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# Leadership and the Social Imperative of Organizations in the 21st Century

Gill Robinson Hickman
*University of Richmond*, ghickman@richmond.edu

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GILL ROBINSON HICKMAN

### *A Social Imperative Emanating From the Environmental Context*

Much of our writing and dialogue as leadership scholars consists of exchanges about "good" leadership—what leadership ought to be as opposed to what it really is, as Barbara Kellerman so accurately observes. Although I strongly believe that leadership scholars should do both, I intend to provide a normative perspective for organizational leadership in the context of turbulent environments. The new era in which organizations must function is characterized by factors such as intense global concern and competition; intraorganizational relationships and collaboration; a focus on democracy, substantive justice, civic virtues, and the common good; values orientation; empowerment and trust; consensus-oriented policy-making processes; diversity and pluralism in structure and participation; critical dialogue, qualitative language, and methodologies; collectivized rewards; and market alignments (Bennis & Slater, 1968; Emery & Trist, 1973; Toffler, 1980; Clegg, 1990; Rost, 1991; Kuhnert, 1993; ).

Consider that within a 5-year span in the political arena alone, we witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall, reconfiguration of the former Soviet Union, and the rise of struggling democracies in previously communist societies. Events such as these link people and organizations globally in an environmental context of turbulence, unpredictability, and quantum change. Interdependencies are fostered as a way of life in environments with dynamic properties such as these.

The social imperative for organizations is to understand the interdependent nature of this new

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environment and purposely link their survival efforts to the survival and well-being of society. Can organizations be formulated or reconfigured so that social change and collective purpose have explicit prominence with profitability and productivity as their ultimate aims? A new framework is needed to help organizations meet this unique challenge. The concept of "transformistic organizations" describes *the capacity of an existing or new organization to facilitate multiple levels of transformation (individual, organizational, or societal) by partially or completely changing its human capabilities, structure, and/or functions in alignment with its core values and unifying purpose to respond to or directly inpact needs that arise from the environment.* I originated this framework to provide a means for organizations to conceptualize and configure new ways of functioning in an era that requires creative and sustainable approaches to unprecedented change.

Components of this framework already exist in some pioneering organizations. Increasing numbers of private sector and government organizations are attempting to pursue these seemingly contradictory requirements of balancing the functions for which they exist and assuming responsibility to work on problems and challenges of society. Several organizational initiatives illustrate this strong commitment to both organizational purpose and social change. For example, the Timberland Company, maker of rugged outdoor footwear and clothing, won the Corporate Conscience Award given each year by the Council on Economic Priorities. Timberland incorporates social commitment into its mission statement: "Each individual can, and must, make a difference in the way we experience life on this planet" (Will, 1995, p. 18). The company provides its employees with 32 hours of paid time off and five company-sponsored events to allow them to volunteer their services to make a difference in society. The company made a 5-year commitment of services and funding to the City Year urban "peace corps." The youth corps members teach children to read, clean up trash-strewn lots, and interact with different segments of the community. Timberland shares its private sector expertise with City Year and the youth corps provides its employees opportunities to do community service. Beyond its social commitment in the United States, the company also sets forth international guidelines for choosing business partners based on its Standards for Social Responsibility.

In South Africa, a group of white male business entrepreneurs join together at a "walkabout" to give birth to a new nonprofit organization aimed at identifying and developing emergent leaders in black South African communities. Simultaneously, one of the entrepreneurs initiated an institute within his enterprise to develop the capacity of black South African small business owners to sustain their survival. Why are such unusual affiliations occurring? Their fates are inextricably linked.

One popular journal indicated that a number of U.S. entrepreneurs whose companies are both profitable and socially active have been moved to action by several unsettling trends including "the sharp rise in juvenile crime, the dearth of quality child care, and the plight of unskilled workers who can't get jobs" (Lord, 1994, p. 103). These are not issues that immediately affect the bottom line but can affect the future availability of workers, the location of businesses, and the quality of life in urban areas.

A major retirement system offers its contributors the opportunity to invest their retirement earnings in a fund called "social choice." The companies in this fund practice social and/or environmental responsibility in their business actions and choices. Investors have actively embraced this fund and have also received strong economic returns.

