

## **Explorations Using the Social Change Model: Leadership Development among College Men and Women**

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From both historical and contemporary perspectives, the education and development of future leaders has served as a core function of higher education (Astin & Astin, 2000; Burkhardt & Zimmerman-Oster, 1999; Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education [CAS], 1999; Zimmerman-Oster & Burkhardt, 1999). This is evidenced in institutional mission statements (Boatman, 1999; CAS) and the recent proliferation of both curricular and co-curricular programs targeting college student leadership development (Zimmerman-Oster, 2003). The creation of these programs is consistent with research linking collegiate involvement to developmental gains (Astin, 1993). Further, studies have linked leadership programs with a variety of specific developmental outcomes including civic responsibility, multicultural awareness, skill development, and personal and societal awareness (Cress, Astin, Zimmerman-Oster, & Burkhardt, 2001; Posner, 2004). These findings situate leadership development not only as central to the goals of higher education, but also as a powerful tool for influencing student learning. However, research has also challenged traditionally held assumptions regarding the transferability of leadership models across gender differences (Kezar & Moriarty, 2000).

### **Divergent Leadership Paradigms**

Any examination of leadership must first be framed by the theoretical context that influences the understanding of leadership today. Despite the characterization of leadership as an easily recognized construct that is particularly difficult to comprehend (Burns, 1978), scholars have developed an array of theories to describe the phenomena, and a clear evolution of thought has led to the identification of two distinct paradigms framed by Rost (1993) as industrial and post-industrial. Most of the twentieth century has been governed by the industrial understanding of leadership, which focused primarily on the individual as leader, promoting command and control models, power and authority, rational and analytical thinking, and strong managerial influences (Rogers, 2003; Rost). This focus shaped the body of leadership research generated during this time period. Significant emphasis was placed on determining task versus interpersonal orientations and/or autocratic versus democratic leadership styles (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003).

The emerging paradigm of leadership sharply contrasts with its industrial counterpart and is grounded in human relations and characterized by shared goals (Allen &

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Cherrey, 2000; Higher Education Research Institute [HERI], 1996; Komives, Lucas, & McMahon, 1998; Rost, 1993). This post-industrial perspective is process-oriented, transformative, value-centered, non-coercive, and collaborative (Rogers, 2003; Rost). Much of the emerging research that explores this paradigm has focused on transformative (i.e., leadership focused on a shared, motivational partnership between leaders and followers) versus transactional (i.e., leadership focused on the exchange that occurs between leaders and followers) styles and determinants of leadership effectiveness (Eagly et al., 2003; Northouse, 2001).

### Research on Leadership Styles of Men and Women

Along with changing understandings of leadership, the emergence of the post-industrial paradigm contributed substantially to expanding accessibility of leadership to a variety of populations. Specifically, women benefited from a new conceptualization that incorporated stereotypically “feminine” skills and behaviors consistent with female gender roles (Eagly & Carli, 2003; Helgesen, 1990; Komives, 1994). These skills emphasized relationship-building, process-orientation, connectedness, and ethics of care and concern and transformed leaders into facilitators that perform more like coaches and teachers (Eagly & Carli; Helgesen). Further research established a consistency between women’s perceptions of leadership and the values asserted by the post-industrial paradigm (Boatwright & Egidio, 2003; Kezar, 2000). This inevitably led to the question of whether or not sex differences influence post-industrial leadership styles and ultimately provide a leadership advantage to women (Eagly & Carli; Helgesen). The question bears significant merit as:

(a) leadership behavior is often a major predictor of effectiveness (Eagly et al., 2003), (b) results could potentially help to refute stereotypical beliefs regarding women’s abilities to lead (Eagly, 1990; Eagly & Carli), and (c) research may serve as a source of empowerment for women (Eagly).

