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On Keeping Team Members Motivated

Employees are the major and most important resource of any company. It is through this human resource that most companies get important work done. When you combine the members' energy, knowledge, and skills with high motivation, you and your team can accomplish great results. Therefore, each leader should have a motivation strategy to create and maintain the spirit of enthusiasm among his team members. A leader may have put together an excellent working team, but keeping them motivated during hard times can be a challenge even for the best-governed companies. Between strict deadlines, ever-increasing workload and high performance factors, it is easy for employees to often feel discouraged and demotivated, which subsequently leads to fall in their productivity. When it comes to job satisfaction, monetary rewards may be valued low on the list. Being satisfied with the job seems to depend more on the intangibles such as belongingness and being valued and appreciated consistently. These intangibles often outshine even the financial rewards.

The present issue revolves around the factors which may motivate the employees and enhance their morale. The issue will be helpful for practitioners in identifying the relevant ways to motivate their team members. Simultaneously, academicians can also benefit from the discussions on the motivating factors and their implications.

Dan Coughlin's perspective, "The Tremendous Value of Personal Reflection and Discernment", is an interesting description of personal improvement, which should start with taking time for personal reflection and discernment. The author has presented the personal improvement ways through asking four questions to self.

In their paper, "Advice in Action: How to Retain and Engage Employees", Stephanie Jones, Dixon Block and Abigail Daley have raised concerns regarding employer branding. The authors have correctly mentioned that motivating team members should be the key element for being a good manager or leader. In this paper, real experiences and best practices are taken from different leaders of different backgrounds and sectors to provide insights into employee engagement, regardless of the situation at hand.

Kai-Alexander Schlevogt's paper, "Lessons in Intelligent Leadership from Cyrus the Great: First Insights from the New Discipline Called 'Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge' (ALTK)", proposes a new discipline 'Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge'. This discipline deals with knowledge creation, codification and transmission. The author claims that this discipline will be helpful to the leaders in terms of designing innovative solutions to their problems.

Not only the employees, the board of directors also need motivation to remain effective. Colin Coulson-Thomas's paper, "Teamwork, Motivation, Complexity and the Board", focuses

on factors leading to board effectiveness. The author has suggested ways through which today's leaders can counter the uncertainty and other challenges.

Finally, Ronald J Burke's paper, "Agency and Communion", reviews two concepts that have only recently been applied to effective leadership, viz., agency and communion.

Aditya S Mishra

Consulting Editor

The Tremendous Value of Personal Reflection and Discernment

Dan Coughlin*

A week is a loooooong time.

Over the course of a week, we say and do a lot of things. Most of those things turn out to be trivial and are quickly forgotten. However, that still leaves an incredible amount of things we said and did that are not trivial.

I believe one of the most important things we can do on a weekly basis is to think about the week with reflection and discernment. There are only four questions we need to answer, one for reflection and three for discernment.

The One Reflection Question

Question #1: What Happened?

The first question we can ask ourselves is, "What happened?" not "What do we wish had happened?" but rather just, "What happened?"

When we look at what we actually said and did this past week, then one of a few things will result.

Either we are really pleased with what we did, we are neutral about what we did as in it was not good or bad it just happened, or we realize we did something wrong or poorly.

If we realize our words or actions were really good, think about how we could repeat them again.

If we realize our words or actions were just neutral, think about how we could make them better.

If we realize our words or actions were wrong, think about what we should do. My suggestion is that when we know we were wrong even if we had good intentions, we should simply say, "I was wrong. This is 100% my fault. I take full responsibility. I sincerely apologize to those people whom I've affected. I am truly sorry." That's it. Do not dodge the issue or blame anyone else. And be sincere in your apology.

This one reflection question, "What happened?" allows us to see our words and actions as they really happened, not how we had wished they had happened.

The Three Discernment Questions

I have two great friends from high school, Jeff Hutchison and Mike Feder. Two amazing guys. Jeff died from brain cancer in November

* Dan Coughlin, as an Executive Coach, Seminar Leader, Keynote Teacher, and Strategic Guide, focuses on strengthening excellence: individual excellence, leadership excellence, management excellence and team excellence. He defines excellence as doing whatever you do as well as you can do it right now while simultaneously learning how to do it better the next time. He has provided more than 4,000 Executive Coaching Sessions and more than 500 seminars on excellence since 1998. He is the co-author of the new book, *The Any Person Mindset: Be Accountable to the Difference You Can Make*. Visit www.theanypersonmindset.com to learn more. Visit his Free Business Leadership Idea Center at www.thecoughlincompany.com. The author can be reached at dan@thecoughlincompany.com

2012. His favorite word was discernment. He would say over and over and over again, “I need to spend some time thinking about that situation and discerning what I can from it.” Wow, that statement meant and means a lot to me.

After we have identified what happened, there are three more crucial questions to answer.

Question #2: Why Did It Happen?

Now we are digging deeper. Why did we say what we said and why did we do what we did? This forces us to go farther than just recalling what we said or what we did. We have to think about why we said it and why we did it.

We are getting at the roots of the tree. Insights are coming to us that we may not have thought about before we did what we did. Be patient with this question. Ask it over and over and over again. Something really powerful might come to you.

Question #3: What Did I Learn?

After we really think about why we said it and why we did it, then we start to uncover what we learned from this whole situation. Now we are going below the roots of the tree and we are uncovering real gold.

No matter how great the situation turned out to be or how awful it turned out to be, the real value is in digging for what we learned from the situation. We cannot redo the past, but if we dig, we can uncover extremely useful

lessons. Again, be patient. Repeat the question several times. That is incredibly important for us to improve as individuals. This is the step where we gain insights that we can use for the rest of our lives.

Question #4: What Will I Do?

Of course, a mountain of lessons learned are useless if we never apply them. Now that we have invested time and energy into reflecting on what happened and discerning why it happened and what we learned, it is time to intentionally determine what we will do from now on.

This is the part where we move forward with greater wisdom. This is where we become better at what we do and better at how we live our lives.

Conclusion

Personal improvement starts with taking time for personal reflection and discernment. That is the engine for improving as a person. I suggest we go for long walks of 3-5 miles. Use that time for personal reflection and discernment. It is an unbelievably good use of our time and our energy. Or sit quietly with a blank journal and write out answers to the four questions of reflection and discernment. The value to us and our future and our future impact on other people can be truly tremendous.☺

Reference # 03M-2018-12-01-10

Advice in Action: How to Retain and Engage Employees

Stephanie Jones*, Dixon Block** and Abigail Daley***

Through social media, news, online reviews, and technology that makes word-of-mouth so much easier and more impactful, employer branding has become a topic of utmost importance. Furthermore, as traditional 'one-employer' careers fade away to be replaced by a more positive outlook on 'job-hopping' by the current generation, employee retention becomes less about long-term benefits like pension plans and dental care, and more about the immediate advantages of a positive atmosphere and opportunities for development. Motivating team members (or enabling employees to motivate themselves) is a key element to being a good manager or leader. In this paper, the real experiences and best practices are taken from different leaders of different backgrounds and sectors to provide insights into employee engagement, regardless of the situation at hand.

This paper uses the real experiences and best practices taken from different leaders of different backgrounds and sectors to provide insights into employee engagement, regardless of the situation at hand.

Stephanie as Leader of Sports Racing Volunteers

In late October each year, a large number of racing yachts—up to 130 and sometimes even more—set off from the Mediterranean island of Malta on a 600-nautical mile race around

* Stephanie Jones is Associate Professor of Organizational Behavior at Maastricht School of Management in the Netherlands. Author of over 25 full-length internationally-published books on business and management, she teaches MBA students across the world, especially courses on leadership, culture and change management. With a background in managing businesses in human resources, recruitment, consulting, and training operations (and lecturing) in the UK, China, India, the Middle East, Australia and New Zealand, Jones gained extensive experience in the corporate sector before returning to academe a decade ago. The author can be reached at jones@msm.nl

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*** Abigail Daley is a newly-appointed Program Assistant at the Maastricht Graduate School of Governance at Maastricht University. After obtaining her Bachelor's degree in International Business in Spain and the United States, Abigail moved to the Netherlands where she completed her Master's with research on the business model of sex trafficking. A certified life coach and author, Abigail's research centers around understanding and diminishing sex trafficking from a financial and economic perspective. Her work with Maastricht University includes mentoring students and helping drive the direction of the Masters degree in Public Policy and Human Development. The author can be reached at abigailcdaley@gmail.com

Sicily off the southern tip of Italy. It is tough and grueling and sometimes the weather is very bad, and around 30-50% of the yachts abandon the race before they reach the finish. Some are double-handed—just two crew members—but some of the larger yachts have up to 20 crew. Some are professional and represent a significant investment; many are amateur and just having fun. But it is one of the most important races per year for yachtsmen and attracts huge sponsorship from Rolex, the Swiss watch company.

My job for a number of years has been to organize a group of 50-60 volunteers to man the finish line and record the finish times for each yacht. They work in three-hour shifts/watches round the clock for 5-6-7 days—until the slowest yacht reaches the finish. These people are not being paid so I have to make it interesting and rewarding for them, and give them a sense of learning a new skill and achieving something important. I match experienced people with rookies to help them learn, and provide training and detailed instructions. They need to observe the finish of each boat, including talking to the crew to them on the radio as they approach the end of the race. They must count them down to the marker, sound the horn to mark the moment they finish, and write down the time in the official log. I emphasize how there is a lot at stake for the largest and most professional yachts—sponsored by Maserati, Hugo Boss and other top brands. Sometimes, only a few seconds separate the finish times. These are multimillion dollar luxury racing yachts with the latest technology and the Royal Malta Yacht Club receives millions of euros in sponsorship and race entry fees.

But how can one motivate these volunteers? Especially, the ones on the midnight to 03:00 watch or 03:00-06:00? They like the prestige of wearing the sponsor's shirt and enjoy a free meal and drinks at the club. Mostly, it is about being part of something special. Being called up by the organizer, reminded, briefed and feeling part of a team is what makes these volunteers feel a personal connection that reminds them they are valued. Playing a role in an international event and making friends with other team members add to this positive atmosphere.

Additionally, they know that if they break the rules—they will not be asked again. If they do not show up; miss recording a yacht's finish; fall asleep on duty; turn up inebriated; fail to follow procedures—they will not be asked again. So here motivation is a mixture of stick and carrot! But especially when managing and leading volunteers—they have to like what they are doing, otherwise why should they go to the trouble? But if managed well and therefore motivated they turn up year after year, even traveling from foreign countries to be in Malta for the race. And I make sure they are all invited to the yacht club for a special volunteers' dinner and given medals as a memento. It works!

Lucia as Leader of her Team Selling Medical Products

Lucia works for the European operation of a large US healthcare business, managing a team focused on diabetes care products. With five salespeople of diverse nationalities and languages across a wide geographical area including Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, Lucia's team sells diabetes care products mostly B2B—indirect selling to

nurses/pharmacists/wholesalers. The salespeople must be empowered to get on the road and visit as many potential customers per day as possible—especially in hospitals. There are many challenges—they must fulfill tough individual sales performance targets—but are also expected to assist team members outside of their departments to help the company as a whole. Sometimes, they have a good year and make a big bonus. But when they do not get it the following year they feel demotivated. How to cope with this problem?

Lucia's job as their manager is to try to get the best sales result and motivate and retain these people for the company, in a high staff turnover environment (she herself has changed jobs a number of times and has only recently joined her current team). She tries to emphasize the value of their work in saving lives—healthcare professionals have a special kind of motivation, and tend to stay in this industry. However, one of the main challenges is the fact that it is all indirect selling—her sales team do not sell to the end-users, but to the middlemen who mostly want low prices rather than top quality products. She tries to have empathy with their issues here and helps them in convincing the customers. She tries to help them stay motivated in the context of them having variable performance bonuses—which can go up as well as down. Although only a minority of them are really influenced by incentives (only less than a third of them actively track their incentive payments) she knows they like big cash bonuses, especially those coming out of the blue as a big surprise. It is not always in her power to award these, so she has to think what motivates them beyond money—especially in terms of recognition and career growth.

Lucia is advising her company on how to maximize motivation—which could include new approaches to reward systems based on recognition and opportunity rather than just cash. And in particular, she works on building their relationships so they are willing to help each other. This can take time, as meetings must be held in English—the Dutch-speakers do not speak French, and the French speakers do not speak Dutch. So she needs to have private conversations in the native language of her team to get to know them and keep them excited about their work. And why should they help others when this help does not attract extra pay whilst they have their own targets? So far so good—Lucia has been able to retain her team and achieve the targets, mostly through her own ability to build teams, being a role model, being focused on the end goal of patient care and support, and through lobbying with her bosses to respond to the motivators she knows really works—and she has made a survey of her staff for that very purpose!

Clive as Captain of a Superyacht

Clive works for a multimillionaire businessman as the captain of his private motor yacht, used by himself and his guests. He has to drive the ship anywhere the owner wants him to go, and make sure it is kept in a safe operating condition. He can only achieve his tasks through motivating his crew of 10 young people in his job as the captain, training and developing them to become competent sailors and stewards to respond quickly and efficiently to the needs of the owner and his guests. Every morning from 7.30-8.00, Clive requires all crew to meet for training. They practice man overboard, fire drill, abandon ship and other routines—not just the deckhands but the

stewardesses working below decks. Even the most junior crew member learns the essentials of working at sea on a superyacht, so he or she can aspire to a more senior job. To that end, Clive encourages a form of job rotation, making sure everyone has variety in their daily tasks. Everyone gets to lend a hand when the ship comes into port—with mooring lines and fenders and looking-out.

When it comes to rest periods, Clive insists that everyone has time off not only according to the regulations but to ensure everyone works at their peak. They have crew outings on arrival at a new port when the owner has gone ashore, when their jobs are finished; and also try out all the ship's toys—jet skis, water skis, diving equipment, paddle boards, and kayaks—not just to make sure they are safe and in working order, but for crew members to have fun. In port, there is a crew team outing one afternoon a week—to the go-kart race track, to a sports game, to a pub by the coast for a team dinner. There are parties on board whilst the owner is away, especially to practice on-board parties for the owner and guests—but also to have fun. He allows crew members to swap duties so they can be off watch when they want to, allowing some flexibility as long as jobs are done. Clive also writes references for crew members when they leave to get a new job, and looks out for new jobs for them even when they left years ago. He also makes sure they get paid on time, as many superyacht crews are abused by their owners and not paid regularly. Clive even went to the lengths of reporting his ship for non-payment of crew salaries, so the ship was taken over by the insurance company and was then sold to pay off debts, including crew wages. Clive's crews are trained to Royal Navy standards (he was

an RN officer most of his career) so they take a pride in their work and have discipline and structure.

The crew are so motivated by Clive as their captain that they want to stay working for him and be part of his team even if not paid; they volunteer for extra duties; they keep in touch years after leaving; they apply to work for him again; they invite him to visit them when they return to their countries; and above all they do their best work possible for the owner and charter guests and to fulfill his expectations and to achieve a much higher standard than ever before. And they go on to greater and more exciting careers!

Lucile as Supervisor of a Communal Dinner

Every month, Lucile organizes a family-style community dinner for individuals to cross demographic lines and expand their personal community, in the city of Maastricht in the Netherlands. To accomplish this, Lucile works with a core team of six to establish the menu, location, childcare, and confirm the guest list. On the day of the event, team members supervise a group of volunteers for set-up, event service, and clean up—all of which Lucile oversees.

