



Responsible Rebellion: A Wholeness-Centered Framework for Gender-Equitable Leadership

Candice Deal-Bartell
Galaluna Group, USA

Abstract

This conceptual paper offers a gender-equitable alternative to leadership discourse centered on productivity, resilience, hierarchy, and transformation. Its starting point is a systemic problem it names “workplace theater,” where organizations operate as figured worlds in which people secure legibility and advancement by performing recognized roles, and in which each fluent performance re-anchors the structures that favor the dominant category. Read systemically, this is a reinforcing feedback loop, and mainstream reform intervenes only at its weakest leverage points, including representation targets, procedural rules, and behavioral training. The framework introduced here instead targets the paradigm, the tacit and largely unstated definition of what a competent leader is, from which a system’s goals, structure, and rules arise. Gender performance is treated as the sharpest instance of this dynamic. Drawing on theories of performance and power, the paper shows how the compulsion to perform a masculine-coded ideal of authority reproduces inequity at the level of the leader’s own self-constitution. Responsible Rebellion, developed through critical-theoretical synthesis and reflective practitioner inquiry, comprises four pillars (Responsibility, Response, Reflection, and Rebellion) grounded in embodied wholeness. It moves leaders from scripted performance toward self-authored agency, replacing power-over with power-with and power-within, and reframes reinvention as a homecoming rather than a repair. The paper illustrates the pillars through two composite practice vignettes, specifies a logic model linking them to hypothesized individual, relational, and system outcomes, and states eleven testable propositions with candidate indicators and disconfirming conditions. It grounds its embodied claims in the sociology of bodily disposition and the epistemology of bodily knowing developed within leadership and organization studies, not in clinical neurophysiology, and specifies the scope conditions under which the framework is expected to hold beyond Western and Anglophone settings.

Keywords: wholeness-centered leadership, responsible rebellion, gender equity, embodied leadership, systems thinking, power-within, cross-cultural portability

1. Introduction

Dominant models of leadership present themselves as neutral, but they are not. The qualities most readily recognized as “leaderly” including decisiveness, command, emotional containment, disembodied rationality are historically and culturally coded as masculine. This coding is among the more consistently replicated findings in the psychology of leadership, running from Schein’s (1973) demonstration that attributes ascribed to successful managers track those ascribed to men, through Eagly and Karau’s (2002) account of the perceived incongruity between the female gender role and the leader role, to the meta-analytic confirmation by Koenig et al. (2011) that leader stereotypes remain culturally masculine. Section 2.3 develops this evidence and states the limits on its cross-cultural reach. Much of leadership discourse continues to center productivity, resilience, performance, power, and hierarchy, and the cost of that emphasis, often burnout and exclusion, falls disproportionately on women and marginalized professionals. Women who lead are often required to perform a script they did not write, convincingly enough to be legible as leaders at all.

This paper takes that requirement as its starting problem and asks what becomes possible when leadership is approached not as a set of behaviors to be adopted and performed, but as an embodied act to be re-authored. The argument proceeds in two movements. The first is diagnostic. The paper names the systemic problem as workplace theater, where organizations function as figured worlds in which legibility and advancement depend on performing recognized roles, and in which performing the favored role anchors the performer ever more firmly into structures that privilege one category over another. Gender performance is treated here as the clearest instance of this general mechanism, not as the entirety of the problem. The second movement is generative. The paper introduces *Responsible Rebellion*, a wholeness-centered framework that draws on practice theories of positioning, power, performance, and self-authorship, on the relational leadership tradition, and on somatic scholarship, to move leaders from inherited performance toward self-authored, embodied agency.

The framework’s thesis is that gender-equitable leadership cannot be secured through representation, performance, and behavior alone, because inequity is reproduced in the very performances by which people take up position within institutions: in how a leader holds authority in her body, what she permits herself to feel, and which scripts she enacts without noticing. Equity work must therefore reach the level of self-constitution, and it must be generative, not the repair of a self presumed deficient, but a return to wholeness from which a more equitable, co-active order can be authored and resystematized.

The remainder of the paper proceeds in eight steps. Section 2 reviews the literature and states the problem, moving from organizations as figured worlds, through gender performance and the scales of power, to the body as the site where power lands, how bodily disposition is formed and revised, and the intersectional limits any such framework must carry. Section 3 states the method, Section 4 presents the four pillars and the wholeness turn, Section 5 illustrates them, Section 6 sets out a logic model and eleven propositions, and Sections 7 to 9 state the research program, the limitations, and the conclusion.

2. Literature Review and Problem Statement

2.1 Workplace Theater: Organizations as Figured Worlds

Before gender enters the analysis, a more general observation organizes this paper: organizations run on performance. Holland et al. (1998) describe the social settings in which identities form as *figured worlds*, which are culturally produced realms, each with its own recognized roles, valued actors, and tacit scripts, within which people come to know who they are by taking up positions relative to others. The workplace is such a world. To be seen as competent, professional, or leaderly is to perform the role the institution already recognizes as such, convincingly enough to remain legible and to advance. Holland and Leander (2004) sharpen the mechanism through their account of positioning and subjectivity: the self is produced as gendered, raced, and classed through ongoing acts of social positioning, as people are placed by others and place themselves within the spatial and symbolic order of a setting.

This is the heart of what may be called workplace theater. The workplace is a stage, its roles are pre-scripted, and the actor who performs the favored role well is rewarded with legibility and access. The difficulty is structural rather than personal: because the scripts that read as authoritative are historically weighted toward one category, every fluent performance recites and restabilizes the order that favors it. In performing to belong, actors anchor themselves and the workplace more deeply into the structures that distribute advantage unequally, and the category most compatible with the inherited script is continually reconfirmed as the norm: “it’s just the way it’s done around here.”

Crucially, practice theory does not leave the actor without agency, though it is candid about the bind. Holland et al. (1998) note that the cultural media people create come to constrain those who take them up, appearing to offer only compliance or resistance. Yet the same theory opens a third path through self-authoring, developed from Bakhtin (1981). The Bakhtinian premise is that consciousness is dialogic: the self is not a private origin of speech but a site at which the many voices of a social world meet, hence “the word in language is half someone else’s” (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). Authoring is therefore not the invention of a voice from nothing but the orchestration of voices already present, granting some the status of internally persuasive discourse and demoting others from the authority they claimed. Applied to the workplace, self-authoring names the improvisational answer a leader gives to the positions assigned to her, the labor by which the institution’s script about what a leader sounds like is relativized and, over time, subordinated to one she can persuade herself of. In this precise sense she rebels, and the same stage on which scripts are reproduced is where they can be rewritten.

2.2 The Figured World as a Self-Reproducing System

It is worth stating this mechanism in explicitly systemic terms because doing so clarifies both where inequity is produced and where intervention has leverage. Meadows defines a system as “an interconnected set of elements that is coherently organized in a way that achieves something” (Meadows, 2008, p. 11), a definition satisfied by a firm, an economy, or a living body alike, and what it achieves is a function of its structure rather than of the intentions of its participants. A figured world is a system in exactly this sense, with a stock (here, the distribution of legibility, authority, and advantage) held in a particular state by the flows that run through it.

The anchoring dynamic described above is, in this vocabulary, a reinforcing feedback loop: performing the favored script yields recognition and advancement; that reward recertifies the

script as the definition of competence; the recertified script raises the threshold others must meet and tilts the distribution further toward the category the script already fits, which intensifies the pressure to perform it. Each fluent performance increases the gain on the loop. The system does not merely tolerate inequity; it manufactures it continuously, through the very actors it rewards, which is why the pattern proves so resistant to good-faith reform.

Meadows's (1999) central insight sharpens the diagnostic: not all points of intervention are equal. Her hierarchy runs from weakest to strongest, and its lowest rungs are where organizational equity work concentrates including constants and parameters, buffer sizes, the structure of stocks and flows, and the lengths of delays, which in the organizational register are representation targets, pipeline sizes, reporting structures, and the horizons over which change is expected. Higher up are information flows and the rules of the system: pay-transparency reporting, promotion criteria, compliance training. Near the top come the power to self-organize, the goals of the system, and, second only to the power to transcend paradigms, "the mindset or paradigm out of which the system, its goals, structure, rules, delays, parameters, arises" (Meadows, 1999, p. 3).

What Meadows means by a paradigm does the decisive work in this paper. A paradigm consists of "the shared idea in the minds of society, the great big unstated assumptions, unstated because it is unnecessary to state; everyone already knows them" (Meadows, 1999, p. 17). In an organization the operative unstated assumption is the definition of a competent leader: what authority sounds like, what composure looks like, whose discomfort registers as a problem and whose does not. That definition is never adopted by decision and is rarely written down, which is what makes it powerful and what places it near the top of the hierarchy of leverage. The present framework is an attempt to intervene at that level rather than below it, which is why it can change system behavior that representation and training alone cannot.

2.3 Gender Performance as the Sharpest Instance

For this argument, gender performance is the clearest case of the inequity dynamic that workplace theater describes. Butler (1990) argues that gender is performative rather than expressive: it is produced through the stylized repetition of acts, an improvisation within a scene of constraint, not the outward sign of an inner essence. In her formulation, gender is "an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts" (p. 140). Transposed to the figured world of the workplace, the implication is exact. There is no neutral, pregendered template of the leader to step into; to be recognized as a leader is to cite, convincingly, an ideal already saturated with masculine meaning. Foucault (1982) explains why the citation binds: power is productive as well as repressive, operating through the body to constitute the subject, so that the competent leader is not a natural kind but a subject produced by disciplinary norms felt as personal aspiration. Gedalof (2000) adds that this subject is at once enabled and constrained, which forecloses any simple story of women as passive victims.

That the ideal is masculine-coded is also, and independently, one of the better-evidenced findings in organizational psychology, and the convergence of the critical and the empirical literatures matters to the argument. Schein (1973) established the pattern now known as think manager–think male, showing that the characteristics male middle managers ascribed to successful managers corresponded far more closely to those ascribed to men than to women. Koenig et al. (2011), meta-analyzing three research paradigms, confirmed that leader stereotypes remain culturally masculine while noting that the stereotype has attenuated over time and varies by role, context, and gender. Eagly and Karau (2002) supply the mechanism

through role congruity theory, and Heilman (2001) and Rudman and Glick (2001) document its enforcement: women who display the agency the role demands are judged socially deficient and penalized accordingly. The script is therefore not only theoretically masculine-coded but empirically enforced, and its enforcement is bidirectional, penalizing departure from the leader role and from the gender role at once.

One qualification must be entered here rather than deferred, because it bears on how much this evidence can carry. The corpus is drawn overwhelmingly from Western, Anglophone samples, and its cross-cultural status is weaker than its frequent citation suggests. Koenig et al. (2011) could test nationality as a moderator in only one of their three paradigms, and there the Eastern–Western difference was marginal and did not survive multivariate control; the earlier cross-national test found the male–managerial association among men in every country sampled but far more variability among women (Schein et al., 1996). Societies also vary systematically in gender egalitarianism (House et al., 2004), and a recent review of cross-cultural leadership warns that the field’s disproportionately Western origin limits generalization (Den Hartog & De Hoogh, 2024). The prototype is therefore well evidenced where it has been studied, and its universality is open rather than settled; Section 8 states what follows.

The result is what might be called the hidden equation of women’s leadership: competence is frequently purchased at the cost of self-fragmentation. The leader learns to override embodied signals, to perform an authority that does not feel like her own, and to treat her worth as conditional upon sustained performance. This is effective on the organizational chart and depleting in the body. Gender is foregrounded here not because it exhausts the problem but because it displays, more vividly than any other instance, how performing to belong anchors a person into structures that were not built for her flourishing.

2.4 Power, Read Across the Scales of the System

If the problem is the reproduction of power-over hierarchies through performance, the resources for an alternative are older than the problem’s current framing, and they belong beside Butler and Foucault rather than after them. Where Butler (1990) and Foucault (1982) describe how power constitutes the subject, Mary Parker Follett (1924, 1940) describes what an organization looks like when its power is arranged otherwise; the two accounts answer each other, and the framework developed below requires both.

Follett, writing in the 1920s, offers a relational theory of organization that the present framework extends. She distinguished power-over, the coercive, zero-sum power exercised by one party upon another, from power-with, a jointly developed capacity that grows rather than diminishes as it is shared, and stated the stakes without hedging: “coercive power is the curse of the universe; coactive power, the enrichment and advancement of every human soul” (Follett, 1924, p. xiii). She argued that the most generative response to difference is neither domination nor compromise but integration, and proposed the law of the situation described as authority deriving from what the situation requires and not from the person of a superior, which depersonalizes command and loosens its gendered coding (Follett, 1924, 1940).

