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culturally intelligent leadership model for service
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**AFRICAN SUSTAINABLE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:
A CULTURALLY INTELLIGENT LEADERSHIP MODEL
FOR SERVICE ORIENTED LEADERS AND ORGANISATIONS**

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***Abstract:** As a new generation of African leaders is emerging, so is the need to create appropriate and effective leadership paradigms for personal and organizational development. Servant leadership and cultural intelligence are essential pillars for identifying, developing and sustaining value-based leadership practices. Drawing from the Service Leadership model that emerged from the Depaul Leadership Project (DLP); this article outlines the competencies, orientations, methods and strategies for establishing effective and culturally intelligent sustainable leadership development programs. The Depaul leadership development model proposes that a collaborative, value-centered, and service-oriented perspective be at the center of an effective and sustainable African leadership development program. This innovative and cross-cultural leadership development model bridges theories and best practices from the sustainable development, service leadership and cultural intelligence paradigms in leadership and organizational development. National or international institutions committed to effective organizational and leadership development can adopt and adapt this African sustainable leadership development model to fit their needs.*

***Keywords:** cultural intelligence, leadership, development, service, sustainability*

Leadership is a universally recognized concept, but at the same time the practice and interpretation of it is culturally framed. During the past 50 years, there have been countless development initiatives empowering marginalized and impoverished populations in Sub-Saharan Africa. With the growing presence of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and more recently of local civil society organizations (CSOs), the leadership development work of churches has expanded into a collaborative global agenda fostering sustainable development initiatives. Yet, many still struggle to identify what does and does not work. Systems thinking applied to personal and organizational leadership is a fairly new field (Fullan 2004). This paper attempts to introduce and integrate the characteristics of three innovative paradigms in leadership and management: servant leadership, cultural intelligence and sustainable development.

Recent international and cross-cultural analysis of managers and leaders has shown how limiting the “one-size-fits-all” approach to management can be. Several questions need to be addressed: “How can the servant-service leadership paradigm be applicable in culturally diverse contexts?” “What African values reflect or contradict the servant-service leadership paradigm?” “How can this innovative, but still Western based and Christian inspired, model become more culturally intelligent?” The integrated leadership development model presented here bridges these insights of servant leadership with the cultural intelligence and sustainable development paradigm.

Through a comparative study of 42 in-depth interviews of leaders working in the United States, Latin America, Europe and East Africa, the DePaul Leadership Project (DLP) has formulated culturally appropriate assessments measuring personal, collective, organizational and international leadership practices (Tavanti 2005). The cultural relevance and validity of this emerged leadership model is placed here in relation to the needs and best practices of African leadership development. The three leadership paradigms that emerged during the interviews, namely servant leadership, cultural intelligence and sustainable organizations are combined to formulate an African sustainable leadership development model adaptable by individuals and organizations. In the examination of the service-servant paradigm with the cultural-intelligence and sustainable development paradigm we suggest an integrated model for sustainable and organizational leadership development. This framework analysis on the emerged DLP paradigms, orientations and competencies could serve as a system thinking template for evaluating African best practices in leadership development.¹

The Servant-Service Leadership Paradigm

Robert K. Greenleaf, the creator of the servant leadership principles, affirms that “leaders must be servants first.” This strong statement suggests that authentic leadership development programs need to orient their efforts to form service-oriented leaders and organizations. Such leaders are less concerned about personal achievements or past failures and are more excited about serving their countries and organizations in the challenges of the future. What does service-orientation mean in the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts of Africa? Before answering this question, let’s examine the meaning of this paradigm as applied to personal and organizational leadership development.

As explained by Robert K. Greenleaf in his essay 'The Servant as Leader' in 1970, servant leadership emphasizes the need for leaders and organizations to focus on meeting the needs of others. Current personal and organizational leadership studies put an emphasis on a sense of community, empowerment, shared authority, and relational power. These elements have been recognized by numerous authors as indicators of the great promise represented by servant leadership (Bass 2000). Despite the fact that to date

¹ The African sustainable leadership models and paradigms illustrated in this paper serve as frameworks for the consultative and leadership development initiatives of the Depaul Leadership Project (DLP) in East Africa. They also serve to evaluate and plan initiatives of the East African Institute of Collaboration (EAIC) and for the Vincentian Family’s Think Tank initiative for the analysis of organizational best practices in poverty eradication.

there are very few solid research studies on the application and characteristics of servant leadership (listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community) the notion of servant leadership has been gaining momentum across value-oriented people and institutions (Northouse 2003: 308).

