Lemma Degefa

Omega Graduate School

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Assignment #3 - Essay on a case study

Write a 5-page paper on a specific event or phenomenon (e.g., a historical event, cultural practice, a legal decision), and interpret it from a hermeneutic perspective. This would involve understanding the event within its context and recognizing the role of your prejudices in shaping your interpretation.

The student should direct developmental readings from Assignment #2 on the hermeneutic issue for this assignment.

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of eleven scholarly research sources (two books and the

remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

**Introduction**

Sophos Africa is an Ethiopian organization that was established in 2021 with the aspiration to see a resilient and flourishing Ethiopian society. It asserts that a critical mass of fourteen percent can transform a society. In other words, it takes few transformed leaders to transform a society. As one of its core strategies, the organization applies training and mentoring engagements as the keys to transforming leaders into agents of societal transformation. To this effect, it has developed a leadership development curriculum that outlines training and coaching activities toward creating the fourteen percent critical mass of leaders. The leaders that are undergoing the program are drawn from different sectors. After completing the training and coaching, the participants are all expected to identify, train, and coach other leaders, who will continue to replicate the program until the fourteen percent threshold is achieved. The hope is that the trained and coached leaders shall ensure the transformation of Ethiopian society.

In short, the organization assumes that through non-formal training and coaching, it’s possible to create a critical mass of transformed leaders who can transform a society. This short essay asserts that transforming a society takes more than transforming leaders; developing transformed leaders takes more than just training and coaching.

**Discussion**

Sophos Africa admits that Ethiopia’s problems are incredibly complex, characterized by decadence of the common good and unsafe public spaces rocked by negative ethnocentrism and religious extremism. Yet, it believes that a critical mass of socio-culturally and economically transformed leaders can transform Ethiopian society and beyond ([https://sophosafrica.org/about-sophos-africa).Use](https://sophosafrica.org/about-sophos-africa%29.Use) a proper APA citation here.

Some scholars argue that leaders are the gates to social transformation (Aina, 2023). Abbas, Ekowati, & Suhariadi (2022) further add that societies can be transformed and leaders can serve as agents of change as both initiators and implementors of social change. Yet, some scholars disagree with the assertion. For instance, Walk (2023) suggests that leaders may also hinder societal change depending on their personal desires. That is why some scholars argue for solutions beyond leadership concerning societal change. Those who portray leaders as hope for society also admit that societies worldwide face a host of problems where particular leadership actions barely address societal challenges (Boik, 2021). That is why the topic of social transformation through a leadership lens should be brought under the purview of academic discourses.

The Institute of Social Transformation describes social transformation as large-scale change that requires inter-disciplinary and collective processes resulting in a shift of collective consciousness at local, national, and global levels (<https://transform.ucsc.edu/about/social-transformation>) This should be a proper APA citation, npot a hyperlink. Björn & Victoria (2019) describe it as a profound, sustained non-linear systemic change, which involves social, cultural, [technological](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technological_change), [political](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Political), and [economic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economic), as well as [environmental](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_protection) changes. In short, social transformation is not a linear project that can be achieved through a particular group in a particular way. Needless to say, thus, transforming a society takes more than a group of transformed leaders.

Although it’s intuitively appealing, defining and developing transformed leaders, and effectively establishing a direct linkage between the transformation of leaders and the transformation of a society have several challenges. First, scholars hold different positions concerning the type of leaders needed to transform a society.

Some African scholars look at it from African socio-cultural context, thus, advocate that authentic leadership is the key to social transformation in Africa. In this regard, some discuss four dimensions of authentic leadership: self-awareness, internalized moral perspectives, balanced processing (fairness), and relational transparency (Samwel, 2022).

Other scholars look at the context from digital perspective, thus, suggest digitally inclined leadership expertise that can transform a society in a digital era. These include the expertise of crafting winning digital strategies, developing marketable businesses, and solid digital capabilities (Antonopoulou, Halkiopoulos, Barlou, & Beligiannis, 2021). Other scholars further argue that social transformation must be seen within mega-global trends' context. Arne, Michaela, & Heike (2022) state that the societal transformation requires enhanced capacities to tackle grand global challenges such as climate change, the ageing society, health, digitalization or growing social and territorial inequalities.

