

Review of Supporting Literature on community, leadership and community leadership

By Paul Born

What is the fundamental nature of community leadership and its applicability for communities today? These questions lead to a study of three interrelated, though distinct, themes:

- What is community? What are the characteristics of personal and collective journeys toward and away from community? What are the characteristics of a caring community?
- What is leadership and what can we learn about leadership that is applicable to the building of communities?
- What is community leadership and how is it expressed in communities today?

This review will examine the Literature of Community, the Literature of Leadership and the Literature of Community Leadership. The literature in all these areas is extensive; the review below is not meant to be exhaustive but rather representational.

A. Literature on Community

The review of literature on community will focus on specific areas related to four themes:

- How is community defined?
- What is the journey that groups and individuals undertake to achieve community?
- What breaks down or destroys community?
- What are the characteristics of sustainable and caring communities?

I. How is Community Defined?

Scott Peck, one of North America's leading writers and animators on the subject of community, suggests, "community can be a word that is too large to submit to a single definition" (Atkisson, 1991). This is a common theme in the current literature about community (Kuyek, 1990; Gilman, 1983). Community can mean many things to many people. Definitions seem to be based on personal experience.

Joseph Schaeffer (1999) describes community in the phrase, "I carry the potential for community within me all the time. I live in community with you the moment we come together." By contrast, Joan Neuman Kuyek (1990) sees community as a physical place or neighborhood, a "geographically based human relationship" between a number of people who know each other quite well and share a sense of purpose and values. Robert Gilman (1983) echoes Kuyek in stating that communities are "face to face groups where each person has a sense of belonging to "the community" (p. 1). Margaret Wheatley (1998) contrasts and compliments both Schaeffer and Kuyek in believing that "We have an instinct for community" and that "everywhere in nature communities of diverse individuals live together in ways that support both the individual and the entire system" (p. 1). With the exception of Schaeffer, these writers seem to agree on two things: community is a collective journey, a seeking toward or a coming together with others, and community is purpose building. Schaeffer sees community as a way of living.

It is often necessary to define community as a physical place that one can go to and where one can co-exist with those present. The current literature suggests that when one recognizes community within oneself, one can actively express community with others. One can find community within and then seek community with others. This is similar to the theory that leadership is within each one of us and can be expressed when it is required. We have an innate desire to be in community just as we have the innate ability to lead.

II. *The Journey to Community*

In much of the literature, “being in community” is synonymous with being on a journey “to community.” This journey often begins as individuals seek community and then join together in a collective purpose. A journey toward purposefulness creates a deeper sense of community.

Individuals seek community, or as Margaret Wheatley (1998) says, “systems of relationship” (p. 2). People sense conflicting forces generated by the need for individual freedom and the need for relationships. The need for relationships is described by Schaeffer (1999) as “living meaning in conversations with others” (p. 10). As individuals seek community, they begin to learn about community. It is this desire to learn to live in community that leads people toward community.

The literature describes how individuals can learn to live in community. Some of these “ways of living in community” are documented in the work of Scott Peck and Joseph Schaeffer. Peck has developed an approach in which individuals enter four stages of community building. The four stages include pseudocommunity (where niceness reigns), chaos (when emotional skeletons crawl out of the closet), emptiness (a time of quiet and transition), and finally, true community (marked by both deep honesty and deep caring) (Atkisson, 1991, p. 1). Schaeffer (1999, p. 10) contrasts this communal learning with a more personal response. His belief is that individuals have both natural and cultural inclinations towards what he calls the “qualities of character” which include genuine interest, acknowledgment, empathos, altruism and trust. These form the basis for what Schaeffer calls creative communication.

As individuals seek and learn to live in community, communities are formed. Peck suggests this is simply a process of committing to talk to each other, to stay in the same room together (Atkisson, 1991, p. 6). Schaeffer (1999, p.10) and Wheatley (1998, p. 9) make this same point. It is our desire to be together and to stay together that makes community possible and leads us to learn to form communities successfully.

