

The Arab Spring and Western Societies

Fraternity and Collective Leadership

Paolo Giusta
Sophia University Institute

This article uses the principle of fraternity to read some recent evolutions of the concept of leadership both in research and in practice (for instance, the Arab revolutions) from individual, to shared, to collective leadership. In particular, it explores how some fraternal characteristics of collective leadership can provide an effective practice, underpinning both successful participation and transformation. The fraternity principle, indeed, can help collective leadership evolve from a “neighborly choice” to a full-fledged “civic duty”: a duty, however, which like leadership itself cannot be enforced or imposed from outside, but must result from an inside-out movement.

The French revolution invented the concept of fraternity as a political category alongside liberty and equality. The three elements of the famous triptych, *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, still appear in the letterhead of all administrative documents and official websites of the French administration. The third element of the triptych, however, has been, until recently, “forgotten.”¹ It has been perceived as being too difficult to harness, to translate fraternity into a political program, and the more handleable and reassuring idea of “solidarity” has more often replaced it.²

Yet, fraternity offers a very insightful perspective from which to analyze certain phenomena of our time, such as collective aspects of leadership that, in recent times, an increasing number of scholars have started exploring.³ On top of academic research and

1. Cf. Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *Il principio dimenticato: La fraternità nella riflessione politologica contemporanea* (Roma: Città Nuova, 2007).

2. Cf. Bruno Mattéi, “La république n’est pas fraternelle,” *Le Monde*, May 21, 2002.

3. For leadership as a collective endeavor, see: Lucia Crevani, Monica Lindgren, and Johann Packendorff, “Shared Leadership: A Postheroic Perspective on Leadership as a Collective Construction,” *International Journal of Leadership Studies* 3 (2007): 40; Wilfred H. Drath, Cynthia D. McCauley, Charles J. Palus, Ellen Van Velsor, Patricia M. G. O’Connor, and John B. McGuire, “Toward a More Integrative Ontology of Leadership,” *Leadership Quarterly* 19 (2008): 635; Lucia Crevani, Monica Lindgren, and Johann Packendorff, “Leadership, not Leaders: On the Study of Leadership as Practices and Interactions,” *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 26 (2010): 77; Morela Hernandez, Marion B. Eberly, Bruce J. Avolio, and Michael D. Johnson, “The Loci and Mechanisms of Leadership: Exploring a More Comprehensive View of Leadership Theory,” *Leadership Quarterly* 22 (2011): 1165; Lucia Crevani, *Clearing for Action. Leadership as a Relational Phenomenon* (Doctoral thesis, 2011). For a relational and participatory approach to leadership, where the unit of analysis is no longer the individual leader, but the relation, see: Mary Uhl-Bien, “Relational Leadership Theory: Exploring the Social Processes of Leadership and Organizing,” *Leadership Quarterly* 17 (2006): 654; Mary Uhl-Bien, Russ Marion, and Bill McKelvey, “Complexity Leadership Theory: Shifting Leadership from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Era,” *Leadership Quarterly* 18 (2007): 298.

publications, we now observe experiences of collective leadership in organizations⁴ and in communities.⁵ This is also the case with the phenomena of collective movements, that at first sight seem leaderless, which are unfolding under our eyes: the Arab Spring, the Spanish *indignados* (the 15-M movement), and Occupy Wall Street (OWS). How did the concept of collective leadership come about? How does it operate in practice? Let us start our journey toward understanding collective leadership with a more familiar model, the one of individual leadership.

Individual Leadership

The more traditional concept of leadership, which is still the dominant model in organizations and in the literature,⁶ sees the leader

4. Cf. Mehrdad Baghai and James H. Quigley, *As One. Individual Action—Collective Power* (London: Penguin, 2011). The book, co-authored by CEO of Deloitte, James H. Quigley, is the result of a research project of Deloitte. It identifies eight models of “as-one” action. Noteworthy are the examples of organizations without job titles, without job descriptions, in which the working teams self-organize, “merging” and dissolving based on the talents necessary to successfully carry out a project. Hierarchy is a by-product (for example the CEO of Gore, the firm producing among other things Teflon and Gore-Tex, is chosen by the staff). The authors define collective leadership as the “leadership that results in a cohesive group of people working together effectively toward a common goal or purpose” (p. 7).

5. Karma Ruder et al., propose a series of stories of communities in the United States that contribute to solving local problems through interactions among community members and with public authorities. The interweaving of relationships inside these communities contributes to a new “social fabric” made of: deep relationships with each other; a shared purpose to cross boundaries that keep us from working with others; trust in community wisdom; the ability of imagining together the narrative for our community. In this framework, collective leadership is seen as “a way for diverse groups of people in our communities to hold purpose, direction, and action cooperatively.” See Karma Ruder, ed., *The Collective Leadership Storybook: Weaving Strong Communities* (Seattle: Center for Ethical Leadership, 2010).

6. Niina Koivunen notes, with reference to the persistence of “heroic leadership,” that “leadership discourses have varied and changed over time but have remained surprisingly—and disappointingly—stable. The meanings attached to leadership are still very

as the one occupying a position of hierarchical supremacy, the one holding the power, the manager, the boss. The focus is on the person of the leader and on his or her qualities, skills, and tasks. The leader is seen in a “dyadic relationship” with his or her followers.⁷ From this perspective, according to our opinion, there is very little place for fraternity. Hierarchy is useful and necessary for the sound organization of society; but, taken alone, it involves the submission of one person or persons to another.⁸ Fraternity takes a completely different starting point: fundamentally we are all peers on an equal footing, and the fact that we assume different roles and occupy different positions does not eliminate this original state.

