictions cannot be made seeing that “history does not reveal its mind to us” (Taleb, 2010, p. 268).

In the light of Taleb’s cynical views on theoretical models, the degree of coherence of consciousness models may be related to “contagion”; their intuitive appeal rooted in the emotional need for intellectual certainty; information processing dynamics involved in theorising; and speculation – none of which is particularly scientifically desirable.

However, other than the social sciences models, the spiritual perspectives focus on qualitative aspects, without claiming explanatory value. The “research method” of the wisdom traditions involves contemplation and is experiential. In the case of scientific perspectives in this regard, some degree of speculation is still involved and the rational basis of the claims is not as well developed as the empirical basis is.

The consciousness models

Supporting evidence for the existence of specific, separate stages in consciousness development is the exception rather than the rule. Carroll and Maxwell (1979) pose queries regarding theoretical models, namely: are the constructs necessarily linked to mental operations; do they represent a mental architecture; how reliable is the manifestation of these constructs or stages; to what extent are they subject to change and what are the dynamics underlying change. The scientific status of psychology and the nature of consciousness models, however, fail to address these queries. The meaning of the observations are also theoretically embedded and to some extent arbitrary and subjectively determined.

From a metacognitive perspective, these models also reflect the way in which the human mind is inclined to process information, i.e. by identifying linear progressions; making generalisations; structuring; as well as by identifying the interactions between system components. In addition, there is also the capacity to deal with vagueness and dynamic interactions. The outcome of these processes, namely the models that are formulated, are thus as much a function of the theorist’s skills and capabilities, as it is of the subject matter.
The levels and stages models describe change and growth in terms of a linear sequence of phases or stages; reflecting a purposeful and adaptable goal-directed movement; and an evolutionary process by which dissonance, disequilibrium or conflict between opposing forces leads to synthesis, followed by a next cycle of polarisation and integration.

In terms of the level of theorising involved, consciousness models mostly reflect an “intermediate level”. The level of theorising refers to the molarity or molecularity of the concepts involved and how refined the specification of detail regarding the stages is. This may range from the detailed level of reaction time studies for example, to that of an abstract, general or aggregative level. Intermediate level theorising involves, according to Royce and Powell (1983), the level of traits responsible for integrative goal achievement.

Consciousness models are also characterised by a tendency to combine, or synthesise, various approaches. The work of Wilber, in particular, involves an elegant synthesis of theoretical approaches and models. Although this practice normally provides a most useful big picture perspective, a lack of research findings regarding the combination of theoretical inputs often applies. Currently the tendency of cross-disciplinary integration is relatively uncommon and Carroll and Maxwell (1979, p. 603) sees it as a “hesitant courtship between traditionally separate disciplines”.

Model building activities have to meet certain meta-theoretical criteria such as that of parsimony, structural adequacy, empirical adequacy, plausibility, completeness and falsifiability (Sternberg, 1977; Prinsloo, 1992).

Parsimony refers to the degree of simplicity by which the model accounts for the data. A relatively small number of parameters are desirable. According to Sternberg (1977) there is, however, a tradeoff between parsimony and completeness and specificity on the other. Detterman (1984) emphasises the “law of parsimony” as the most important criterion in theory construction – particular in disciplines characterised by weak theorising such as the social sciences. The parsimony of a model simplifies the process of falsification as well as the practical utility of a model. No clarity has been obtained with regards to a “reasonable number of constructs” though. The criteria of parsimony is largely met in the case of consciousness models.

The structural adequacy of a model refers to the interrelationships between the proposed constructs. Given the scientific status of the social sciences, which lack explanatory value and are merely descriptive in nature, it is at present only possible to speculate on the interrelationships between constructs. This raises the question of whether the constructs in consciousness theory are merely of an arbitrary nature.

Structural inadequacy also complicates validational efforts as well as the practical implementation of a model. An example in this regard, is the somewhat contradictory implications of the SD model for its application in the leadership context.
According to Graves’s specified progression of stages of consciousness, a prerequisite for viable leadership lies in the leader’s level of consciousness either reflecting, exceeding or at least mirroring the perspective(s) of followers. However, the second tier value systems as represented by the Yellow and Turquoise orientations, which Graves refers to as “spiral wizards”, are exempted from this rule in that Graves regards them as having sufficient adaptability and understanding to lead followers from all different orientations.