The literature suggests that by learning to be together and stay together, we move toward purposefulness. Communities often form a mission or purpose. “This is what we are going to do together,” states Scott Peck (Atkisson, 1991, p. 4). This is confirmed by Tom Bender (1993, p. 6) and Wheatley (1996, p. 3). It is our need to define our purpose that changes the nature of relationships in community. “It is this very call of purpose that attracts individuals to community. They discover how to work together...and share desires that then can create more and more for the community” (Wheatley, 1996, p. 6). Lisabeth Schorr (1977) sums this up well in a quote from President Kennedy. Kennedy spoke of “the thousand invisible strands of common purpose, affection, and respect, which tie men to their fellows” (p. 305). It is the value of and values inherent in purposefulness that motivate individuals and communities toward a desire to change and grow, the desire to be connected in a “deeper place” and “to find a meaningful response” (Wheatley, 1998, p. 6).

Community is something which individuals wish to learn. This desire to learn leads people on a journey to “become community.” This journey is described as a search for purposefulness. The literature suggests that we can both help people to learn to be in community and to seek purpose in community.

III. *The Breakdown of Community*

Yet ultimately everything goes better with a circle of friends. Without this circle of safety it is extremely difficult to erase the fear that coats our health, relationships, economics, etc. This fear has been a major stumbling block in reestablishing community and must be cast aside (Patch Adams).

The breakdown of community is cyclical and exponential. The less community there is, the more problems people have in establishing and maintaining community. “Without community people lose the conviction that they can improve the quality of their lives through their own efforts” (Schorr, 1997, p. 305). There seems to be a general consensus

that this comes from a breakdown of community values or the “spirit” and meaning of the community (Bender 1993, p. 2; Wheatley, 1998, p. 8). Cheryl King (1997) states that leadership in communities is valueless today (p. 4). This view is supported by Scott Peck when he suggests that “rule by consensus” is common. (Atkisson, 1991, p. 3). Rule by consensus can lead people to use community to separate and protect themselves from each other. It can ultimately lead to an excessive need for conformity and a breakdown of community (Wheatley, 1998, p. 1).

In his most recent book, Becoming Human, Jean Vanier (1998) suggests that fear breaks down community. “We are all frightened of losing what is important for us, the things that give us life, security, and status in society” (p. 73). He outlines four distinct fears: the fear of dissidents, those who threaten the existing order; the fear of difference, of “people who suffer poverty, brokenness, disabilities, or loneliness;” the fear of failure; and the fear of loss and change. We seek scapegoats for this fear (pp. 73-82), the origin of which lies in a sense of personal worthlessness and collective mistrust. It can have serious implications for the breakdown of community and often manifests itself when individuals turn against others and communities turn against other communities.

The literature also suggests that the physical ways we structure community can contribute to its breakdown. Sherri Torjman (1997) talks about our emphasis on business development over community building (p. 1). Kuyek (1990) echoes Torjman by stating that communities in Canada were built primarily with the interest of business and thus did not encourage self-reliance. Kuyek documents how we have built communities in Canada in grid patterns and on business transportation routes rather than in ways and places that were the best for people living together (p. 13). Schorr (1997) provides a number of reasons for the breakdown of community including:

- the rise of fear and violence which deters people from gathering in informal places thus preventing people from meeting naturally.
- Rapid advances in communication and technology which allow people to move about much more freely, keeping them from getting to know their neighbors and those around them.

- Greater numbers of women, historically the backbone of communities, have now entered the workforce and have less time to give to community.
- The rise in single-parent families.
- Our institutions have become depersonalized as technology becomes sophisticated and institutions have grown in size (p. 305).

The literature on the breakdown of community is significant. Community breaks down exponentially because of a loss of values. This creates distrust. As a result, groups form against each other out of fear. Communities are developed and planned so that people can guarantee efficiency. They become places of protection where groups of people come together to compete against each other.

IV. Characteristics of sustainable and caring communities

A community that lives only for greed and commerce and consumption does not enjoy itself and does not enjoy life. It has no great passions, and dreams only small dreams. We need to rediscover how to make the communities where we live able to raise our passions and move our hearts (Bender, 1993, pp. 7-8).

The idea that caring is of primary importance in definitions of community is common in the literature. Caring is often described as a fundamental societal value (Schorr, 1997, p. 3; Bender, 1993, p. 3) and as the outcome of the responsibility we feel in community. Community empowers people to provide their own leadership and to make positive things happen (King, 1997, p.4). Community builds love (Wheatley, 1996, p.7). Love leads us to want to make the world a better place (Kuyek, p. 66).