Lucile's task is to keep everything organized and running—a process that takes the entire month to prepare and execute. Each guest needs to be sent an invitation, volunteers need to be confirmed, team meetings need to be held, and much more to ensure the dinner is ready. This requires Lucile to communicate in both English and Dutch. For this to be successful month after month, continuous care, encouragement, and motivation are priorities for Lucile. To do this, she emphasizes

that team members should work in areas that they enjoy. “When they are doing what they love,” says Lucile, “there is an inherent motivation within each team member that keeps them going”. Lucile also explains that there is no hierarchy in the organization. She is just as much a part of team and they are all co-creators in the event. Listening and clear communication are two areas where Lucile is especially diligent. She does this through sending every update in a group chat and in bimonthly meetings. Throughout this whole process, Lucile strives to make the work environment-friendly for idea-sharing, so each team member knows they can contribute—a key to sustained motivation.

This work environment has resulted in a content, enthusiastic workforce, in a workplace where volunteers come back month after month to give back to the community in which they live, study, and work.

Jessica as Co-Director of Europe and MENA for a Study Materials Company

Jessica heads up a team of 43 group leaders and 11 coordinators in building and sustaining study groups in over 10 countries around the world—as the international leaders in Europe and MENA for the company. Jessica’s role as co-director is to keep the leaders organized and make sure they have the support they need to make their study groups successful. To do this, she actively maintains contact with them and pays great attention to detail in supporting them.

When Jessica first accepted this appointment, she traveled to the location of each group leader and met with them face-to-face, established a relationship, and

experienced their world to create a solid relational foundation. This helped form a “togetherness” that can be essential for motivation when team members are geographically apart. Today, a lot of Jessica’s job includes sustaining that togetherness through listening to leader cases and supporting them in resolving issues, giving them encouragement and updating them on what is happening in different groups. By staying in touch regularly, Jessica not only strengthens that working relationship but also tries to offset the feeling of isolation for some individual leaders, who may be the only team member in their area.

Jessica comments that she does not need to motivate the team leaders to do their job or stay in their positions because they are led by their passion for their work. She focuses more on making sure each leader is in a positive mental state to do their jobs. She does this in part by conducting day-retreats and “vision workshops” to remind the leaders of the impact they are making with their work. Because of these efforts by Jessica and her co-workers, she has seen leaders empowered to expand their groups and start new ones, and she has seen friendships form through the study groups that will last a lifetime.

Richard as Human Resource Consultant and Ex-HR Director in the Retail Industry

Richard joined the UK retail business as an HR director as was immediately faced with a huge problem—low employee engagement on a large scale, and a rate of turnover reaching 80-90%! He and his team were tasked with motivating employees throughout the UK, including across the perilous gap that often

spans between corporate entities and their branches. After much deliberation, it was decided to implement a small change in an attempt to achieve scalable results. All employees had a silver badge with the company logo to identify themselves to customers easily. For employees who were successful through the induction program and had been with the company for a given period of time, they were awarded a badge with a golden backing. At first, Richard was skeptical about such a small act making enough of a difference. Even after employee retention rates increased, he remained cynical about the effectiveness of the program until he happened to witness one of the “award ceremonies” and saw how happy the employees were to receive their golden badges. It became clear to him that such recognition makes an impressive difference in the intrinsic motivation of employees.

From an HR consultant and trainer’s point of view, Richard has always stressed the importance of this recognition on both a small and large scale. Some tips include asking for opinions and suggestions on important issues and authentically taking their responses into consideration. “Managers and leaders,” Richard states, “should adopt a customer service mindset. After all, they are serving the people on their team!”

He goes on to list five important questions managers should have their employees ask themselves when addressing their motivation and engagement:

1. Do I fit in?
2. Am I clear on what is expected of me?
3. Do I feel supported?
4. Do I feel valued?
5. Do I feel inspired?

If the answer to any of these questions is “no”, it is a manager’s duty to find the root cause and address it. Richard wisely adds, “day-to-day work is just work, but motivation comes from everything *around* the work”.

Conclusion

It is clear that creating a positive and empowering environment allows employees to motivate themselves from *within*, something that can never be fully replicated by efforts to induce extrinsic motivation. Stephanie, Lucia, Clive, Lucile, Jessica and Richard provide us—with just a few cases in which examples are shown—that as a good leader you must take your responsibility to pave the way for your employees to take their own responsibility. You must ensure that you cultivate an environment in which your team can find their own reasons to enjoy doing the jobs they do. Extrinsic factors such as cash bonuses and free meals can be used to sweeten the deal, but ultimately these are only physical manifestations of appreciation, recognition, and gratitude, and as such are only worth as much as your authenticity within these gestures. If you show fake appreciation hoping to buy your team member off, you will certainly get fake engagement in return.

Employee motivation, engagement, and retention starts from day one: from creating the right environment; attracting the right candidates; hiring the right fit for your business, company, or team; and then ensuring that you appreciate those employees. After all, without a committed team, a leader is just another person who thinks they matter. But they might not!☹️

Reference # 03M-2018-12-02-01

Lessons in Intelligent Leadership from Cyrus the Great: First Insights from the New Discipline Called “Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge” (ALTK)

Kai-Alexander Schlevogt*

This programmatic study makes three key contributions in terms of (1) discipline creation, (2) innovative cross-disciplinary method application and (3) novel and actionable leadership content. First, the pioneering discipline of “Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge” (ALTK) is invented, consisting of the two subdisciplines of “Archaeology of Leadership Thought (ALT)” and “Archaeology of Leadership Knowledge” (ALK). These new branches of knowledge aim at uncovering long-hidden treasures that can help postmodern leaders to solve truly challenging problems. Second, the author proposes a distinctive methodological approach for these new disciplines, including the application of Qualitative Content Analysis to the field of classical philology. Third, a multifaceted holistic leadership model is created from Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, which fictionally portrays the life of Cyrus the Great. The model includes new transformational concepts for movers and shakers, such as “proleptic leadership”, “cordial leadership”, “nano-leadership” and “radiant self-discipline”, thus demonstrating the game-changing potential inherent in the “Archaeology of Leadership”.

Sed in primis ad fontes ipsos properandum, id est graecos et antiquos.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1971 [originally published: 1511])

(First and foremost, however, recourse must be had to the sources themselves, that is, to the Greeks and the ancients).

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1978 [originally published: 1511], p. 673)

Introduction: Urgent Need for a Return to the Sources of Leadership Thinking and Action

The postmodern world in many quarters is pervaded by a widespread feeling of overwhelming diversity, complexity, ambiguity,

uncertainty and insecurity, as well as a lack of sense and orientation, especially with respect to moral issues. At the same time, baseless relativism, disordered pluralism and reckless individualism abound. One key reason for this dire and explosive situation is the

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current lack of responsible and effective leadership. With astonishing and saddening regularity, stories are emerging about yet another political or corporate scandal, caused by narcissistic executives at all levels of their respective institutions, including the highest echelons of power. In many countries, politicians at best rank slightly higher than criminals in terms of popularity.

Yet, despite the urgent need for potent remedies curing these unsustainable social maladies, leadership experts, as a rule, have so far failed to offer truly effective solutions. They are often moving blindly in a closed system that is sealed by demands of “political correctness”, that is, the modern form of merciless censorship in all realms of society. It is also closed by the oftentimes destructive ideology of “enlightenment” and self-constructed “scientific” tenets, such as the unfounded positivist belief that only those things that can be measured do actually exist. This tenet leads many scientists to the—ironically (and oxymoronicallly) quasi-religious—creed that God does not exist or at least that he has nothing to do with science (including the “science” of leadership) and thus needs to be eliminated from all scientific deliberations. This, of course, differs sharply from the formula summarizing a key idea of one of the greatest thinkers in history, St. Augustine, that is, “*Crede, ut intelligas; intellige, ut credas!*” (“Believe so that you may understand; understand so that you may believe!”).¹ Clearly, St. Augustine believed in a positive, synergistic relationship between

true faith and human reason. In contrast, many postmodern ideologues, who are caught in a dangerous web of constructivist ideas, claim that there is no truth, thereby, in an unwitting act of performative self-contradiction, making an absolute statement they consider to constitute the (only existing) truth! Besides, the “science” of leadership in particular has become an academic discipline, in which the members of the scientific community frequently are overspecialized, often engaging in reductionist quantitative studies in an ahistorical fashion without relevance for practitioners. Moreover, self-appointed “management gurus” often hide the obvious behind the plethora of seemingly new labels that they are constantly creating.

Given the need for different (not necessarily original!) and effective leadership solutions and the lack of useable advice from contemporary “experts”, it is high time to search for alternative, possibly unconventional sources of knowledge. It is within this context that I suggest going back nearer to the sources (*ad fontes*²!) of early leadership thinking and action, which dates back thousands of years. To enable curious investigators to truly profit from their journey in time, I propose to make meaning of these treasures with various (at times new) hermeneutic keys and to apply the insights thus gained to situations that are either similar to the past or differ from it. It is not unreasonable to do so, given that the basic tasks and problems faced by leaders in the past in many cases are similar to our times, even though the specific context has usually

¹ This command was later partially reformulated by Anselm of Canterbury into the maxim “*Credo ut intelligam*” (“I believe so that I may understand”).

² “*Ad fontes*”, a motto used by Renaissance humanists, who were interested in studying original Greek and Latin classical texts to improve man embedded in society through education according to their distinctive ideals, literally means “to the sources”.

changed. It might even be argued that in many instances, leadership in the past in certain respects was more difficult than nowadays. Among other things, this is due to the fact that the communication tools available to rulers back then obviously pale in comparison to the instruments that can be leveraged by helmsmen today, for example. Thus, one can expect to often discern high-impact leadership techniques in starker colors. Besides, the immersion in former thinking on leadership can also help to accord (new) priorities to contemporary leadership practices and deepen our understanding of them, as well as to uncover ideas from the data that may appear to be new. In this context, we should constantly remember Hermann Heimpel's maxim: "Erudition protects against new discoveries"³ (see, for example, Wehler (2001, p. 65)). Furthermore, the in-depth analysis of former leadership thought and knowledge might function as a veritable hermeneutic, creative and transformational catalyst. By means of allegorization and associative streams, for example, along the pilgrimage back to the sources, new fascinating questions and hypotheses might arise as a result of the initial trigger and an ensuing dialectical process. In combination, those could, among other things, in turn help researchers and practitioners to find answers that enable them to finally make sense of the world in which they live. During this journey of discovery, it might also be possible to create new leadership ideas altogether, which, when applied to specific settings in a focused manner, could make it feasible to transform chaos into order there.

One reason explaining the catalytic and maieutic power inherent in the "*ad fontes*"-approach is that contact with different ideas can help to surface hidden biases and then attack them so that the newborn contrarian can successfully complete an "out-of-the-box" move. In this context, it is important to warn the reader of this paper (and the new type of researcher and practitioner bent on uncovering former leadership thought and knowledge in general) from the outset that many alternative ideas are bound to be anathema to mainstream opinion manipulators. But to break out of the current global disaster and mental paralysis, new (and at times fundamentally different) approaches are required; therefore, certain possibly unorthodox solutions at least deserve to be tried out.

When the researcher moves from one-dimensional, strictly text-analytical literal exegesis to comprehensive interpretations based on the spirit, not the letter, or even thinks in terms of allegories and records multifaceted streams of association that cannot be anchored in the text at all, he has to ensure that he clearly indicates which of these hermeneutic keys he is employing and explicitly distinguishes between conclusions based on the text and those that result from (possibly text-induced) inspiration.

Going back to the sources should mean that the hunter for leadership treasures reads old texts in full, as many renaissance humanists endeavored to do, not just perusing a *florilegium*⁴ (compilation of fine excerpts), which were particularly popular in the Middle Ages (which, contrary to popular belief, proved to be a time of great intellectual and spiritual

³ Original German version: "*Belesenheit schützt vor Neuentdeckungen*".

⁴ This term is derived from the Greek ἀνθολογία *anthologia* (literally: collection of flowers).

progress). It is also important to commit key passages to memory—a very useful habit that is quite rare nowadays—so that they are constantly available in the mind, making it possible to create powerful new connections at any time without external means.

As part of the holistic and discursive analysis, the processes of both “close reading” and “wide reading” (see, for example, Hallet (2010)) should be performed complementarily. “Close reading” describes the thorough perusal of the focal text with text-immanent interpretation, which should, to the greatest extent possible, be free from external “contaminating” ideas. “Wide reading”, a complementary technique, is an intertextual and interdiscursive process, which entails parallel perusal of other related sources (including non-literary ones) employed for the purpose of contextualization; without such context, the passages under consideration may not be understandable at all. Together, the focal text and related sources form a textual web (or textual nexus), from which recurring *topoi* (in our case, “leadership leitmotifs”, for example) can be identified.

Manifesto of a New Discipline: The “Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge” (ALTK)

In this paper, I propose the creation of a new discipline, which I call the “Archaeology of

Leadership Thought and Knowledge” (ALTK),⁵ consisting of the two subdisciplines of (a) “Archaeology of Leadership Thought”⁶ (ALT), which has a broad scope encompassing all human products related to leadership from former times, and (b) the “Archaeology of Leadership Knowledge”⁷ (ALK), which is more formalized in epistemic terms, dealing, among other things, with knowledge creation, codification and transmission.

Leaning on the conceptualization of archaeology, I define the “Archaeology of Leadership Thought (ALT)”, the subdiscipline on which I will focus in this paper, as

“the study of (a) thinking on leadership and (b) actions taken by leaders in former times through the surveying, recovery (by means of oftentimes mere ‘intellectual excavation’), examination and interpretation of data, aiming at increasing our knowledge about leadership in the past throughout the entire world and making it fruitful for the present and future.”

In my endeavor to unearth long-hidden intellectual treasures, as well as to develop and promote what I call “source-driven leadership literacy”, I intend to focus on Greco-Roman antiquity first, but, of course, within the Western orbit, the Middle Ages,

⁵ As an alternative broad name I suggest “archaeology of leadership ideas” (in short: “archaeology of leadership”). The term “archaeology” (consisting of *lógos* λόγος (word, account, etc.) and *archaios* ἀρχαῖος (ancient, primeval, olden) here can be understood as a “study (or account) of ancient things (from the beginning)” or “discourse about ancient times”. Thus, for example, the “archaeology” section at the beginning of Thucydides’ “History of the Peloponnesian War” is an analytical account of early Greek history, not a detailed treatise on primeval archaeology in the modern sense.

⁶ Thought, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, is defined as “the intellectual product or the organized views and principles of a period, place, group, or individual”.

⁷ Knowledge, according to the *Oxford Dictionary*, in a broad sense is defined as “facts, information, and skills acquired through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject”, in narrower philosophical sense it is defined as “true, justified belief; certain understanding, as opposed to opinion.”

Renaissance and other time periods also need to be analyzed in future studies. Besides, going ahead, thorough research on past leadership thinking and action is required as regards the Near East (including Egypt), India, China and other places around the world across different eras. Furthermore, leadership in the past needs to be examined across a wide variety of subject domains. Finally, the findings from the different places, times and knowledge areas should be compared and possibly be aggregated and unified into a global mega- and meta-leadership theory.

It is worth noting, though, that as an alternative to using an entire leadership system derived from the past in a holistic fashion, it is possible to leverage what I call “leadership wisdom snippets” from bygone ages, which are really practical and exert a forceful impact. More specifically, these immaterial nuggets are actionable ideas that can (usually immediately) be applied in isolation, such as leadership action at the micro- or nano-level (see below). Viewed in historical perspective, many single pieces of advice extracted from the past are so important that—even without the exponentially accruing systemic benefits derived from applying a model (such as the one that I will outline in this paper) in its entirety—many great wars have since been won or lost depending on their observance or neglect respectively.