Follett’s contribution is twofold. She names the leadership the framework moves toward including relational, integrative, co-active, oriented to constructive rather than suppressed conflict, and she reframes rebellion as more than refusal: to disrupt a power-over order is to make room for power-with, a disruption that builds. That integrity is what distinguishes responsible rebellion from defiance, and it gives the framework a leadership lineage older than the inclusive models it critiques.

Read alongside the systems account of Section 2.2, Follett's distinction does further analytic work. The way a system distributes power is not incidental to its paradigm; it is the paradigm, expressed as a grammar of relation. To shift a system from power-over to power-with is therefore not a change of tone but a change at the two highest-leverage levels Meadows (1999) holds to be practically available: the system's goal and the paradigm from which it arises. Yet that dyad leaves a question unanswered: from what does the capacity to re-author actually draw? Here the framework extends Follett with a third term from feminist power scholarship. Rowlands (1997), and later VeneKlasen and Miller (2002), distinguish power-over from three generative forms including power-to, power-with, and, most pertinent here, power-within: an individual's sense of self-worth, self-knowledge, and capacity to imagine alternatives, the transformation of consciousness that precedes and enables action. Power-within is the interior source of self-authoring, since one cannot re-author an inherited script from a position external to oneself.

Read this way, the three powers map onto the scales at which the figured world operates, and onto Rowlands's (1997) own personal, relational, and collective dimensions of empowerment. Power-within is the intervention at the scale of the self; power-with is its realization at the relational and collective scale; power-over is the systemic default that both are marshaled to re-author. The framework's developmental arc follows this mapping: cultivate power-within, author out of power-over, build power-with. And because these are scales of one system rather than separate arenas, the arc is not a private journey with a public afterthought; it is a single movement of systemic change observed at increasing scope. The interior work is structural work, because the self is the scale at which the system's power-grammar is first either reproduced or revised.

2.5 The Body as the Site Where Power Lands

The account of power given so far is incomplete while it stays cognitive. Power operates through the body to constitute the subject (Foucault, 1982), and gender is done in the stylized repetition of bodily acts (Butler, 1990). Embodiment therefore continues the theory of power rather than applying it, and Nayak and Kehily (2006) make the continuity explicit. What it requires is an account of how a social order comes to be held in a body. Mauss (1935/1973) established that the ways people walk, stand, and hold themselves are culturally specific techniques, learned by imitation and not given by nature. Bourdieu (1972/1977) turns this into two ideas. *Habitus* is the set of durable dispositions that generate practice without conscious rule-following. *Bodily hexis* is the way of standing, speaking, and moving in which a social order becomes bearing rather than belief; what the body learns is not something a person has but something a person is (Bourdieu, 1980/1990, pp. 66–79). Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012) adds the phenomenology through motor intentionality, a directedness carried in movement rather than in representation, and Crossley (2013) develops the synthesis of the two. This is how an inherited script can govern a leader who has never examined it and would not endorse it if asked.

Applied to gender, the analysis sharpens. Bourdieu (1998/2001) treats masculine domination as the paradigm case of symbolic violence. It works through neither coercion nor belief. It writes the social division of the sexes into bodies as durable dispositions including gait, gaze, gesture, the occupation of space, the pitch of speech, so that the dominated read the dominant order through categories that order itself produced. The consequence reverses the usual therapeutic reading of embodied work. A woman who has learned to hold authority in a masculine-coded register is not showing damage. She is showing *competence*, acquired at cost, at a game whose rules were set elsewhere. The framework's object is an accomplished

social skill, not an injury, and its aim is to make that skill optional rather than to repair a deficit.

The organizational chain is already built, and it is raced as well as gendered. Acker (1990) established that the apparently disembodied worker organizations are designed around is in fact a specific, masculine body. Young (1980) found an inhibited intentionality in feminine comportment, produced by situation and not by anatomy. Bartky (1990) described femininity as a bodily discipline with no identifiable disciplinarian, internalized as personal choice. Trethewey (1999) showed gendered discourses written on professional women's bodies in ways that constrain identity. Puwar's (2004) *somatic norm* names the tacit bodily standard institutional space is built around, and against which other bodies register as intruders. That norm is racialized too: display rules permit from a White worker what they penalize from a Black worker (Wingfield, 2010), and Afrocentric hair lowers ratings of Black women's professionalism (Opie & Phillips, 2015). Ahmed (2007, 2012) holds these together. Institutions have habits, and rooms take the shape of the bodies that have habitually occupied them, so some bodies extend into a room without friction while others are stopped.

Leadership studies has its own literature on all of this, and the framework takes its warrant from there and not from clinical science. Ropo and Parviainen (2001) argue that leadership knowledge is irreducibly bodily, and Ropo et al. (2013) state the consequence: embodiment makes sense-based data count as knowledge. Sinclair (1998, 2005, 2013, 2019) showed across two decades that stature, stance, gesture, and voice are central to leadership rather than incidental. Ladkin (2008, 2010, 2013) showed that leadership is apprehended aesthetically, in a shared perceptual field, before it is interpreted. Ladkin and Taylor (2010) then move authenticity from an inner state to a somatic achievement. That is the move this framework needs, and it does not route through physiology. Küpers (2013), Hansen et al. (2007), Fisher and Robbins (2015), and the review by Sweet et al. (2026) develop the field further. One construct bears directly on the framework's central claim. Mavin and Grandy (2016) theorize women elite leaders' bodies as at once powerful and abject, and name the strategies women use to manage that in-betweenness, including turning attention away from body and appearance. This is exactly the splitting the wholeness turn addresses, and Pullen and Vachhani (2021) point toward intercorporeality as the alternative.

2.6 How Bodily Disposition Is Formed and Revised

An account of leadership as bodily disposition raises an immediate problem: Bourdieu defines habitus by its durability, and this framework asks leaders to revise theirs. Suppose a masculine-coded register has been laid down as bearing rather than belief, below the level at which reasons are given. The framework then owes an account of how that register could change without collapsing into the voluntarism its own analysis rejects. The debate is a recognized one. Lovell (2000) finds Bourdieu's habitus overdetermined, its dispositions bound too tightly to their conditions of origin for resistance to be theorized, and finds Butler's performativity guilty of the opposite fault, an over-optimism about how readily a norm can be resignified.

McNay supplies the resolution the framework adopts. Gender identity is a durable but not immutable norm (McNay, 1999). The mechanism of change is neither will nor discursive slippage but a structural condition: habitus is durable and fields change, so the two fall out of alignment, and revision becomes possible in that misfit. McNay (2000) develops this into a critique of Butler and Foucault, whose account yields a negative paradigm of agency in which the subject is only the effect of what it resists. McNay (2004) names the mode as

situated intersubjectivity, not conscious resolve. A leader who finds that the register securing her legibility no longer fits her situation is living that misalignment.

Revision is therefore practical and effortful, not insightful. This is the framework's most consequential commitment. Noble and Watkins (2003) show that habituation always passes through a phase of conscious, corrective attention before it becomes automatic, so dispositions laid down by attentive practice can be re-laid the same way. Dewey (1922/1988) supplies the negative half. Habits constitute the self rather than belonging to it, and resolution cannot alter them; only changed conditions and the slower work of forming a new habit can. Wacquant (2004) supplies the demonstration: an ethnography of a boxing gym showing that an adult can acquire a genuinely new bodily habitus through structured, supervised practice.

One objection must be met rather than absorbed. Adkins (2003) argues that reflexivity about gender may itself have become a habit of gender, demanded by contemporary fields rather than an escape from them. The framework's answer is that awareness is a precondition and not a mechanism. Reflection makes the governing register visible, and the practiced interval of Section 4.3 does the work of revision. Shusterman (1999, 2008) argues philosophically, against the skepticism Bourdieu and Merleau-Ponty share about deliberate somatic attention, that disciplined body consciousness can alter habitual disposition, a position with little uptake in organization studies that the framework imports deliberately. The organizational learning literature makes it operational. Springborg (2018) develops sensory templates, the pre-reflective bodily schemas through which managers construe situations, and argues that changing the template changes the construal. Bigo and Islam (2022) identify unlearning by analogization in a yoga-based leadership course and show the claim can be established qualitatively. Strati (2007) grounds the epistemology in workplace fieldwork, and Nicholson and Carroll (2013) establish identity undoing as a studied organizational phenomenon.

2.7 The Evidentiary Status of the Embodied Claim

Precision about the kind of claim being made is owed here, because embodied leadership work is often read as making a stronger one. The framework's claims are constitutive and interpretive. Leadership is enacted, perceived, and judged bodily. Inherited registers of authority are carried as disposition. Particular bodies are read, disciplined, and rendered illegible. And structured practice can alter how a practitioner construes situations and comports herself. The framework does not claim that a named practice produces a measurable physiological change, or that a mechanism runs through a specified neural pathway. Its warrant is the epistemology of bodily knowing established since Ropo and Parviainen (2001). No clinical warrant is required, and none is claimed.

The boundary matters because applied somatic work, including earlier formulations of this framework, has often taken clinical neurophysiology as its foundation, and above all polyvagal theory (Porges, 2011). That theory is contested within psychophysiology on grounds of measurement, comparative physiology, and neuroanatomy (Grossman, 2023; Neuhuber & Berthoud, 2022; Taylor et al., 2022). Porges (2023) has replied that critics conflate neuroanatomy with neurophysiology and address a simplified proxy of the theory. The exchange is not settled here, because the framework's claims do not depend on how it comes out. This is not a repudiation. Polyvagal theory has been extraordinarily generative in applied settings, and the practices it informs are constitutive of two of this framework's pillars, not incidental to them. What the framework declines is the mechanism, not the practice, and the reason is prudential: a framework that rests its warrant on a contested phylogenetic account inherits a dispute belonging to another discipline.

A distinction between provenance and warrant closes the matter. Several practices the framework draws on have clinical lineages. Levine (1997, 2010) developed the attention to bodily activation within Somatic Experiencing. Strozzi-Heckler (2014) describes the retraining of survival-shaped patterns in somatic coaching. Van der Kolk (2014) gives the account of how experience is inscribed in the body. And polyvagal theory supplied the standard vocabulary for orienting, for noticing cues of threat and safety, and for co-regulation. These lineages are not peripheral: the bodily tracking Reflection requires, and the noticing of activation the pause in Response depends on, are recognizably practices of this kind. The same distinction applies to the outcome literature, which is young rather than discredited. The first randomized trial of Somatic Experiencing found large reductions against a waitlist control (Brom et al., 2017). The better-powered trial that followed found no significant difference against an active comparator (Andersen et al., 2020). And the scoping review most often cited as validation concludes that study quality is mixed (Kuhfuß et al., 2021).

The point is that these practices do not rise or fall with the theory that came to explain them. Clinicians and somatic coaches were working with orientation, settling, and co-regulation before polyvagal theory named them. If the phylogenetic account is revised, the practices will be re-explained, not abandoned. On that footing the framework does more than tolerate them; it advances a positive claim. Polyvagal-informed somatic practice is held here to increase a leader's awareness of her own bearing as it is happening, and to widen the interval in which a response can be chosen rather than executed. Those are claims about what the practice affords, not about why it works at the level of vagal anatomy, and they are what Propositions 2 and 3 specify. Putting them in a form that could be shown false is how a practitioner-scholar should hold a belief formed in practice.

2.8 The Limits of Mainstream Leadership Reform

Contemporary leadership scholarship has responded to gender inequity largely through inclusive, transformational, and authentic leadership models. These approaches have widened access and legitimized relational and developmental practices once dismissed as peripheral. Yet they share a limitation. Fletcher (2004) demonstrates that even the softer, post-heroic, relational models are themselves gendered: the relational competence they prize is coded feminine, systematically devalued, and “disappeared” in practice, so that the apparent reform leaves the underlying hierarchy of value intact. Sinclair (2007) makes a parallel argument about the heroic myths that survive inside ostensibly reformed leadership development. Liu (2020), writing from an anti-racist feminist standpoint, extends the critique, showing how mainstream leadership discourse naturalizes whiteness and masculinity even as it celebrates inclusion. Nicholson and Carroll (2013) add the developmental counterpart, showing that leadership development attends far more readily to what leaders acquire than to what they must let go.

