

Leadership Theories and the Gender Lens

Draft 1

October 6, 2008

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The purpose of this document is to examine different leadership theories, notably those used and described by MIAC colleges and universities. In addition, a focus on gender in leadership is examined later in the text. Finally, a comprehensive look at the Inspiring Leaders Certificate Program (ILCP), which we utilize at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University is defined and described.

Effective Leadership Development

Effective Leadership development is vital in today's higher institutions, notably because of the erosion of quality leadership in recent years (Astin & Astin, 2000; Bordas, 2007). The summation of Effective Leadership includes "values in social responsibility," respect for people, and a fostering community (Astin & Astin, 2000; Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005; Fischer & Adams 2008). There are two main philosophies of leadership, under which most other models fall. The first philosophy, transactional leadership, is hierarchical in nature and promotes a top-to-bottom structuring in decision-making. In addition, transactional leadership models value "change," but often only when there is a *problem* or *dilemma* to remedy. The second philosophy, transformational leadership, remains the focus of this paper. This philosophy iterates that leaders can and must emerge from all levels of a group, organization, or business (Chin, 2004; Heifetz, 1994; Astin & Astin, 2000). Furthermore, transformational leadership, as its name implies, aims to make fundamental changes, while still preserving the resources and ideals that are important to people. In his book *Rebel Leadership: Commitment and Charisma in a Revolutionary Process*, James McGregor Burns describes transformational leaders as people who commit themselves to becoming visionaries for a purpose. Moreover, they "raise the bar by appealing to the higher ideals and values of followers" (The Transformational Leadership Report, 2007). Both transactional and transformational leadership models

share vitality within society today. The challenge is striking a balance so that more people's potentials are realized.

While many colleges emphasize the importance of leadership development to prospective students, they do not presently invest the resources for effective leadership to prosper (Roberts, 1997; Astin & Astin, 2000). Thus, a call for understanding and creating solid leadership development programs in higher institutions is a worthy endeavor. This paper is going to examine several current models being used in promoting leadership development in higher institutions. While the list is not extensive, it does focus on models which are, at present, used in different ways amongst many of the MIAC schools. In addition, this paper will begin looking at leadership through a gender lens, given that leadership remains a social construct (Eagly et al, 2000; Astin & Astin, 2000).

A Further Look at Transformational Leadership

It is important to note some of the key characteristics of transformational leadership. Rounaq Jahan of Columbia University writes the following attributes:

Equality, Equity, Empowerment, Human Rights, Peace, Sustainability, Shared Power, Responsibility, Well-Being, Participatory, Egalitarian, Responsive, Transparent, Accountable, Non-Corrupt, Consensus-Oriented, Empowering (Jahan).

In addition, transformational models are inherently values-based, given that they call for fundamental changes and shared goals.

While many of transformative leadership models are similar in their foundations, it is important to look at the distinctions that make them viable models in society. Servant

Leadership, The Social Change Model, Ecological Leadership, and finally the Leadership Challenge will be examined as current leadership approaches being used on college campuses (MIAC schools, specifically) and the work environment today.

Servant Leadership

Servant Leadership was developed in 1970 after Robert K. Greenleaf used the phrase in his essay, "The Servant As Leader" (Servant Leadership, 2008; Servant Leadership (Robert K. Greenleaf) 2008). There are several distinct, but not entirely unfamiliar characteristics involved in utilizing this model. Among these are:

Listening, Empathy, Healing, Awareness, Persuasion (in contrast to using positional authority), Conceptualization (visionary), Foresight, Stewardship, Commitment to the Growth of People (a characteristic that makes this model transformational), Building community

While servant leadership is transformational in that it calls for collaboration and concern for people's long-term development, it is noted that truly transformative leaders take more responsibility in getting followers to "engage in and support organizational objectives" ("Servant Leadership, 2008). Both, however, remain embedded in producing fundamental changes in self, organizational and/or societal contexts.

The Social Change Model (of Leadership Development)

In its name, the social change model affirms its position as a transformational model. In addition, the social change model incorporates individual, group, and community values for its practitioners. Individual values include: consciousness of self, congruency (behaving in a genuine, honest, and authentic way toward others), and commitment. Group

values include: collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility. Finally, there remains the community value: citizenship.

While the Social Change Model is distinct from Servant Leadership and other forms of transformational models, service is noted as a powerful way of enhancing leadership and leadership development. In addition, like all transformational leadership models, it is specifically noted within the Social Change framework, that leadership is a *process*. Valuing the process component of leadership development enables followers to produce fundamental change and embrace different experiences as contributions to a greater goal—a greater good. It allows for mistakes and trials because there is a certain guarantee of flexibility. (Social Change Model, 2008).

Ecological Leadership

Ecological Leadership is rooted in the connection that inherently exists between everything and everyone within an organization, college, university, and/or society (Allen, Stelzner, Wielkiewicz, 1998; Stelzner and Wielkiewicz, 2005). This model's premises include: authentic communication, adaptability, empathy, interdependence on a local and global scale, and long-term vision.