Servant leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader. Greenleaf believed that the servant-leader is one who is servant first. In his book *The Servant as Leader* he wrote: "It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. The best test is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or at least, not be further deprived?" (Greenleaf & Spears 2002: 24). The servant-leadership paradigm has inspired leadership and management authors like Stephen Covey, Scott Peck, Ken Blanchard, Peter Block, James Hunter, and Max DePree among others.

The servant-service leadership paradigm has been applied in the business, government and nonprofit sectors. School administrators and higher education institutions have also applied this paradigm to their missions and curriculums. The current popular "service-learning" program across universities emerged in the 1980s as a synthesis between the learning-by-doing or experiential learning, with the insights of civic engagement and servant leadership. Several large, medium and small sized corporations have successfully applied and integrated the servant-service leadership paradigm into their practices of managing-by-values (Blanchard & O'Connor 1997; Spears 1996).

The servant-leadership paradigm has been applied to the study of corporations and other service-oriented organizations. Several Fortune 100 companies have applied and advocated for servant leadership as a new paradigm for success. According to the study of Sen Sendjaya and James C. Sarros (2002) six criteria identify these servant leadership companies: openness and fairness, camaraderie/friendliness, opportunities, pride in work and company, pay/benefits, and security (Sendjaya & Sarros 2002: 57). In the attempt to study and assess the health and service orientation of organizations, Dr. Jim Laub developed the Organizational Leadership Assessment (OLA) in 1998. The purpose of this assessment, originally called SOLA (for servant), is promoting the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization (Laub 1999). In the OLA model, healthy servant leadership organizations reflect the following six characteristics: (1) display authenticity, (2) value people, (3) develop people, (4) build community, (5) provide leadership and (6) share leadership. The uniqueness of the OLA instrument is to align personal self-perceptions of practices with the culture of the organization.

TABLE 1

Service Leadership Characteristics

Display Authenticity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open & Accountable• Willing to Learn• Honesty & Integrity
Value People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Serve others first• Believe & Trust in people• Listen receptively
Develop People	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide for learning• Model appropriate behavior• Build up through affirmation
Build Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build relationships• Work collaboratively• Value differences
Provide Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Envision the future• Take initiative• Clarify goals
Share Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share the vision• Share the power• Share the status

The SERV*OR model is another application of the Servant-leadership paradigm to personal and organizational leadership assessments. The SERV*OR model of organizational service orientation is developed and validated. The model measures employee perceptions of an organization's service practices, policies and procedures. It incorporates 10 dimensions of service orientation including servant leadership, service visions, customer treatment and employee empowerment. The model also emphasizes service encounters, servant leadership by management, human resource management and service systems created for quality customer service (Lytle, Hom & Mokwa 1998). The analysis of this model suggests that servant-leadership and service vision are foundational leadership elements within the practice and development of service-oriented individuals and organizations. Although SERV*OR focus on customer service interpretation of servant leadership, it attempts to bridge the individual's "servant leadership" characteristics with the service-orientation and mission of the orientation.

These types of assessments are important contributions to the empirical and systematic studies of servant and service leadership paradigms applied to personal and organizational practice. Yet, they often fail to assess the intercultural validity as well as the sustainable application of such models into leadership development programs. The "one-size-fits-all" approach of management has proved to be wrong by more recent international and cross-cultural analysis of managers and leaders. Therefore the questions

should be “How can the servant-service leadership paradigm be applicable in culturally diverse contexts?” “What African values reflect or contradict the servant-service leadership paradigm?” “How can this innovative, but still Western based and Christian inspired, model become more culturally intelligent?” The integrated leadership development model suggested here bridges the insights of servant leadership with the cultural intelligence and sustainable development paradigm.