This may generally be the case, but not necessarily. Graves also states that the effectiveness of a value orientation depends on its contextual fit. The contextual requirements of leadership may thus clash with the principle of equal or higher level leadership orientation. In fact, leadership direction reflecting a lower level of consciousness than those of followers, may apply, and willingly be accepted by potential followers. For example, Green or Yellow followers may accept Orange, Blue or Red leaders in Orange, Blue or Red contexts.

A model’s empirical adequacy refers to the ability of the model to account for empirical findings. Although the consciousness models do categorise phenomena, which seems to describe behaviour in everyday life, the randomness of human behaviour may derail the performance of the models under certain circumstances.

The criterion of plausibility involves intuitive judgements about the reasonableness of the theory (Sternberg, 1977). The models discussed in this paper all seem viable and theoretically elegant.

The models, however, fail to meet the criterion of completeness. The theoretical constructs proposed, seem to be widely (“width”) applicable, but lack theoretical “depth”. The manifestation of phenomena are described, but the dynamics of the underlying systems are not addressed.

According to Popper, the falsifiability of scientific findings is important and depends on an adequate definition of the constructs. Although definitions and theories are not falsifiable, models are, and can generate falsifiable predictions. The consciousness models, however, are mostly descriptive, their constructs overlap, the nomological networks involved are “lose”, and they lack predictive validity. At most these models van be regarded as organising frameworks which echoes Taleb’s (2010) criticism of the “pretence of a science”. The cognitive and moral development models such as those of Piaget, Kohlberg and Perry, however, are more solid in this regard.

The constructs

It is required of theorists to carefully motivate and explain the unit of analysis incorporated in their models. Typical units of analysis includes, for example, the “reflex” of behaviorists and the “factor” of psychometrists.
The consciousness models propose “levels”, “states” or “stages”. Although these terms provide descriptive and heuristic value, there is inadequate evidence to motivate the linear progression of the various levels, which impacts on the theoretical value of the models. Assumptions may therefore have been involved in the formulation of the models. Again, this criterion is better met by the cognitive and moral development models.

From the organising framework as proposed in section 3, some degree of disconnect between the proposed stages of different models is noticeable. Myss’s view of the heart chakra (proposed to correspond to the green value system of the SD model), preceding the throat chakra (which can be associated with the orange value system of the SD model) differs from the order specified by the SD model where orange is regarded as a prerequisite for green. This raises questions with regard to the linear progression of the stages – even though the chakras represent a different frame of reference than does the SD model.

The stages and levels proposed by most of the consciousness models, can perhaps be compared to Carroll’s (1988) construct of “functional unities” which seems to co-occur with specific circumstances, means and operations to produce specific outcomes. The “unpacking” of these constructs, however, remains a future scientific goal.

The relationships between the consciousness model constructs are of a conceptual nature; with few formal connections; and are organised within a nomological net. The organisation mostly reflect a linear progression of stages. The high degree of interaction between the constructs, as well as the methodological shortcoming involved, further confound the constructs involved. A graphic presentation of the interrelationships between the constructs proposed by the various theorists may have clarified the issue to some extent. Wilber’s concept of holon and Graves’s spiral are, however, useful in this regard.

In terms of the meta-theoretical criteria as discussed above, consciousness theory thus lack scientific rigour and the proposed models often cannot be regarded as scientific models, but rather as organising frameworks. The speculative nature of the various contributions are, however, in line with the descriptive nature of the social sciences. The heuristic and pragmatic value of the models can nevertheless not be denied.

5. Application of consciousness models to the study of leadership

Consciousness theories, the work of Graves and Wilber in particular, provide a valuable meta-framework for understanding human awareness and the principles by which complex behavioural, emotional, cognitive, valuing and identity formation processes are shaped.

Models of consciousness provide a progression of increasingly inclusive and integrated states of awareness and describe the dynamics of becoming conscious.

