Leadership Styles for Success in Collaborative Work
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INTRODUCTION

Environmental advocacy organizations work in coalitions or strategic partnerships with other organizations with similar missions for a wide variety of reasons. As with many other nonprofits, collaboration is a key organizational mechanism for advancing their missions. In these tight economic times, foundation funders also consistently call for advocacy nonprofits to think strategically and to cooperate with other nonprofits. Often the first question that foundations ask potential grantees is "with whom are you working?" It is imperative that advocacy organizations, especially smaller groups "play well with others" because they neither have the staff nor the financial resources to successfully achieve their goals without successfully engaging other groups in the effort.

Many environmental groups create intra-sector alliances with other environmental groups or cross-sector alliances with non-environmental groups, including government agencies and for-profit entities. While there are many advantages and disadvantages to each type of alliance, even collaborations with the "right" partners are often difficult to build. A commonly-used phrase describes collaboration as an "unnatural act among non-consenting adults," which emphasizes the difficulties that are encountered in virtually every collaborative effort (Wuichet, 2000).

Leadership in cross-sector and intra-sector collaborations crosses many boundaries and is fundamentally different from position-based leadership authority or tactical-level leadership exercised within organizations. Collaborative leadership differs from traditional hierarchy-based leadership in many ways, such as the emphasis on leading the collaborative process.

Chrislip & Larson's study on collaborative leadership indicate that collaborative leaders usually have no formal power or authority and tend to exercise leadership in what is perhaps the most difficult context – when all parties involved are peers (Chrislip and Larson, 1994). The authors state: "Collaborative leaders have a different focus [from other kinds of leadership] – promoting and safeguarding the collaborative process" (p. 130). Collaborative process leadership activities include "keeping stakeholders at the table through periods of frustration and skepticism, acknowledging small successes along the way, helping stakeholders negotiate difficult points, and enforcing group norms and ground rules" (p. 130).

If this is true, there must be a set of leadership styles that promote success in collaborations and therefore, presumably, success in achieving the goals of the organization. Other research in the literature of the nonprofit sector points out the key role that executive directors play in the development of collaborative partnerships and their inception. If executive directors of nonprofit organizations can utilize specific leadership styles to advance their organizations' missions through collaboration, which styles and leadership actions are the most important? This study asked leaders of reputationally successful collaborations among environmental advocacy organizations which of the leadership styles described in the literature are actually confirmed by their experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

While the existing research on leadership for collaboration was limited, the subject did receive cursory mention within research and theory from several disciplines. Chrislip and Larson (1994) performed observation-based studies on the subject and describes several principles of collaborative leadership. Goldman and Kahnweiler (2000) completed several trait-based studies on effective leadership for collaboration. There was a significant body of research on leadership and leadership styles, several of which apply to the collaborative context. Lipman-Blumen (1996) promoted her "Achieving Styles Inventory" as a method for identifying "Connective Leaders," but there were no studies that focused on identifying leadership styles in the context of collaboration between nonprofits. These researchers contributed much to the field, but none focused explicitly on environmental collaborations or even the broader progressive movement. Additional literature relevant to this study included insights from research literature on effective nonprofit management, building and maintaining collaborations, and leadership in both the nonprofit and for-profit sectors. Because this study explored the concept of leadership in the context of collaboration, there was also a significant focus on the general subject of leadership theory and practice.

<u>Collaboration</u>

What is collaboration? Collaboration is an advanced form of an "interagency linkage," the traits of which include shared vision and goals, well-developed and formalized roles for participants, sharing of power and decision-making, and joint assumption of risks and resources.

Operationally, this study employed a definition laid out by Mattesich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2001) in their studies on behalf of the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation:

> A mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations. The relationship includes a commitment to mutual relationships and goals; a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility; mutual authority and accountability for success; and sharing of resources and rewards. (p. 22)

This definition encompasses all of the necessary elements of structure, goal-orientation, mutual benefit, relationship-building, and clarity in activities, and is the current standard within the literature for defining collaboration. Leaders need to keep some form of this concept in mind in the initiation, building, and maintaining of their collaborative efforts.

