

# **Rebirth Epistemological Paradigm as a transformational tool for individuals and organizations post COVID-19 outbreak: a new normal adaptation model**

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## **Abstract**

COVID-19 has impacted how organisations function the world over. Adaptation models that will bring sustainability in the new normal will need to integrate humanistic perspectives beyond the five normal dimensions of emotional intelligence to inculcating the cultural perspectives and indigenous methods of community engagement and inquiry. This article is one of a series produced by authors, pursuant to an intense doctoral study by one of the authors which culminated in a Rebirth model. The setting of the study was at one of the largest banking groups in South Africa, whereby collective engagement for Organisational Change and Development (OCD) using multiple methods within the interpretivist ontological philosophy was investigated. The study resulted in the establishment of Rebirth first as a paradigm for enquiry, complemented by phenomenological research strategy in conjunction with the Integral Research Approach (IRA) using both Feminist Transformative theories in a Participatory Action Research (PAR) mode for data collection. This paper provides basic steps into understanding Rebirth philosophy through explication of its six (6) pillars, namely; Ubuntu-Botho, Nature, Dialogue, Story-telling, Symbols and Tribal Circle. Core to the Rebirth philosophy are the eight (8) human factors of behavior, classified as quotients in a spiral direction representing the womb as a place of seed germination to birth and ultimate attainment of knowledge that leads to productive execution.

**Key Words:** Behavior, Change management, Epistemologies, Transformation, Research, Organisational Development,

## 1. Introducing Rebirth Epistemology of the South



Figure 1: Depicting of Ubuntu/Botho - Source: Philosophy.com

Rebirth Model is presented here as a paradigm and framework for facilitating change from the African perspective, sometimes introduced in the concept as “the South”. This description strikes congruency with the narrative that investigates decolonisation of Northern epistemologies and embracing those emerging from indigenous sources. As a paradigm of inquiry within the change and organisational development perspective, the Rebirth is hinged upon six African philosophical pillars: (1) Ubuntu-Botho, (2) Nature, (3) Dialogue, (4) Story-telling, (5) Symbols and (6) Tribal Circle. These epistemological foundations of African inquiry are further depicted in images carefully prepared by one of the co-authors (Sekgaphane, 2018).



Figure 3: Tribal Kraal - by Sekgaphane N.D.



Figure 2: African Story-room - Prepared for presentation by Sekgaphane, N.D. at First Rand Banking Group

### Ubuntu

Rebirth as an organizational change framework and transition journey is framed and incorporates the first construct used in Botho-rebirth, Ubuntu's which Mbigi and Maree (1995) noted and described as "a philosophy of life that represents personality, humanity, humanity and morality in its most fundamental sense." Community unity is crucial to the sustainability of resource-poor societies, where the basic belief is that "motho ke motho ka batho ba bangwe...umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" which, simply translated, implies that a person can only be a person by others (Ramosé, 1999) and

(Mbigi & Maree, 1994). In other words, the entire life of the entity is relative to that of the group. If the person is to survive, this life is reflected in anti-individualistic behavior towards the group's survival. It is fundamentally a humanistic attitude towards fellow humans (Mbigi & Maree, 1994).

### **Nature**

Within regeneration, the second construct is that of existence. Nature is the most important and purest source of life, meaning and resources that human beings can not survive without (Robins, 2007). It serves as a rich library and tutor that plays a crucial role in the path of renaissance transformation. Much of the rebirth sessions took place in the open, where nature is the root of the call to be and to become grounded. This chapter will also explore the effects of witnessing regeneration in nature. Dialogue is the third framework used in regeneration and can be defined as the framework underpinning the concepts of system thought (Mohrman, Finegold & Klein, 2002). For a community for which there is no predefined intent other than shared awareness and exploration of human thought, Bohm (1998) defines dialog as a form of free association.

### **Dialogue**

Dialogue is a dialogue between two or more persons used to share perspectives on an issue or discussion. Voicing by conversation is the mechanism underpinning the values of system thought (Mohrman, Finegold & Klein, 2002 cited in Viljoen, 2008). Engaging in a dialogue calls for dedicated effort. For a community for which there is no predefined intent other than shared awareness and exploration of human thought, Bohm (1998) defines dialog as a form of free association. It facilitates the development and awareness of preconceptions, perceptions and modes of thought.

Dialogue refers to a dialogue that connects various viewpoints, according to Mohrman in Mohrman, Finegold and Klein (2002) cited in Viljoen (2008), to allow the unit to "transcend deeply held individual and collective views and create new meaning that goes beyond the previous understanding of any individual." Bohm (1998) describes the mechanism of dialog as "aimed at understanding conscio-consciousness."