Businesses such as Tom's of Maine, Ben and Jerry's, and the Body Shop have embraced explicit organizational missions that combine profitability and productivity with specific social change efforts. For example, the mission of Tom's of Maine is to provide safe, effective, and natural products to consumers and to address community concerns locally and globally (Chappell, 1994). They support educational, environmental, and community causes through their business practices (use of natural ingredients and environmentally safe packaging), paid work time for employees to volunteer in the community, and monetary donations. One member of the board of directors commented that the company's 31% sales growth and 41% profit increase in 1992 had only been surpassed by its 50% spiritual growth (Chappell, 1994).

These examples are representative of organizations that are embracing social imperatives in their mission while meeting their organizational purpose. As organizations have incorporated these dual missions and capacity-building roles, they have encountered challenges. These organizations face the difficulties inherent in building appropriate infrastructures and capacity to generate and sustain the ambitious pursuit of organizational purpose, economic viability, and social change. Encountering challenges and even setbacks in these areas does not mean that this pursuit should be abandoned or that it is imprudent. It means that pioneering efforts into this new arena require organizational learning, concerted analysis, refinement, and corrections.

How can such efforts be prudent in a time of fierce global competition, downsizing, layoffs, outsourcing, and "lean and mean" strategizing? Downs (1995) cites a Wyatt and Company survey of 1,005 corporations that had recently participated in downsizing. The survey found that only one third of the companies reported that profits increased as much as they expected after layoff; fewer than half said the cuts reduced expenses over time, in fact four out of five organizations rehired the laid-off managers; and a small minority reported satisfactory increase in shareholders' return on investment (pp. 11-12). These tactics are temporary reactions that are often detrimental to long-term success, not responses or solutions, to larger more fundamental changes in a postindustrial/postmodern environmental context. Organizations with a social imperative that links their survival to the well-being of society may be better positioned in the long run to maintain their human and economic viability.

## *The Influence of Burns on Transformistic Organizations*

We are in an era that requires the pursuit of more enduring visions, purposes, and roles for organizations. Organizations may be in the most advantageous position to facilitate unprecedented advances for society and resolve highly complex problems based on their capacity to mobilize resources and often transcend political entities. The essential element is leadership—the kind of leadership that assumes elevated sights and dimensions beyond those set in previous eras.

Transforming leadership within transformistic organizations provides the potential to bring about unprecedented change. James MacGregor Burns (1978) defines transforming leadership as "a process in which one or more people engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (p. 20). He explains that transforming leaders engage in collective purpose linked to social change, with the ultimate objective of achieving goals that enhance the well-being of human existence. Given Burns's definition, organizational leaders who aspire to be truly transforming must generate collective purpose and transforming processes within the organization that are ultimately linked to social change.

Transformistic organizations necessitate leadership by activists who work internally and externally to bring about human and economic metamorphosis. Inside the organization they generate visions, mission, goals, and culture that contribute to the capacity of individuals, groups, and the organization to practice its values, serve its purpose, maintain strong economic viability, and serve societal needs. Externally, transforming leaders are both organizational and "social entrepreneurs" (Waddock & Post, 1991) who build interconnectedness for business and societal purposes. These individuals are frequently business executives such as those involved in Cleveland Tomorrow, Hands Across America, or the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, who recognize crisis-level social problems characterized by multiplexity (i.e., extreme levels of complexity) and mobilize activities among interdependent organizations and individuals to begin working toward new solutions. They are highly credible leaders who generate follower commitment that results in a sense of organizational and collective purpose.

How can organizational leaders develop the kind of context where human capabilities are maximized for personal, organizational, and societal good? To respond to this complex question, organizations will need to develop the ability to generate and expand human capacity at multiple levels (individual, group, organizational, societal) and