The Cultural Intelligence Paradigm

David C Thomas and Kerr Inkson, the authors of Cultural Intelligence, argue that leaders and managers must develop skills for recognizing cross-cultural difference and choosing appropriate behaviors according to each cross-cultural context (Thomas & Inkson 2004). The term 'Cultural Intelligence' or CQ, relates to Daniel Goleman's Emotional Intelligence (EQ). The two concepts are actually comparable in the sense that they both involve high levels of self-awareness, as well as an ability to connect with and understand others (relational awareness). Both types of intelligences are rooted in the concept of social intelligence (Goody 1995).

Leadership is a concept more or less universally recognized, but the practice and interpretation springs from a unique cultural context. Local cultures and contexts interpret leadership across multiple meaning-making and value-belief systems (Ciulla 2003). The GLOBE model proposed by House, Javidan, Hanges, and Dorfman (2002) is based on the premise that leaders and followers in specific cultures behave, assume and expect differently across different cultural contexts. Because of the increased speed and intensity of connections in our global era, leaders and organizations must strive to recognize and adapt to local differences and the ever changing demands of local-global (glocal) contexts.²

A number of scholars have recognized the importance of cultural variables in leadership and organizational processes and behaviors (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005; Lucas & Chambers 2003; Thomas & Inkson 2004; Earley & Ang 2003). Cultural diversity is interpreted in its large sense not limited to national and ethnic notions, but as "shared motives, values, beliefs, identities and interpretations or meanings of significant events that result from common experiences of members of collectives and are transmitted across age generations" (House, Javidan, Hanges & Dorfman 2002: 5). This definition obviously includes the cultures and subcultures of organizations.

TABLE 2
CQ Development Characteristics

Cultural Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self Awareness • Identity with own culture • Personal interpretation and practices of culture
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² *Glocalization* as a term, though originating in the 1980s from within Japanese business practices, was first popularized in the English-speaking world by the British sociologist Roland Robertson in the 1990s.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethnocentric thinking
Cultural Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salient knowledge of particular culture of other • Health belief, practices and behavior • Stereotyping of other culture • History and traditions • Power distribution
Cultural Sensitivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy • Interpersonal communication skills • Acceptance and trust • Respect • Appropriateness
Cultural Competency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment skills • Diagnostic skills • Clinical skills

Earley and Mosakowski (2004) suggest a definition of CQ that has to do more with skills and techniques than attitudes and values. Our interpretation of cultural intelligence is more comprehensive than this. Cultural intelligence includes what is also known as intercultural competencies and, even more, intercultural awareness. Ata Karim (2003) suggests intercultural consciousness in leadership as a “synergistic combination of essential cognitive, emotional, and behavioral knowledge and skills for intercultural competence and a commitment to consistent, caring, and ethical application of those skills and knowledge” (Karim 2003: 37). The concept of intercultural consciousness indicates the moral and ethical responsibility that leaders and organizations have to engage in cultural intelligence programs and collaborative relations.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s most NGOs and church missionary projects operating in the African continent focused their work on the importance of acculturation and local adaptation. Yet, most schools, hospitals and other large institutions remained tied to a dependent and somehow unsustainable model. The cultural intelligence paradigm offers new criteria for interpreting the cultural feasibility and intercultural effectiveness of leadership and organizational related projects and initiatives. The cultural intelligence paradigm requires extensive critical analysis of individual and collective identities and actions.

The Sustainable Development Paradigm

The sustainable development paradigm emerged in the 1980s in an attempt to explore the relationship between development and the environment (Dresner 2002). The application of the sustainable development paradigm to leadership and organizational development is essential for establishing the connection between economic progress and societal development and environmental concerns. Sustainability is, therefore, closely

connected to the triple bottom line (TBL) concept (Henriques & Richardson 2004). The TBL notion emerged in the 1990s as a deepening of the organizational applications of the sustainability paradigms (Edwards 2005). The TBL notion suggests that leaders must pay attention to development that is equally driven by economic interests, and the respect of human dignity and of local contexts. Today numerous organizations are active in their annual TBL reporting which entails reporting on economic, social, and environmental issues (Laszlo 2003).

According to the World Commission of Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) report, sustainable development is “a process of change in which the exploitation of resources, direction of investments, orientation of technological development, and institutional change are made consistent with future as well as present needs” (WCED 1987: 9). Apart from attempting to reconcile economic growth with environmental protection, the sustainable development agenda of Brundtland also focuses on social justice and human development within the framework of social equity and the equitable distribution and utilization of resources (Banerjee 2003).