<u>Defining "Successful" Collaboration</u>

Mattessich and Monsey (1992) performed an exhaustive literature review of the factors influencing successful collaboration and ranked the following traits as the most important:

1. Mutual respect, understanding and trust
2. Appropriate cross-section of members
3. Open and frequent communication

4. "Sufficient funds"

Several large San Francisco Bay Area foundations sponsored a study on successful collaboration entitled Common Ground – Building Collaborations for Sustainable Communities in the San Francisco Bay Area (Wiltshire and Satterwhite, 1999). This ideographic study focused on how diverse, progressive coalitions form, mature and successfully fulfill their goals. The organizers of the study interviewed 33 leaders of networks based in the Bay Area or individual leaders with substantial experience working in multi-issue coalitions. Primary findings relevant to this study included:

1. Coalitions and collaborations work best if there is:
   a. a shared mission and goals
   b. effective leadership and a leadership development program
2. To develop a shared mission and goals it is necessary to:
   a. Have open dialogue about why people are involved, what they hope to accomplish and how the coalition can help them achieve their goals
   b. Build strong, trusting relationships
   c. Have a participatory process with the active involvement of member organizations
3. To develop an effective governance process, there has to be:
   a. Clear operating procedures regarding decision-making, communications and accountability
   b. Strong executive leadership
4. To develop and nurture effective leadership, it is necessary to:
   a. Develop a shared vision
   b. Build strong relationships within the leadership team
   c. Rotate leadership roles
   d. Question leadership roles at the beginning – (leadership roles in the coalition/network are often assumed but not talked about)
   e. Make sure that the institutional memory of the organization is not housed with one person

Hayes (1988) noted that environmental groups sometimes had a distinct disincentive to collaborate widely with other organizations. Partly this was due to the watered down environmental position that often resulted from a negotiated process. Many environmental groups therefore formulate and advocate for their objectives and look to make compromises at the end of the process instead of at the beginning. Additionally, since many environmental advocacy groups see their role as public education, public battles using the media as a vehicle were also often a preferred alternative to quieter backroom deliberations.

<u>Traits of a Successful Collaboration Leader</u>

Lipman-Blumen (1996) notes that decades of research aimed at pinpointing general leadership traits has yielded inconclusive results and cites the work of Bass, Gibb and a comprehensive review of thousands of leadership studies by Nanus. However, there have been numerous studies done on collaboration and leadership in the context of collaboration, many of which were trait based.

A study by Stein (1992) confirms that gender is a factor in perceived collaborative outcomes – males tend to think that their collaborations are more successful than females do. Stein's work was based on and further validated the utility of a survey instrument called "Working Together: A Profile for Collaboration" that assesses the success of collaborations using the perceptions of participants. The instrument consists of 40 items in five subscales and measures perceptions of issues important to collaborative success based on the perceptions and feelings of the participants.

Goldman and Kahnweiler (2000) performed an exhaustive trait study of effective leadership for collaborations for the nonprofit sector as a whole (health and human services, arts, religious, educational and public society, and professional associations). All of the traits were evaluated using binary metrics. The study sample was categorized into successful and unsuccessful groups using the survey instrument described in the Stein study above. Their results indicated that a statistically significant number of the successful nonprofit executives were male, extravert (Myers Briggs), feeling oriented (Myers Briggs), and having less role boundary occupational stress but more role ambiguity occupational stress in comparison to the unsuccessful group. The study did not focus on environmental groups or even progressive groups, which tend to have less hierarchy and flatter management structures.

Chrislip and Larson (1994) focused on what principles were most often used by collaborative leaders. They found that collaborative leaders are decidedly visionary, but this vision is focused on how people can work together constructively, rather than about a particular vision or solution for a specific issue. He noted that collaborative leaders define their roles and practices differently than tactical and positional leaders do (traditional leadership).

Chrislip and Larson lay out several principles of collaborative leadership (1994, p. 138-146)
1. Inspire commitment and action. Power and influence help, but they are not the distinguishing features of collaborative leaders. The distinguishing feature is that these leaders initiate a process that brings people together when nothing else is working. They are action oriented, but the action involves convincing people that something can be done, not telling them what to do nor doing the work for them.
2. Lead as peer problem solver. Collaborative leaders help groups create visions and solve problems. They do not solve the problems for the group or engage in command and control behavior.
3. Build broad-based involvement. Collaborative leaders take responsibility for the diversity of the group and make a conscious and disciplined effort to identify and bring together all the relevant stakeholders.
4. Sustain hope and participation. Collaborative leaders convince participants that each person is valued, help set incremental and achievable goals, and encourage celebrations along the way.
5. Servant Leadership. Collaborative leaders are servants of the group, helping stakeholders do their work and looking out to make sure those others' needs are met and that they grow as persons.
6. Leadership as a process. Motivation and inspiration happen through the belief in the credibility of the collaborative process and good working relationships with many people.