In the traditional vision of individual leadership, several theories have introduced elements that we would define as fraternal. *Transformational leadership*, for example, goes beyond the leader-follower exchange typical of *transactional leadership*. Indeed in the former type, leadership is seen as a process that transforms the people—both the leader and the followers—and directs their action toward the attainment of common objectives. In this process not only do the leaders in positions of power promote the transformation, but they are themselves transformed in relationship with

similar to those presented in the 1940s and 1950s and, I fear, still resemble those in the eighteenth-century post-Enlightenment times” (Niina Koivunen, “The Processual Nature of Leadership Discourses,” *Scandinavian Journal of Management* 23 (2007): 302).

7. Among others, Nancy C. Wallis, Francis J. Yammarino, and Ann Feyerherm, “Individualized Leadership: A Qualitative Study of Senior Executive Leaders,” *Leadership Quarterly* 22 (2011): 182. These dyadic relationships can be very positive, characterized for instance by “high levels of mutual respect, deep reciprocal trust and mutual obligation” (184), but they remain asymmetrical relationships.

8. Crevani even refers to discrimination: “An individualized conception [of leadership] also leads to . . . the segregating and hierarchizing effect of leadership notions. Leadership discriminates people into subjects and objects, intentional subjects that are able to manipulate lesser objects” (342).

the followers.⁹ Here, we find a quantum of fraternity, in the sense that the follower is taken seriously, is considered a subject and not an object, and plays an active role. An important component of the fraternal relationship, namely *reciprocity*, appears in the mutual influence of the leaders on the followers and vice versa.

In a 1977 prophetic book, Robert Greenleaf introduces the concept of *servant leadership*. Greenleaf looks with sincerity and boldness for a new type of leader, a leader who takes into account the needs and the aspirations of the followers, gives priority to their growth, and also considers the less privileged in the society to be partners. Leaders and followers are as individuals and together at the service of the community: “a face-to-face group in which the liability of each for the other and all for each one is unlimited” (as opposed to the limited liability—“LTD”—of our institutions).¹⁰ The servant leadership introduces some aspects that we see related to the fraternity principle such as the unconditioned attention

9. Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2010), pp. 171–173. The *transformational leadership* theory has been developed in particular by the sociologist James McGregor Burns in his definitive 1978 work *Leadership*. According to Burns, unlike transformational leadership, transactional leadership places the emphasis on the exchanges that happen between a leader and his or her followers (a politician who gets votes because he promises tax cuts, a manager that offers promotions to employees who exceed a set objectives. . . .). Also the Leader–Member Exchange (LMX) theory comes to a “mature partnership,” marked by high-quality leader-member exchanges, where “there is a high level of reciprocity between leaders and subordinates: each affects and is affected by the other” (Ibid., p. 153). Nevertheless, this theory does not manage to overcome, at least conceptually, the hierarchical relationship.

10. Robert K. Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership. A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness* (New York: Paulist Press, 1977), p. 52. Greenleaf envisages some forms of collective leadership, such as a leadership team that is a group of equals with one of them *primus inter pares* [first among equals], instead of a solo leader, at the top of large organizations (pp. 79–80) and of diffuse leadership (everyone, inside of the organization, may be a leader, “from time to time” [p. 18], in particular whenever the formal leaders fail to be up to the job).

to every person inside the organization and in the community in which the organization operates.¹¹ However, the unit of analysis remains the hierarchical relationship even if, in some way, the formal hierarchical pyramid is inverted and those at the top of the organization are seen as the ones who support the entire system from beneath, as servants.

Leadership has begun to be seen not only in relation to the role of management:

as a position that someone holds, but rather as something that happens in a group or organization, something that ebbs and flows as the group or organization does its work. Anyone can be a leader, whether for a moment, for a few hours, a few days, a few weeks, or for years.¹²

In other words, regardless of the position one occupies, one can become a leader when one makes the choice of not considering himself or herself a victim, but of taking one’s destiny into one’s own hands.¹³ From this perspective, that we could call *diffused*

11. “Greenleaf places a great deal of emphasis on listening, empathy, and unconditional acceptance of others” (Northouse, p. 433).

12. Robert B. Denhardt, *In the Shadow of Organization* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1989), pp. ix–x. For Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, “Leadership is a much more distributed and frequented activity than we are often given to believe. For every chief executive presiding at the top of some organization or enterprise, there are a thousand men and women called upon to exercise temporary or sustained leadership over a project or team within an organization” (Robert Kegan and Lisa Laskow Lahey, *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011], p. 2). Also Uhl-Bien et al. distinguish leadership “from managerial positions or ‘offices’ (a bureaucratic notion). The vast majority of leadership research has studied leadership in formal, most often managerial, roles and has not adequately addressed leadership that occurs throughout the organization” (p. 300).