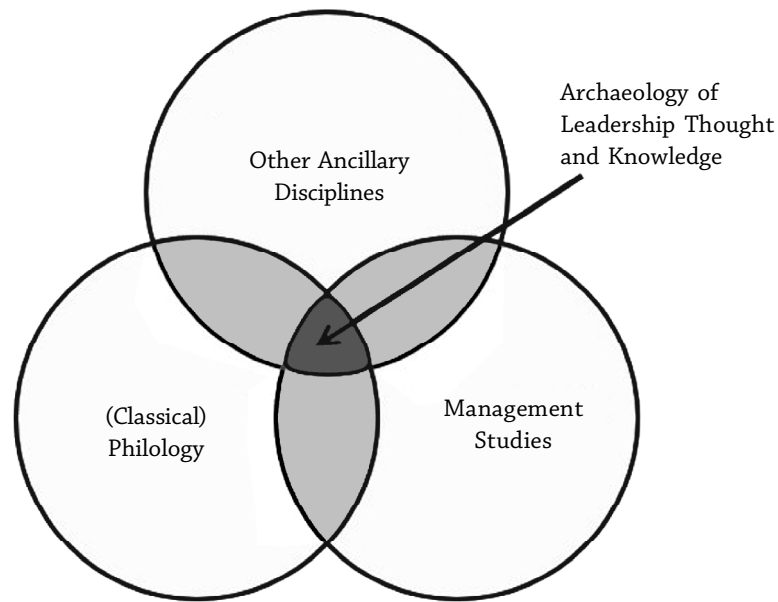
The good news is that oftentimes ancient sources, due to certain distinctive features—which, in terms of methodology, are worthwhile imitating—lend themselves particularly well to this selective use of leadership thought and knowledge. For example, partly for mnemonic purposes, ancient

texts often contain captivating stories that leverage the rhetorical technique of *enárgeia* (ἐνάργεια), that is, a vivid description, often coupled with *syntomía* (συντομία), that is, conciseness. Frequently, the mind is further engaged through the lively and entertaining character of certain narrative or dialogic parts. Besides, many treatises are didactic and exhortatory in nature, containing actionable recommendations that can be applied to various contexts. In this regard, one hermeneutic difficulty should be mentioned, that is, ancient authors in particular sometimes do not clearly distinguish between positive (descriptive) passages (“what is”) and normative sections (“what ought to be”), at times making it difficult to decide which elements are recommended for application.

It should be stressed that the new field of leadership archaeology needs to be built on a strong scientific foundation from the very beginning. Among other things, solid and useful research in this area requires deep holistic knowledge of the subject matter, including a clear understanding of the context in which the observed phenomena occurred. This helps to avoid the regular production of what I call “airplane articles” by non-expert outsiders, which derive their name from the fact that they can be written on a single flight (hopefully, at least an intercontinental one!).

Due to the above quality imperative, as in the field of general archaeology, the new scientific domain of “Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge”, which can be regarded both as a branch of the social sciences and the humanities, needs to rely on many other disciplines (see Figure 1), combining diachronic and synchronic perspectives within a comparative research framework.

**Figure 1: Core Supporting Disciplines
of the 'Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge' and Its Subdisciplines**



The key supporting disciplines to be integrated are (a) management studies (a knowledge domain that usually includes the subdiscipline of leadership studies, even though management differs sharply from leadership!) and (b) (classical) philology. It is important to emphasize that philology plays an extremely significant role in the new discipline of leadership archaeology, since it helps to authenticate, reconstruct, contextualize and interpret the sources under consideration. Given the present focus on early intellectual developments and the concomitant emphasis on written *historical* sources from antiquity (including literary texts and documentary records), *classical* philology is especially important for the new knowledge domain.

The pivotal discipline of philology in turn needs to make use of literary studies (including literary criticism), history (including art history), linguistics and semiotics, among other things. The cross-disciplinary research that I am envisioning also presupposes solid knowledge in the auxiliary disciplines of classical philology, such as epigraphy, papyrology and paleography.

Other important supporting disciplines for the archaeology of leadership include, among other things, theology, philosophy, political science, economics, sociology, general archaeology, anthropology, ethnology, geography, information sciences and statistics.

The ideal “archaeologist of leadership thought and knowledge”, in terms of his

competence profile, obviously is a veritable *homo universalis*. He is capable of embracing multiple perspectives and, as a “hermeneutic pontifex” (bridge builder), is able to intellectually translate and perform transformations between the past, present and future across different knowledge domains, geographical areas and social contexts. This presupposes thorough training in many of the above-mentioned disciplines, at least in economics, management, theology, philosophy and classical philology. This is a rather rare combination, though, since, for example, management and classical philology usually are worlds apart. Having mastered several foreign languages (including a variety of ancient languages, such as Latin, Ancient Greek and Classical Hebrew), he also needs to possess a senior management track record (ideally both as a practitioner and educator) and global multicultural experience. In terms of communication skills, this new type of archaeologist in the field of leadership must be able to converse effectively both with scholarly and practitioner audiences.

Research Aim, Question and Object

The aim of this epideictic and protreptic pioneering study⁸ is to illustrate the promises of the new field of “Archaeology of Leadership Thought” by distilling potentially valuable, exemplary lessons from the *Cyropaedia* (*Kýrou paideía* Κύρου παιδεία, that is, the “Education

of Cyrus”), composed by Xenophon of Athens (*Xenophôn* Ξενοφῶν, ca. 430-354 BC), a philosopher, historiographer, military leader and Socratic in the classical era of ancient Greek history.

In this programmatic study, I endeavor to answer the following specific research question:

“Which are the key success factors related to the education, character traits and behavior that contributed to the outstanding success of Cyrus the Great as a leader?”

In the *Cyropaedia*, a fictional political-didactic treatise, which consists of eight books, Xenophon develops the model of the ideal just monarch. He describes Cyrus as follows:

1.2.1 (...) And even to this day the barbarians tell in story and in song that Cyrus was most handsome in person, most generous of heart, most devoted to learning, and most ambitious, so that he endured all sorts of labor and faced all sorts of danger for the sake of praise.⁹

More specifically, Xenophon outlines the *raison d'être* and scope of the *Cyropaedia* as follows:

1.1.6 Believing this man [that is, Cyrus] to be deserving of all admiration, we have therefore investigated who he was in his origin, what natural endowments he possessed, and what sort of education

⁸ The adjective “epideictic” (derived from the ancient Greek word *epideiktikós* ἐπιδεικτικός) here is understood in the general sense of “fit for displaying, exhibiting, showcasing or demonstrating” rather than in its narrower technical sense referring to the specific branch of rhetoric called “ceremonial oratory”. “Protreptic” (derived from the ancient Greek word *protreptikós* προτρεπτικός, meaning “hortatory”) here is applied to a text that (a) “beats the drum” for a particular discipline (in antiquity, oftentimes the field of philosophy in particular) by advertising its benefits, and (b) encourages readers to engage in it.

⁹ A slightly altered version of Walter Miller’s English translation (Xenophon, 1914) is used for the purpose of this study. In most cases, the original wording, which in some instances deviates from modern English usage, is retained.

he had enjoyed, that he so greatly excelled in governing men. [comments in square brackets added by the author of this paper]

It is imperative to take into account the communicative context in which this intellectual product is embedded (compare, for example, Mayring (2014, p. 39)). Here, it must be stressed that Xenophon does not pursue the objective of historical veracity. For example, the writer highlights self-restraint as an important principle of the Persian education system. This feature, though, is reminiscent rather of the (sparse and potentially one-sided) reports about the conditions in ancient *Sparta*, which have been passed on to us. It contrasts with what we know about Persia, which, according to widespread stereotypes, was more oriented toward luxury.

Xenophon's work is of particular interest for the purpose of this study. First, it covers the life of a truly outstanding leader who, for several reasons, is worth being scrutinized, that is, Cyrus the Great, who reigned from 559-529 BC. Among other things, this leadership exemplar was extremely successful, since he managed to found the great Persian Empire—a very large and highly dynamic system full of diversity, complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty—with only a “little band of Persians” (1.1.4) and to keep it unified.

According to the following passage, Xenophon—after declaring that animals are more tractable than human beings, who are frequently striving for system change and counteracting authority even in the *oikos* (οἶκος, that is, the extended family or household unit)—became convinced by the successful

example of Cyrus the Great that effective leadership is possible after all:

1.1.3 Thus, as we meditated on this analogy [between leading men and animals], we were inclined to conclude that for man, as he is constituted, it is easier to rule over any and all other creatures than to rule over men. But when we reflected that there was one Cyrus, the Persian, who reduced to obedience a vast number of men and cities and nations, we were then compelled to change our opinion and decide that to rule men might be a task neither impossible nor even difficult, if one should only go about it in an intelligent manner (...) [comments in square brackets added by the author]

Besides, Cyrus' dynamic “task environment” has some features in common with the context in which many leaders nowadays are operating, especially with respect to its size, diversity, complexity, ambiguity and embedded uncertainty. More specifically, he reigned over a multinational and multilingual empire, which covered a vast territory. Especially due to the fact that “data processing” tools and means of communication back then were by far less developed than they are today, in many cases, it was impossible to attach probabilities to various outcomes, and it proved extremely challenging to lead people. Nevertheless, Cyrus managed to overcome the numerous significant obstacles imposed by the environment. Xenophon states:

1.1.3 (...) At all events, we know that people obeyed Cyrus willingly, although some of them were distant from him a journey of many days, and others of

many months; others, although they had never seen him, and still others who knew well that they never should see him. Nevertheless they were all willing to be his subjects.

Furthermore, Xenophon's work is also attractive, because it constitutes an innovative hybrid form of certain features originating from different genres, which in several respects point the way toward later developments in the subsequent Hellenistic Period and Roman Period, in particular. More specifically, it combines historical, philosophical, biographical, novelistic and essayistic features. There is even genre-related innovation, since some categories, such as the genre of biography, were just emerging, destined to come to full development only in later eras. Walter Miller classified the *Cyropaedia* as the first "historical romance" in Western literature (Xenophon, 1914, p. viii). This hybrid nature of the work allows for a variety of hermeneutic approaches and explorative methods. Moreover, this book draws on Xenophon's advanced thinking in the field of philosophy, historiography, administration and warfare, enriched by his rich experience as a military leader, among other things. Furthermore, the work is also lively and entertaining, featuring captivating narratives and engaging dialogues, among other things. Finally, the enduring worth of this treatise is evidenced by the reception-related fact that in various subsequent time periods, it has often been enthusiastically embraced by key thought leaders and transformational helmsmen in a wide variety of areas. For example, Xenophon's treatise, which in total contains eight books, is said

to have formed part of the *impedimenta* of Africanus and Cicero (Marchant, 1916, p. 165). In addition, it served as a prototype for later "Mirrors of Princes" (in German: *Fürstenspiegel*), which became particularly popular during the Renaissance, culminating in Niccolò Machiavelli's masterpiece *The Prince*. Until now, the *Cyropaedia* continues to interest scholars in different fields of study. Alas, few contemporary leaders seem to know it, which is another reason for focusing on this treatise and its applications in the current study.

A New Research Approach

Research Design and Procedure

As in general archaeology, where special methods are needed to extract material artifacts, the new field of archaeology of leadership, while embracing methodological diversity, needs to develop a distinctive set of research approaches that are likely to be particularly effective for the chosen aims and the objects under investigation. In this context, I suggest a method cross-over into the field of classical philology. More specifically, within the framework of Grounded Theory (see, for example, Glaser and Strauss, 1967), I plan to use a comprehensive form of Content Analysis. This rule-bound and replicable procedure involves, among other things, coding (that is, labeling) contextually embedded data (in our case, a text) with different categories, then analyzing the codes quantitatively or qualitatively, for example, by looking for patterns and finding meaning, possibly identifying causal relationships (including feedback loops) within a dynamic system, and finally trying to generalize the findings by

building a theory and developing normative recommendations for practitioners. If the process is correctly performed, valid knowledge is created, which meets high scientific quality standards in terms of validity and reliability, for example (it is important to emphasize that this applies not only to quantitative research, but also to *qualitative* studies!).

In the first step of my overall interdisciplinary and cross-method research program, I will focus on the specific technique of Qualitative Content Analysis (see, for example, Schreier (2012)), applying it to the field of archaeology of leadership, in order to analyze intellectual products, in particular, prose writings dating back to Greco-Roman antiquity. In the subsequent step of this particular method crossover, the research focus can be broadened to include other literary sources (comprised of a variety of literary genres) and different types of documentary sources and can be extended to other regions, such as the Near East and Far East. This technique enables the researcher to perform an important transformation, that is, it makes it possible to analytically dissect a text that is full of narratives and, in the countermovement of synthesis, to integrate the intellectual nuggets thus mined into an actionable model.

More specifically, the various analytical and synthetic processes include, among other things, surveying and structuring the data, interpreting it, generalizing it (through the process of *analytical* generalization, not in a statistical sense) and translating the findings into a new context. If texts are written in a foreign language (especially a classical one

that is not spoken anymore), additional difficulties arise.

In the realm of content analysis, the following research designs are possible (Mayring, 2014, p. 12), which can also be mixed:

- Explorative
- Descriptive
- Relational
- Causal

The data can be typologized in two ways, that is, through deduction or induction. Of course, it is possible to use mixed designs, which are combining the following approaches (and their subvariants):

1. *Deduction*: A researcher who uses this descriptive process starts with a theoretical model or framework and, through various cognitive processes, deduces a set of categories (such as principles) from it. Then, in a confirmatory move, he tries to identify instances in the dataset that correspond to the logically deduced categories.
2. *Induction*: This explorative process builds categories empirically from the dataset. Two approaches are possible:
 - a. The first option is what I call “anagnostic¹⁰ category development”. This entails assigning a category that is already *known* in a given research community to a single data point or aggregated ones.
 - b. The second option is what I call “heuristic category development”. Using this approach, a researcher, in a process similar to abduction (see, for example, Peirce (1931-1935) and Reichertz (2007, p. 219-

¹⁰ *Anágnōsis* ἀνάγνωσις means “recognition”.

220)), connects single data points or aggregated ones with a *newly discovered or invented* category.¹¹ The satisfaction that is at times associated with the discovery of new categories reminds us of the famous exclamation “*Heureka!*” (I have found it!).

In this study, I will adopt a mixed exploratory-causal design, using mainly a combination of anagnostic and heuristic induction to link data points with categories, which, in a subsequent step, will be causally related to each other. In addition, for demonstrative purposes, I will give a few examples of how deduction can be used in the context of ancient sources (see the section on leadership behavior). Throughout the research process, I will also try to keep my mind open and make room for associative streams that—by means of inspirations from the past—help to produce new ideas about leadership altogether or at least to generate new intriguing questions.

As regards the detailed analytical procedure, I will start with a “panoramic reading” of Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*, trying to understand its *gestalt* and spontaneously noting key ideas. In the second reading (in French: *relecture*), I will code the work in a detailed manner. All codes will be summarized in a coding scheme that includes anchor examples for each category. Subsequently, the categories derived during the coding stage will be subsumed into larger latent constructs (similarly to the connection between observed measures (or indicators) and latent variables in structural equation modeling), which then, in the theory-

development stage, will be connected through causal links. Finally, practical recommendations will be derived from the new theoretical framework.

Regarding the conundrum as to which passages are descriptive and which ones are normative, as a heuristic device, I adopted the plausible hypothesis that since Xenophon chose Cyrus the Great as a leadership exemplar (the ideal monarch), as a rule, he actually seems to recommend the principles, development schemes, traits and behaviors that he observed, which, in other words, means that he regards them as being normative.

With respect to the presentation of findings, it is important to stress that a researcher needs to make copious use of citations from the source text (ideally in the original language, too) instead of just paraphrasing it. He thus should allow the text to “speak for itself” and enable readers to make their own judgments before he offers an interpretation.

