Beyond Leadership

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Abstract

Organizational leadership must evolve beyond a focus on those occupying the positions of organizational leadership. Complex systems provide the opportunity to rethink the leadership function in terms which are holistic and comprehensive. Applying the principles of complexity may provide the basis for a more collaborative, distributed and productive "way of being" for today's organizations.

Keywords: Leadership, Complexity, Complex Adaptive Systems, Complex Adaptive Leadership

1. Background

Observers regularly lament the failing US economy and predict a diminished role for the United States on the global economic stage (Bell, 2010).The connections between these predictions and the current recession, culture wars or political stalemates are debatable. So too, the relationships between organizational failure and the stature of sovereign nations are complex. What remains clear is evidence of poor performance and even failure of large organizations and the complex projects undertaken in the United States and a global context. The failure of the United States' Federal Emergency Management Agency during the Katrina emergency, the inability of the European Union to deal effectively with its financial woes, and the failures of large corporations such as Kingfisher Airlines in India or Eastman Kodak in the United States provide examples.

Some would argue gridlock is an integral part of the United States' government functioning (Binder, 2011) and stifling bureaucracy is a necessary bi-product of larger organizations. Despite the existence of complex systems success stories such as Google, large complex systems failures are not limited to the United States and recent history causes many to question whether there might be better ways to manage and lead in these complex environments (Gilpin & Murphy, 2008). The ongoing economic crisis in the European Union provides evidence of further systemic breakdowns within complex environments. Businesses are no less susceptible than governments to failure in a world of rapid change. In the United States, Bear Sterns, Sears, General Motors, and large legacy commercial airlines all have experienced tremendous challenges. Even traditional political parties are complex organizations which seem ineffectual, leading to questions about their ability to produce the best and the brightest needed to lead nation states. There seems to be no end to the number of complex systems we have constructed; what bedevils us is how often they fail to perform at peak levels in a consistent manner.

1.1 A Common Thread

A common thread accompanying organizational breakdown or poor performance is the so-called "failure of leadership". As a consequence, the blame is laid at the feet of those who lead –presidents, CEOs and others in positions of power. A personnel change, like the firing of a football coach at mid-season after a slow and disappointing start, is often viewed as the most expeditious route to quick transformation.

But is firing the leader really the right step? (Incidentally, studies of mid- season coaching changes within professional team sports demonstrate "minimal improvement over the long term. (McTeer, White, & Persad, (1995)). Make no mistake, changes in leadership do sometimes portend quick and better results (Kouznes and Posner, 2003). However, discounting the short term effects of a "rearrangement of the deck chairs", real change happens over time and must be accomplished deep inside the organization, in ways integrally related to its "being" as well as that of its members (Collins J., 2001) . Lasting and productive organizational transformation rarely happens by "trickle down" theory, it is the result of conscious design not happenstance, even in a chaotic world (Collins, 2001). One useful model for more productive change efforts is that of Dannemiller Tyson Associates, called Whole Scale Change™ (Dannemiller Tyson, 2011). It looks beyond the traditional concept of goal setting to interventions that engage entire organizations in change. The model represents a systemic approach to change instead of specific and discrete efforts that concentrate on limited objectives.

Aside from the change process itself, there are signs that a more productive approach to leading requires a re-examination of what we call leadership and how we lead. In the words of Allio (2008), "The most damning indictment of the traditional [command and control leadership]model, then and still, is that it falls well short of harnessing the full creative potential and emotional commitment of the people who devote their lives to serving major organizations." (p. 5).

1.2 A Sea of Advice Amid Paradox

Against this backdrop of turbulence in organizational leadership, executive leadership sections in bookstores are regularly replenished with leadership titles (Amazon.com lists 76,234 leadership titles); and the leadership development business, with its multitude of consultancies and experts, grows at a brisk pace. With the continuing and rapid expansion of this "leadership industry" led by its army of consultants, coaches, and authors amid a context of organizational turmoil at all levels, one has to ask why the two trends continue to diverge. Given continuing research and study in the fields of leadership and organizational development, why are we not seeing convergence of theory and practice? Are leaders the survivors suffering from thirst in their rafts adrift in an ocean of water? With all the advice and research available, why does "failure of leadership" remain so prominently mentioned in case studies of organizational nonperformance?

