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IRLS 608  
Assignment 2E – Leadership

Denhardt, J.V. & Campbell, K.B. (2006). The role of democratic values in transformational leadership. *Administration & Society* 38(5): p. 556 [electronic resource]. Retrieved from ABI/Inform Database.

### Summary

The authors reflect on issues and theories in transformational leadership through the lens of public administration. They believe this form of leading requires attention to both moral processes and change processes in creating successful organizations benefitting society. By reviewing past literature, the authors provide a history of literature on transformational leadership, explain why they believe moral implications are equally as important as change, and present a new model supporting this based on linking democratic values and citizenship to effective transformational leadership by “formulating and realizing shared goals.”

First, the authors review previous literature on transformational leadership, and explain that most of the theories on this type of leadership were based on private sector perspectives and related to corporate business models, forming a dominant model for transformational leadership. MacGregor Burns originally framed the concept of transformational leadership, weaving in a moral interpretation of leadership. The authors explain that he believed the result of transformational leadership is mutual stimulation and elevation of the relationship between leaders and followers and their objectives, transforming both parties; and according to Burns via the authors, “transformational leadership is concerned with both the change process and the source and nature of the core values being sought.” After Burns, more focus was turned to a “value-neutral perspective,” referred to as “transformation as change.” Because of this, a more

widely accepted model of transformational leadership is based on Bernard M. Bass's theory. Bass argues that the purpose of transformational leadership is not to discover the interests of followers, but rather to arouse or alter them. Unlike Burns, Bass does not believe transformational leadership requires a moral element. Further separating transformational leadership from its moral grounding is the trend to relate theories to charisma in leaders. These theories place responsibility all on the leader to devise and promote his or her vision across the board; methods of (potentially devious) persuasion and rhetoric are accepted here, essentially furthering transformational leadership from its original moral framework.

Second, the authors discuss why they believe the moral processes of transformational leadership are just as important as change processes. They note that it is seldom authors challenge this apparent disregard in the literature for the moral nature of leadership. The few authors who do pose this challenge are "trying to refocus our attention on the inseparability among morality, values, and transformational leadership." As the authors point out in regards to the importance of these moral and ethical considerations along side change processes, "Transformational leadership focused on both the accomplishment of change and the morality of change is needed to engage citizens and public servants in building stronger communities, addressing difficult public problems, and realizing shared values and goals." These important issues depict the implications of those in opposition to a moral component and were a driving force to convince the authors to describe a new framework worth consideration.

Third, the authors create a new framework, based on an environment where scholars and practitioners in the field of public administration are looking to re-establish democratic values, citizenship, and service in the public interest. These issues are not adequately considered in the current dominant model and also differentiate between trends in goals of private versus public

sector organizations. With that in mind, this framework can apply to all, but essentially has public sector organizations in mind with its creation. The authors explicitly consider the role of citizens in their new model of transformational leadership to relate back to the interests within the field of public administration. Touching more explicitly on these interests, the authors note that for more than fifty years literature within the field has expressed a need for “collaboration, moral perspective on the public interest, a concern for democratic administration, and experimental action.” Hence, the authors’ new model moves away from the focus of transformational leadership as change and reverts back to Burns’ consideration of moral elevation, and as they explain, “Only by drawing from both the value-based leadership literature and from these normative components of public administration theory can a more robust and complete view of public sector transformational leadership be envisioned.” These moral considerations help to create engaged and active citizens.

### Discussion

Libraries are often public sector organizations, and although participatory democracy of a library’s constituents is not feasible for all instances, this article can relate to communities being actively involved in respective libraries, but also, staff as followers is an important consideration for democratic organizations in general. This article is important for library organizations to understand for reasons of effective and moral leadership in libraries, as well as better abilities for change from more holistic organizations. As the authors explain in regards to the importance of morality in public sector organizations, “If the goals being sought are not moral, not based on the public interest, and not rooted in the values of democracy and citizenship, public leadership has failed.”

As Carol Leland said in her paper, we are in a post-heroic phase in leadership, moving away from western leadership myths. She points out a challenge for leaders is to build a future through a shared sense of purpose; both this challenge and her five competencies truly address what the authors express as a need to reconsider moral processes in transformational leadership. They state, “If we are committed to democratic governance, then it is no longer enough for leaders to come up with an idea and then work to convince others it is right. Instead, we need leaders who work with others to come up with the right idea.” As we have discussed throughout the semester, involving constituents, followers, in the planning process helps better tie them to the shared vision, improving an organization’s ability for change and organizational learning. As the current environment changes and as more organizations in libraries become more team-based, old leadership methods of not only transactional leadership, but transformational leadership based solely on change and not also morality, will no longer be effective and could in fact harm an organization more than help it. As libraries are more often public sector organizations as mentioned, the authors make an excellent point in regards to who followers truly are; the public sector is not isolated and sanctioned into confined compartments, but rather is a holistic organism of multiple levels of involvement where they suggest that “the leaders and followers, or participants in the process, must include citizens and public servants at all levels of the organizational chart.” An organization as participatory democracy not only engages community members to impact their library, but also better involves and motivates staff. As Stueart and Moran point out, no one can lead alone: cooperation and collaboration are essential. In fact, through the studies they presented on varying forms of leadership styles, democratic was proven to be the most successful version over autocratic and laissez-faire.

Libraries now being organizations constantly engaged in change need to be prepared for rapid change throughout the entirety of the organization; as pointed out in lecture, change is now seen as constant. Also mentioned in lecture were twenty-first century leadership issues. Issues pertaining to better leadership as well as becoming more effective change organizations (from organizational learning) involve preparing staff for today's library environments, building leadership into the organizational culture (preferably, transformational leadership, or a combination of transactional and transformational, here), and promoting better communication and relationships for involvement. Stueart and Moran point out that there are no set traits to define a leader, and Leland also points out that listing personality traits is problematic because it can promote thinking that the problem is solved if an individual believes personally perceived traits match up. These concepts in concert with the authors of this article promoting the onus of leadership being more holistic take this new model of transformational leadership further away from focusing on the hero and instead depict the importance of organizational teamwork and organizational learning to foster effective change. As the authors point out, "What good is the achievement of measureable results if their attainment weakens the ties of community, disengages citizens, alienates those in the organization, and makes them less capable of change in the future?" By this they advocate for leaders to work with others to jointly envision the "right idea," as in the right idea for all parties.

To conclude, although this article is most focused towards public administration, it very much applies to libraries; these constantly changing organizations should embrace the authors' new model of transformational leadership to consider moral processes in this method of leadership to improve abilities for change, but not with the sole focus on change. Creating a participatory democracy within an organization improve effectiveness by morally considering

citizens' (or staff in the case of libraries) perspectives and visions to foster collaborative success and bolster necessary change. Organizational learning promotes successful change and helps to make institutions more cohesive; libraries increasing presence as team-based organizations could benefit greatly from this new model of transformational leadership.