

## 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leadership: Complexity & Collaboration

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### Abstract

This paper provides an alternative view to leadership that is becoming a necessary part of the executive or senior leader's skill-set and tool kit. Complexity leadership and collaboration are the answers to effectively managing fierce competition and the dynamic non-stop change that is our global world today. Effective executive or senior leadership is critical for greater employee engagement, higher organizational performance, and minimization of the chaos inherent in organizations. In this article, the author conducts an analytical study of the literature on complexity leadership, collaboration, governance, and decision making in organizations. It is particularly important for leaders in senior or executive management positions to understand that the principles of collaboration, governance, and effective decision making are key links in creating sound partnerships. Understanding these principles will be critical for executive or senior leaders in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond.

**Key Words:** *Complexity Leadership, Collaboration, Governance, Decision Making*

Methodology: Literature Review and Analytical Analysis

### Introduction

There are many definitions as to what constitutes leadership and management. In fact, there are several differences between the two functions (Marion & Uhl-Bien, 2001, Mintzberg, 1973, Rost, 1991). Since the early 1900s, leadership researchers have examined such things as a leader's trait, power, influence, behavior; roles, path-goals, situations, and relationships. Researchers have also examined management from multiple perspectives such as situations, behaviors, and leadership styles (Bass 1985, Burns 1978, Bryman, 1996, Mintzberg 1973, Uhl-Bien, & Marion 2001, 2008, 2009, Uhl-Bien et al. 2008, Yukul 2001). Bass (1990) defined leadership as "an interaction between two or more members of a group that often involves a structuring or restructuring of the situation and the perceptions and expectations of the members" (p. 19-21).

Similarly, Yukl (2001) argued that leaders make decisions along the lines of specifying and completing certain tasks, building relationships, and directing organizations. Likewise, Bennis (1985) and Bennis and Nanus (1989) posit that leaders create organizational vision, pathways for action, and allocate resources for organizational sustainability. Kouzes and Posner (2006), Uhl-Bien (2001, 2008, 2009), Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding, Jacobs, and Fleishman, (2000), and Plowman and Duchon, (2008) have suggested that leadership and management is much more complex, complicated, and essential to the well-being of the organization than most people realize or give credit to. Today, many organizations have limited resources, are globally connected, and constantly deal with changing technologies and environments.

Add to that complexity, uncertainty, and unprecedented governmental involvement, and you have executives, senior leaders, or high-level decision makers that have to think "outside of the box" before making any decisions. The social, political, and economic challenges of today creates a need for senior executives and decision makers in federal, state, local government, non-profit, for-profit, and private industry to understand the value of leadership, collaboration, and effective decision making. Understanding the intricacies of leadership, collaboration, and decision making will go a long way in effectively managing organization. Efficient and effective management will help leaders and managers to better be able to attack and maybe even solve some of today's complex and complicated

challenges. The 21st century is advancing very quickly, which means that leaders and managers need new ideas right now on how to lead and manage the complexities of today's organizations (Alimo-Metcalfe & Alban-Metcalfe 2005, Day et al., 2013, Lichtenstein et al. 2006, 2009, Plowman & Duchon 2008, Uhl-Bien 2001, Uhl-Bien & Marion 2008, Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey 2008, Rost, 1991). This is especially critical for executive or senior leaders. It is time for a new direction in leadership thought that more aligns with the current leadership and management challenges of today.

## **Literature Review**

### **1. Leadership Theories**

Leadership is one of the most researched social science areas studied in the last 50 or 60 years. However, in spite of the large amount of research into what leadership is there is no set standard that describes effective leaders. In fact, there are several definitions of what makes up a leader (Bass & Stogdill 1990, Bennis 1989, Bennis & Nanus 1985, Burns 1978, Kaiser, Hogan, & Craig 2008, Rost, 1991). In many people's minds, leadership means telling someone what to say or do!