A primary distinction of the ecological model of Leadership remains its emphasis in the idea that positional leaders are still needed; that is, it does not discount hierarchical thinking as an ideal of the past. If a consensus cannot be made in a situation, executive power should be enacted because time, very often, directly affects the organization's ultimate needs of adapting to a constantly fluxing world. That said, the success of the ecological model of leadership lies in "optimizing" the tension between hierarchical (boss-

subordinate) and collaborative (transformational or systemic) approaches to leadership (Wielkiewicz & Stelzner, 2005).

The Leadership Challenge and Benedictine Values

Kouzes and Posner, authors of *The Leadership Challenge*, sum up their belief of leadership as: “The art of mobilizing others to want to struggle for shared aspirations.” The Leadership Challenge incorporates Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership and specific ways in which each practice may be utilized. The Five Practices include:

1. Challenge the Process (Seek innovative ways to grow and improve; experiment and take risks and learn from the group’s mistakes)
2. Inspire a Shared Vision (Think big picture and include others by tapping in on shared goals)
3. Enable Others to Act (Collaborate, share power)
4. Model the Way (Find individual voice, set the example)
5. Encourage the Heart (Celebrate successes, create community, show appreciation)

The Leadership Challenge promotes a person’s ability to authentically lead from his/her own lens in life. It has been implemented specifically at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John’s University for its basic premises as well as its close alignment with the Benedictine Values that make our two institutions unique. For instance, to Challenge the Process most effectively within any context, would provide an opportunity for an individual to seek counsel (a Benedictine Value).

Leadership Issues Today

As noted previously, leadership is a social construct. Thus, there remains an inherent challenge and crucial need to examine at leadership through different societal lenses. Two main lenses under study today are:

1. Gender—Do men and women lead differently? Why do women especially choose to disengage from executive power?
2. Diversity—How do we lead effectively in a global society?

While both lenses deserve exploration, the first has become especially potent in recent years. In addition, given the distinct environment shared between Saint John's University and the College of Saint Benedict, gender becomes an especially interesting leadership component. Let's examine more closely gender and leadership.

Several research experts have confirmed that society's gender role distinctions do affect individual leadership attitudes and beliefs (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000; Peters, Kinsey, & Malloy, 2004, Chin, 2004). Furthermore, there are specific attributes that have been designated as *feminine* or *masculine*. On the feminine list are attributes such as: *cooperative, interpersonal, participatory, and relationship-oriented*. On the masculine list are words including: *task-oriented, competitive, dominating, and self confident*. The feminine list emphasizes the values of systemic, collaborative (transformational) leadership approaches, and de-emphasizes hierarchical thinking in leadership. The masculine list does the opposite (Kezar & Moriarty, 2004; Chin 2004; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). The discrepancy is not surprising. The latter list aligns itself closely with traditional, positional ways of defining leaders. Truly, it has and continues to be a man's world, notably within our western culture, which inherently promotes "individualism" and thus competition.

In a study initially conducted by Murphy, Eckstat, and Parker (and summarized in a study at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University), gender stereotypes were proven. *Perceived* successful leaders were considered to have a masculine style, valuing being task-oriented. Furthermore, female managers, more than their male counterparts, were noted as having more humanistic and relationship-oriented styles, specifically in regards to their correction and rewards tactics (Murphy, Eckstat, & Parker, 1994). Wielkiewicz and Stelzner, authors of the Ecological Model, note in their research that individuals holding top leadership jobs are usually: "masculine, aggressive, rational, self-confident, competitive, dominant and task oriented" (2005).

In addition to the gendered perspectives on leadership, there remains another issue that is worth exploration: women's reluctance to gravitate toward certain leadership positions. The obvious question is: why?

In her book *Opting Out*, Pamela Stone speaks on this very issue. She has also given a myriad of talks, one of which, "Women, Careers, and Family: The Rhetoric and Reality of Opting Out," I was fortunate enough to attend in Washington D.C. this summer.

In unraveling this idea of opting out, she points out the expectations we have created as a society. She notes, "It is almost taken for granted that just as women make up half of the students in higher education institutions, they should [and will] move unto leadership roles at equal rates [to men]." This is not proving to be the case.

Her book summarizes a study she did of women in the workforce. Some basic demographic information includes:

- Median Age: 41
- Two Kids
- Educated (half had advanced degrees)
- Professional men as spouses
- Women themselves had a variety of professions

In extensively interviewing these women, Stone found that the “rhetoric of choice” versus the “reality of constraints” made it difficult for her subjects to want to have leadership positions in the workplace. On the one hand, there are people telling girls and young women that they can be what they want to be, they have time for it all, and that they live in the 21st century. On the other hand, there is the reality that the many professional positions (and notably executive positions) have retained an inflexibility that makes it hard for women to have it all. Men, and fathers, are often still able to hold top offices because women (whether they work or not) continue to be the primary care-givers when at home. In addition, the women interviewed noted the idea of “an all or nothing workplace,” where top executives and even whole organizations, are expected to work 60, not 40 hours. This adds to the internal conflict and often “opting out” of women who initially sought executive positions.