The pattern is instructive, and systems thinking names it exactly. Mainstream reform operates on low-leverage points that include representation, meaning who occupies leadership roles, and behavior, meaning what leaders are trained to do, while leaving untouched the level at which inequity is actually reproduced: the paradigm governing what counts as competent leadership, enacted through the performances by which a leader takes up position. A woman may be present in the room and trained in inclusive behaviors while still constituting herself, moment to moment, through a masculine-coded register that the system rewards, that she acquired as a competence, and that she has never had occasion to examine. Adjusting the parameter without shifting the paradigm leaves the reinforcing loop intact; the numbers change while the system's behavior does not. Meadows (1999) is blunt that this is the

predictable error, noting that leverage points “are not intuitive” and that “magical leverage points are not easily accessible, even if we know where they are and which direction to push on them” (p. 19). It is this gap between low-leverage reform and high-leverage embodied self-constitution that the present framework addresses.

2.9 Gender, Read Intersectionally

Any framework for gender-equitable leadership must guard against a false universalism that treats “women” as a uniform category. Crenshaw (1991) established the foundational point: systems of subordination do not operate additively but intersect, so the experience of women at the crossing of race and gender is not the sum of two separately analyzed disadvantages and is rendered invisible by frameworks built on either axis alone. Collins (2000) develops this into an account of interlocking systems of oppression and the standpoint such positioning produces. Nagel (2000) shows gender is always entangled with ethnicity, and Gamson and Moon (2004) that the production and policing of categories is itself an exercise of power. Namaste (1994) adds the methodological point that the dominant term tends to remain unmarked and therefore unexamined. Butler (2004) cautions against frameworks that secure coherence by universalizing one group’s experience, and Mohanty (2003), revisiting her own critique of Western feminist scholarship’s construction of a singular third-world woman, reaffirms it while shifting toward transnational solidarity.

For the present framework these are not peripheral caveats, and Section 2.5 has already shown why: the somatic norm against which bodies are read is raced as well as gendered, and the display rules governing what a leader may show are demonstrably racialized (Puwar, 2004; Wingfield, 2010). Which category counts as most compatible with the inherited register, and how heavily a performer is penalized for departing from it, vary across intersecting positions of race, class, and culture, so a framework centered on embodied agency must hold open the question of whose body, and whose wholeness, is in view. Bilge (2013) presses a further demand: the disciplinary uptake of intersectionality has depoliticized it, severing it from the Black feminist and anti-racist praxis that produced it, so a framework citing Crenshaw owes its reader a statement of whether it is using intersectionality as critical praxis or decoratively. This paper’s answer is partial. Intersectional analysis constrains the framework’s claims, as Section 5.3 and Section 8 show, but it did not generate the framework, whose derivation is traceable in Table 1 to a predominantly Western corpus.

2.10 Problem Statement and Thesis

The problem, stated precisely, is this. Institutions operate as figured worlds in which advancement depends on performing recognized roles; because those roles are weighted toward the socially dominant category, the act of performing to belong continually reanchors inequity, most visibly through gender, at the level of the leader’s own self-constitution. That self-constitution is bodily: the inherited register of authority is held as disposition and bearing rather than as belief, which is why it survives the leader’s intellectual rejection of it. In systems terms, this is a reinforcing feedback loop maintained at the level of the paradigm. Mainstream reform intervenes on representation and behavior, the system’s weakest leverage points, and leaves the embodied anchoring intact.

The thesis of this paper is that a framework integrating practice-theoretic accounts of positioning and self-authoring, the relational leadership tradition of power-with and integration, and the sociology and phenomenology of embodied disposition can reach that level. Such a framework enables leaders to see the figured world and their position within it, to re-author the register they inherited instead of reciting it, and to build a more equitable, co-active order as a return to wholeness rather than a correction of deficiency. The thesis is

advanced as a specified and falsifiable hypothesis, and Section 6 states the terms on which it could fail.

3. Method

3.1 Design

This is a conceptual paper, and its design is a two-strand qualitative inquiry: a primary strand of critical-theoretical synthesis and a secondary strand of reflective practitioner inquiry. Conceptual work of this kind does not generate new observational data; it produces a theoretical account whose warrant lies in the defensibility of its sources, the traceability of its reasoning, and the coherence, fertility, and explanatory reach of the framework it yields. Stating the design explicitly matters here because the paper makes claims across three literatures that are rarely read together, and a reader is entitled to know how they were selected and combined.

3.2 Critical-Theoretical Synthesis

The framework was derived by putting seven bodies of scholarship into structured dialogue: performativity theory, Foucauldian power analysis, practice-theoretic accounts of positioning and self-authoring, the relational leadership tradition, the intersectional sociology of difference, the sociology and phenomenology of embodiment, and the literature on habituation and the revision of disposition. Systems theory supplied the integrating vocabulary. Table 1 sets the seven out in Panel A. The table is exhaustive rather than illustrative: Panel B records the literatures engaged for corroboration, constraint, appraisal, or method rather than as sources of constructs, so every entry in the reference list is accounted for by its function. Sources were selected against three criteria. The first is foundational status: each literature is represented by its primary theoretical statements, not by secondary summaries. The second is mechanism specificity: work specifying how inequity is produced and reproduced was preferred to work documenting its distribution. The third is productive tension: sources were kept precisely where they resist one another, most consequentially where the durability of embodied disposition contradicts poststructuralism's account of a subject remade in each performance. Where a theoretical claim was load-bearing and empirically testable, corroborating literature was sought and is reported in Sections 2.3 and 2.7.

The analytic procedure ran in four steps, and Table 1 records their result. Mechanism extraction read each literature for its account of how a person comes to occupy a position within an institution, and stated these in a common vocabulary. Convergence mapping found the points at which independently developed literatures described the same mechanism in different terms; this is how positioning, performativity, and disciplinary subject-formation were brought into a single frame. Tension adjudication named the contradictions that could not be dissolved and argued the framework's position on each, the essentialism problem of Section 4.6 being the main case. Operationalization resolved the analysis into four pillars. Each pillar had to rest on an identifiable theoretical claim and to name a movement a leader can actually undertake.

Table 1. Derivation of the Framework: Bodies of Scholarship, Mechanisms Extracted, and Points of Entry

Body of scholarship	Principal sources	Mechanism or contribution	Where it enters
Panel A. Bodies of scholarship from which the framework's constructs were derived (n = 71)			
Performativity theory and subversion (n = 6)	Butler (1990, 1997); Nayak and Kehily (2006); Mullaney (2002); Halperin (2003); Garber (1992)	Gender is produced through the stylized repetition of acts rather than expressed from an essence; norms sustained by repetition can also fail productively, and resignification opens the ground of new possibility.	2.3; Response (4.3); Rebellion (4.5); wholeness turn (4.6)
Foucauldian power analysis (n = 2)	Foucault (1982); Gedalof (2000)	Power is productive as well as repressive, operates through the body to constitute the subject, and is exercised only over free subjects, who are enabled and constrained at once.	2.3; Responsibility (4.2); Reflection (4.4); Rebellion (4.5)
Practice-theoretic positioning and self-authoring (n = 3)	Holland et al. (1998); Holland and Leander (2004); Bakhtin (1981)	Identity forms within figured worlds through ongoing acts of positioning; self-authoring orchestrates voices already present rather than inventing one from nothing.	2.1; Responsibility (4.2); Response (4.3); wholeness turn (4.6)
Relational leadership tradition (n = 5)	Follett (1924, 1940); Rowlands (1997); VeneKlasen and Miller (2002); Metz (2018)	Power-over is a grammar of relation that can be replaced by power-with; power-within is the interior source from which re-authoring draws.	2.4; Rebellion (4.5); developmental arc (2.4)
Intersectional sociology of difference (n = 8)	Crenshaw (1991); Collins (2000); Namaste (1994); Gamson and Moon (2004); Nagel (2000); Butler (2004); Mohanty (2003); Bilge (2013)	Systems of subordination intersect rather than add, and the dominant term remains unmarked, so analysis must turn toward the naturalized norm rather than only its exceptions.	2.9; Reflection (4.4); Vignette 2 (5.3); Table 2
Sociology and phenomenology of embodiment (n = 31)	Mauss (1935/1973); Bourdieu (1972/1977, 1980/1990, 1998/2001); Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012); Crossley (2013); Acker (1990); Young (1980); Bartky (1990); Trethewey (1999); Puwar (2004); Ahmed (2007, 2012); Ropo and Parviainen (2001); Sinclair (1998, 2005, 2013, 2019); Ladkin (2008, 2013); Ladkin and Taylor (2010); Küpers (2013); and others	A social order is carried as bodily disposition rather than as belief; particular bodies are read, disciplined, and rendered illegible in organizational space; and leadership is enacted and apprehended bodily rather than only cognitively.	2.5; all four pillars; embodied wholeness (4.6)
Habituation, disposition, and its revision (n = 14)	Dewey (1922/1988); Noble and Watkins (2003); Wacquant (2004); McNay (1999, 2000, 2004); Lovell (2000); Adkins (2003); Shusterman (1999, 2008);	Disposition is durable but not immutable: it is laid down by attended practice and can be re-laid the same way, and revision is generated by the misfit between a durable disposition and a	2.6; Responsibility (4.2); Response (4.3); wholeness turn (4.6); P3 (6.2)

Body of scholarship	Principal sources	Mechanism or contribution	Where it enters
	Springborg (2018); Bigo and Islam (2022); Strati (2007); Nicholson and Carroll (2013)	changing field.	
Systems theory (integrating vocabulary) (n = 2)	Meadows (1999, 2008)	The figured world is a reinforcing feedback loop, and leverage is unequal across intervention points, with the paradigm the highest practically available.	2.2; 2.8; contribution (4.7); P8–P10 (6.4)
Panel B. Literatures engaged as corroboration, constraint, appraisal, or method rather than as sources of constructs (n = 44)			
Empirical corroboration of the masculine-coded ideal (n = 6)	Schein (1973); Schein et al. (1996); Eagly and Karau (2002); Heilman (2001); Rudman and Glick (2001); Koenig et al. (2011)	Tests the load-bearing claim that the leader ideal is masculine-coded, and establishes the limits of its cross-cultural reach.	1; 2.3
Critique of mainstream leadership reform (n = 3)	Fletcher (2004); Sinclair (2007); Liu (2020)	Establishes that inclusive, transformational, and authentic models leave the underlying hierarchy of value intact.	2.8
Evidentiary appraisal of the embodied claim (n = 12)	Porges (2011, 2023); Grossman (2023); Neuhuber and Berthoud (2022); Taylor et al. (2022); Brom et al. (2017); Andersen et al. (2020); Kuhfuß et al. (2021); Levine (1997, 2010); Strozzi-Heckler (2014); van der Kolk (2014)	Bounds what the framework claims for bodily practice, and separates the practice lineages it retains from the mechanism it declines.	2.7; Response (4.3); Reflection (4.4)
Intersectional and cross-cultural constraint (n = 19)	Oyèwùmí (1997); Nkomo (2011); Lugones (2010); Kandiyoti (1988); Anzaldúa (1987); Markus and Kitayama (1991); Farh and Cheng (2000); Huang et al. (2005); House et al. (2004); Den Hartog and De Hoogh (2024); Tsui (2004); Jepson (2009); and others	Constrains rather than generates: specifies whose body is in view, which of the framework's commitments are culturally particular, and where it is a hypothesis rather than a prescription.	2.9; Vignette 2 (5.3); Table 2; P11 (6.5); 8
Method and measurement (n = 4)	Petitmengin (2006); Petitmengin et al. (2019); Varela (1996); Gherardi (2019)	Supplies the first-person and practice-based methods proposed for examining the propositions.	6.5; 7

Note. *n* = the number of reference-list entries whose principal use in the paper is the one shown. The two panels are exhaustive and together account for all 115 entries; sources used in more than one place are counted once, under their principal use. Sources were selected against three criteria: foundational status, mechanism specificity, and productive tension. The analytic procedure ran in four steps: mechanism extraction, convergence mapping, tension adjudication, and operationalization. The asymmetry between the panels is a feature of the derivation, not an artifact of the table: as Section 3.2 states, non-Western, postcolonial,

and cross-cultural scholarship entered the process as a constraint on the framework's claims rather than as a generative source of its constructs, and Section 8 treats this as a limitation.

Two features of the procedure bear on the framework's limits and should be stated rather than inferred. First, the corpus is predominantly Western and Anglophone, and non-Western, postcolonial, and cross-cultural scholarship entered as a constraint on the framework's claims rather than as a generative source of its constructs, as Panel B of Table 1 records. Second, the framework's components rest on warrants of different kinds. The masculine-coding claim is checked against a mature quantitative literature. The embodied claim is warranted interpretively and is not offered as a causal or physiological claim at all. Section 6 assigns propositions accordingly.