However, research has shown that what constitutes good or effective leadership is far more complex and complicated than that. For example, there has been research in areas as diverse as behavioral, situational, ethical, transformational, transactional, servant, complexity, and public leadership. All give very different ideas of what leadership is or should entail (Bass 1985, 1991, Brown & Trevino 2006, Burns 1978, Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2013, Plowman & Duchon 2008, Uhl-Bien, 2001 & 2008). In this section, this author briefly discusses several leadership theories that highlight various aspects of leadership and their effect on management decision making.

#### **1.1. Transformational Leadership**

It is not surprising that transformational leadership is one of the most talked about leadership principals in the last 30 years. In fact, research has shown that a transformational leader affects the outcome of several aspects of the organization. According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders affect individuals and groups of an organization which creates an increase in job satisfaction, enhanced employee performance, and greater organizational commitment. To attain these outcomes, Burns argued that the transformational leader usually displays, key abilities such as (a) idealized influence-creating trust and confidence among followers, (b) inspirational motivation- giving followers a vision for the future, (c) intellectual stimulation-encouraging others to think on a higher level, and (d) individualized consideration- recognizing individual needs and aspirations. The executive or senior organizational leader of today must have a little bit of each of these characteristics to be an effective leader.

Bass (1985, 1991) also conducted seminal work on transformational leadership. Bass (1991) argued that "transformational leaders inspire, energize, and intellectually stimulate their employees" (p. 19).

Bass also suggested that the transformational leader impacts the entire organization when he or she creates an air of openness, honesty, mentorship, and direct involvement with subordinates. This is especially true when senior or executive leaders are involved in the activities of the organization. Executive or senior leaders need to have skill-sets that allow them to be flexible, creative, and approachable. In fact, Mumford et al. (2000) and Warrick (2011) have suggested that there is an urgent need for more skilled leaders. That is why researchers Riaz and Haider (2010) examined the role of transformational and transactional leadership on job satisfaction and career enhancement. Likewise,

Ekaterini (2010) investigated the impact of executive leadership styles from a manager's personal and professional perspective. Similarly, Anderson (2015) examined the relationship between leadership, organizational commitment, and the intent to stay among junior executives. The key here is that there are many positive aspects of leadership that have been explored. However, there is another side of leadership that is rarely discussed.

Many researchers focus on the "positive side" of leadership. However, transformational leadership is not an end-all to be-all as it relates to organizations operating in an efficient and effective manner. In fact, Kaiser, Hogan, and Craig, (2008), Hogan and Hogan, (2001), Khoo et al. (2008), Harms et al. (2011) Harms and Spain (2015), and Slattery (2009), all have argued that there is a "dark side" of leadership that is hardly ever mentioned in leadership research. The authors have suggested that often leaders (especially those with influence) forget where their responsibilities lie. Leaders often need to be reminded that their priority and allegiance should first and foremost be to the organization. This is especially true for those senior or executive leaders who have a lot of influence (some call it the "it" factor or "charisma").

In fact, Bass (1991) argued that even transformational leaders can forget their organizational purpose, which leads them to abuse their positions because of the focus on their own interest (p. 30). Leadership researchers have suggested that the destructive type of leader is only focused on what he or she can get out of the organization. According to Sheard, Kakabdasde, and Kakabdasde (2013), a destructive leader pays more attention to his or her wants as opposed to the organization's need. The authors also suggested that paranoid, sociopathic, deluded, and narcissistic behaviors are the four types of destructive behaviors that destructive leader's exhibit. When a leader is destructive their attitude, beliefs, or feelings about a particular subject or issue creates an anti-social perspective that drives their decision making and leadership capacity (Sheard, Kakabdasde, & Kakabdasde, 2013).