Collaborative leaders are rarely dramatic or flashy, and the leadership function is often shared among several people. Their role is to facilitate the constructive interaction of the network, not to do the work for it.

Chrislip and Larson (1994) state that collaboration requires a different kind of leadership: leaders who "safeguard the process, facilitate interaction, and patiently deal with high levels of frustration" (p. 52). Chrislip and Larson also point out that the process must be open, fair and not be seen as dominated by any particular stakeholder group. A notable finding from their qualitative study of 52 collaborations on behalf of the National Civic League was that collaboration also works when there are a few key leaders, either in formal or informal roles, who keep the process going.

Examples of key process leadership activities include "keeping stakeholders at the table through periods of frustration and skepticism, acknowledging small successes along the way, helping stakeholders negotiate difficult points, and enforcing group norms and ground rules" (Chrislip & Larson, 1994, p. 53). Yukl (1994) cites Bradford's research (1976) indicating that successful group-centered leaders also closely observe the socio-emotional processes and interactions of those in the group process and encourage and deal with member needs and feelings in the group processes.

Chrislip's (2002) observation of group facilitation in a variety of collaborations indicated that three basic components help ensure an effective process:
1. Comprehensive agreements come from a series of smaller, less consequential agreements. Break agreements into smaller steps.
2. Meetings or collaborative processes break down unless participants engage in the same activities at the same time. "A group gathers and clarifies information in an opening phase, before organizing and evaluating information in a narrowing phase, and reaching agreements in a closing phase" (p. 16). This framework informs the overall design of the collaborative process, the stages within the process, particular meetings within each stage, and subparts of the meetings.
3. The work done ahead of time to create an environment for working together is as important as what is done in the engagement itself. Work such as gaining initial agreement on the process for working together can help anticipate and prevent problems in meetings or collaborative engagements.

Several leadership theories and their respective bodies of applied research were also reviewed as potentially applicable to leading collaborations.

Contingency Leadership

Fred Fiedler (1967, cited in Chemers, 1997) spent several decades refining variations of his contingency theory of leadership effectiveness. Fiedler postulated that influence of a leader was dependant upon several factors: (1) how well liked and respected the leader was; (2) the degree of clarity and structure of the task assigned; and (3) the amount of authority that the leader held by virtue of formal or designated position. A key finding was that task-motivated leaders performed significantly and consistently better in situations in which the leader had either very

high or very low levels of control. Leaders who were more motivated by their relationship with their counterparts performed best in situations of moderate control.

Transactional Leadership

Edwin Hollander (1993, cited in Chemers, 1997) was the first and most influential of the transactional leadership theorists. His "idiosyncrasy credit" model was based on the concept that leadership is a dynamic process involving on-going interpersonal evaluations by followers and leaders. When the leader demonstrates competence by helping the group achieve its goals and/or is deemed trustworthy by the group, he/she earned "credits." These credits allowed him/her to innovate, that is, to act in ways or suggest strategies that deviated from traditional approaches of the group, and failures result in a loss of credits.

Traditional Leadership

So-called "traditional leadership" is based on the concept that leaders should have the initiative and power to direct, drive, instruct and control their followers (Bradford, 1976, in Yukl, 1994). Basic tenets of the traditional leadership school include that leaders should:
1. Focus on the task and ignore personal feelings and relationships whenever possible
2. Seek opinions and try to get agreement, but never relinquish the right to make final choices
3. Stay in control of the group discussion at all times and politely, but firmly, stop disruptive acts and irrelevant discussion
4. Discourage members from expressing their feelings and strive to maintain a rational, logical discussion without any emotional outbursts
5. Guard against threats to his/her authority in the group and fight if necessary to maintain it.

Charismatic Leadership

In contrast with traditional and especially the transactional leadership styles, charisma-based leaders use the moral imperative of their views to create obligations in their followers. Charismatic leaders repudiate the past and are forces for revolutionary change. House and Shamir (1993) extracted the personal, behavioral, and situational characteristics of charismatic leaders. Personal characteristics focused on a high level of certainty in self and a willingness to impose that certainty on others. Conger and Kanungo (1987, cited in Chemers, 1997) theorized that effective charismatic leaders placed great importance on the charismatic leader's ability to inspire others to take action.