Data Corpus

As regards the dataset (or “sample”) used for this study, I will focus on the first book of the *Cyropaedia*, which deals with the education of Cyrus, since (a) it contains a particularly dense set of valuable leadership lessons, and (b) the beginnings here afford a glimpse of further developments (compare “*omina principiis*” inquit “*inesse solent*”, translated: “Omens are wont,” said he, “to wait upon beginnings”, Ovid, *Fasti*, 1,178 (Ovid, 1989, pp. 14-15)). In fact, the subsequent books (2-8), which deal with the rest of Cyrus’s life, among other things, impressively illustrate the leadership principles outlined in the first book.

¹¹ It should be noted that Peirce considers abduction to be the only knowledge-extending means of inference, classifying it as a third approach besides deduction and induction (Reichertz, 2007, p. 216).

Results and Discussion

Overview of Leadership Model

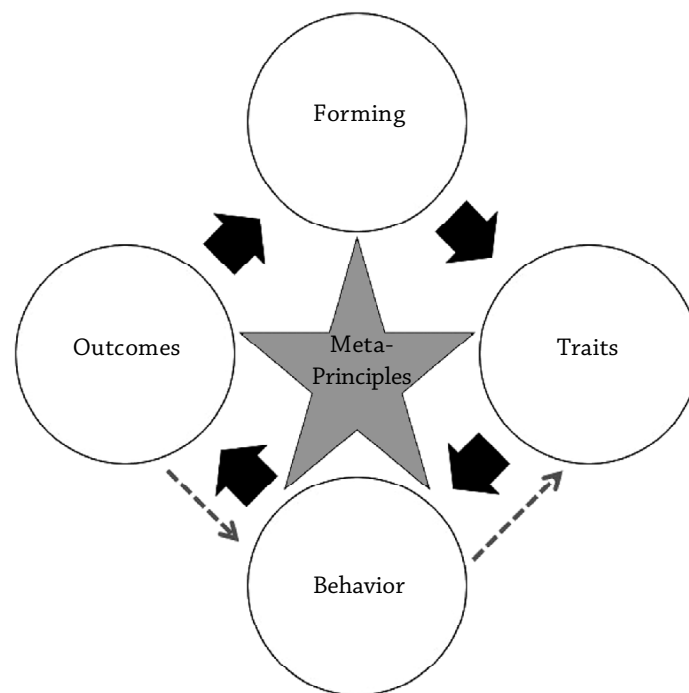
Based on Xenophon's narrative, it is possible to deduce a leadership model that consists of five components (see Figure 2).

To start with, the overall system is driven by (1) a set of enduring meta-principles. Those principles have a relationship with all the other components of the leadership system, including (2) the forming stage, during which the future helmsmen get imbued with (3) enduring traits (or habitual dispositions), which get *ontologically* anchored. Those in turn manifest themselves in a series of (4) leadership behaviors at different levels of granularity, generating (5) various outcomes. While the meta-principles shape or at least permeate the

formation process, traits and behavior, they serve as benchmarks (one could imagine an implicit scoring card) against which outcomes are measured.

As mentioned, the holistic system, as understood here, is dynamic. First of all, the overall model is circular, since there is a link from the outcomes to the forming stage. A member of the community who produces undesirable *individual* results, according to Xenophon, in the early education stage or further development stage will get severely punished (in the worst case, by being eliminated from the system altogether through complete degradation and disenfranchisement). One can also speculate that collective failure would create a need to change the development

Figure 2: Holistic and Dynamic Model of Leadership in Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*



process of future leaders in general. Besides, there are reinforcing feedback loops. For example, the model includes a reciprocal relationship between traits and behavior, since habitual dispositions not only influence actions, but actions that are repeated several times can morph into habits and dispositions. Besides, specific behaviors do not only usually have an impact on outcomes, but the causal relationship can also be reversed. For example, bad results might motivate a change in behavior. Given that the feedback loops are reinforcing, virtuous or vicious cycles can develop.

Individual Components of the Leadership Model

Leadership Meta-Principles

The leadership meta-principles are latent constructs derived from Xenophon's narrative. They explicate the core values that matter most for the overall social system and in consequence for the actors driving it and being shaped by it. Those principles constitute a "grammar of virtue" and "grammar of goodness", which the members of the elite corps in particular need to learn and apply. Two different types of meta-principles from the larger set of systemic underpinnings appear to be particularly important; they interact with the other model components in varying degrees:

- Individual "cardinal" virtues, including, among other things, justice, kindness, generosity, respect, obedience, temperance and self-control.
- Systemic values, such as a restricted form of *isonomía* (ἰσονομία = equality of (political) rights) and decorum. Those

values theoretically could be further divided into group-level and state-level ones.

I will describe the actual *manifestations* of these principles in more detail when I discuss the other components of Xenophon's leadership system.

The Forming of Future Leaders

Overview of Leadership Development Process

The forming of future helmsmen encompasses both early education and continuing development. More specifically, according to Xenophon's *fictional* account, the Persians distinguished different stages in the process of developing leaders (see Figure 3).

Overall, there are four divisions, led by 12 guardians respectively (mirroring the 12 tribes in Persia), with different duties that are at least partly connected with educational aims:¹²

1. **Boys** (*paides* παῖδες): Children and youths stay in this group up to age 16 or 17. The main objective during this formative stage is to imbue them with cardinal virtues (see meta-principles)—especially by ensuring that they learn justice in the same way as pupils in other country learn to read and write—and to teach them technical skills for *distant* combat.
2. **Young Men** (*éphēboi* ἔφηβοι): Members of this group are between 16 or 17 and 26 or 27 years old respectively. For 10 years, they are mainly employed for the performance of various state services during daytime and at night, hone their technical skills, and participate in hunting sprees with the king as a "school of war".
3. **Full-Grown Men** (*téleioi ándres* τέλειοι ἄνδρες): The age of the respective members

¹² In the remaining text, I will not always mention the fact that the various facets of the leadership model presented here are based on Xenophon *fictional* account, but this point should always be borne in mind. In this study, I am not concerned with questions of historicity.

ranges from 26 or 27 and 51 or 52 years. For 25 years, they participate in military expeditions as close combatants, serve as magistrates (including as guardians, except for the role of boy teachers), and perform other demanding state services.

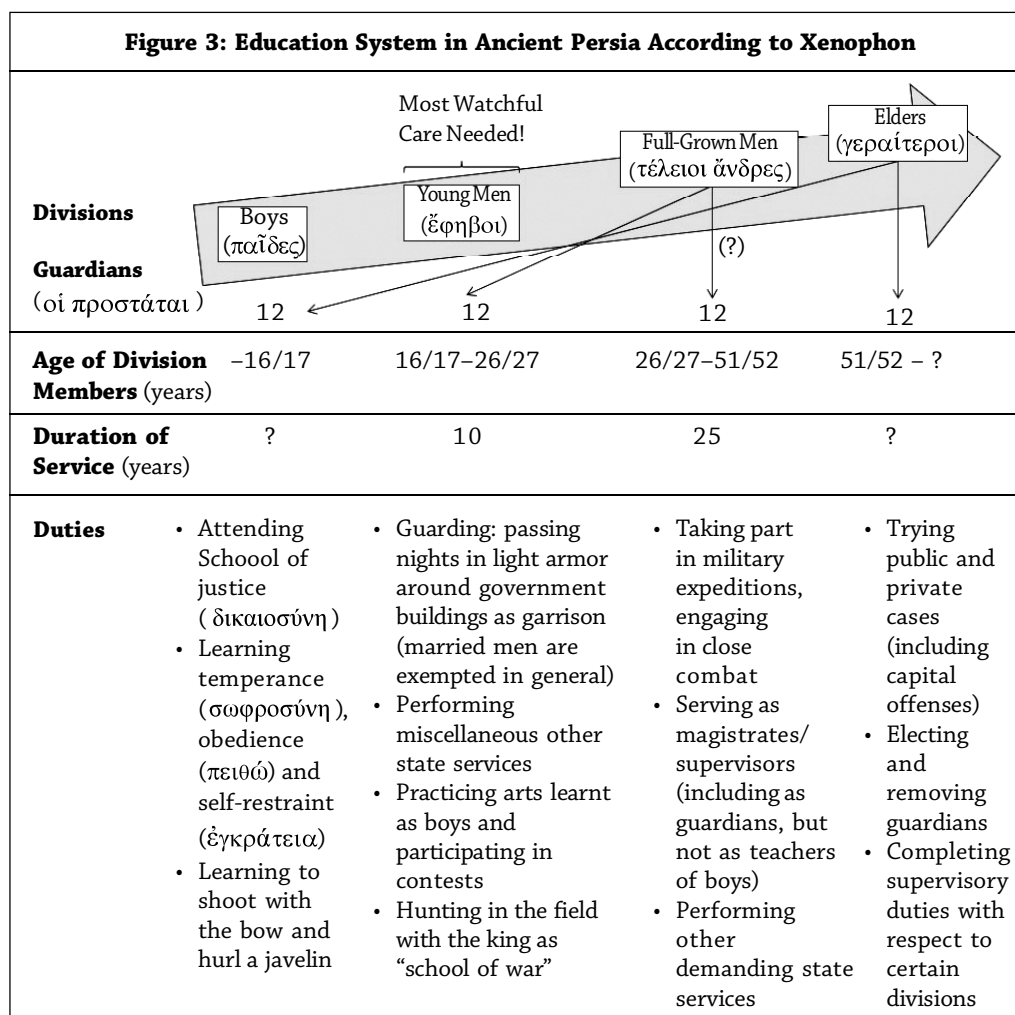
4. **Elders** (*geraítēroi* γεραίτεροι): Persians enter this age cohort at age 51 or 52. Members of this group are mainly occupied with deciding public or private cases (including cases involving capital offenses). They are also responsible for electing all guardians and removing deviant

ones. Finally, they fulfill supervisory duties with respect to certain divisions (see Figure 3).

Important Aspects of Leadership Development

The following characteristics of the forming system described by Xenophon, among other things, are particularly noteworthy and could inspire postmodern (contrarian) thinkers on leadership development, who may either implement all of the below mentioned suggestions or only a subset of them.

Restricted Isonomía: A key principle in the Persian education system (and of society at



large) is a restricted form of *isonomía*, whereby all members of the nobility (called *homótimoi* (ὁμότιμοι = peers) in principle have access to the various state positions. Besides, these individuals are allowed to send their boys to school if they can finance their upbringing without working. Xenophon tells us:

1.2.15 Now, that the whole constitutional policy of the Persians may be more clearly set forth, I will go back a little; for now, in the light of what has already been said, it can be given in a very few words. It is said that the Persians number about one hundred and twenty thousand men;¹³ and no one of these is by law excluded from holding offices and positions of honor, but all the Persians may send their children to the common schools of justice. Still, only those do send them who are in a position to maintain their children without work; and those who are not so situated do not.

Importance of Seniority, Hierarchy and Stratification: As can be seen from the above description of the Persian divisions, the education system in Persia (and society at large) makes use of clear seniority-based command structures and divides the leadership pool into different layers. This is very different from the situation in many organizations today, where hierarchies to a large extent are removed and everything becomes fluid, often leading to confusion and concomitant lack of orientation. It is important to note though, that, as we will see later, in Persia, seniority is positively related to merit. An important

aspect in this state (as in other political entities in antiquity) is the strict separation between males and females. One might consider applying this principle at least to some stages of leadership training in the present age.

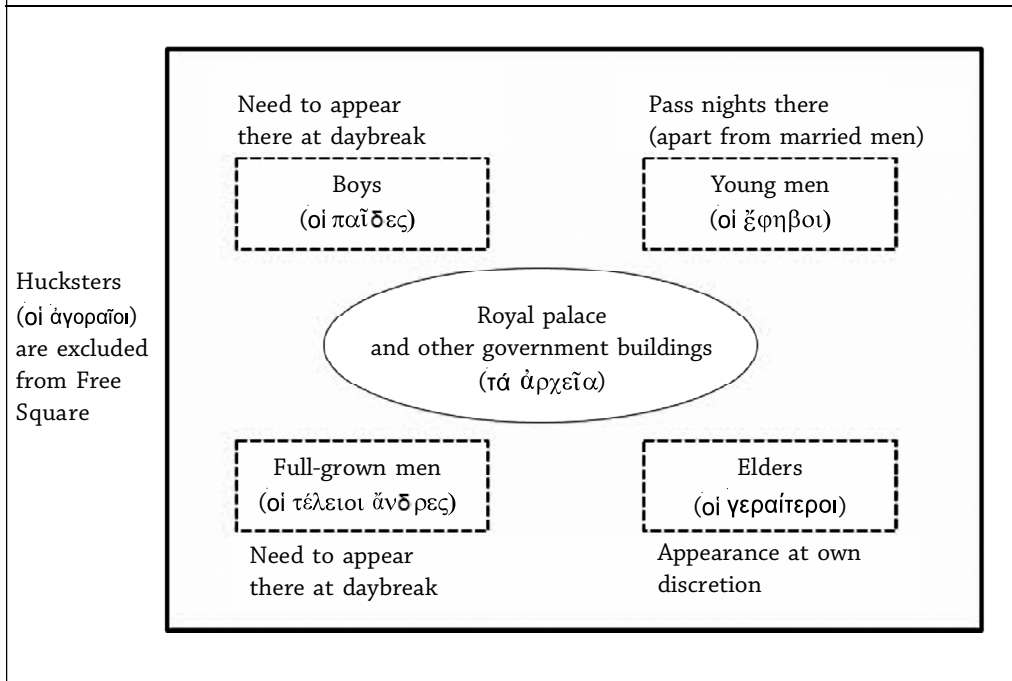
Spatial Protection Aiming at Vulgarly-Free Community-Building: In the Persian leadership development system, physical space matters, reflecting the structured nature of society mentioned above. More specifically, there is a “Free Square” (*eleuthéra agorá* ἐλευθέρα ἀγορά), containing the royal palace and other government buildings (*archeía* ἀρχεῖα), which are surrounded by four areas for the four divisions respectively, which need to be visited according to strict rules (see Figure 4). An important objective of this spatial arrangement is to protect the members of the various age cohorts from unwanted influences. Xenophon reports:

1.2.3 They have their so-called “Free Square,” where the royal palace and other government buildings are located. The hucksters with their wares, their cries, and their vulgarities are excluded from this and relegated to another part of the city, in order that their tumult may not intrude upon the orderly life of the cultured.

Proleptic Leadership: In many systems (especially today), certain commands or rules are established (if at all), but, in the next step, the people that are subject to them, without necessarily receiving proper training, are granted the freedom to do whatever they want. If they deviate from the established norms, they (in theory) get punished. Obviously, a

¹³ This number does not refer to the entire population of Persia, but only to the members of the nobility, called *homótimoi* (ὁμότιμοι, which means “peers”).

Figure 4: The Free Square: Spatial Division and Attendance Rules



sanction in this system at best occurs when it is already too late, since by that time, the damage has already been done. I call the reactive approach, which is based on fixing existing problems, “acestic” (this word is derived from the ancient Greek verb *akéomai* ἀκέομαι¹⁴ which means “healing”, “repairing”, “mending”). In business, for example, this reactive approach is used in “management by exception”, among other things. In the following account, Xenophon informs us that the system in many states he knew was similar:

1.2.2 For most states permit everyone to train his own children just as he will, and the older people themselves to live as they please; and then they command them not to steal and not to rob, not to break into anybody’s house, not to

strike a person whom they have no right to strike, not to commit adultery, not to disobey a *guardian*, and so forth; and if a man *transgresses* anyone one of these laws, they punish him. [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller’s translation; grammar-related changes are not highlighted]

In contrast, Persian social architects attach paramount importance to *anticipation*, which makes prevention possible, especially through character formation ensuring that undesirable behavior does not occur in the first place. I call this approach “proleptic leadership” (the ancient Greek word *prólēpsis* πρόληψις means, among other things, “anticipation” in rhetoric). In this context, it is important to note that in contrast to the situation prevailing in many

¹⁴ The stem also appears in the English word “pan-acea” [hyphen added for clarity], which, according to the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* means “a remedy for all ills or difficulties”.

organizations today, propriety and morality matter tremendously in Persia. Xenophon reports:

1.2.2 (...) but he [that is, Cyrus] was educated in conformity with the laws of the Persians; and these laws appear in their care for the common weal not to start from the same point as they do in most states. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

1.2.3 The Persian laws, however, begin at the beginning and take care that from the first their citizens shall not be of such a character as ever to desire anything improper or immoral.

