Leadership Competencies and the Connection to Italian Reform

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What are the leadership competencies related to reform? Since there are different types of reform (Light 1997), what the specific competencies related to those specific reform types? And finally, what are the types of reform being instituted in Italy, and how does that relate to the practical competencies needed by Italian administrators?

There are literally hundreds of theories that explain leadership (Rost 1991; Bass 2008). Some theories are meant to have universal applicability while others are intended to explain leadership in a vast array of special circumstances. Theories generally try to use as few concepts as possible to explain as much of a phenomenon as possible. This elegance is useful for teaching and scientific purposes, but has made transference to the organizational world problematic (Van Wart 2003, 2008; Van Wart and O’Farrell 2007). While the organizational world has found these theoretical perspectives useful, they have nonetheless largely insisted on focusing on competency-based approaches to leadership (Hollenbeck, McCall, and Silzer 2006). Competencies are the concrete traits, skills, and behaviors that are the building blocks of effective management and leadership (Winter 1979; Quinn et al. 1996; Van Wart 2005). Examples include energy, communication, delegation, motivation, and environmental scanning. Competency-based approaches make sure that leadership approaches can be translated into concrete strategic purposes through systems design (position descriptions, performance evaluations, etc.), training, and system evaluation (U.S. OPM 1999).
One useful and well-supported leadership theory regarding change is called the Full Range Leadership Theory developed by Bernard Bass (1985). Like many theories, it strives for elegance by proposing as few elements as possible. Sadly, many of the global concepts such as management by exception and contingent reward have little meaning to front-line leaders. Like many macro-level theories, it needs to be translated into specific terms that first, are meaningful and, second, can be applied by operational leaders.

This paper will first briefly describe a competency framework consistent with the worldwide literature on leadership. The framework provides a relatively comprehensive, and cohesively organized set of micro-level concepts to be used in the wide variety of situations with which managers and leaders must cope and grapple. The framework can be used to translate different theories into universally understood concepts. However, as an overall framework does it not propose how leaders should act in specific situations or which competencies to emphasize on a daily, weekly or yearly cycle of activities. Next, the paper will introduce Bernard Bass’ theory of transformational change. This well-regarded theory is strong in providing an abstract notion of the global elements necessary for transformational change, but is weak in providing the related competency requirements for success. The paper then identifies the relevant competencies necessary in order to effectively provide the leadership styles recommended by Bass. Finally, the paper ends with a brief discussion of the types of reform legislatively enacted by the Italian government. It divides the reform initiatives into four fundamental types, using the analysis of Paul Light. The paper concludes with a discussion of the types of leadership and their related competencies that should be emphasized in order to achieve the different types of reform proposed.

For simplicity, leadership will generally be treated as if it were the primary province of the formal leader with executive or managerial responsibilities. However, leadership is as much a process and community activity as an executive or heroic activity, and with more space, such additional levels of
analysis could complement the discussion (Uhl-Bien 2006; Uhl-Bien, Marion, and McKelvey 2007). Also, while the elements of leadership in various domains such as political, social movement, and organizational leadership have common elements (Burns 1978; Kellerman 2007, 2008), they differ markedly in the types of situations they deal with. The focus here is organizational settings, and in particular, those administrative settings in government agencies.