13. According to Peter Senge, “Leadership exists when people are no longer victims of circumstances but participate in creating new circumstances” (Introduction to Joseph

leadership, the possibility of fraternity increases: the access to the leader function is open, all are potential candidates, it is a question of choice, of personal responsibility. It is first and foremost a matter of an inner change of perspective,¹⁴ which can set in motion a change in objective circumstances. There is here, at least potentially, a certain horizontality typical of fraternity.

Shared Leadership

Continuing this brief review of leadership approaches, theorists and practitioners began to realize that individual leadership is insufficient to successfully cope with increasingly complex situations and that sharing leadership tasks among several people is indeed more effective. Shared leadership is a practical way to organize leadership by dividing it in chunks and allocating them to several people—a sort of division/optimization of work for best results.¹⁵ The core idea here is collaboration, synergy.

Leadership can be shared by delegating portions of responsibility from the boss to the subordinates.¹⁶ It embodies the concept

of empowerment¹⁷ that is surely positive in itself, but still not very fraternal because it is always a movement from the top down in line with vertical solidarity. In terms of horizontal solidarity, what is quite interesting are the experiments of shared leadership among peers, of which the most successful is, in our opinion, the European Union. Indeed, the European Union integration process from the outset intentionally tried to put the member states—which still remain sovereign states that decided to share part of their sovereignty—on an equal footing as much as possible. For instance, proportionally more power is given to smaller states in order to avoid the systematic dominance of the larger ones. This type of *horizontal shared leadership*, however, has its limits as we see every day in this period of sovereign debt crisis in some Eurozone countries. When the formally equal states are faced with choices that require extra solidarity, courage, and sacrifices, selfishness and narrow views tend to emerge instead. True fraternity would require—and, if practiced, would allow—more generous impulses.

We need to go a step further from the independence needed to become a leader (take oneself in hand, do not feel like a victim), to the interdependence of shared leadership (various individual leaders who interact synergistically, enhancing what each could do alone). In this way we reach a unity,¹⁸ an acting “as one.”¹⁹ But

17. Stephen R. Covey gives a beautiful definition of empowerment: “I call this *directed autonomy*. The manager’s role . . . shifts from controller to enabler—co-missioning with people, removing barriers, and becoming a source of help and support” (Stephen R. Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People: Restoring the Character Ethic* [London: Simon & Schuster, 1989], p. 257).

18. Ruder speaks of “sense of the whole,” the ability to embrace the whole, which is the condition and culmination of collective leadership. This does not imply, the author explains, that everything should be done by everyone together. Rather, the sense of the whole allows everyone to act in a different way, according to each one’s gifts and interest (p. 5).

19. Baghai and Quigley.

Jaworski, *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership* [San Francisco: Berret-Koehler, 2011], p. 3).

14. The first step toward the change is always a change that happens inside of the person, in an inside-out movement that starts first with self and then reaches out to others. “To the servant the process of change starts *in here*, not *out there*” (Greenleaf, p. 57).

15. “This view [distributed leadership] still limits human involvement to the completion of a task rather than the co-creation of meaning” (Emmanuel Gobillot, *The Connected Leader: Creating Agile Organizations for People, Performance and Profit* [London: Kogan Page, 2007], p. 90).

16. Peter Gronn refers to *distributed leadership*: leadership functions (e.g., the power to take decisions) are shared among team members, or entrusted upon people at different levels in an organization. The concept of distributed leadership is opposed to the one of focused leadership, concentrated in a “solo or stand-alone leader” (Peter Gronn, “Distributed Leadership as a Unit of Analysis,” *Leadership Quarterly* 13 [2002]: 423).

to reach this point, it is necessary to see leadership not as just a purely individual fact, but also as a community construct. There is a need for leadership to go beyond the vertical command-and-control paradigm typical of the industrial age and to evolve into new forms, more suited to the knowledge era.²⁰

Collective Leadership

Various authors have begun to speak of leadership as a “collective activity,”²¹ redefining leadership in terms of “processes and practices organized by people in interaction.”²² The unit of analysis moves away from the individual, as is the case in what they call the “heroic vision” of leadership, to the leadership phenomenon itself.²³ Leadership is no longer seen, therefore, as the activity of a single

person but as collective construction processes.²⁴ In this view, all members of an organization are considered as “co-leaders.”²⁵

We would suggest that collective leadership can be defined as:

*a set of actions and leadership practices put in place by people who work together to achieve shared goals, where everyone's contribution is complementary to that of the others.*²⁶

Pierce and Ruder have identified three major features of collective leadership based on the experience of communities in the United States:

1. *Collective leadership is relational: the group as a whole is a leader in the community just as members within the group can be leaders within the group.*
2. *Collective leadership is fluid: it emerges out of specific situations, the process of defining vision and setting direction, as well as exercising influence over other people and organizations; it becomes a shared function of the group.*
3. *Collective leadership is transformational: it begins with a belief in and a commitment to social advocacy and social justice.*²⁷

20. Uhl-Bien points to the evolution of leadership “toward a more ‘post-industrial’ model . . . one that is not hierarchical [and] can address various forms of relationships (not just dyadic and not just ‘leader–follower’ relationships)” (p. 672). Uhl-Bien et al. assert that the “leadership models of the last century have been products of top-down, bureaucratic paradigms. These models are eminently effective for an economy premised on physical production but are not well-suited for a more knowledge-oriented economy” (p. 299). “The Knowledge Era calls for a new leadership paradigm . . . a new way of perceiving leadership—a theoretical framework for approaching the study of leadership that moves beyond the managerial logics of the Industrial Age to meet the new leadership requirements of the Knowledge Era” (p. 315).

