

## **Shared Leadership or Democratized Decision-making Process: Practical Lessons from Tunisia, Egypt and the U.S.A**

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### **Abstract**

*Shared leadership can be part of the ingredients for coping with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Global economic volatility, demographic trends and fast-paced technological changes present mounting challenges for organizations. Shared leadership occurs when constituents/followers have meaningful input in the decision-making process. Access to and involvement in decision-making process is the foundation of shared leadership. Organizational structure, rather than leadership style, determines whether or not the organization is likely to practice shared leadership. This paper provides an analysis of decision-making process used by six civil society organizations in Egypt during the January 25 Revolution, in Tunisia during the Tunisian Revolution, and in the United States during the peak of Occupy Wall Street's protests. The analysis reveals that civic movements, loosely structured with nonsingular leadership, democratized decision-making and practiced shared leadership compared to formal organizations.*

**Keywords:** Shared Leadership, Distributed Leadership, Civic Movements, Formal Organization Democratized Decision-making

### **1. Introduction**

*People don't like to be told what to do.* This premise constitutes the origins of a large body of research pertaining to areas ranging from organizational behavior, management sciences, behavioral change theories, leadership studies to policymaking processes. The logic appears to be simple; when people have control over their destiny, they tend to do a better job in whatever they are doing, *leading* or *following*. An array of factors calls for a new type of thinking about organizational leadership. Technological and demographic changes present daunting challenges to formal and informal organizations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Workplaces are becoming more diverse. Uncertainty is the rule not the exception. Both trends are likely to increase as the world's economies are becoming more integrated, globalized and volatile.

This paper examines the structure of selected civil society organizations in Tunisia, Egypt and the U.S.A. The analysis shows that organizations' structure necessitated different decision-making models, which in turn makes the case for the thesis of shared leadership as one of the most effective tools for coping with the fast-paced environmental changes facing organizations and societies in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In the Middle East, many countries are going through sociopolitical changes that appeared to be a surprise for some and for others a defeat of a long-held belief that these countries cannot embrace democracy because of their cultural differences. So, the media in the West coined terms such as the Arab Spring and Arab Awakening to describe these events. Explaining why these events occurred at this time in history and in this form is something that can go well beyond the realm of a single study, but there are some commonalities in how people organized themselves and how these events unfolded.

During the peak of the Arab Spring in 2011, in many cities in the West—from London to New York to Sydney—people formed movements demanding social justice and better income distribution. In the U.S.A the movement came to be known as Occupy Wall Street or the 99 Percent.

Despite the historic and socioeconomic differences between the developed democratic countries in the West and the Middle East, there are surprisingly some similarities between the movements for social justice in the West and the Arab Spring movements aside from the fact that they are all forms of protest movements. The similarities this paper attempts to analyze can be described as shared and distributed leadership through democratization of decision-making processes. Shared leadership occurred within organizations that played crucial leadership roles in the events in Egypt, in Tunisia and in the U.S.A.

The premise is that shared or democratized leadership engages people in determining what they should do instead of telling them what to do. It begins by allowing people a genuine voice in the decision-making process. The word genuine here is relevant because false representation—allowing people to voice their opinions and concerns without real consideration—also proved to be shortsighted. The question is, can leadership be shared or distributed without democratizing the decision-making process? Democratization of decision-making goes beyond voicing concerns to include people's voices in the final decisions. The analysis in this paper examines organizations that engaged members and affiliates in the process of making organizational decisions, which can be used as a guide for building shared leadership models. What exactly shared leadership entails will be discussed in the following sections.

Organizationally this paper is divided into six sections. The following section provides background and context for the psychological underpinning that drives people to want to be consulted in making decisions that affect them. In the third section, the discussion covers the evolution of the notion of shared leadership within the leadership literature, which is fair to say that it still is a novel idea within formal organizational structure. The fourth section presents the methods followed to conduct this study. Like most research on leadership, this is a qualitative study that employs content analysis of statements released by and media coverage of studied organizations. The fifth section is dedicated to analysis of findings. While the organizations studied are not-for-profit in nature, their leadership style coupled with the emerging research in organizational leadership provide interesting implications for all type of organizations. The six and last section offers some concluding remarks, mainly the lessons learned about the process of shared leadership through true democratization of decision-making process.