Therefore, it may be said that the concept of societal transformation is a broad and long-lasting process that requires a comprehensive approach and collective actions.

Raising effective leaders who can transform a society is also complex. Some scholars argue that in order to develop transformed leaders that can spearhead social transformation, it’s imperative to employ an approach that blends proven traditional values with modern values (Kane, Phillips, Copulsky, & Andrus, 2019). Paza & Odeliusa (2021) assert that leadership competencies are influenced by organizational context. To this effect, organizations are expected to equip their leaders in a manner that fits their unique organizational context. Luísa & Catarina (2021) insist that despite the ever-changing circumstances, consistent leadership core competencies are relevant to all circumstances. According to Karakose, Kocabas, Yirci, Papadakis, Ozdemir, & Demirkol (2022) despite the fact that certain standard leadership skills remain relevant, leaders with adaptive skills can navigate through the change better than those possessing standard set of skills.

Scholars describe the skills that transformative leaders need to possess within the digital context of the 21st century. According to Luísa & Catarina (2021), the digital context makes leadership development efforts more challenging because the change is faster than the time it takes to prepare leaders to lead a change. Gomathy, Mohanapriya, Mahalakshmi, & Hemalatha (2022) list social skills such as collaboration, connection and communication for leaders to be effective in the digital era. Likewise, [Edgar](https://www.amazon.com/Edgar-H-Schein/e/B000APSBI8/ref%3Ddp_byline_cont_ebooks_1) & [Peter](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Ddp_byline_sr_ebooks_2?ie=UTF8&field-author=Peter+A.+Schein&text=Peter+A.+Schein&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=digital-text) (2023) underline that leaders need to collaborate with their team and other leaders or fail altogether. Julian (2022) asserts that leaders should remain agile. That is to say, they can thrive if only they remain adaptive through continuous learning. Further, Anna & Magdalena (2021) argue that leadership agility and adaptability have become skills required among leaders to succeed in the volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous world. Yet, they underline that digitization of processes should not eliminate human skills.

Karakose, Kocabas, Yirci, Papadakis, Ozdemir, & Demirkol (2022), an article which examined influential authors and journal articles between 1983 and 2021 with emphasis on key themes of leadership in the digital era noted that the most unique feature of today’s change is the sheer speed and extent of the changes taking place. The technology-led transformation has caused many organizations to change their leadership and management processes radically. Digitalization has caused a paradigm shift, along with new innovative business models and business behaviors, which has required leaders to possess certain digital skills ensure social transformation. In alignment with the unprecedented change, leaders in digital era must aim to consistently manage digital transformation processes by adopting multiple leadership approaches. According to this source, effective digital leadership requires an empathetic problem-solving, fast, accurate, and participatory decision-making ability, as well as effective networking skills, which requires digital literacy, agility, and cooperation.

In general, there is no one single formula to develop transformed leaders that can transform a society. As most scholars argue, raising leaders for the 21st century requires a very flexible approach that accommodates organizational context, digital context, human context, a blend of traditional and modern values while remaining collaborative and agile.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, transformed society is not just a biproduct of few transformed minds; it’s much deeper and wider than that. It’s a collaborative effort that involves multiple layers. Its realization involves diverse approaches and multiple stakeholders both locally and globally. It, therefore, involves a wide range of views and approaches instead of linear and shallow prescriptive models.

Likewise, developing leaders to transform a society requires much more than training and coaching. It entails multiple engagements and diverse interventions. It must be a continuous process in alignment with the dynamic context within which transformation is envisaged. Above and beyond possessing personal leadership capabilities, leaders need to collaborate and network with other key players both locally and globally. Nevertheless, applying customized training and coaching leaders may play a part in developing leaders that may play a part in transforming societies.

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