21. Drath et al., p. 646.

22. Crevani et al., “Leadership, not Leaders,” p. 78.

23. The core of this kind of leadership “is not the role of a formal leader, but the interaction of team members to lead the team by sharing in leadership responsibilities” (Nathan Hiller, David V. Day, and Robert J. Vance, “Collective Enactment of Leadership Roles and Team Effectiveness: A Field Study,” *Leadership Quarterly* 17 [2006]: 387–388). Sonia Ospina and Erica Foldy in “Building Bridges from the Margins: The Work of Leadership in Social Change Organizations,” *Leadership Quarterly* 21 (2010): 292) put the emphasis on “leadership practices” as elements that “operationalize often vague and immaterial processes of collective leadership” (p. 303). For Koivunen “a more discursive approach to leadership can help to shift notions of leadership away from the individualist and towards more collective and inclusive forms” (p. 289).

24. Crevani et al., “Shared Leadership.”

25. Crevani et al., “Leadership, not Leaders,” p. 78.

26. Pearce and Conger define collective leadership (which they call “shared leadership”): “A dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer, or lateral, influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence” (Craig L. Pearce and Jay A. Conger, eds., *Shared Leadership: Reframing the Hows and Whys of Leadership* [Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2003], p. 1).

27. Stephanie Pierce and Karma Ruder, *The Collective Leadership Framework: A Workbook for Cultivating and Sustaining Community Change* (Battle Creek: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2007), p. 3.

Although the emphasis in this model of leadership is on the interaction between people and on the collective aspect of the action, the personal contribution is still an essential component of these leadership practices.²⁸ We need individual leaders who are responsible and proactive to allow collective entities such as communities to take charge of their own destiny. If leadership has traditionally been characterized by the leader's ability to influence others and the possibility that he or she has to give a direction to the actions of followers, so as to forge the meaning of these actions, in collective leadership, it is the various stakeholders that contribute to the processes of influencing and of creating direction and meaning.

In collective leadership, the traditional top-down influence exerted by the leader toward the followers becomes *mutual influence*,²⁹ in an "exchange of lateral influence among peers."³⁰ The essential concept here is *co-creation*.³¹ The *direction* is no longer defined at the top and communicated downward but is the ongoing product of the interactions between the participants in the collective

28. Cf. Ruder: "Mistaken notion # 3—Collective leadership replaces individual development. In fact, when collective leadership is in action, the group supports individuals to take risks, and to be open—a process that promotes individual development" (p. 5).
29. For Hernandez, it is the team itself that "engages in a reciprocal influence process where no single team member is presumed to be more powerful, knowledgeable or influential than the other" (p. 1177).

30. Drath et al., p. 639.

31. Co-creation, within the organization and with the organization's stakeholders, is at the core of Gobillot's *connected leadership*. Only co-creation, he maintains, is able to create engagement, trust, and sustained performance: "Co-creation is the only way fully to engage 'real' human performance in a sustainable way" (Gobillot, p. 131). Cf. Pearce and Conger: "Collective leadership becomes possible when the members of a group, motivated by a common purpose, begin to build relationships with each other that are genuinely respectful enough to allow them to *co-construct their shared purpose and work*" [Emphasis added], p. 3.

leadership practices,³² a process potentially open to divergent outcomes.³³ The *creation of meaning*, or *sensemaking*, defined as "need for creating and maintaining shared understandings"³⁴ of what we are and we do together,³⁵ is also a collective endeavor.³⁶ These collective actions are *effective* in that they do not leave things as they were and they inspire other people to participate in the change. As we will see, the example of the Arab revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia is well suited, in our opinion, to illustrate some operating features of collective leadership.

How Does Collective Leadership Work?

In February 2011, Tahrir Square in Cairo was swarming with people calling for the resignation of Mubarak. This event has become the *icon of change* made possible by collective, largely peaceful, action of

32. Crevani, *Clearing for Action*, p. 158. Crevani et al., "Leadership, not Leaders," call this joint production of direction *co-orientation* (p. 81).

33. "Direction . . . refers to a reasonable level of agreement in the collective about the aim, mission, vision, or goal of the collective's shared work. . . . The concept of direction here is not limited to unified or concerted direction; the possibility that direction may be variously conceived and understood in a collective, consisting of a cluster of interrelated agreements on aims and goals, is left open, as is the possibility that direction is continuously being transformed" (Drath et al., p. 647). "Leadership interactions and practices will also have to include possibly diverging processes and instances of unresolved conflicts, ambiguities and debates" (Crevani et al., "Leadership, not Leaders," p. 81).

34. Crevani, *Clearing for Action*, p. 298.

35. Tamara et al., define *sensegiving* as "shaping how people understand themselves, their work, and others engaged in that work" (Tamara L. Friedrich, William B. Vessey, Matthew J. Schuelke, Gregory A. Ruark, and Michael D. Mumford, "A Framework for Understanding Collective Leadership: The Selective Utilization of Leader and Team Expertise within Networks," *Leadership Quarterly* 20 [2009]: 940).