## **2. Background and Context**

This sections provides a brief overview of the forces driving a new type of thinking to lead organizations in an increasingly complex environment. These include demographic changes as well as best practices that make the case for the notion of shared leadership.

To begin with, demographically, millennials (children born between 1981 and 1996) have distinct worldviews and expectations from their lives and work. In May 2008, CBS news broadcasted a report *The Millennials Are Coming*. The report focused on the implications of demographic changes to workplaces, estimating that about 80 million millennials have already entered the workforce. In the same report, Marian Salzman, who has been studying millennials, noted that "They are enormously clever and resourceful. Some of the others are absolutely incorrigible. It's their way or the highway" (CBS, 2008). This generation is becoming prominent in organizations and one of the biggest changes the millennials expect has to do with flexibility in the workplace. Flexibility in terms of work hours, responsibilities and job involvement. As such "We have to start thinking about how work is done", says Lauren Stiller Rikleen (2014, p. 4), the author of *You Raised Us, Now Work with Us*. Social scientists and organizational behavior theorists have made the point that organizations (public and private) will have to respond to these changes if they want to remain competitive and successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Some of these changes point to more involvement in the process of decision-making and organizational leadership.

Behavioral change studies have long concluded that self-motivated change is the most successful path to sustainable change for individuals seeking to alter their behavioral patterns (Boyatzis, 2001). Change is sustainable when it is internalized and when it becomes part of routine behavioral patterns. Recent research in clinical psychology and psychotherapy suggest that creating or inducing intrinsic motives for people to want to change their behavior is likely to produce lasting results. In any case, for any type of change, lasting or fleeting, to occur there have to be a desire because "Unless clients learn to see problems for themselves and think through their own remedies, they will less likely implement the solution (Schein, 2009, p. 64). For both the individuals and groups, if behavioral changes are to last they have to be self-directed and intentional (Goleman 2001).

The implication is that you can tell people what to do, including what is good for them, but it would be more effective if those concerned are involved in making that decision for themselves.

Research in management, particularly decision-making processes, suggests that when people are involved in the decision-making process they are likely to commit to the final choice, which is crucial to implementation (Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, & Switzler, 2012). Because the involvement of a large number of stakeholders in the decision-making can be costly and inefficient, it is important to differentiate the types of decisions by a single leader from those requiring larger constituents' involvement. Usually high-stake decisions, which include, but are not limited to, long-term strategies are reserved for broader constituents' involvement. Once again, the logic is simple, if we need the constituents to implement new policies they must be involved because their input is genuinely imperative and their resistance can be avoided.

In developing countries, after decades of failed economic development strategies, mainly industrialization through import substitution (replacing foreign imports with domestic production), international development research came to a startling conclusion; people's participation in policies and strategies that are supposed to affect their lives is the single most important factor in determining the outcomes (Stiglitz 2000; Oakley 1995). Participation here includes involvement in all the stages of policymaking from formulation to implementation to feedback. Such involvement is unlikely without engaging people in defining and deciding what is good for them instead of telling them what is good for them.

In the business world, many successful organizations, dubbed as organizations for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Krebs 2007), are moving towards a structure that relies more and more on self-managing teams (Bolman & Deal, 2013). Self-managing teams are groups of employees that "manage themselves organically from the bottom up" (Bolman and Deal, p.109). Organizations heading in this direction are making innovative products, but they are also setting the standards for some creative organizational design that is purported to deal with the complexities stemming from the technological and demographic changes characterizing today's economic world.

While there are obvious and urgent forces that call for a different response, formal organizations (private, public and nonprofit) appear to be moving slower than the speed of changes in their environment. If we ask why, a reasonable explanation may lie within the dominant traditional top-down design with its hierarchical model that permeates every facet of our modern lives. Organizational designers have introduced innovative forms of organizational structure, yet the hierarchical model prevails.