3.3 Reflective Practitioner Inquiry

The secondary strand draws on my own leadership practice of more than a decade across education, corporate, and nonprofit settings, in the tradition of the reflective practitioner. Its function in the design is corrective rather than evidentiary: I used it to test whether each pillar named a movement recognizable in applied leadership practice, and to discard formulations that were theoretically tidy but practically inert. Reflection in this strand was ongoing and documented through practice notes and post-engagement debriefs across coaching, facilitation, and organizational change work, and I revised the pillars wherever the practice record and the theoretical derivation disagreed. The wholeness turn in Section 4.6 originated in this strand, as a repeated observation that leaders who had successfully deconstructed an inherited script were left without an account of what they returned to, and was subsequently given theoretical form.

This practitioner grounding could be developed into a formal feminist autoethnography, in which my own narrative of leadership and reinvention would function as data rather than as illustration, analyzed through explicit coding and accountable to the standards of that method. The present paper stops short of that fuller method while remaining open to it, and it is important to be exact about the consequence: the practice strand supports the framework's plausibility and practical fit, but it is not offered as evidence of the framework's effects, which remain untested. The vignettes in Section 5 inherit this limit exactly and are labeled accordingly.

3.4 Quality Criteria, Reflexivity, and Scope

Because the paper offers no data, its claims should be assessed against the criteria proper to theory-building: whether the constructs are clearly specified, whether the relationships among them are argued rather than asserted, whether the account explains phenomena its rivals leave unexplained, and whether it generates propositions that could be shown to be wrong. Section 6 states the propositions and the evidence that would count against each; Section 7 states the empirical program by which the framework could be tested; and Section 8 names the conditions under which it would fail.

Reflexivity is owed on two points. I am a woman leading and consulting in Western, Anglophone, predominantly professional-class organizational settings, and both the phenomenon the framework describes and the resources it draws on are marked by that position; Table 2 states the consequence as scope conditions and Section 8 treats it as a limitation rather than as a caveat. I also practice and teach within the wholeness-centered tradition this paper advances, which creates an evident interest in its validity, an interest I address by stating the framework's contested points and its disconfirming conditions explicitly, not by claiming a neutrality the design does not permit. The decision to ground the

embodied claim in the sociology and phenomenology of disposition rather than in clinical neurophysiology, recorded in Section 2.7, is offered as a concrete instance of that commitment, not a claim to have satisfied it.

Finally, the scope conditions. The framework is specified for formal organizations in which advancement depends on legibility to institutional others, and it presumes a leader with some measure of discretion over her own conduct. It is not specified for settings in which the costs of deviation from the script are physically or economically catastrophic, where the analysis may hold while the prescription does not. Table 2 states the full set, together with the point at which each assumption is exposed and the adaptation required outside it; Section 8 discusses what follows.

Table 2. Scope Conditions of the Responsible Rebellion Framework

Assumption	Condition under which the framework is specified	Where the assumption is exposed	Adaptation required outside the condition
Leader discretion	The role permits meaningful discretion over one's own conduct.	Paternalistic and highly prescribed role systems, in which authority, benevolence, and moral example are fused (Farh & Cheng, 2000).	Relocate the intervention from individual conduct toward collective and institutional levers (Cooke, 2023).
Voice legitimacy	Upward dissent is a legitimated act carrying non-catastrophic cost.	Large power-distance settings, where participative mechanisms do not raise voice as they do elsewhere (Huang et al., 2005).	Treat Rebellion as collective, procedural, and timed to institutional openings rather than individual and expressive (see Section 5.3).
Self-construal	Participants lean toward an independent rather than interdependent self-construal.	Sociocentric, ecocentric, and cosmocentric concepts of the person (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Kirmayer, 2007).	Recast self-authoring as coalitional and communal authoring (Lugones, 2010).
Cost of deviation	Costs of departing from the script are social and career-related rather than physically or economically catastrophic.	Settings of acute economic precarity or physical risk; positions where costs are sharply asymmetric (Crenshaw, 1991).	The diagnostic analysis may hold while the prescription does not; strategic accommodation is agency, not failed rebellion (Kandiyoti, 1988).
Wholeness as integration	Integration of a divided self is a meaningful and desired end state.	Plural-subject traditions (Anzaldúa, 1987); settings in which identity integration at work carries costs (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).	Substitute the plural specification of Section 4.6: capacity to hold several registers without any being consumed.
Embodiment as shared ground	Attention to bodily bearing is intelligible and acceptable as leadership practice.	Bodily technique as culturally specific (Mauss, 1935/1973); the body as ground of culture rather than substrate (Csordas, 1990); culturally variable emotion regulation (Ford & Mauss, 2015).	Source practices from within the setting's own traditions rather than importing decontextualized technique (Purser & Milillo, 2015; Menakem, 2017).

Note. The framework is specified for settings meeting the conditions in column two. Where a condition is not met, the diagnostic analysis of Sections 2.1 through 2.9 may still hold while the prescription does not; Proposition 11 in Section 6.5 states this as a testable claim rather than a disclaimer.

4. The Responsible Rebellion Framework

4.1 Overview

Responsible Rebellion is the wholeness-centered, gender-equity expression of the Rebel Leadership framework. It comprises four pillars, namely Responsibility, Response, Reflection, and Rebellion, grounded in a fifth, integrative commitment to embodied wholeness. The pillars are not a linear sequence to be completed once. They form a recursive loop of standing, acting, seeing, and disrupting, returned to repeatedly as a leader encounters new scripts and new constraints. Each pillar is presented below with the theoretical anchor that gives it analytic weight, the embodied practice through which it is enacted, and the practical movement it names. Table 3 summarizes the four pillars and the grounding commitment.

Table 3. The Four Pillars and the Grounding Commitment

Pillar	Guiding question	Theoretical anchor	Embodied practice	Movement named
Responsibility	What is genuinely mine to answer for, and what is not?	Power is exercised over free subjects (Foucault, 1982); the enabled-and-constrained subject (Gedalof, 2000); habit as constitutive of the self (Dewey, 1922/1988); law of the situation (Follett, 1924, 1940).	Attending to breath, posture, and the pull toward the accustomed bearing; building tolerance for remaining present without discharging it (Noble & Watkins, 2003).	From “the system made me” or “I alone must fix this” toward situated response-ability.
Response	Is this action chosen, or is it the script running?	Norms sustained by repetition can fail productively (Butler, 1990, 1997); positioning as choice (Holland & Leander, 2004); motor intentionality (Merleau-Ponty, 1945/2012).	The pause: noticing the disposition as it moves to execute and holding the interval long enough for choice to become available.	From automatic performance toward chosen, value-congruent action.
Reflection	Who wrote these rules, and do they still serve who I am becoming?	Genealogical interrogation (Foucault, 1982); attention to the unmarked term (Namaste, 1994); the somatic norm (Puwar, 2004); institutions as habit (Ahmed, 2012).	Bodily tracking: noticing where the body braces, shrinks, or performs, and treating this as evidence about the room rather than about oneself.	From a script experienced as “just how leadership is” toward a script seen as authored and revisable.
Rebellion	What am I willing to disrupt to make something better possible?	Subversion through resignification (Butler, 1997); target the technique of power (Foucault, 1982); disruption that builds (Follett, 1924, 1940).	Disrupting while remaining in contact rather than while braced; staying present through the discomfort disruption produces.	From compliance or private resentment toward strategic, principled disruption.
Embodied wholeness (grounding)	What was I required to set aside in order to remain legible?	A durable but not immutable norm (McNay, 1999); the figure of the third (Garber, 1992); congruence as competence (Ladkin, 2008); authenticity as somatic enactment (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010).	Reclamation rather than remediation; recovering an interior the performance had consumed; disposition re-acquired through practice (Wacquant, 2004).	From repair of a deficient self toward homecoming, in either integrated or plural form.

Note. The pillars are recursive rather than sequential. The embodied practices in column four are the means by which each pillar is enacted, and Section 2.7 states the kind of claim the framework makes for them.

4.2 Responsibility: Standing as a Free-Yet-Situated Subject

Responsibility, in this framework, is the ability to respond, or response-ability, to oneself, to others, and to the systems one is part of, with awareness of both one's power and one's limitations. Its theoretical anchor is Foucault's (1982) insistence that power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. Responsibility is the leader's recognition that she is constituted by power and yet retains genuine capacity to act within it. Gedalof's (2000) enabled-and-constrained subject sharpens the point: responsibility means holding both truths at once, refusing the false comfort of pure victimhood and the false burden of omnipotence. Practice theory deepens it, since Holland et al. (1998) locate agency in the capacity for self-authoring, and Responsibility is the leader's claim on that authorship. Follett's law of the situation gives it organizational form, responding to what the situation genuinely requires rather than to inherited authority or the expectations of a role (Follett, 1924, 1940).

Responsibility is not, however, only a cognitive stance, and the framework's embodied ground distinguishes it from will-based accounts of leadership agency. Response-ability is a dispositional capacity before it is an ethical one. What a leader can do under pressure is governed by what her body has been trained to do, and the training was not hers to choose: the inhibited intentionality Young (1980) describes, the self-monitoring bearing Bartky (1990) analyzes, and the control and over-functioning Strozzi-Heckler (2014) and Sinclair (2005) observe are acquired competences, laid down through the demands of remaining legible in a masculine-coded field. Dewey (1922/1988) states the consequence: a habit is not altered by resolution, because it constitutes rather than belongs to the self, and the leader who decides to respond differently while her bearing remains unchanged has changed nothing. The practice of Responsibility is correspondingly the attention Noble and Watkins (2003) show precedes re-habitation: attending to breath, posture, and the rising pull toward the familiar bearing, and building tolerance for remaining present without discharging it.

The movement Responsibility names is from "the system made me" or "I alone must fix this" toward a sober and durable response-ability, practically supported and situated in real constraint.

4.3 Response: The Repetition That Can Be Done Differently

Response is the choice of aligned action over the reflexive reproduction of an inherited script. Its anchor is Butler's (1997) analysis of how norms are sustained by repetition and yet can fail productively, opening a distance between the hegemonic call to conform and its critical appropriation. Because identity is remade in the doing (Butler, 1990), each enactment of leadership is also an opportunity to enact it otherwise. Response is the precise site at which the citation can be altered, where a leader, rather than automatically reproducing masculine-coded authority, deliberately re-cites it in a form aligned with her values. Read through practice theory, Response is the moment of positioning, the choice to take up, refuse, or revise the position the figured world offers (Holland & Leander, 2004), and, in Follett's terms, the turn from reactive exchange toward integrative, co-active response.

The embodied practice of this pillar is the pause. Between the stimulus that summons the script and the enactment that reproduces it lies an interval, and that interval is where the framework does its work; without it the citation proceeds automatically and the loop closes

before deliberation begins. The pause is not hesitation, and it is not primarily cognitive. It is the bodily act of noticing the disposition as it moves to execute (i.e. the tightening, the quickening, the pull toward the familiar bearing) and holding the interval long enough for a genuine choice to become available. In Merleau-Ponty's (1945/2012) terms the script is a motor intentionality, a directedness already underway before it is entertained as an option, and the pause interrupts that directedness without suppressing it. As a practice it is drawn from the somatic tradition, and specifically from the polyvagal-informed attention to states of threat and settling now standard in somatic coaching and trauma-informed facilitation (Levine, 2010; Porges, 2011); Section 2.7 sets out why the framework retains these practices while declining to rest its theoretical claims on the contested mechanism that came to explain them. What the pause secures is optionality: the difference between reacting from conditioned bearing and choosing an aligned action.

The movement Response names is from automatic performance toward chosen, value-congruent action, secured in practice by the pause that makes choosing possible.

4.4 Reflection: Making the Invisible Norm Visible

Reflection is the examination of inherited narratives, condensed in the framework's guiding question: who wrote these rules, and do they still serve who I am becoming? Its anchor is Foucault's (1982) genealogical move, interrogating how a given truth about the proper leader was produced and through what technique of power, directed by Namaste's (1994) insight toward the unmarked term: the masculine-coded "neutral" of leadership itself, not only women as its exceptions. Practice theory gives Reflection its object, since to see the workplace as a figured world and recognize one's positioning within it (Holland et al., 1998; Holland & Leander, 2004) is the precondition for revising it. Its embodied practice is tracking the body's own evidence: noticing where in a room, a meeting, or a sentence the body braces, shrinks, or performs, and treating those responses as data about the governing script rather than as private failures of nerve. Ahmed (2012) gives this its institutional form, an institutional habit becomes perceptible precisely from the position of the body stopped by it, so the friction a leader registers is the most reliable evidence available about the shape of the room. The tracking belongs to the practice lineage of Section 2.7, and leaders typically learn it in polyvagal-informed language, which the framework treats as a genuine practical resource. The movement Reflection names is from a script experienced as "just how leadership is" toward one seen as authored, contingent, and revisable.