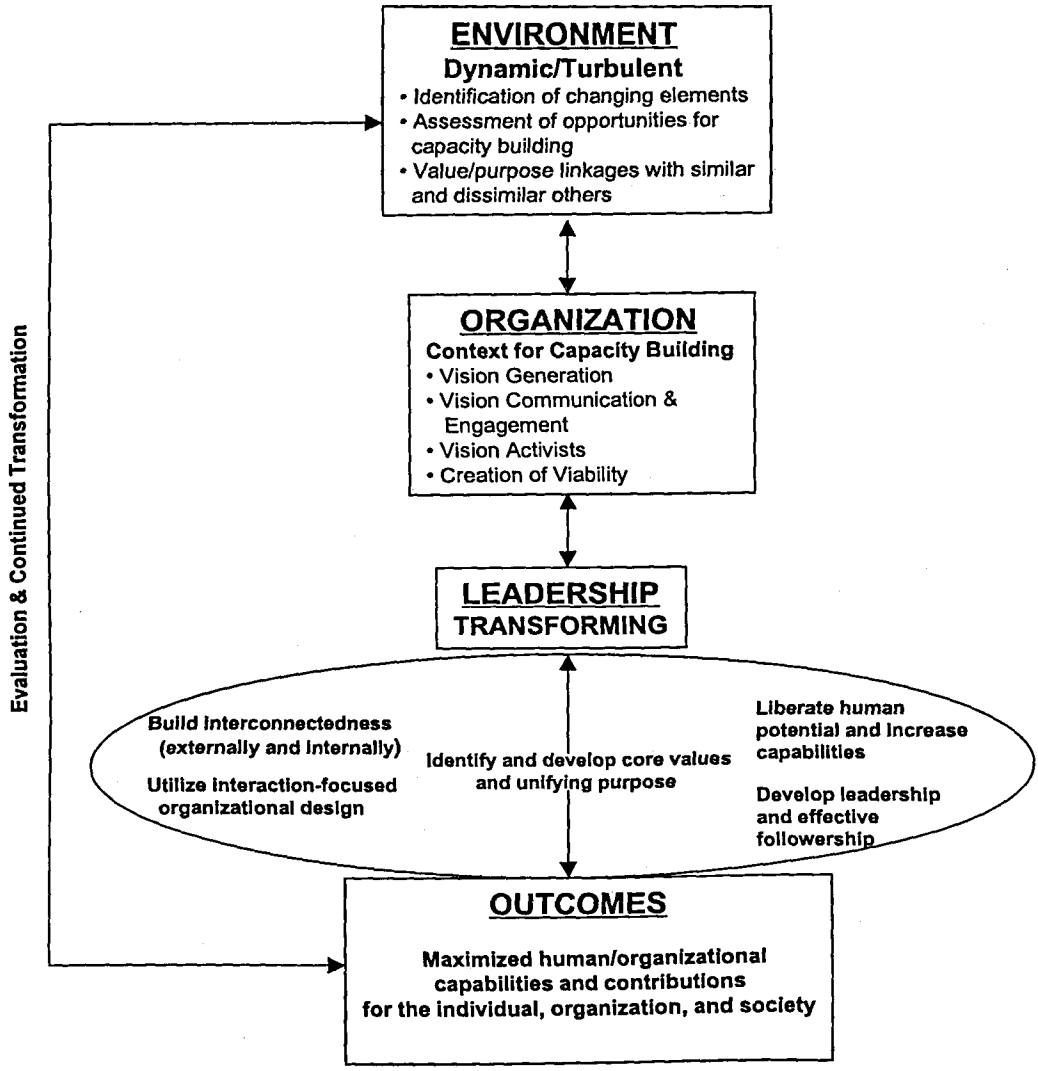


**Figure 52.1.** Transformistic Organization Framework

forge the interconnectedness among these levels.[1] The transformistic organization framework in Figure 52.1 is designed to address these issues for a new era.

As with any framework, the transformistic organization presents elements in their emergent and idealized form. However, it is intended to help us move systematically toward a more comprehensive view of the purposes, structure, functioning, and roles of organizations in a new era and to specifically examine the role of transforming leadership in capacity building within this context. Although the elements incorporated in the transformistic framework are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, they are discussed separately for purposes of analysis.

### *The Conceptual Framework*

The framework focuses on four interdependent components—a dynamic and turbulent environ-

ment; the organization as a context for capacity building; transforming leadership that mobilizes, facilitates, and elevates human and organizational processes; and outcomes characterized by maximized human and organizational capabilities and contributions for the individual, organization, and society. Transforming leadership functions to create and sustain a context for building human capacity by identifying and developing core values and unifying purpose, liberating human potential and generating increased capacity, developing leadership and effective followership, using interaction-focused organizational design, and building interconnectedness.

