CREATIVE DESTRUCTION AND ADAPTIVE REEMERGENCE:
A COMPARISON AND SYNTHESIS OF HEIFETZ'S ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP THEORY
AND SHARMER'S EMERGING LEADERSHIP THEORY (THEORY U)

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Introduction

We are in "the age of disruption," according to Otto Scharmer (2016, p. 1). Scharmer outlines three major disruptions that have already rocked the 21st Century: geopolitical safety (September 11, 2011 terrorist attack), economic stability (2008 financial crisis), and political stability (election of Trump and other far right destabilizers). Therefore, he predicts, "We know that the years ahead will bring chaos, conflict, collapse, and confusion" (2016, p. 5).

Philosopher and leadership consultant, Peter Koestenbaum (LaBarre, 2000) explains the existential crisis of the 21st Century: "We're living in a peculiar time: It's marked by … acute alienation… What I call the 'new-economy pathology' is driven by impossible demands — better quality, lower prices, faster innovation — that generate an unprecedented form of stress" (p. 2).

Unfortunately, as Koestenbaum argues, society isn't coping with this existential stress well: "There is a terrible defect at the core of how we think about people and organizations today. There is little or no tolerance for the kinds of character-building conversations that pave the way for meaningful change" (LaBarre, 2000, p. 3). Ronald Heifetz and Otto Scharmer guide us through the jungle of distractions to the real issues confronting us as individuals, as organizations, as nations, and as a global society.

Theoretical Overview

Heifetz's adaptive leadership theory, exemplified in *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (1994), and Scharmer's Theory U, expressed and applied in *Leading from the Emerging Future* (2014) offer two distinct paths of creative deconstruction and adaptive reemergence. In their own way, each offers leaders tools to see through the mist of urgent tasks and status quo paradigms to discern the key adaptive challenges and how to mobilize teams to address the real issues in authentically helpful ways.

Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership Theory

Joe Flower (1995) accurately summarizes, "Heifetz pulls leadership apart along two fault lines: the difference between leadership and authority, and the difference between technical answers and adaptive work" (p. 1). Heifetz's work focuses on leadership during times of intense change. Given the radical, discontinuous change of the 21st Century, all organizations and all leaders may need to do what Heifetz calls "adaptive work."

The differentiation of technical and adaptive problems is foundational to Heifetz's framework. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) explain: "Technical problems… can be solved applying … the organization's current problem-solving processes. Adaptive problems resist these … require individuals throughout the organization to alter their ways; as the people themselves are the problem, the solution lies with them" (p. 1). To identify an adaptive challenge, the distinguishing question is: "Does making progress on this problem require changes in people's

values, attitudes, or habits of behavior?" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 87). In times of change and conflict, most leaders and most followers look to technical solutions to restore a sense of equilibrium even when deeper adaptive change is needed for genuine progress (Heifetz, 1994). Identifying the key adaptive change needed is fundamental to successful leadership.

For Heifetz, the distinction of leadership and authority is critical. Leadership is essentially mobilizing people to do adaptive work — to overcome tough problems related to conflicts between their aspirational values and their current reality. Authority may be formal/positional or informal, but either way it is essentially social power that others give to an individual in exchange for providing "direction, protection, and order" (Heifetz, 1994, p. 125). However, not all leaders have positional authority, and not all with positions of authority actually act as leaders (Heifetz, 1994). In fact, as Heifetz explains, "people in positions of authority are often constrained in their exercise of leadership, because they are not expected to disturb people. … Many people in authority simply avoid the risks and hazards that come from challenging people to tackle tough problems" (Flower, 1995). Therefore, all organizations need creative deviants, people without positional authority, who will disrupt the stable system to identify blind spots, instigate difficult but necessary conversations, and prod the organization to engage adaptive challenges (Heifetz, 1994).

In explaining and applying adaptive leadership, Heifetz (1994) lays out several concepts which are fundamental to the practice of adaptive leadership. First, adaptive leadership is less about a leader getting people to follow his/her vision, and more about identifying the key challenges and empowering the people to face reality and develop adaptive solutions together (Flower, 1995). Second, orchestrating healthy conflict is critical to adaptive change. Conflict opens the doors to deeper insight, creativity, and innovation (Heifetz, 1994). Third, leaders must "cook the conflict" in a "holding zone," keeping the "heat" high enough to maintain urgency without letting it "boil over" (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002). Fourth, leaders engaged in this difficult work will need to spend significant time on inner work, differentiating self from role, rooting in spiritual sources of power, and healing the wounds sustained in the midst of battle (Heifetz, 1994).