The top-down model has dominated the ancient and modern eras of human civilizations. The hierarchical structure with positional power is as old as the pyramids. Historically, the ancient Egyptians are known to have used hierarchical structure. In the modern eras, there are two major intellectual roots for this model. The first is the work of industrial analysts who sought after designing organizations for maximum efficiency. The most prominent intellectual of this approach was Frederick Taylor (1911). Studying time and motions, he founded what is known as "scientific management". Other organizational theorists who contributed to the scientific management approach (Fayol, 1919 and 1949; Urwick, 1937; Gulick and Urwick, 1937) developed guidelines focused on specialization, span of control, authority, and delegation of responsibility. A second originator of structural model is Max Weber, who wrote in early days of the twentieth century. At the time, formal organizations were a relatively new phenomenon. Patriarchy rather than rationality was still the primary organizing drive (Bolman and Deal 2013). Weber described the "monocratic bureaucracy" as an ideal form to maximize rationality. Weber's model outlined several principles such as division of labor, a hierarchy of offices, rules governing performance, separation of personal from official property, the use of technical expertise for staffing not familial ties, and employment as primary occupation and long-term career.

This model is credited, and rightly so, for the most prosperous period in documented human history. In the past decades, the structural model has evolved. Now, there are many versions of less hierarchical organizations, which are sometimes referred to as flat organizations. It would be unwarranted to conclude that everything about the model is counterproductive and that it is not working. Great innovations and inventions were developed under this model and today's most innovative organizations use some form of structural design. But we know the top-down model worked even better when it was porous, flexible and red-tape free. It is too early as well as immature to suggest that the hierarchical model is antiquated. Nonetheless, there is a compelling body of research suggesting that as great as the top-down model is in aligning resources to achieve rational objectives, it also stifles creativity and works to justify the realities of the present at the expense of future possibilities.

The principle of defined and rigid objectives as the most rational form of aligning resources is by itself an antithesis of constant change in environment characterizing the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Postrel, 1998). Bolman and Deal (2103) argued that planning for organizations can be rituals, symbols, games, and opportunities for interaction. All of which are about other things but rational goals. What about alternative models? One may wonder if there is something to be learned from the recent leadership innovations characterized informal organizations leading change in the Middle East and the U.S.

### **3. Leadership: Democratized, Shared and Distributed**

The interesting and similar trend among some of the movements in Egypt, Tunisia and Zuccotti Park in New York is that they don't have known leaders who were in control of actions carried out by these movements even though some figures were well known. This is the same theoretical foundation that appears to be spanning from emerging new organizational design, behavioral change, economic development, to management decision-making.

Early studies on leadership paid too much attention to the personal qualities of a leader or what has come to be known as the *traits approach*. The assumption is that these personal traits are the major underpinning of successful and effective leadership (Stogdill, 1948, 1974). Traits approach fails to explain why an effective leader in one context fails miserably in another. As a result, leadership studies started to focus on the process and relations, i.e. what exactly takes place when successful leaders conduct the act of leading (Burns, 1978, & Bass, 1985). This approach attempted to explain effective leadership by examining the process. There is also a growing interest in leadership studies that focus on followers or what is referred to as *follower-centered perspective*. This approach suggests that followers can determine whether a leader succeeds or not regardless of the leader's outstanding traits. In their book *A Very Short, Fairly Interesting and Reasonably Cheap Book about Studying Leadership*, Brad Jackson and Ken Parry (2011) also discussed a new focus on critical and distributed perspectives. This call moves the attention from the individual qualities of a leader to how leadership is practiced. Focusing on how leadership might be practiced in future public organizations, Denhardt, Denhardt & Aristigueta (2013) defined shared leadership as a style of leadership that:

Focuses not on the leader but rather on clusters of individuals working and growing together. Leadership is seen as a function that operates within a group- not the property of a single individual but rather an activity in which many participate". (p. 228)

Shared leadership is not synonymous with group decision-making even though decisions made under shared leadership might relatively be similar to the process of group decision-making. Nonetheless, shared leadership differs from group decision-making in the fact that it is a continuous function not an event. Group decision making tend to deal with a specific problem or situation where a group of people go through a process of interaction to produce an outcome (Moscovici & Zavalloni 1969). Contrary to the top-down approach, shared leadership promotes the idea of individuals growing together as equals.