Holistic and efficiently organized dialogue will facilitate ecological functioning and have the ability to weave internal and external affairs, technologies, creativity, individuals and processes intricately to create an atmosphere in which integral innovation and spiritual wisdom can flourish (Quinn, 2000). Viljoen (2008) notes that dialogue can help to transform unconscious information into origins and can contribute to inclusion. Dialoguing may be used to generate mutual consensus and buy-in in terms of the new paths to be taken, especially through a transition or improvement initiative (Viljoen, 2015).

### **Story-telling**

Storytelling (as quoted from Tuwe, 2016) is a means of capturing and communicating the thoughts, behaviors and reactions to one's perceptions and environment (Gbadegesin, 1984). The story-telling role has been described as mediating and distributing knowledge and information over centuries, transmitting society, worldviews, morality and aspirations, norms and values to the younger generations. Story-telling includes the entire person which generates constructive momentum to drive a society forward. It is a way of understanding history and provides a space for sense-making, reconnecting people to ancestral, ancient knowledge's innate gift and meaning. It thus transcends constructed human boundaries as a method of ecologically engaged life (Sekgaphane, 2018).

Collective Story-telling encourages institutions, people and societies to challenge their thought and the importance of it to trigger collective learning (Senge, 1990). The capacity of regeneration to encourage creative dialectical approaches and not only to improve, but also to sharpen the eight individual dimensions and mutual quotients of the ecology of an entity and to create systematic synergies of external relationships. As a realistic learning method using iteration, story-telling is incorporated throughout the rebirth transition journey.

Story telling is an important part of traditional African cultural life, and practical instruction in the oral arts and skills of a culture is an essential part of traditional indigenous schooling for children on their way to complete civilization (Tuwe, 2016). Tuwe notes further; Chinyowa (2001) claims using examples from the Zimbabwean Shona trickster stories that African storytelling is an effective pedagogical instrument

for transmitting the knowledge and intelligence of the people. The tale helps to sharpen the ingenuity and imagination of people, to mould their actions, to train their minds and to suppress their emotions, far from being a simple form of entertainment.

### **Symbols**

Symbols are the fifth construct used as a pillar in rebirth that has a deep and symbolic significance, with clear descriptions inherent in African cultural societies. Symbols may be characterised in the form of a spoken word, event or action (LeBaron, 2005). Symbols may take different forms; they represent a person or object; (Lessem & Nussbaum, 1996). In the tribal circle, icons are used as organic and auditory learning instruments within the case organisation during the rebirth transformation journey. Through their approach to regeneration, music and dance have both been identified as symbols and calming tools to facilitate genuine group bonding and connectedness.

### **Tribal Circle**

In this transition journey, the tribal circle also known as the womb of regeneration is the homestead relative to my isiZulu and seTswana societies where meetings, discussions and marriages take place, and all other kinds of gatherings take place (Nkomo, 2006). The culture interacts with the individual self inside this womb and, at the same time, with the collective voices of the wider community and universe. This resonates with the observations and lessons I gained in my narrative and the tale of my society as portrayed. Therefore, individual celebration is seen as the seed of a tree (Nkomo, 2006). When a new seed is planted, it can become the doorway to a collective mind's "being" change with an acute consciousness to "becoming" that triggers collaborative and not independent causes. This common cause could contribute to a shift in thought towards inclusive change (Zohar & Marshall, 2004) and Viljoen (2014).

## **2. Harnessing the philosophical constructs of Rebirth with inquiry methods**

This section provides a tabulated approach to conducting an inquiry using this epistemological position within the context of change and organisational development.

Table 1: Integrating Rebirth Research Approaches - created by Costa, K.

| <b>GENE Approach and dimensions</b> | <b>Method</b>                       | <b>State of individual during processes</b> | <b>Integral Research Approach</b>                  | <b>Rebirth positional location</b>  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---|
| <b>G</b> rounding                   | Call                                | Being                                       | Origination  | Southern  |
| <b>E</b> mergence                   | Context                             | Becoming                                    | Foundation   | Exploration of ontologies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• humanistic South,</li> <li>• holistic East,</li> <li>• rational North, and</li> <li>• pragmatic West</li> </ul> |
| <b>N</b> avigation                  | Creation<br>Co-creation<br>Critique | Knowing                                     | Emancipatory                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Alignment with 8Qs</li> </ul>  |
| <b>E</b> ffecting                   | Contribution                        | Doing                                       | Transformation<br>Participatory<br>Action Research | Reflexivity   |