A Comprehensive Leadership Framework: The Leadership Action Cycle

Leadership involves, among other things, an array of assessment skills, a series of characteristics (traits and skills) which the leader brings to a leadership setting, and a wide variety of behavioral competencies (Van Wart 2004). As study after study has indicated, standard management in which systems changes are minimal still requires a tremendous repertoire of skills, typically ranging from personal attributes that contribute to effectiveness of task, people, and organizational behaviors (Katz 1955). Managing change dramatically compounds these requirements (Kanter 1983; Kanter, Stein, and Jick 1992; Van Wart and Berman 1999). Further, all managers tend to be bombarded with interruptions, problems, and conflicting demands (Mintzberg 1973). For our discussion we can define leaders as those managers who must also assist their organization—internally and externally—to adapt to the environment, adjust the organizational culture, and refine and institutionalize the appropriate changes. This sets up a daunting task for leaders because of the variety of challenges that leaders face over relatively short periods of time. Thus, while leaders do not need all significant competencies all of the time, it is amazing how many they do need on occasion, and how important even rarely used competencies can be in specific situations. The study of major leadership competencies, then, provides not only a useful tool in translating different situational needs, but acts as a developmental tool given the inevitable need for all competencies over time.
The model reviewed here has five major functional areas. The first is leader assessment. Leaders must be able to assess the dynamics occurring in the organization, the external environment, and the constraints that they face in carrying out routine functions and nonroutine changes. How well do followers understand their roles, do they have all the skills necessary, and are they motivated to work hard? Are organizational processes supportive of productivity, teamwork, and morale? Is the organization creative and innovative enough to stay abreast of contemporary practice? Does the organization have an eye to the opportunities and threats occurring outside its boundaries, and is it able to adapt quickly and flexibly? In addition, leaders must know their constraints: by law, by position, by resources, and by their own leadership limitations. They must also know how to push these bounds back (with the exception of law in the public sector), when necessary over time, in order to meet the challenges that leaders face. Finally, in conducting this ongoing assessment, leaders must be able to set goals and priorities for themselves and for their organizations.

Leaders come to various situations in different stages of readiness. Leader characteristics are a large part of that readiness. While no absolute set of characteristics is necessary in all leadership situations, certain traits and skills tend to be significantly more important than others. Traits are those characteristics that are primarily inherent and become a part of one’s personality, while skills are characteristics that are primarily learned. This is not to say that traits cannot be enhanced, especially through training and/or indoctrination; nor is it to say that some people do not have a natural gift for some skills. Leaders tend to be perceived as self-confident and this tends to be an innate personality characteristic; nonetheless, those with excellent technical training and substantial experience become far more self-confident. The traits that are commonly held to be most useful to leaders in a variety of situations include: self-confidence, decisiveness, resilience, energy, need for achievement, willingness to assume responsibility, flexibility, service motivation, personal integrity, and emotional maturity. Skills
that researchers have found are of the highest utility for leaders are communication skills, social skills, influence and negation skills, analytic skills, technical skills, and the skill of continual learning.

Leaders also bring a set of leadership “styles” to situations. A style can be thought of as the dominant pattern of behavior for a leader in a particular position. Rather than referring to all aspects of leadership, style normally refers to a pattern of behaviors to deal with followers and the external environment in different situations. Like leadership characteristics, styles are antecedent to leadership in that they are prior aspects of the leader’s repertoire and to some degree are an explicit method of accomplishing specific goals. Yet styles, like leadership characteristics, are expressed through specific actions that leaders take in doing their jobs. Some leaders have only a few styles in their repertoire, while others have many that they can use in various situations. Of course, just because one uses a particular style does not mean that the leader uses the style effectively or in the correct situations. Common mid-level style patterns identified by researchers include laissez-faire, directive, supportive, participative, delegative, achievement-oriented, inspirational, strategic, collaborative, and combinations of these styles executed simultaneously. (Note that Bass theory proposes two macro-level style types which will be discussed later.)