**The Environment**

The effects of larger societal challenges such as new markets in new democracies, changes in family structures, cultural and ethnic diversity, decline in urban environments, and environmental preservation are becoming intermeshed purposefully and often unexpectedly with organizational functioning. To build capacity in organizations, leaders are required to be as attentive to the changes and needs in the external environment as they are to the requirements of their internal environments. They must help determine the relationship between the external environment and the human and structural capacities of their organization.[2] The beginning point for structuring these relations is the identification of the organization's core values. These values provide the basis for selecting what opportunities and threats are important for the organization and which course of action to pursue.[3]

Emery and Trist (1973) described the concept of a turbulent field environment as having dynamic processes or properties created by indigenous changes emanating from the environment:

> Fairly simple examples of this may be seen in fishing and lumbering where competitive strategies, based on an assumption that the environment is static, may, by over-fishing and over-cutting, set off disastrous dynamic processes in the fish and plant population with the consequent destruction of all the competing social systems. . . . It is not difficult to see that even more complex dynamic processes are triggered off in human populations. (pp. 52-53)

Implications for organizations are that traditional methods of forecasting, planning, and strategy building will be less effective, and consequences of the organization's actions or those of its competitors become more unpredictable. Collective strategies among multiple organizations linked by the recognition of "significant values" can provide a coping mechanism in this context. As discussed by Emery and Trist, significant values are methods of complexity reduction. They indicate that "values are neither strategies nor tactics and cannot be reduced to them. As Lewin has pointed out, they have the conceptual character of 'power fields' and act as guides to behaviour" (Emery & Trist, 1973, p. 69).

Upon introducing the use of values, Emery and Trist immediately recognize the problems of determining *which* values and how these values will be used in organizations. This issue will be addressed in more detail. However, the authors suggest that a means for dealing with the complex issue of values is contained in the design of the social organization. "We are suggesting that the first decisions about values for the future control of our turbulent environments are the decisions that go into choosing our basic organizational designs" (Emery & Trist, 1973, p. 71). They postulate, as does Heifetz (1994) later in his description of adaptive processes in organizations, that internally organizations must increase the adaptiveness of their individual members. Externally, they must link with like but competitive others *and* develop "some relationship between dissimilar organizations whose fates are basically positively correlated: that is, relationships that will maximize cooperation while still recognizing that no one organization could take over the role of the other" (Emery & Trist, 1973, p. 76).

In summary, the results of Emery and Trist's design principle become a responsive, self-regulating system with core values and unifying purpose as the inherent self-regulating device. The creation of such organizational contexts allows cooperative linkages with similar and dissimilar organizations in a dynamic environmental field. Existence within this environmental context, therefore, requires changes in concepts of the nature, purpose, and design of organizations, organizational leadership,

relationships within and between organizations, expectations concerning human capabilities and contributions in organizations, and inherent outcomes.

## The Organization

The transformistic framework recognizes organizations as "contexts" for capacity building. Such organizations focus on human purposes and values as the driving force of the institution so that gains in economic resources become instruments for concerted human activity. This organizational focus does not mean that significant service and products do not result or that economic (bottom line) considerations and productivity are minimized. It simply means that organizations become human entities with economic interests as components of human requirements.

Building the context, which Wheatley (1994) refers to as "fields," for organizations creates an internal setting that shapes the dynamics of the organization.

> In many ways, we already know what powerful organizers fields can be. We have moved deeper into a field view of reality by our recent focus on culture, vision, and values as the means for managing organizations. . . . Creating the field through the dissemination of those ideas is essential. The field must reach all corners of the organization, involve everyone, and be available everywhere. Vision statements move off the walls and into the corridors, seeking out every employee, every recess of the organization. . . . We need all of us out there, stating, clarifying, discussing, modeling, filling all of space with the messages we care about. If we do that, fields develop—and with them, their wondrous capacity to bring energy into form. (Wheatley, 1994, pp. 55-56)

Creation of such a context develops the organization's capacity for "resilience" (Wheatley, 1994) and "self-transcendence" (Carey, 1992), so that the human potential that is unleashed may be used beyond the organization for societal transformations in the external environment. When these factors are established, the organization can be positioned to create value and purpose alignments with others in the environment whose fates, in the words Emery and Trist, are "positively correlated."

Several pragmatic challenges arise for organizations moving toward such contexts including (a) how to create contexts that facilitate the liberation of human potential to maximize personal, organizational, and societal capabilities; (b) how to prepare individuals for and engage them in these new challenges; (c) how to identify, develop, and sustain core values and unifying purposes; and (d) how to align organizational values and purposes with others in the environment and/or to meet emergent needs in the environment. There are no simple responses to these challenges. However, the ability to meet them seems to lie more in a process and set of responsibilities than a solution—leadership.