As an executive or senior manager, it is very important to understand how one's morals and values play a significant role in a leader's decision making. It is even more important that public service officials (civil servants) understand the affects their values play in their decision making and organizational direction. All leaders including those that are public officials need to understand the critical effect that a dark side to their personality could have on the whole organization. In fact, Harms, Spain, and Hannah (2011), Vogel (2013), Harms and Spain (2015) have suggested that there is much more that can be said about the destructive side of leadership. Unfortunately this manuscript will not allow me the time or place to do that. Although transformational leadership has been the main focus of leadership research recently, let us not forget that transformational leadership is not the only type of leadership style that leaders can use to move the organization forward 1.2. Transactional Leadership

When leadership is mentioned, one often hears about transformational leadership and not its distant cousin transactional leadership. Transactional leaders bring a slightly different leadership perspective that is just as important to an organization as transformational leadership (Bass 1985, Bennis, 1989 & 2001, Burns 1978, Ekaterini 2010, Riaz & Haider, 2010). It is important to understand what transactional leadership is and how it works to fully implement its characteristics in an organization. Burns (1978) and Bass (1985, 1991) argued that transactional leadership is when one entity influences another by way of compensation or some other type of reward for achieving a goal or milestone. The authors suggested that the important thing to realize and recognize is that in a transactional situation there is an exchange (positive or negative) between parties. A not often talked about area of transactional leadership is punishment.

Punishment is usually handed out for not achieving a certain goal or objective. Because of the reward and punishment aspect of the transactional leader he or she affects organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intent, and career satisfaction (Conger 1990, Ekaterini 2010, Kaiser et al. 2008). No matter how the situation is viewed it is still an exchange between leader and follower. There has been a good amount of research on transactional leadership. However, this author believes that more empirical studies on the effects of the exchanges on individuals and organizations would enhance our knowledge of the effects (outcomes) of the transactions that take place in an organization. Another aspect of transactional leadership that is not mentioned as much in the literature is active and passive management-by-exception.

Active management-by-exception means that the leader formally checks a follower's actions to ensure they complete the goal or objective and passive management-by-exception means that leaders' step in when expectations are not met and follower performance is not what it should be (Burns 1978, Bass 1985, & Uhl-Bien 2001, 2007). For instance, if there is an organizational project that has a specific timeframe for completion and the people responsible for its completion have allowed the timeline to get away from them, the leader or manager may step-in to suggest a particular course of action to get the project completed. If the lapse is particularly egregious then the leader or manager may issue some type of punishment or other corrective action to move toward the stated goal or goals.

Thus far in this section the discussion has centered on what a transactional leader is, and how he or she leads. However, what are we asking our leaders to do to meet today's complex and complicated leadership and decision making challenges? Kaiser et al. (2008) argued that "the fate of organizations revolves around our understanding the effectiveness of leaders, performance of the group or team, and organizational outcomes" (p. 107). Could it be that there is a need to be both transformational and transactional as leaders when looking at the overall dynamics of an organization? In today's change oriented, technological, and global world, leaders or managers need a new way to think about how to lead and manage. This "new" way of thinking is a way to help leaders (especially executive or senior management) tackle the complex and complicated challenges of the decisions they have to make.

It is time for a new idea of how leaders should lead in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. In fact, Lord, (2008) suggested that there is leadership beyond the transformational and transactional perspective. The author suggested that a leader's decision making is affected by the biases they bring to the position because they influence the structure of the organization. Lord (2008) asks "can leaders still lead when they don't know what to do"? It is in this context that complexity leadership may provide the answer.

### **1.3. Complexity Leadership**

Complexity has been with us for a long time. In fact, Weaver (1948) argued that complexity would have a significant impact on our world. The author also suggested that the use of technology (computers) and collaboration ("mixed teams") would be the means that allowed complex problems to be solved. Weaver also suggested that because of multiple variables in a given situation, we can no longer solve problems using a simplistic approach the decision making process. As we hurriedly move through the twenty-first century, organizations must develop senior or executive leaders who are creative thinkers, innovative, and is able to apply leadership principles in a practical and effective way. Today, senior leaders or executives must combat rapid change, an increased reliance on the interconnectedness that technology creates, and a global world to even make day-to-day decisions that affect the entire organization. No longer can leaders use the same leadership or management style of

Frederick Taylor's and others time frame (Hazy 2010, Lichtenstein et al. 2008, Marion & Uhl-Bien 2001, Olmedo 2012, Uhl-Bien & Marion 2008, Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey 2008).