Leaders act. These actions or behaviors can be thought of as occurring in three domains. First, leaders have tasks to accomplish. Their organization, division, or unit has work that it must produce, no matter whether that is an actual physical product or a relatively nebulous service. Some of the standard tasks of leaders include: monitoring and assessing work, operations planning, clarifying roles, informing, delegating, problem solving, and managing innovation. Second, leaders have followers and it is the followers who actually accomplish the mission of the organization. Thus, good leaders never lose sight of the fact that they accomplish their goals through and, as importantly, with others. Common people-oriented behaviors include consulting, organizing personnel, developing staff, motivating, managing teams and team building, managing personnel conflicts, and managing personnel change. Finally,
leaders are expected to know more than how to design and coordinate work processes; they are expected to know how the product of these efforts will integrate and compare with other organizations and external entities. If production and people constitute the mission of leadership, then organizational alignment and adaptability constitute the vision of leadership. Today more than ever, good leaders must not only be competent in their profession and skillful with people, they must have well-articulated visions that are compelling to a wide variety of constituencies. Commonly accepted organizational behaviors include scanning the environment, strategic planning, articulating the mission and vision, networking, performing general management functions, decision making, and managing organizational change.

Finally, leaders must be able to evaluate how they have done. This is an ongoing and complex activity. It requires balancing numerous competing interests. It also requires adjusting plans and priorities as new operational problems occur, some problems are resolved, and, less frequently but very critically, new opportunities and threats materialize suddenly. It requires examination of one’s own performance as well as the performance of the organization. Exhibit 1 identifies the general causal relationship of these elements. Putting aside unusual situations such as unexpected crises, the model essentially recommends: think about your organization in its environment first (along with your own constraints) in order to set goals, know your traits and skills well enough so that you capitalize on your strengths and improve your critical weaknesses, know your style preference but be as flexible as possible, balance your actions across domains of responsibility according to your assessment, and evaluate what you and your organization have done.

Having surveyed the competencies generally found to be the most universal for organizational leaders in a variety of situations, we will now turn to a particular model of transformational leadership. It is a model of particular usefulness in times of change and reform.
An Overview of Bass’ Theory of Transformational Leadership

Bass (1985) provides a solid theoretical framework with his “full-range leadership” theory. Bass conceives leadership as a single continuum. It progresses from nonleadership to transactional leadership to transformational leadership. Nonleadership provides haphazard results at best; transactional leadership provides conventional results; but transformational leadership provides, as his book title indicates, “performance beyond expectations.” He theorizes leadership as having an additive nature in general. However, it is important to keep in mind that Bass only uses a positive notion of transformational leadership so his theory explains the phenomenon when leaders are successful. For this article, we will focus on this positive but simplistic supposition. However, some technically “successful” transformational leaders are nonetheless destructive in terms of the diminished legacy that they bequeath to their organizations.

Bass asserts that transformational leadership is a widespread phenomenon across levels of management, types of organizations, and around the world. It is therefore a universal theory without contingency factors. As with other transformational theories, it does assume that both the quality of the transformational factors executed and the number of styles/factors used will have a moderating effect on the performance. That is, there is a substantial additive effect of the styles.

Starting with an essentially nonleadership style, laissez faire takes a hands-off approach to leadership. Laissez-faire leaders are largely uninvolved in operations, sloppy about details, resistant to participation in problem solving, lax in decision making, negligent in providing feedback, and indifferent to subordinate needs. Management-by-exception is a style that utilizes mistakes or deviations from standards as corrective opportunities, and that emphasizes negative feedback. In the more lax or passive form of management-by-exception, the manager intervenes or takes corrective action only after a mistake has been made or a problem has become obvious. An active management-by-exception style simply indicates that the manager is monitoring more closely and intervening prior to problems going
outside the unit. Neither of these styles is necessarily bad in and of itself. However, Bass holds that it is generally an inferior style that should be used sparingly. Extensive use of this style creates fear and intimidation and discourages initiative and creativity.

The more progressive and positive portion of transactional leadership is contingent reward. Managers using contingent reward find out what employees value and vary the incentives that they offer accordingly. An employee willing to take on one assignment may be released from another. A high-performance employee may get a large raise or a promotion. Such leadership is at its best, generally, when the work and incentives are negotiated and mutually agreed upon in advance. Although contingent reward is a fundamental part of most organizational systems and represents a practical reality—we expect rewards for hard work—it does have its weaknesses. First, by itself, contingent reward systems can easily lead to extensive tit-for-tat systems where only what is specifically rewarded gets done. Second, contingent rewards are generally set up as individual reward systems, and therefore do not directly account for group achievements. Furthermore, an exclusive reliance on contingent rewards may leave many, perhaps most, managers and executives with few leadership options when resources are extremely scarce or diminishing and yet the organizational needs are critical or increasing.