4.5 Rebellion: Principled, Strategic Disruption

Rebellion, the practice the framework names responsible rebellion, is the intentional disruption of inequitable systems with integrity and compassion, captured in the question: what am I willing to disrupt to make something better possible? Its anchor is Butler's (1997) account of subversion through resignification, in which the ambivalent space opened when power's constructs fail becomes the ground of new possibility. Foucault (1982) adds the crucial qualification that effective resistance targets the technique of power and not only its agents, making rebellion structural rather than interpersonal; Mullaney (2002) offers the figure of the site of resistance, rebellion that builds instead of only refusing; and Halperin (2003) reminds us that genuine disruption must retain its capacity to startle, lest it be absorbed into the order it contests. Follett gives the pillar its constructive form: rebellion against a power-over order is the work of making room for power-with, oriented toward integration rather than victory and treating conflict as a site of creation (Follett, 1924, 1940). Its embodied practice is disrupting while remaining in contact rather than while braced: a challenge delivered from a defended bearing tends to reproduce the grammar it means to

interrupt, and a challenge withheld because the exposure cannot be tolerated is no challenge at all. The movement it names is from compliance or private resentment toward strategic, principled disruption. Table 2 enters the caution that the safety of this movement is not culturally invariant, and Section 5.3 shows what the pillar looks like where it is not safe.

4.6 The Wholeness Turn: Homecoming Rather Than Repair

The four pillars equip a leader to see and rewrite her scripts; they do not, by themselves, tell her what she returns to once a script is set down. The grounds for the framework's answer were established in Sections 2.5 through 2.7, where embodiment was treated as a continuation of the account of power rather than as an application of it, where the formation and revision of bodily disposition were set out, and where the limits of what the framework claims were stated. What remains is to state what the framework does with that ground.

The framework names the return wholeness, and reframes leadership reinvention accordingly: not as the repair of a deficient self, but as a homecoming. The reframing is consequential in practice. Deficit-based development asks a leader what she lacks and must acquire; a wholeness-centered account asks what she has been required to set aside in order to remain legible, and what becomes available when it is reclaimed. The first orientation adds to the performance; the second interrupts it. This is a claim about the mechanism of developmental change and not only about tone, which is why it appears in Section 6 as Proposition 4 rather than as a matter of preference.

This claim must be kept from collapsing into a naive essentialism, and the tension with the framework's poststructuralist sources is real. McNay's (1999, 2000) reformulation of embodied identity as a durable but not immutable norm does most of the work: revision arises neither from an act of will nor from discursive slippage but from the structural lag between a durable disposition and a changing field, so a leader may compose a different standing without either transcending her formation or recovering a self that predates it. Lovell (2000) identifies the same problem between Bourdieu's overdetermined habitus and Butler's over-optimistic performativity, and McNay's resolution is the one the framework adopts. Garber's (1992) figure of the third supports it, recasting wholeness as an integration that exceeds the binary rather than a recovered origin, as does the point that self-authoring composes a standing rather than uncovering one (Holland et al., 1998). What the embodiment literature contributes is not a pre-discursive essence but a body whose dispositions were acquired and can be re-acquired (Wacquant, 2004).

A further qualification changes the construct rather than merely bounding it. Wholeness need not mean integration into a single coherent self. Anzaldúa's (1987) *mestiza* consciousness describes a capacity constituted by holding incompatible worlds without resolving them, and Ramarajan and Reid (2013) show that identity integration at work is a strategic choice with costs rather than a default good. The framework therefore specifies wholeness disjunctively: it is the recovery of an interior that the compulsion to perform had consumed, which may take the form of an integrated standing or of a plural one in which several registers are held without any being the true one. What is common to both, and what the framework actually claims, is that the leader is no longer wholly spent in the performance. Section 5.3 illustrates the plural form.

Ladkin's (2008) account of leading beautifully, in which congruence between inner state and outward action is itself the competence, gives the claim its leadership form. The critical tools reveal the script; embodiment supplies the ground on which a leader can stand once the script is released. The framework does not claim to have dissolved the tension between construction and homecoming, and Section 8 states plainly what remains unresolved in it.

4.7 Contribution and Differentiation

The framework's distinct contribution can now be stated plainly. Where inclusive, transformational, and authentic models work on representation and behavior, Responsible Rebellion works on the embodied, performative self that produces the behavior; the paradigm level, the highest point of leverage practically available within a system (Meadows, 1999). It is generative where critical feminist theory is diagnostic, offering not only a deconstruction of leadership's gendered norms but a practice for authoring alternatives, and affirmative where deficit-based development is corrective, treating reinvention as a return to wholeness rather than the remediation of a flaw. It thus couples critique with construction, replacing power-over with Follett's power-with and treating the figured world as something leaders can re-author instead of merely inhabiting. Embodiment, in this account, is where the change occurs rather than a metaphor for it, and Section 6 states the terms on which that claim could be refuted.

4.8 Application, Learning Objectives, and Relevance

The framework is intended for women's leadership development, organizational change, and leadership education, and for any setting in which leaders are asked to enact inherited scripts, subject to the scope conditions in Table 2. Translated into a developmental setting, it pursues three learning objectives: to understand the link between wholeness-centered leadership and gender-equitable organizational culture; to explore responsible rebellion as a framework for ethical, values-based disruption; and to identify actionable strategies for cultivating inclusive, sustainable leadership practices in one's institution or community.

These objectives locate the framework within the broader scholarly and practical concern with gender, equity, and inclusion. By integrating personal transformation with systemic change, and by positioning wholeness as central to sustainable equity, the framework speaks to the wider scholarship on gender justice in organizations. Its aim is to help leaders move beyond performative inclusion toward authentic transformation: leadership that honors both structure and soul.

5. The Pillars at Work: Two Composite Practice Vignettes

5.1 Construction, Function, and Ethical Status

The framework's pillars are abstract, and abstraction is where conceptual leadership work most often fails its practitioner readers. The two vignettes below show what each pillar looks like when enacted, and what separates it from the adjacent behavior it could be mistaken for. Their epistemic status should be stated first. Both figures are composites, built to illustrate the framework's movements and not to evidence its effects. They are assembled from patterns recurrent in the practitioner strand of Section 3.3, but no vignette corresponds to any individual, no client material is reported, and no consent-bearing relationship is represented. Their function is that of a worked example. They show that the constructs pick out something recognizable, and they specify what the framework would look like if it were operating. They cannot establish that it does operate, that the sequence generalizes, or that the changes would survive measurement.

The two cases are deliberately dissimilar. The first shows the pillars operating close to the conditions the framework is specified for. The second shows what happens at their edge, where an intersectional position and an asymmetric cost of deviation change what each pillar can reasonably ask, and where the framework's wholeness construct must be revised rather than applied.

5.2 Vignette 1: The Director Who Could Not Stop Absorbing

The first composite is an operations director in a mid-sized manufacturing firm, roughly fifteen years into her career and the only woman on a seven-person leadership team. Her reputation is for reliability: she catches what others drop, absorbs the consequences of upstream failures without escalating them, and is described in performance reviews as the person who holds it all together. She is also exhausted in a way that sleep does not touch, and she has begun to notice that she cannot sit through a leadership meeting without her jaw and shoulders locking before the first agenda item.

Reflection enters first, and not as insight. Asked to track where in the meeting she braces, she finds it is not during disagreement. It is in the silence after a decision is announced, when the question of who will absorb the implementation gap goes unasked. She has registered the governing rule bodily before she can state it propositionally: work that keeps the system functioning but produces no visible achievement is hers by default, and the default is invisible because no one ever decides it. The paradigm has become visible in Meadows's (1999) sense, and the point for the framework is the order of operations. The tracking produced the articulation; the articulation did not produce the tracking.

Responsibility is the harder movement, and it takes the form of refusing two false positions: that the system has made her this way and she can only endure it, and that if she were simply more assertive the pattern would dissolve. Neither is true, and holding constraint and capacity together (Gedalof, 2000) is what makes a third possibility available. In practice the work is initially bodily rather than deliberative, because the over-functioning is a conditioned bearing and not a considered strategy: her capacity to do anything other than absorb depends on whether she can remain present while a gap sits unfilled in front of her. The early practice is unglamorous and includes attention to breath and posture during the meeting itself, and the deliberate building of tolerance for an unclosed loop. This is habituation in Noble and Watkins's (2003) sense: effortful, corrective, and attended, until it is not.

Response is the pause, and it is a matter of seconds. A decision lands, the gap opens, and the familiar pull to say "I'll pick that up" arrives with the tightening she has learned to notice. She does not say it. The interval she holds is long enough for someone else to speak, and on the third occasion someone does. What has changed is not her values, which were never in question, and not her competence, which was never in doubt. What has changed is the availability of a choice at the moment the script would otherwise have executed itself. That distinction is what the pause is meant to secure, and it is also what separates the practice from mere restraint: she is not suppressing an impulse, she is holding an interval in which the impulse is not the only thing present.

Rebellion follows and is deliberately small. Instead of contesting the pattern rhetorically, she proposes a standing agenda item requiring that implementation ownership be named before a decision is closed. The proposal is procedural, which is precisely why it works: it alters the rule that produced the default instead of challenging any individual's behavior, which is Foucault's (1982) point about targeting the technique of power rather than its agents. It is also delivered while she remains in contact, not braced, and framed integratively, a team-level failure of decision hygiene, not a grievance, which is what distinguishes responsible rebellion from the accusation it could easily have become. In Follett's terms it is a disruption that builds, and its effect is felt by people other than its author: the default it dissolved was not only hers.

The *wholeness* turn is what the composite reports as most consequential and is the least visible from outside. She had understood her over-functioning as a virtue requiring

moderation, which is a deficit framing wearing a compliment. Reframed, it appears as an acquired competence rather than a flaw, a capacity she had been required to deploy in one direction only, and the question shifts from what she must give up to what had become unavailable while she was absorbing. In her account, what had become unavailable was judgment about which problems were worth solving at all, which is the faculty her role most needed and her performance had most reliably consumed.

5.3 Vignette 2: The Newly Promoted Director Who Sounded Like Someone Else

The second composite is a first-generation professional and a woman of color, recently promoted to direct a policy team in a public-sector agency. The promotion was earned on unusually strong analytic work, and within four months she is being described, in feedback she was not meant to see, as hard to read. She has been managing this by tightening her control over her own delivery: shorter sentences, less qualification, no visible deliberation. The performance is effective, and she reports that it does not feel like hers.

Her situation shows why the pillars cannot be applied uniformly, and why the cautions of Section 2.9 and Table 2 are not decorative. The bind she is in is not only the generic double bind of agency and likability documented by Rudman and Glick (2001). It is compounded by a narrower range of expression available to her, in which the same directness that reads as competence in a colleague risks reading as hostility in her. Crenshaw's (1991) point applies exactly: the constraint is not the sum of two separately analyzable disadvantages, and a framework treating "the leader" as a single position will not see it.

Reflection, for her, is directed less at her own script than at the unmarked one, which is Namaste's (1994) methodological instruction taken seriously. The productive question is not what she is doing wrong but what the setting has established as the neutral register of authority and whom that register was built to fit. Naming an unmarked norm does not remove it, and the framework should not imply that it does. What the naming changes is the attribution: a difficulty she had been carrying as a personal deficiency is relocated to the paradigm that produced it.

Responsibility here means declining a demand the framework could be misread as making. She is not obliged to stop performing. The costs of deviation are not symmetrical across positions, and a leader who judges that a particular performance is the price of remaining in the room is exercising response-ability rather than failing at it. This is Kandiyoti's (1988) patriarchal-bargain insight at the individual scale, and it follows from Section 2.5: the register she has mastered is a competence, not a symptom, and a framework treating it as damage would insult the achievement it rests on. What the framework offers is not a mandate to stop but a distinction between performing knowingly, as a strategic choice held at a distance, and performing compulsively, as the only available mode of being legible.

