

Visionary networks for Responsible Development

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Abstract

This paper argues that despite most scholars' support social responsibility (CSR) and stakeholder rights are central to organizational strategy still, the companies' socially responsible activities around the globe continue to fall short. In a globally integrated world this behavior produces a gradual weakening of social, ecological and economic systems. This weakness is particularly felt in the field of environmental sustainability where a more appropriate framework is one of Responsible Development. The authors argue that a broader, more integrated and systemic framework focused on "responsible development" networks may be a more effective and desired pathway in the field of environmental sustainability. The current CSR framework has yet to systemically integrate values, mission and vision into the inter-organizational relationships framework.

The authors provide interesting examples of organizational networks (non-profit, public and private) that have achieved responsible development using a network model in which their actions become catalytic. The authors additionally provide a set of benchmarked "responsible networks" that have enabled these actors to achieve a remarkable level of values congruence, purpose and mission convergence and shared vision coherence. The paper ends with recommendations for future research on the role of organizational values, mission, and visions in network effectiveness.

Introduction

Sustainability is a wicked problem that requires holistic, strategic, systems thinking. Social, ecological, economic, cultural and ethical considerations need to become a focus of every organizational process if institutions really want to follow a sustainable orientation in their activities. An organization can become “sustainably oriented” by building a set of coherent core values, purpose and vision. No one organization, can achieve significant sustainable goals by itself. A network approach with wide stakeholder involvement is necessary for organizations that have serious aims toward reaching sustainability goals. These organizations need to go beyond the traditional organizational mindset and approaches and embed a “sustainably-oriented philosophy and ethic” in their relationships, not only at group and organizational levels, but also at an inter-organizational one.

Sustainable or responsible development?

Sustainability, and moreover sustainable development, is a controversial concept that can be interpreted in different ways. Scholars such as Friedman (1970) have argued that the only social responsibility of a company executive is to “engage [in] activities to increase [company] profits”. Friedman’s work established that there is a need to have some marketplace “rules of the game” in place. Others have argued that the social responsibility situation is so complex that it simply cannot be described by the sentence “the social responsibility of business is to increase its profits” (Freeman, 1984; Freeman & Velamuri, 2006; Hart & Milstein, 2003; Carrol, 2009; Carroll & Buchholtz, 2011). Today it has become clearer that organizational activities produce not just positive, but also an increasing amount of negative effects on the society. The impacts of organizational processes on the human environment has reached a global dimension, as evidenced by United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP, 2002) which stated “there is a growing gap between the efforts of business and industry to reduce their impact on the environment and the worsening state of the planet”.

In a global society reasonably defined as “organizational” (Prethus, 1978), (eq. considering that social life styles, assets and levels of well being are determined by organizations) the responsibility of organizations for positive or negative scenarios of social sustainability is a real requirement. We echo (Starik & Marcus, 2000: 542) who stated that “much more needs to be done by both practitioners and academics” to solve the environmental sustainability challenge.

For decades many have argued for a wiser, safer and longer-term perspective on global development. Now, the global situation is considered so alarming that the UNEP (2007: 2) has

evidenced that “major threats to the planet, such as climate change, the rate of extinction of species ... put humanity at risk”.

The issue of global sustainability became a real concern in the second half of the nineteenth century as a consequence of the process of environmental degradation starting with the industrial revolution (Clifton & Amran, 2011). The global sustainability debate has become more and more formalized in the last four decades. One of the most significant views of a global vision for sustainable development was expressed in 1972 at the United Nation Conference of Stockholm on Human Environment. This document stated that the “protection and improvement [of the human environment] is a major issue which affects the well-being of people and economic development”. The principles of global sustainable development were reaffirmed and better focused in the 1992 “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development” which articulated the vision to “entitle human beings to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature”. Yet, since 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, this sustainable vision has been less clearly understood and advanced.

The expression sustainable development became well known globally after 1987, when the World Commission on Environment and Development of the UN, also known as “Brundtland Commission”, drafted its famous report, entitled “Our Common Future”. In this report development was defined as sustainable, when it “meets the needs of the present without compromising the abilities of the future generations to meet theirs [needs]”.