Caring for one another is a natural outcome of being in true community. Schaeffer suggests that caring increases when “our meanings become a source for meaning in the lives of others” (Schaeffer, 1999, p. 8). He suggests that altruism is fundamental in community. Each individual human being provides caring and support for others. People

believe in and have a desire for the actualization of others (1999). Wheatley says our desire for contribution blossoms when the heart of community is clear (1998, p. 9).

Frances Hesselbein (1998) suggests that we must mobilize whole communities in which people dream and communicate in common ways that include common action by the public, private and voluntary sectors (pp. 178, 179). Arun Gandhi talks of the community as a family in which all members are similar and equal and actively contribute to the whole (1998, p. 83). Torjman talks of civic engagement in which all sectors and peoples of a community take an interest in a common future (1998, p. 4). Suzanne Morse (1998) talks about all citizens contributing what they know and affirm. She suggests that all citizens are critical to the overall success of communities and that “communities recognize that stability and sustainability occur only when the vast majority of citizens have a stake in and contribute to the community” (p. 231).

A caring community is the outcome of a healthy community in which all citizens have worth and dignity. In a caring community, people have deep-rooted values of inclusion and truly love each other. A healthy community is made up of healthy people who desire the actualization of their neighbors. Can a group of individuals who really have the best interest of their neighbors deeply in their souls ever allow for issues that break down community such as poverty and racism?

B. Literature on Leadership

The study of leadership has long fascinated people as they embark on a search for the key to effective people and successful organizations. This review will focus on specific areas related to four themes about leadership:

- What is some of the historical and current thinking about leadership?
- How do we create leaderful or participatory organizations?
- What is purposefulness in leadership?

- How does an understanding of emergence, self-organization and order help us define the process of leadership?

I. What is leadership?

Leadership is often defined as having to do with the greatness of an individual (Dering, 1998). We have all read a biography that describes the amazing feats of individuals who transform a family, a company, or a country. These stories, while inspiring, often leave us with a feeling that leadership is out of our control and is more often something that we are either destined to do or not to do.

What is leadership? Does it exist in the traits or behaviors of a person (trait leadership) (Yukl, 1998)? Is it defined by the relationships a leader engages in (relational leadership) (Kouzes & Posner, 1995)? Does it have to do with the kind of person a leader is or the attitudes a leader has (servant leadership or values-based leadership) (DePree, 1989)? Or is it a process in which leadership emerges (transformational leadership) (Clemmer, 1995)?

Approximately 40 years ago behavioral scientists at Ohio State University prepared a study that described what leaders did (behaviors) rather than what they were like (traits). Gradually, the research has evolved to the point where leadership is understood as a set of behaviors, tasks, and relationships that lead to change (Dering, 1998; Yukl, 1998).

The research suggests that managerial work consists of four general types of activities: building and maintaining relationships, getting and giving information, influencing people, and making decisions (Yukl, 1998). The myriad of managerial practices described in the research include planning and organizing, problem solving, clarifying roles and objectives, informing, monitoring, motivating and inspiring, consulting, delegating, supporting, developing and mentoring, managing conflict and team building, networking, recognizing and rewarding (Yukl, 1998, p.60). The description of the

behavior of managers as leaders provides a view of the process they use and the skills they employ to be effective.

Recent studies of leadership focus less on skills and behaviors and more on relationships between the leader and the follower. These studies emphasize the “E’s” of leadership: enabling, enlisting, entrusting, engaging, and envisioning (Dering, 1998, p. 1). Kouzes and Posner describe ways in which leaders can inspire others to achieve greatness (1995). They consider the five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership to be challenging the system, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modeling the way, and encouraging the heart (p.18). Much of their work describes ways for leaders to inspire intrinsic motivation in others. Yukl calls this intrinsic motivation ‘followership.’ He states that followers are more effective when they view themselves as active and independent rather than passive and dependent on the leader. Self-management is a way that followers empower themselves to be more effective as individual contributors (Yukl, 1995, p. 170). Kenneth Blanchard supports this perspective in Leadership and the One-Minute Manager. He describes the leader’s role as situational. The leader employs ways to help ‘followers’ wherever they are. For those followers who need a high level of management, the leader provides management. Followers who are self-managed receive less management (1985, p. 47). Studies of relational leadership provide a better understanding of the interconnection between leader and follower. This is not only a cause and effect relationship but also a relationship of influence.

