Maastricht University

NEVI CPO summit 2023

The development of leaders able to respond to climate change and sustainability challenges

Prof. dr. Mariëlle G. Heijltjes

May 25th, 2023

UMIO
expand *your perspective*
PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

Agenda

- Understanding the nature of climate change and sustainability challenges
  - Implications for organizations and leadership

- What does this require from you in your leader role?

Maastricht University

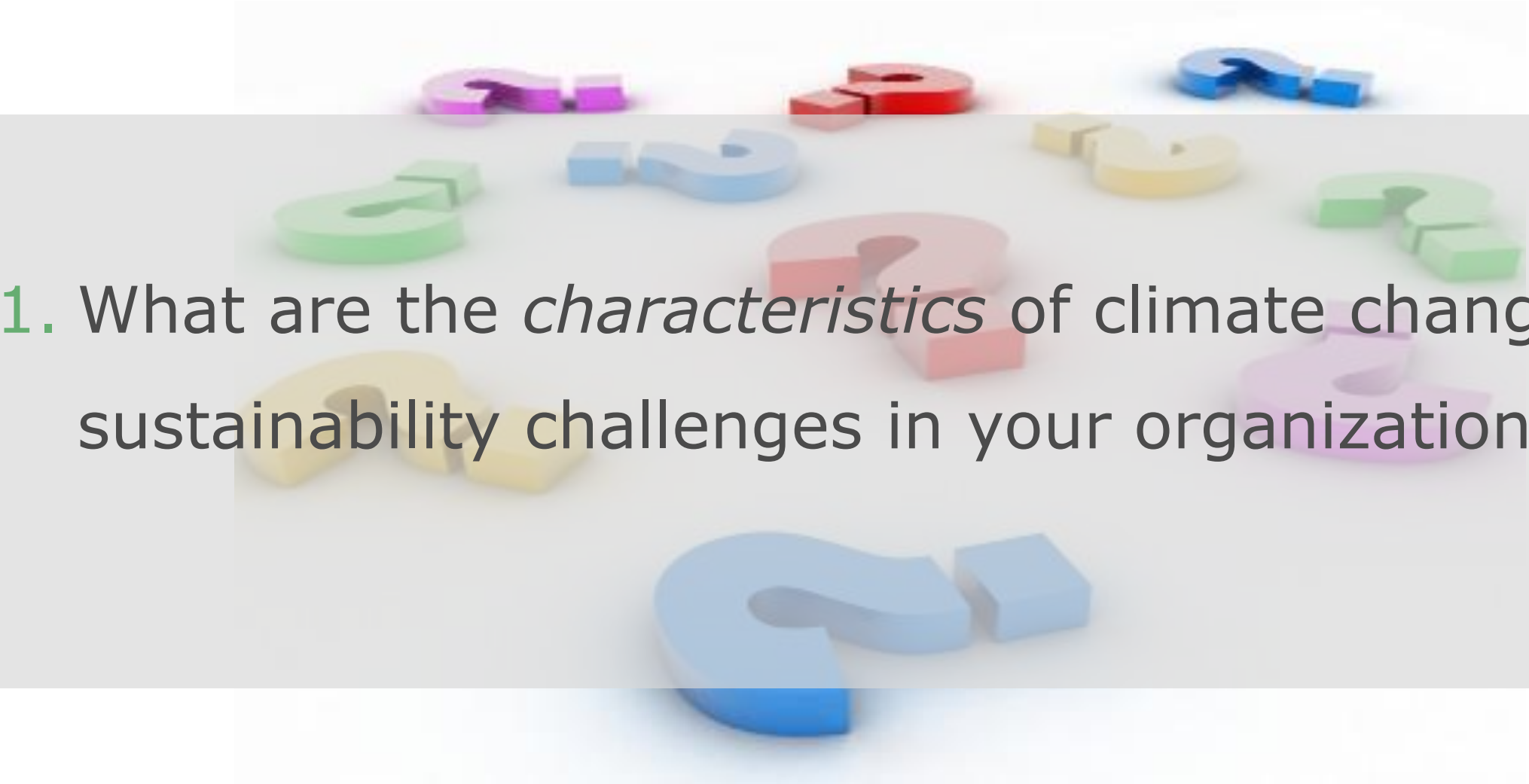
Understanding the nature of climate change and sustainability challenges

UMIO

expand *your perspective*

PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

Your experience



1. What are the *characteristics* of climate change and sustainability challenges in your organization?

Obvious, complicated or complex?