One of the four factors designated as transformational by Bass and others in the transformational school is called “individualized consideration.” It is highly similar to the supportive roles proposed in transactional theories. It refers to coaching, professional and personal support, individualized treatment based on specific needs, increased delegation as employees mature professionally, and so forth. In short, it boils down or is reduced to respect and empathy.

Bass calls the next factor or style “idealized influence,” which is very similar to the concept of charisma. Those who exhibit idealized influence function as powerful role models for their followers. Followers identify with leader goals and emulate their actions. This requires a perception by followers of a high level of integrity and wisdom.
“Intellectual stimulation” is the factor of leadership that encourages people to create new opportunities, to solve problems in new ways, and to envision a different future. Not only does it foster intellectual flexibility in followers, it also requires the ability to reexamine competing values. This style emphasizes techniques such as information sharing, brainstorming, vision articulation, and employee development targeted at specific organizational improvements. These types of leaders are often thought of as idea people or visionaries.

The final factor in Bass’s taxonomy is “inspirational motivation”—in a sense, the most critical element of a transformational style. When leaders successfully use inspirational motivation, their followers are able to transcend their self-interests long enough to become passionate about organizational pride, group goals, and group achievements. Through enhanced “team” spirit, leaders are able to motivate followers to pursue higher standards or to make sacrifices, without reliance on extrinsic incentives. Although the greater good is expected to redound to followers at some point in the future, there is generally not an exact commitment or transaction contract because of the uncertainty or abstractness of the goals. The causal chain implied in Bass’s model is illustrated in Exhibit xx.

All four transformational elements are generally present in concert during successful change initiatives, but that is not to say that the leader must supply all of them. Colleagues may supply their own consideration; low-key trust may successfully substitute for bold charisma; young, highly motivated professionals in the group may provide the intellectual stimulation; and inspirational motivation may be largely the result of a rich and proud tradition as well as a professional indoctrination instilling strong ethical values. The major elements of the two macro-level styles, transactional and transformational leadership, are summarized in Exhibit 2.

Of all the transformational theories, Bass’s is the most highly researched and has been given a good deal of positive support (Yammarino et al. 2005; Yammarino and Dansereau 2008). His additive approach is intuitively appealing as well as relatively elegant, considering the large number of styles that
It incorporates. Further, one senses that Bass’s approach builds on earlier transactional theory, even though the earlier theory and concepts are somewhat minimized. In terms of weaknesses, one of the most obvious is its universality, which in turn implies that transformational leadership is better in all leadership levels and situations. This would seem to be contradictory to the reality of many leaders, especially those working at ground-level operational levels. Second, the overlap and lack of clarity of the transformational concepts are problematic. Part of the problem is structural, however, because higher-level human motivations are abstract and related in extraordinarily complex ways. Additionally, the nomenclature of the concepts is not always easy to understand and remember. Even though his transformational factors have the mnemonic of all starting with \( i \), differences between concepts such as those between individualized consideration and idealized influence have to be explained and memorized.

**Articulating Bass’ Theory in Competency Terms**

Bass’ theory, understandably, emphasizes transformational elements at the expense of transactional elements. While studies indicate that employees consider transactional styles only slightly less important than transformational styles in general (Trottier, Van Wart, and Wang 2008), Bass’s theory provides relatively little focus. For the purpose of this study, we will combine management by exception and management by contingent reward into a single style. What types of traits and skills do transactional leaders need? Some of the more obvious traits and skills include communication, analytic skills, and technical skills. The behaviors emphasized would primarily be found in the task domain: monitoring and assessing work, operations planning, delegation, performing general management functions, and clarifying roles. The styles most commonly used would be laissez-faire, directive, delegative, and achievement-oriented.
The Full Range Theory details the macro level elements for successful transformation much more fully than the transaction elements, and indeed, the research supports the idea that change is exceedingly difficult to design, execute and institutionalize.