Transformational Leadership

Kouzes and Posner (1987) expanded on House and Shamir's investigation into charismatic leadership and popularized the concept of a transformational leadership style in an exhaustive and ongoing study of leadership practices. Of the actions that effective leaders used, they found five actions that stood out: *Challenge the process; Inspire a shared vision; Enable others to act*; *Model the way;* and *Encourage the heart.* In one study Kouzes and Posner (1987) asked workers

and lower-level managers what the characteristics of superior leaders were, the first two choices were honesty and competence. Chemers (1997) pointed out that this finding is consistent with Hollander's (1958) idiosyncrasy credit theory mentioned above, in that followers first want to establish that the leader has a legitimate basis for authority before surrendering autonomy.

<u>Servant Leadership</u>

"Servant Leadership" was an outgrowth of a set of leadership principles laid out by Greenleaf. Servant leaders aspire to "simultaneously enhance the personal growth of workers and improve the quality and caring of our many institutions through a combination of teamwork and community, personal involvement in decision-making, and ethical and caring behavior" (Spears, 1995). This spiritually grounded approach to transformative leadership has been part of the popular literature for three decades, although there hasn't been significant research on its application in the nonprofit context except in hospitals and educational institutions. However, it was a natural fit for collaborative endeavors, especially because unlike autocratic traditional leadership, servant leadership espouses "that good leadership is good followership" (Bailey & Koney, 1996).

Leadership within the context of collaboration has not yet been extensively studied and there has been almost no research focused on environmental advocacy organizations. Several general areas of theory and research apply to this subject. They could best be categorized into research on collaboration, research on leadership both in the nonprofit and for-profit sectors, and research on collaborative leadership.

Research and theory on leadership pointed to a few leadership styles that nonprofit executives were likely to employ in the context of collaboration. Of these, the transformational/charismatic leadership concept seemed most likely to be applied in the context of collaboration between environmental advocacy organizations, especially for organizations whose mission was to advocate for a major paradigm shift in environmental stewardship.

METHODS
<u>Research Question and Study Objectives</u>

This study was designed to discover which leadership styles executives of environmental advocacy nonprofits used to enhance their inter-organizational collaborative efforts. The study was undertaken in two phases. The first phase asked foundation funders of environmental advocacy organizations to identify who they viewed as being successful leaders of collaborative processes. The second phase involved semi-structured interviews with several of the leaders of collaborations nominated as "successful" by the foundation funders.

The primary question this study sought to answer was:

1. What were the leadership styles that executives use to make their collaborations successful?

Additional probing questions to help answer the above question included:

2. What leadership styles did the executive use for the creation and expansion phases of these collaborations?
3. How did the executive promote effective communication and decision-making processes within the collaboration?
4. How attentive to the process of creating the collaboration was the executive and how did his/her leadership contribute to advancing the collaborative process?
5. How did the executive contribute to setting the collaboration's goals and vision? How did the executive contribute to creating mutual agreement on those goals?
6. How did his/her leadership style help the executive gain legitimacy within the collaboration?
7. How did the executives develop leadership styles to insure collaborative success?

The primary goal of all of the primary and probing questions was to determine what leadership styles, methods, behaviors, and frameworks were used by leaders of successful collaborations among environmental advocacy organizations.

Methods

This study employed a nomination process to determine which leaders of "successful" collaborative efforts to interview. The nominators were all foundation executives, who are well established "judges" of the work of nonprofit environmental advocacy efforts. A sample of 13 executives of nonprofit agencies were identified as being "successfully" engaged in collaboration with other nonprofit environmental advocacy organizations.

A variety of qualitative techniques were employed in the actual interview process with collaboration leaders. In practice, the interviewees were asked to describe their leadership styles through questions about the roles they played in collaborative efforts. Interview questions focused on each leader's role in convening and creating collaborative efforts, decision-making, creating an inclusive and cohesive group, developing vision and structure, and the leaders' leadership style in general. Interviewees were asked what their roles were in each specific focus area and all questions were designed to elicit information about executive leadership style.

The interviews were digitally recorded and then transcribed and proofed for transcription quality. The transcriptions were then imported into the N6 qualitative software analysis package created by QSR International. Each transcript was then assessed for whether or not the executive director exhibited one of 39 initial leadership styles, behaviors, actions, and attitudes. Codes were assigned within N6 to each paragraph text block if it related to one of the codes relating to leadership style, behavior, action, and attitude (absent or present). Many text blocks were assigned multiple codes, because the text they contained related to different code ideas. Annotations linked to many text blocks were also written during the coding process that formed the basis of the notes and collaborative leadership model development. Coding was an iterative process, and the accuracy of the use of each code was cross-checked against the use of that code in all other interview transcriptions. Each transcript was reviewed and coded at least twice.