The discussion in this paper aims to expand the idea of shared leadership proposed by Denhardt et al. (2013) by shedding light on emerging leaderless movements. The analysis provides comparable evidence for this proposition from leadership styles practiced by formal and informal civil society organizations that played crucial role during the Egyptian Revolution and Tunisian Revolution in 2010-2012. It also draws from general observations about the tactics used by the Occupy Wall Street movement in the U.S.

As such, the author argues that shared leadership comes as a result of democratized access to decision-making process. This style indicates that in the coming decades, people in formal organizations—but more so in voluntary associations—are likely to demand and expect real inclusion in the leadership process. Such inclusion goes beyond symbolic consultation and involvement. There is no doubt that individual contributions remain as important as ever before, however, the 21<sup>st</sup> century is probably no place for individual heroes. This is not to suggest that individual characteristics are becoming irrelevant or that individuals cannot be catalysts for change. Far from that, it is rather to make the point that the charismatic leadership style seen in the likes of Nelson Mandela and Mahatma Gandhi is less likely. Then, one may ask how access to decision-making can be a foundation for shared leadership?

To Murray (1985) organizational decision-making is the process by which "courses of action are chosen (from among alternatives) in pursuit of organizational goals" (1986, p. 10).

Allison (1971) suggested that there are three methods to analyze decision-making process: 1) the rational model, 2) the organizational process model, and 3) the governmental politics model. These models serve as lenses and each one of them offer a different perspective on the variables involved in a specific situation. Allison used a chess game to explain how the three models can produce very different and distinct views about the game. For instance, a rational observer may see each move from the two players as a calculated step towards a bigger goal, i.e. to win the game. Under the organizational process model “we can think of an organization as pattern of communication and relationships that provides each member with information and assumptions, goals and attitudes that enter into his or her decision” wrote Denhardt et al. (p. 136). Using the lenses of organizational process model, one might see the game as planning and aligning each move with the broader organizational procedures and processes. Finally, because each player must respond to the other player’s move and tactics, “decision are group efforts that involve bargaining among players with different competing interests” (Denhardt et al. p. 137).

The analysis in this study is concerned with the organizational process model to explain and analyze decisions made by the studied organizations during complex and critical times. According to Allison and Zelikow (1999), the assumptions of organizational process model are: 1) Individuals must be organized in a structured way to achieve an objective; 2) Organizations create capabilities for performing tasks that otherwise would be impossible; 3) Existing organizations and programs constrain behavior; 4) An organizational culture emerges that shapes the behavior of individuals within organizations; and 5) Organizations form a sort of technology in which groups of individual(s) work together in developing procedures to complete designated tasks (P. 145). There is no need to emphasize that some of studied organizations applied very loose organizational structure.

#### **4. Methodology**

Similar to the dominant design of research on leadership, this is a qualitative study that builds on Allison’s (1971) classis decision-making modalities to make the case for the notion of shared leadership. The assumption is that true shared leadership cannot be realized without genuine access to the decision-making process.

To test such assumption, data were collected during the peak of the events in Tunisia, Egypt and the United States during 2011-2013. In addition, statements provided by leaders of these organizations and media coverage about their activities were coded and analyzed using content analysis to determine how decisions were made within the studied organizations. The analysis shows how distributed power within these organizations affected the decision-making process and produced certain outcomes at critical and historic moments. The sample include six civil society organizations from three countries, each of which has a unique organizational structure. Some maintained hierarchical structure such as professional associations and trade unions while civic movements operated with very loose structure.

In Tunisia, the analysis focuses only on the Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT), the Tunisian Federation of Public Works. The reason for focusing on the Tunisian Federation of Public Works is that it was the most vocal organization during those critical moments of the Tunisian Revolution. Other groups were involved in calling for and organizing the protests, but there was little to no doubt that UGTT emerged as a representative of public demands during the negotiations prior to President Zine Al-Abidine Ben Ali’s flee of the country in January 2011. That doesn’t mean that UGTT was in total control of the protests or their outcomes.