Sustainability and sustainable development, which are used interchangeably in both academic and popular discourses, mean different things to different people. While some stress social relations in particular ecological contexts, others stress the primacy of social justice (Edwards 2005). In an attempt to clarify the sustainability concept and explore its relevance to management, Thomas N. Gladwin, James J. Kennelly and Tara-Shelomith Krause (1995) identified several themes, including human development, inclusiveness (of ecological, economic, political, technological, and social systems), connectivity (of sociopolitical, economic, and environmental goals), equity (fair distribution of resources and property rights), prudence (avoiding irreversibilities and recognizing carrying capacities), and security (achieving a safe, healthy, and high quality of life).

TABLE 3

Human Development Sustainability Themes

Inclusiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecological Systems • Economic Systems • Political Systems • Technological Systems • Social Systems
Connectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sociopolitical goals • Economic goals • Environmental goals
Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair distribution of resources • Property rights
Prudence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding irreversibilities • Recognizing carrying capacities

Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Achieving a safe life• Healthy life• High quality of life
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There is a need to identify and promote an integrated approach to sustainable development. These terms can be seen as contradictory. To sustain suggests to support from below, to supply with nourishment; while development resembles more an act of control, an induced process, often promoted and managed by external agents operating under the tenets of modern Western science (Banerjee 2003). This idiosyncrasy, more than a dualism, is what is needed for attaining an integrated model of effective leadership and organizational development in the African contexts.

Towards an Integrated African Model of Leadership Development

How do these leadership development paradigms relate to African contexts? In his recent visit to Ghana, Henry Mintzberg challenged the assumption that “we” westerners can develop leaders **as we think to develop countries** (Mintzberg, 2006). The fact that some best practices in leadership development work in Chicago does not necessarily mean that they fit the local needs and specificity of other contexts in Africa. As sustainable development theories and practices suggest, we cannot have a true socio-economic development unless there is true understanding of local needs and possibilities. Imposed top down leadership development models or “best practices” may obviously raise reactions **from the part of African leaders**. How would managers in Chicago react to a team of consultants arriving from Tanzania with their list of “best practices”? In his analysis of “cross-cultural” leaders such as Kofi Annan, the Ghanaian Secretary General of the United Nations, Mintzberg suggests that an “engaging” model of leadership, rather than heroic, would work best to promote leadership development in African contexts. The concept of engaging leadership resembles the characteristics previously described in the servant-service leadership paradigm. In Mintzberg’s words, “true leaders engage others with their thoughtfulness and humility because they engage themselves in what they are doing – and not for personal gain. Such leaders bring out the energy that exists naturally within people. If there is a heroic dimension to their behavior, it is not by acting heroically as much as by enabling other people to act heroically.” (Mintzberg 2006: 4).

The diverse cultures of the African continent present common dimensions comparable to the values expressed in the service, cultural and sustainability paradigms. Mbigi (1995) invites organizations in Africa to build their programs in a more open dialogue with indigenous cultural practices. Several concepts, ideas and metaphors drawn from African culture fit well with the transformational and servant leadership model. The author describes the African value and practice of “Ubuntu,” the solidarity or brotherhood which arises among people within “marginalized” or “disadvantaged” groups (Mbigi 1995: 7). Although expressed in various languages and cultural worldviews, this “sense of service to the poor” is a value embedded in the collective shared experience of African people. “A thumb working on its own is useless” is one among many proverbs that reflects the

collective African identity. Mbigi advocates that effective leadership development programs and approaches to training in organizations must take into account the interconnectedness of African people (Mbigi 1995: 18-24).

People in management and leadership positions in African nonprofit and social service organizations often find themselves pulled in two different directions. They are expected to be transparent and accountable like private businesses but their “customers” or “clients” do not expect them to operate like businesses. An appropriate way of handling this situation is for organizations to focus on leadership development. Only an integrated model of leadership development that would reconcile Western and African management values would be capable of fostering sustainable leadership development programs in African contexts. The service paradigm applied to leaders and organizations in Africa serves as an example. While hierarchical systems in organizations are a functional reality, leaders must undergo a change in how they perceive themselves and their role in an organization as well as how the organization operates. Quoting Drucker and Pollard, “leaders will have to see themselves as students... (and) must always be prepared to serve and never ask someone to do something that they are not ready to do themselves,” (Garone & The Conference Board 1999: 18). Due to the partnerships that many indigenous, African civil society organizations (CSOs) have with larger, multinational organizations, it is important that CSOs recognize that the leadership structures of their partners are changing away from a command-and-control model and that CSO leaders may have to do the same in order to maintain the partnership.