The first element is (individualized) consideration in Bass’ model. If followers do not feel that their leader cares about their well-being, then they will be distrustful and demotivated. In terms of our competency taxonomy, the trait that lends itself to consideration is a service motivation toward employees and clients. The types of behaviors that exhibit consideration are informing, consulting, planning and organizing personnel, and developing staff. The predominant leader style is a supportive one focused on listening, helping and empowering followers.

The second element is transcending self-interests (“inspirational motivation”). Leadership must get individuals and groups to let go of their short-term personal priorities and selfish preferences, for long-term group success that ultimately cascades opportunities back to the individuals involved. Personal integrity and emotional maturity are key traits if the requisite trust is to be garnered. Behaviors that facilitate the group to transcend its self-interests include motivation, team building, managing personnel conflict, managing personnel change, and networking and partnering. Leadership styles necessary include participative and collaborative.

The third element in Bass’ transformational leadership style is vision and creativity (“intellectual stimulation”). Leaders need to know where the organization must go and how to get there. Vision is not just created by the leader, but is the combined effort of the leader and followers in a synergetic relationship. The traits and skills that reflect vision and creativity include flexibility and continual learning. The behaviors include problem solving, managing innovation and creativity, scanning the environment, strategic planning, decision making, and managing organizational change. The predominant leadership style is strategic.
The fourth element in Bass’ transformational leadership style is charisma (“individualized influence”). At a minimum, leaders need to be likeable and able to interact competently with followers and external stakeholders. Ideally, of course, leaders are inspiring, praiseworthy, and have superb social graces. The types of traits and skills commonly associated with this element are self-confidence, decisiveness, resilience, energy, need for achievement, willingness to assume responsibility, social skills, and influencing and negotiating skills. The behavior most associated with charisma is articulating the mission and vision. The specific leadership style most connected to charisma is an inspirational style. Exhibit 3 relates these competencies to Bass’ model.

Dissecting Reform by Light’s Types of Reform

We have already discussed the fact that leaders must assess the situation with which they must deal, and act accordingly, using the appropriate traits, skills and behaviors to execute appropriate styles. We have examined the competencies emphasized in a change-oriented style. Is it possible to define the type of change in the Italian administrative context, and in this way define the major elements and concrete competencies even more specifically? To look at this question, we will first use Paul Light’s well-known analysis of reform by types to better understand how narrow or broad the Italian reform effort is. Next, we will superimpose the legislative mandates of Delegated Law #15 of March 4, 2009 onto that analysis.

Light (1997) points out that reform can accomplish four very different purposes. First, some reform is intended to make organizational processes as efficient as possible. For example, a personnel-intensive process might be reengineered to involve fewer steps and take advantage of new technology. Second, some reform is intended to make organizational structures, functions, and responsibilities as economical yet as functionally complete as possible. Examples of such reforms are when two agencies are merged to reduce overhead, when a mandate is removed from an agency, or when regulatory
reductions allow for more timely responses, and as a result consume less resources. Some examples of economical reform mean providing a missing service that is critical to the success of the agency mission. A third type of reform of reform is to enhance accountability, what Paul Light calls the “watchful eye.” Are appropriate checks and balances in place, is due process followed, and is the organization’s mission protected from individual and group distortions or manipulations? All of these three types of reforms rely heavily on transactional leadership in terms of technical skills, analyzing what needs to be done, operations planning, directing the changes and communicating expectations and changes. Achievement oriented leaders must pursue the goals of efficiency, economy and accountability.