Although there has been a general consensus regarding the benefits of studying sex differences, the results of numerous studies conducted over the past 40 years often are contradictory. The plethora of research does, however, allow for the use of meta-analysis to examine overall trends in data (Northouse, 2001). In their early meta-analysis of more than 160 studies of sex-related differences, Eagly and Johnson (1990) found women employed a more democratic leadership style grounded in a strong interpersonal approach, whereas men relied more on task-related behaviors. However, these results were diminished in organizational settings and male dominated environments (Eagly & Johnson). More recently, a meta-analysis of 45 studies of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles by Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) found that women demonstrated more transformational behaviors (e.g., clearly communicated values, motivation, optimism, willingness to consider new perspectives, and attention to individual needs) than their male counterparts. Women also demonstrated higher levels of contingent reward, or behaviors in which the leader rewards followers for the completion of tasks. Both transformational leadership and contingent reward behaviors have been identified as predictors of effectiveness (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996), which would suggest that women may possess a leadership advantage under the post-industrial paradigm (Eagly et al.).

## Leadership among College Men and Women

Although many of the studies examined in the above meta-analyses drew samples from populations of college students, few used instruments designed specifically for that population. Furthermore, a shortage of instruments designed to specifically measure the leadership development of college students continues to exist, forcing researchers to rely on instruments with psychometrics generated on samples largely from the business and organizational leadership sectors (Posner, 2004). Given the essential role of higher education in preparing leaders, it would seem important to generate data utilizing an

instrument created for students and grounded in a theoretical understanding of leadership designed for students. A product of the post-industrial paradigm, the social change model of leadership (HERI, 1996) may be useful as a means to explore these issues.

The social change model was designed for college students and advocates for leadership development grounded in social responsibility and change for the common good (HERI, 1996). Of primary importance are increasing the individual's level of self-knowledge and capacity to engage others in collaborative work. This is accomplished through the development of seven core values that interact at the individual, group, and societal levels.

TABLE 1.

### Definitions of Core-Values of the Social Change Model (HERI, 1996)

**Consciousness of Self.** Awareness of the beliefs, values, attitudes, and emotions that motivate one to take action. *Sample Items:* I know myself pretty well. I can describe how I am similar to other people.

**Congruence.** Thinking, feeling, and behaving with consistency, genuineness, authenticity, and honesty towards others; actions are consistent with most deeply-held beliefs and convictions. *Sample Items:* I wish I could be more like myself around my friends. Being seen as a person of integrity is important to me.

**Commitment.** The psychic energy that motivates the individual to serve and that drives the collective effort; implies passion, intensity, and duration, and is directed toward both the group activity as well as its intended outcomes. *Sample Items:* I persist in carrying out my goals. I stick with others through the difficult times.

**Collaboration.** To work with others in a common effort; constitutes the cornerstone value of the group leadership effort because it empowers self and others through trust. *Sample Items:* I enjoy working with others toward common goals. I am able to trust the people with whom I work.

**Common Purpose.** To work with shared aims and values; facilitates the group's ability to engage in collective analysis of issues at hand and the task to be undertaken. *Sample Items:* Others in my group have similar goals to mine. I support what the group is trying to accomplish.

**Controversy with Civility.** Recognizes two fundamental realities of any creative group effort: that differences in viewpoint are inevitable, and that such differences must be aired openly, but with civility. Civility implies respect for others, a willingness to hear each others' views, and the exercise of restraint in criticizing the views and actions of others. *Sample Items:* Creativity can come from conflict. I struggle when group members have ideas that are different from mine.

**Citizenship.** The process whereby an individual and the collaborative group become responsibly connected to the community and the society through the leadership development activity. To be a good citizen is to work for positive change on the behalf of others and the community. *Sample Items:* I am willing to act for the rights of others. I believe I have a civic responsibility to the greater public.

**Change.** The ability to adapt to environments and situations that are constantly evolving, while maintaining the core functions of the group. *Sample Items:* Transition makes me uncomfortable. I can identify the differences between positive and negative change.

These values include: consciousness of self, congruence, commitment, collaboration, common purpose, controversy with civility, and citizenship. Definitions for each of these values can be found in Table 1. Collectively, they contribute to an eighth critical value of change. Despite the fact that this compelling model was developed for college students and is among the most well known (Moriarty & Kezar, 2000), there exists little published, empirical research regarding its use.