This has fundamental implications for leadership theory. Chatterjee (1998) is of the opinion that leadership should be interpreted in terms of fields of awareness rather than in terms of
personality traits or mental attributes. Reams (2005) refers to a number of studies indicating that world class performers, frequently experienced higher states of consciousness. Torbert (2004) too, found that, given the complexity of organisational change initiatives, the effectiveness of transformational efforts depend upon the level of consciousness of leadership.

The centrality of consciousness to leadership is discussed from an integral perspective.

**Integral theory**

Integral theory, as grounded in the AQAL model of Ken Wilber (2000 (a),(b)), provides a comprehensive, systematised and inclusive framework that embraces and contextualises various disciplines including science, art, theology and philosophy as applied to self, culture and nature. It reflects the principle of wholeness that exceeds the limitations of rationality. The integral framework thus accommodates multiple and seemingly contradictory views on almost any topic, including that of leadership.

In accordance with the AQAL model, integral theory posits a four quadrant model (the upper left or UL, the upper right or UR, the lower left or LL and the lower right or LR quadrants), each differentiated into levels of complexity or stages of development, states of awareness, types and specific lines or streams of development. All these dimensions offer significant heuristic value within the leadership context.

The integral framework contextualises existing leadership models and provides theoretical guidelines for the evaluation of current and emerging views, thereby creating an inclusive structure according to which various leadership perspectives can be integrated and applied.

**Leadership**

Leadership can be seen as a contextualized phenomenon and involves a temporary role. It can be performed by multiple players in multiple roles. Depending on their worldview and perceptual framework, followers are attracted to the vision offered by leadership. This idea is elsewhere expanded on in the ILR. [http://integralleadershipreview.com/6340-towards-an-integrated-assessment-of-leadership-potential](http://integralleadershipreview.com/6340-towards-an-integrated-assessment-of-leadership-potential)

According to Fuhs (2008) a number of definitions of leadership can be found in the literature, emphasizing:

- influence as explored by Maxwell (1993)
- behavioral characteristics as described, amongst others, by Collins (2001)
- design of context as emphasised in the work of Senge (1990) for example, and
- the process of purpose setting and people motivation discussed by authors such as Kofman (2006).

**Leadership theory**
Reams (2005) provides a brief overview of leadership theories aimed at conceptualising the construct of leadership. He points out that an integral framework, which provides a meta-perspective of leadership, is required to synthesise the different models.

Initial attempts of the early 20th century reflect the upper left (UL) quadrant of integral theory. It was aimed at understanding leadership in terms of the innate intentional qualities and personal characteristics of leaders, and became known as trait theory or the “great man” theory. This angle to leadership development is still widely applied.

Trait theory, however, failed to accommodate for the contextual requirements of leadership, which lead to a shift in emphasis to leadership styles, or behavioural skills that could be acquired. According to style theory, leadership primarily entails task and relational behaviour – extending the leadership view to primarily the upper right (UR) behavioural, and to some extent also the lower right (LR), collective quadrants.

The path-goal theory emphasises the leader-follower relationship in terms of the level of motivation of the follower. Here the style approach also surfaced in that behavioural skills can be developed.

A psychodynamic explanation of leadership focuses on the emotional characteristics of the relationship between the leader and follower.

The group dynamics approach emerged to anchor leadership theory within the collective domain and gained particular prominence during the 40's and 50's.

A more explicitly contextualised view emerged with the conceptualisation of the situational leadership theory which provided greater explanatory power than the individual and the group foci of the previous theoretical approaches. This view highlights both the development level of subordinates and the leadership style within a particular situation. The level of development of followers are, however, not proposed to match that of the leader.

Further leadership theories have also been formulated, such as contingency theory which is relatively similar to situational theory. It aims to match the traits of leaders (UL) with the collective context (lower quadrants).

Transformational leadership is concerned with inspiring followers to achieve higher levels of moral conduct and value based actions, which reflect the upper quadrants.

Worldcentric views transcend the egocentric (such as some of the trait theories) and ethnocentric (including the group dynamic approaches) views and offer a more integral picture of leadership. An example is the servant leadership model of Greenleaf (2002) by which leadership is aimed at the greater good of humanity, as opposed to meeting the needs of the individual or company.
Reams (2005) also mentions a number of alternative views of leadership. It includes models focusing on responses to complexity. Some theorists have also ventured into the areas of consciousness, spirituality and new scientific theories.