Northouse (2016) provides a helpful summary: "Adaptive leadership focuses on the *adaptations* required of people in response to changing environments" (p. 257). Therefore, as Northouse continues, adaptive leaders challenge people in their organizations "to face difficult challenges, providing them with the space or opportunity they need to learn new ways of dealing with the inevitable changes in assumptions, perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that they are likely to encounter in addressing real problems" (p. 258).

Scharmer's Theory U.

In their exploration of how organizations undergo deep change, Peter Senge, Joseph Jaworski, Bety Sue Flower, and Otto Scharmer introduced the concept of "presencing" in their book *Presence: An Exploration of Profound Change in People, Organizations, and Society* (2005). Scharmer (2007) summarizes presencing as "a heightened state of attention that allows individuals and groups to shift the inner place from which they function. When that shift happens, people begin to operate from a future space of possibility that they feel wants to emerge."

Next, in *Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges* (2007), Scharmer then situated the concept of presencing within a "U-shaped" framework for facilitating deep change in organizations and in society. Theory U has five basic steps:

1. "Co-initiating: build common intent." Gather core group who will work together on an issue of shared importance in a "process of deep listening — listening to what life calls you and others to do" (Scharmer, 2007, p. 6.)

2. "Co-sensing: observe, observe, observe. Go to the places of most potential and listen with your mind and heart wide open" (p. 6).

3. "Presencing: Connect to the source of inspiration and common will. Go to the place of silence and allow the inner knowing to emerge" (p. 7).

4. "Co-creating: Prototype the new in living examples to explore the future by doing" (p. 7). Develop and test initial ideas in real time, for immediate feedback and refinements.

5. "Co-evolving: Embody the new in ecosystems that facilitate seeing and acting from the whole" (p. 8).

Together, these five steps provide a guide for "multi-stakeholder innovation" (p. 12).

Together with Kaitrin Kaufer, Scharmer continued to expand on and apply Theory U in *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to Eco-System Economies* (2013). Here, Scharmer identifies eight key disconnects or "bubbles" causing major social disruptions (2013, pp. 46-47):

1. Financial bubble: A disconnect between financial speculation and real values threatens the economy.

2. Infinite-growth bubble: Expectations of ever increasing consumption threaten the environment.

3. Income bubble: The polarization of income inequality undermines human rights.

4. Leadership bubble: The separation of leaders and people results in broad disempowerment for both groups.

5. Consumerism Bubble: Material consumption (illustrated through GDP) does not result in improvements in actual well-being.

6. Governance Bubble: The voiceless masses are underserved by and have no influence on the systems of government.

7. Ownership Bubble: State and private property ownership lead to misuse of the ecological and social commons.

8. Technology Bubble: Tech innovation primarily pampers the wealthy rather than helping to solve real societal needs.

For Scharmer (2013), each of these bubbles represents the fundamental disconnect of mind and matter. Together, they are disrupting and threatening to undo the foundations of human society.

Having established a sense of urgency, Scharmer (2013) calls on leaders to enter a journey of self and social discovery through the Theory U process. The downward journey is

essentially a process of listening to our context and deconstructing old, outdated mental models. At the bottom of the U, leaders connect with their true Self, discern their true vocation (their Work), and sense the future that "wants to emerge" (p. 163). The upward swing of the U involves working with others to co-create new ways of engaging the world and then embedding these changes in the fabric of our ecosystems. In other words, the downward journey is deconstructing the ego-systems of selfishness, and the upward journey is reconstructing eco-systems of shared thriving. For Scharmer, the path forward for individuals, for organizations, and for society at large is to enter this journey of deeply listening to each other and ourselves, next sensing the future solutions, and then helping the future become real among us.

<p style="text-align:center">Theoretical Foundations</p>

Heifetz and Scharmer are both cartographers on the seas of change. They are mapping the same seas using different language and different navigational methods, but they share several thought sources. Furthermore, they have developed their theories simultaneously with other explorers in the same territories. Before delineating their unique theoretical foundations, it may be helpful to describe what they share in common.