It is puzzling that at a time when professionals across the spectrum of human endeavor are subject to endless barrages of leadership material, in the form of suggestions, guidance and models, the organizations and projects they lead are increasingly subject to failure and the very self-confidence they require to lead is on the wane. One fact worth noting is that much of what is published today for public consumption is either autobiographical or anecdotal, more designed for self-adulation of the author, a self-designated leadership expert , or is based on a repetition of traditional leadership theory, without consideration of the changing circumstances organizational leaders face today (Collins, D., 2008). One wonders if we have been focusing in the wrong areas. Wheatley (2005) shifted attention to the organization:

> Leaders begin with a strong *intention*, not a set of action plans. (Plans do emerge, but locally, from responses to needs and contingencies). Leaders must have confidence in the organizations' intelligence. The future is unknown, but they believe the system is talented enough to organize in the way the future requires. (p.43)

In *Leadership and the New Science*, Wheatley (2006) continued her focus on the organization,

> ….an organization that wants to learn has to be willing to look at information that disconfirms its past beliefs and practices. Organizations that want to stay vital must search out surprise, looking for what is startling, uncomfortable and maybe even shocking. The organization then needs to support people to reflect on this unsettling or disconfirming information, providing them with the resources of time, colleagues, and reflection….through these new processes, new information is spawned, new meanings develop, and the organization grows in intelligence. (p. 108)

Now, let's turn our attention to what professionals and leaders are saying on the ground.

1.3 Anecdotal Interviews Provide Context

The 2010 *IBM Global CEO Report Capitalizing on Complexity* states, "… most CEOs seriously doubt their ability to cope with rapidly escalating complexity" (p.15). In his introduction to the report, Samuel Palmisano, IBM CEO, refers to,

The realities - and challenges - of global integration [provide an]… unprecedented level of interconnection and interdependency…a global system of systems is subject to systems-level failures which require systems-level thinking and may not always operate at peak productivity…the ultimate consequence of any decision has often been poorly understood. (IBM, 2010, p.15) Over half of the organizational leaders surveyed doubted their ability to manage the challenges of this new and complex world.

It was not surprising when recently, within the space of several days, this author was involved in three separate but eerily similar conversations with consultants and C-suite executives from entirely different economic sectors. The first group was a gathering of industry consultants from the materials handling sector. Meeting in a hotel boardroom, the collective conversation began with discussions of the latest software designed to optimize the on-loading and off-loading of supplies on tractor trailers for delivery to retail fast food stores. The talk shifted quickly to discussions of organizational culture and large systems. Recalling their meetings with clients and organizational leaders, the consultants described corporate leaders who suffered from "diminished cognitive capacity" to manage the complexity of their environments. None of the consultants challenged the technical expertise of their clients. Yet, all of them questioned the ability of their clients' leaders to fully understand the environment within which they were operating and the implications for their businesses. In the words of the consultants, the leadership was "failing"…but not because they could not comprehend the nature of their sometimes complicated business. Rather, it was because they could not fully grasp and deal with the increasing levels of complexity in their business. (Note the difference between complicated and complex.) Material handling, as part of the larger discipline of supply chain management, is not a discipline to be addressed in isolation, particularly in view of its increasingly global scale, hypercompetitive nature, and accompanying economic uncertainty.

In a similar conversation involving several aerospace executives, their collective sense was that "something is wrong". Referencing the US Air Force's F-22 fighter cancellation, US dependence upon Soviet lift to space, and the lack of new initiatives in the aerospace defense sector; the consensus around the table was that industry leadership had lost its ability and perhaps even its will to conduct large scale development projects. Part of the discussion revolved around what one participant referred to as industry leaders' collective inability to plan, communicate effectively, hold itself accountable, and simply be honest with its various stakeholders. Again, the discussion moved from specific examples of program and project failure, to what seemed to be the common link – the failure of leadership to appreciate and operate effectively in a complex and challenging environment. References to "diminished cognitive capacity" from earlier conversations at the materials handling conference again were manifest.