After the coding process, the data were reviewed in an iterative process within the code-reporting functionality of N6 and annotated for main ideas and concepts. Although much of the data fit best in the original categories under which it was coded, upon review, a new concept often emerged.

FINDINGS

The coded text selections were summarized and divided into eight main leadership themes. These themes overlap and provide a framework for understanding the study results. Theme names were derived by summarizing narrative concepts contained in the literature review. The themes are:

1. **Authentic Self Awareness**
   a. Maintaining personal maturity
   b. Being modest
   c. Actively listening
   d. Understanding personal and professional motives
   e. Understanding when to work collaboratively

2. **Passion, Charisma, Personal Vision**
   a. Personal passion
   b. Thinking creatively about who to engage
   c. Looking for the next big thing
   d. Political understanding
   e. Creating team spirit
   f. Giving partners credit

3. **Communication for Understanding**
   a. Communicating your passion
   b. Understanding each other
   c. Engaging others at their level
   d. Communicating about differences
   e. Phrasing and maintaining a positive frame
   f. Being direct
   g. Getting alignment
   h. Communication mechanisms (phone, email, meetings, etc.)

4. **Facilitate the Process**
   a. Setting the agenda
   b. Convening
   c. Deciding about processing
   d. Assessing needs for collaborative activities
   e. Keeping a broad view
   f. Managing conflict
   g. Willingness to compromise
   h. Creating governance structure
   i. Facilitating
   j. Using outside facilitators
   k. Benefiting from social technologists such as Rockwood Leadership

5. **Relationship Building**
   a. Relating is more important than knowing facts
   b. Working through connections
   c. Personalizing relationships
   d. Building team relationships
   e. Socializing
   f. Being nice
   g. Being proactive in conflict resolution
   h. Creating funding opportunities for

6. **Consultative Decision-Making**
   a. Involving everyone to the extent that they want to be
   b. Devolving decisions to smaller units
   c. Evaluating policy options
   d. Creating decision-making structures judiciously
   e. Maintaining involvement from others
   f. Integrating diverse opinions

partners

g. Decision making process
h. Resolving disagreements
i. Creating trust through transparency

7. Forging Group Vision
   a. Challenging assumptions
   b. Engaging others within the scope of their existing work
   c. Connecting to deeper reasons for the work
   d. Finding common ground
   e. Setting goals
   f. Doing a power analysis
   g. Keeping your organization on mission

8. Management for Action
   a. Maintaining a systemwide perspective
   b. Matchmaking
   c. Shifting human resources where they are needed
   d. Creating an appropriate organization structure
   e. Managing effective committees, work groups, and task forces
   f. Staffing

The Collaborative Leadership Model diagram (figure 1) was developed to create a visual representation of the concepts in the eight leadership themes. Each of the themes are interrelated and the narrative data included in one theme could often have been included in another theme. The themes have been broken down into four elements of the collaborative leadership style. The uppermost layer includes two traits and characteristics: Authentic Self-Awareness, and Passion, Charisma, Personal Vision. The second layer includes the three themes related to a leader's interpersonal skills: Relationship Building, Facilitate the Process, and Communication for Understanding. The third layer includes the two themes related to inter-group processes: Consultative Decision-Making, and Forging Group Vision. The final layer is Management for Action.

The theme areas have been linked to demonstrate the conceptual associations between effective implementation of the skills and ideas in one theme and the effective implementation of the skills and ideas in another theme. The direction of the links does not denote a causal relationship; they simply point out a leadership path. For example, if a leader is sufficiently self-aware to know what his/her own motives are (theme one) and has a personal vision and a charismatic communications style (theme two), these will enhance the clarity and effectiveness of communication with other groups (theme five). The Collaborative Leadership Model diagram (figure 1) helps to simplify presentation of the results.