Shared foundations.

First, both adaptive leadership and theory U are influenced by systems thinking. Northouse (2016) summarizes adaptive leadership's connection with a systems perspective as follows: "This approach assumes that many problems people face are embedded in complicated interactive systems. Problems are viewed as complex with many facets, dynamic in that they can evolved and change, and connected to others in a web of relationships" (p. 259).

Peter Senge was an influential systemic thinker for both Scharmer and Heifetz. As Heifetz (1994) explains that adaptive leadership is essentially helping organizations learn, he specifically references Senge's *The Fifth Discipline* (1990). Scharmer (2013) summarizes *The Fifth Discipline* as the synthesis of "(1) system dynamics, (2) organizational change, and (3) the creative process" (p. 17). Senge's observation that many practitioners were not able to utilize the five disciplines well launched Senge, Scharmer, and others on a massive interview project to determine what enables authentic innovation and systemic breakthrough. *Presence, Theory U,* and *Leading from the Emerging Future* are all direct outflows of this research prompted by Senge's work (Scharmer, 2013).

Second, both Scharmer and Heifetz operate within the orbit of Complexity Leadership Theory. Marion and Uhl-Bien (2007) summarize Complexity Theory: "the interaction of different 'things' (people, ideas, chemicals, species, etc.), combined with various mechanisms that emerge when adaptive entities interact (catalysis, elaboration, alteration, interdependency, etc.), produce novel outcomes. Like natural selection, this process is driven by adaptive tension" (p. 293).

According to Northouse (2016), Adaptive Leadership "has been conceptualized as an element or subset of Complexity Leadership Theory" (p. 260). As they prepare to unfold a model of Complexity Leadership Theory, Uhl-Bien, Marrion, and McKelvey (2007) reference Heifetz (1994) as they suggest that leadership is not only positional authority but also "an emergent, interactive dynamic— a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change emerges when heterogeneous agents interact in networks in ways that produce new patterns of behavior or new modes of operating" (p. 299). Although Uhl-Bien and others build

on Heifetz's work with Adaptive Leadership, it seems that Heifetz offered an early expression within the same flow of Complexity Leadership Theory. Similarly, due to Scharmer's (2013) vast reach (eight disconnects that span all of society), emphasis on social disruption, and encouragement of bottom-up leadership, Theory U and emerging leadership would seem to operate in a similar realm.

Third, both Adaptive Leadership and Theory U seem to be influenced by post-heroic leadership theory. Fletcher (2004) explains that Mary Parker Follett is recognized as the first recognized theorist in the post-heroic leadership movement for her acknowledgement nearly a century ago that different team members may provide the needed leadership depending on the demands of the situation. Fletcher (2004) offers three basic characteristics of post-heroic leadership: (1) "Leadership as practice: shared and distributed," (2) "Leadership asocial process: interactions," (3) "Leadership as learning: outcomes" (p. 648-9). This definition resonates well with both Adaptive Leadership and Theory U. It's not surprising then that Fletcher (2004) specifically references Heifetz in discussion about collaborative leadership and Scharmer in discussion about "assuming responsibility for the whole" (p. 649).

Heifetz demonstrates a post-heroic ethos in at least two specific ways. First, he constantly advocates that a leader must continually give the adaptive work back to the people: "you as a leader need to resist the reflex reaction of providing people with the answers. Instead, force yourself to transfer … much of the work and problem solving to others. If you don't, real and sustainable change won't occur" (Heifetz and Linsky, 2002, p. 6). Second, Heifetz argues that the common idea of the leader as the primary source of vision is "bankrupt and dangerous … because it relies too much on the best guesses of a few people operating in isolation" (Flower, 1995, pp. 4-5). Instead, Heifetz advocates a humbler, more community-oriented approach: "Articulating a vision for an organization or community has to start with an awful lot of listening, a lot of stimulating of debate and conversation, and then listening - to distill, to capture, the values" (Flower, 1995, p. 5). The adaptive leader helps the people discover, express, and fulfill their vision.