The third instance occurred during a Skype call with the author's brother, a health care executive running a large metropolitan hospital. Recently he had hired the hospitals first "OD person" to help with making required cultural changes across medical disciplines and assist in supporting necessary shifts in organizational culture. He commented that his staff was technically proficient but leadership deficient. Today's effective medical practice places a premium on being able to maneuver across a number of competencies ranging from clinical specialties to simple teaming skills required when dealing with patients, social workers, insurance companies, psychologists, physiotherapists and the like. Predictably, the conversation moved from the exigencies of medical care and treatment to the need for a better appreciation on the part of hospital employees of the need to work across boundaries and in pursuit of shared goals and objectives while still dealing with the complexities of health care as it is practiced today. So too, Storey and Buchanan (2008) write about health care governance and barriers to learning in the United Kingdom:

> Meanwhile, there is the ever-increasing external monitoring by a range of bodies – most notably, the Healthcare Commission, the National Litigation Authority, the GMC, Monitor and PCTs to name but a few. Such external scrutiny may lead to a minimalist, ritualistic, conformance-oriented approach amounting to little more than box-ticking. In addition, because of their number and because they each take a partial view, there are concerns about the extent of joined-up analysis of underlying key issues. At least occasionally, there is likely to be a need for system reengineering rather than a reactive, firefighting approach. (p. 650)

Reading between the lines, we perceive a system bereft of leadership that approaches its problems from a silo based systemic perspective.

Clearly, indications are that the US health care system is broken as well, demonstrating similar symptoms. What appears to be missing from both is a meta-goal focus that allows leadership to engage as much of the system as possible from a complex systems perspective versus adoption of a so-called "patching" behavior (Storey & Buchanan, 2008). What exists at the local institutional level is mirrored at the national healthcare system level.

2. Complexity

The previously summarized conversations reflect a common frustration about the seeming inability of leadership to operate in a world characterized by rapid change and complexity. It is important to take a moment to distinguish between the terms *complicated, complex* and *complex adaptive*. Complicated refers to a multiplicity of parts; complex systems rise to the next level of integration of multiple parts. Finally, complex adaptive systems refer to those which exhibit emergent properties, adaptive behavior, and interdependencies occurring in dynamic and non-linear ways. Complex adaptive environments actually are not predictable and they evolve over time from state to state. If the rules of interaction are altered, new patterns of order likely evolve. Think for example, what would the results be of holding ourselves accountable for looking at things in a creative versus a reactive perspective? Complex adaptive systems are at once paradoxical yet alike; they exhibit characteristics of order but may appear chaotic at certain stages. Early complexity theorists studied complexity in natural settings such as the weather or ecologies of organisms. In recent years, complexity theory has become an effective framework for examination of man-made social and economic systems. Given the complex nature of the environment, complexity science might provide a useful lens through which to examine leadership practice.

2.1 Increasing Complexity in Supply Chains Requires Leadership and People Skills

Taking theoretical concepts and applying them to a specific instance such as aircraft design and production and associated supply chain issues provides a good example of a complex set of tasks undertaken around a complicated piece of machinery. Most large US aircraft manufacturers no longer design or manufacture aircraft on site. Rather, these processes are carried out in geographically dispersed locations, often using virtual tools and teaming processes. Aircraft production is supported by highly integrated and interconnected networks designed to create value and synchronize supply and demand. Corporations must be at once adaptive and responsive to forces as diverse as the weather, local economies or political influences and manufacturing strategies can evolve, arising "out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions" (Mintzberg, cited in Obolensky, 2010, p. 88). Thus, supply chain design requires non-linear approaches, multiple disciplines and the re-conceptualization of traditional logistics practices. Jain and Benyoucef (2007) write, "Competition in the future will not be between individual enterprises but between competing supply chains" (p.1). In today's environment, supply chains can be as much the problem as the solution for a company (Salzman, 2009).

As a supply chain becomes more internally interconnected, there are more potential points of failure and at the same time few degrees of freedom to make adaptive choices. Seemingly minor changes, or unexpected errors can cause a cascade of further consequential errors, and chaos can quickly ensue. For example, changes to immigration laws left apple crops in the state of Washington unpicked, thus having an impact on the supply chain for apple products as well as the local economy. In a similarly unpredictable manner, the Japanese tsunami crashed over sea walls that officials confidently predicted would protect sea-side villages. It had an impact on automobile and computer production due to cutbacks in electrical power production that reverberated around the world. And finally, in 2011 the deaths from the European sprouts contamination damaged sales of tomato and cucumber crops because officials initially jumped to the wrong conclusions. The point is that supply chains are now ever more vulnerable to human error, climate issues, failures of leadership and the like. Developing the robustness of supply chains requires not only technical experts, but also people who are able to work across disciplines in an integrative and adaptive way and both to create and sustain supporting systems, and also to deal creatively with the unexpected. in *Managing Long Supply Chain Networks: Some Emerging Issues And Challenges,* Jain and Benyoucef (2008) identify key drivers for change with regard to traditional supply chains.