## Leadership

### *Leadership Structure*

Changing and reframing organizations to meet the challenges of a new era require innovative leadership structures. Rost (1991) indicates that there is a definite trend toward shared or collaborative leadership. He contends that old relationships composed of one leader over many followers are improbable in the postindustrial era. Contemporary organizational leaders including chief executive officers, university presidents, government agency heads, and directors of nonprofit agencies are faced with increasing multiple demands that greatly surpass the capacity of a single incumbent. The turnover rate alone among these leaders attests to the complexity of the role and the need for new models.

Collaborative leadership, particularly at what is currently executive levels, entails a redistribution and sharing of power, authority, and position that have been relatively untested in contemporary organizations. In addition to the executive leadership team configurations, leadership might function in arrangements such as dyads, triads, representative team leaders, and many other constructs. The leadership structure, like the organizational structure, will need to be developed by stakeholders to fit the purpose, needs, and values of the enterprise.

*Leadership Role*

Transforming leadership is particularly useful for the needs of this context. When Burns's (1978) concept of transforming leadership is employed in the transformistic organizational context, it is imperative that three factors maintain prominence: the focus on leadership as a *process;* the powerful and mutually reinforcing *roles and impact of leaders and followers on one another;* and the *responsibility of leaders and followers to engage in collective purpose to effect social change* while implementing the organization's purpose and remaining economically viable.

When viewed from the perspective described by Emery and Trist, transforming leadership serves to align human, organizational, and environmental values, capabilities, purposes, and needs. This form of leadership influences participants in the process to remain open to new information and inputs and move themselves and others toward the capacity for self-transcendence (Carey, 1992). It involves advancing beyond self-serving, egocentric purposes to focus on a larger perspective or greater good and serve genuine human needs.

*Identify and develop core values and unifying purpose.* One of the major roles of leadership in transformistic organizations is to engage participants in the work of identifying, developing, and employing values. Values serve as the organization's essence, stability, and guide for action. Still, the question is, which values should be used for the work of organizations and their alignment with others? In an attempt to develop the beginning of a global set of values, Kidder (1994) sought the perspectives of 24 diverse leaders and influential individuals from around the world. The values identified included love, truthfulness, fairness/justice, freedom, unity, tolerance, responsibility, and respect for life. Even in the unlikely event that these values become accepted universally, they acquire meaning only in the reality of their implementation.

Heifetz (1994) provides several significant insights concerning this issue. First, he indicates that leadership involves helping and mobilizing people to do the "adaptive work" required to address or lessen the gap between value conflicts among individuals. Second, values are shaped and refined when people must deploy them in the face of real problems. Third, success is influenced by the openness of participants to diverse and even competing value perspectives and their willingness to use creative tensions and conflict to generate new knowledge, approaches, and outcomes. He urges that leadership tackle the tough problems by allowing values to evolve without an imperialistic perspective through engaging participants in the examination and incorporation of values from different cultures and organizations.

Collective values provide a foundation for forming the organization's unifying purpose. This purpose represents the substance to which organizational participants are willing to commit. It provides meaning for the organization and in the lives of its participants (Wheatley, 1994). The pursuit of unifying or collective purposes requires an elevation of motives and values. Burns (1978) asserts that in the pursuit of collective purposes, "whatever the separate interests persons might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of 'higher' goals, the realization of which is tested by the achievement of significant change that represents the collective or pooled interests of leaders and followers" (pp. 426-427).

Using foundational values and a unifying purpose, leaders and organizational participants can derive a shared formulation of organizational vision, culture, change efforts, relationships, and external interactions. These factors constitute the identity of an organization and position it to relate and contribute to its environment.

*Liberate human potential and increase capacity.* In transformistic organizations, engagement of the full person involves liberating human potential and capabilities to change. Transforming leadership facilitates this capacity by promoting

- Personal and emotional stability and maturity among organizational participants through establishing a culture, context, or field that supports advancement of self-knowledge, enhanced self-esteem, and emotional and physical wellness;[4]

- Development of whole-person relationships including recognition and regard for the uniqueness and diversity of individuals and the interrelated aspects of their lives (i.e., personal, professional, and relational); and
- Development of the culture and resources for continual learning to empower individuals to grow, create, and change themselves, the organization, and the environment.