Some writers focus on values and service in leadership. They stress the idea that authentic and intrinsic beliefs and motivations are central in leadership. Stephen Covey describes servant leaders as “individuals who have abundance in their souls” (1999, p. 2). Greenleaf concurs with this. “At the core of servant leadership is character.” Greenleaf describes servant leaders as those who serve the needs of their followers by empowering followers to do the work themselves. He asks the question, do those served grow as persons? (King, 1997, p. 3) Block describes value-based leaders as stewards. He states that collectivist assumptions are at the core of servant or collaborative leadership. “One must submit one’s individualistic will to the collective good to be a servant leader”

(King, 1997, p. 7). Cashman (1998) describes servant leadership as authentic leadership. He suggests that authenticity and love are fundamental in servant leadership. This clearly humanizes the study of leadership and elevates the importance of a leader's self-knowledge and values.

Transformational leadership is mostly about inspiring change and growth (Covey, 1990, p. 282). Kouzes and Posner describe the transformational leader as inspiring others to excel, giving individual consideration to others and stimulating people to think in new ways. This is in contrast to the transactional leader who likes to maintain a situation and enable performance through extrinsic rewards (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p. 321). Yukl describes transformational leadership in a similar way but emphasizes the cultural changes a leader makes by helping both individuals and organizations to be their "better selves" rather than their "everyday selves" (1995, p. 324). Max DePree (1989) calls transformational leaders giants who "see opportunities where others see trouble," give people and companies space to grow and develop, make good ideas a reality, utilize their own gifts and help others utilize their gifts (pp.73-79). Tom Peters (1999) describes the role of a transformational leader in finding and developing what he calls "wow" projects. Jim Clemmer may say it best when he describes a high performance leader as one who helps people believe in the impossible (1995, p. 29).

The study of leadership is evolving. It has moved from a focus on the behaviors of "effective managers" to dynamic and human processes of change and growth in individuals and organizations. The most important consensus in the literature is that leadership can be learned and developed by people, organizations, and communities. A second consensus is that leadership is not solely dependent on individuals. It is a process that can be influenced by relationships between people. Leadership can be observed, analyzed and encouraged in organizations and communities.

II. *Participatory Leadership*

In life, the issue is not control, but dynamic connectedness ... I want to move into a universe I trust so much that I give up playing God. I want to stop holding things together. I want to experience such safety that the concept of “allowing” – trusting that the appropriate forms can emerge – ceases to be scary. I want to surrender my care of the universe and become a participating member, with everyone I work with, in an organization that moves gracefully with its environment, trusting in the unfolding dance of order (Wheatley, 1992, p. 23).

Leaders today help people work together. They make it possible for individuals and groups to develop leadership processes. Comments such as, “It is obvious that teams outperform individuals” (Clemmer, 1995, p.207) seem to be common-place. The benefits of teamwork are many. “It would seem that the more participants we engage in this participative universe, the more we can access its potentials and the wiser we can become” (Wheatley, 1992, p.65). The changes in communities and organizations are often so complex that unless people in these communities and organizations change and grow together true change and sustained growth cannot occur.

The key to participatory or “leaderful” organizations and communities seems to be in the creation of leadership when and where it is needed (situational leadership) (Blanchard et al., 1985; Gilman, 1985, p. 5) and in enabling people to work together in teams (Clemmer, 1995, pp. 207-218) or communities of leadership (Wheatley, 1992, p .43). The process of creating this type of leadership involves the 5 E’s of leadership mentioned above: enabling, enlisting, entrusting, engaging, and envisioning (Dering, 1998, p. 5). The skills required to develop leaderful organizations are those which help people facilitate process, nurture growth, develop relationships and interrelationships, enhance listening and communication skills, and facilitate groups (Wheatley, 1992, p. 38; Gilman, 1985, p. 5).

People are effective when they are involved in making decisions and setting directions at all levels of an organization (Senge, 1990, p. 277). People need to participate and be reflective with each other. Reflective openness makes it possible for individuals and groups to subject their ideas to test and improvement. “It involves not just examining our own ideas, but mutually examining others thinking” (Senge, 1990, p. 278). This is in contrast to a more traditional view of teamwork espoused by Clemmer: “A team’s commitment and performance increases exponentially with the degree of power, control, and ownership team members feel they have” in their own perceptions of their work (Clemmer, 1995, p. 210).