36. Authors refer to "collective sense-making" (Uhl-Bien, p. 2); "shared sense-making of a collective" (Drath et al., p. 648); and "the team's collective capacity for sense making" (Hernandez, p. 1177).

Egyptian and Tunisian peoples. The transformation set in motion in the squares and streets of these two Arab countries managed to overcome the forces that opposed the change. Two other squares, also present in the collective imagination, can efficiently represent the other forces also present in the processes of change.

At the end of December 2011, Kim Il-sung Square in Pyongyang was full of soldiers perfectly aligned to pay tribute to the late North Korean dictator Kim Jong-Il. Order reigns supreme. It shows the apparent strength of a regime that fails to prevent its citizens from starving to death. It is, it seems to us, the *icon of entropy*, the process by which dynamic systems (as social systems are, just as with groups of people and organizations) gradually fall apart. This dissipation of energy results in increasing dis-order, randomness, and, in groups and organizations, in complacency, routinization, and loss of focus.³⁷

Tahrir Square symbolizes the very opposite force to entropy, which physicists call *negentropy* or negative entropy. It is the ability to react to entropy, to find new resources, to move to a complete new level of capacity, to focus people's energy on solving problems. It is a process that leads to greater complexity, order, choice, concentration, and power.³⁸ In the case of the two Arab revolutions, the complexity that this force involves appears in the new spectrum from liberalism to Islamism.

In Beijing in 1989, Tiananmen Square was also filled with people, and the outcome can represent the third force acting in transformation processes. Kegan and Lahey call it *dynamic equilibrium*,

that prevents groups of people and organizations from learning, changing, and growing. This force is not about fixity or the lack of motion, but is about a system of countervailing motions, which counteracts the efforts to change and results in things remaining as they are or going back to the previous state of equilibrium. This is similar to an immune system or gravity. This force was also present in Egypt and Tunisia, represented by the millions of people who had a direct interest in the continuation of the regimes.³⁹ What was needed in these cases was a sufficient thrust to overcome the countervailing force of social gravity, or the immune system that tends to keep things pretty much as they are.

Collective leadership can provide this sufficient thrust to make change possible. However for its success, one must give up the illusion of control, from the top or in a centralized manner, of the processes of change. Indeed, the transformation made possible by collective leadership lies on the border between chaos and order, in the middle of a continuum⁴⁰ stretching from capitulation on one extreme, to absolute control on the other:

chamós—chaos—order—control⁴¹

39. West calculates that during the regime of Mubarak, one active person in the labor market out of 25 worked with or for the security state (Johnny West, *Karama!: Journeys Through the Arab Spring* [London: Heron Books, 2011]).

40. We refer here to the “chaordic path,” presented by Toke Møller and Monica Nisén at *The Art of Participatory Leadership*, European Commission, Brussels, June 2008.

41. The Greek word χαμός expresses resignation, despair, and surrender to the entropic process of disintegration. The claim of control reflects the dynamic equilibrium force, that is, the attempt to control, enclose the process of change. This attempt to control proves more often vacuous (for example, the attempt of governments to control markets, or social movements), to the point that Peter Senge talks about “an era of massive institutional failure,” in particular the failure of the dominant hierarchical, authoritarian organizations, including political institutions, which are inadequate to harness the

37. We take the explanation of the three forces intervening in change processes from Robert Kegan and Laskow Lahey, pp. 3–6.

38. Kegan and Lahey quote the famous aphorism by Einstein: “We will never be able to solve our problems at the same order of complexity we used to create them” (p. 5).

Between order and chaos there is a subtle way, a space for cooperation in which the new can emerge, a space of possibilities for co-creation. Walking this path requires the courage to go through a certain amount of chaos, and the perseverance to cross over it into a new level of order.⁴²

It is in this *chaordic*⁴³ space that the new kind of leadership we are talking about surfaces: no longer the heroic leadership in which an extraordinary individual steers the ordinary masses into a better future. Now it is the communities that are reclaiming their own destiny,⁴⁴ possibly triggered by temporary leaders who play an activator's role (the Adbusters collective for OWS, the grassroots platform Democracia Real Ya for the 15-M movement, a small number of activists who are the origin of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, etc.).

The engines of collective action and of the ambition to change the status quo are the needs and problems (such as the high unemployment rate and the endemic corruption in both Egypt and Tunisia), and at the same time the aspirations and the desire for novelty, for a different future, and the willingness to fight for one's

more and more complex problems we face: Foreword to Dee Hock, *One From Many: VISA and the Rise of Chaordic Organization* (San Francisco: Berret-Koehler, 2005), p. xi.

42. "Order is an ongoing social construction based on producing clearing for action in a chaotic and changing social reality" (Crevani, *Clearing for Action*, p. 317).

43. The founder of Visa, Dee Hock, considered one of the greatest innovators of the 20th century, calls *chaordic* this space between chaos and order, merging the two terms, and so he defines it: "The behavior of any self-organizing or self-governing organism, organization, or system that harmoniously blends characteristics of chaos and order" (Hock, p. 13).

44. Peter Senge cites a definition of leadership of the Society for Organizational Learning: "leadership is the capacity of a human community to shape its future" (Afterword to the 2002 edition of Greenleaf, p. 358), which is the transposition, on a collective scale, of the individual initiative behind the choice to become a leader (Cf. footnote 13).

own dignity.⁴⁵ Among the means that enable collective action and make it effective, new communication technologies and social media play a key role.⁴⁶ They help, often enabling social innovation, but they remain a vehicle—not to be confused with the novelty that is unfolding.