This definition demonstrates some important positive aspects. First, it introduces a long-term ethical perspective, including the future generation rights as the main focal point. Second, this report also presents a holistic approach toward development. The title “Our Common Future” can be viewed as a systemic and holistic view (Our and Common), expressing an

interconnected and long-term vision (Future). This holistic perspective can be conceptually connected to the work of a set of organizational scholars, such as the organizational ecologists who look at the creation of “common futures” (Astley, 1984; Fombrun & Astley, 1983; Trist, 1977, 1979, 1983; Emery & Trist, 1973; Trist et al., 1997; Gray, 1998; Morgan, 2002). This conceptual framework can be useful approach for analyzing and interpreting the role of organizations in sustainable development. The Brundtland definition also shows some evident weaknesses. The expression “without compromising” implies a defensive strategic approach toward sustainable development. In addition the word “sustain” can mean “do not increase”, while the word “development” can also mean “increase”. In other words sustainable development could be defined as the “increase that does not increase”- an oxymoron.

The contextual dichotomy regarding the concept of sustainable development needs an alternative, less defensive set of strategies and a more proactive orientation. The concept of responsibility versus sustainable could be useful for this purpose. The need for responsible development was first expressed more than a century ago from a visionary man, George Perkins Marsh. Marsh was the first US Ambassador in Italy, where he wrote “Man and Nature” (1864), his seminal book on responsible development. In this work he clearly expressed his vision of “global responsibility”, saying that “we are not passive inhabitants of the earth ... we are responsible for it.... As social beings we are responsible for the world we hope our descendants will inherit” (George Perkins Marsh as cited in Lowenthal, 2003: 427). So the notion of responsible development is conceptually different from sustainable development.

While responsible development can be considered an extension of the concept of social responsibility, this idea is certainly not new in the organizational arena (Fisher, 2004, Carrol, 1999). Since the fifties (Bowen, 1953) and into the seventies (Davis, 1960, 1967; Walton, 1967;

Davis, 1973; Carroll, 1979) the notion of responsible development and its inclusion in debate and ultimately classification and modeling has made this concept an important variable in the CSR conversation. The debate today remains dynamic (Garriga & Melé, 2004; Jamali, 2008) with new theories, concepts and models (Freeman & Velamuri, 2006) continuously produced in the academic arena.

For our purposes responsible development can be defined as: meeting the needs of the present generation and envisioning increased potential opportunities for all stakeholder categories for the future (Niccolini, 2008). This requires a holistic perspective in which the triple bottom line model, proposed by Elkington (1998) (society, economy, ecology) is placed in a cultural container (see Figure 1).

Insert Figure 1 about here

The cultural variable identified in Figure #1 is a critical dimension for understanding the Responsible Development construct. Both culture and ethics were most recently recognized as important concepts by the IUCN (2008) as prominent dimensions of sustainable development. We believe culture and ethics are the key variables for responsible development. They are the synthetic input and output of the dynamic interaction among the societal, ecological and economic systems. Responsible development in this viewpoint is a dynamic process not a static construct. Responsible development then requires that leaders in organizations create ethics and cultures in which responsible development is practiced. This also means at its broadest level that

creating a culture of responsible development involves more than one organization at the same time. In other words achieving responsible development requires engagement among stakeholders, and collaboration at the inter-organizational level. Today's organizations can not operate in their environments without this interaction with other entities (organizations and actors) in its environment.

Collaborative networks: sustainable and responsible development

In order to understand how organizations can be effective in shaping a more responsible future involving other actors, we must first understand the variety of approaches scholars have used to look at the nature of inter-organizational relationships. We agree with Lowndes and Skelcher (1998) that academics have often placed these relationships into two categories based on organizing principles of competition and/or collaboration.

Inter-Organizational Competition:

Inter-organizational relationships organized by competition are often tied to the theoretical concept of Resource Dependency – in other words – relationships between organizations are based on the struggle and acquisition of resources from the environment. In this perspective the environment is fundamentally seen as a limited container of resources to be exploited, without paying too much attention to the ecological, social, cultural and economical negative externalities of the organizational activities. The competitive viewpoint is based on behavior that is rational and deterministic and with a single actor focus. In this view, the overall relationship between individuals, organizations and the environment is highly consumerist and competitive and the strategic behavior is reactive at best (Davis, Kee, Newcomer, 2010).