Significantly less emphasized, but still critical for high levels of success, is transformational leadership to the degree that the reforms involve change. It does not matter whether the type of change is process change, changing attitudes, or changing organizational missions and culture. A mere transactional leadership style is unlikely to be successful for a number of reasons. To begin with, followers must feel that they are important and have received consideration, even when they are being required to do more, being required to do new things, and being held more accountable. Also, because change generally requires giving up comfortable habits and often involves considerable sacrifice, the transcendence of self-interests turns change from being a burden and hardship to being an adventure and privilege. Change rarely has cookie-cutter answers; rather, change requires flexibility, continual learning, problem solving, strategic planning, and environmental scanning which involve the vision and creativity subset of transformational change. Finally, change is nerve-wracking, exhausting, and confusing. Successful change efforts need leaders who are self-confident, resilient, energetic, and who have the social and influence skills to articulate appealing visions and inspire others to follow.

The fourth type of reform that Paul Light discusses is providing management with the flexibility to manage creatively, and to incentivize the organization to be excellent in service and forward-thinking in vision. Light calls this “liberation management,” a term coined by Peters (1992). This involves
employee empowerment, managerial innovation, and appropriate experimentation and risk taking.

Liberation management reverses the emphases of transactional and transformational leadership. Transformational leadership skills are most important for liberated managers. Liberating managers encourages radical change rather than minor improvement, inspiration over compliance, internal evolution to meet external forces rather than external forces mandating internal change. Yet liberated managers had better not totally neglect transactional leadership as Bass’ theory suggests. Technical competence, good analysis, careful monitoring, solid operations planning, and basic general management functions can never be completely overlooked. Light’s four types of reform are summarized in Exhibit 4.

Narrower reform agendas can involve just one of these types of reform. Larger reform efforts can address several or even all of these reform types. Some reform types go together relatively easily such as efficiency and economy. When changing an organizational structure, why not simultaneously streamline some outdated processes? Some reform types produce greater tensions in the competing goals that they try to achieve. Providing greater accountability on one hand in terms of more checks and balances, and liberating management from constraints to be more creative on the other, can potentially be inconsistent. Of course, well-structured liberation management should change the emphasis on the types of accountability so that accountability is not reduced, but simply restructured.

How do the three pillars of Italian reform—modernization of public administration, innovation and digitization within public administration and the country, and better relationships between public administration with citizens and business—match up against Light’s analysis? On the surface, it might seem that modernization would strengthen efficiency, innovation and digitization would strengthen efficiency and economy, and enhancing the relation to citizens would focus on liberation management. Closer analysis indicates that all three pillars have a variety of reform types embedded in the initiatives.
The modernization of public administration involves (1) transparency and integrity, (2) performance evaluation, (3) meritocracy and rewards, (4) managerial responsibility, (5) disciplinary sanctions, and (6) collective bargaining. The transparency and integrity initiatives which bring disclosure to salary information and provide a new Anti-corruption and Transparency Service emphasize accountability. The scope of performance evaluation initiative is not only to help services work better (efficiency), but also to emphasize accountability when performance measure schemes enable better tracking of the quantity and quality of results. The meritocracy and rewards initiative emphasizes excellence and managerial enterprise, and strongly supports liberation management. The managerial responsibility initiative gives more flexibility to senior managers (liberation management), as well as proposes to make them more accountable for results. Disciplinary sanction for false medical certificates, refusal to transfer, and persistent poor performance is clearly focused on increasing accountability. The purpose of collective bargaining initiatives is to bring more regularity to the process, and thus more economy; nonetheless, the regulatory change clearly seeks to enhance union accountability on one hand, and provide more opportunities to reward entrepreneurial managers in light of liberation management on the other.