It is in the context of new leadership ideas that complexity leadership theory (CLT) is a leading contender to be a welcomed fresh of breath air for organizational leaders and decision makers. This is especially true for executive or senior leaders and managers. The complexity leadership approach comes from complexity science. This is a somewhat new concept that many social scientist are starting to see more frequently in the leadership literature. In fact, complexity science is a new way of examining the complex and dynamical behavior of individuals, organizations, and the systems connected to them (Marion & Uhl-Bien 2001, Olmedo 2012, Uhl-Bien & Marion, 2008). Complexity science's foundation emerges from the idea that organizations are complex adaptive systems (CAS). According to researchers such as Weaver (1948), Hazy (2006), Hazy (2010), Schnider and Somers (2006), Snowden and Boone (2007), Snowden (2008), Sarguth and McGrath (2009), and Uhl-Bien (2008), have suggested that complex adaptive systems (CAS) have characteristics that are adaptive, innovative, and emergent.

Great examples of CASs are ant colonies, schools of fish, and flocks of birds.

All operate as complex adaptive systems (CASs) when they go about doing what they do. Many researchers believe that because of the characteristics mentioned earlier CASs operate much like human organisms do. Human organisms are complex entities that are unpredictable, interconnected, and have structure. In many cases organizations act the same way. For instance, organizations can be nonlinear (all over the place), emergent, adaptive, and be efficient and effective (Hazy 2006, Uhl-Bien 2001, 2006, 2008, Uhl-Bien & Marion 2009). Nonlinear simply means the organization is adaptable, innovative, and creative and that the status quo of a straight-line function is not the direction the organization is operating in at all times. This means a complex perspective as a leader is really important today. Specifically, leaders should operate with the perspective that their organization is complex and that the old thought of organizations being linear (one way all the time) is no longer true.

When most people hear the term complex or complicated the first thought is to automatically think the terms are used interchangeably. However, that is not the case at all. The difference between the two terms comes down to understanding that something that is complicated can be separated into its component parts and something that is complex cannot be separated because the parts are interconnected in multiple ways that is not easily separated (Hazy 2006, Uhl-Bien et al. 2006, 2007, 2008, & 2009).

For example, a 747 airplane is complicated because one could separate all of the component parts into their individual functions. On the other hand, mayonnaise is complex because the make-up (eggs, oil, vinegar, and lemon juice) of mayonnaise cannot be separated once they are put together (Lichtenstein et al. 2008, Uhl-Bien 2001, 2008). In fact, Uhl-Bien and Marion, (2008) suggested that the definition of complexity leadership is "a framework for leadership that enables the learning, creative, and adaptive capacity of CASs in knowledge producing organizations or organizational units" (p. ix). Complexity leadership enables the development of organizational structures that are not solely based on control or order, but on enablement instead. This allows organizations to produce outcomes appropriate to the vision and mission of the system (s) around it.

An important aspect of complexity leadership that leaders must understand is that no one person or single group of individuals can manage all of the interconnected parts of an organization effectively. This is especially true for senior or executive leaders no matter if they are in federal, state, local, for-profit, or not-for-profit organizations. It literally takes everyone in the organization giving input

for it to be successful, innovative, and forward moving. The literature on complexity leadership is rapidly becoming more and more at the forefront of leadership research because of the dynamical nature of today's organizations. There is not enough space in the pages of this article to expound on the importance of complexity leadership, however, it must be studied from as many perspectives as possible to develop the leadership tools needed for managing the national, international, and global challenges of today. In fact, collaboration is another leadership spectrum that is promising as leadership research expands to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **2. Collaboration**

There is a "new" movement in the leadership arena that is not really new at all. In many organizations there is a notion that the decisions by the senior executive will be the best decision that keeps the organization focused and moving forward. The reality is that today no one decision maker will be able to effectively make the necessary decisions that solves organizational problems, creates innovation, and the flexibility that allows for progress, stability, and financial well-being (Chenok et al. 2013, Gray 1989, Gray & Wood 1991, McGuire 2006, Moynihan et al. 2011, Thomson et al. 2007). In her seminal work on collaboration, Gray (1989), argued that collaboration or some semblance of it has been around for quite some time. The author also argued that one may not recognize collaboration because of how it is implemented in an organization.