Ploughman (2000) comments on the structural-functionalist frame of reference of those leadership theories that are anchored in hierarchical, linear, pragmatic and management oriented assumptions.

**Leadership publications**

Fuhs (2008) has evaluated a number of popular publications by means of a content analysis technique to determine their “quadratic” comprehensiveness.

- In “Good to Great: Why some companies make the leap and others don’t”, Jim Collins describes what great companies do in terms of their culture and technology, for example. His focus on the actions of collectives constitutes a 50% representation of the LR quadrant.
- In “The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change”, Stephen R. Covey addresses the personal, behavioural, cultural and social aspects of personal growth and leadership. Although his model lacks a theoretical basis, or meta-framework, it addresses all four quadrants.
- In “The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization”, Peter Senge describes the systems dynamics of organisational behaviour, thereby largely focusing on the LR quadrant.
- In “Leadership without Easy Answers”, Ronald A. Heifetz postulates leadership as culture bound and applies a 74% right quadrant focus given his historical account of leaders’ actions.
- In “Action Inquiry: The Secrets of Timely and Transforming Leadership” by Bill Torbert and associates, Torbert focuses on subjective, intersubjective and objective data that makes for a quadratically balanced exploration of leadership.
- In “Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World”, Margaret Wheatley shows an 82% right quadrant focus.
- In “Leadership and Self Deception: Getting Out of the Box” by the Arbinger Institute, an 84% focus is placed on the interior quadrants, and the UL is regarded as fundamental to all the other quadrants.
- In “Primal Leadership: Learning to Lead with Emotional Intelligence”, Daniel Goleman, Richard Boyatzis, and Annie McKee provide a quadratically balanced view of leadership. They regard resonance building as the fundamental task of leaders and explore the impact of leadership on culture and context.

Fuhs (2008) concludes that these eight publications show a 38% LR quadrant perspective, a 65% right quadrants focus; and a 55% lower quadrant orientation. The exterior collective territory of leadership functioning is thus most commonly represented in popular leadership
literature. In a further analysis of 19 leadership publications, Fuhsagain found a LR quadrant focus to be most prominently represented, although other quadrants are also addressed. An integral perspective, however, indicates the shortcomings of such an unbalanced view.

In having to address the complexity of organizational dynamics, leaders need to select a most appropriate approach. The exterior dimension seems more tangible, observable, manageable and responsive, whereas the interior tends to be more hidden, elusive, dynamic and change resistant.

The more manageable nature of the exterior collective quadrant, as well as the current behavioural emphasis of popular literature, both seem to reinforce a focus on organisational and group behaviour as the primary domain of leadership. Behaviours (UR) and intentions (UL) are, however, interconnected and of equal importance. Personal growth and awareness is thus a prerequisite for effective leadership. Addressing the interior, however, requires awareness, introspection and interaction.

Consciousness theory provides an invaluable clarification of the complexities of the interior quadrants, which are inherently linked to exterior manifestations.

An all quadrant view of leadership, informed by both the behaviourally oriented leadership models, as well as consciousness theory’s interior focus, constitutes a significant step towards integral leadership practice.

**Integral leadership**

According to Reams (2005) and Kegan (1994), leadership contexts are often characterised by complexity, change, vagueness and paradoxical demands, and leaders are responsible for the development of core business competence while ensuring future growth through innovation. This is a tall order for which Putz and Raynor (2004) regard integral leadership as essential. In essence, they see it as psychological maturity which they describe as the capacity to consciously adapt one’s identity, or “mind” in a purposeful manner.

Pauchant (2005) views integral leaders as primarily following their higher self with moral courage as opposed to focusing on followers. This may involve drawing on something beyond themselves. Many other leadership theorists, such as Wigglesworth (2006), also emphasise the maturity and spiritual awareness of “second tier” leaders (according to Grave’s Spiral Dynamics model), as a prerequisite for dealing with the increasing complexity of the leadership domain.