As an important corollary of proleptic leadership, the insulating training of future helmsmen starts very early in Xenophon's Persia, that is, in childhood. This contrasts sharply with the situation in many countries today, where people usually are participating in serious leadership development programs only when they have obtained already senior positions or do not get any such training at all (as is often the case, for example, in institutions such as hospitals, where capable doctors get promoted to positions of authority without ever having learnt how to lead themselves and others). As an inspiration from Xenophon's work, educators around the world could start offering *systematic* age-adapted leadership training already in the kindergarten and primary school, as well as continue it in all subsequent development stages in a thorough fashion!

Teleological Principle: Social architects in Persia undertake very determined efforts aimed at helping individuals to achieve their full inborn potential, with senior leaders bearing a special responsibility in this regard.

Xenophon frames his description of the education system as follows:

1.2.5 (...) And what duties are assigned to each age to perform we shall now set forth, that it may be better understood what pains the Persians take that their citizens may prove to be the very best.

The senior leaders, among other things, function as strict teachers placed *above* the pupils, not, as is common today, as rather ineffective "co-partners in learning" with equal social status. More specifically, the guardians (*prostátai* προστάται) have to help the subordinated members to become the best men they can be. Xenophon tells us:

1.2.5 (...) To have charge of the boys, such are chosen from the ranks of the elders as seem likely to make out of the boys the best men; to have charge of the *young men*, such are chosen from the ranks of the *full-grown* men as seem most likely on their part to develop the *young men* best. [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller's translation]

Emphasis on Education in Virtues: In the Persian system, education in virtues, especially justice, is accorded a higher priority than training in operational skills, such as using military equipment. Put distinctly, boys in Persia attend a "school of justice" instead of a technical school. This contrasts sharply with the situation today, since in most modern leadership education programs ethics at best is a supplementary course, ranking lower in priority and being taught at a later stage than technical subjects, such as finance and operations. Xenophon reports:

1.2.6 The boys go to school and spend their time in learning justice; and they say that they go there for this purpose, just as in our country they say that they go to learn to read and write. And their *guardians* spend the greater part of the day in deciding cases for them. [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller's translation]

Other important virtues taught in Persia include, among other things, temperance and self-control (see below), as well as obedience. These intangible assets are nowadays—with healthy authority structures and reasonable limits being actually eliminated in many places—not often promoted, even though they serve as powerful curbs on destructive ego-centric behavior. In this context, it should be noted that smart authority-enforced restrictions (comparable to the Ten Commandments) actually tend to enhance true freedom, since they help to liberate individuals from the heavy yoke of pernicious behavioral patterns.

Up or Out-System Coupled with Severe Punishments: An important feature of the Persian leadership development system is the fact that individuals can only advance to the next leadership cohort if they have completed their study program in the current one. Xenophon tells us:

1.2.15 (...) And only to such as are educated by the public teachers is it permitted to pass their young manhood in the class of the young men, while to those who have not completed this course of training it is not so permitted. And only to such among the *youngmen* as complete the course required by law

is it permitted to join the class of *full-grown* men and to fill offices and places of distinction, while those who do not finish their course among the young men are not promoted to the class of the *full-grown* men. And again, those who finish their course among the *full-grown* men without blame become members of the class of elders. [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller's translation; as mentioned before, the original wording of the translation may deviate from modern English usage]

According to Xenophon, those who fail to meet the preset standards are punished severely:

1.2.14 ...They [that is, the elders] try people indicted for capital offences also, and they elect all the *guardians*. And if any one, either among the *youngmen* or among the *full-grown* men, fail in any one of the duties prescribed by law, the respective *guardians* of that division, or anyone else who will, may enter complaint, and the elders, when they have heard the case, expel the guilty party; and the one who has been expelled spends the rest of his life degraded and disfranchised. [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller's translation; comments in square brackets added by the author]

As a consequence of the rigorously enforced up-or-out system, there is a positive correlation between position and merit. Xenophon reports:

1.2.15 (...) so, we see, the elders are made up of those who have enjoyed all honor

and distinction. This is the policy by the observance of which they think that their citizens may become the best.

Developmental Mix Focusing on Mind and

Body: In a holistic manner, the Persian system combines different developmental methods targeted at various constituent parts of the human being. As regards methods, it makes use of formal education (see 1.2.6, mentioned above). Besides, there is a heavy emphasis on experiential learning, which can take place “on-the-job” (thus providing training by means of *real* case studies) and in areas that, at first glance, might appear to be peripheral to leadership. For example, hunting is considered to be a great schooling for war (compare 1.2.10). Moreover, as we can see from the various dialogues between Cyrus and his father, Cambyses I., the king of Persia, informal mentoring is used to prepare members for new situations and to help them make sense of previous learning.

There are various target areas of leadership development, which are either directly or indirectly touched, that is mind, soul and body. Given what we know about the soul-body-linkage in particular (such as the phenomenon of psychosomatic illnesses, for example), one has to ask why leadership training nowadays as a rule focuses only on the intellect, usually neglecting soul and body.

Emphasis on Temperance and Self-Control:

Physical training, which unfortunately usually does not play any role in modern leadership development programs at all, in Persia is used to train individuals in moderation and to strengthen their self-discipline. One example is the moderate use of food and drink during the chase, which helps the hunters to appreciate even little things. Xenophon tells us:

1.2.11 (...) Now, if anyone thinks that they do not enjoy eating when they have only cresses with their bread, or that they do not enjoy drinking when they drink only water, let him remember how sweet barley bread and wheaten bread taste when one is hungry, and how sweet water is to drink when one is thirsty.

Importance of Role Modeling: Leadership talent in Persia, among other things, learns desirable traits and behavior by following uplifting exemplars. For instance, Xenophon reports:

1.2.8 They teach the boys self-control also; and it greatly conduces to their learning self-control that they see their elders also living temperately day by day. And they teach them likewise to obey the *guardians*; and it greatly conduces to this also that they see their elders *strictly* obeying their *guardians*. And besides, they teach them self-restraint in eating and drinking; and it greatly conduces to this also that they see that their elders do not leave their post to satisfy their hunger until the *guardians* dismiss them (...) [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller’s translation]

Cambyses I. taught his son Cyrus that a general, too, needs to serve as an exemplar, by stating the following:

1.6.25 “And in his campaigns also, if they fall in the summer time, the general must show that he can endure the heat of the sun better than his soldiers can, and that he can endure cold better than they if it be in winter; if the way [should] lead through difficulties, that he can

endure hardships better. All this contributes to his being loved by his men”. [comments in brackets added by author]

Practice Empowered by Agonal Principle:

An important educational means in Persia, according to Xenophon, which complements constant practice and helps to increase motivation, is hosting a public or private *agōn* (ἀγών, which means “contest”) and award prizes to those who deserve them. In the *Cyropaedia*, we read:

1.2.12 The divisions remaining at home, in their turn, pass their time shooting with the bow and hurling the spear and practicing all the other arts that they learned when they were boys, and they continually engage in contests of this kind with one another. And there are also public contests of this sort, for which prizes are offered (...)

Besides, Xenophon presents the following dialogue between Cyrus and his father:

1.6.18 “Yes,” said Cyrus; “but at all events, as to practice in the various warlike exercises, it seems to me, father, that by announcing contests in each one and offering prizes you would best secure practice in them, so that you would have everything prepared for use, whenever you might need it.” “Quite right, my son,” said he; “for if you do that you may be sure that you will see your companies performing their proper parts like trained sets of dancers.”

Honoring Past and Present Guardians: In relation to the contests, it is interesting to mention the fact that not only the winner gets rewarded, but also his current leader (who apparently acts like a champion) and—which is particularly noteworthy—even his *former* trainer. Collectives, too, can receive prizes. Xenophon reports:

1.2.12 (...) and whatever division has the greatest number of the most expert, the manliest, and the best disciplined young men, the citizens praise and honor not only its present *leader* but also the one who trained them when they were boys. [words in italics mark semantic changes made to Miller’s translation]

Smart Incentive Alignment: Rewards are structured in a way that encourages desired behavior. For example, participants in the chase can only eat meat if they have succeeded in their hunting efforts! Xenophon relates:

1.2.11 Those of this age [that is, the young men] have for relish the game that they kill; if they fail to kill any, then cresses. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

Traits

The various methods of leadership development help to form certain stable traits, which are permanent habits of mind or body (*héxis* ἥξις, that is, a permanent state or condition produced by practice (*prâxis* πράξις)).¹⁵ An ontological approach is adopted

¹⁵ Aristotle compares a stable habit (*héxis* ἥξις), which can be formed through a deliberate effort (such as regular training), with a temporary *páthos* (πάθος), which is something that happens to a person (or, more literally, something that a person “suffers”). The *páthos* is a contingent, accidental attribute (*tò symbebēkós* τὸ συμβεβηκός), which does not form part of a person’s true nature and stable being. In some ancient medical texts, *héxis* is linked to the body, describing a permanent constitution, and is contrasted with *schésis* (σχέσις) or *diáthesis* (διὰθεσις), which are expressions for a temporary condition. As regards Greek grammar, present states that result from past action verbally can be represented with the Greek perfect, whereas the punctual occurrence of conditions (including the beginning of emotions, for example) can be described with the Greek aorist.

here, meaning that high-impact and enduring leadership starts with “being”, not with “acting”. In some instances, I have formed clusters of traits, which in turn are oftentimes related to other traits or groups of traits. As a caveat, it should be noted that not all successful leaders possess all of these traits. The following list of traits is not exhaustive:

Transcendent Orientation Supported by Self-Help: For Cyrus, leadership always needs to start with the gods. This belief had been transmitted to him by his father, which shows that it is an important duty for parents to imbue their children with religious values, too. Xenophon reports:

1.5.6 Now as soon as he [that is, Cyrus] was chosen, his first act was to consult the gods; and not till he had sacrificed and the omens were propitious, did he proceed to choose his two hundred men. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

Rather touchingly, Cyrus rejoices as follows:

1.6.4 “... I feel toward the gods as if they were my friends.”

The religious fervor and joy remind us of Psalm 42,1 (King James Bible):¹⁶

“As the hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.”

The gods rank first, even in small things, as Xenophon relates:

1.5.14 This, moreover, will, I think, strengthen your confidence: I have not neglected the gods as we embark upon

this expedition. For you have been with me enough to know that not only in great things but also in small [ones] I always try to begin with the approval of the gods. [addition in square brackets made by author]

Besides, according to Cyrus, the gods should be remembered at all times. Xenophon writes:

1.6.3 “Aye, father,” said Cyrus, “as you have taught me, I always try to take care, as far as I can, that the gods may be gracious unto us and willingly give us counsel; for I remember,” said he, “having once heard you say that that man would be more likely to have power with the gods, even as with men, who did not fawn upon them when he was in adversity, but remembered the gods most of all when he was in the highest prosperity. And for one’s friends also, you said, one ought always to show one’s regard in precisely the same way.”

The importance of prayer, in particular, is shown in the following passage:

1.6.1 Now, when Cyrus had gone home and prayed to ancestral Hestia, ancestral Zeus, and the rest of the gods, he set out upon his expedition; and his father also joined in escorting him on his way.

This practice is still nowadays found in a heterogeneous set of locations. For example, in the Philippines and Iran, which obviously differ sharply in many respects, a large number of organizations starts important activities with

¹⁶ It is important to note the different numbering of psalms due to different divisions in the Hebrew and Catholic tradition. The section above corresponds to Psalm 41,2 in the Greek Septuagint (ὃν τρόπον ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ ἐλαφος ἐπὶ τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων, οὕτως ἐπιποθεῖ ἡ ψυχὴ μου πρὸς σέ, ὁ θεός) and Latin Clementine Vulgate (*Quemadmodum desiderat cervus ad fontes aquarum, ita desiderat anima mea ad te, Deus*).

a prayer. At the same time—to paraphrase Xenophon’s thought—we learn that the gods help those who help themselves. More specifically, in the *Cyropaedia*, it is recommended to ask the gods only for things that cannot be achieved through one’s own efforts. Cambyses I. poses the following question to his son Cyrus to elicit an affirmative response:

1.6.5 ... so in this matter it seemed to us that those only who had made themselves what they ought to be had a right to ask for corresponding blessings from the gods?”

While not relying on superstitious practices, such as bird watching, it is a good idea for leaders to discuss key decisions (and also the *seemingly* “small” everyday issues) with God, the almighty, asking him for his opinion and putting everything in his hands (while giving one’s best to make maximum contributions oneself). If you have consulted God before a decision and listened to him, according to former Pope John Paul II, you can never say afterwards that the decision was wrong. Unquestionably, this sense of security and the concomitant calmness are worth a lot, especially for a leader, who is responsible for the lives of thousands of human beings!

The Importance of Authenticity: It is of chief importance that the inner and outer life of a leader are in correspondence. Cyrus’s father underlines how important it is to be true to oneself and to avoid pretending to be someone else:

1.6.22 ... “For example, if you wish to seem to be a good farmer when you are not, or a good rider, doctor, flute-player, or anything else that you are not, just think how many schemes you must

invent to keep up your pretensions. And even if you should persuade any number of people to praise you, in order to give yourself a reputation, and if you should procure a fine outfit for each of your professions, you would soon be found to have practiced deception; and not long after, when you were giving an exhibition of your skill, you would be shown up and convicted, too, as an impostor.”

Spirit of Justice: Given the importance of the principle of justice in the Persian system, it has been deeply anchored in Cyrus’s personality as a stable trait. In his own words (as reported by Xenophon), Cyrus relates an example of how he learnt the meaning of justice (which is a virtue that needs to be reinforced particularly in our age, since many leaders nowadays feel increasingly emboldened to disrespect laws in their pursuit of outcomes they consider to be more valuable than modeling law-abiding behavior and thus cause widespread lawlessness in all social strata):

1.3.17 “The case was like this: a big boy with a little tunic, finding a little boy with a big tunic on, took it off him and put his own tunic on him, while he himself put on the other’s. So, when I tried their case, I decided that it was better for them both that each should keep the tunic that fitted him. And thereupon the master flogged me, saying that when I was a judge of a good fit, I should do as I had done; but when it was my duty to decide whose tunic it was, I had this question, he said, to consider—whose title was the rightful one; whether it was right that he who took it away by force should keep it, or that he who had had it made for

himself or had bought it should own it. And since, he said, what is lawful is right and what is unlawful is wrong, he bade the judge always render his verdict on the side of the law. It is in this way, mother, you see, that I already have a thorough understanding of justice in all its bearings; and," he added, "if I do require anything more, my grandfather here will teach me that."

In a "teachable moment", Cyrus's mother compares Persian and Median ideals of justice as follows:

1.3.18 "Yes, my son," said she; "but at your grandfather's court they do not recognize the same principles of justice as they do in Persia. For he has made himself master of everything in Media, but in Persia equality of rights is considered justice. And your father is the first one to do what is ordered by the State and to accept what is decreed, and his standard is not his will but the law. Mind, therefore, that you be not flogged within an inch of your life, when you come home, if you return with a knowledge acquired from your grandfather here of the principles not of kingship but of tyranny, one principle of which is that it is right for one to have more than all."