### 3. Human factors impacting behaviour in Rebirth Model

REBIRTH signifies a trajectory involving both juristic and natural persons and their relationship with each other in the process. Therefore, the journey of REBIRTH transformation can be broken down into separate functional structures. In the transitional and ever changing nature of business, these functional structures answer unique criteria within the human system. This path of change becomes a tool for a potential narrative for integral creativity. This trip carries the echo of Scharmer's theory-U (2009) as adapted in the study and will be described as an eternal genius in Chapter 7 to catch acute standards of divine knowledge. In this thesis, these standards are presented as the eight human aspects (8Q's) are the metaphysical quotient (SQ), emotional quotient (EQ), intellect quotient (IQ), moral quotient (MQ), body quotient (BQ), career quotient (WQ), social quotient (sQ) and leadership quotient (LQ) adapted from Scharmer's theory-U (2007), each of which will be briefly addressed below:

### **Spiritual quotient Spiritual quotient (SQ)**

The spiritual quotient (SQ) is the capacity to tap into infinite knowledge to surpass the physical and material (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). It is the capacity to experience heightened consciousness states and to sanctify daily experience. The opportunity to use divine tools for problem solving is by the SQ. REBIRTH arises and aims to foster moral wisdom and grow communal culture internally, which by the SQ appreciates supra-consciousness. The SQ suggests that new rules for unifying the society from the fragile to the anti-fragile by the reduction of fragility by deep psychological practice in harnessing anti-fragility would be important in any field of organizational reform and growth.

### **The emotional quotient (EQ)**

In Regeneration, the culture is reflected in the EQ where solid community-rooting ideals lie. Organizations enable information staff to be more dedicated to integrated working relationships where emotional intelligence facilitates the capacity to sense, interpret and implement emotional awareness efficiently. This makes the emotional quotient a critical reservoir of human energy, interaction and mutual power. It is also important to remember that information in the work world is a vital resource and learning institutions prioritize the production and acquisition of new knowledge and stress the value of emotional and moral wisdom.

### **Quotient for Intellect (IQ)**

Mainly, since it tests mental knowledge, the intelligence quotient (IQ) addresses logical problems. Information was categorized by Carson and Lowman (2002) into fluid intelligence (reasoning), crystallized intelligence (information), long-, medium- and short-term memory, knowledge amounts, visual processing, auditory processing, reading and writing, speed of thinking and decision/reaction time. IQ can't guarantee success alone. Therefore, linking their intellectual capacity to their moral and core beings is essential for human beings. Intelligence is defined by Gardner (1999:33) as "the bio-psychological ability to process information that can be activated in a cultural environment to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture."

## Moral quotient, moral quotient (MQ)

For any entity, the moral quotient (MQ) is called a strategic resource, and it is in this sense that this quotient spirals out in the womb of Regeneration to improve good conduct and to enable a sustainable social existence. In the spiritual quotient, maternal leadership and responsibility exist in (Lessem et al., 2014). Maternal leadership is a form of leadership that inculcates the creation of a family system that works or governs holistically in a motherly manner. Maternal leadership finds the African warrior as an essential reference structure through which common environmental ideals are expressed as valuable to the journey of rebirth transition and translate into the tribal circle within the South (Field, 2000). Maternal leadership is characterized by a more feminine leadership style with soft skills of quality, long-term thought, efficient and collaborative qualities to strengthen organizations. Thus, MQ is the capacity to discern right from wrong. Morality is founded on one's principles and ideals in the decision making process.

## Health quotient of Body quotient (BQ) (HQ)

The health quotient (HQ) spirals out inside the body quotient (BQ) to collectively reflect what people know about their bodies, how they feel and how to take care of them. Respect for self and others is reflected within the BQ, along with integrity. HQ is about harnessing one's overall well-being and wellbeing. The path of rebirth change facilitates a clear state of mind, expressing emotions and reflections that fuel self-confidence. Therefore, BQ and HQ are barometers in the environment for establishing well-being and equilibrium.