Olson (2004), for example, cites that often academic studies on inter-organizational relationships based on competition have emphasized such phenomena as the struggle for power in inter-firm networks (Cook, 1997 as cited in Olson, 2004: 37). Here studies have looked at issues of power distribution noting asymmetry of these relationships; differentiating levels of influence (stronger, weaker) and examining differences in individual and organizational values, attitudes and beliefs each offering an alternative ontological perspective (Olson, 2004).

In summary, most research in the literature on competition has sought to understand the dynamic asymmetry properties and functions in inter-organizational relationships.

Inter-Organizational Relationships: Cooperation/Collaboration

The other organizing principle of inter-organizational relationships is the notion of cooperation and collaboration between and among organizations and actors. Currently there is a tremendous amount of literature from various disciplines that have tackled the issue of collaborative relationships (Schreiner & Corsten, 2004).

Gulati and Gargiulo (1999) argue “interdependence is the most common explanation for the formation of interorganizational cooperative ties such as strategic alliances. A long stream of research suggests that organizations engage in ties with other organizations in response to the challenges posed by the interdependencies that shape their common environment” (p. 1443).

In the context of collaboration theory – most scholars agree that collaborations are based on issues of reciprocity, interdependence, and trust (Lowdnes & Skelcher, 1998; Gray, 1998); Olson, 2004; Schreiner & Corsten, 2004). Studies that have focused on understanding

collaborative arrangements between and among organizations have sought to understand motivation, strategic intent, structure from the stakeholder and the individual manager perspective. Still other scholars (Schreiner & Corsten, 2004) studying inter-firm collaboration have looked at this phenomenon through the lens of the Resource Based View (RBV) of the firm and dynamic capabilities. Of particular interest recently is the participation of organizations in collaborative networks given the need to develop dynamic capabilities to meet the uncertainty in the environment.

Organizational Networks

With the myriad of definitions of network – one needs to be clearer in the distinction among the concepts of cooperation, collaboration and the term network itself. O’Toole (1997) has certainly told us that the age of the Network has arrived - but how does this differ from the notion of cooperation and collaboration? Agranoff (2006: 56) has stated that *Cooperation* refers to the act of working jointly with others, usually to resolve a problem or find a corner of activity.

Cooperation in networks can be occasional or regular, and it can occur within, between, or outside formal organizations. Here the interest is focused on the activities of individuals who represent organizations working across their boundaries. In an earlier work Agranoff and McGuire (2003) identified that these cooperative arrangements as collaboration that constitutes “the process of facilitating and operating in multi organizational arrangements to solve problems that cannot be solved, or solved easily, by single organizations” (2003: 4). Responsible and

sustainable development clearly falls into this category of cooperation of individuals, groups and organizations.

Hwang (2009) argues that the term 'network' means different things to different disciplines. He contends that network research grows idiosyncratically from metaphor to method, theory, and paradigm (as cited by Kenis and Provan, 2006: 230). Although there is a growing literature on networks as a unit of analysis, the majority of this work has been descriptive (cf. Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Goldsmith & Eggers 2004; Sydow, 2004; Klijn, 2003; Mandel, 1999). Most research on organizational networks can be broadly characterized by two basic approaches as identified by Provan and Kenis (2007): the network analytical approach and the network as a form of governance.

We agree with Provan and Kenis (2007) that both approaches are limited when it comes to analyzing network level functioning and governance. Network analytical approaches focus on the micro-level, egocentric individuals; this requires an analytical focus on nodes; relationships positions and actors in an attempt to understand and describe configurations and network outcomes. What usually gets described when the unit of analysis is at the individual level, is an explanation of the nodes and their relationships but not the network itself. While the network analytical approach looks at the individual behavior of actors the organizational level network research has focused on networks as a form of governance. Here researchers have treated the network itself as the unit of analysis.

The advantages of network coordination in both the public and private sectors appear to be considerable, leading to enhanced learning and to more efficient use of resources; increased capacity for addressing complex problems; increased competitiveness and better services (O'Toole, 1997; Provan & Kenis, 2007; Brass et al., 2004). According to Agranoff (2006: 65)

the payoff of the network form is that public management networks have a lasting collaborative effect, as they build collective capacity for subsequent collaborative solutions and teach managers the essential skill of collaboration.