Debates about participatory leadership are often focused on the place of the team as it relates to the hierarchy in the organization. Wheatley states that we need to create the conditions in which self-organization can thrive. “With all these wonderful and innate desires calling us to organize, we can stop worrying about designing perfect structures and rules” (1999, p.58). We must trust that if we strive to develop relationships within an organization and community, people will organize naturally.

III. *Emergence and Creativity*

To live in an evolutionary spirit means to engage with full ambition and without any reserve in the structure of the present, and yet to let go and flow into a new structure when the right time has come” – Eric Jantsch (Wheatley, 1992, p. 74).

There is a strong link between ideas about participatory systems and the theme of emergence in leadership. The old assumption is that people were unable to direct themselves or take responsibility. The new assumption is that people have the potential, wisdom and creativity for leadership within them. They only need to be educated and encouraged to become leaders (McLaughlin & Davidson, 1984, p. 5). This idea is supported by Myles Thorton, founder of Highlands School in Tennessee. Thorton developed a school for community leaders in order to empower people to provide their own leadership and to make positive things happen in their communities. His philosophy

was that leaders do not manage and resolve conflicts. They facilitate conflict so that learning can happen. His belief was that “You need to get people into a situation where they will have to act on ideas” (King, 1997, p. 5).

Theories of emergence provide evidence that we live in a relational world. Emergence has to do with journeys people and communities take from one place to another. Peter Senge suggests that these journeys lead to creative tension between current realities and vision (1990, p.150). It is in this tension that emergence is most evident. “Truly creative people use the gap between vision and current reality to generate energy for change” (Senge, 1990, p. 153). When leaders embrace this idea of emergence, they can nurture a creative phase in the development of a community or project. As a result, more can be accomplished. “We witness emergence any time we are surprised by a group’s accomplishment or by our own achievements in a group” (Wheatley, 1999, p. 67).

There is a second tension which, if addressed by a leader, can either enhance creativity in emergence or destroy it. It is the tension between allowing self-organization and the need for order and control. Wheatley believes that people have an innate desire to work together to do more. “We seek one another because we want to accomplish something” (Wheatley, 1999, p. 69). People self organize through purpose or through envisioning and affirming a new future (Kouzes & Posner, p. 117). The process of organizing and working together allows creativity and vision to emerge. This idea is supported by Patricia Pitcher (1997). She compares the work of a leader to the work of an artist. An artist may have an idea for a painting, but it is only through the act of painting that true creativity and artistic brilliance can occur. An artist seldom sees the whole painting at the beginning. The creative process emerges during the act of painting (p. 21). Wheatley suggests that if organizations are machines, control makes sense. If they are process structures, control through permanent structures is suicide (1992, p. 9). Through control, we often attempt to create fluid systems or equilibrium. In equilibrium nothing happens. Open and creative systems are non-egalitarian so they can change and grow.

There is a critical paradox here. People have an innate desire to organize and be organized. Yet it is in self-organizing that people have the ability to be creative and purposeful, to reach their visions. Freedom and order turn out to be partners in generating viable, well-ordered, autonomous systems (Wheatley, 1992, p. 95).

IV. Purposefulness and Leadership

Purposefulness leads people to organize in order to accomplish more (Wheatley, 1999, p. 56). When common values and vision interconnect, purposefulness is formed. It generates a powerful energy and commitment (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p.131). Purposefulness is the hope people have who wish to develop and sustain communities (Covey, 1999, p.4).

Leaders need to develop a personal purposefulness before they can create it with others. Covey calls this personal purposefulness an abundance mentality, a belief that there is enough for all which enables a leader to share power, knowledge and recognition. This is in contrast to a scarcity mentality that protects power and information (Covey, 1999, p. 2). Kouzes and Posner suggest that the most critical knowledge for leadership is self-knowledge. Self-knowledge brings personal meaning to the leader's work (1995, p. 335). Peter Senge describes self-knowledge as personal mastery – the discipline of personal growth and learning. “People with high levels of personal mastery are continually expanding their ability to create the results in life they truly seek” (1990, p.141).