Scharmer (2013) advocates a post-heroic attitude as he calls leaders to move from "me" to "we" and from "ego" to "eco" (or self-centered to collective centered). In unpacking a group learning experience, Scharmer (2013) reflects: "We learned that individual skills and tools are usually overrated… Disconnected individuals became part of a co-creatie network of change-makers… Igniting this flame of inspired connections is the heart and essence of all education and leadership today. (p. 186)

Both Adaptive Leadership and Theory U evidence a great debt to Transformational Leadership Theory. Northouse (2016) summarizes: "transformational leadership is the process whereby a person engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower" (p. 162). Bass (1985) further clarified that transformational leadership "raises followers levels of consciousness … getting followers to transcend their own self-interest for the sake of the team or organization and … moving followers to address higher level needs" (Northouse, 2016, p. 166).

Scharmer (2013) clearly echoes transformational leadership in his third step of Theory U: Presencing, which involves moving from me to we, discerning our true Self, and moving forward toward our highest potential. Similarly, Heifetz (1994) carries forward Transformational Theory

by directing followers motivation and attention (consciousness) toward the adaptive work of addressing their highest level needs. Both Scharmer and Heifetz are attempting to cultivate connections that elevate the moral functioning of followers to improve society.

Adaptive Leadership Foundations.

Northouse (2016) notes four distinct conceptual roots for Heifetz's Adaptive Leadership model: systems theory (as noted above), biological (adaptation as an evolutionary adjustment to a changing context), servant leadership (leadership as a service to the common good by helping people solve important problems), and psychotherapy (providing a supportive environment and overcoming defense mechanisms). However, another key influence in Heifetz's thinking is political theory. Many of Heifetz's illustrations in *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (1994) come from the political arena, and his footnotes are replete with political theory or political history sources.

In fact, Heifetz (1994) cites Robert Tucker's *Politics as Leadership* (1981) no less than 12 times, far more than any other single source. Tucker (1981) seems to have influenced Heifetz with several key concepts: (1) The leader is fundamentally framed by the direction and work of the people, rather than the power of the leader; (2) Leadership is an activity that can happen from multiple locations in the hierarchy; (3) Authentic leadership can happen with or without formal authority; and (4) Leadership is primarily oriented toward identifying and solving tough problems.

Although critical of traditional leadership studies' emphasis on individual leaders, Heifetz intentionally builds on the tradition of previous scholars. Particularly in his footnotes of *Leadership without Easy Answers* (1994), Heifetz enters into dialogue with stalwart leadership scholars: Rost, Bass, Stodgill, Blake, Mouton, Argyris, Burns, Weber, Vroom, Jago, Blanchard, Yukl, Kotter, Morely, Jaques, and more. Sometimes, he calls them to account for their shortcomings; other times, he points out how they have influenced his own work. For example, referencing John. P. Kotter's *The Leadership Factor* (1988), Heifetz (1994) writes: "Kotter goes farther than many business scholars in his view that vision is not only the product of the CEO alone, but the CEO's effort to identify and articulate the long-term interests of the parties involved" (p. 281).

Theory U Foundations.

Scharmer (2013) builds rather explicitly on Buddhist roots, even discussing personal interviews with Buddhist zen masters. His emphasis on deepening consciousness, detachment, and reuniting mind and matter are key Buddhist concepts.

According to Liu (2007), "transcendental leadership … taps into the fundamental needs of both leader and follower for spiritual survival and aims to improve the spiritual development of both the leader and followers" (p. 4). Similarly, Hays (2013) sees Scharmer's work within the tradition of Transcendental Leadership. Nearly echoing Scharmer (2013), Hays (2013) argues that, as transcendental leadership enables organizations to develop heightened consciousness, those organizations are able to peer beyond the horizon, to redefine themselves in relation to their context, and to access novel resources for innovative solutions. Following the movement of Scharmer's Theory U (2007), Hays (2013) argues that transcendence empowers both inner vision (within the leader) and outer vision (toward the environment).

Scharmer also participated in a joint paper, "Exploring Transcendental Leadership" in which he summarized Theory U in dialog with three other Transcendental Leadership theorists (Barney, Wicks, Scharmer, and Pavlovich, 2015). In this shared article, Pavlovich identifies three foundational elements of Transcendental Leadership as (1) self-examination of ourselves and our relationship with the world, (2) subsuming our ego in the larger cause of social and ecological good, and (3) understanding our purpose as mutual transformation of self and society. Clearly, Scharmer's (2013) emerging leadership theory operates within this transcendental leadership framework.