Networks exist to fill the gap in problem solving that government, non-profit and private enterprises alone cannot solve independently because of the problem complexity and requires a more collaborative approach generating solutions more appropriate for the problem.

Responsible Development and Environmental Co-Evolution

The answers to the deep and important questions of responsible development can be found in theories that put more emphasis on the understanding of the relevance of interdependence and on co-evolutionary dynamics. Organizational Ecology (Fombrun & Astley, 1983; Trist, 1977, 1979, 1983; Emery & Trist, 1973; Morgan, 2002) presents a perspective in which leaders do not see the environment as an enemy, but as an ally in co-creation between organizations and environment. In this view leaders through cooperation, plot a desired future direction, sharing a vision. The co-evolutionary process can lead to a global strategic transformation that is more responsible both for the actors involved and the environment if the shared vision fosters the improvement of social, ecological, economic and cultural standards.

Some scholars have noted that involvement of others in creating solutions to large scale problems like sustainability has or could lead to the creation of “hollow government” as governments are often the recipients of problem formulation and solutions (Goldstein, 1992). Yet, we would argue that all leaders across the globe must think about developing solutions with the involvement of a large set of stakeholders (actors).

In this context Rethemeyer and Hatmaker (2008) have noted that collaborative networks, are collections of government agencies, nonprofits, and for-profits that work together to provide a public good, service, or “value” when (a) a single public agency [leaders] is unable to create the good or service on its own and (b) the private sector is unable or unwilling to provide the goods or services at all or in the desired quantities (c.f., Agranoff, 2006: 7-9; Agranoff & McGuire, 2003: 296; O’Toole, 1997: 45). As cross-sector collaborative networks seek solutions to highly complex problems – how do we understand the dynamics and effectiveness of these networks and actors? Few theorists have looked at inter-organizational network effectiveness (with the exception of Provan and Milward, 1995) and almost none have examined the cross cultural dimensions of networks and the leadership dynamics.

Work in this area will help to address some of the theoretical and conceptual issues outlined by O’Toole (1997) by identifying dimensions of network structure and development and help to explain program and service delivery results as it applies to issues of sustainable and responsible development and explain the role of leadership.

The use of elements of both approaches in examining network dynamics at the organizational level must also be cognizant of the micro-level approach of understanding the individual level actors in network development and their role in the ongoing relationships. This is particularly relevant knowing that development of networks after all has social dimensions. Further this will particularly relevant as few scholars have looked at the inclusion of cultural values that individual actors bring the network dynamics and development. The development of a deep understanding of the role of vision, values and mission and their interaction in network development and subsequent impact on effectiveness needs greater clarification. Many scholars have indicated that the appreciative systems of collaborative relationships (values, attitudes and

beliefs) have an impact on network development – however little is known regarding the depth, intensity and impact that these constructs have in organizational networks. Scholars have noted the importance of constructs such as trust, interdependence and reciprocity noting that vision, mission and values are important. Yet little is known regarding the roles of shared vision, mission and values and the subsequent impact this might have on collaborative networks and their effectiveness. To better understand this we must determine the role of these constructs and their potential impact on organizations that seek to work together in ways that create higher levels of system performance.

The role of values, mission and vision in the responsible development network

Values, mission and vision are elements reciprocally related and considered significant when explaining organizational effectiveness (Collins & Porras, 1994; Denison & Mishra, 1995). In addition, several scholars (Di Tomaso & Gordon, 1992; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Collins, 2005) have argued that at the organizational level there is a relationship between organizational culture and performance.

The definition of culture has been debated since Cicero introduced this concept in philosophy. For Cicero, culture was a set of elements that people decided to cultivate inside their soul (Cicero, 45 b. C.). Cicero expanded the meaning of the word “culture” from the agricultural field to the intellectual and even to the spiritual level. As the farmer focused on cultivating what was valuable to be eaten, people could also decide to cultivate information that they considered useful knowledge, transforming the same into significant priorities or values.