The purpose of this study is to examine the leadership styles of college men and women using the social change model as a conceptual framework. Specifically, are there differences between men and women across the eight core values of the model? This study contributes to the multiple benefits of sex comparison research highlighted by Eagly (1990) and may have direct implications for leadership development educators working in higher education.

## METHOD

This descriptive study will examine the hypothesis that there are mean differences between male and female college students across the eight constructs of the social change model of leadership development.

### Instrument

The Socially Responsible Leadership Scale (SRLS) is a 103-item instrument designed to measure leadership development across the eight constructs of the social change model (Tyree, 1998). Each construct comprises between 12 and 14 items. Table 1 provides sample items for each of the constructs in the instrument. Participants self report using a five-point Likert-type scale response continuum ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Psychometrics for this instrument were established in a pilot study

and confirmed in a final study (Tyree). An additional study has since validated the instrument (Rubin, 2000). Negative response items were reverse scored. Internal reliability for this instrument ranges from .69 for controversy with civility to .92 for citizenship. Chronbach alphas were conducted to determine reliabilities for this study and ranged from .71 for controversy with civility to .90 for citizenship.

### Participants

Participants were selected based on class enrollment at a large, public, doctoral-granting institution in the west. A random sample of 100 undergraduate courses was selected from the entire undergraduate course offering. A total of 60 professors granted permission to administer the instrument at the start of class. Informed consent was obtained from all participants. Instruments were distributed to 912 participants, and a total of 859 usable instruments were returned.

The sample represented each of the 10 undergraduate colleges and was consistent with institutional demographics. Slightly more women (51.6%,  $n = 443$ ) completed the instrument than men (47.7%,  $n = 410$ ). Racial/ethnic breakdowns were as follows: 61.7% White ( $n = 530$ ), 17.3% Asian Pacific Islander ( $n = 149$ ), 6.8% Hispanic ( $n = 58$ ), 5.5% Black ( $n = 47$ ), 4% multiracial ( $n = 34$ ), and 0.9% American Indian ( $n = 8$ ). Age was converted to a categorical variable with the following representation: 17 or younger (0.6%,  $n = 5$ ), 18-20 (29.2%,  $n = 251$ ), 21-23 (35.3%,  $n = 303$ ), 24-29 (19.8%,  $n = 170$ ), 30-39 (8.5%,  $n = 73$ ), 40 or older (6.2%,  $n = 53$ ).

## RESULTS

The research goal of this study is to test whether or not groups appear to collectively

differ on a set of correlated dependent variables. However, there is reason to believe that age may act as a confounding variable due to natural developmental progress and/ or maturation. Therefore, multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA) was selected for its sensitivity to the direction and size of correlations among dependent variables, measure of control for Type I error, and ability to remove variance attributable to a confounding variable (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998). In this case age, the covariate, is partialled out to test the relationship between the independent variable of sex and the eight dependent variables relating to the social change model (Hair et al.). Age was highly correlated with class standing and selected as a covariate in order to control for potential influences on the dependent variable. The Pillai-Bartlett trace is used as a test statistic in lieu of the Wilks's lambda given its greater robustness (Hair et al.; Olsen, 1976). The MANCOVA revealed significant differences between men's and women's scores (Pillai-

Bartlett trace = .06,  $F = 6.51$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The covariate of age was not significant (Pillai-Bartlett trace = .02,  $F = 1.71$ ,  $p .05$ ).

Further analysis was conducted at the univariate level using independent samples  $t$  tests to explore between group differences more closely (Hair et al., 1998). Given that age was not significant in the MANCOVA, it was not included in additional analyses. Table 2 provides the means, standard deviations, and  $t$  values for both men and women across each of the constructs. Women scored significantly higher than their male counterparts on the following constructs: consciousness of self ( $t = -2.69$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .2$ ), congruence ( $t = -4.63$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .3$ ), commitment ( $t = -3.95$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .3$ ), common purpose ( $t = -3.13$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .2$ ), citizenship ( $t = -5.69$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .4$ ), and change ( $t = -2.32$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $d = .2$ ). The constructs of collaboration ( $t = -1.89$ ,  $p .05$ ,  $d = .1$ ) and controversy with civility ( $t = -1.08$ ,  $p .05$ ,  $d = .1$ ) were not significantly different.