The first three involve communications and knowledge sharing, highly sophisticated customers, and the importance of creativity and innovation. Further, the authors address the need for "technological tools and human competencies and experience…[because]…an increasingly complex world has forced companies to develop new ways of interacting with their customers or suppliers" (p.479). Customer/supplier relationships must evolve to "new levels of interdependence and cooperation in achieving mutual goals" (p. 479).

Although electronic markets present their own efficiencies, trust is still recognized as an essential element of transactional relationships – thus adding an additional and potentially unquantifiable element to business relationships. Interdependencies mean increasing levels of complexity-involving human interactions.

Jain and Benyoucef's article is not unusual in its focus on the human aspects of a complex environment. In fact, the literature on complex systems is replete with references to the human component and complex adaptive leadership. For example, Ford (2009) writes about "complex adaptive leading-ship and open-processional change processes". He cites the need for leadership to manifest itself throughout the organization, in contrast to traditional leadership, viewed through solely the lens of the individual leader. Ford finds Uhl-Bien et al.'s approach to leadership as either "role" and/or "process", most fitting in complex environments where leadership is more likely the result of multiple interacting forces. He notes "leading-ship competencies" of administrative leading-ship, adaptive leading-ship and enabling leading (Uhl-bien et al. cited in Ford, 2009).This is not to say that complexity based leadership advocates are doing away with the leadership function. Rather they seek to "redefine what a leader does" (Gilpin, 2008 p.166).

3. Leadership and Complexity Converge

Complexity is an inescapable characteristic of nearly all professional fields. Leveraging technology, organizations have created data management capabilities that churn data and produce information. According to Obolensky (2010), when comparing the growth of the world's knowledge to volatility in equity markets, the two curves are surprisingly similar (p.16). In simple terms, he proposes the more we know, the less certain the times are. In a world of rapid change, technological advances and rising expectations, the pace of change has "outstripped by far the leadership assumptions we have" (Obolensky, 2010, p.19). Intuitively, one might surmise that the quality of decision making and leadership in general would track in a positive direction with greater amounts of available knowledge. Yet, as noted earlier, the evidence on the street is that this has not yet occurred and is still on the far horizon. Traditional approaches to leadership are falling short in a new environment characterized by complexity (IBM, 2010).

Raghavendran and Rajagopalan (2011) wrote,

> Recent market events provide an opportunity for leaders and their organizations to rethink their leadership approach in a bid to restore the marketplace's confidence in them. In an environment steeped in complexity, the most common reaction of leaders and their organizations is to revisit the levers most often used to change course in response to market developments – improving corporate governance, revamping talent processes, as well as creating new risk management plans and capabilities. However, while these levers remain important, oversimplification and a single-minded focus on these alone will not necessarily help a company to plan and respond cohesively in a complex system like today's financial services marketplace. (p.19)

What remains evident across the board is that learning organizations where members are "continually learning to see the whole together" across disciplines and organizational boundaries create the most value. Leadership in these organizations focuses on adaptive and generative learning as part of a larger developmental strategy (Senge, cited in Smith, 2001, [page reference for direct quote]). A complex environment does not lend itself to one-step solutions. Every action in a complex environment affects other elements of the system. Linear thinking leads to myopic and ineffective solutions. Still, a holistic and all-encompassing approach to leadership remains elusive in many organizations. As long as leadership is regarded as something which is "done by" the top of the organization and "done to" subordinates and employees, the point is lost. Thus, most organizational charts are still depicted in pyramid-like format with the leadership at the apex. Although more recent leadership models such as Serving Leader (Jennings, 2003) would invert the entire pyramid.

Alternatively, the competitive global environment requires leaders to recognize the added value and potential of members at all levels of the organizational pyramid. Because in a complex environment, they can no longer possibly understand or comprehend everything that is required for the organization by leading alone from the top, they have literally made structural and cultural changes to "mine" assets throughout the pyramid. (Also, the contemporary work force "has different expectations and pays less attention to authority" (Hamel in Allio, 2008). In *The Wisdom of Crowds,* Surowiecki writes, "The more power you give a single individual in the face of complexity and uncertainty, the more likely it is that bad decisions will be made" (cited in Obolensky, 2010, p.90).