Even if scholars do not agree on a definition of culture, hundreds of acceptable definitions are used in the academic arena (Kluckhohn & Kroeber, 1952), most authors agree that

values are a fundamental aspect of organizational culture (Martin & Siehl, 1983; Gagliardi, 1986; Schein, 1985).

For some, values and culture can be found in every single aspect of organizational life (Smircich, 1983, Meyerson & Martin, 1987). According to Rokeach (1973) values are “enduring beliefs that a specific mode of conduct that is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or state of existence (as cited in Berson, Oreg & Dvir, 2008). Pruzan (1998) also stated that values are key managerial tools in post-industrialized economy (as cited in Lyons, Higgins, & Duxbury, 2010). So, culture and especially values are relevant variables in examining organizational performance.

Collins & Porras, (1994) and Senge (2006) in particular have discussed “vision” as another variable related to organizational performance. For these scholars, the concept of vision assumes a realistic meaning, like “an ambitious but achievable guide of the business priorities, built on the basis of realistic scenarios” (Decastri, 1998: 18). Yet the concept of vision has been interpreted in different ways. For March (1995), a vision can assume an illusory meaning, a driving force that pushes an organization to run toward a dream that can help the organization to move toward the competition.

Some authors define the word “vision” in a narrow sense as essentially, the ability to imagine – and describe – a future scenario that does not exist now. In this view Senge (2006: 208) defines the concept of vision as picture of the future that we seek to create. Nanus (1994) has described vision as “a mental model of a future state of a process, a group or an organization.

Thoms and Greenberger (1995) have described vision as “a cognitive image of the future” and Kouzes and Posner (1985: 85) have identified vision as an “ideal and unique image of the future” (as cited in Pearce and Ensley, 2004: 260). These authors have separated this

concept from mission. They define mission as the core purpose of an organization, the reason why an organization exists.

Other authors give a broader meaning to the concept of vision. For some scholars vision may represent not only the “ability to see the future”, but also a pattern of organizational values that underlies a unique visionary pattern for an organization's future (Greenwood & Hinings, 1988, 1993; Hinings & Greenwood, 1988; Kouzes & Posner (1987) as cited in Larwood et al., 1995: 741). Stam, Van Kipperberg and Wisse (2010) describe visions as ideals of the future that concern norm and values. Collins and Porras (1991, 1994, 1996) also included the core purpose of an organization as part of Vision. In this sense, they subdivide the vision in 3 components: the envisioned future, the core purpose and the core values.

Vision means essentially “the ability to see – and describe - a future scenario”. In this view Senge (2006), that define the concept of vision as the “future that we decide to create”. The concept of vision is often associated, and sometimes confused, with the one of mission, that is the core purpose on an organization, the reason why an organization exists.

In spite of these terminological differences, authors agree that the core values, the purpose/mission and the vision are three core elements strongly interdependent in organizational life. Core values are a breeding ground, upon which purpose and mission are built. They empower and provide the fuel the organization needs face the realities but to imagine probable and desired futures. Scholars agree that the core purpose of mission has a special place in the production of a compelling, envisioned future (in the wider sense) or vision (in the narrow sense). In this context, Vision helps leaders to make purpose more concrete and tangible.

Values then are the fundamental building blocks for purpose and mission, and purpose is the “launching pad” for the development of vision. As such, these core elements become an

integrated system of factors that is crucial in helping to explain organizational performance and together create the concept of the “visionary organization”.

We have current examples where visionary organizations and their subsequent organizational networks have formed and “co-created” environments in more responsible direction. A significant level of value coherence, mission convergence and vision sharedness or salience has driven these visionary organizational networks. Such networks provide insights into the role and function the visionary organizational paradigm plays in creating effective outcomes in dynamic and stable environments. Further, leadership carries the primary responsibility for enacting the visionary organizational paradigm.

Leadership – The fire for Networks or Crossing Boundaries?

Today’s conventional view of leadership has left us with a paradigm that may not be helpful nor viable for solving today’s wicked problems. An emerging area of scholarship in the literature is the area of cross-boundary leadership. Addleson (2011) argues the expectation that someone is actually capable of running an entire organization and can be responsible for its success in addition to efforts of other organization ‘leaders’, the senior managers, “to live up to, or play out, the fantasy, is an obstacle to organizing effectively and holds organizations back.” (Addleson, 2003, 2011: 2).