Response is correspondingly modest, and it is where the shift actually occurs. She does not change her register. She changes its status, treating it as a costume she can notice putting on, which restores an interior that the compulsion had been quietly consuming. The difference she reports is not in how she is perceived but in what remains available to her afterward, which is a claim about cost rather than about impression, and which the framework should be careful not to inflate into a claim about outcomes.

Rebellion, for her, is collective before it is individual, and at the intersections this is the pattern, not the exception. She does not challenge the register in the meetings where she is least protected, and the framework should not ask her to. She raises instead the question of what "executive presence" is being taken to mean in the agency's promotion criteria, pursued documentarily and procedurally, with two colleagues, at a moment when the criteria were

being revised in any case. The disruption is real and it is strategically placed, which is what makes it responsible rather than merely costly. It also illustrates the qualification entered in Table 2: where voice is not safely available to an individual, the pillar does not disappear but changes form, becoming collective, procedural, and timed to institutional openings rather than expressive and immediate.

The wholeness turn is where this vignette departs most instructively from the first, and where it revises the framework rather than illustrating it. She does not describe a return to an integrated self, and the framework should not require one of her. Her account is closer to Anzaldúa's (1987): the capacity she recovers is the capacity to hold two registers without either being the true one, and to move between them without the movement costing her an interior. Hers is the plural form of wholeness specified in Section 4.6, not the unified one, and it is the form the construct must take if it is to survive the intersectional and cross-cultural scrutiny of Section 2.9 and Section 8.

5.4 What the Vignettes Do and Do Not Establish

Three things are worth drawing out. First, the bodily practice precedes and enables the analytic movement instead of accompanying it. This is clearest in the first case, where the tracking produced the articulation and not the reverse, and it is the framework's distinctive claim, stated as Proposition 3 in Section 6.2. Second, in both cases the rebellion that follows is procedural and aimed at a rule rather than at a person. That is what the framework means by responsible, and what separates it from defiance. Third, and most consequentially for the theory, the two cases require different forms of the wholeness construct. This is why Section 4.6 specifies it disjunctively instead of assuming that integration is what every leader returns to.

What the vignettes cannot do should be equally clear. They are illustrations constructed by the author of the framework they illustrate, which is a conflict of interest rather than a form of evidence, and they are subject to precisely the confirmation risk that Section 3.4 acknowledges. Nothing in them tests whether the pillars produce the movements described, whether the movements persist, or whether they propagate as Section 6.3 hypothesizes. Those are empirical questions, and the following section states them in a form that permits an answer.

6. A Logic Model and Testable Propositions

6.1 The Logic Model

The framework has so far been stated as a set of theoretically anchored movements. To be testable it must also be stated as a chain of hypothesized relations: from what a leader does, through the proximal mechanisms that change, to outcomes at the three scales the paper has argued are scales of one system and not separate arenas. Table 4 sets out that chain.

Two features of the model carry the framework's theoretical commitments. First, sustained embodied practice appears as a condition of the individual-scale outcomes, not as an activity alongside them. Sections 2.6, 4.2, and 4.3 argue the claim: dispositions are revised through practiced re-habitation, not through insight. That is what would differentiate the framework empirically from a purely reflective intervention, and it is also its answer to Adkins's (2003) objection. Second, the arrows between the relational and system columns are bidirectional in the theory even though the model reads left to right, because a change in the local distribution of legibility alters the positions later available to the leader who initiated it.

Table 4. Logic model linking the pillars of Responsible Rebellion to hypothesized individual, relational, and system outcomes

Pillars and embodied practices	→ Proximal mechanisms	→ Individual outcomes	→ Relational outcomes	→ System outcomes
Responsibility · attending to the accustomed bearing	Capacity to remain present under pressure without discharging it (power-within)	Paradigm articulation (P1) Optionality in enactment (P2) Practice, not insight, as the condition of change (P3) Lower defensiveness; sustained engagement (P4)	Widened positional latitude for others (P5) Shift toward power-with grammar of relation (P6) Comportment shapes how challenge is received (P7)	Durable change in the local distribution of legibility and advantage (P8) Reduced gain on the reinforcing loop (P9) Complementarity with structural reform (P10)
Response · the pause	Interval opened between stimulus and enactment			
Reflection · bodily tracking	Governing paradigm made articulable			
Rebellion · disrupting while in contact	Disruption takes integrative, not power-over, form			
Grounding · embodied wholeness · reclamation framing	Development experienced as reclamation, not repair			
Moderators and scope conditions (P11): leader discretion · voice legitimacy · self-construal · cost of deviation · wholeness as integration · intelligibility of embodied practice within the setting				

6.2 Propositions at the Individual Scale

Proposition 1 (paradigm articulation). Sustained engagement with Reflection increases a leader's capacity to articulate the governing paradigm operating in her setting, meaning the tacit definition of competent leadership from which its goals, structure, and rules arise, relative to leaders receiving behaviorally focused development of equivalent duration. Articulation is a proximal outcome and is expected to precede any behavioral change.

Proposition 2 (optionality). Sustained engagement with Response increases the interval between a script-summoning stimulus and its enactment, and increases the proportion of enactments a leader identifies as chosen rather than automatic. The claim concerns optionality, not the direction of the choice; a leader who pauses and then enacts the inherited script has satisfied the proposition.

Proposition 3 (practice rather than insight). Change on Propositions 1 and 2 is conditional on sustained embodied practice, such that leaders who undertake the bodily practices of the pillars show greater change in how they take up position than leaders given the same analytic content without them. This is the framework's central and most falsifiable claim, and it follows directly from the account of habituation in Section 2.6: if a disposition is laid down by attended practice, it is not dislodged by understanding alone. If analytic content alone produces equivalent change, the framework's embodied ground is decorative and its differentiation from cognitive-reflective leadership development fails.

Proposition 4 (homecoming rather than repair). Development framed as reclamation of a capacity set aside produces lower defensive response and higher sustained engagement than deficit-framed development of equivalent content. This isolates the wholeness turn as an

active ingredient rather than a rhetorical preference, and it is directly testable by framing manipulation with content held constant.

6.3 Propositions at the Relational Scale

Proposition 5 (positional propagation). Because positioning is relational (Holland & Leander, 2004), a leader who re-authors her own standing alters the positions available to others in her local figured world. Direct reports of leaders showing change on Propositions 1 and 2 are therefore expected to report greater latitude to depart from role scripts than direct reports of comparison leaders. This is the proposition on which the paper's claim that interior work is structural work principally rests.

Proposition 6 (grammar shift). Re-authored leadership is observable as a shift in the grammar of relation, specifically an increase in integrative responses to conflict and a decrease in power-over responses, in observed interaction and not only in self-report. Because a leader's sense of having changed is itself part of what is in question, observational assessment is treated here as necessary rather than desirable.

Proposition 7 (bearing shapes reception). Disruption enacted while the leader remains in contact produces different relational outcomes than disruption enacted from a braced or defended bearing, the former being associated with sustained engagement by the challenged party and the latter with escalation or withdrawal. Because leadership is apprehended aesthetically and pre-reflectively by those on the receiving end (Ladkin, 2008, 2013), the claim is that comportment, and not only content, determines what a challenge accomplishes. This proposition supplies the operational content of the word responsible in responsible rebellion and would, if unsupported, reduce that term to an ethical preference without behavioral consequence.

6.4 Propositions at the System Scale

Proposition 8 (leverage differential). Interventions targeting paradigm-level self-constitution produce more durable change in the local distribution of legibility and advantage than interventions of equivalent duration targeting representation or behavior alone. Durability is the operative term; the framework does not predict larger immediate effects and, given the evidence reviewed in Section 2.6, should be treated with suspicion if it appears to produce them.

Proposition 9 (loop interruption). Where the framework operates as theorized, the gain on the reinforcing loop decreases: fluent performance of the inherited script becomes less predictive of recognition and advancement within the local unit. That is the systemic signature of a paradigm-level intervention, and it is measurable through the association between rated script conformity and subsequent recognition outcomes.

Proposition 10 (complementarity, not substitution). Paradigm-level intervention and structural reform are complements rather than alternatives. Units receiving both are expected to show greater change than units receiving either alone, and paradigm-level intervention alone is not expected to produce durable change in the formal distribution of power. This proposition is stated in the form that would embarrass the framework if it were wrong, because the individualization objection addressed in Section 8 depends on it.

6.5 Boundary Conditions and Disconfirming Evidence

Proposition 11 (scope conditions). The framework's effects are conditional on the scope conditions specified in Table 2: leader discretion, voice legitimacy, self-construal, the cost of deviation, wholeness as integration, and the intelligibility of attention to bodily bearing

within the setting. Effects are expected to attenuate as these conditions depart from the specified range. The proposition is two-sided, and both failures are informative. Failure to attenuate would indicate that the framework is less culturally particular than Section 2.9 concedes. Failure of effects within the specified range would indicate that the mechanism itself does not hold.

Table 5 pairs each proposition with a candidate indicator and with the evidence that would count against it. The table is a research agenda, not a measurement model. Several of the indicators would require instrument development, and Section 7 identifies where that work is most needed. What the table is meant to establish is that the framework is refutable in specific rather than general terms, which is the standard Section 3.4 sets for it.

Table 5. Propositions, Candidate Indicators, and Disconfirming Evidence

No.	Hypothesized outcome	Candidate indicator	What would disconfirm it
P1	Increased capacity to articulate the governing paradigm.	Structured elicitation of tacit leadership norms, blind-rated for specificity; comparison against behaviorally focused development.	No difference from active comparator, or gains attributable to fluency in the framework's vocabulary rather than to articulation of the setting's own norm.
P2	Increased optionality in enactment.	Behavioral or observational index of the stimulus–enactment interval; proportion of enactments identified as chosen, corroborated by observation.	Change in self-reported deliberateness with no corresponding change in observed enactment.
P3	Embodied practice, not analytic content alone, produces change on P1 and P2.	Randomized comparison of the pillars with and without their bodily practices, content held constant; micro-phenomenological interviewing of the pause (Petitmengin, 2006).	Analytic content alone produces equivalent change, collapsing the framework into cognitive-reflective development and vindicating Adkins's (2003) objection.
P4	Reclamation framing outperforms deficit framing.	Framing manipulation with content held constant; defensive response and sustained engagement as outcomes.	No framing effect, or an effect that does not survive an active comparator of equivalent content.
P5	Widened positional latitude for others in the local figured world.	Direct-report reports of latitude to depart from role scripts; observed variation in role enactment within the unit.	Individual change with no measurable change in others' positional latitude, which would defeat the claim that interior work is structural work.
P6	Shift from power-over toward power-with grammar of relation.	Coded observation of conflict episodes: integrative versus dominating responses.	Self-reported relational change unaccompanied by observed change in interaction.
P7	Comportment during disruption shapes how the challenge is received.	Blind-rated observational coding of comportment during challenge episodes, paired with subsequent engagement or withdrawal of the challenged party.	No difference in relational outcome by comportment, which would reduce "responsible" to an ethical preference without behavioral consequence.
P8	More durable change in the local distribution of legibility and advantage	Longitudinal archival measures of recognition, assignment, and advancement,	Equivalent or shorter-lived effects relative to an equivalent-duration comparator.

No.	Hypothesized outcome	Candidate indicator	What would disconfirm it
	than representation- or behavior-focused intervention.	with follow-up beyond the intervention period.	
P9	Reduced gain on the reinforcing loop.	Association between rated conformity to the inherited script and subsequent recognition outcomes, measured before and after.	Unchanged association, indicating the loop is intact irrespective of individual change.
P10	Paradigm-level intervention and structural reform are complements.	Factorial comparison of units receiving paradigm-level work, structural reform, both, or neither.	Paradigm-level intervention alone produces durable change in formal distributions of power, or the two are substitutes rather than complements.
P11	Effects attenuate as scope conditions depart from the specified range.	Replication across settings varying in discretion, voice legitimacy, self-construal, cost of deviation, and the intelligibility of embodied practice.	Failure to attenuate (framework less particular than claimed) or failure within the specified range (mechanism does not hold).

Note. Indicators are candidates rather than validated measures. Because a leader's sense of having changed is itself part of what is in question, propositions relying on first-person report alone are marked for corroboration by observational or archival measures wherever both are available. Micro-phenomenological interviewing (Petitmengin, 2006; Petitmengin et al., 2019) is proposed in Section 7 as the appropriate instrument for the propositions whose object is the structure of a brief lived episode.