- Few or multiple stakeholders?
- To what extent do perspectives diverge?
- To what extent are they each right?



- Is causality transparent?
- Can you predict pattern of behavior or only recognize these in retrospect?
- To what extent does the problem definition remain stable?

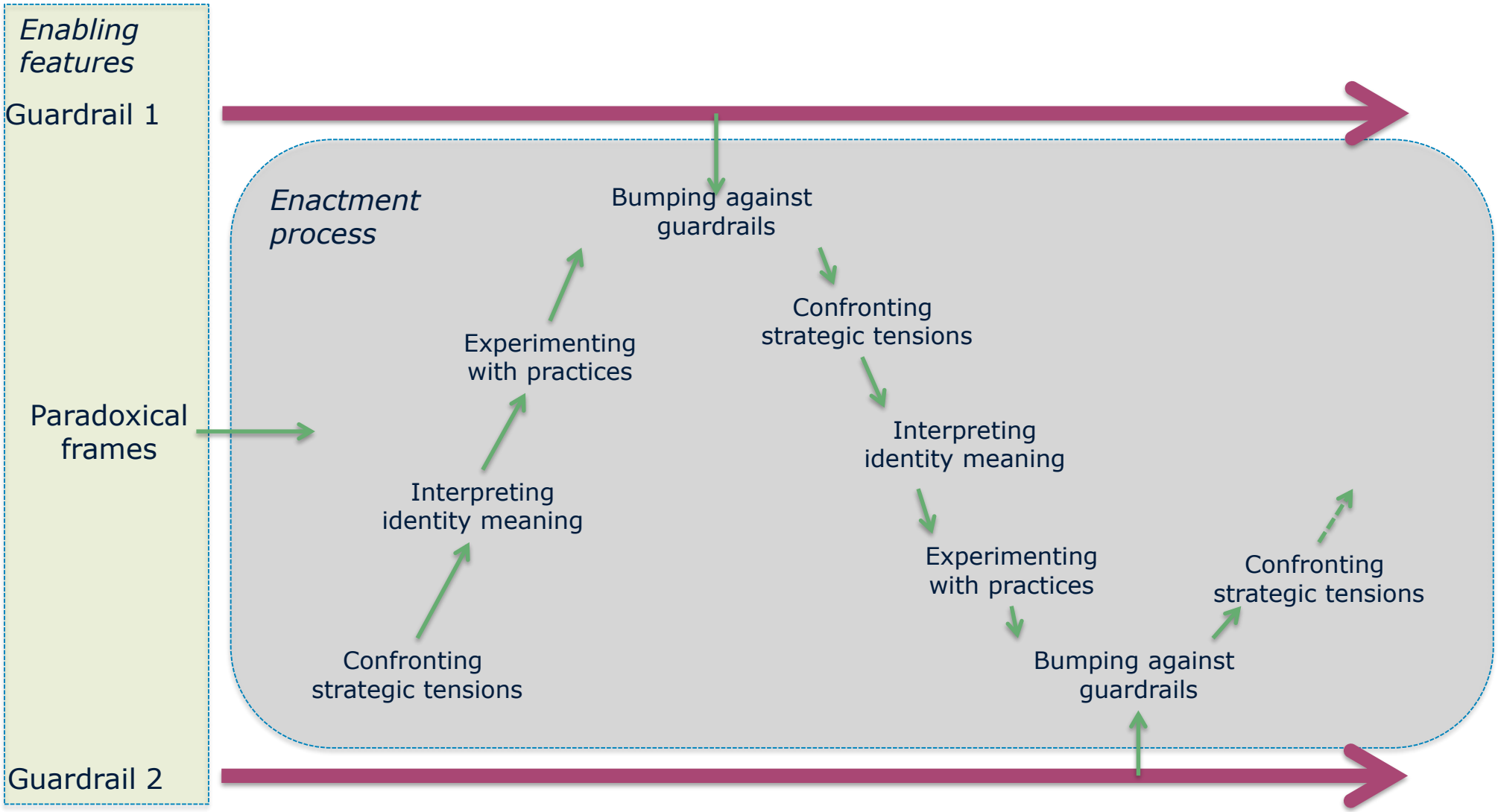
Sources: Camillus, 2008; Snowden & Boone 2007