In Egypt, the analysis covers three different types of civil society organizations. The first group comprises three professional associations: the Judges’ Club, Journalists Syndicate and Lawyers’ Syndicate. The second group is the Federation of Egyptian Workers, an umbrella for 22 trade unions in Egypt. The third group includes three civic movements: Kifaya, the April 6 Movement, and the National Association for Change. These are very different types of civil society organizations, which is useful for comparative analysis. Professional associations and the Federation of Egyptian Workers are formal organizations with structures and mandates regulated by laws. The civic movements represent a new brand of social movements. They differ from social movements in the fact that they have a loose organizational structure and defined leadership. Diani (2011) defines social movements as “networks of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations, engaged in political or cultural conflicts, on the basis of shared collective identities” (p. 1). Social movements could be about causes or discourse without defined leadership or leadership structure; whereas civic movements can be member-based, event-oriented or permanent. They usually do not maintain a rigid form of organizational structure and decisions are not concentrated in the hands of specific leaders.

Civic movements can emerge from interactions in cyberspace. This might include coalitions among civil society organizations, political organizations and advocacy groups or may simply refer to groups analyzed in this study such as Kifaya, the April 6 and The National Association of Change.

Finally, in the U.S. the paper includes an analysis of Occupy Wall Street Movement. In September 17, 2011, Occupy Wall Street Movement took its first action in Liberty Square in Manhattan. The movement defined itself as “a people-powered movement” (Occupy Wall Street, p.1). Soon after, sit-in protests spread to over 100 cities in the United States and in over 1,500 cities globally. “fighting back against the corrosive power of major banks and multinational corporations over the democratic process and the role of Wall Street in creating an economic collapse that has caused the greatest recession in generations” (p.1) is the overall goal of Occupy Movement. The founders of the group’s webpage state that “The movement is inspired by popular uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia, and aims to fight back against the richest 1% of people that are writing the rules of an unfair global economy that is foreclosing on our future” (p.1). While there are known faces of founders of the Occupy Solidarity Network (OSN) such as Micah M. White and Justine Alexandra Roberts Tunney, the movement refers to itself as a leaderless (leader-full) movement. As a real time observer, one finds it extremely difficult to suggest that the movement operates with any form of a traditional structure or type of leadership. The very nature of the Occupy Movement makes it a perfect candidate for the thesis of shared leadership through democratization of decision-making process.

Looking at these organizations in three separate contexts (Tunisia, Egypt and the U.S), the following section explains why democratizing decision-making is the foundation of shared and distributed leadership.

## **5. Discussion and Analysis**

Regarding the assumptions governing the organizational process model, there are two immediate observations to be made about the role of the studied organizations in political events unfolded in Egypt, Tunisia and the U.S. First, there are issues with goal clarity. Both in Egypt and Tunisia, in the early days of the protests, while people were protesting oppression and police brutality, it was generally unforeseeable to anyone that these events would lead to a regime change. For formal organizations such as trade unions and professional associations, goals kept changing as the protests grew larger in size and effectiveness. In New York, Occupy Wall Street’s goal is (was) to bring to light the economic injustices but one is doubtful that the movement’s ultimate goal was to get rid of Wall Street altogether. Second, civic movements did not have defined organizational structures with defined authority that meets the assumptions required in Allison’s (1999) model. In addition, the executive leadership of trade unions lost complete control over the process of decision-making within its member regional organizations.

The analysis of roles played by the studied civil society organizations suggests that there are four major findings. All the observations have to do with the degree of involvement of the studied organizations in what was then unfolding political events as they occurred as a result of organizational structure, decision-making process, and leadership style (Elmedni, 2013). Nonetheless, the overarching theme is that these differences, to a great extent, have a lot to do with the type of each organization. Generally speaking, civic movements were more engaged in political advocacy from the very beginning compared to formal organizations such as professional associations that were forced or dragged to take stance.