TABLE 2.  
Means, Standard Deviations, and  $t$  Values for Leadership Constructs by Gender  
( $N = 859$ )

Leadership Constructs	Male		Female		$t$ values
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Consciousness of Self	3.85	0.49	3.94	0.49	-2.69*
Congruence	3.91	0.51	4.06	0.48	-4.63*
Commitment	4.10	0.48	4.22	0.43	-3.95*
Collaboration	3.81	0.49	3.87	0.48	-1.89
Common Purpose	3.85	0.47	3.94	0.45	-3.13*
Controversy with Civility	3.69	0.43	3.72	0.40	-1.08
Citizenship	3.61	0.60	3.84	0.58	-5.69*
Change	3.78	0.52	3.86	0.48	-2.32*

\* $p < .05$

## DISCUSSION

An examination of means scores for men and women across the eight constructs representing the social change model reveals results ranging from a low of 3.61 (men on citizenship) to a high of 4.22 (women on commitment). The relatively high means suggest that college students may relate more readily to the post-industrial leadership values associated with the social change model than industrial models focused more on management and control. However, both men and women score lowest on the same three constructs: controversy with civility (men = 3.69, women = 3.72), citizenship (men = 3.61, women = 3.84), and change (men = 3.78, women = 3.86). Further examination of individual items from each construct reveals similarities for both men and women on controversy with civility. The construct comprises 14 items; however, 1 item in particular (“I do what I can to avoid conflict,” men = 2.59, women = 2.52) appears to lower the overall mean scores for both men and women when reverse scored. Taken within the context of the construct’s definition and scores on other items, there would appear to be a discrepancy based on both men’s and woman’s appreciation of conflict, but desire to avoid it. A similar pattern emerges when examining the construct of citizenship. Overall scores are lowered for both men and women by responses to a particular item (“I volunteer my time in the community,” men = 2.82, women = 3.04). Again, taken into consideration with the construct definition and scores on other items, this would suggest an inconsistency between students’ appreciation for engaged citizenship and actual participation in it. Together these differences appear to highlight a lack of congruence between knowing/being and doing as it relates to leadership development on these particular scales.

Mean scores also reveal that women score higher than men across all eight of the leadership constructs. The follow-up univariate analysis indicates that these differences are statistically significant across six of the eight scales. Only the constructs of collaboration and controversy with civility were not statistically significant. These descriptive results seem to support previous meta-analyses’ findings (Eagly et al., 2003; Eagly & Johnson, 1990) that suggest women possess an advantage when leadership is defined according to the emergent paradigm. Given the sample in this study, it can be concluded that a similar advantage under the emergent paradigm may be present for college women as well. However, the lack of statistical significance on the construct of collaboration is somewhat baffling as it represents a behavior directly tied to the process-driven emergent paradigm. This finding also contradicts previous research that indicated women use collaboration and shared decision-making more regularly than men (Eagly & Johnson). Given that the mean scores were relatively high for both men and women, it may be that men are either developing or being encouraged to enact more collaborative leadership styles and closing the statistical gap on this construct.

## Implications

Results from this study are relevant for student affairs professionals working in a wide array of functional areas and at multiple levels within the institutional environment. Specifically, they may be used to shape programmatic design for professionals using the social change model as a basis for preparing students for socially responsible leadership. Findings suggest a need to purposefully shape how we engage in and structure the leadership development experiences of students. Furthermore, the findings represent one of the first empirical

studies conducted using the social change model as a theoretical framework and can inform programmatic design.