7. Directions for Future Research

The framework opens an empirical program rather than closing one, and five lines of inquiry follow from it. The first is qualitative validation. Phenomenological interviews and longitudinal work with leaders engaged in the practice would test whether the pillars describe a developmental movement participants recognize, and would surface refinements the theory cannot anticipate on its own. The framework's constructs describe lived movements, not traits, so this work should come before instrument development rather than after.

The second is operationalization. The pillars could be developed into a structured developmental assessment and pedagogy, with attention to whether the constructs can be measured without flattening them. Two problems are already visible. The capacity to articulate a governing paradigm has no existing instrument, and any measure would need to separate genuine articulation of a tacit norm from fluency in the framework's own vocabulary. And optionality in enactment is not well captured by self-report, since a leader's sense of having chosen is precisely what is in question; behavioral and observational indices are needed alongside it. Springborg's (2018) sensory templates offer one route to the first problem: they specify the bodily schemas through which a manager construes a situation, and those can be elicited and compared rather than merely asserted.

The third concerns the method. The framework's central object is a brief, pre-reflective, hard-to-articulate episode: the interval in which a disposition moves to execute and is held open instead. Studying it well will require methods built for experience at that scale, and the most developed of these is micro-phenomenology. Petitmengin's (2006) elicitation interview guides a person to re-live a brief episode and describe how it unfolds, against explicit validity

criteria. Petitmengin et al. (2019) supply the analysis procedure for moving from individual accounts to structures shared across participants. Varela (1996) supplies the underlying argument that first-person data require a rigorous pragmatics rather than dismissal. Physiological measurement has a complementary place in such a program rather than a competing one. Indices of bodily state cannot by themselves describe the structure of an experience, but they can corroborate first-person accounts, and a design pairing the two would say considerably more than either alone.

The fourth is intersectional and cross-cultural extension. Research should examine how the framework operates across differently situated leaders and in non-Western contexts, testing its reach rather than assuming it. The appropriate form is not translation of the present framework into other settings but indigenous theory-building, in which constructs originate locally and are permitted to contradict the framework instead of instantiating it (Tsui, 2004). Work of this kind is likely to revise the framework's vocabulary as much as extend its application. The scope conditions of Table 2 are offered as the starting point for that revision, not as its conclusion.

The fifth is to apply the practice-based and observational designs the embodied leadership field already uses. Bigo and Islam (2022) show that the claim that bodily practice changes managerial construal can be established qualitatively and at length, through participant observation across cohorts, written testimony, and reflective journals. Their study is a workable template for studying the framework in a developmental setting. Fisher and Robbins (2015) show how existing leadership data can be reanalyzed phenomenologically to surface situated embodied practice, and Gherardi (2019) sets out the practice-based methods on which such a program would draw. Section 6 states the specific claims that work of this kind would be testing.

8. Limitations

Intellectual honesty requires naming what the paper leaves unresolved. Most plainly, it is conceptual rather than empirical: its claims are theoretically warranted but untested, and the developmental movement it describes has not been observed under study conditions. The vignettes of Section 5 do not alter this; as Section 5.4 states, they are illustrations and not evidence.

A deeper tension runs through the argument. The paper borrows the anti-essentialism of Butler and Foucault to deconstruct leadership's gendered norms, then invokes wholeness, a notion that risks smuggling back the pre-discursive, authentic self those theorists deny. The appeal to Garber's third, to the practice-theoretic notion of self-authoring, and to the disjunctive specification of Section 4.6 mitigates the problem by recasting wholeness as something composed in practice rather than recovered from before culture, but it does not fully dissolve it. Whether wholeness is itself a culturally produced ideal, and whose body is permitted to inhabit it, remains genuinely open. Section 4.6 sharpens the question by specifying wholeness disjunctively, and Section 5.3 suggests that plurality may be the more defensible general form of the construct; neither answers it, and a framework named for wholeness owes its readers more on this point than the present paper delivers.

A related risk is political and deserves a direct answer. A framework centered on the leader's embodied self-constitution can be misread as making equity an individual achievement, letting institutions off the hook. Read systemically the objection loses much of its force: the performance is not a private matter running parallel to the system but the mechanism through which the system reproduces itself, the node at which the reinforcing loop is fed or

interrupted, so intervening at the level of self-constitution is a paradigm-level intervention rather than a retreat from structural change. Proposition 5 states the further reason: because positioning is relational, the change a leader makes in her own standing propagates through the same loop that formerly reproduced constraint. What must still be held is that paradigm-level leverage is neither easy nor guaranteed (Meadows, 1999), and that the structural levers of rules, resource flows, and the formal distribution of power remain necessary. Proposition 10 states this in a form that could be shown false.

The paper also bridges its literatures unevenly, and the unevenness is specifiable. Its feminist and poststructuralist foundations are drawn from a coherent body of scholarship, and its central empirical claim about masculine-coded leadership is well evidenced within the Western samples where it has been tested. Its embodied ground is of a different kind: as Section 2.7 sets out, those claims are constitutive and interpretive, warranted by the sociology of disposition and the epistemology of bodily knowing rather than by clinical evidence. That is a defensible position, not a weak one, but it carries a cost — interpretive warrant establishes that the framework describes something real without establishing that its practices produce the changes it hypothesizes, and closing that gap is what Section 6 exists to do. The framework also asks practice to revise dispositions that Bourdieu's readers regard as durable precisely because they resist revision; it sides with McNay (1999, 2000) against Adkins (2003), and should be read as having taken a position in a live dispute rather than settled it.

Finally, the framework's reach is narrower than its ambition. Its theoretical lineage is predominantly Western and Anglophone, and Table 1 records the consequence: non-Western, postcolonial, and cross-cultural scholarship entered as a constraint on the framework's claims rather than as a generative source of its constructs. That is the weaker of the two forms of engagement, and it is the criticism Bilge (2013) directs at decorative uses of intersectional and decolonial scholarship. Four commitments are culturally particular, and Table 2 states them among its scope conditions. Self-authorship presupposes an independent rather than interdependent self-construal (Markus & Kitayama, 1991), where decolonial scholarship offers a coalitional subject instead (Lugones, 2010). Leader discretion presupposes a role definition paternalistic systems do not share (Farh & Cheng, 2000).

Rebellion presupposes that upward voice is safely available, which participative mechanisms secure in small power-distance settings and not in large ones (Huang et al., 2005), and Kandiyoti's (1988) patriarchal bargain names why: a model coding strategic accommodation as failed rebellion will misread the agency of women for whom contestation is costliest. And wholeness presupposes that integration is the desired end, where Anzaldúa (1987) describes a consciousness whose capacity lies in holding incompatible worlds without resolving them. Two cautions bear on the starting assumptions: Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that the category "woman" did not organize Old Òyó Yoruba society, and Nkomo (2011) warns that the corrective to Western universalism is not an essentialized alternative, though alternatives exist, as Metz (2018) shows. The appropriate development is indigenous research in which constructs originate locally (Tsui, 2004), treating contexts as interacting rather than stacking (Jepson, 2009). Until Proposition 11 is tested, the framework's claim is not that it is universal but that it is specifiable.

9. Conclusion

Leadership is not a neutral instrument to which women have merely been denied access. It is enacted within figured worlds that run on performance, where performing the favored role anchors the performer into structures built to advantage one category over another, a dynamic gender displays at its sharpest, and one that, read systemically, is a reinforcing feedback loop

sustained at the level of the paradigm. Reforms addressing only who leads and how they behave push the system's weakest levers and leave that anchoring untouched.

Responsible Rebellion proposes a different point of intervention: through four recursive pillars — standing within constraint and claiming self-authorship, reciting the script deliberately, seeing the figured world for what it is, and disrupting power-over to make room for power-with — and through a grounding return to embodied wholeness, it offers leaders a way to author their leadership rather than merely perform it. The paper has tried to state that proposal in a form that can be argued with: it illustrates the pillars in practice, specifies a logic model and eleven propositions with the evidence that would refute each, grounds its embodied claims in the sociology of disposition and not in a contested clinical science, and specifies the conditions beyond which the framework is a hypothesis rather than a prescription. As a way of naming where gender-equity work must reach, and of insisting that such work can be a homecoming rather than a correction, it aims to expand both the theory and the practice of leading.

References

- Acker, J. (1990). Hierarchies, jobs, bodies: A theory of gendered organizations. *Gender & Society*, 4(2), 139–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124390004002002>
- Adkins, L. (2003). Reflexivity: Freedom or habit of gender? *Theory, Culture & Society*, 20(6), 21–42. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276403206002>
- Ahmed, S. (2007). A phenomenology of whiteness. *Feminist Theory*, 8(2), 149–168. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1464700107078139>
- Ahmed, S. (2012). *On being included: Racism and diversity in institutional life*. Duke University Press.
- Andersen, T. E., Ellegaard, H., Schiøttz-Christensen, B., Mejldal, A., & Manniche, C. (2020). Somatic experiencing® for patients with low back pain and comorbid posttraumatic stress symptoms: A randomised controlled trial. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 11(1), Article 1797306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2020.1797306>
- Anzaldúa, G. (1987). *Borderlands/La frontera: The new mestiza*. Aunt Lute Books.
- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (M. Holquist, Ed.; C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.). University of Texas Press.
- Bartky, S. L. (1990). *Femininity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*. Routledge.
- Bigo, V., & Islam, G. (2022). Embodiment and management learning: Understanding the role of bodily analogy in a yoga-based learning model. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2021.0190>
- Bilge, S. (2013). Intersectionality undone: Saving intersectionality from feminist intersectionality studies. *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race*, 10(2), 405–424. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1742058X13000283>
- Bourdieu, P. (1977). *Outline of a theory of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1972)
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1980)

- Bourdieu, P. (2001). *Masculine domination* (R. Nice, Trans.). Stanford University Press. (Original work published 1998)
- Brom, D., Stokar, Y., Lawi, C., Nuriel-Porat, V., Ziv, Y., Lerner, K., & Ross, G. (2017). Somatic experiencing for posttraumatic stress disorder: A randomized controlled outcome study. *Journal of Traumatic Stress, 30*(3), 304–312. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.22189>
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1997). Gender is burning: Questions of appropriation and subversion. In A. McClintock, A. Mufti, & E. Shohat (Eds.), *Dangerous liaisons: Gender, nation, and postcolonial perspectives* (pp. 381–395). University of Minnesota Press.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. Routledge.
- Collins, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Cooke, F. L. (2023). Changing lens: Broadening the research agenda of women in management in China. *Journal of Business Ethics, 184*(2), 375–389. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-022-05105-1>
- Crenshaw, K. (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Stanford Law Review, 43*(6), 1241–1299. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Crossley, N. (2013). Habit and habitus. *Body & Society, 19*(2–3), 136–161. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1357034X12472543>
- Csordas, T. J. (1990). Embodiment as a paradigm for anthropology. *Ethos, 18*(1), 5–47. <https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.1990.18.1.02a00010>
- Den Hartog, D. N., & De Hoogh, A. H. B. (2024). Cross-cultural leadership: What we know, what we need to know, and where we need to go. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior, 11*, 535–566. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-orgpsych-110721-033711>
- Dewey, J. (1988). *Human nature and conduct*. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *The middle works of John Dewey, 1899–1924: Vol. 14. 1922*. Southern Illinois University Press. (Original work published 1922)
- Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review, 109*(3), 573–598. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.109.3.573>
- Farh, J.-L., & Cheng, B.-S. (2000). A cultural analysis of paternalistic leadership in Chinese organizations. In J. T. Li, A. S. Tsui, & E. Weldon (Eds.), *Management and organizations in the Chinese context* (pp. 84–127). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230511590_5
- Fisher, K., & Robbins, C. R. (2015). Embodied leadership: Moving from leader competencies to leaderful practices. *Leadership, 11*(3), 281–299. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715014522680>
- Fletcher, J. K. (2004). The paradox of postheroic leadership: An essay on gender, power, and transformational change. *The Leadership Quarterly, 15*(5), 647–661. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2004.07.004>
- Follett, M. P. (1924). *Creative experience*. Longmans, Green.