In the Handbook for Leadership Development, the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) defines leadership development as “the expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes” (McCauley & Velsor 2003: ??). The right process for cross-cultural and effective development programs is not designing a “shopping list” or “fast-forwarding” types of programs. Rather, they need to integrate the development leaders with organization and team development. The emphasis is not on developing a list of skills but to increase the capacity to learn from experience and be open to change if necessary. This attitude of humility encourages a willingness to learn and is an essential component for both the individual's and the organization's capacity building. Neither leaders nor organizations can become great, unless they go beyond striving to be the best and enter into an ongoing process of integrated development. Hoppe (2003) argues that effective and integrated leadership development program must be cross-culturally intelligent. The essential components of the development experience (assessment, challenge and support) as well as the development process at the organizational level must be adapted and sustained through intercultural dialogue.

The leadership model that emerged from the ongoing research of the DePaul Leadership Project (DLP) is an example of an integrated model. Through the multilevel comparative research and leadership development programs the DLP aims to gather and learn from value-oriented personal and organizational best practices. Since its foundation in 2003, the project has assessed and trained more than 650 participants worldwide. Based on the inspiring values and modern applications of St. Vincent de Paul (1581-1660), the DLP identifies the characteristics of Vincentian leadership in four orientations

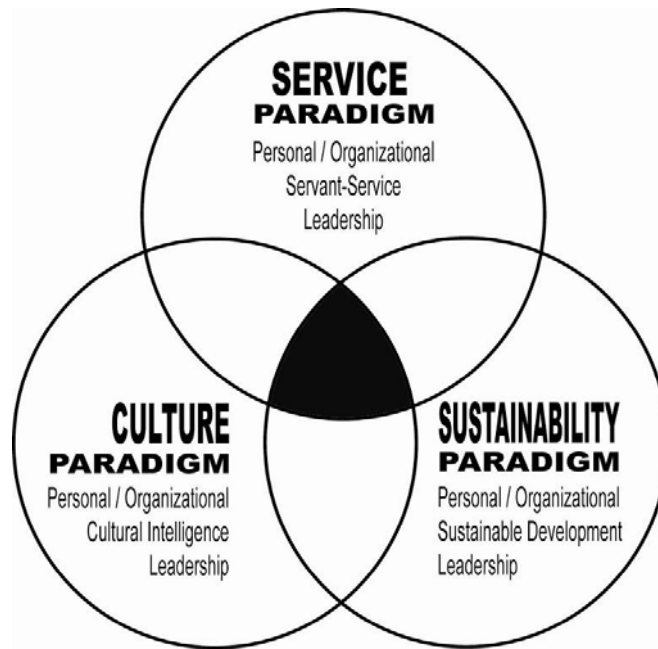
(mission, task, people and service) and 12 competencies (Vision, Value, Innovation, Commitment, Pragmatism, Risk-taking, Inclusiveness, Collaboration, Communication, Service, Empowerment and Social Justice). Throughout the international collaboration with nonprofit organizations and service institutions worldwide, the DLP has identified a fifth orientation measuring five cross-cultural leadership competencies: Openness, Flexibility, Identity, Empathy and Respect. These orientations and the corresponding competencies reflect Geert Hofstede’s cultural dimensions of masculinity, individualism, risk-taking, power inequality, and short-term orientation (Hofstede & Hofstede 2005; Tavanti 2005).