McDaniel and Carr (2003) and Torgas (2004) have cited the need for the development of paradigms of cross-boundary leadership in public sector organizations as a tool for creating the capacity to meet the challenges organizations face in their highly uncertain environments.

We believe that responsible development networks demonstrate some of these characteristics of cross-boundary leadership. And these networks have evidenced a capacity to

cross not just the physical boundaries of organizations but cross boundaries that are cultural and social - targeting the fundamental beliefs, attitudes of network actors and creating space or “good space” for active engagement and problem-solving.

We can find some interesting examples of networked organizations that have achieved responsible development through collaboration and have increased local levels of ecological, social and economic well-being in their environments. There are, in fact, some unique organizations which have been incorporated with the main purpose of pursuing “the rights of future generations”, as core part of their missions: these are the organizations deputed to manage the protected areas. The United States National Park Service (USNPS), for instance, was founded with the formal mission to conserve the parks’ areas for “this and future generation”. The USNPS has been a pioneer and beacon for the protected areas development (parks) all around the world. The USNPS has effectively integrated 391 parks, key stakeholders and public citizenry into a mindset focused on conservation. Many nations have created similar organizations creating a core mission of conservation for “future generations” as a key part of the mission statement. The USNPS – with key stakeholders – has created a system of responsible development, which depends on the system’s capability to create a “common sense of a responsible development”. Leadership in the USNPS has stated – *“the effectiveness of the USNPS in making a greener, more sustainable and more responsible future for US citizens can be discovered through looking at congruence of values, the symbiosis of purposes and the power of shared visions between employees not only at organizational level, but also at the inter-organizational one”*.

The USNPS used a bottom-up stakeholder process to develop a shared understanding of a responsible development purpose in its system. Another example of this capability to produce a

highly effective “common sense of responsible development is Cinque Terre National Park in Italy. Cinque Terre National Park is a case of a network catalyzed by a visionary organization. In both cases leaders of the networked organizations that manage the protected area have been able to involve partners with coherent values, convergent missions and create a shared compelling vision for a more responsible future. In Cinque Terre Park’s case, the park experienced a significant growth in tourism and sustainable economic activities as a result of this vision and mission convergence of its stakeholders.

The responsible development success of Cinque Terre can be attributed to a set of strong traditional values that survived in these villages due to the physical isolation of the area up until the sixties. These traditional values created a platform for the development of a mission to preserve the landscape. Cinque Terre’s local organizational leaders subsequently created a committee, generated a vision to create a “national park organization” and asked for government support.

Leadership in Cinque Terre articulated: *“in the 1998-2008 decade making Cinque Terre National Park more effective from an ecological, economical and social standpoint have depended mostly on how much people have been motivated on sustainable development issues by some leaders that reinforced the traditional values of the farmers’ culture and diffused a “one-hundred years vision” that has been shared not only by the public authority employees, but also by some key partners.”*

Consistent with the example of the USNPS, the leaders of Cinque Terre National Park Organization continued to follow a responsible development orientation involving a network of key stakeholders in their environment in a dynamic process.

Another example of this visionary organizational model is the Loccioni Group in Italy, a medium size group of firms of more than 300 employees, working in 40 nations around the world, with a growing net income of more than \$70.5 million annually. The Group's core competence is multisector "measurement and testing" solutions. The Loccioni Group is an exemplar case study on how companies, focusing on innovation and experimentation, have been able to translate environmental ethics and a responsible development orientation into a competitive advantage (York, 2009). The Group created a network of organizations focused on "building a more responsible and eco-friendly future" for humanity. Some key partners include Whirlpool, ENEL, IKEA Cisco, Kyoto Club. The project called "Life Energy And Future" (LEAF) is driven by an audacious vision to create communities of people working and living in structures (industries, schools, houses, hospitals) that generate more energy from renewable sources than is necessary to operate. Leadership in the Loccioni group has stated that:

"To be successful, the main challenge is not only to work inside your organization to make the internal behaviour greener, but to drive the behaviour of key players in the green direction. To reach this goal, leaders have to spend almost fifty percent of their time working with partners of organizations that possess coherent values, synergic purposes and a compelling shared picture of the future."