Kindness-Inspired Generosity, Sincere Recognition and True Comradeship: Due to his inner kindness—a manifestation of what I call "cordial leadership"—Cyrus is imbued with touching generosity and thus full of appreciation of the good things that others do. According to Xenophon, Cyrus once asked his grandfather to dispose of the meat

at the dinner table at his own discretion and, after he had been given the permission to do so, used it as a targeted reward:

1.3.7 Thereupon Cyrus took some of the meat and proceeded to distribute it among his grandfather's servants, saying to them in turn: "I give this to you, because you take so much pains to teach me to ride; to you, because you gave me a spear, for at present this is all I have to give; to you, because you serve my grandfather so well; and to you, because you are respectful to my mother." He kept on thus, while he was distributing all the meat that he had received.

This generosity of heart contrasts sharply with the egocentric mindset or ostensible, calculated liberality of many leaders today. Signaling his determination, Cyrus does not permit others to stop him from being generous, as we can see from the following scene:

1.4.26 And Cyrus also, it is said, departed very tearfully. And they say that he distributed as presents among his young friends many of the things that Astyages [that is, the Median king and Cyrus's grandfather] had given to him; and finally he took off the Median robe which he had on and gave it to one whom he loved very dearly. It is said, however, that those who received and accepted his presents carried them to Astyages, and Astyages received them and returned them to Cyrus; but Cyrus sent them back again to Media with this message: "If you wish me ever to come back to you again, grandfather, without having to be ashamed, permit those to whom I

have given anything to keep it.” And when Astyages heard this, he did as Cyrus’s letter bade. [comments in square brackets added by author]

Generous sharing, among other things, also helps Cyrus to gain respect:

1.5.1 And at first the boys were inclined to make fun of him, saying that he had come back after having learned to live a life of luxurious ease among the Medes. But when they saw him eating and drinking with no less relish than they themselves, and, if there ever was feasting at any celebration, freely giving away a part of his own share rather than asking for more; and when, in addition to this, they saw him surpassing them in other things as well, then again his comrades began to have proper respect for him.

Moreover, Cyrus is imbued with a strong spirit of comradeship, which is based on the important principles of justice and fairness, as we can see from the following example:

1.4.4 (...) he did not challenge his mates to those [that is, contests] in which he knew he was superior, but he proposed precisely those exercises in which he knew he was not their equal, saying that he would do better than they; (...) and when he was beaten he laughed at himself most heartily. [comments in squared brackets added by the author]

Obviously, it would be wonderful if more leaders nowadays, instead of being enamored with themselves and trying to look good all the time at all costs, were able to laugh about themselves from time to time!

Importantly, Cyrus, driven by a strong spirit of *isonomía*, disliked unjustified privileges accorded to him. Xenophon reports:

1.4.14 ... And as he [that is, Astyages, the Median king] was present himself, he gave the royal command that no one should throw a spear before Cyrus had his fill of hunting. But Cyrus would not permit him to interfere, but said: “If you wish me to enjoy the hunt, grandfather, let all my comrades give chase and strive to outdo one another, and each do his very best.” [comments in square brackets added by the author]

Disposability, Self-Sacrifice and Willingness to Serve with Personal Care: As a close corollary of generosity, Cyrus is imbued with a strong spirit of self-surrender, constantly making himself available to help others. His willingness to serve is shown in the following example:

1.3.12 Such amusement he furnished them [that is, his grandfather and the royal entourage] at dinner; and during the day, if he saw that his grandfather or his uncle needed anything, it was difficult for anyone else to get ahead of him in supplying the need; for Cyrus was most happy to do them any service that he could. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

Here is a distinctive example of Cyrus’s heart-winning self-forgetfulness and personal care, showcasing his positive attitude toward his Median grandfather Astyages in particular:

1.4.2 And Astyages could not refuse any favor that Cyrus asked of him. And this was natural; for, when his grandfather fell sick, Cyrus never left him nor ceased

to weep but plainly showed to all that he greatly feared that his grandfather might die. For even at night, if Astyages wanted anything, Cyrus was the first to discover it and with greater alacrity than anyone else he would jump up to perform whatever service he thought would give him pleasure, so that he won Astyages's heart completely.

Spirit of Moderation and Self-Control: Cyrus has a strong inner sense of self-restraint and self-discipline, partly driven by his ability to discern the true nature of things. This trait manifested itself when he was still quite young and challenged an aspect of the luxurious lifestyle pursued by his grandfather, the Median king. Xenophon relates:

1.3.4 “No, grandfather,” Cyrus replied to this; “but the road to satiety is much more simple and direct in our country than with you; for bread and meat take us there; but you, though you make for the same goal as we, go wandering through many a maze, up and down, and only arrive at last at the point that we long since have reached.”

This episode clearly demonstrates Cyrus's great power of observation, as well as his concomitant ability to move beyond a dazzling and seducing facade and thus get to the bottom line.

In a dialogue with his father centering on leadership, Cyrus stresses the particular importance for rulers to be exemplars in terms of what I call “radiant self-discipline”. This particular posture is proactive in its search for self-mortifying opportunities (including—to paraphrase Xenophon's thought—the associated willingness to “go the extra mile”),

with the ultimate objective of benefitting other human beings:

1.6.8 “(...) I observe that the Medes consider it necessary for the one who governs them to surpass the governed in greater sumptuousness of fare, in the possession of more money in his palace, in longer hours of sleep, and in a more luxurious manner of life, in every respect, than the governed. But I think,” he added, “that the ruler ought to surpass those under his rule not in self-indulgence, but in taking forethought and willingly undergoing toil.”

The ideal of deeply anchored self-restraint differs sharply from the habit of many leaders today who tend to shout out impulsively whatever is on their mind without prior deep reflection about the consequences. Rather regrettably, such erratic behavior can increasingly be detected in written communication, too (including in the social media). To counteract such undesirable behavior, organizations should think about measures that strengthen self-discipline, such as “corporate fasting days”.

Need for Power and Achievement Coupled with Courage, Self-Confidence and Optimism: According to Xenophon, the ideal monarch, as epitomized by Cyrus, needs to possess a genuine willingness to lead and to accomplish great things. Coupled with strong courage and self-confidence, these traits result in an optimistic world view, such as a unshakable belief in ultimate success. Willingness to lead implies taking initiatives—true leaders do not wait to be called! Cyrus seems to have often been on the

lookout for opportunities to direct others and distinguish himself. For example, the young Cyrus once asked his Median grandfather Astyages to take over command over his cupbearer Sacas:

1.3.11 “I beg of you, grandfather, allow me for just three days to rule over him.”

Here is another example of Cyrus’s resolution and determination to lead:

1.4.18 (...) When Cyrus saw the rest marching out with all speed, he put on his armor then for the first time and started out, too; this was an opportunity that he had thought would never come—so eager was he to don his arms (...) And though Astyages wondered at whose order he had come, he nevertheless told the lad to come and stay by his side.

Power of Integration: Cyrus also possessed the rather rare ability (and willingness) of holding opposite ideas simultaneously in his head, which I call “et-et-thinking” (the Latin “et...et...” means “both...and...”). He was also capable of using this distinctive cognitive operation to give reconciliatory answers to dichotomous questions, as we can see from the following example:

1.3.2 (...) And when his mother asked him which he thought more handsome, his father or his grandfather, Cyrus answered at once: “Of the Persians, mother, my father is much the handsomest; but of the Medes, as far as I have seen them either on the streets or at court, my grandfather here is the handsomest by far.”

Ambidexterity with Respect to the Environment: As a corollary of the integrative mindset, Cyrus learnt from his father to adopt a differential perspective with regards to his

“ecosystem”. Concerning the army at large, Cyrus’ father emphasizes:

1.6.17 (...) For if an army is to do its duty, it is absolutely necessary that it never cease to contrive both evil for the enemy and good for itself.

We later read:

1.6.27 “[Cyrus:] But, father, what would be the best way to gain an advantage over the enemy?” “By Zeus,” said he, “this is no easy or simple question that you ask now, my son; but, let me tell you, the man who proposes to do that must be designing and cunning, wily and deceitful, a thief and a robber, overreaching the enemy at every point.” “O Heracles, father,” said Cyrus with a laugh, “what a man you say I must become!” “Such, my son,” he said, “that you would be at the same time the most righteous and law-abiding man in the world.” [comment in square brackets added by the author]

These passages remind us of Matthew 10:16:

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (King James Bible)

Furthermore, we find another interesting statement in the Gospels (Luke 16:8):

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” (King James Bible)

This Bible passage certainly should not be understood as an encomium of wickedness (according to Aristotle (Rhetoric, 1.9.33), an encomium (*enkōmion ἐγκώμιον*) pertains to deeds (*érgea ἔργα*), that is, the results achieved

through an action, whereas praise (*épainos* ἔπαινος) refers to actions in operation (*práxeis* πράξεις). Rather, this quotation underlines the importance of being prudent (in ancient Greek: *phrónimos* φρόνιμος; in Latin: *prūdēns*) and clever—albeit, by way of interpretation, in the pursuit of the right, eternal goals!

Moreover, Cambyses I. admonishes Cyrus to be creative in devising strategies against the enemy:

1.6.38 “However, my son,” he continued, “since you are desirous of learning all these matters, you must not only utilize what you may learn from others, but you must yourself also be an inventor of stratagems against the enemy, just as musicians render not only those compositions which they have learned but try to compose others also that are new. Now if in music that which is new and fresh wins applause, new stratagems in warfare also win far greater applause, for such can deceive the enemy even more successfully.”

It is important to note that, according to the *Cyropaedia*, the lessons in the above

mentioned ambidexterity should be taught only at a later stage of leadership development, when the virtues are already firmly anchored in individuals, and there is no risk of confusion anymore. Besides, the source of everything—including hostile action against enemies—should always be a heart of justice.

One needs to ask oneself why the “serpent trait”, which undoubtedly is an important habit for survival and success in the postmodern “sawtooth wave” environment (Schlevogt, 2011) is almost never taught in today’s leadership classes. Among other things, such a dangerous arena is characterized by mind-boggling complexity and sudden reversals of fortunes, resulting in a development trajectory that looks like the horizontally placed blade of a saw. In contrast to the sound and robust advice given in the *Cyropaedia*, many leadership programs nowadays are one-sided. For example, blindly (and sometimes unwittingly) following a liberal agenda, a significant number of educational designers and teachers advocates giving more power to women in a destructive zero-sum game move¹⁷ and focuses only on

¹⁷ It is of paramount importance for leaders in all types of organizations to truly understand this pernicious trend in its entire complexity. They need to discern its far-reaching, dynamic and systemic ramifications, as well as devise and implement powerful counteracting measures instead of just focusing exclusively on short-term “business as usual” without regard for disruptive strategic developments within the organization and beyond its boundaries. This also implies that businessmen, too, increasingly have to gain a greater awareness of pivotal political, social and cultural trends, such as forceful attempts to redefine traditional roles. Undoubtedly, they need to learn in certain cases to think and act as erudite, articulate and smart “corporate politicians” and “corporate social engineers”, shaping the environment instead of just silently accepting the demands for destructive revolutionary changes imposed on them, since these transformations are not only detrimental to society at large, but also endanger their own organizational survival and success.

In this context, it is important to note that the ill-fated racial feminist agenda, which is now already pervading many corporations in different countries, comes at the expense of (a) children, who lack adequate parental care and miss their mother, (b) men, who suffer from discrimination, (c) organizations, where harmony gets lost due to venomous power struggles between highly politicized groups, and (d) society at large, which is undermined by an increasing number of broken families and declining fertility rates. At the same time, ill-advised politicians try to compensate for the shortfall of children by forcefully promoting immigration, which at times is allowed to happen even without any hindrances and illegally. They thus subvert collective trust and endanger national identity, cohesiveness, unity and stability, as well as ultimately—through the accumulation—of latent aggression and resulting large-scale discontent, which can be easily channeled into foreign military adventures—threaten global peace.

effeminate soft skills. One aim usually is to convert employees into edgeless team workers and robot-like “company men”. At the same time, the educational ideologues and practitioners downplay crucial masculine values and connote them negatively. This is despite the fact that noble and heroic men, in many respects similar to those in the great ancient epics, are urgently needed in today’s confused, anti-authoritarian and, in many quarters, decadent societies and failing organizations in the Western world!

Love of Beauty and Importance of Decorum: Xenophon also highlights the importance of aesthetic aspects, telling us:

1.3.3 (...) And as Cyrus was a boy fond of beautiful things and eager for distinction, he was pleased with his dress and greatly delighted at learning to ride (...)

In other places (see for example, 1.2.16), Xenophon highlights the importance of behaving with decorum.

As a lesson, leaders nowadays should think about how to put beauty (which, according to Plato, due to its psychagogic quality, can lead human beings to the ultimate good) and the sublime (which tends to gratify the desires of the spirit) back on the map. For example, helmsmen may host aesthetically appealing and edifying ceremonies and design elegant workspaces and uniforms for their employees, which will make them feel special and endow them with great dignity.

Behavior

The deeply engrained traits give rise to a distinct set of concrete, observable actions or activities (*enérgeia* ἐνέργεια) at different levels of granularity. Theoretically, as an example of deductive category-development,

the following activities and cognitive processes can be distinguished:

- Meta-leadership action: Meta-leading means taking systemic action. This includes making sense of the world and shaping the ecosystem, for example.
- Macro-leadership action: This is an activity at the institutional level.
- Meso-leadership action: This refers to an action taken at the group-level.
- Micro-leadership action: This is an activity in a one-on-one (“dyadic”) leadership situation. In this context, it is interesting to note that Aristotle stated the following (albeit with immediate reference to the relation between male and female): Man is by nature a creature disposed to live in pairs [(sc. *zôon*) *syndyastikón* (sc. ζῷον) συνδυαστικόν] even more than he is a political creature [(sc. *zôon*) *politikón* (sc. ζῷον) πολιτικόν]” (Nicomachean Ethics 1162a17; comments in square brackets added by author). This insight alone, if taken to heart and acted upon, probably could have avoided the emergence of many totalitarian regimes and the ensuing large-scale wars.

Besides, I propose an idea transfer from modern science and technology. In a slight variation of the definition given in the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*, I define nanotechnology as the science of manipulating matter on an atomic, molecular, and supramolecular scale. In analogy, I suggest introducing the concept of what I call “nano-leadership”, which involves leading *oneself* at different levels of granularity, including:

- Supra-molecular leadership action (“hand”): This is concrete, manifest action of self-leadership.

- Molecular leadership action (“head 1”: long-term memory): These are *patterns* of rational thoughts (such as a set of principles).
- Atomic leadership action (“head 2”: short-term memory). At an even more granular level, these are single rational thoughts (such as single principle).
- Subatomic leadership action (“soul”/“heart”): This refers to one *spiritual impulse*, such as a one-sentence prayer.

In the subsequent deduction-driven coding process, the researcher must try to find instances in the *Cyropaedia* that fit into the categories. The activities and cognitive processes constitute snippets down to the nano-level that can be used without delay, even in isolation. They remind us of finely-cut Chinese food, which can be eaten immediately without prior additional cutting. The key leverage point is located at the lowest level in the above hierarchy, that is, spiritual impulses in the “interior castle” of the soul, which trigger a thought or patterns of thoughts. It should be mentioned in this context, that through deeply engrained habits, certain thoughts often occur automatically.

Once again, the following list of actions only includes a couple of examples and thus is not exhaustive. I will mainly focus on the most important aspect, that is, gratitude-imbued behavior.