Fraternity and Collective Leadership

How does fraternity help in outlining the *modus operandi* of collective leadership? Some of the qualities of fraternity⁴⁷ elucidate two aspects that, in our opinion, characterize collective leadership: participation and its transformative capacity (Table 1).

1) Fraternity is an expression of *horizontality*,⁴⁸ of eye-to-eye interactions,⁴⁹ between persons enjoying substantial parity, even

45. "Karama" is the Arab name for dignity.

46. The popular uprisings broke out, in Tunisia, after the cousin of Mohamed Bouazizi—the young street vendor who set himself on fire December 17, 2010, after yet another ill-treatment by the police—posted on the Internet the video of the protest led by the victim's mother, which was eventually broadcast by Al-Jazeera and, in Egypt, following the appeal launched on Facebook "We are all Khaled Said," a young Egyptian who died after being arrested by the police. Mohamed Bouazizi was not the first young man to set himself on fire in Tunisia, nor was Khaled Said the first to die in unclear circumstances in Egypt: social media allowed, however, to bring their stories to the forefront and to transform them into the spark of a much broader process.

47. These characteristics are mentioned by Antonio M. Baggio in a speech held at the seminar on "Fraternity and Participation in the Transformation of Democracies," Sophia University Institute, February 18, 2012 (Author's personal notes).

48. Cf. Antonio M. Baggio, "La riscoperta della fraternità [Rediscovering Fraternity]," in Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *Il principio dimenticato: La fraternità nella riflessione politica contemporanea* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2007): "Fraternity . . . presupposes a horizontal relationship" (p. 22). "Fraternity makes it possible [for the French] to find themselves in a horizontal dimension of the relationship, by bracketing the vertical structure in which, though, they are still living" (p. 28).

49. "Fraternity is lived at the height of the face . . . in the proximity of the other, brother of the same human race" (Mattéi).

Table 1

Qualities of fraternity	Participation	Transformation
Horizontality	Co-creation	A shared purpose
Openness	Involvement	Reproducibility
Reciprocity	Various and proportionate contributions	The result exceeds the sum of contributions
Universality	The particular interest in the general interest	Humanization

though everyone takes a different role according to his or her talents and inclinations. In collective leadership, horizontality is expressed in terms of participation as “co-creation.” There is no strategy agreed at the top and communicated from the top down. There is rather a process of co-creation of the meaning of what people do together around a shared purpose⁵⁰ in which leadership “emerges” from an interactive and messy process defined by the interactions themselves.⁵¹ This shared purpose, in turn, becomes the engine of transformation. It is together, therefore, that space for action is created, where the possibilities and limits for individual and collective action are defined.⁵² It is no longer a single

50. For Carson et al., the *shared purpose* is one of the constitutive dimensions of collective leadership (Jay B. Carson, Paul E. Tesluk, and Jennifer A. Marrone, “Shared Leadership in Teams: An Investigation of Antecedent Conditions and Performance,” *Academy of Management Journal* 50 [2007]: 1222).

51. Uhl-Bien et al., p. 664.

52. Crevani et al., “Leadership, not Leaders,” call this process *action-spacing*, i. e., “construction of possibilities, potentials, opportunities and limitations for individual and collective action within the local-cultural organizational context” (p. 81).

person—the leader—who decides, thus limiting the space for the action of others—the followers. Rather, we see a destination and a common path surface through interaction among peers.⁵³

2) Fraternity is not exclusive but *open*.⁵⁴ Collective leadership is by definition an open and inclusive process.⁵⁵ Whoever wants to participate can do so. There is an explicit or implicit invitation, not a co-optation. Openness, by increasing the number of participants to collective leadership processes, generates more interactions and increases the collective intelligence of the group, that is, the capacity jointly to take better decisions and solve complex problems more effectively.⁵⁶ The transformative aspect of openness is its reproducibility. Successful experiences of participation and of bottom-up leadership trigger similar experiences elsewhere: for example, the Spanish 15-M movement explicitly refers to the experiences of the Arab Spring, particularly the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. OWS refers to the Arab squares and the 15-M movement as sources of inspiration.

3) Fraternity has *reciprocity* as a typical quality. It expresses cooperation and mutual influence. This does not mean that each

53. Uhl-Bien et al. specifically propose to consider leadership “an emergent, interactive dynamic—a complex interplay from which a collective impetus for action and change emerges” (p. 299).

54. Lopresti refers to fraternity as to an “inclusive mechanism” (Alberto Lopresti, “Il potere politico alla ricerca di nuovi paradigmi [Political Power in Search of New Paradigms],” in Baggio, p. 192). For Marco Aquini the fraternal relationship is “constitutionally” open to the relationship with other human beings (Marco Aquini, “Fraternità e diritti umani [Fraternity and Human Rights],” in Baggio, p. 275).

55. Above all, collective leadership overcomes “the tendency of leadership theories to include some people and exclude others” (Crevani et al., “Leadership, not Leaders,” p. 80).