The existence of these interrelated conditions provides organizational participants with the capabilities to respond to complex issues and the needs that arise in rapidly changing dynamic environments. In an earlier publication, Schon (1971) described the process that organizations must employ to gain this capacity by becoming adept at learning. He contends that organizational participants "must become able not only to transform our institutions, in response to changing situations and requirements; we must invent and develop institutions which are 'learning systems,' that is to say, systems capable of bringing about their own continuous transformations" (p. 30).

Senge (1990) later refers to this process as generative learning that enhances the capacity of organizational participants to create. He states that five essential elements must develop as an ensemble to create a fundamental learning organization:

1. Personal mastery—continually clarifying and deepening personal vision, focusing energies, developing patience, and seeing reality objectively;
2. Mental models—changing ingrained assumptions, generalizations, pictures, and images of how the world works;
3. Shared vision—unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that foster genuine commitment;
4. Team learning—aligning and developing the capacity of a team to create the results its members truly desire; and
5. Systems thinking—integrating all the elements by fusing them into a coherent body of theory and practice. (Senge, 1990)

These concepts are further developed in Heifetz's (1994) concept of adaptive work as collective learning that is stimulated during the process of leaders and followers working through hard problems together. The forms of learning described by Schon, Senge, and Heifetz require organizational participants to continually examine, synthesize, and integrate from various disciplines, perspectives, and cultures—a concept that is conceptually sound but difficult to practice. These processes must be built into the organization through planned time for dialogue (Senge, 1990), use of technology to enhance creation and problem solving (Passmore, 1988), and diligence by leaders and participants in the organization.

*Develop leadership and effective followership.* Leadership and followership in transformistic organizations are predicated less on positional authority and more on interdependent work relationships centered on common purposes. Participants are active, multifaceted contributors. Their involvement is based on shared, flexible roles.

Kelley (1995) indicates that leadership and followership are equal but different activities often played by the same people at different times. Individuals who assume leadership roles have the desire and willingness to lead as well as sound visioning, interpersonal communications, and organizational skills and abilities. Effective followers form the other equally important component of the equation and are distinguished by their capacity for self-management, strong commitment, and courage.

Organizations must be purposefully created or changed to facilitate this form of leadership and followership. They must engage participants in organizational learning processes that develop their capabilities, and especially provide greater opportunities to *experience* and *practice* leadership and effective follower roles (Kelley, 1995; Kotter, 1990). A current trend in this direction is the increasing use of self-directed work teams (Fisher, 1993; Manz & Sims, 1989, 1993) in organizations. These teams are based on "shared authority, flexible and shared tasks, and management based on information sharing and participative decision making" (Kulish & Banner, 1993, p. 27). Members must respect and use the abilities, skills, and unique contributions of each individual, and leader-follower roles emerge or are assigned with fluidity based on member contributions or capabilities.

Unprecedented advances could be made through the development of leadership and effective followership throughout the organization. Influence in this environment is multidirectional crossing of organizational boundaries. Leaders and followers have the ability to affect outcomes and effect change from any position in the organization. Advances in new information and communication technology vastly enhance these kinds of relationships.

Given the accessibility and use of technology by multiple participants who are empowered to act, new and subtler forms of power and authority are likely to emerge. In this context, power is shared and widely distributed and is defined by broader conceptions than those traditionally ascribed. As indicated by Luke (1991), power becomes "the production of intended effects, not only unilaterally but also collectively. It is facilitative power, not commanding and dominating force" (p. 40). Thus, it is critical that the organization's context, values, purpose, and human capacity are well developed so that these multiple, self-managed actors (leaders and effective followers) have clear intrinsic and extrinsic guidelines for their actions.

*Use interaction-focused organizational design.* Another vital role of transforming leadership is to create work settings and organizational design that promote the human, technical, and societal goals of transformistic organizations. Structure and work designs emerge from defining the set of human interactions that participants want to facilitate. In contrast to current practices of attempting to find an enduring fit, different forms are used and innovated by organizational participants. If participants want to promote problem solving or innovation, they need organizational designs that correspond with these activities. Technology-supported organizational design tools provide the capability for organizations to rapidly design new teams to accomplish desired program or project outcomes (Nadler, 1992). Organizational forms for the 21st century need to be fluid and transitory incorporating teams of participants from inside and outside the organization based on the requirements of the situation (Gerstein & Shaw, 1992). Structures will be formed by changing teams, partnerships, and units who have the freedom and authority to optimize their work processes by experimenting with new flexible designs (Gerstein & Shaw, 1992).