The first observation is that loosely structured civic movements were better equipped to mobilize people from various backgrounds. In Egypt, Kifaya, April 6 and the National Association for Change have been instrumental in organizing and maintaining the 18-day protests during January 25 through February 12, 2011. They maintained a clear vision about the revolutionary demands and refused to engage in a dialogue with the collapsing regime. The ingenuity of these movements was tested in their collective decision-making as reflected in their ability to build broader coalitions to engage youth groups who joined the protests without previous affiliation. During the 18-day protests, the solid position of these groups kept the sit-in strike in Tahrir Square alive when political parties were engaging in a dialogue with the ailing regime. The loose hierarchical structure and shared leadership protected these groups from pressure, control, hijacking and blackmail. Also, the loose organizational structures allowed people to join them without feeling pressure to commit to something beyond the vision of change. The most important characteristic of the three civic movements is that they preached an agenda of change not an ideological doctrine, which made them open to people from various ideological backgrounds. Simply put, they didn’t tell people what to do, they created a function for people to grow together and share a purpose.

The second observation is that professional associations provided an essential boost to popular movements, but their participation is often constrained. Judges Club, Journalists and Lawyers syndicates in Egypt and the UGTT in Tunisia intervened in a crucial moment during the protests; their intervention transformed what appeared in the beginning as spontaneous protests into civil disobedience, which disallowed both regimes further maneuvering tactics and accelerated their collapse. However, the professional associations examined in this paper should not be expected to initiate a popular call for political change, but can be counted on to join the process at a critical moment. For certain professional associations the moment was when decisions are no longer in the hands of executive leadership. The laws and regulations governing professional associations are partially responsible for limiting their roles in political advocacy. Also, risks associated with possible failure of change can be a limiting factor. Professional associations are member-based and their primary purpose is the professional development and welfare of their members, which limits their constituents and thus influence. Under Mubarak and Ben Ali, professional associations became politicized because of the lack of political freedoms. Another factor is that leaders of professional associations did not have a unified political vision. For example, the Judges' Club had limited its advocacy to calling for independence of the judiciary system. While this call has apparent political implications, methods adopted by the Judges' Club to meet this goal had never reached a public call for regime change. The same is true about the Tunisian Federation of Public Works. The declared and desired tools by these organizations had always been sound institutional reforms. As shown, the structural nature of these organizations determined the process of decision-making. However, in order to respond to changes in their political environment, professional associations were either transformed into or forced to practicing shared leadership.

The third observation is that while leaders of the Federation of Egyptian Workers and some factions of the Tunisian Federation of Public Works were neutralized through the bribery system and oppression, trade unions proved that they cannot be completely coopted. While Mubarak's regime managed to control the Federation of Egyptian Workers by making it part of the state's bureaucracy and extension of state security, it failed to silence individual trade unions without actually conceding to workers' needs (job security and living wages). The participation of trade unions as organized entities representing millions of constituents in the protests socially legitimized what was referred to at that time as a Facebook youths uprising. Trade unions in both Egypt and Tunisia played very crucial role through political bargains to influence the decisions of other groups and to some extent the executive leadership of their respective federations. This was at least the case in Tunisia.

The fourth observation is that in today's world more people are likely to be wired and connected whether directly or through a third party, hence people are likely to join a cause without necessarily developing a sense of organizational membership. This is not to underestimate the fact that the vast majority of people around the globe are still not connected to the cyber world. In the parts of the world where people have access to internet, how people engage and participate in public causes is evolving to become a unique undertaking that requires further research. What we know for sure is that there will continue to be a need for a core group for advocacy and coordination, but not necessarily a known leadership or defined organizational structure. Does that mean people are likely to sign petitions from their phones and assume that they have participated in advancing causes that align with their own personal values? To some people that might be the case, but the far-reaching implications are twofold. First, allowing people to be part of something without boxing them into a rigid organizational structure might be the model of future civic engagement. Also, allowing people to choose how they prefer to civically engage supports the premise of free choice—whether it is an illusion or real is irrelevant. Secondly, people will redefine what change means to them even if they are provided with a script outlining how things would look like after the change is accomplished. Occupy Wall Street (OWS) helped bring social issues to light and refocused the public discourse on economic justice, fairness and equity. One may doubt that physically occupying Wall Street is going to bring about the kind of changes that OWS and many people in the U.S. and around the world are demanding. It is the economic and social policies that put the Wall Street in the driver's seat and if any, it will be policies that can limit the influence of Wall Street in political arenas.