As part of their adaptive nature, Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) organizations form teams on an as needed basis and then dissolve them when they are no longer necessary. This is what IBM's report refers to as "building operating dexterity" (IBM, 2011, p.53). Rather than having a classic "structural" foundation, the CAS organization's foundation is one of "*people* processes and policies; sound and flexible information and communication *technology* systems; and transparent, inclusive and flexible *strategy* development processes" (Obolensky, 2010, p. 26). From the perspective of culture, CAS culture must be emergent in nature and receptive to new ideas and perspectives. Organizational culture must allow multiple voices to be heard to maximize adaptability while simultaneously leveraging the talents of a maximum number of stakeholders. Where complex adaptive leadership systems exist, leaders are "not invested in establishing themselves as the ultimate authority [rather, they] cultivate conditions where people could self-organise and restructure around the existing issues" (Lewin & Regine cited in Gilpin, 2008, p.166).

As organizations have flattened out with fewer levels of intervening authority and decision-making authority has devolved to lower levels where specialized competencies exist, today's complex environment is best viewed from a systems perspective. Entities deal at multiple levels with multiple actors and environmental forces, both internal and external. Organizations have morphed from traditional silos to matrix organizations to complex adaptive systems. Since we as a society have been socialized to understand leadership as the sole purview of those at the top of the organization, the issues that remain are "How should the organization be led?" and "How should the leaders be trained?" The next step in this process of devolving responsibilities and "deconstructing" the framework within the organization is introducing what Obolensky (2010) and others refer to as complex adaptive leadership.

3.1 Complex Adaptive Leadership

A true complex system structure includes scale: "multiple level(s) of systems that are mirror images of or comparable to each other" (Boyatzis, 2005). This concept of scale evokes the idea of fractals as patterns that are repeated many times; and as they do, they become increasingly integrated and connected within an organization. So it is that distributed leadership becomes a part of a truly complex adaptive leadership model – where the activities or functions of leadership are no longer the purview of the select, but rather the responsibility of many. This model of complexity applied to organizational structure serves in a similar manner when considering the external environment. Creativity must be distributed across the organization, rather than partitioned off in some "skunk works" where only a few are accorded the space to innovate (IBM, 2011).
But in order for organizations to "turn on a dime", it is not only creativity that needs to be distributed, but also other skills, which were once delivered by specialist groups or line managers, including facilitation, process redesign, project management, crisis management, continuous improvement and breakthrough innovation skills (Maverick & Boutique, 2011)

Now that we are in a position where complexity is simply a matter of fact, the leadership challenge is to adjust within that environment and maximize organizational productivity. Ashby's Law of Requisite Variety states that "the variety in the control system must be equal to or larger than the variety of the perturbations in order to achieve control". From an organizational perspective, the implications for business are simply that to engage an environment which is constantly changing and evolving, business must be equally adaptable and able to adjust. The corollary to this is that not only must the organization's structure be able to respond to the demands of the environment, but individuals within the organization must be similarly adaptable. What leadership talents might best match the demands of requisite variety in a complex environment? The IBM study's focus on creative leadership provides one answer – where creativity "is the basis for disruptive innovation and continuous innovation"(IBM, 2011, p.27). Interestingly, the same study says creativity has been elevated to a "leadership style". Nevertheless, the "variety" in Requisite Variety demands that organizational leadership talents should be multiple. Creative talents should be balanced with execution and implementation skills.

4. Where to Now?

Now that we understand the problem of complexity and what may be required of leadership, the question becomes "How can we change?" Building an organization from the ground up to deal effectively within a complex environment is inherently easier than changing one that already exists. Jim Collins (2011) book *Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck…Why Some Thrive*, describes Southwest Airlines and its well-publicized success.

The airline is described as a 10xer that operates in a highly disciplined manner, is innovative in a targeted and focused way, bounds its risk and operates by a set of principles that are specific, methodological and consistent, taking advantage of good luck where it presents itself. Many airline companies have attempted to duplicate Southwest Airlines' success and none have done it. Southwest flies the same type of aircraft, uses the same airports, and has access to the same pool of employees as other airlines. What sets it apart are the principles noted above plus a company culture that is well suited to a complex commercial aviation environment and most importantly the fact that Southwest has grown from day one, focused and dedicated on its operating principles. Changing from their existing cultures to what drives Southwest has proven to be impossible for its competitors, despite their best efforts (Lauer, 2010). This alone gives us pause to reflect on how difficult it is to change an organization's culture.