Figure 1: The Collaborative Leadership Model Diagram
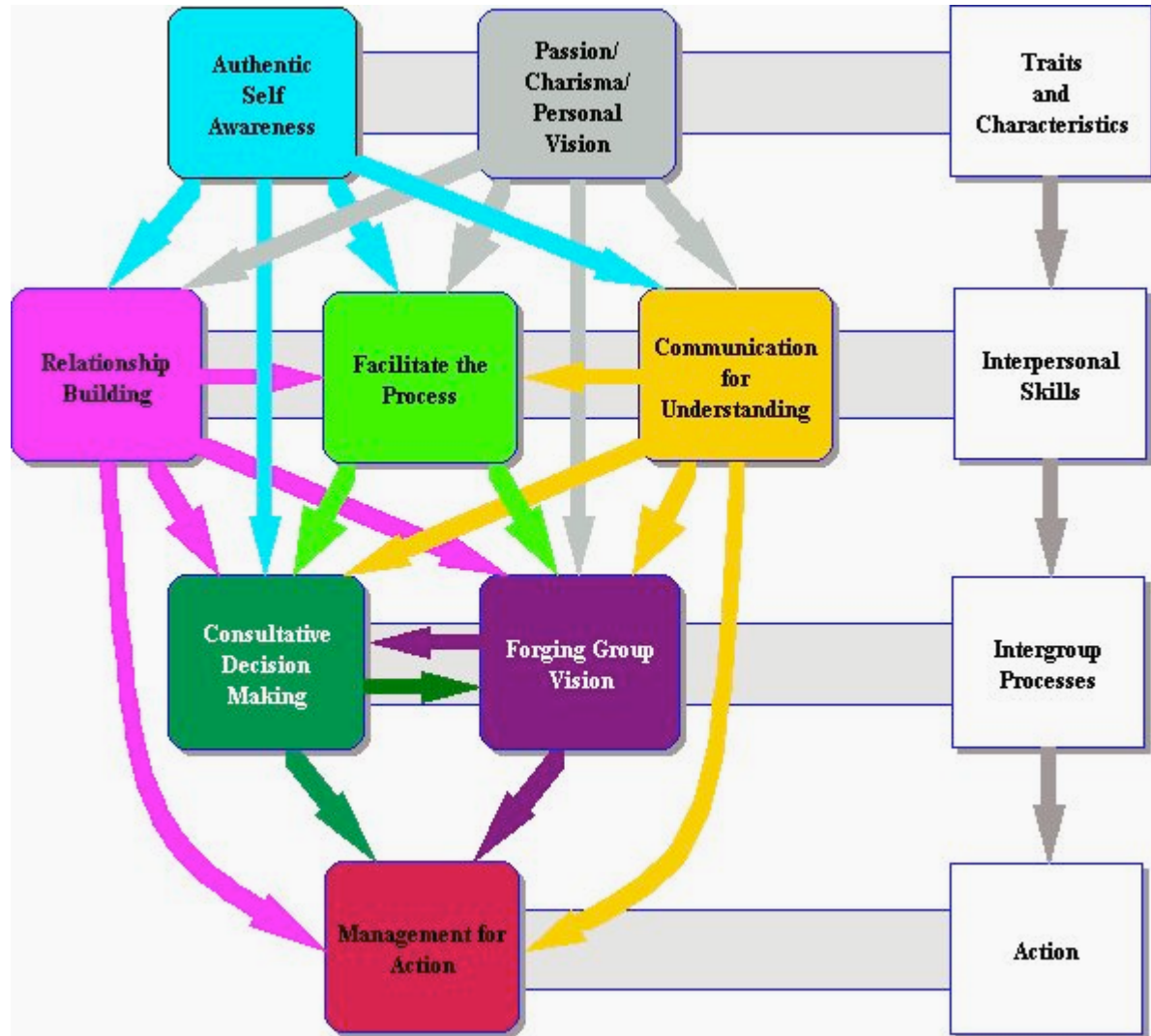
This study attempted to correlate success in building and maintaining programmatically successful collaborations within the environmental advocacy sector, with the leadership styles of the executives that make such success possible. Findings of the study include links to concepts from the literature review.

<u>Building Successful Collaborations</u>

Even the most "process averse" of the interviewees agreed about the dangers of underestimating the critical role of process in ensuring successful collaboration. The interviewees all stressed that there is a middle course that avoids "processing to death," but still allows for discussing operating assumptions about decision-making, program strategy, resources and fundraising, and allocating credit. This verified Gray's (1989) work that framed successful collaborations as

"negotiated inter-organizational orders" that highlight the need for transparent leadership, adaptive and change-oriented management, and attention to effective processes that can lead to agreement (as much or more than programmatic goal orientation).