Different type of challenges demand different approaches

Classic hierarchy	Flexible forms of organizing
Value creation for a dominant group (exclusive)	Value creation for multiple stakeholders (inclusive)
Outcome is clear and can be defined	Outcome is not known in advance
Predictability & stability	Adaptability
Differences and dissonance are problematic and to be resolved	Differences and dissonance are a source of inspiration to discover new paths insights
Formal rules and procedures	Emergence and team learning
Execution of rules	Co-creation and responsibility
Compliance	Commitment
Leader-centered	Leader as a part of a complex whole

Sources: De Smet et al, 2023; Saggurthi & Thakur, 2016; Smith et al, 2016; Obolensky, 2014; Laloux, 2014; Edmondson, 2012, Hamel 2009

Structured flexibility



Source: Smith & Besharov, 2019

UMIO PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT | Maastricht University

Maastricht University

Implications for leadership

UMIO expand *your perspective*

PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

Implications for leadership

Administrative leadership	Adaptive leadership
develop and follow rules and procedures	be willing to adapt (involve others)
be predictable and stable (stop discussions, keep the heat off people)	allow for emergence (encourage group discussion and boundary spanning)
acknowledge the importance of each stakeholder	take multiple stakeholders into account and balance multiple views
take decisions	allow for co-creation and responsibility taken by others (give freedom, accept mistakes)
ensure compliance	foster commitment
provide direction as a leader (lower complexity)	Encourage contributions of others (increase the complexity of responses)

Sources: Havermans et al, 2015; Scharmer, 2013; Birkinshaw, 2010; Prahalad, 2010, Uhl-Bien et al, 2007

Required shifts

1. Go beyond profit and extend to impact
2. Go beyond competition and extend to co-creation
3. Go beyond command and extend to collaboration
4. Go beyond control and extend to evolution
5. Go beyond expectations and extend to wholeness

Source: De Smet et al, 2023

Maastricht University

What does this require from you?

