

JOURNAL OF CHANGE MANAGEMENT:
REFRAMING LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICE
2025, VOL. 25, NO. 3, 169–178
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2025.2539965>



LEADING ARTICLE

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Changing Change: From Heroic Leadership to Collective Agency

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MAD statement

This leading article aims to *Make a Difference* (MAD) by challenging outdated but persistent ideas about organizational change and leadership. It calls for a fundamental shift away from traditional, leader-centric frameworks and towards recognizing change as an emergent, collective, and relational process. It advocates theories and methodologies that foreground human experiences, interactions, and identities.

Introduction: 'Dead' Ideas of Organizational Change

Why do some ideas in organizational change refuse to die, even when evidence contradicts them? From normative change models to heroic leadership narratives, certain concepts persist despite mounting critique. This article examines these 'dead ideas' and their grip on scholarship and practice, exploring alternative frameworks that address the relational, embodied, and contextual nature of how change unfolds in organizations. Building on the foundation set out in 'Zombie leadership: Dead ideas that still walk among us' (Haslam et al., 2024), we turn our attention to organizational change 'dead ideas', defined as 'ideas that have been repeatedly debunked but which nevertheless resolutely refuse to die' (p. 101770). These authors argue that persistent leadership axioms are those that simplify complex realities while reinforcing elite privilege and the lucrative leadership