According to Liz Ploughman (2000), a core challenge for leadership is to recognise the central role of awareness in dealing with a complex world. External crises inherently involve crises of perception.

Her view of leadership as stewardship promotes a deep ecological awareness. This involves a reconceptualization of the purpose of life to unleash the human spirit. Such a view...
dictates that ethics becomes the enabling mechanism of leadership. The issue of integrity applies to all leadership contexts and roles.

The level of self-awareness required for such a meta-perspective is described by consciousness theory which proposes higher levels of consciousness as more integrated, connected and therefore more ethical. It is further clarified by specific developmental models seeing that leadership as a driver of transformation and change may require cognitive strategy, awareness and morality to align organisational orientations with global ecological issues.

The majority of the developmental models as discussed in this paper, refer to the individual interior quadrant (UL) of the AQAL model though, and describe level / stages of development within certain lines / streams. It includes the following models:

- Piaget's theory of cognitive development
- Kohlberg's stages of moral development
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Loevinger's stages of ego development
- Perry's stages of intellectual and ethical development
- Kegan's equilibrium stages
- May's levels of consciousness development
- Myss's application of the wisdom traditions to personal development

The developmental models which address specific lines or streams, are all hierarchically organised, and therefore regard leadership functioning at higher levels as more inclusive, integrated and effective. Although these models primarily represent the individual interior, behavioural descriptions of the various stages are also provided.

- Gebser’s structures of human consciousness model primarily reflects a focus on the collective quadrants
- Graves’s Spiral Dynamic (SD) model specifies stages / levels of development within the stream/line of consciousness. Consciousness can be regarded as a higher level holon which includes and transcends the “line” constructs of cognitive, moral-ethical, socio-emotional and identity functioning. The SD model is interpreted to addresses the full integral spectrum of the self, others and the organisation.

**Leadership in the business context**

According to Ploughman (2000), business has become the “institutional strength” of the modern world and leadership the instrument for dealing with its typical crises of rampant consumerism, demands on resources, pollution and immoral short sightedness in general.

She suggests that a “network of variations” will become the dominant social structure which will replace hierarchical organisation, of which the latter is centred around power
considerations and reflects a management mindset. Her proposed concept of a network refers to an organic mode of social organisation which is highly adaptive, efficient and conscious. Shared values will replace the importance of power, money and ambition. She links this view to Drucker’s concept of the “post-business” society and the emergence of a social economy centred around relationships and knowledge. Leadership entails authentic power as opposed to external power, where authentic power refers to the alignment of the person with his/her innate capacity to evolve. This leadership delivers via the communication of ideas.

**Implications of consciousness models for leadership development**

The integral model provides a comprehensive perspective for leadership development given its four quadrant framework and its recognition of specific lines of self that can be addressed. Individual intention, motivation, vision, feelings, (UL) and how these manifest behaviourally and contextually (UR) are thus critical aspects in leadership development.

A mere intellectual understanding of the consciousness and integral models is, however, not sufficient to ensure the acquisition and internalisation of an integrally informed perspective. Inconsistencies and gaps in the level of development of the various lines/streams of a person may further complicate developmental initiatives. The integral model, however, creates an awareness of potential developmental challenges and goals in the leadership context.

**6. Conclusion**

Consciousness theories provide a comprehensive perspective for the understanding of human behaviour, which goes beyond the offerings of most of the leadership models, in particular that of “trait theory” which largely informs psychometric practice and leadership development. The consciousness models of Graves, Wilber, May and others thus enrich an integral approach to leadership theory and practice.

This paper reviews a number of consciousness models as well as more specific developmental models and represents these within a broad organizing framework which indicates the similarities of the various models. The developmental themes underlying most of these models, including both the stream- or line-specific developmental models (for example the cognitive and moral-ethical models), as well as the more encompassing consciousness models (representing a higher level holon than those of the cognitive and moral-ethical models), reveal the almost “fractal” nature of the AQAL approach. [The concept of fractals was proposed by Mandelbrot (Taleb, 2010) and refers to a mathematical set of self-similar patterns which are the same at every scale, in other words, a detailed pattern repeating itself.] The organising framework presented here, reveals the similarities across models at different levels of generality.
This paper also critically evaluates the various models in terms of meta-theoretical criteria. Consciousness theory, however, generally fails with regards to its explanatory power, is characterized by significant gaps of information – particularly on the underlying mechanisms involved; lacks scientific status; and is difficult to measure. In addition, the structure of the models may well reflect the workings of the mind of the theorists as opposed to the hidden dynamics of the subject matter. It also seems that certain claims may be based on dubious premises. These models thus describe, but fail to predict, human behavior.