Showing Gratitude and Respect: In the specific section in which Xenophon describes the education of boys in Persia during the time of Cyrus, he explains that the guardians who supervise them are regularly deciding court cases brought by the boys, who might become future leaders. In this context, he indirectly highlights the key importance of showing

gratitude by stressing the ignominy of ingratitude (*acharistía* ἀχαριστία) and the tremendous value of respect, which is the positive antidote to impudence (*anaischyntía* ἀναισχυντία), in the following manner:

1.2.7 “And they bring one another to trial also charged with an offence for which people hate one another most but go to law least, namely, that of ingratitude; and if they know that any one is able to return a favor and fails to do so, they punish him also severely. For they think that the ungrateful are likely to be most neglectful of their duty toward their gods, their parents, their country, and their friends; for it seems that shamelessness [*anaischyntía* ἀναισχυντία; other translation: impudence] goes hand in hand with ingratitude; and it is that, we know, which leads the way to every moral wrong [*aischrón* αἰσχρόν].” [comments in square brackets added by author]

This is a truly fascinating concise passage, where “showing gratitude” can be coded as an example of the important “micro-leading” category. As a sort of “compact communication” (Luhmann, 2000, p. 35) in *prose*, this text is—like a dense and complex chorus passage in Attic tragedy—pregnant with potential meaning, inviting us, in an act of “hermeneutic midwifery”, to ask intriguing questions and embark on an exciting journey of discovery.

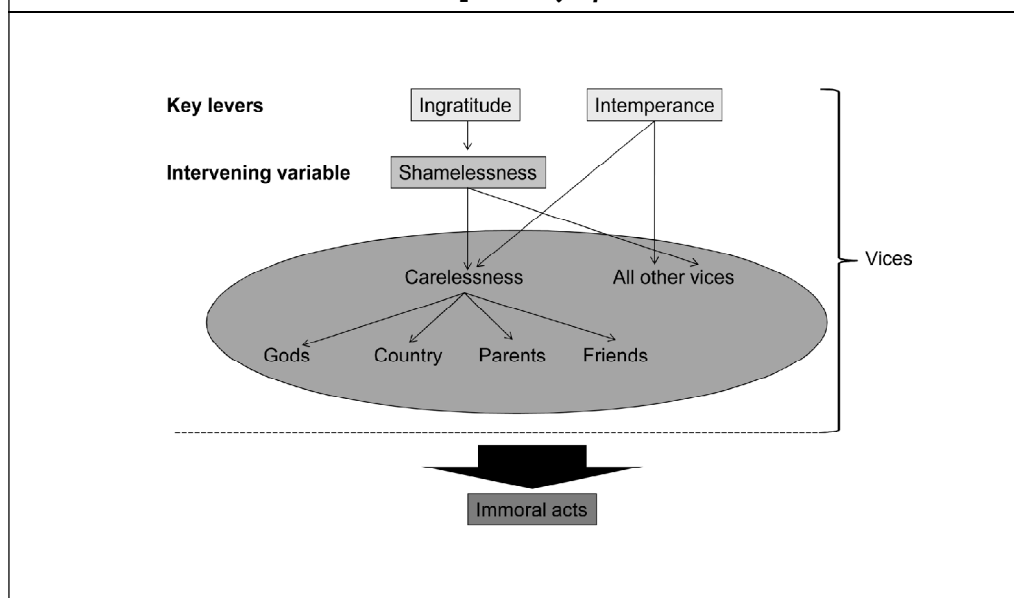
Many people would still today agree that gratitude matters as a sign of courtesy. After all, parents around the world are often teaching their children (in their own language, of course): “Say ‘please’ and ‘thank you’”. These formulas are the oil that keeps the social engine running.

Not everybody, though, is likely to discern the less obvious, deeper meaning of gratitude—which is an important act of reciprocity—and its dynamic effects in Xenophon’s account. Even fewer, I assume, would link gratitude to leadership and accord it the *top* priority in this field. Here is one possible way of solving the riddle (see Figure 5): Xenophon seems to regard the virtue of gratitude, that is, returning a favor when a person is in a position to do so, as a crucial component in a complex dynamic social system. More specifically, gratitude is one key lever to pull to avoid countless other vices (that is, bad habits making people prone to commit wrong deeds) and—to bring Xenophon’s idea to the logical conclusion—to prevent the resulting immoral acts themselves. Those spring from ingratitude through the intervening variable of shamelessness or impudence (*anaischyntia* ἀναισχυντία), which here is understood to constitute rude and disrespectful behavior,

particularly toward more senior people (both in terms of age and position).

As regards one possible granular explanation of the transmission process, one could argue that gratitude is an act of justice, since the grateful person returns to others what is their due, thus balancing the “social capital account” (social capital is the value embedded in human relations, such as trust). In contrast, ungrateful people accumulate a “social capital deficit” with dire results. More specifically, according to Xenophon, ingratitude is the very offense that is most disliked by fellow members of society, who—rather paradoxically—albeit are least likely to seek legal satisfaction for the wrong done to them. This implies that ingratitude, left unaddressed, may continue to exert an invisible, corrosive effect on the social fabric. It is likely to deplete social capital in a society without people discerning the true latent causes for this degradation and thus preventing

Figure 5: Ingratitude and Intemperance as Root Causes of All Vices and Immoral Acts in Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*



them from making targeted valuable social investments.

A person who fails to return favors even in minor cases may, in the next logical step of a process characterized by increasing inner corruption, develop a habitual disposition to act shamelessly and impudently in a wide array of situations and commit myriads of immoral acts, possibly disregarding social sanctions in a cold-blooded fashion. This could well result in pervasive carelessness (*améleia* ἀμέλεια), that is, a combination of indifference and neglect, with respect to one's duties. With the restraining effect of shame neutralized, this driver, according to Xenophon, as well as intemperance, engenders *all* other vices (*aischrá* αἰσχρά). The resulting disgraceful acts, which cause shame and dishonor, in turn, are bound to exert a negative influence on closely related persons, and, through cascading effects, also on more distant groups and society at large. In this context, it is noteworthy that Xenophon includes a broad array of affected groups (that is, gods, country, parents and friends), which shows the broad indirect impact of ingratitude and the widespread direct impact of shamelessness. Due to the multiplying power of leaders, who, among other things, act as positive or negative role models, morally undesirable behavior displayed by them proves particularly detrimental for society. In conclusion, given a profound and sophisticated understanding of these social and moral dynamics, the Persians, according to Xenophon's account, elevated ingratitude from its usual relative low position in the hierarchy of moral values, where it often falls under the category of mere bad manners with mild social sanctions, to a grave offense that incurs heavy punishment.

Admittedly, the systemic embeddedness of gratitude and concomitant leverage in the context of leadership is truly startling! In this context, Xenophon's totality assumption, that is, the view that gratitude indirectly (through the intervening variable of disrespectful shamelessness) constitutes the source of *every* moral ill, is particularly noteworthy. I recommend that leaders in different organizations even if they do not yet concur with this prominent position accorded to gratitude and respect, try to focus on these twin aspects and systematically analyze the empirical results of their concomitant interventions at the individual, group, organizational and ecosystem level. This might then prompt them to reevaluate their initial skeptical reaction. For example, as a helmsman, you might start to act as a positive, inspiring role model and show your gratitude on a daily basis to a wide variety of stakeholders. Then you can see with your own eyes whether this behavioral change generated disproportionate positive, even game-changing results. Besides, in terms of organizational policies and practices, you might start to distribute rewards for acts of gratitude (for example, during special public ceremonies) and penalize ingratitude (both can be done through informal, social mechanisms too).

Furthermore, one should bear in mind the fact that in the Persian system, training in gratitude (and concomitantly, respect) starts during childhood. This contrasts sharply with the fact that at least in many Western countries, a large number of leaders of public opinion has systematically undermined authority and respect for seniority, starting in the family by subverting the role of the father from early childhood onwards, for example, and continuing their pernicious influence in

kindergarten, schools and other institutions that have an impact on a person during his entire lifetime. As one result, showing sincere gratitude to one's school teacher, for example, is often considered to be an act of despicable flattery. This is despite the fact that the relationship with educators (in like fashion as the bond with parents, priests and doctors, for example) has a somewhat sacrosanct dimension and should be continuously cultivated. Clearly, it is high time to eradicate the societal problems at the root level!

Practice Continuously Containing Your Desires: As we have seen, intemperance is another source of immoral action. For example, if somebody cannot exert self-control and indulges in overeating and smoking or lacks any inhibition that would prevent him from committing adultery, there is no reason to trust him in another context, such as inside an organization. It is therefore important to constantly strengthen one's own power of self-control (which is a component of nano-leadership) and increase the power of others to restrain themselves (which forms part mainly of micro- and meso-leadership, unless institutional or systemic interventions are chosen). One possibility is to adopt or propagate small acts of self-mortification, such as denying oneself a sweet or refraining from reacting negatively to a colleague and instead praying for him (after which it becomes virtually impossible still to be angry with him). It helps to remind yourself that whenever you commit bad acts toward others, you actually punish yourself, since you then have (a) failed to be what you ought to be, (b) lost eternal rewards, and (c) increased the likelihood of suffering damages in this world (possibly including negative retaliatory actions from an injured party), which are often larger than the havoc you initially created!

Act as a Benefactor to Other Persons: Closely related to this point is another behavior-focused recommendation. According to Xenophon, the sure road to win affection is to do other people good, which at times could simply mean to show sympathy to them and refrain from harming them. More specifically, he relates the following exchange between Cyrus and his father:

1.6.24 [Cyrus:] "Yes; but as to the love of one's subjects—and this, it seems to me at least, is one of the most important questions—the same course that you would take if you wished to gain the affection of your friends leads also to that; that is, I think, you must show yourself to be their benefactor." "Yes, my son," said he [that is, Cyrus's father] "it is a difficult matter, however, always to be in a position to do good to whom you will; but to show that you rejoice with them if any good befall them, that you sympathize with them if any ill betide, that you are eager to help them in times of distress, that you are anxious that they be not crossed in any way, and that you try to prevent their being crossed; it is in these respects somehow that you ought rather to go hand in hand with them. [comments in square brackets added by the author]"

Besides, Xenophon reports:

1.4.15 Thus, Cyrus passed most of his time, contriving some pleasure and good for all, but responsible for nothing unpleasant to anyone.

I suggest that when you go to work next time, you commit yourself to do at least three good things to various stakeholders, especially

those whom you tend to dislike particularly, and to watch carefully what happens. I am sure that you will be positively surprised!

Conform Logical and Verbal Virtuosity to the Inner Man: Xenophon tells us about the young Cyrus:

1.4.3 He was, perhaps, too talkative, partly on account of his education, because he had always been required by his teacher to render an account of what he was doing and to obtain an account from others whenever he was judge; and partly also because of his natural curiosity, he was habitually putting many questions to those about him why things were thus and so; and because of his alertness of mind he readily answered questions that others put to him; so that from all these causes his talkativeness grew upon him. But it was not unpleasant; for just as in the body, in the case of those who have attained their growth although they are still young, there yet appears that freshness which betrays their lack of years, so also in Cyrus's case his talkativeness [*polylogia* = πολυλογία] disclosed not impertinence but naïveté and an affectionate disposition, so that one would be better pleased to hear still more from his lips than to sit by and have him keep silent. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

First, as a philological note, the Greek noun *polylogia* (πολυλογία), which has been rendered above with the rather pejorative “talkativeness”, in its basic ethymologically derived meaning simply describes the state or quality of talking a lot.¹⁸ Oftentimes, of course, the context endows it with a negative connotation. Besides, here the *polylogia* is described as a trait of the *young* Cyrus. As he grew older, he became more measured in his speech, but managed to keep his verbal virtuosity and continued to achieve concomitantly high impact. This is evidenced, for example, by his extremely impressive maiden speech to his soldiers as army commander (see *Cyropaedia*, 1.5.7 - 1.5.14). After recounting this address, Xenophon simply makes the following laconic remark, implicitly underlining the effectiveness of Cyrus' speech:

1.5.14 They [that is, the soldiers], for their part, proceeded to do as he had said. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

The power of logical reasoning and words, in particular, cannot be overestimated. To start with, according to the Christian faith, the world has been created by the word of God, and his only begotten son, Jesus Christ, is the *lógos* λόγος.¹⁹ The Greek sophists emphasized the importance of word power, often visiting different city-states (*póleis* πόλεις) to teach their inhabitants rhetorical skills in particular.

¹⁸ See for example, Plato, *Laws*, 641e (Plato 1903):

“τὴν πόλιν ἅπαντες ἡμῶν Ἕλληνες ὑπολαμβάνουσιν ὡς φιλόλογός τε ἐστὶ καὶ πολύλογος, Λακεδαιμόνα δὲ καὶ Κρήτην, τὴν μὲν βραχύλογον, τὴν δὲ πολύνοιον μᾶλλον ἢ πολυλογίαν ἀσκοῦσαν”.

“Our city, Athens, is, in the general opinion of the Greeks, both fond of talk [*philólogos* φιλόλογος] and full of talk [*polylogos* πολύλογος], but Lacedaemon is scant of talk, while Crete is more witty than wordy [accusative singular of *polylogia* πολυλογία]. [comments in square brackets added by the author]

¹⁹ The noun *lógos* λόγος is extremely difficult to translate—the respective entry in the standard *Greek-English Lexicon* (Liddell, 1996, pp. 1057-1059) occupies six columns on three pages. One of the basic meanings of *lógos* is “word” (additional meanings include, among other things, “thought” and “reason”). Applied to Christ, a combination of both senses, that is, “word” and “thought”, is likely.

Such competencies were of key importance for gaining influence, for example, in people's assemblies and courts of justice. Socrates, especially as portrayed by Plato, was said to have strongly opposed the sophists and was well-known, among other things, for the value he placed on dissecting the meanings of words. Besides, Aristotle wrote important treatises on rhetoric and related subjects. Of course, there was also a great interest in oratory in Republican Rome and subsequently in Imperial Rome, too. In medieval times, Dante Alighieri, for example, in his *"De vulgari eloquentia"* (On Eloquence in the Vernacular), gave impressive testimony to the special importance of language. In addition, during the Renaissance era, humanists engaged in elaborate philological studies, and until now, rhetorical techniques still remain extremely important in politics, jurisprudence, advertising and other realms.

Furthermore, in a famous grammar book of ancient Greek we read:

"Language is the expression of thoughts. A thought comes into existence in our soul by terms being related in part to each other, in part to the speaker, and by being connected together into one unit" (Kühner, 1898, p. 1).²⁰

In fact, even though Kühner's statement is not uncontroversial in the modern scientific community, it seems to be true at least that a

person's linguistic skills have a profound influence on the way he thinks.²¹ For example, a leader who possesses a vocabulary of hundred different words to describe human emotions is likely to be able to think in a more differentiated way about the reasons for his action and the behavior of others than someone who suffers from "emotional analphabetism". This disconcerting phenomenon can be increasingly noticed especially among members of the younger generation, some of which are experiencing mental decline, because they use certain electronic tools of communication and entertainment in an abusive fashion. This peculiar form of analphabetism describes an extremely small pool of words accessible to describe feelings.

Importantly, as an operationalization of the authenticity trait discussed earlier, words have to be in conformance with the innermost thoughts of man. It is interesting to note that the pivotal role of such an alignment has already been stressed in Homer's *Iliad*, where Achilles declares:

Iliad, 9.312-314:

"For hateful in my eyes, even as the gates of Hades, is that man that hideth one thing in his mind and sayeth another. Nay, I will speak what seemeth to me to be best."²²

²⁰ In German: "Die Sprache ist der Ausdruck der Gedanken. Ein Gedanke entsteht in unserer Seele dadurch, daß Begriffe teils aufeinander, teils auf den Redenden bezogen und zu einer Einheit verbunden werden."