56. Cf. James Surowiecki, *The Wisdom of Crowds* (New York: Anchor Books, 2004).

person's contribution has to be equivalent to the contributions of everyone else, as in a contract where the exchanges between the parties have to be of a corresponding value. Nor does it mean that a contribution is conditional: I cooperate only on condition that you do as well. The contribution that I can offer certainly assumes and expects the others' contributions, but they may be "giving back" to another and not necessarily to me.⁵⁷ Moreover, fraternity includes the difference principle and accepts diversity.⁵⁸ In collective leadership, the various contributions to the joint undertaking reflect the specific skills and competences of each person.⁵⁹ The complementarity of contributions—which is not the fruit of a deliberate attempt to reach a certain balance, but results in actual fact from the diversity of actors—gives completeness to the action as a whole. The transformation depends on the fact that, although everyone contributes to the extent of his or her possibilities, the overall result is greater than the sum of each contribution.

57. Marco Aquini states: Fraternity's typical reciprocity "is marked by voluntary relational actions that are not conditioned by the other's behavior, in which however an 'expectation of reciprocity' exists. These actions, in turn, are not limited to a two-way direction, but are always opened to the relation with a third party" (Baggio, p. 261). Savagnone refers to the "fraternal reciprocity" also in terms of reversibility, in the sense of "putting yourself in the others' shoes . . . of making an effort to predict how they will react, trying to put ourselves in their place" (Giuseppe Savagnone, "Fraternità e comunicazione [Fraternity and Communication]," in Baggio, p. 155).

58. Cf. Antonio M. Baggio, "Introduzione. La fraternità come categoria politica (Introduction. Fraternity as a Political Category)," in Antonio M. Baggio, ed., *Caino e i suoi fratelli: Il fondamento relazionale nella politica e nel diritto [Cain and his Brethren: The Relational Foundation Between Law and Policy]* (Rome: Città Nuova, 2012), p. 11.

59. For Koivunen, collective leadership is based on the "different-but-equal" principle, which makes cooperation possible: "Different but equal allows a relational view of organizing whereby members of the organization are respected as different but still equal" (p. 296).

This is what makes collective action effective, in the manner of the Tunisian and Egyptian uprisings which have achieved the goal of pulling down tyrants.

4) Fraternity is *universal*.⁶⁰ It looks by its nature at the reference subject of each local community: humankind as a community of communities.⁶¹ In collective leadership, universality translates into the ability to see one's own interest within the general interest.⁶² Serving this wider interest makes people prepared to sacrifice part or all of their individual interest—even up to giving one's life as

60. Ropelato defines the political idea of universal fraternity as "the conjunction of relationships of mutual belonging and of responsibility, as the fact of recognizing the identity and unity of the social fabric and, at the same time, its irreducible multiplicity" (Daniela Ropelato, "Cenni su partecipazione e fraternità [Outline of Participation and Fraternity]," in Baggio, p. 167). For Savagnone "the concept of 'brotherly love,' announced in the Gospel, brings an absolute novelty. It is totally gratuitous and therefore strictly universal" (Baggio, p. 113).

61. For Buonomo it is through the bond of fraternity that "every local community of people . . . is part of the only 'subject-humanity'" (Vincenzo Buonomo, "Vincoli relazionali e modello di fraternità nel diritto della comunità internazionale [Relational Ties and Brotherly Model in the Law of the International Community]," in Baggio, p. 241). Baggio recalls that "fraternity has been . . . acquiring, throughout history, a universal meaning: it arrived at identifying the subject it can fully relate to: the subject 'humanity'—a community of communities" (p. 21). He moreover affirms that "fraternity succeeds in substantiating the idea of a universal community, a unity in diversity where the peoples are at peace with one another not under the yoke of a tyrant, but respecting their identities" (Antonio M. Baggio, "L'idea di fraternità tra due rivoluzioni: Parigi 1789–Haiti 1791 [The Idea of Fraternity between Two Revolutions: Paris 1789–Haiti, 1791]," in Baggio, p. 54).

62. Drath points out, as a typical element of collective leadership, "the willingness of members of a collective to subsume their own interests and benefits within the collective interest and benefit" (p. 636), as if the particular interests were, as they are, a part of the whole. With reference to the ethical aspects of leadership, Northouse argues that "effective leaders see their own personal vision as an important part of something larger than themselves—a part of the organization and the community at large" (p. 432).

is the case in many of the Arab revolutions—so that the public interest can prevail. Phenomena of collective leadership such as the experiences of the Arab Spring in Egypt and Tunisia contain transformative humanizing elements such as the quest for dignity, dialogue, and empathy.⁶³ These elements are enhanced by fraternity, which, in addition to being a value in itself, supports like the weft of a fabric the shared values within a collective movement. It is however rare that such transformation movements had the consciousness that their humanizing power could transcend a local dimension and model wider processes, up to the scale of the whole of humanity. This was for instance the case with the founding fathers of the European integration process such as Schuman⁶⁴ and Monnet. In the 1950s, they had a clear vision that the proposal to unite on a regional scale peoples who had until then fought each other foreshadowed the way in which tomorrow's world could organize: indeed, the European Community was, in the eyes of Monnet, just the first of a potential series of continental communities to be created, which would eventually dialogue with one another.⁶⁵

63. Koivunen points to less explored elements of leadership, such as “dialogue, listening and empathy” (p. 302), which we see as aspects of the humanization that the relational approach typical of collective leadership brings about.