This study also affirmed the validity of Wiltshire and Satterwhite's (1999) excellent ideographic study on collaboration, and Chen and Quiroz-Martínez's Diversity Network Project study (2004) that covered the traits of successful, diverse collaborations between environmental and social justice organizations. These two reports relied on interviews with many of the same executive leaders included in this study; however, they did not explicitly focus on leadership styles for collaboration, but focused more on the traits of the collaborations themselves.

Contingency Leadership

Verified was one aspect of Fiedler's contingency leadership theory (1967) (as cited in Chemers, 1997) that the influence of a collaborative leader seems to be highly correlated with how well-liked and respected the leader is. The interviewees were mostly relationship- rather than task-motivated leaders, and operated successfully in situations in which they had low to moderate levels of control over their colleagues. Task-oriented leaders seemed to perform well in policy battles with extremely tight timeframes and well-defined outcomes – if they already had the relationships in place to address the issues. In most other longer-term contexts the interviewees used a relationship-oriented frame.

Transactional Leadership

While present to a slight degree, very little of Hollander's (1958) transactional leadership "idiosyncrasy credit" concept was present in the ways that the interviewees thought about their leadership style. This was due to two factors. First, the interviewees built trust primarily by personalizing their relationships with others, acting in a transparent manner, and getting others to understand that their values were understood. Second, the interviewees did not interact with others in a context in which they were the single leaders directing the group forward toward their goals, and most often no single person "got all the credit" for the effort going well.

Traditional Leadership

The nominated interviewees demonstrated almost none of the traits that Bradford (1976) described as command-and-control "traditional leadership" (as cited in Yukl, 1994). Instead, the interviewees all had a process orientation and actively listened for and were responsive to the feelings, thoughts, and values of others within the collaborative.

Charismatic Leadership

The interviewees tended not to rely on personal charisma, and even repudiated some of the personal, behavioral, and situational characteristics of charismatic leaders as identified by House and Shamir (1993). The interviewees did note the importance of referencing a strong moral imperative for collaborative work, and generally acted with strong self-confidence. However, they did not impose their own certainty on others and also were able to maintain a level of

humility and willingness to negotiate that would be atypical for charismatic leaders. Instead of publicly demonstrating their commitment to key values and personal goals implying that others must adopt them, the interviewees focused more on mutual sharing of everyone's values, and on group negotiation of group goals. A charismatic leadership style is characteristically used in situations where the leader can set high expectations and express confidence in a follower's ability to achieve those expectations; however, in collaborative contexts, the others involved are not followers, but rather collaborators. Many of the interviewees said they sought to motivate high-energy emotional states consistent with what was necessary to achieve their goals. This is consistent with what Yukl (1994) described as inducing coworkers to "transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the collaboration or team" (p. 94).

Transformational Leadership

The interviewees generally exhibited at least four of the five leadership practices represented by Kouzes and Posner's (1987) Leadership Challenge model. The interviewees were in strong agreement with the *inspiring a shared vision* and common purpose and "we" teamwork frame of *enabling others to act.* They promoted *modeling the way* by leading by example in a way congruent with their stated beliefs and purposes, but were sure to incorporate the beliefs and purposes of others in the group leadership dynamic. Most of the interviewees very pointedly *encouraged the heart* by supporting the commitment and action of others by being emotionally available and open to discourse that would build trust and deeper relationships. The one leadership practice that was not much demonstrated by the interviewees was *challenging the process*. While the leaders did encourage the group to experiment and innovate, this was seldom enacted by a decision of a single leading executive, and the role of the interviewees was much more centered on facilitating the process rather than challenging it.

Servant Leadership

Robert Greenleaf's "Servant Leadership" principles (as cited in Spears, 1995) probably best describes the overall leadership style and traits of the successful collaborative interviewees in this study. The servant leadership approach based on caring, openness, and empathy, attending to ethics and values, practicing team-oriented decision-making, and advancing the growth of others is a prescription for a collaborative leadership style. Servant leadership, often cast as a spiritually-based approach, is a leadership model primarily grounded in personal relationships, which is very similar to the caring, interpersonal style that the interviewees demonstrated. Several interviewees referred to ambiguously spiritual "deeper resonance" values that they say help group members connect with each other.