The values of individuals and collectives are critical in both defining and developing a sense of purposefulness in a community. Wheatley has observed a growing trend whereby organizations are exploring their values in order to shape and reshape corporate culture (1992, p. 55). Kouzes and Posner and Jim Clemmer write extensively about the importance of values in organizations today. Clemmer highlights the importance of building shared values in creating a deeper source of spirit and passion in an organization (1995, p. 93). Kouzes and Posner write about the importance that clarifying values will have for guiding the kinds of choices and actions people and organizations make. They

also find that shared values help to unify constituents. Values must be modeled by leaders and shared through discussion, stories, and questioning (1995, pp. 209-241). Values are more important in defining the potential actions of both individuals and organizations than anything else.

Values are important in purposefulness. Vision is also crucial. Leaders who express visions consistent with their values and who are oriented toward the future have dynamic energy (Kouzes & Posner, 1995, p.101). Clemmer suggests that vision provides focus and energy, thus motivating people to work together toward common goals (1995, p. 193). Covey talks about vision as a compass that helps to guide people's actions and choices in a fast-paced, ever-changing environment (1990, p.185). Authors who write extensively about values also place emphasis on vision. The two are interconnected. Vision comes from an inner belief system that seems to radiate an energy or glow. It is the very merger of vision and values that creates this energy which can be defined as purposefulness.

When individuals, organizations or communities live in purposefulness, they become active not because of purposefulness but within purposefulness. When they experience purposefulness, people desire action. They want to share and develop purposefulness to accomplish more. It is for this reason that people with a deep sense of purposefulness join together with others who have similar values and visions.

The study of leadership gives us important insights into the development of more leaderful communities. When we understand leadership as a process of engagement rather than as something someone is or is not, we are able to map the process of leadership in action within a community. Once we understand the process of leadership in a community, we can begin to influence this process and help it to grow in a healthy manner.

Leaderful communities exemplify participatory leadership. They encourage people to work together to utilize their skills to create a better whole. Leaderful communities

cannot be controlled from the center. They are made up of emerging, purposeful networks of people with common values and visions, people who are motivated by a desire to create and grow more.

C. Literature on Community Leadership

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has – Margaret Mead.

The review of literature on community leadership will focus on three areas helpful in understanding community leadership:

- What is community leadership and how is it expressed in the literature?
- How is the issue of collaboration or collaborative community leadership explored in the literature?
- What does the literature on civil society say that is relevant to our discussion of community leadership?

I. What is community leadership and how is it expressed in the literature?

It is difficult to find an explicit definition of community leadership. Community Leadership is often described as a process which actors in a community engage in to make something happen. At other times it is described as a training program in which people learn together about their community and become more engaged or involved in that community. There is also a traditional view of community leadership that emphasizes the great leader theory. It focuses on the need to develop more strong and influential leaders. Most often, definitions of community leadership are based on observations of effective community leadership processes.

Community leadership, when described as a process, is most often seen as a response to something that is breaking down communities (Chrislip & Larson, 1994; Shore, 1999;

Rifkin, 1995; McKnight, 1995). Citizens gather together and organize to change things for the better because of a lack of trust that the formal power structures have the will to act (Shore, 1999, p. 122; Leadership Vancouver, 1998, p. 2). McKnight suggests that when people recognize they have the power to decide what the problem is, they also realize they have the power to act, to decide what can be done and to make this happen (1995, p.117). Chrislip and Larson believe that community leadership creates a constituency for change that produces tangible results, empowers participants, and builds communities (1994, p.144). Community civic leaders serve in new and significant leadership roles that bring citizens together to solve problems themselves (p. xvi).

Community leadership is often described as something which people can be taught in order to become more active and committed citizens. This idea is based on a belief that if we bring people together in constructive ways with good intentions they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing shared concerns related to the organization of their communities (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p.108). “Any citizen has the capacity to practice collaborative leadership. The skills and concepts can be learnt”(Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p. xx). Bill Shore describes the process as one in which ordinary people use skills they had taken for granted (1999, p.154).

Many definitions of community leadership emphasize the importance of community response. But there are frequent references in the literature which focus on the equal importance of strong, civic-minded leaders (Getting Started, p. 2). Examples of extraordinary community leadership often emphasize the efforts of individuals who bring people together to make extraordinary things happen (Shore, 1999; Leadership Vancouver, 1997; Rifkin, 1995; Schorr, 1997). Schorr likens these individuals to entrepreneurs who have the ability to use resources for things they were not originally designed for (p.185).