Specifically, the overall results suggest that of the leadership constructs measured here, controversy with civility, citizenship, and change are the ones with which students struggle most regardless of sex. Professionals working with students in any type of leadership capacity should focus attention on developing these critical values more thoroughly. Direct attention should be paid to helping students close the gap between their values around controversy with civility and citizenship and their actions. Leadership development programs may offer seminars or workshops that engage students in group process while also providing them with conflict resolution skills and the resources to critically think about how their actions influence group-level outcomes. Additionally, community service and service learning opportunities should integrate reflection opportunities that connect students' values with their work within the community.

Statistical differences between men and women across six of the eight constructs point to the need for increased values-based leadership training and exploration for college men. Although mean scores were relatively high for men, colleges should work towards closing the performance gap between men and women. Professionals should actively engage men at all levels within the collegiate environment in discussions regarding how values inform their leadership philosophy. Specific attention should be directed at involving more men in leadership programs focused on training, education, and development. Additionally, given the strong role that peer interaction plays in college outcomes-based research (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005), providing opportunities for college men and women to work together

in leadership development initiatives may provide a powerful developmental tool.

Finally, results from this study have the potential to impact the ways in which women experience leadership on college campuses. First, findings should be shared broadly to help deconstruct persisting stereotypes regarding women's abilities to lead. Similarly, they may help to combat constraining beliefs that contribute to women's lack of self-confidence, understanding of institutional opportunities, or self-efficacy for leadership. Second, professionals should tap into women's skills as they relate to the social change model. Women should be recruited to serve as peer leadership educators, not only to develop their own skills, but also to serve as role models and help build the leadership capacities associated with the social change model in other students.

### Limitations and Future Research

This descriptive study has a number of limitations that should be considered when generalizing results to the broader college population. These limitations also point to future research that may be helpful in furthering the understanding of leadership development among college students. Due to the large sample size in this study, it is useful to consider issues relating to effect size. Although both multivariate and univariate analyses found significant differences in the means, effect sizes were small. Additionally, although the sample size in this study is large, it only represents a single institution. As such, caution should be paid to unique institutional characteristics that may influence the degree of generalizability to other institutional environments. Single sex institutions in particular may be a source of divergence. The establishment of a national normative data set using the SRLS would contribute significantly to professionals' ability to assess and direct

leadership program efforts.

As the social change model continues to grow in use, further research is needed that captures longitudinal changes in leadership development using the model. The descriptive nature of this study does not look at change over time. Additionally, attention should be paid to the various predictors within the collegiate environment that contribute to development. Do some involvement experiences (i.e., student governance, athletics, student employment, multicultural involvement, community service, positional roles, etc.) contribute more significantly than others to developmental gains? Do certain populations (i.e., race, class, age, ability, sexual orientation) perform differently using the social change model? What group level outcomes result from a positional leader's level of leadership development?

In summary, this study found significant

differences in the leadership development of college men and women. Further analysis identified key areas for developmental growth for both groups. These results have direct application to leadership development educators and should be considered in the design and delivery of leadership programs as a means to enhance their effectiveness. Additionally, the results have a broader application to student affairs generalists working to develop the leadership capacity of students in a wide array of environments. Findings may serve as a tool for practitioners to help diminish constraining beliefs that prevent women from reaching their full developmental potential.

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## Educational Performance and Persistence of Bereaved College Students

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Anecdotal evidence and clinical impressions suggest that bereaved college students are at risk for academic difficulties and dropout (Balk, 2001; Rickman, 1996; Toth, Stockton, & Browne, 2000; Zinner, 1985). However, no investigations have directly addressed the effects of a significant death loss on the educational performance or persistence of bereaved undergraduates. Before universities can initiate intervention programs targeted at fostering the academic success of bereaved college students, determining whether or not this population is at risk is necessary. As retention is a by-product of both academic and institutional success, the identification of at-

risk populations is of utmost importance in the world of higher education.

Tinto (1975, 1993) described the process of dropout as a longitudinal one in which students cyclically evaluate their commitment to their academic goals and to the institution they are attending. According to Tinto (1975), the outcome of this evaluation (e.g., dropout vs. persist) hinges upon the level of both academic and social integration experienced by students. Academic and social integration are largely determined by the "interactions between the individual and the academic and social systems of the college during the person's experiences in those systems" (p. 94). In

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