The innovation and digitization of public administration (e-Gov 2012) involves both large doses of efficiency in terms of doing things faster and more cheaply, and economy in terms of actually providing new services. In education, health and justice, digitization will provide opportunities to provide service at a distance, more quickly, and with more basic information being accessible for self-service. This enhances efficiency. It will also allow for new services to be provided because of the ability of citizens to use and access information directly which aids the economy of public administration because of its mass outreach and the ability of consumers to customize their requests. To be successful, these new initiatives will require substantial doses of liberation management to overcome the inevitable barriers to successful implementation.
The pillar of reform focuses on improving the relationship between public administration and the citizen-business community has five sub-initiatives. The certified email initiative provides new service but also does so more efficiently. The friendly networks initiative emphasizes expanding access points for citizens, as well as a liberation management perspective in making a cultural change to embrace a more open and welcoming approach to the public. The “friendly line” initiative seeks to be the first access point for citizens and would be a new service, and the “smart inclusion” initiative would provide Italy’s first distance learning, entertainment, and clinical data management for hospitalized children. These fall within the definition of economy. However, the “show your face” initiative would gauge customer satisfaction, while aiding feedback and efficiency would also provide accountability in the short term. Both the implementation of new services and the enhancement of customer services require liberation management to be successful.

What then, can be said of the blend of transactional and transformational skills necessary for the greatest level of success in the Italian reforms? Certainly, many aspects of the reforms, narrowly conceived, require a more transactional leadership skill set. Setting up performance measurement systems, reducing fraud/waste/abuse, requiring professional discipline of individuals and organizations, cutting unnecessary services, and adding new services that are clearly understood and for which resources are readily available are examples of types of reform that are more transactional in nature. On the other hand, some of the narrow reforms call for more transformational skills such as emphasizing managerial discretion and employee merit, introducing entirely new services in which the implementation is vague and unclear, and changing the culture of public administration itself to be less self-absorbed and more customer friendly. The entire scope of change also emphasizes transformational skills because the number of transactional adjustments are meant to add up to a paradigm change in administrative culture and productivity. Therefore, in many of the narrow areas of technical reform, leaders with strong transactional skills may be sufficient. Some policy leaders,
relatively insulated from the details of organizational workings, may need to be primarily transformational leaders, rallying the troops to keep moving despite resistance and obstacles. However, in general, the range and scope of Italian reform is so ambitious, that most Italian reform will need leaders with both transactional and transformational skills, as Bass recommends. Leaders will need to inspire while clamping down on abuse, and leaders will need to pay close attention to the technical aspects of legal strictures and organizational realities while advocating change. While transformational leaders do not need to personally possess the full range of competencies identified, they do need to ensure that those competencies are well represented in the leadership team. This is a tall order, but is clearly required if the ambitious Italian reform effort is to be as successful as hoped for.

Conclusion

Transactional leadership with its managerial and achievement oriented focus requires a substantial number of competencies in order to maximize efficiency, economy and accountability (Yukl 2002). Transformational leadership with its change orientation thrives on additional competency clusters such as consideration, transcending self-interests, vision & creativity, and charisma. Italian reform includes a number of reforms, that when narrowly conceived are largely transactional. Some of the reforms, such as moving to a more merit based system with greater managerial flexibility are, per se, transformational. Furthermore, the overall scope of the reforms taken together is overwhelmingly transformational.

The need for such sweeping reforms indicates that internal transformation has not been forthcoming in the past, either because it was not encouraged or even stifled. Transactional skills are likely to be much stronger than transformational skills, but with less discipline than new Italian public law would calls for. The new and critical transformational skills are likely to be largely deficient because of a lack of opportunity and practice. Changes in the law and executive mandates will provide the
rationale and initial impetus for change. Yet ultimately, the overhaul of Italian public administration cannot be achieved solely by legislative and executive orders. It will need internal champions, roles models sprinkled throughout the public service and guidance and support to reinvigorate public administration and change its very culture (Barzaley 1992). This means that transformational skills will therefore need to be bolstered at all levels of Italian government through extensive training programs, widespread investments in new education, and role modeling (Van Wart, Cayer, and Cook 1992; Van Wart 1995; Van Wart 1998). This will be challenging but will provide exciting opportunities, both to those designing the change as well as experiencing it.