The characteristics of effective community leadership processes are often used as a basis for defining community leadership. Shore (1999) likens community leadership to that of cathedral building: a) People are devoted to a cause they will never see completed. b) The

process requires the skills of everyone in the community. c) Work is built on the foundation of earlier efforts. d) People are sustained by their own wealth. e) And the project is designed to convey stories and values to people (pp.19-20). John McKnight (1995) suggests that community leaders (whom he calls guides) are those who have an eye for including people and bringing them into community life. They are well connected in the interrelationships of community life, they are trusted by their community peers, they believe that the community is a reservoir of hospitality that is waiting to be offered, they know when they must move on (pp. 120-122). Chrislip and Larson talk about the process of community leadership as being about building trust, sharing ownership, celebrating success, and creating powerful and compelling experiences (1994, p. 90).

II. *Community leadership as collaboration*

The most common theme in the study of community leadership is collaboration. Collaboration can be between people or communities. It can be about people doing something together or learning together what needs to be done. Most often community leadership is about collaboration. Chrislip and Larson (1994) suggest that those leaders who are most effective in addressing public issues are not necessarily the ones who know the most about those issues. Rather, they are the ones who have the ability to get the right people together to create visions (p. xx). These are the people who intuitively grasp the need for community collaboration and know when the community is ready to take on this challenge (Getting started, p.10).

By initiating and sustaining successful collaborative initiatives communities can develop social capital (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p.xii). Citizens often begin to collaborate because nothing else is working that addresses their concerns.

There are many techniques for building collaboration. Citizens can create a constituency for change by creating broad-based involvement, establishing a credible and open process, soliciting the commitment of visible acknowledged leaders and gaining the support of established authorities or power (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p.xviii).

Communities can also create structures that bring people and organizations together to set and accomplish common goals. When communities ‘build capacity,’ individuals can contribute fully within organizations and within their communities. When communities nurture the development of alliances, people from various sectors with various abilities come together for the overall benefit of the community (MacBride-King & Farquhar, 1994, p. 3).

In successful collaborative initiatives, participants work together as peers, share a collective fate, and bring their competencies to the table. Through common perspectives, interests, and experiences, they create a sense of community that breaks down barriers. As a result, they can convene around specific needs.

III. *Civil Society*

In contemporary societies, citizens are frustrated and angry with civic life. They are feeling shut out of the decision-making process (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p. xii). This is in contrast to past civil societies in which the involvement of people was seen as essential to good government. The belief was that government can only be successful when individuals and groups participate in the decision-making process to effect desired changes (Citizens Information Service of Illinois, 1973, p. 3). Today it seems as if people have decided that they cannot affect political structures directly.

A civil society sustains and enhances the capacity of all community members to build a caring and mutually responsible society. All citizens – individual, corporate and government – assumes responsibility for promoting economic, social and environmental well being. It is imperative that communities decide for themselves today what is needed to secure their future (Mount Allison, p. v).

A civil society seeks to achieve three major objectives. It builds and strengthens caring communities (especially through volunteerism). It ensures economic security (Jackson, 1999, p. 10). It promotes social investment by directing resources towards the well being

and positive development of people. It ensures political equality and a deep sense of individual rights and obligations in the larger community.

Moreover, a civil society pursues these objectives in a unique way. It interprets very broadly the concept of resources to include, but move well beyond, the notion of public dollars. A civil society encourages the creation of partnerships and collaborative working arrangements to achieve its objectives. Finally it addresses issues in an holistic and integrated way (Torjman, 1997, pp.107-108).

Modern liberal states require healthy civil societies for their long-term stability. Under a system of limited government, society must be self-organizing to fulfill a variety of social needs. Furthermore, the democratic process requires that citizens organize if they are to represent their passions and interests effectively in the political marketplace. Civil society presupposes social capital – the norms and values that permit cooperation on the part of groups (Fukuyama, 1998, p.1; Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p. xii). Rifkin believes, as does Fukuyama, that these skills can be learned. Civic society can be learned as an outgrowth of successful collaborative endeavors. These authors believe that when collaboration succeeds new networks and norms for civic engagement are established.

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