This concept of evolving organizational form or design to support human interactions is a particularly relevant process for support of the transforming processes within organizations. It further reinforces the development of leaders and effective followers who understand how to use and advance the organization to meet its dual mission.

*Build interconnectedness.* Transforming leadership fosters boundaryless relationships to promote mutually beneficial interactions between and within organizations while maintaining the organization's core identity, purpose, and values. Luke (1991) refers to boundaryless relationships between organizations as "interconnectedness," which involves all forms of interdependencies including organizational, intergovernmental, intersectorial, and global (p. 26).

Jack Welch of General Electric describes boundaryless structures within the organization as "having no hierarchical boundaries horizontally and no functional boundaries vertically" (quoted in Rose, 1990, p. 157). Organizational designs based on human interactive requirements are indeed boundaryless and serve to establish internal connectedness while fostering fluidity of movement and relationships.

New technology will play an ever-increasing role in the flexible designs of organizations and their ability to function intra- and interorganizationally. This new technology is open and networked, modular, and dynamic based on interchangeable parts (Tapscott & Caston, 1993). It empowers users and allows them to distribute intelligence and decision making by integrating data, text, voice, and image information in different formats. They further indicate that this technology serves to blur boundaries between organizations and facilitate the recasting of external relationships.

Vital to the concept of transformistic organizations is the role of transforming leadership in fostering external connectedness with similar and dissimilar others in the environment. Gardner (1990) identified five critical skills for leaders when de-

veloping interconnectedness: agreement building, networking, exercising nonjurisdictional power, institution building, and flexibility. As previously indicated, Waddock and Post (1991) would add the skills of social entrepreneurs who bring together social alliances of multiple actors on multiple levels and by multiple means to solve extremely complex societal problems. Given the complexity of this dynamic environmental field and its accelerated rate of change, leaders must use the collective sense of organizational values, identity, purpose, and capabilities as guides to determine with whom to connect, for what purposes, and to what end. Collaboration and cooperation among organizations globally and domestically are becoming new indicators of success.

Drucker (1994) describes organizations of the 21st century as new integrating mechanisms. He indicates that together public and private organizations form the capacity that the community will need to determine how to balance two apparently contradictory requirements—the primary functions for which specific organizations exist and the social responsibility to work on the problems and challenges of the community. This, Drucker contends, is the joint work of both public and private organizations that are capable of social sector work.

The ability to collaborate among organizations domestically and globally is becoming a new indicator of success in highly dynamic environments. Society expects this form of success not only to produce profitability for those involved, but these organizations are expected to demonstrate responsibility and contribute to the collective good of the society in which they function.

### *Outcomes*

The outcomes of transformistic organizations are not solely exceptional products, services, or profits (although these should indeed result); they are qualitative changes in the well-being of society. Transformation of human capabilities within organizations that change the larger society could be tantamount to a new social movement for the 21st century. A comment by Edward Simon, President of Herman Miller, that "business is the only institution that has a chance . . . to fundamentally improve the injustice that exists in the world," may well apply more generally to interconnected organizations in the next century (quoted in Senge, 1990, p. 5). Although I believe these capabilities lie within organizations in various sectors, Simon's point illustrates the new thinking among organizational leaders that will make the transition to transformistic organizations a viable possibility in the 21st century.

The dynamic properties of the environment have delivered us a challenging social imperative: to prepare and position our organizations to generate unprecedented advances for society and resolve highly complex human and environmental problems. The transformistic organization framework can serve to stimulate organizational movement toward liberation of human potential to meet these unprecedented challenges.

In this context, transforming leadership itself becomes evolving and multifaceted. It evolves and shifts based on several factors:

- Influences of changes and requirements from the environment;
- Quality of adaptive work engaged in by followers with leaders;
- The level, quality, and complexity of collaboration within and across organizational boundaries;
- Ability to use technological capabilities to link participants and change environmental circumstances; and
- Deployment of economic and material resources for collective purposes.