For all the talk about complexity and the need to adapt, evolve, integrate, interact and communicate, few organizations have been able to pull it off and turn themselves around. Organizational change is understood to be very difficult. Does that mean it should be abandoned? If we are to survive as a global community, the answer is "No". We must collectively learn to deal with the problems inherent in a complex environment. There are examples both large and small of entities that have engineered turnarounds.

Although the literature tends to focus on business examples, one can also look to the transformation of nations. For example, India's reforms of 1991 and subsequent re-entry into the global economic system represented a complex response of a complex system to a series of economic issues. The License Raj instituted by Nehru and based in part on the Soviet model of a planned economy was administered by a Planning Commission. After attempting to close the Indian economy to the rest of the outside world based on a policy of import substitution, India became unable to service its debt load and essentially bankrupt with foreign reserves barely able to support ten days of foreign imports (Lal, 2008). The rules of interaction were changed by necessity; and liberalization occurred through a series of government reforms. The Permit Raj was terminated , import controls relaxed , the rupee devalued and foreign investment policies were liberalized, signaling a change in economic policy that stabilized the Indian economy and set it on a path to sustained growth –the reforms became the new rules of interaction upon which the new economy developed. In contrast to its previously top down planned economy which had produced moribund results in decades past, the impressive economic growth in India of the 1990s actually occurred in somewhat unpredictable ways –consistent with the outputs of complex systems. For example, rather than agricultural or industrial sector growth, service sector growth accounted "for a large part of the recent growth acceleration" (Lal, 2008, p.25). Lal notes this as an atypical pattern of international growth and only postulates as to the reasons for it.

What is even more interesting about India's recent growth and emergence from the global economic downturn is its performance compared to that of its neighbor China. Less inclined to use a top down massive stimulus approach, India's reaction to the crisis was less spectacular but the outcomes are likely more sustainable than those of China's policies. Indian growth was based on policies that were more economically diverse and less dependent upon government intervention. Indian policies featured less emphasis on massive export efforts and relied more heavily on private consumption and conservative banking policies.

What we learn from the Indian example is that organizational change (in this case on the scale of 1.3 billion people) is not easy, is unpredictable, is iterative, and is possible. Although we describe a situation of complexity and even chaos that faces leadership today, the issues are not insurmountable. As Jim Collins (2011) writes, great organizations do not happen by accident; they become great as a matter of discipline and choice. Much as the concept of leadership has been altered to one of influence versus command and control, continuous change versus reactive initiatives, and nonlinear versus top down communication (IBM, 2011), the role of leaders inside the organization is emerging and must continue to evolve as the co-created environment changes (Findlay and Straus, 2011).

What seems obvious is that the world is changing, at times faster than our ability to keep up with it, and especially from a leadership perspective. The "world" as we see it consists of an open systems environment, where collective change is within our grasp. Those organizations that are succeeding are guided by leaders who recognize what is happening and are adjusting their leadership styles and practices to facilitate emergence. Complex adaptive systems are emergent and self-organizing. They cannot be controlled in a traditional way.

However, they can be dynamically steered, by establishing local rules of interaction, such as the way people speak to, relate to, or interact with each other, so that new, desirable patterns of activity emerge. Leaders must monitor how the systems emerge, and facilitate the application of meta-rules by everyone to encourage what is working and dampen down what does not (Findlay & Straus, 2011). Hence, managers' assumptions about planned outcomes fall short (Gilpin, 2008). F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function." Gilpin (2008) suggests the same might hold true for organizations. She writes, At its best, culture incorporates multiple voices in the organization without demanding consensus. The reason is "any event, organizational or otherwise is capable of different interpretations by different interests and hence an event contains several meanings simultaneously". (Linstead & Grafton-Small as cited in Gilpin, 2008, p. 165)

5. Concluding Remarks

The title of this article is "Beyond Leadership". The objective was to incite in the reader a sense that we must think beyond traditional leadership concepts and theory to a way of thinking that is more conveniently aligned with the world in which we live, and the world which is evolving around us. It is possible that "leadership" as a concept may simply have outlived its usefulness in its various implicit messages of hierarchy, selective application and linearity. In years to come, successful organizations will look at this subject in terms of a "way of being" that transcends individuals and characterizes entire organizations which accept it in a holistic sense while fully embracing change, paradox and complexity as pathways to growth and productivity…and even a greater purpose beyond the needs of the few, embracing the aspirations of all.

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