Understanding what collaboration is and is not is paramount for the leader of today. In fact, there is no definitive description of what collaboration is. However, Wood and Gray (1991) suggested that collaboration is a perspective that consists of five key dimensions (governance, administration, organizational autonomy, mutuality, and norms) of which if applied properly will open up new ways for decision makers to efficiently and effectively manage organizations. Thomson and Perry (2007) suggested that the definition of collaboration is "a process in which autonomous or semi-autonomous actors interact through formal and informal negotiation, jointly creating rules and structures governing their relationships and ways to act or decide on the issues that brought them together; it is a process involving shared norms and mutually beneficial interactions" (p. 3).

Similarly, Ansel and Gash (2007) purported that collaborative governance is a "governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public program assets" (p. 44). Similarly, Guo (2013) suggested that customers (the public) want their agencies to run efficiently and effectively even though they are getting various services from them. The global environment of today is no exception. In fact, the sudden rise in collaboration's popularity may stem from today's challenging social, economic, and political problems. Senior or executive managers are turning to more formalized collaboration configurations to solve complex and challenging issues (Gray & Wood 1991, Graddy & Chen 2006).

For example, the current terrorism situation many countries find themselves dealing with is being examined through the lens of collaboration. The United States and 64 other countries are coming to together to end or at least slow down the threat of radical Muslims such as Al-Qaida and ISIS. Whether it is the United Nations, (UN), local government, federal government, private industry, or a non-governmental organization (NGO) there is a need for organizations to collaborate on challenging issues that cannot be solved with a single decision maker at the top (McGuire 2006, Thomson et al. 2006, 2007). Another example of the importance of collaboration comes from the office of the president of the United States. Without major collaboration on the parts of lawmakers from all sides of the aisles

(Democrats, Republicans, or Independents), efforts like Health Care, Minimum Wage increases, and etc. would not get done.

In fact, President Obama has struggled to get the congress and senate to agree on his proposals and nominees to various political offices. Collaboration is much more than getting a group of people to agree with you. Collaboration is also understanding that the lone-wolf mentality of management is no longer an effective way to manage. This is especially important if an individual is serving in a public service position as a senior or executive manager (McGuire 2006 Thomson & Perry 2006, O'Leary 2012). Gray and Wood (1991) argued that managing collaborations is tough because collaborations are complex entities that require the management of joint decision making, administration, agreement, and trust that flows from all of the constituents involved in the collaboration. Thinking that collaboration is an end-all to be-all would be a big mistake. According to Thomson and Perry (2006), over the course of time there is a "black box" mentality that develops in collaborations.

To minimize this "black box" mentality, senior or executive leaders must be aware of the formal and informal activities that transpire within an organization. This awareness is critical if senior or executive managers are to be efficient and effective as managers. The authors also suggested that an important take-away from the collaboration process is that senior executives or decision makers need to understand they should not enter into any collaboration unless the entirety of process has been considered (Donahue 2004, Duit & Galaz 2008). For example, what many managers don't consider is the time and effort that collaborations require to manage them effectively (Thomson & Perry, 2006). In spite of the attention that collaborations have been given recently, there is a lot of work that goes into the creation of a successful collaboration. With collaborations, one never knows what the outcome (s) will be until they are developed and implemented (McGuire 2006, Thomson & Perry 2006, Newman et al. 2004). An important part of any collaboration is the governance of the organizations that are a part of it.