64. It was clear in the minds of the founding fathers that European integration was not an end in itself, but in view of a global organization. Schuman, the promoter of the first European Community with his Declaration of May 9, 1950, when he was French minister for foreign affairs, wrote: “A united Europe prefigures the universal solidarity of the future.” (Robert Schuman, *Pour l'Europe* [Paris: Nagel, 1963], p. 38).

65. For Monnet, the author of the Schuman Declaration, “a change causes another. The chain reaction has just begun. We put in motion a process of continuous change that will shape the world of tomorrow. . . . The problems of the present can no longer be solved in the framework of the sovereign nations of the past. And the Community itself is nothing more than a step towards the forms of organization of tomorrow's world” (Jean Monnet, *Mémoires* [Paris: Fayard, 1976], p. 588).

Final Perspectives: The Arab Spring, Western Societies and the Need for Fraternity

Fraternity can help the collective leadership processes broaden perspectives and strengthen relationships. This is especially important to collective leadership because the inner danger in its processes is always possibility of factionalism, a breakdown of fellowship, of unity in diversity. We see this today in Egypt where one participant in the revolution has taken power in ways that have alienated others, treating as “neighbors” only like-minded persons and groups. Also today in the United States, one segment of one political party has used its power for its own limited agenda seeing others in their party and the entire other party as “enemies.” In both cases, the common good of all the people is at risk.

Raadschelders points to these kinds of risks when the fraternity principle, in individualistic societies, refers to a “neighborly choice,”⁶⁶ hence limited to a restricted number of people. The

66. Jos C. N. Raadschelders, *Government: A Public Administration Perspective* (New York: Sharpe, 2003): “In the case of individualism, freedom is defined as individual freedom, equality is defined in terms of opportunity, and fraternity is defined in terms of neighborly choice. . . . Citizenship is voluntary by nature. In an individualist perspective, one cannot be forced to be a citizen and engage in association. Performative citizenship is a choice that is rooted in civil rights. . . .

Western-style collectivism is quite different. Freedom is understood in terms of the Golden Rule, by which the freedom of others should not be inhibited by an individual's action. Equality is defined in terms of condition, which in many Western societies is measured by the gap between rich and poor. Fraternity is not just voluntary but also understood as a civic duty” (pp. 380–381).

According to Raadschelders, more individualistic political systems, such as the United States, on the one hand, and more collectivistic ones, such as the northern European social democracies of the welfare state, on the other, are not a dilemma. Rather, they are the extremes of a continuum (p. 21). The two approaches coexist in the public realm, which seeks to balance the needs of the individual with those of society (p. 25), individual advancement with the needs of others (p. 107).

universal nature of fraternity could help broadening the scope of this neighborly choice: fraternity, indeed, is to care for the neighbor and also for the one who is distant, for the friend as well as for the enemy, for the akin and for the unlike. In fact, many of the manifestations of collective leadership that we see are neighborly choices, either because they are geographically delimited (local civic communities, the Arab revolutions), or because they pursue proximity interests (communities of patients).

On the other hand, according to Raadschelders, in more collectivist Western societies fraternity is seen as a “civic duty” actively promoted, or even enforced, by governments. Such a duty is, however, artificial since no one can be forced to be fraternal toward others or to feel a sense of fellowship toward others. We believe that it is necessary for these neighborly choices to evolve toward civic duties, duties however that, like ethics, are unenforceable.⁶⁷ Freedom can be enforced, for example, by making laws to protect people’s freedoms, or to restrict individual freedoms and punish those who violate another’s freedom. Equality as well is enforceable, for instance, by creating equitable opportunities for all and by redistributing resources. But fraternity cannot be imposed from outside. It is a duty that comes from within, in a movement from the inside out. Fraternity is both a condition⁶⁸ and a matter of a personal, inner choice, as is the choice to become a leader.

67. Kidder defines ethics as “free obedience to the unenforceable” (Rushworth M. Kidder, *How Good People Make Tough Choices: Resolving the Dilemmas of Ethical Living* [New York: Quill, 2003], p. 66).

68. For Pizzolato, the fraternal bond with other human beings is the acknowledgment of a condition, a status, a common heritage of humankind (Filippo Pizzolato, *Il principio costituzionale di fraternità: Itinerario di ricerca a partire dalla costituzione italiana* [*The Constitutional Principle of Fraternity: Research Itinerary Starting from starting from the Italian Constitution*] [Rome: Città Nuova, 2012], pp. 10, 11, 17, and 21).

Conditions must be created that can ignite this inner spark and cultivate it, making it grow and overflow into actions at the service of the others—always extending the circle of inclusivity. In this respect, the exercise of collective leadership—a way of practicing leadership that is not antagonistic to the personal dimension and does not cancel it, but on the contrary strengthens it—seems to be a fertile field where this spark of fraternal care can have the chance to ignite and to spread, creating new opportunities for action, while helping to maintain unity in diversity.

Paolo Giusta is professor of ethics and leadership at Sophia University Institute. He is the author of several articles on ethics and leadership and of Ethics Matters—Practical Micro-Ethics for Civil Servants of the European Union (2006). Giusta is also senior auditor at the European Court of Auditors in Luxembourg for the European Union.