

# Transformative Organizations

A Global Perspective

Editor

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## 25 Organizational Design Under Post-modernization

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What can we Learn from the World Values Surveys?

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Recent research suggests that the societies around the world are experiencing the process of 'Post-modernization' (Inglehart, 1997). Post-modernization refers to a shift in priorities from economic efficiency, bureaucratic authority, and scientific rationality, towards greater human touch, individual self-expression, and equally empowered diversity. It seeks to incorporate metaphysical, cultural, and historical forces as the integrated elements of a new context that encourages conversation which fosters exchange between science and religion, technology and spirituality, economy and people, and culture and history. The emergence of democratic political institutions is a key element of post-modernization. Yet, post-modernization goes beyond the simplistic models of democracy as a form of representative governance, and calls for the representatives to adopt the principle of trusteeship—articulated so elegantly and forcefully by Mahatma Gandhi (1946).

A distinct form of the organization—the Transformative Organization—is uniquely relevant to further the post-modernization milieu. The Transformative Organization pursues and peruses different transformations, changes, and learning with a post-modern sense of purpose, mission, and meaning. It seeks to 'braille' cultures to create a competitive advantage that energizes the lives of various people. To braille a culture calls for a deep appreciation of the meanings that various groups and sub-groups seek in their lives, and how these meanings are manifested in behaviors and intentions relevant for organizational functioning. As a transformative organization, the firms need to both uncover and discover the meanings that energize a culture, as well as craft these meanings into organizational functioning and services so that these meanings can be further enriched and cultivated.

The meaning-centered competitive advantage of a firm has a great power to influence the firm and its individual employees, its supplier and customer network, as well as its national and international competitors and contacts. The