Key Similarities

First, both Scharmer and Heifetz are developing theories for dealing with discontinuous change and finding solutions to intransigent problems. As such, many of their techniques are similar.

Both engage in what Marcy (2015) calls "breaking mental models as a form of creative destruction" (p. 370). According to Marcy (2015) a fundamental task of radical social innovators is "sensebreaking" or disrupting the maladaptive mental models of those around them (causing the old models not to make sense anymore) so that people's minds can develop a receptivity to new ideas. Scharmer (2013) calls this the process of unknowing, and Heifetz (1994) refers to these social reformers as creative deviants.

Given the tension inherent in this process, both naturally emphasize the importance of safe space for adaptive work. Scharmer (2007) advises, "The leader must create or 'hold a space' that invites others in" (p. 11). For Heifetz (1994), the "holding environment" is a critical safe space that "contains and regulates the stresses that [adaptive] work generates" (p. 105).

Next, both Heifetz and Scharmer are deeply committed to listening. Scharmer's (2007) second step in the change process is "Co-sensing: Observe, Observe, Observe" (p. 6). He particularly advocates listening to people on the margins for whom the current system isn't working. At all costs, the innovative leader must listen: "When innovating, we must go places ourselves, talk with people, and stay in touch with issues as they evolve. Without a direct link to the context of a situation, we cannot learn to see and act effectively" (Scharmer, 2007, p. 7). Similarly, Heifetz (1994) advocates listening to partners who can correct and enrich our perceptions. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) even encourage leaders to cultivate listening relationships to better understand their enemies: "Have coffee once a week with the person most dedicated to seeing you fail" (p. 3).

Both Heifetz and Scharmer are committed to shared problem solving. Scharmer (2007) refers to this as "multi-stakeholder innovation" (p. 12), and his entire framework is littered with cooperation: co-initiating, co-sensing, co-creating, and co-evolving. Heifetz (1994) continually beats the drum that the leader cannot solve adaptive problems alone; the leader can only mobilize the people to do the work of discovering solutions to adaptive challenges.

Furthermore, both Heifetz and Scharmer encourage deep inner work for leaders. For Scharmer (2007, 2013) this inner journey is fundamental to Theory-U. For Scharmer (2013), the emerging future "requires us to tap into a deeper level of our humanity… It is a future that we can sense, feel, and actualize by shifting the *inner place* from which we operate" (p. 1). On the other hand, for Heifetz (1994), the leader's inner work has two primary functions: (1) to use one's own emotional reactions as data to interpret the surrounding world, and (2) to stabilize

oneself amid the raging seas of conflict and personal attack that will come during the process of adaptive change.

Last, both Heifetz and Scharmer acknowledge the spiritual roots of leadership. Scharmer (2013) draws rather explicitly from a Buddhist framework, and he encourages mindfulness, transcendence, and spiritual discernment of the emerging future. Heifetz doesn't advocate a particular religious tradition, but he does advise leaders to maintain their spirituality by retreating regularly to "sanctuaries" for renewal and healing (Heifetz, 1994; Heifetz & Linsky, 2002).

Key Differences

One significant difference between the two theories is the role of the individual leader in the adaptive change process. Scharmer (2013) sees the individual subsumed in the whole, constantly co-sensing and co-creating. Although Heifetz (1994) wants the adaptive leader to give the work back to the people, the leader is also the initiator and sustainer of the action and attention.

Also, as indicated above, fueled by his Buddhist sources, Scharmer (2013) operates within a New Age framework and even personifies the future as "wanting" to emerge. Therefore, the leadership process is more open-ended, with the leader unloading unnecessary baggage, observing the environment, and sensing what solutions and directions emerge (Scharmer, 2013). Heifetz (1994), on the other hand, expresses no particular religious commitments. Although Heifetz is open to emotion and spirituality, he maintains a more rationalist perspective. Within Heifetz's (1994) model, the leader is more proactive, identifying the key adaptive challenges and guiding the people to face that reality, to discover solutions, and to implement them.

Next, Heifetz (1994) primarily works on the meso and macro levels of organizations or nations. However, Scharmer (2013) connects micro, meso, and macro changes further outward to the mundo level — dealing with various crises for the global society.

Heifetz (1994) also places more emphasis on the necessity of conflict. Heifetz argues, "We need to begin to see conflict as a good thing. Of course, it's dangerous… But most organizations err on the side of suppressing conflict and maintaining such a low level of disequilibrium that no real learning takes place" (Flower, 1995, p. 6).