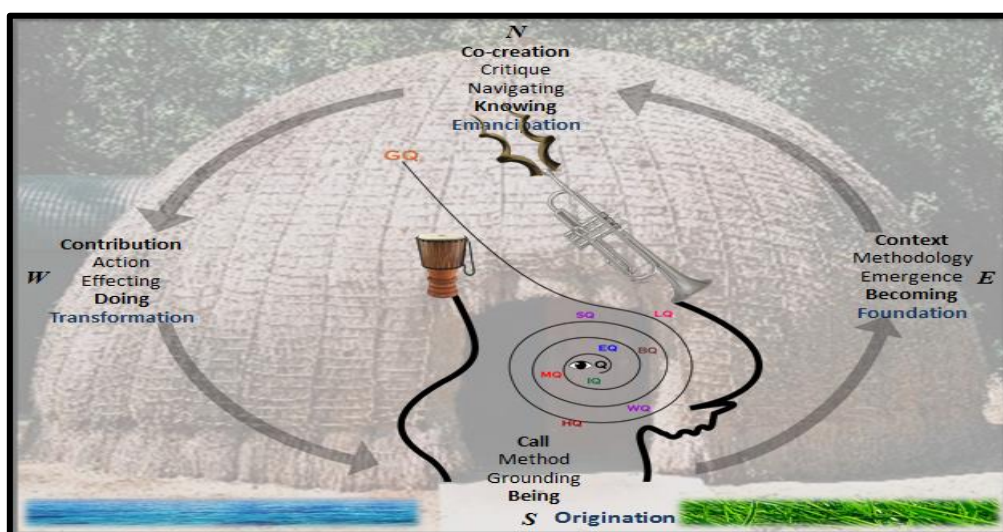


Figure 4: Rebirth Model - Designed by Sekgaphane D.

### **The quotient of work (WQ)**

As a life force and performance instrument, the job quotient (WQ) requires enhanced work ethics and is regulated by WQ. This is the importance of the capacity to operate and the consistency that one contributes to an enterprise. Consultants and leadership are also encouraged in FNB Private Wealth Client-Servicing throughout the rebirth transition journey to lift their hands for new opportunities and projects to which their skills and expertise can add value. The path of regeneration transition inculcates a high WQ as a way to be identified with the Call to deepen spirituality (Zohar, 2000). As the convergence of spirit, brain, and hands within the ecosystem of the human system is awoken, the leadership ethic of "I Care, I Can, and I Commit" is completely active in this quotient.

### **Social quotient (SQ)**

To build equilibrium within the larger ecosystem, the social quotient is about culture and co-existence. This is about improving people's abilities through group learning (Goleman, 1995). When individuals in such circumstances learn and analyze them and their behaviors, they continue to build and mould their authentic attitudes towards others and themselves, which transforms into a transformative value proposition centered in the South.

### **Quotient of Leadership (LQ)**

The Leadership Quotient (LQ) reflects on the special and genuine accomplishment of the meaning of living. Leadership quotient is a means to quantify leadership in a way that overcomes much of the previous assessment challenges with its comprehension and development (Khoza, 1994). As a transformational journey to sharpen LQ, REBIRTH is thus masterfully deployed. Leadership is the true basis on which systemic reform and growth will be pushed through equitable transition within FNB Private Wealth Client-Service (Mbigi, 1995).

## **4. Conclusion**

These 8Qs play different roles within the human system that can be used for interrogating or re-interrogating regeneration dimensions. This is resulting from the fact that the rebirth model is modelled metaphorically around the concept of a fertile womb as a symbol of productive and incubation for praxis for the eight concepts of quotients that facilitate human growth, creativity and value-creation (Quinn, 2000). As a paradigm, Rebirth explores human ecology's dialogue and its effect on inclusive transformation based on internal

quotients and attempts to imply that inclusive transformation is born by authentically engaging human facets of identity, beginning with the spiritual quotient (SQ) engaging the inner eye to see deeper and even greater reality by accessing spiritual reality (Zohar & Marshall, 2000). Spiritual consciousness indicates that new rules for unifying the society from the fragile to the anti-fragile and mitigating fragility by deep psychological practice towards harnessing anti-fragility would be needed in any field of organizational reform and growth. In denying identity inside the safety net of the tribal circle, this becomes the death of life experience (Laubscher, 2013).

The emotional quotient (EQ) spirals out, facilitating feeling, awareness and successful application of emotions as the womb moves towards exploration. A key trait of resilience is emotional intelligence, and Goleman (1995) identifies an emotionally intelligent individual as possessing self-control, self-control, social sensitivity, and management of relationships. In periods of stress, the resilient leader can treat emotions positively, when emotional intelligence requires possessing the ability to withstand discomfort, provide empathy into thoughts, and to interact easily with others. The human being must link to his or her wisdom to find a solution to a dilemma through the knowledge quotient for meaning to be increased within a group (IQ). Similarly, letting go of the past and strengthening positive conduct through the moral quotient (MQ) to enable a social life leads to confusion to encourage change to occur and learn to modify existing homeostatic systems in the workplace. However, the whole process of dissolving and reintegrating must be experienced irrespective of the suffering involved in order for regeneration and rebirth to emerge successfully

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