- Follett, M. P. (1940). *Dynamic administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follett* (H. C. Metcalf & L. Urwick, Eds.). Harper & Brothers.
- Ford, B. Q., & Mauss, I. B. (2015). Culture and emotion regulation. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 3, 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2014.12.004>
- Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4), 777–795. <https://doi.org/10.1086/448181>
- Gamson, J., & Moon, D. (2004). The sociology of sexualities: Queer and beyond. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 30(1), 47–64. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.30.012703.110522>
- Garber, M. (1992). *Vested interests: Cross-dressing and cultural anxiety*. Routledge.
- Gedalof, I. (2000). Power, politics and performativity: Some comments on Elisa Glick's "Sex positive." *Feminist Review*, 64(1), 49–52. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014177800338954>
- Gherardi, S. (2019). *How to conduct a practice-based study: Problems and methods* (2nd ed.). Edward Elgar.
- Grossman, P. (2023). Fundamental challenges and likely refutations of the five basic premises of the polyvagal theory. *Biological Psychology*, 180, Article 108589. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2023.108589>
- Halperin, D. M. (2003). The normalization of queer theory. *Journal of Homosexuality*, 45(2–4), 339–343. https://doi.org/10.1300/J082v45n02_17
- Hansen, H., Ropo, A., & Sauer, E. (2007). Aesthetic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 18(6), 544–560. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.09.003>
- Heilman, M. E. (2001). Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational ladder. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 657–674. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00234>
- Holland, D., Lachicotte, W., Skinner, D., & Cain, C. (1998). *Identity and agency in cultural worlds*. Harvard University Press.
- Holland, D., & Leander, K. (2004). Ethnographic studies of positioning and subjectivity: An introduction. *Ethos*, 32(2), 127–139. <https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.2004.32.2.127>
- House, R. J., Hanges, P. J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P. W., & Gupta, V. (Eds.). (2004). *Culture, leadership, and organizations: The GLOBE study of 62 societies*. SAGE Publications.
- Huang, X., Van de Vliert, E., & Van der Vegt, G. (2005). Breaking the silence culture: Stimulation of participation and employee opinion withholding cross-nationally. *Management and Organization Review*, 1(3), 459–482. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1740-8784.2005.00023.x>
- Jepson, D. (2009). Studying leadership at cross-country level: A critical analysis. *Leadership*, 5(1), 61–80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715008098310>
- Kandiyoti, D. (1988). Bargaining with patriarchy. *Gender & Society*, 2(3), 274–290. <https://doi.org/10.1177/089124388002003004>
- Kirmayer, L. J. (2007). Psychotherapy and the cultural concept of the person. *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 44(2), 232–257. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1363461506070794>

- Koenig, A. M., Eagly, A. H., Mitchell, A. A., & Ristikari, T. (2011). Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 616–642. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023557>
- Kuhfuß, M., Maldei, T., Hetmanek, A., & Baumann, N. (2021). Somatic experiencing: Effectiveness and key factors of a body-oriented trauma therapy: A scoping literature review. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 12(1), Article 1929023. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2021.1929023>
- Küpers, W. M. (2013). Embodied inter-practices of leadership: Phenomenological perspectives on relational and responsive leading and following. *Leadership*, 9(3), 335–357. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715013485852>
- Ladkin, D. (2008). Leading beautifully: How mastery, congruence and purpose create the aesthetic of embodied leadership practice. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 19(1), 31–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.12.003>
- Ladkin, D. (2010). *Rethinking leadership: A new look at old leadership questions*. Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781849805346>
- Ladkin, D. (2013). From perception to flesh: A phenomenological account of the felt experience of leadership. *Leadership*, 9(3), 320–334. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715013485854>
- Ladkin, D., & Taylor, S. S. (2010). Enacting the ‘true self’: Towards a theory of embodied authentic leadership. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(1), 64–74. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2009.10.005>
- Levine, P. A. (1997). *Waking the tiger: Healing trauma*. North Atlantic Books.
- Levine, P. A. (2010). *In an unspoken voice: How the body releases trauma and restores goodness*. North Atlantic Books.
- Liu, H. (2020). *Redeeming leadership: An anti-racist feminist intervention*. Bristol University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781529200041.001.0001>
- Lovell, T. (2000). Thinking feminism with and against Bourdieu. *Feminist Theory*, 1(1), 11–32. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14647000022229047>
- Lugones, M. (2010). Toward a decolonial feminism. *Hypatia*, 25(4), 742–759. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2010.01137.x>
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and the self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review*, 98(2), 224–253. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.98.2.224>
- Mauss, M. (1973). Techniques of the body (B. Brewster, Trans.). *Economy and Society*, 2(1), 70–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147300000003> (Original work published 1935)
- Mavin, S., & Grandy, G. (2016). A theory of abject appearance: Women elite leaders’ intra-gender ‘management’ of bodies and appearance. *Human Relations*, 69(5), 1095–1120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715609107>
- McNay, L. (1999). Gender, habitus and the field: Pierre Bourdieu and the limits of reflexivity. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 16(1), 95–117. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026327699016001007>
- McNay, L. (2000). *Gender and agency: Reconfiguring the subject in feminist and social theory*. Polity Press.

- McNay, L. (2004). Agency and experience: Gender as a lived relation. *The Sociological Review*, 52(2_suppl), 175–190. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.2005.00530.x>
- Meadows, D. H. (1999). *Leverage points: Places to intervene in a system*. The Sustainability Institute.
- Meadows, D. H. (2008). *Thinking in systems: A primer* (D. Wright, Ed.). Chelsea Green.
- Menakem, R. (2017). *My grandmother's hands: Racialized trauma and the pathway to mending our hearts and bodies*. Central Recovery Press.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2012). *Phenomenology of perception* (D. A. Landes, Trans.). Routledge. (Original work published 1945)
- Metz, T. (2018). An African theory of good leadership. *African Journal of Business Ethics*, 12(2), 36–53. <https://doi.org/10.15249/12-2-204>
- Mohanty, C. T. (2003). “Under Western eyes” revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 28(2), 499–535. <https://doi.org/10.1086/342914>
- Mullaney, J. (2002). Globalizing dissent? Arundhati Roy, local and postcolonial feminisms in the transnational economy. *World Literature Written in English*, 40(1), 56–70. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17449850208589375>
- Nagel, J. (2000). Ethnicity and sexuality. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 26(1), 107–133. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.soc.26.1.107>
- Namaste, K. (1994). The politics of inside/out: Queer theory, poststructuralism, and a sociological approach to sexuality. *Sociological Theory*, 12(2), 220–231. <https://doi.org/10.2307/201866>
- Nayak, A., & Kehily, M. J. (2006). Gender undone: Subversion, regulation and embodiment in the work of Judith Butler. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 27(4), 459–472. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690600803038>
- Neuhuber, W. L., & Berthoud, H.-R. (2022). Functional anatomy of the vagus system: How does the polyvagal theory comply? *Biological Psychology*, 174, Article 108425. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2022.108425>
- Nicholson, H., & Carroll, B. (2013). Identity undoing and power relations in leadership development. *Human Relations*, 66(9), 1225–1248. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726712469548>
- Nkomo, S. M. (2011). A postcolonial and anti-colonial reading of “African” leadership and management in organization studies: Tensions, contradictions and possibilities. *Organization*, 18(3), 365–386. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508411398731>
- Noble, G., & Watkins, M. (2003). So, how did Bourdieu learn to play tennis? Habitus, consciousness and habituation. *Cultural Studies*, 17(3–4), 520–539. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0950238032000083926>
- Opie, T. R., & Phillips, K. W. (2015). Hair penalties: The negative influence of Afrocentric hair on ratings of Black women’s dominance and professionalism. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, Article 1311. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01311>
- Oyèwùmí, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses*. University of Minnesota Press.

- Petitmengin, C. (2006). Describing one's subjective experience in the second person: An interview method for the science of consciousness. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 5(3), 229–269. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-006-9022-2>
- Petitmengin, C., Remillieux, A., & Valenzuela-Moguillansky, C. (2019). Discovering the structures of lived experience: Towards a micro-phenomenological analysis method. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 18(4), 691–730. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-018-9597-4>
- Porges, S. W. (2011). *The polyvagal theory: Neurophysiological foundations of emotions, attachment, communication, and self-regulation*. W. W. Norton.
- Porges, S. W. (2023). The vagal paradox: A polyvagal solution. *Comprehensive Psychoneuroendocrinology*, 16, Article 100200. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpnec.2023.100200>
- Pullen, A., & Vachhani, S. J. (2021). Feminist ethics and women leaders: From difference to intercorporeality. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 173(2), 233–243. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-020-04526-0>
- Purser, R. E., & Milillo, J. (2015). Mindfulness revisited: A Buddhist-based conceptualization. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 24(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1056492614532315>
- Puwar, N. (2004). *Space invaders: Race, gender and bodies out of place*. Berg.
- Ramarajan, L., & Reid, E. (2013). Shattering the myth of separate worlds: Negotiating nonwork identities at work. *Academy of Management Review*, 38(4), 621–644. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2011.0314>
- Ropo, A., & Parviainen, J. (2001). Leadership and bodily knowledge in expert organizations: Epistemological rethinking. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 17(1), 1–18. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0956-5221\(00\)00030-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0956-5221(00)00030-0)
- Ropo, A., Sauer, E., & Salovaara, P. (2013). Embodiment of leadership through material place. *Leadership*, 9(3), 378–395. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715013485858>
- Rowlands, J. (1997). *Questioning empowerment: Working with women in Honduras*. Oxfam.
- Rudman, L. A., & Glick, P. (2001). Prescriptive gender stereotypes and backlash toward agentic women. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 743–762. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00239>
- Schein, V. E. (1973). The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57(2), 95–100. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0037128>
- Schein, V. E., Mueller, R., Lituchy, T., & Liu, J. (1996). Think manager—think male: A global phenomenon? *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 17(1), 33–41. [https://doi.org/10.1002/\(SICI\)1099-1379\(199601\)17:1<33::AID-JOB778>3.0.CO;2-F](https://doi.org/10.1002/(SICI)1099-1379(199601)17:1<33::AID-JOB778>3.0.CO;2-F)
- Shusterman, R. (1999). Somaesthetics: A disciplinary proposal. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 57(3), 299–313. <https://doi.org/10.2307/432196>
- Shusterman, R. (2008). *Body consciousness: A philosophy of mindfulness and somaesthetics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511802829>
- Sinclair, A. (1998). *Doing leadership differently: Gender, power and sexuality in a changing business culture*. Melbourne University Press.

- Sinclair, A. (2005). Body possibilities in leadership. *Leadership*, 1(4), 387–406. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715005057231>
- Sinclair, A. (2007). *Leadership for the disillusioned: Moving beyond myths and heroes to leading that liberates*. Allen & Unwin.
- Sinclair, A. (2013). A material dean. *Leadership*, 9(3), 436–443. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1742715013485859>
- Sinclair, A. (2019). Five movements in an embodied feminism: A memoir. *Human Relations*, 72(1), 144–158. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726718765625>
- Springborg, C. (2018). *Sensory templates and manager cognition: Art, cognitive science and spiritual practices in management education*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71794-4>
- Strati, A. (2007). Sensible knowledge and practice-based learning. *Management Learning*, 38(1), 61–77. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350507607073023>
- Strozzi-Heckler, R. (2014). *The art of somatic coaching: Embodying skillful action, wisdom, and compassion*. North Atlantic Books.
- Sweet, K. M., Szelwach, C., Tarhini, K. M., & Vermeer, P. E. (2026). Embodied leadership in organizations: An integrative conceptual review. *Organization Management Journal*, 23(3), 365–379. <https://doi.org/10.1108/OMJ-04-2021-1219>
- Taylor, E. W., Wang, T., & Leite, C. A. C. (2022). An overview of the phylogeny of cardiorespiratory control in vertebrates with some reflections on the “polyvagal theory.” *Biological Psychology*, 172, Article 108382. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.biopsycho.2022.108382>
- Trethewey, A. (1999). Disciplined bodies: Women’s embodied identities at work. *Organization Studies*, 20(3), 423–450. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840699203003>
- Tsui, A. S. (2004). Contributing to global management knowledge: A case for high quality indigenous research. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 21(4), 491–513. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:APJM.0000048715.35108.a7>
- van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.
- Varela, F. J. (1996). Neurophenomenology: A methodological remedy for the hard problem. *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 3(4), 330–349.
- VeneKlasen, L., & Miller, V. (2002). *A new weave of power, people & politics: The action guide for advocacy and citizen participation*. World Neighbors.
- Wacquant, L. (2004). *Body and soul: Notebooks of an apprentice boxer*. Oxford University Press.
- Wingfield, A. H. (2010). Are some emotions marked “whites only”? Racialized feeling rules in professional workplaces. *Social Problems*, 57(2), 251–268. <https://doi.org/10.1525/sp.2010.57.2.251>
- Young, I. M. (1980). Throwing like a girl: A phenomenology of feminine body comportment, motility and spatiality. *Human Studies*, 3(2), 137–156. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF02331805>