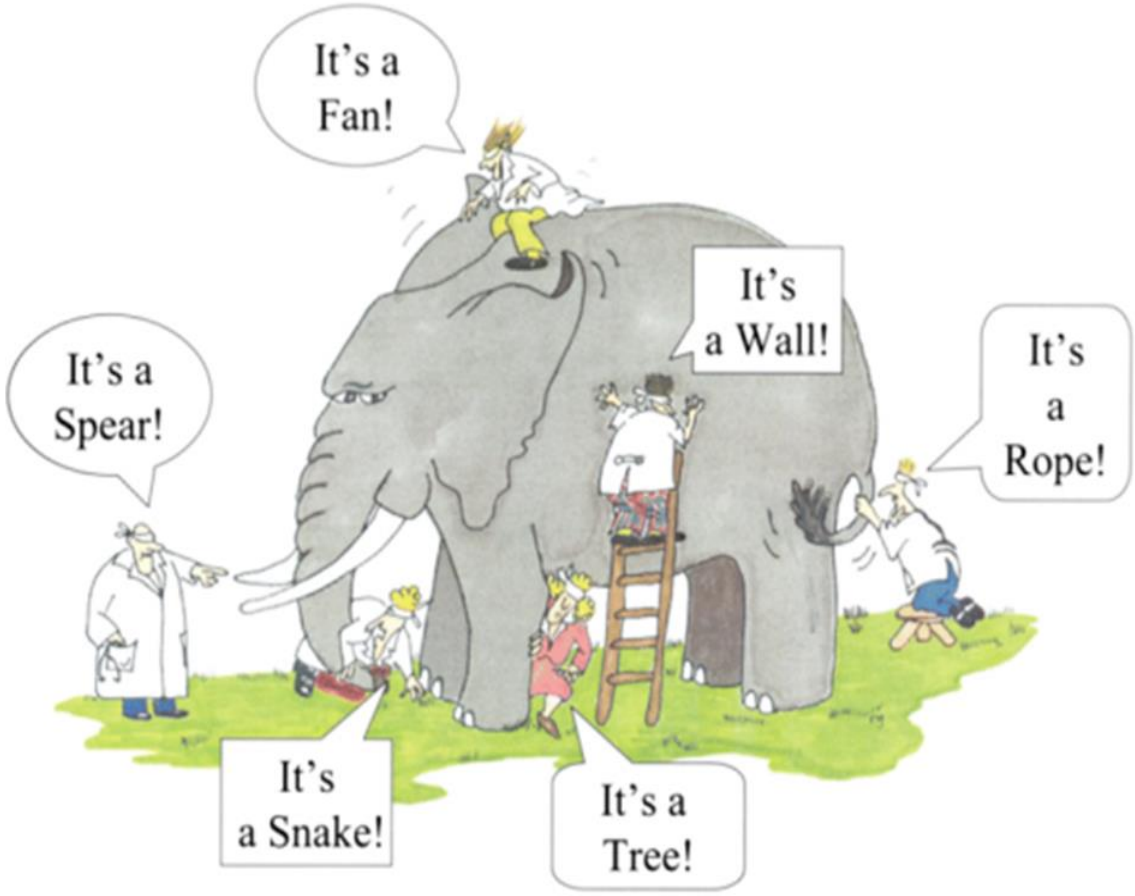
UMIO

expand *your perspective*

PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

The cognitive level

- Perspective taking
  - Identify stakeholders
  - Identify different perspectives
  - Identify patterns
  - Identify polarities/paradoxical frames



The behavioral level

- Ability to incorporate paradoxical frames into leadership behavior. For example:
  - Control and evolution
    - Maintaining decision control while allowing autonomy
    - Enforcing work requirements while allowing for flexibility
  - Command and collaboration
    - Combining self-centeredness with other centeredness

Sources: De Smet et al, 2023; Zhang et al, 2015

Inner work

- Why do you do what you do?
  - What values are important to you?
  - What assumptions are you making about yourself, your leadership, other's expectations?
  - What drives you?
    - Purpose and passion

ENABLING LEADERSHIP:
What enables you to effectively navigate adaptive and administrative leadership towards desired results? Role of inner work and purpose.

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP:
What do you do to enable coordination, cost-control, resource allocation and planning?

STAKEHOLDERS:
Who are the stakeholders/agents that matter in this issue?

PERSPECTIVE-TAKING:
What does the issue look like from each stakeholder's perspective? What are their objectives and concerns?

PATTERN RECOGNITION:
How do the stakeholders relate to each other and which dynamics do their interactions cause?

POLARITIES:
Which patterns of tension need to be managed?

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP:
What do you do to enable collaboration, creation, learning and emergence?

Heijltjes, 2023 (forthcoming). Inspired by Tong & Arvey, 2015; Uhl-Bien et al., 2007.

UMIO PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

Maastricht University

Maastricht University

Wrap up

UMIO expand *your perspective*

PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

Wrap up

- The development of leaders able to respond to climate change and sustainability challenges requires work at three different levels

  - **Cognitive**
    - Assessing nature of the challenge
    - Identifying the stakeholders
    - Engaging in perspective-taking
    - Seeing patterns and polarities
  - **Behavior**
    - Translating paradoxical frames to own leadership behavior
  - **Inner work**
    - Why do you do what you do?



To dare is to lose one's footing momentarily,
to not dare is to lose oneself.

Søren Kierkegaard

UMIO
PROFESSIONAL - DEVELOPMENT

Maastricht University

Maastricht University