The loose organizational structure that characterized the Egyptian civic movements applies to the Occupy Wall Street movement even though (OWS) has a very different goal. While the UGTT in Tunisia and civil society organizations in Egypt were confronted with tyranny and oppression, OWS operated in a place where freedom of expression is valued and protected by law. While it might be rare to encounter someone who claims that he or she is a member of OWS, there are many people who share the sentiments and the values that the movement stands for. This can be explained by the fact that OWS is not an organization that is actively recruiting members.

The movement was not even trying to categorize people, who joined the various protests in Liberty Square in Manhattan or other venues, into any form of organizational structure. It is hard to judge whether OWS succeeded in bringing about any tangible changes since 2011, but it would be unfair to deny the fact it injected its views in the public debates about economic inequality locally and globally. It is sufficient to mention that on December 4, 2013, President Obama declared that the wealth gap and income inequality in the U.S. was one of the most challenging social problems facing the country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (The White House, Office of the Press Secretary 2013). Whether that leads to a policy change is a different issue, but the efforts put forth by OWS in forms of protests lend credence to issues of economic inequality and highlighted the suffering of millions.

What is relevant to the discussion here is that while the movement's political footprint is traceable, its leadership remains invisible. A simple test is to make it a point by asking the first random ten people you run into after reading this piece to name one leader of OWS. One can argue that there is a good chance that none of the people you ask will be able to mention one name. These elements of leader-full and leaderless or shared leadership appear to be similar among civic movements in Egypt and OWS. Trade unions and professional associations are formal organizations with elected or appointed leaders: that is why their decision-making process tend to relatively fit Allison's (1971) three models to some degree. Yet, even these formal organizations at critical moments exhibited a form of shared leadership.

## **6. Concluding Remarks**

The principles of shared and democratized decision-making appear to carry some seeds of the leadership for the future. That doesn't mean that rigid organizational structures and detailed job descriptions are going to go away overnight. Nor should they. Job designers and organizational behavior theorists have long argued that people do better in their jobs when they feel they have control over what they are doing, a sense of autonomy. There will continue to be some organizations that prefer to spell out everything in terms of policies, rules and regulations so that they can have better control over the behaviors of their employees. In any case, some types of businesses may require rigid organizational structure. Nonetheless, organizations that want to play a bigger role in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have to be prepared to create, build and empower self-managing teams and equip these teams with the skills that will allow them to be creative in their practice of shared leadership.

There is probably no need to emphasize more that in fast-paced and complex environments, where organizations compete for resources and markets, innovation and creativity are the most valuable tools for coping with the realities of today and tomorrow. This is also true about public and nonprofit organizations because they also need to respond to the technological advances and demographic changes. King and Anderson (1990) suggest that when group leadership is collaborative and democratic, the structure is flexible, and the team is composed of people with diverse backgrounds, creativity is enhanced. Innovation and creativity do not flourish in environments where people don't have much influence on the process of decision-making and leadership. Shared leadership can be a tool for enhancing creativity, embracing innovation, increasing job satisfaction, and maximizing effectiveness. This might be the time to think of shared leadership as part of best practice in future organizations.

The logic that led organizations to broaden the base of involvement for their employees in the decision-making process will be the impetus that will propel them to embrace the idea of shared, democratized and distributed leadership because it works better for motivating employees and it helps organizations stay relevant in a constantly changing environment. In a nutshell, the skills that will be crucial in future organizations are the skills of shared leadership. The sooner organizations—public, private or nonprofit—realize this trend, the better they will be suited for the future, simply because people will be part of determining what their roles are rather than being told what to do. This is beneficial to the organizational mission, public cause and individuals' morale and commitment. Civic movements in Egypt, UGTT in Tunisia, and OWS in the U.S.A, practiced shared leadership through collective decision-making, which proved to produce creative solutions. Most importantly, the shared-leadership model produced choices that reflect the will of the group not just few leaders, who usually occupy the highest level of the organizational hierarchy in the top-down model. Thus, our future task should be to focus on identifying and clarifying the skills needed for shared leadership and the methods of developing them.



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