### **3. Governance**

Typically, governance is one of those buzz words that we hear when organizations get themselves into trouble. However, governance has always been a part of organizations. A recent example of bad governance is when Volkswagen CEOs lied about the emissions performance of their vehicles for more than 10 years. Another example is that of General Motors (GM) failure to recall millions of cars because of defective steering. A final example is the crash of the United States housing market, where financial organizations were accused of packaging bad mortgages and flooding the financial markets with them. All of these cases can be attributed to a lack of "good governance."

Senior and executive leaders need to understand what governance is and why it is important to organizations? According to Fukuyama (2013), the definition of governance is "a government's ability to make and enforce rules, and to deliver services, regardless of whether that government is democratic or not" (p. 3). Likewise, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), (2002) and Sarbanes-Oxley (2002), suggested that governance is when an organization follows specific rules and does what it is supposed to do as it relates to the community or program under its support or sponsorship. Now that we know what governance is, the question becomes what distinguishes "good governance" from every day governance? Quite frankly that entirely depends on one's perspective of what is good and not good as it relates to governance.

Newman et al., posit that "good governance" involves the interaction of local government, private entities, and community involvement. On the other hand, Fukuyama (2013) sought to better

understand exactly how quality or “good governance” can be recognized in an organization. Fukuyama posited that there are four approaches management must consistently follow and measure for consistency, which will lead to good governance. The approaches cover areas such as (1) organizational procedures, (2) organizational capacity, which includes professional development and various organizational resources, (3) output measures (outcomes), and (4) organizational autonomy. Similarly, Loorbach (2010) argued that because of the complex nature of organizations today, “good governance” needs to have a more transitional management approach. Newman et al., (2004) purported that there has been a shift in how citizens see their government. In fact, the authors suggested that good governance is derived from the interaction of the people who require the government to be by the people. As we can see from the various definitions, what good governance is primarily flows from the perspective of those instituting it. For instance, in the United Kingdom (UK), governance is examined in terms of the Cadbury Committee Report on financial responsibility (Aguilera & Cuervo-Cazurra, 2004).

The Cadbury Committee suggested that there were six core principles that make up good governance. Here in the United States, governance is viewed from a corporate perspective based on the five golden rules of business. The foundation for those rules primarily comes out of the Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act of 2002 and the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) in 1998. All of the rules flow out of attempts to minimize “bad behavior” by the business community. For example, banks, real estate, insurance, and other service entities were targeted for “clean-up.” Whether in a public or private organization executives or senior leaders must consider all parties involved and how they act on their behalf. Executives or senior leaders must also consider the role that organizational transparency plays in their decision making. In fact, Aguilera and Cuervo-Cazurra (2004) argued that “the codes of good governance are assets of best practice recommendations regarding the behavior and structure of the board of directors of a firm” (p. 419). In the end, good governance leads to good decision making.

#### **4. Decision Making**

As an executive or senior leader many times folks look to you as the “shell answer man.” That reference is from a gasoline commercial from the 70s. The shell answer man was looked upon as the guy having all of the answers to any questions related to shell gasoline. As have been stated earlier in this article, there is no one person who has all of the answers for today’s organizational challenges whether in the public or private arena. Senior executives or leaders have to have at their disposal multiple resources to help them make informed and effective decisions. That is critically true when managing an organization, collaborative, or any like entity. The question today is what types of tools are there for executive or senior leaders to use to help them manage the “wicked” (what some researchers call complex problems) problems of the global world we live, work, and play in? The answer to the previous question is there are many decision tools. It just depends on what outcome the individual or organization is hoping to achieve (Mumford et al. 2000, Koerner 2009, Courtney et al. 2013). There is not enough space in this article to expound on the different types of decision making tools. Kurtz and Snowden (2003) argued that there has to be a new strategy to organizational decision making. In fact, the authors suggested that because of the complexity in our decision making, decision makers can no longer make decisions based on “the assumptions of order, rational choice, and good intentions” (p. 462).

