



Charlotte Mason (1842-1923)

Upon her death *The Times* called Mason the foremost educationalist of her day. Her 'revolutionary' ideas led to the formation of the Scout Movement, reached most corners of the globe from Ambleside, and, by the present day, made their way unnoticed into the UK national curriculum. Today, tens of thousands of home educating families follow her person-centered methods. Until now, her ideas have never been applied to management and organisation thinking.

Yet Mason proposed a complete philosophy and method focused on human agency, lifelong learning, and 'aimed at the public good.' Her focus on citizenship and character development through engagement with living ideas and the natural world opens novel possibilities for regenerative organising towards the 2030 Agenda.

RESEARCH AIMS

My research examines the impacts of Charlotte Mason's ideas both historically and today. My purpose is to relate and scope these findings in order to create the conditions for collective leadership aimed at sustainable futures. Mason's philosophy and methods contain the potential for reframing 'reflexivity' to support citizenship and ecological sensemaking in collaborative governance processes.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The outer circle represents the 'imperatives' evident in the extant sustainability science literature

Source Material

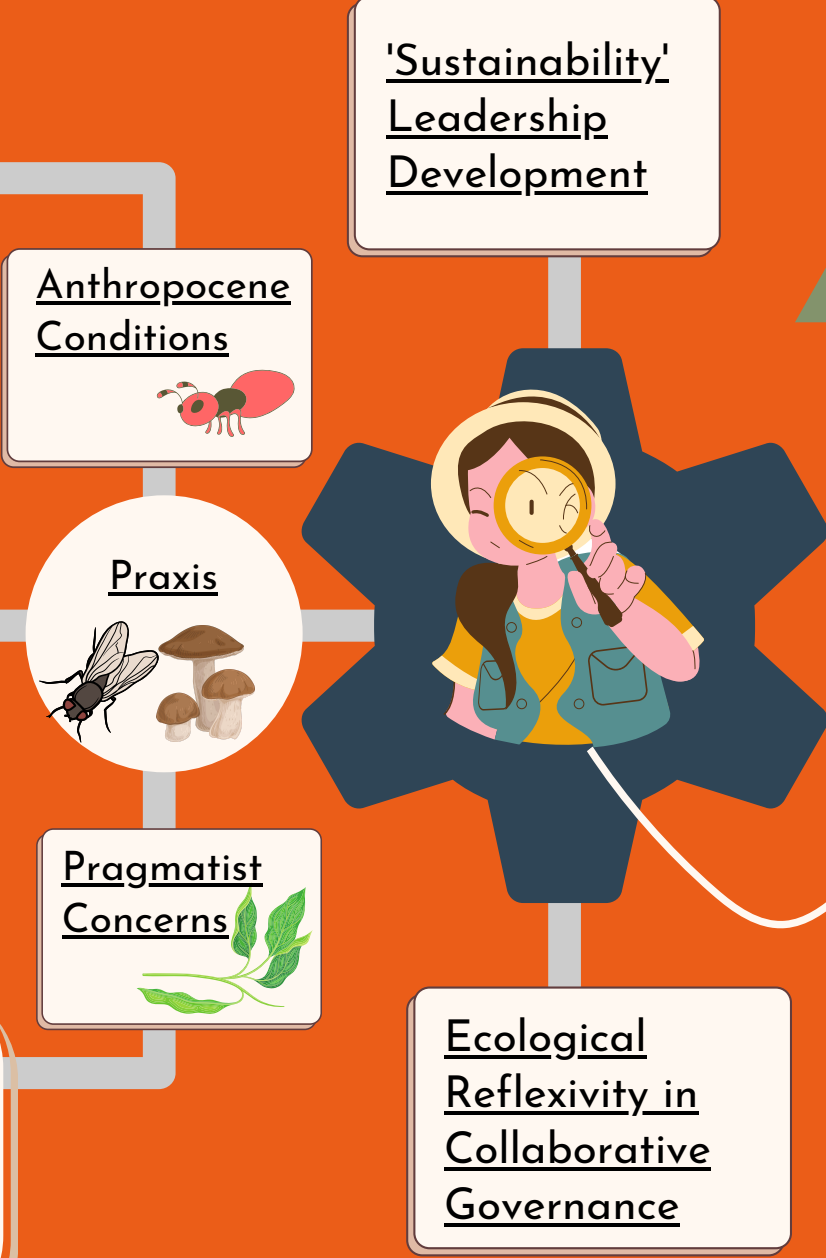
Theory: Mason's claim to Aladdin's Cave & Capabilities
Experience: 'Revolution' via CM
Literature: Drucker on innovation in the breeze

Methodology

Participative Action Research via Q Methodology:
• Rendering the subjective objective, emancipatory aims, abductive logics

Empirical Material

Historical & Modern: Perspectives on the impact of Mason's philosophy & methods
Extant Lit: Abductive thematic content analysis on reflexivity



Ecological Reflexivity

Developmental Spaces

- Cross-sector partnerships as a sustainable business model for systems change (Dentoni et al 2020) and ESG investing dialogue
- Non-financial accounting (Sisaye, 2021)
- Citizenship forums such as citizen science, deliberative democratic forums and other PAR open systems (Gearty et al 2015)

Where?

How?

Picturing Politics, Proximity & Progress

Case Studies

- Heritage-led rural regeneration prioritises investment in non-financial capitals (Egusquiza et al, 2021)
- Blue Ventures 'seeing is believing' approach to short-term fishery closures (Epps & Benbow, 2007)
- SDG Contextualisation in North West England (Stanberry & Murphy, in process)

Vital Pivot

Based on the foundational principle of the born personhood of all, Mason provided only three tools for developmental efforts.

What?