Along these lines, Heifetz extensively discusses how to cope with resistance to adaptive leadership. Heifetz (1994) explains, "Leaders and authority figures get attacked, dismissed, silenced, and sometimes assassinated because they come to represent loss, real or perceived" (p. 236). Heifetz and Linsky (2002) summarize simply: "to lead is to live dangerously" and then delineate how to fight against "leadership's dark side: the inevitable attempts to take you out of the game" (p. 1).

A Phenomenological Perspective

Ladkin (2010) would probably be modestly optimistic in regard to Adaptive Leadership and Theory U. Because she views "leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon" (p. 2), she would probably appreciate Scharmer's co-sensing and Heifetz's insistence that the real work happens among the people. The complexity theory of leadership that undergirds both theories fits well a phenomenological perspective which takes into account: "quality rather than quantity," "felt experience," "the impact of absent or invisible aspects," "emergent and obscure territories," and multidimensional experiences centering on the person being led rather than the leader

(Ladkin, 2010, pp. 6-7). Also, Ladkin (2010) refers to the slippery nature of leadership, defying definition, in part because leadership is decentralized and multidirectional. This perspective resonates with both Theory U and Adaptive leadership.

In fact, Ladkin resonates with Heifetz and Scharmer on multiple points. Ladkin's (2010) tentative definition of leadership could fit surprisingly well with either theory: "collective mobilization towards an explicit or implicitly determined purpose" (p. 28). Similarly, Ladkin seems to echo Heifetz and Scharmer's holding zone ideas: "leadership … can look forceful and outspoken and other times it is appreciated for its steady ability to hold a psychological space in which dialogue between people who hold vastly different views can safely occur" (p. 32). Also, Ladkin (2010) resonates with Heifetz's (1994) distinction between leadership and authority: "One of the outcomes of [Gibb's] research was to distinguish between 'headship,' held by the person in a group with the highest level of hierarchical power and authority; and leadership, recognized as a process of influence which readily moves between groups of individuals focused on completing a task" (p. 35). When Ladkin (2010) reflects on the Hurricane Katrina crisis — "this situation called for the capacity to deeply perceive what was going on in the hear and now" (p. 50) — she could be expressing Scharmer's (2013) deep co-sensing or Heifetz's (1994) testing of reality.

Ladkin (2010) sounds like Heifetz and Scharmer when she advises leaders to pay attention to their intuition: "When data just 'does not add up,' when a situation evokes a feeling of disquiet, curiosity or unease … pause. One of the invisible, intangible, negative presences at the heart of the particular 'leadership moment' … might be trying to reveal itself" (p. 53). Scharmer (2013) would call this "attending to the crack" (p. 23).

Lastly, Heifetz and Scharmer seem to actively employ the concept of "reversibility." Ladkin (2010) explains, "In confronting another's perceptions, I become more aware of my own predispositions and limits" (p. 62). Heifetz (1994) encourages leaders to actively monitor how they are being perceived to discern their level of authority or political capital at a given moment. For Scharmer (2013) one of the key steps in discerning our true Self is co-sensing reality with those around us. In summary, both Heifetz and Scharmer employ a phenomenological perspective of leadership and resonate with many of Ladkin's points on the process of leadership.

Research Summary

Both Adaptive Leadership and Theory U are primarily theory-based models without much empirical research. Northouse (2016) notes that, even though Heifetz laid out the conceptual framework for Adaptive Leadership more than two decades ago, not much work has been done to test his ideas. Similarly, Theory U suffers from a paucity of empirical research. Dihn, et al (2014) conducted a helpful literature review of ten top tier leadership journals from 2000-2012. They found only five articles specifically on Adaptive Leadership, composing less than 1% of all articles, and ranking 35th in overall theories discussed. Furthermore, all of the articles on adaptive leadership focused on theory development, with no articles offering quantitative research. On the other hand, Complexity Leadership Theory faired slightly better with 23 articles, making up 3% of all articles, ranking #23 (Dihn, et al, 2014, p. 40). It is unclear how the authors might classify Scharmer's work, possibly as "Transcendental Leadership"

(receiving no coverage) or as "Leading for Innovation, Creativity, and Change" (receiving significant coverage, ranking 9th overall) (Dihn, et al, 2014, p. 40).