TABLE 4
DLP Orientations and Competencies

Mission Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vision Competency • Value Competency • Innovation Competency
Task Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment Competency • Pragmatism Competency • Risk-taking Competency
People Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusiveness Competency • Collaboration Competency • Communication Competency
Service Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service Competency • Empowerment Competency • Social Justice Competency
Cross-cultural Orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Openness Competency • Flexibility Competency • Identity Competency • Empathy Competency • Respect Competency

The DLP model is a comprehensive and inclusive service-oriented leadership model assessing and promoting value-service oriented leadership practices of people in organizations. Their service, mission and value oriented leadership practices are evaluated in balance with their commitment and accomplishments of tasks, and their ability to engage in collaborative, communicative and inclusive interpersonal relations. The servant-leadership paradigm and the cultural intelligence – intercultural consciousness paradigms are embedded in the orientations and competencies of the DLP model. The sustainability paradigm, when combined with the service and culture paradigms, forms an integrated model of three intersecting circles that can be used to understand both personal and organizational leadership development practices.

FIGURE 1
The Integrated Leadership Development Model



This integrated model for leadership development goes along with Jim Collins’ (2001) findings of what makes good organizations become great. His “hedgehog” concept is exemplified in three interconnecting circles of (1) What you are deeply passionate about? (2) What can you be the best in the world at doing? (3) What drives your economic engine? These three questions reflect the service, culture and sustainability paradigm of our leadership development integrated model. It is suggested that African leadership and organizational development programs can reach their best efforts if they follow and re-evaluate their practices through these three frameworks.

Vincent de Paul, the founder of organized charity used to say “It is not enough to do good, it must be done well.” Many times, it is the small things that count; like an act of charity. But in organizational leadership development it is a well-thought-out plan and deliberate actions that make a difference. Vincent understood this and dedicated his leadership vision, managerial skills and organizational inventiveness to making a sustainable impact to serve disadvantaged populations worldwide. He understood the idea that the good intentions of a few heroic leaders are not enough to alleviate world poverty (Sacks 2005). This integrated model suggests that good mission statements, plans and visions of individuals have the possibility to become great organizations and best practices when developed and thoughtfully discerned through economic, cultural and service paradigms. Using Collins’ vocabulary and cultural context, the intersection of these circles provides teams and organizations across the three sectors with “Big, Hairy, and Audacious Goals” (BHAG) to do great things (Collins 2001 and 2005). In the African context, each organization has to come up with their own version of “big, risk-taking and bold” goals to achieve great things. The three paradigms are not about settings specific goals but help ask the hard questions and gain an understanding of an individual and organization’s leadership development assumptions and practices.

In Conclusion:

In this article, we have analyzed three recent trends in leadership development theory. The Greenleaf Center suggests that the servant leadership paradigm can be applied as an institutional philosophy, a model in for-profit as well as not-for-profit organizations, trustee education, community leadership organizations, experiential and leadership education, and, finally, in training programs related to personal and spiritual growth (Spears & Lawrence 2001; Spears & Greenleaf 1998). We have argued that the service-servant leadership paradigm is relevant across sectors, beliefs and cultural contexts. We suggested that certain characteristics of African philosophies and cultures fit (if not extend) the concept and values of servant leadership. We would suggest that a service-oriented organizational leadership development approach could be even more appropriate for African contexts. Our integrated leadership development model suggests how the service, culture and sustainability paradigms resemble Jim Collins' good-to-great and hedgehog concept.

A follow up of this framework analysis paper would be to create a matrix that showed the overlap between the three paradigms as well as their unique characteristics. A critical analysis of this model would suggest its limitations and simplifications. Nevertheless the refinement of this model will occur as our research goes into the application and analysis of best practices in the East African context of nonprofit and service sector organizations. To analyze the model in a broader perspective, the DLP will apply a comparative analysis across contexts and sectors. We anticipate that the service paradigm will receive more acceptance than the sustainability model across nonprofit, volunteer and religious organizations that often operate in a more defined environment and attract motivated employees. We also anticipate that these organizations will resist undergoing appropriate evaluation processes of their intercultural competencies and sustainability impact.

The need for understanding the nature of leadership development and implementing effective leadership development practices will likely be greater than ever before. At the same time, we find ourselves hopeful by looking at the possibilities of integrating personal leadership development with organizational development. We are also optimistic that the integration of systems thinking, contextual learning and personal development will become better and more articulated in the years to come. The learning and comparative analysis of many "engaging" African best practices in organizational leadership development will have a profound effect on poverty reduction strategies, democratization, decision making and human rights.

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