1. The atmosphere of environment
2. The discipline of habit
3. The presentation of living ideas



Critical Insights

- Developmental processes either conform or emancipate (Freire, 1968)
- The human-denying effects of capitalism and the need for organised abandonment (Drucker, 1955, 1963, 2013)

Why?

Leadership

- Re-thinking 'leadership' for planetary health (Redekop et al, 2018)
- Developing sustainability leadership isn't working (Bendell & Little, 2015)
- 'Collective leadership' is complex, delicate, and performative (Edwards & Bolden, 2023)

Who?

Developmental Tools

- Integration with applied SDG tools such as evaluative thinking (Patton, 2017) and Participatory Action Research (Chevalier & Buckles, 2019)
- Exposes the limitations of Theory U (Scharmer), Inner Development Goals, etc.

How?

Vital Pivot for reflexivity

REFRAMING LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE FUTURES



INSIGHT into the literature

Sustainability science is an applied, problem-oriented field that seeks to bring all the knowledge needed to bear towards sustainable development. In this context Clark and Harley (2020) claim ecological reflexivity (Dryzek & Pickering, 2018) as the core capacity needed for the Anthropocene.

This is the 'capacity for structures, systems, and sets of ideas to question their own core commitments, and if necessary change themselves, while listening and responding effectively to signals from the Earth System' (p. 17). Mason's theory can connect this to leadership development.

"We...have to go beyond the role of human beings specifically as 'consumers' or as 'people with needs', and consider, more broadly, their general role as agents of change who can—given the opportunity—think, assess, evaluate, resolve, inspire, agitate, and, through these means, reshape the world."
Amartya Sen (2013, p. 7)

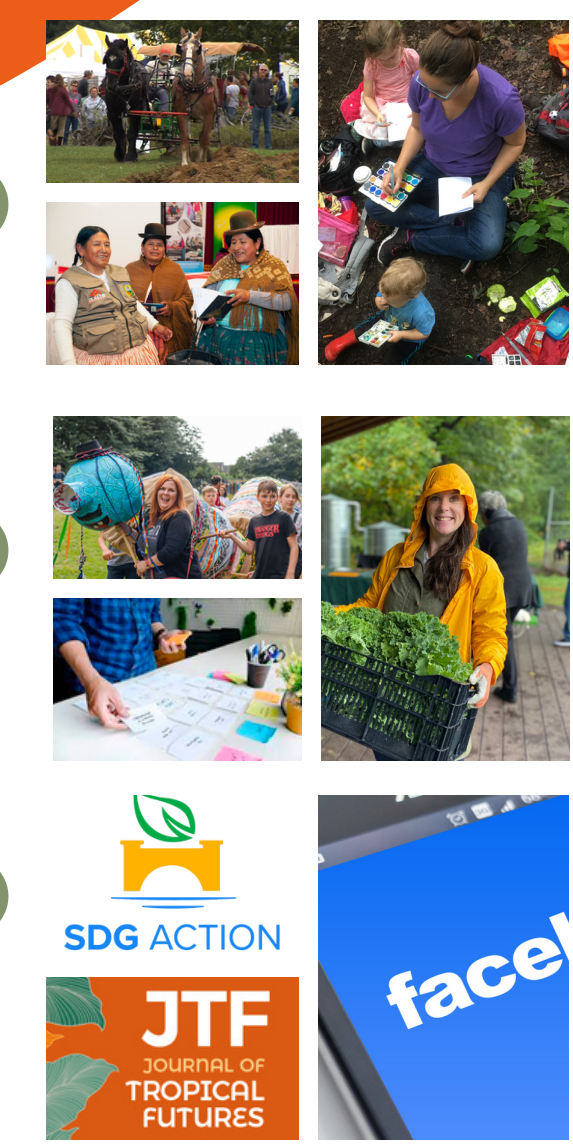
SDG 17 Partnerships ALIGNMENT

In 'A conceptual review of Sustainable Development Goal 17: Picturing politics, proximity and progress' (2023) Janis Balda and I uncover the manner in which the original normative aims of SDG 17 have been lost in the discourses of partnership surrounding the 2030 Agenda. We use three lenses (power politics, proximity to the poor, and progress measurement) to picture implementation of SDG 17.



PROGRESS to date

- Prior to starting doctoral program:
- 2003 & 2004 field work in Bolivia and Brazil beginning a process of exploring 'bottom-up' processes in the leadership dynamics of systems change (Stanberry 2009).
 - More recently, developing modern applications for Mason's philosophy and methods (Stanberry 2019; Stanberry 2021)
 - And researching business ethics and sustainability (Balda & Stanberry, 2022), and the kind of global leadership and collective engagement needed for the SDGs (Stanberry et al, 2022; Balda & Stanberry, 2021). In 2022, developing SDGAction Cumbria in collaboration.



2022- 2023

- 10/22: SDG Shortcut
- 11/22: Rydal Cave Nature Walk
- 01/23: Stanberry & Balda (2023)
- 02/23: PAR project
- 06/23: Rural entrepreneurship PDW for 'Inventing home education as a social enterprise'
- 07/23: CMI & Merry Maker Fair



KEY CHALLENGES to date

- Reducing the scope to form an ambitious but achievable project. What literature belongs?
- Reframing Mason from an educationalist to a social entrepreneur and reframing 'education'.
- Resisting conventional constructs in research—choosing a field, and blending narrative into my writing.

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KEY CONTEXT of my research

At the nexus of practice and research I am piloting Vital Pivot as a novel approach to learning and reflexivity for transformations:
• Towards 'developing' collective leadership (without using the word)
• Towards creating processes for ecological reflexivity in private governance for the SDGs



- Social innovation in resource-deprived settings
- Participatory Action Research in community collaborations
- Digital platforms towards inclusivity