References


**Exhibit 1: The Leadership Action Cycle**

**Leader Characteristics**

**Traits**
1. Self-confidence
2. Decisiveness
3. Resilience
4. Energy
5. Need for achievement
6. Willingness to assume responsibility
7. Flexibility
8. Service motivation
9. Personal integrity
10. Emotional maturity

**Skills**
1. Communication
2. Social skills
3. Influencing and negotiating
4. Analytic skills
5. Technical skills
6. Continual learning

**Leader Behaviors**

**Task-oriented Behaviors**
1. Monitor and assess work
2. Operations planning
3. Clarify roles
4. Inform
5. Delegate
6. Problem solving
7. Manage innovation and creativity

**People-oriented Behaviors**
1. Consult
2. Plan and organize personnel
3. Develop staff
4. Motivate
5. Manage teams and team building
6. Manage personnel conflict
7. Manage personnel change

**Organizational Behaviors**
1. Scan the environment
2. Strategic planning
3. Articulate the mission and vision
4. Network and partner
5. Perform general management functions
6. Decision making
7. Manage organizational change

**Leader Assessment**

**Organization and environment**
1. Task skills
2. Role clarity
3. Innovation and creativity
4. Resources and support services
5. Subordinate effort
6. Cohesiveness and cooperation
7. Organization of work and performance strategies
8. External coordination and adaptability

**Constraints**
1. Legal/contractual constraints
2. Limitations of position power
3. Availability of resources
4. Limits of leadership abilities

**Leader Priorities**
1. Technical performance
2. Follower development
3. Organizational alignment
4. Service and ethical focus
5. Balance and integration of foci

**Leader Styles**
1. Laissez-faire
2. Directive
3. Supportive
4. Participative
5. Delegative
6. Achievement-oriented
7. Inspirational
8. Strategic
9. Collaborative
10. Combined

**Leader Evaluation and Development**

**Development**
1. Self-study
2. Experience
3. Education

**Evaluation**
1. Technical performance
2. Follower performance
3. Organizational alignment
4. Service mentality and ethical focus
Exhibit 2: Bernard Bass’ Full Range Leadership Theory

**TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP**
- Management by Exception
  - and
- Contingent Reward

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**
- Consideration
- Charisma
- Vision & Creativity
- Transcending Self-interests

**Successful Change**
Exhibit 3: Bernard Bass’ Full Range Leadership Theory with Competencies

**TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP**

- Management by Exception
  - and
  - Contingent Reward
  - Traits and skills: communication, technical skills, analytic skills
  - Behaviors: monitor and assess work, operations planning, clarify roles, delegate, perform general management functions

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

- Consideration
  - Traits and skills: service motivation
  - Behaviors: inform, consult, plan and organize personnel, develop staff

- Charisma
  - Traits and skills: self-confidence, decisiveness, resilience, energy, need for achievement, willingness to assume responsibility, social skills, influencing and negotiating
  - Behaviors: articulate the mission and vision

- Vision & Creativity
  - Traits and skills: flexibility, continual learning
  - Behaviors: problem solving, manage innovation and creativity, scan the environment, strategic planning, decision making, manage organizational change

- Transcending Self-interests
  - Traits and skills: personal integrity, emotional maturity
  - Behaviors: motivate, manage teams and team building, manage personnel conflict, manage personnel change, network and partner

Successful Change
### Exhibit 4: Paul Light’s Four Types of Reform

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efficiency (Scientific Management)</td>
<td>focuses on expertise and technical improvements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Economy (War on Waste)</td>
<td>focuses on doing the right thing and making sure that the right thing is done through inspections and audits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accountability (Watchful Eye)</td>
<td>ensures due process is in place for employees and the public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Liberation Management (higher performance)</td>
<td>focuses on outcomes, new ways of doing things and managerial flexibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>