
POSTER ABSTRACT

The Ethical Work of Leadership

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Background: My PhD thesis investigated how the ethical work of leadership materialised as practices for voluntary sector practitioners as part of Leadership Learning.

• **Approach:** I use a new materialist approach that explores how human and non-human actors are entangled in the ethical work of leadership. My approach uses a new materialist ethnography that places me as an interactive participant rather than a detached observer.

• **Results:** I identify three practices as the ethical work of leadership; the first practice of Becoming an Ethical Leader, enabled an understanding of how participants intra-acted (1) with previous experiences and learning as ethical responsibility. The second practice was Working Differently with Ethics, enabling me to reveal practices of closing down relational leadership as an agential cut (1) and via Bennett (2) and enchantment and disenchantment. The third, Practices at the Intersection of Leadership and Ethics, emerged as entangled, embodied and relational practices that materialise in leadership development and the research process, understood through Barad's (1) agential realism and Braidotti's (3) sustainability.

• **Implications:** My contributions to practice are firstly, for leadership development designers and facilitators in recognising that they are also involved in the ethical work of leadership and therefore the associated practices. Secondly, for Voluntary Sector Organisations, consider how the ethical work of leadership is approached and how the unethical can emerge through more traditional approaches to leadership, such as visionary, charismatic, transformational and authentic. Instead relational and responsible leadership can enable more equal spaces to be created for engagement in such leadership.

Thirdly, I caution the development of government policy, in that Voluntary Sector Organisations are increasingly viewed through an ability to be effective, due to constraints and decreasing financial support. The sector has increasingly, therefore looked to more traditional forms of leadership (as set out above). Government can therefore acknowledge that they too are entangled in the ethical work of leadership that practitioners practice in the face of diminishing resources and increased scrutiny.

Key learning points and relevance for international delegates: international delegates can apply the practices at the intersection of leadership and ethics in enabling an evocative level of insight in how practitioners grapple with the ethical work of leadership, and how the human and non-human can interact in the development of such practices.

References:

1. Barad, K. (2007). *Meeting the Universe Halfway*. Durham and London; Duke University Press.
2. Bennett, J. (2001). *The Enchantment of Modern Life. Attachments, Crossings, and Ethics*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
3. Braidotti, R. (2011). *Nomadic Theory. The Portable Rosi Braidotti*. New York and Chichester: Columbia University Press.