Stone also noted in her presentation that of the women she interviewed, 1 in 10 decided to stay at home by choice. The other 9 in 10 found the reality of constraints to be extensive enough as to resist their initial goals of top positional power. Stone also acknowledged that many of these mothers felt guilty for pursuing what they considered to be “their own interests” while their children were being looked after by other members of the family, daycares, etc. With men and fathers, there is a certain separate sphere mentality

that enables them more readily to “have it all.” With women, there are no separate spheres to distinguish work and family. It all becomes interconnected. The “distractions” of family make women less effective in top leadership positions. Again, dads who are also top executives apparently do not have these “distractions.” Part of this discrepancy is aligned with the biological fact that women carry and deliver their children. Automatically, work must take the back seat for at least a short time. Many women commented on the fear that their employers would not promote them if they feel “she’s only going to leave anyway [when she has kids].” These women, in turn, do not work as hard to get promoted in a sort of “why bother?” solution.

A major setback to Stone’s research remains the homogeneous demographic used as principle participants in her study. Therefore, the thoughts and beliefs that these women shared are by no means, the thoughts and beliefs shared by all career women.

**Would like to gather some more information here...thoughts?*

Though the realities of the workplace are bleak, it is especially important that women are given the tools and attitudes to *want* to make their ways to top leadership positions. As the beginning of this exploration into leadership theories notes, transformational leadership (which women may be more naturally successful in mastering) is gaining ground as a viable model of leadership. The problems seem to arise in promoting it effectively because, bottom line, the real world is hierarchical. Corporate America is hierarchical. How do we, as Wielkiewicz and Stelzner state, optimize the tension between transactional and transformational leadership models?

**Need to familiarize myself more with the second issue: diversity. Just haven't come across a good article yet. Do we want to look through this lens as well?*

It is important, first and foremost to continue to embrace gender differences in leadership and promote an approach which allows all people to reach their maximum potentials. This fundamental change, the essence of transformational leadership models, will ultimately allow for society's restructuring of traditional notions of leadership. It is important that we, men and women alike, challenge and promote such a change. Effective leadership is too important not to explore, develop, and examine in the context of today's society. In many ways, it is one of the most important issues to be examining because it raises the important question of: Who in our world can be an agent for change, an agent for the greater good, and an agent for others?

Understanding one's own leadership potential is but another way to explore one's purpose in life. We are all leaders in something or to someone, but society's values and beliefs must reaffirm this notion, otherwise it will not flourish the way it could. It is as simple and as difficult as that.

Leadership Development at the College of Saint Benedict and Saint John's University

The College of Saint Benedict and St. John's University currently utilizes a values-based leadership development model grounded in the Benedictine values in tandem with Kouzes and Posner's "The Leadership Challenge." The CSB/SJU program, ***Inspiring Leaders Certificate Program*** (ILCP) is a six level certificate program. The ILCP mission states: "ILCP seeks to prepare students for authentic leadership roles grounded in Benedictine Values." The foundation of the program is a unique values-based curriculum

based upon Kouzes' and Posner's five principles of exemplary leadership: *Model the Way, Challenge the Process, Inspire a Shared Vision, Enable Others to Act and Encourage the Heart*. The principles are taught through the lens of the corresponding Benedictine values for each principle.

The six levels of certification, which require six courses and a reflective summary, address leadership education through a development model. The certificate levels are:

- ❖ **Bronze Life Skills Leadership Certificate:** an introduction to new perspectives on leaders and leadership, suggests pathways for personal growth and development, and offers a range of individual and group leadership skills.
- ❖ **Silver Practicing Leadership Certificate:** additional skill development, assists students in higher level group development, explores the range of personal learning and leadership styles, and helps students discover their strengths and effective leadership practices.
- ❖ **Gold Personal Leadership Model Certificate:** explore a wide variety of leadership theories, examines individual theories, assist students in developing and articulating a personal leadership model based upon values and beliefs, which is demonstrated through a leadership action plan.
- ❖ **Emerald Professional Development Certificate:** provides opportunities for students and student employee supervisors to enhance personal and professional skills that are workplace expectations; help prepare students for promotions and higher level supervisory positions, develop meaning from

work place culture and assist students in identifying transferrable skills from college to career. This certificate level is a partnership of the Student Employment Leadership Team (SELT) and ILCP. This stands as a unique and emerging model in higher education student leadership development.

- ❖ **Opal Intercultural Competency Certificate:** exposure and information surrounding various aspects of intercultural and identity issues; recognizing the multiple levels of diversity which occur in our local, national, and global societies that influence one's identity and interaction with others.

The courses are facilitated by faculty, administrators, staff, alumnae/I, and students who have achieved their GOLD Certificate. Members of the ILCP advisory board include faculty, staff, alumnae/i, and students.

The success of ILCP in its first two years has been overwhelming, having reached more than 5,000 participants and awarding 145 certificates in five levels. Students report the benefits of ILCP as they have applied for international study abroad, internships, fellowships, graduate schools and professional opportunities. We continue to seek to enhance and expand this unique values-based leadership development model throughout our campus community and beyond.

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*- Articles I found to be interesting as I read through the research. There are some other, more extensive articles that were not cited in this document, but still remain worth a look if you are interested.