It seems that the unwieldy nature of these models of complexity theory leadership have made measurement-based studies impractical (Schneider & Somers, 2006). Leadership scholars are still in the process of developing these models further to facilitate more direct research.

However, several scholars are attempting to offer some structure to Complexity Leadership Theory. For example, Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) propose a model of Complexity Leadership Theory that "includes three entangled leadership roles (i.e., adaptive leadership, administrative leadership, and enabling leadership) that reflect a dynamic relationship between the bureaucratic, administrative functions of the organization and the emergent, informal dynamics of complex adaptive systems" (p. 298). Building on the work of Heifetz (1994) and others, Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey (2007) theorize:

> Adaptive leadership is an emergent, interactive dynamic that is the primary source by which adaptive outcomes are produced in a firm. Administrative leadership is the actions of individuals and groups in formal managerial roles who plan and coordinate organizational activities (the bureaucratic function). Enabling leadership serves to enable (catalyze) adaptive dynamics and help manage the entanglement between administrative and adaptive leadership… These roles are entangled within and across people and actions. (p. 306)

They suggest three possible methodological strategies for studying Complexity Leadership Theory: qualitative evaluations, agent based modeling, and system dynamic modeling (Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey, 2007).

Also exploring Complexity Leadership Theory, Schneider and Somers (2006) propose that "leadership might influence emergent self-organization through the mediating variables of organizational identity and social movements" (p. 362). They suggest these mediating mechanisms might be measured through "dynamic systems simulation" and analysis of "artificial neural networks" (p. 360).

Similarly, scholars are continuing to develop working models of Transcendent Leadership. For example, Brown (2015) adopts and modifies Scharmer's (2007) Theory U into a multi-stakeholder model for systemic change he calls: "Bridge Building for Social Transformation" (p. 34-35). Reworking the steps from Theory U, Bridge Building has five steps:

"(1) Compelling, locally generated goals, (2) Cross-boundary leadership systems, (3) Generative theories of change, (4) Systems that enable and protect innovation, (5) Investment in institutionalizing change" (p. 38).

However, a few students have begun to apply quantitative research to Transcendental Leadership. Liu (2007) theorizes that transcendental leadership is an evolutionary step beyond both transformational and transactional leadership. As a PhD student, Liu (2007) offers some initial data to suggest that transcendental leadership increases followers intrinsic motivation more effectively than either transactional or transformational leadership. In addition, inspired by Scharmer's Theory U and emerging future, Kragulj (2014) conducted a masters thesis study on how "interacting with the envisioned future" might enable people to identify their true needs (p. 38). The initial data (both qualitative and quantitative) yielded promising results for how

imagining the future in this way may connect participants with their deeply felt needs (Kragulj, 2014). These studies are encouraging steps. However, they are incomplete (focusing only on motivation and need) and unreliable (insufficiently rigorous). More research is needed to validate Theory U's assumptions and efficacy.

Application

Adaptive Leadership and Theory U are practitioner-based theories, so they live and breathe in the "real world." Leaders who read Heifetz's work will see themselves on nearly every page and will find practical tips for dealing with both day-to-day situations and career-defining opportunities. For example, when this author (Broward, 2017) explained Adaptive Leadership theory in a clergy mentoring workshop in northern California, pastors immediately recognized that their churches and their district are facing adaptive challenges. In their increasingly post-Christian context, the old modes of "doing church" are increasingly and glaringly outdated and ineffective. The follow-up discussion demonstrated that the pastors believe Adaptive Leadership will be helpful in guiding their churches through this change process.

Scharmer's emerging future leadership is more intangible, but it still offers the courageous reader a realistic process of deconstruction, introspection, and relaunch. Furthermore, Scharmer's insistence on cooperating with others in the co-sensing and co-creating process will serve leaders well. It may be possible to merge these two theories into a transcendental complexity leadership theory. With coalition-based reality testing and deep introspection, organizations may be able to imagine new futures together and then prototype adaptive solutions to implement societal change. In a world in which "we collectively create results that nobody wants" (Scharmer, 2013, p. 2), this creative destruction and transcendental adaptation may be our best hope. In summary, in an increasingly complex era, complexity leadership theories are essential and practical survival tools.

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