Snowden and Boone (2007) and Snowden (2008) suggested that the Cynefin (“pronounced (ku-nev-in) framework, (“a Welsh word that signifies the multiple factors in our environment and our experience that influence us in ways we can never understand.”) is a tool that can be used to help decision makers make good decisions as to the proper direction for their organization. The authors are



not suggesting that Cynefin is an end-all-to-be-all solution to an organization's problems because there are other decision making tools out there. However, the authors are saying that "cynefin is one tool that gives decision makers a powerful new construct that they can use to make sense of a wide range of unspecified problems" (p. 468). The most interesting thing in the cynefin framework is how it allows the user (s) to examine a problem from a nonlinear perspective unlike older decision support tools. Most decision support tools come from the perspective of order, choice, and intent because that is how it has been for a very long time (Courtney, Lovallo, & Clarke 2013).

Yukl (2001), Hazy (2006), Lichtenstein et al., (2006), Kaiser et al., (2008), Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2008), Prewitt et al. (2011), and Olmedo (2012) all have argued that today's leaders need to shift their leadership and decision making perspective from the traditional outlook (a linear approach) to one more inclusive of complexity, nonlinearity, adaptability, and emergence. This new direction for leaders allows more creative and flexible thinking and management which in turn allows more effective decision making (Beshears & Gino 2015). This is important for executive and senior managers in an organization because the outcomes of their decisions affect individuals up and down the entirety of the organization. Whether one is making decisions as a part of a collaboration, multi-party organization, or public entity consideration must be given to how decisions are made and the organizational impact that will be felt as a result of them (Rogers & Blenko 2006).

Therefore, developing good decision makers requires being intentional when considering how senior or executive leader's careers are developed in the coming years. Day et al. (2014) argued that in the past 25 years of leadership development, we still do not know the best road to take to become an effective leader. Not having a standard practice allows for all kinds of interpretations which affects the quality of training rendered. For those senior or executives working in local, federal, and state government it is a similar story when it comes to executive development. The authors also argued that early development in a leader's development is crucial for them to become the efficient and effective decision maker organizations need and want today.

Brook and Hartney (2015) did a study on the management of the United States government's senior executive talent. The authors' findings suggested that federal senior or executive managers need to be a part of the executive development process in the early stages of their government careers. That means coaches, trainers, mentors, etc., need to help potential executive leaders develop the necessary skill-set as early as possible as they advance in their careers. It is important because they might have to deal with not-for-profit providers, for-profit contractors, and private industry as a part of representing their agency. An important consideration is that all of this is done within an environment consisting of less or no resources, constant change, and rapidly advancing technologies.

## **Conclusion**

Today, in leadership and management there must be a new way to think about how to solve problems. Many of today's challenges are not just of the local or national variety, but are global in nature and therefore much more challenging. According to Weaver (1948), Uhl-Bien (2001), Alimo-Metcalfe (2005), Hazy (2006, 2010), Lichtenstein (2006), Olmedo (2012), Loorbach (2010), Day et al. (2013), Tummers and Knies (forthcoming) leaders must develop new ways to deal with the complexities of today's organizations. Senior or executive leader development is an important component to the success of future leaders who make the critical decisions that affect an organization. This is especially important for the leader of a complex adaptive system (CAS) such as an organization. It is even more important now because there are four generations of workers in the workforce. They all bring a different set of social, political, and moral values to the job every day. According to Twenge, Campbell,

Hoffman, and Lance (2010), today's workforce consist of "the Silent Generation: (born 1925-1945), Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Generation X (born 1965-1981), and Generation Me (born 1982-1999)" (p. 1118).

There are several things that senior or executive managers must realize. First, they must understand that the workforce has changed from when they entered into it (Ekaterini 2010, Perry & Wise 1990, Perry et al. 2010). Second, senior or executive leaders must be flexible enough to embrace the generational differences in work values presently in the workplace (Ekaterini 2010, Twenge et al. 2010). Collaborative thinking, effective leadership, effective governance, and efficient decision making from executive or senior leaders will be critical in managing global challenges such as terrorism, hunger, poverty, and a host of other challenges in the coming years.

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