Connective Leadership and Achieving Leadership Styles

While this study did not use the same quantitative Achieving Styles Inventory that Lipman-Blumen (1996) developed, many of the interviewees demonstrated some of the pragmatic characteristics found in Lipman-Blumen's "Connective Leadership" model. By and large the Connective Leadership model aptly described the interviewees and their leadership styles. If they had taken the ASI survey, they likely would not have ranked highly in the direct achieving styles (intrinsic, competitive, and power), but would have ranked highly in the instrumental

social and the relational collaborative achieving styles. It would have been interesting to test each of the leaders' achieving styles using the ASI model, but it was not possible to use this model for the study.

Contrary to Lipman-Blumen's (1996) assertion that Connective Leaders more often engage in "stitching together shorter-term alliances" than building enduring teams, the interviewees tended to be more skewed toward longer-term collaborations. Some interviewees tended toward short-term teams; a second group engaged in both long- and short-term alliances; and a third cohort built enduring teams.

Collaborative Leadership

Chrislip and Larson's (1994) principles of collaborative leadership described the leadership style of the interviewees in this study in the most comprehensive way. All of the principles that Chrislip and Lawson promoted were verified by the study participants.   Those principles are reviewed below along with a few appropriate quotes from the interviewees that pertain to each of Chrislip and Lawson's principles.

Inspire commitment and action – Bringing people together when nothing else is working. One executive promoted using a stakeholder group process to "identify target partners and potential barriers to the work, assemble a list of questions, call those people and get feedback, pull together a synthesis and use that to plan the initial campaign planning meetings."

Lead as peer problem solver – Helping groups create visions and solve problems. The interviewees phrased this in terms of a collaborative effort to help partners "get the results that they didn't think that they were going to achieve" or "be successful in what they want to do [as well as] where you want them to go."

Build broad-based involvement – Ensuring group diversity and that all relevant stakeholders are present. One interviewee noted that it is always "the most impressive coalitions that get press." Several executives emphasized that collaborations of unusual players produce more change than collaborations among those of similar interests.

Sustain hope and participation – Valuing each person, setting incremental and achievable goals and encouraging celebrations along the way.   Interviewee I framed much of her job as "developing and keeping a realistic, energetic, inclusive process going where you make some very explicit decisions about the future."

Servant Leadership – Helping stakeholders do their work and looking out to make sure that others' needs are met. This was referenced by one interviewee by simply saying "Don't jam things down other peoples' throats," advising instead that one's stance be "How can I help?"

Leadership as a process – Inspiring through belief in the collaborative process and good working relationships with many people. An interviewee captured the importance of this concept, saying "Half of my job is spent in maintaining relationships with partners, funders, board members, allies, people that we want to be allies – easily half of my time."

DISCUSSION

This study describes some definitive dos and don'ts of collaborative leadership. The interviewees are all clearly leading practioners in the environmental advocacy community, and active leaders of collaborative efforts. While this research is by no means a how-to manual, it does identify leadership styles and provides some key ideas on how to lead collaborations in the environmental advocacy community. This research was clearly limited to leaders in the nonprofit environmental advocacy sector, and although some of the basic concepts may be transferable to other sectors, the results cannot be generalized to other sub-sectors or outside of the nonprofit sector.

The results should be of interest to leaders working to ensure the success of collaborative efforts in environmental advocacy and other fields. The results also give insights to nonprofit boards that may be helpful in hiring executive directors with the requisite skill sets for creating successful collaborations.

This research has some implications for the foundation funding community, especially as related to linking foundation funding to the success or failure of a collaborative effort. Foundations often have stated or unstated expectations that nonprofits should work together, but don't really have methods for determining how or when groups should link together. While this research by no means spells out those answers, it does provide some examples of ways to think about the nature of those working relationships. This study should provide some insight into questions that funders could ask of potential grantees.

Recommendations for Further Research

There are many potential avenues for future research that could elaborate upon this research study. This research focused on reviewing leadership styles effective in the environmental advocacy sector; it would be useful to do confirming research in a sample outside of this sphere.

The interview questions could be refined and developed into a quantitative model that could be more efficiently utilized in the same manner as Lipman-Blumen's Achieving Styles Inventory (1996) or Kouzes and Posner's Leadership Challenge (1987). It would also be interesting to do a study that compares persons nominated as successful collaborative leaders to other leaders not so nominated, to see if their responses vary significantly. It would also be interesting to study whether launching collaborations requires different leadership styles than maintaining established collaborative efforts. Studying executive leadership change in continuing collaborations to learn whether new leaders share qualities with their predecessors could provide new insights on topics such as change management and executive transition.

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