The Loccioni Group has tackled complex issues of sustainability and created a network of organizations, integrating a base of coherent values, convergent missions and especially creating an intellectual and physical space (Nonaka & Konno, 1998) for key partners' employees to develop and work together on a shared vision.

These examples demonstrate that collectively a network of organization can significantly change the environment. This echoes scholars (Astley, 1984; Fombrun & Astley, 1983; Trist,

1977, 1979, 1983; Emery & Trist, 1973; Trist et al., 1997; Gray, 1998) who have emphasized that organization environmental relationships influence each other and that this co-evolution can be even more effective through collective action of actors.

In all the three cases, the leaders of these visionary organizations (USNPS, Cinque Terre National Park Authority and Loccioni Group) have been able to catalyze the diffusion of a responsible mission and vision. These organizations have become laboratories of responsible development and created mixed public, private and non-profit networks that “activated” the system in a more responsible direction.

These networks have worked with an overall philosophy of responsible development yielding a remarkable level of values congruence, mission convergence and with a sharedness of vision. In these cases, where the “visionary network” is functioning, higher levels of performance seem to be achieved.

Most of this literature has been aimed at an understanding of individuals, groups and single-organizational phenomena. While environmental complexity rises and uncertainty increases, it is clear those solutions to complex problems are being hosted by network responses. In a certain sense, these examples demonstrate the organizational effectiveness of a shared vision at the network level.

The visionary network organizational paradigm has deep relevance for system function and performance. Figure 2 below demonstrates a potential conceptualization of the values, mission, and vision trajectory in the vision network construct.

Insert Figure 2 about here

Summary & Future research

We have identified that nature and complexity of large scale problems and the need to look at how the world is tackling these issues. The high degree of uncertainty the volatility of markets and an increasingly complex globally integrated economy has made the age of the “network” a household phenomenon. We have further identified that in the field of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) that the link to network function and effectiveness has yet to be made. Our review has identified that collaborative networks may be a viable approach to dealing with increasing level of complexity. Additionally we have identified that a more useful approach for examining the collective action of actors may be the motivation of Responsible Development. And further that issues of organizational vision, mission and values may play a critical role in aiding organizations in solving these complex problems. Of special importance is the issue of leadership in Responsible Development and the diffusion of organizational vision, purpose and values. The visionary organizational paradigm and its role in organizational behavior need further investigation. Little is known about system level network effectiveness and/or performance. We believe that a key to understanding organizational network success is tied to the visionary organizational paradigm and its diffusion throughout collaborative networks and their systems. It is the capacity of leaders to establish the conditions to “share” these elements across organizations in a collaborative way that creates effective outcomes. No doubt more is deeply concealed in the culture of these networks. Future research should aim to develop a deeper understanding of network function and effectiveness highlighting the role of values, mission and vision. Additionally research should be focused on how these network dynamics evolve over time and how these critical elements are shaped and modified. And lastly – we

advocate for future researchers to provide a deeper understanding of the role of structure but in the context of the visionary organizational paradigm.

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Figure 1
Responsible Development

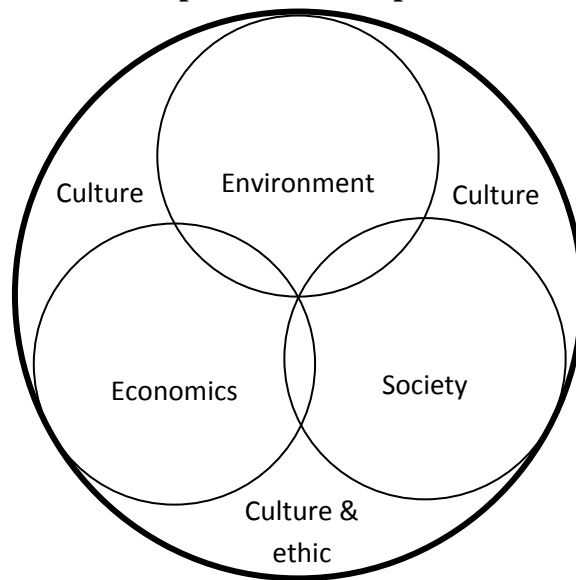


Figure 2

Visionary Networks