Failure to substantiate the predictive validity of the models may to some extent be remedied by lowering explanatory expectations – especially in the application of the models. As in the case of the spiritual traditions, an experiential, action research approach may be the most appropriate route towards an understanding of the concepts involved.

Given the “fractal” structure of the organizing model, and the relatively well researched status of the cognitive and moral development models, there also is value in leveraging consciousness research off the more validated models.

In addition, contributions from physics can also increase the robustness of the consciousness models. For example, Hawkins and McTaggart’s concept of “attractor patterns” may offer a solution to account for the apparent randomness of social phenomena, thereby adding weight to the concept of “networks”. This idea has already been capitalized on by Mindell’s (Mindell, 1982; Prinsloo, 2012) “process oriented psychology” which describes role-taking in terms of collective awareness and the degree to which an individual’s potential resonates with the role requirements within a specific context.

Consciousness models, however, offer a valuable first step towards understanding individual and collective processes. The significant overlap between the various models as discussed here, add to their face validity. The models are also most interesting and applicable to everyday life contexts; they specify themes and mechanisms which can guide developmental inputs; and Wilber’s AQAL model in particular bridges the divide between most disciplines. Consciousness theory therefore has significant heuristic and practical value in providing a foundation for educational, therapeutic, training, personal and organisational development, research initiatives, as well as for cross-disciplinary integration.

The application of consciousness theory to the study of leadership is also addressed, according to the principles of integral theory.

The view taken here is that the UL quadrant of the AQAL model, as populated by consciousness constructs, largely determines all manifestations on the other axes. Awareness is thus positioned at the core of the full integral spectrum of human experience. Ploughman’s views of leadership in terms of “perspective”, authenticity, connectedness,
deep ecological awareness, integrity and stewardship, also shows a UL orientation and heavily capitalises on awareness.

Higher levels of consciousness involve the required inclusiveness and integration to support ecological awareness and integrity. This is currently a critical consideration in leadership given the global economic meltdown, which can partly be attributed to ineffective and linear, yet complex, business strategies aimed at achieving short term, decontextualized, materialistic and power goals. Current business culture is thus reflective of worldviews that are inadequate in meeting the challenges posed by their own creation. The inherent egocentrism and materialism that seem to drive business initiatives, in combination with the power that is involved, have resulted in a fragmented world. Awareness and integrity are key to addressing social and environmental issues – an aspect of leadership that is informed by consciousness theory.

The progression of levels of consciousness of the UL quadrant, co-arises and increasingly merges with both:

- the higher level structures of the collective quadrants (given phenomena such as social network organisations; multi-role, multi-context leadership anchored in collective consciousness; resonance and intuitive awareness) via the mechanism of compassion; and
- the higher level structures of the exterior quadrants (as illustrated by concepts such as McTaggart’s zero point field, force fields, and Pribram’s subatomic coherence), via the mechanism of intention.

The convergence of the higher ends of the AQAL axes, which can almost be visualised as a pyramidal structure, is hinted at by a number of principles underlying to consciousness and developmental theory. Graves, for example, describes the lower levels of the SD model (Purple, Red and Blue) as fear driven. At these levels, the self is seen in opposition to the world and others, and external factors largely determine one’s fate. At the second tier levels, the impact of subjectivity on the human experience is recognised metacognitively, as is the inherent integration of man and his world. At the higher end of the spectrum of consciousness, man can thus enter the control room of his world via the mechanisms of compassion and intention.

Consciousness theory, though primarily heuristic in nature, thus provides valuable guidelines in understanding ourselves, others and the world, thereby contextualizing and enriching an integral leadership practice.

5. Bibliography