### Application of the Transformistic Conceptual Framework

In a recent case study, I examined an initiative to establish a Leadership Training Institute (LTI) at John F. Kennedy High School (JFK) in Montgomery County, Maryland. The LTI was initiated in 1993 as the first public high school program in the country to integrate leadership into its core curriculum (The Partners, 1995). In June 1996, the first class of LTI students graduated from the program. Details concerning the LTI initiative were based on site visits; questionnaires completed by

the LTI director, teachers, and seniors; and a small number of JFK students and teachers.[5]

The LTI was intended to revitalize an urban high school and serve a larger societal goal of preparing young people for meaningful roles as citizens, leaders, and directors of their own lives. Using the lens of the transformistic framework, I was able to categorize important approaches and processes that led to success while identifying critical areas for improvement. The outcome of this examination provides promise for using the transformistic organization framework in real-world organizations as a conceptual, analytical, and evaluative tool for institutions that intend transformation of individuals, structures, and forms of leadership to build increased capacity for the betterment of themselves and society.

In addition, a case study was conducted with the Timberland Company using the transformistic framework. This was the first attempt to apply the framework to a corporation. The researchers found that Timberland's intentional commitment to both meeting its organizational purpose and engaging actively in social enterprise contributed strongly to capacity building and transformation at multiple levels (individual, organizational, and societal) as indicated in the framework (Horan & Levin, 1998). Furthermore, Timberland institutionalized its social commitment through establishing a social enterprise unit in the organization. Lessons learned by participants in community projects about leadership without positional roles, building trust, and effective teamwork were brought back into the organization. Involvement in social enterprise by Timberland employees contributed strongly to the community and equally as strongly to the capacity building of the employees and company. Employees expressed a powerful sense of pride because of their ability to contribute personally and effectively to community and organizational purposes.

Responses to presentations of the transformistic organization framework in international arenas such as South Africa have supported its potential utility as a conceptual and analytical tool. The newly constituted government of South Africa rests its vision for the country on the transformation of public service organizations to continually improve the lives of the people of South Africa (Ministry for the Public Service and Administration, 1995). To this end, it has adopted a Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). The RDP focuses on such factors as creation of a people-centered and people-driven public service; development of new forms of leadership; creation of programs for training and education; promotion of team learning and development; facilitation of learning and skills building through diversity; devolution of decision-making power; advancement of the values of equality, human rights and dignity, fairness, honesty, democratic participation, and service; democratization of internal work procedures; building collaboration between the public sector and business, nongovernmental, and community-based organizations; and the ultimate attainment of increased capacity in the public service and improved lives of South African people. In sessions with directors of national, provincial, and local public service organizations, these factors were reconfigured in the transformistic framework to provide a means for conceptualizing, analyzing, and evaluating their transformational efforts.

## Need for Further Study

Exploration of the LTI initiative using this framework, as well as considerations of business and international governmental initiatives, suggests the need for further conceptualizing and testing to more fully define the components of the framework, test its utility, and address the issues of organizational viability and use of conflict and power. It is particularly important to focus future research efforts and analysis in organizations that have begun, with some vigor, to promote goals for simultaneous achievement of increased service outcomes or profitability, development of human potential, and enhanced societal well-being.

Transformation of human capabilities within organizations that change the larger society could be analogous to a social movement for the 21st century. Burns (1978) asserts that in the pursuit of collective purposes, "whatever the separate interests persons might hold, they are presently or potentially united in the pursuit of 'higher' goals, the realization of which is tested by the achieve-

ment of significant change that represents the collective or pooled interests of leaders and followers" (pp. 426-427).

## Notes

1. Historically, respected scholars (Argyris, 1965; Parsons, 1947/1964; Weber, 1956/1978) have employed conceptual frameworks using multilevel elements in response to changing context and requirements.

2. Classical writers such as Weber and Marx were eminently concerned with the larger environmental and societal context; however, emphasis on this context was relatively subdued in organization theory until systems theorists began to reintroduce environmental inputs into organizational analyses.

3. Earlier writers (Emery & Trist, 1973; Lewin, 1951) provided prophetic insight into the use of values in complex environments suggesting that multiple organizations might use collective strategies linked by the recognition of "significant values" as coping mechanisms in this dynamic environment.

4. This view is compatible with the concept of "personal mastery" as defined by Senge (1990) and "self-transcendence" described by Carey (1992).

5. A complete description of this study can be found in Hickman (1997).

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