²¹ In a speech held in 1813, the German theologian and philosopher Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher (1768-1834) presented some reflections about the inner nexus between thought and expression, musing about how those would have varied if a man had first been used to think and express himself in a different language (see Schleiermacher (2002 [first printed 1816])). Furthermore, in P B Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* we read: "He [that is, Prometheus] gave man speech, and speech created thought, which is the measure of the universe." [comments in square brackets added by the author]

²² In ancient Greek:

"ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Αἴδαο πύλῃσιν
ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπῃ.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω ὥς μοι δοκεῖ εἶναι ἄριστα"

In view of the power of logical reasoning and the enormous leverage of verbal and non-verbal expression, it is high time that leadership development programs for a wide range of different age groups start to offer high-impact courses on “leadership logic” and “leadership rhetoric” instead of just focusing on “hard” subjects. Such logical and rhetorical training could start in an elementary and playful form at an early development stage after a child has learnt to think and express itself in a meaningful way. Alas, many schools nowadays tend to neglect logic and oratory and in many cases place too much emphasis on the natural sciences. Undoubtedly, there is still huge potential to significantly transform the world for the better!

Constantly Seek for Hidden Potential and Strive for Personal Growth Challenges in an Agonal and Dialectical Manner: As an outflow of an achievement-driven mindset and agonal spirit, it is crucial for leaders to constantly stretch themselves, which includes seeking difficult public contests, too. Those provide them with an opportunity for competitive benchmarking and thus point toward avenues of improvement. As a consequence, movers and shakers can become the “best among the good”. Xenophon reports:

1.3.15 When Astyages had said this, his mother asked Cyrus whether he wished to stay or go. And he did not hesitate but said at once that he wished to stay. And when he was asked again by his mother why he wished to stay, he is said to have answered: “Because at home, mother, I am and have the reputation of being the best of those of my years both in throwing the spear and in shooting with the bow; but here

I know that I am inferior to my fellows in horsemanship. And let me tell you, mother,” said he, “this vexes me exceedingly. But if you leave me here and I learn to ride, I think you will find, when I come back to Persia, that I shall easily surpass the boys over there who are good at exercises on foot, and when I come again to Media, I shall try to be a help to my grandfather by being the best of good horsemen.”

As an important part of the lifelong improvement journey, both aspiring leaders and those who have already been entrusted with significant responsibilities should hold wide-ranging and profound dialogues with competent mentors about a variety of both major and minor leadership issues and the underlying meta-principles and values. In other words, mentoring should not be restricted to early career stages only, but continue through later development periods, too. While it is possible to have several mentors, a single particularly trust-imbued mentoring relationship should be cultivated with one particular guide. The mentors in most cases should be acting or retired top executives and spiritual leaders from a wide variety of different backgrounds, who are more experienced and, ideally, also older than the mentorees. In some cases, organizational members (especially executives who are higher up in the hierarchy and operate in different areas) can play a mentoring role. At the same time, to open up horizons, it is often useful to have another mentor who is not part of the organization.

The intellectually stimulating conversations between Cyrus and his father, to which I have referred on various occasions

in this paper, serve as great examples of the above-mentioned dialogues.

This type of intellectual exchange can be compared to a conversation between a conductor and a solo violinist on how to leverage the full potential of a music piece. Ideally, such an encounter also resembles the truly enlightening dialogues between Socrates and his friends. This practice of intellectually stimulating “dialectical leadership” contrasts sharply with the situation in many modern business schools, for example, where oftentimes discussions circle only around narrow technical details instead of meta-leadership principles and values. Besides, managers in modern organizations rarely engage in such conversations and collective reflections about such truly pivotal matters.

Do Not Care About Taking Credit and Attempt to Praise Others Often: To combat selfishness and conceit, as well as to motivate others, it is extremely important not to bother about getting recognized all the time and instead to extend praise to others frequently. In this context, it is important to note that the seeds and actual manifestations of both envy and jealousy must be combated with utter resolve. Xenophon tells us:

1.4.15 And he [that is, Astyages] was pleased to see that Cyrus was unable to keep silence for delight, but, like a well-bred hound, gave tongue whenever he came near an animal and urged on each of his companions by name. And the king was delighted to see him laugh at one and praise another without the least bit of jealousy. At length, then, Astyages went home with

a large amount of game (...) [comments in square brackets added by the author]

Inspiring Others by Acting as a Psychagogic

Teacher: Helmsmen must serve as psychagogic teachers, not simply as egalitarian coaches. Apart from employing various methods of direct instruction, these soul leaders, among other things, need to constantly seek opportunities for serving as exemplars of those behavioral patterns that they want to impart to their followers. Here is an example of how Cyrus’s manifest battle joy infected others:

1.4.22 But none the more did Cyrus give over, but in his battle-joy he called to his uncle and continued the pursuit; and pressing on he put the enemy to headlong flight, and Cyaxares did not fail to follow, partly perhaps not to be shamed before his father; and the rest likewise followed, for under such circumstances they were more eager for the pursuit, even those who were not so very brave in the face of the enemy.

Outcomes

Among other things, the following results flow from the various activities undertaken:

Combined Fear and Attraction: The immediate result of Cyrus’s leadership is a combination of fear *and* attraction that in the extreme case can even morph into love. This hybrid leadership outcome at first may surprise many observers. This applies especially to those who lack the “et-et” (Latin for: “both ... and”)-mindset introduced earlier (characterized by simultaneously holding opposite ideas in the mind). This is because one-dimensional

thinkers in particular are likely to regard the two categories of fear and attraction as being mutually exclusive. Fear here is a corollary of respect, that is, the attitude displayed by a pious son toward his father (including the relationship between a child of God and his heavenly Father) rather than the terror experienced by a subject when he faces an irrational and brutal tyrant. This distinctive notion of fear is neglected in many one-sided leadership development programs and modern organizations. The act of triggering true admiration-driven love toward leaders is an equally overlooked practice in both education and organizational life. Clearly, it is high time, for example, to put a “fear-love-index” on the leader’s scorecard and learn to take remedial action, if necessary, for instance, by managing social and emotional distance in a contingent fashion.

Willing Obedience: As an outflow of fear and attraction, followers are likely to obey the leader with full consent and without personal supervision. Xenophon tells us (see also 1.1.3, which I have cited earlier):

1.1.5 (...) He [that is, Cyrus] was able to cover so vast a region with the fear which he inspired, that he struck all men with terror and no one tried to withstand him; and he was able to awaken in all so lively a desire to please him, that they always wished to be guided by his will. [comments in square bracket added by the author]

Unity, Cohesion and Harmony: If individuals, social substrata and society at large willingly obey a leader, all members are glued together into one highly impactful unit that is characterized by excellent, concord-driven

human relations. It is remarkable that Cyrus (as always, according to Xenophon’s account) was able to achieve this outcome in a multinational and multicultural context, marked by a high degree of diversity, complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty. It was arguably extremely difficult to attain this result, since leaders back then, among other things, lacked the enabling technologies that are available today. This positive outcome contrasts markedly with the divisions in many societies today (such as in the United States of America), where—to use an apt expression used by a thinker elsewhere—“mutual dislike has been stepped up to a feeling of community”! Clearly, postmodern leaders, too, should take to heart this lesson and actually start to *reduce* divisive and centrifugal diversity, which is likely to result in serious damage in all social strata caused by strife between various factions, instead of promoting it blindly and relentlessly.

Welfare at All Levels and Self-Realization:

The final outcome of the ideal Persian system is the completion of the ruler’s mission to generate individual and collective welfare, as well as to actualize potential at all levels. During another truly enlightening and uplifting conversation about leadership issues, Cambyses I. makes the following remarks to his son Cyrus:

1.6.7 But, my son, have you forgotten the discussion you and I once had—that it was a great task and one worthy of a man, to do the best he could not only to prove himself a truly good and noble man but also to provide a good living both for himself and his household? And while this was a great task, still, to understand how to govern

other people so that they might have all the necessities of life in abundance and might all *become what they ought to be*, this seemed to us worthy of all admiration.” [italics added by the author for the purpose of emphasis]

Here is an example of the *personal* improvement that Cyrus achieved due to his participation in challenging contests:

1.4.5 And as he did not shirk being beaten and take refuge in refusing to do that in which he was beaten, but persevered in attempting to do better next time, he speedily became the equal of his fellows in horsemanship and soon on account of his love for the sport he surpassed them (...).

Conclusion

This programmatic study made three key contributions in terms of (1) discipline creation, (2) innovative cross-disciplinary method application and (3) novel and actionable leadership content.

First, acting as a pioneer, I invented the brand-new discipline of “Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge” (ALTK), consisting of the two subdisciplines of (a) “Archaeology of Leadership Thought” (ALT) and (b) the “Archaeology of Leadership Knowledge” (ALK). These new branches of knowledge aim at uncovering long-hidden treasures that can help postmodern leaders to solve truly challenging problems at different level of aggregation (including highly complex systemic challenges) in an “innovative” (or restorative!) fashion. Put pointedly, given the current status of knowledge, we may often draw more important leadership lessons from

non-technical disciplines focusing on the past, such as historical theology, ancient philosophy, classical philology and ancient history—where many intellectual gold nuggets lay in wait to be unearthed through a focused approach that was previously lacking—than from contemporary specialized and highly technical disciplines such as economics and management science.

Second, I proposed a distinctive methodological approach for this pioneering new discipline and its attending subdisciplines, focusing, among other things, on the application of Qualitative Content Analysis to the field of classical philology.

Third, in terms of leadership content, a multifaceted holistic leadership model has been created from the *Cyropaedia*, which includes many leverage points for highly effective leadership interventions, including new transformational concepts, such as “proleptic leadership”, “cordial leadership”, “nano-leadership” and “radiant self-discipline”.

This study thus increased our knowledge in the areas of management studies and classical philology, among other things, and, more generally, demonstrated the game-changing potential inherent in the “Archaeology of Leadership”.

It needs to be emphasized that not only the individual leadership concepts and recommendations given in the *Cyropaedia* are fascinating, but also the weights attached to various insights and suggestions. One example is the truly startling fact that Xenophon assigns a pivotal role to gratitude, which leaders in different walks of life can nowadays use as a key lever to achieve positive in-depth transformation on a large-scale. As with all

the other observations and recommendations, we do not have to uncritically accept Xenophon's point, but at least should allow him to stimulate our thinking. For example, the new insight might prompt us to ask new questions, in this case related to the deeper meaning of gratitude and its functions in dyadic relations, groups, institutions and social ecosystems.

There are many thoughts that independent critics and exegetes who are unfamiliar with Xenophon's works might have easily attributed to later stages of literary history. An example is the implied notion that God helps those who help themselves (even though Xenophon, as a pagan, committed the error of referring to "gods" in the plural).

To conclude, the various above-mentioned lessons in grooming helmsmen capable of leading intelligently have important implications for the entire development journey that the elite members of our society are undertaking, from early childhood to old age.

Limitations and Next Steps: In essence, this study was a "teaser", aiming at demonstrating the amazing potential of the new discipline of "Archaeology of Leadership Thought and Knowledge" and its subdisciplines by means of selected instructive and engaging examples, which need to be further elaborated in future studies.

As mentioned several times in this paper, the aim of my research was not to examine the correspondence between certain aspects of Xenophon's narrative with historical reality.

Besides, the controversial nature of the "trait approach" has been highlighted. Given that leadership is a multivariable latent

construct, some helmsmen who possess traits opposite from those recommended may still succeed, without causality being clearly established in a scientific manner.

To tackle this problem, I suggest that researchers first exploit a new and exciting rough idea (in our case, an insight taken from ancient sources) as a provocative thought trigger to develop a coherent concept in a scientifically rigorous way. Afterwards, the logical plausibility of the hypothesized effects created by this intellectual product needs to be examined theoretically. Finally, the scientists—together with practitioners—should assess its actual worth through manifold experiments and pilot studies.

This entire process of construction and verification should be implemented even if at first, the said concept appears to be counterintuitive and contravenes mainstream "politically correct" opinion. Especially, when stuck with seemingly unsolvable problems in a crisis situation (including the present age of widespread confusion, insecurity and disintegration), it is crucial to give fresh ideas at least a chance by testing them. This is because only if you try out different things instead of just pushing failed approaches more vehemently, you may finally be able to break out of the much-feared "box" of stagnation and despair.

Furthermore, Xenophon did not always distinguish clearly between positive and normative statements. Besides, neither did he prioritize all leadership components nor did he in all cases provide causal explanations for their effectiveness. Clearly, more studies need to be conducted in this area, for example, with the aim of ranking a larger set of key

success factors and explaining their direct or indirect impact on various dependent variables under different conditions. In this context, it needs to be stressed that especially in qualitative studies, it is difficult to exclude personal bias, especially in the process of interpreting the available data points.

Going ahead, it is also necessary to analyze the remaining seven books of Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and then to further ruminate holistically and systemically about the text, albeit at that time in its entirety. In general, more fine-grained philological analyses are required, including, among other things, a close line-by-line reading (with detailed word studies) of at least all important passages and a search for enlightening intratextual connections. Subsequently, other books containing past leadership thoughts from different ages, geographical areas and subject domains have to be mined in depth. In the course of this hunt for intellectual treasures, the researcher should always try to find significant intertextual connections. Finally, a global mega- and meta-theory of leadership should be developed from all the newly gained insights.

To expand the new discipline and anchor it institutionally, it certainly would be helpful to establish special "Institutes of Leadership Archaeology" at renowned universities across the globe, possibly as joint-ventures between the faculties of business and classical studies (especially classical philology). These institutes then could engage in intensive cross-border collaboration and build strategic alliances with each other to develop the above-mentioned global mega- and meta-theory of leadership, among other things.

I am confident that if scholars and practitioners, supported by institution-builders, move into the above-mentioned research direction, they will uncover many valuable leadership nuggets from the past that will enable postmodern leaders to make the world a significantly better place!☺

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Teamwork, Motivation, Complexity and the Board[†]

Colin Coulson-Thomas*

The collective effectiveness of boardroom teams cannot be assumed and has to be worked at. Boards operate in a business environment of change, uncertainty and insecurity. They are simultaneously confronted with multiple and interrelated challenges and new and unprecedented opportunities. The issues faced by many boards have also become more complex and may have a variety of short, medium and long-term impacts for many corporate activities and, in some cases, most stakeholder groups. They may require collective responses and have implications for how boards operate, governance arrangements and the motivation of directors who feel “out of their depth” and worry whether they are still relevant.

A collection or group of people will not necessarily form a team, let alone an effective one, if they are left to their own devices. Effective teamwork requires effective teambuilding (Adair, 1986). Harnessing the potential of groups can represent a significant challenge (Coulson-Thomas, 1993a). Some groups focus for so

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long upon their internal effectiveness as a team that they lose sight of their rationale, objectives and external impact. Some groups are also much more significant than others in terms of their potential and actual impacts. For many organizations, the board represents a group of people who have distinctive, formal and both individual and collective responsibilities.

Board effectiveness cannot be assumed. It has to be consciously worked at (Charkham, 1986). The chair of a board of directors has particular responsibility for ensuring that it operates effectively and adds value (Beevor, 1975; Cadbury, 1990; Parker, 1990; and Harper, 2005). Board members should also periodically review their own performance, and there are a variety of steps that can be taken to build an effective boardroom team (Coulson-Thomas, 2007). Boards and 'top teams' can play a significant role in wealth creation and are worthy of special study (Kakabadse, 1991). An organization can be a reflection of its board and top management (Hambrick and Mason, 1984).

Motivation of Directors and Boards

The motivation and contribution of directors can depend upon a recurring question of the extent to which they are pawns or actually wielding power (Lorsch and MacIver, 1989). Some directors accept or are reconciled to the former, while others are not effective in the latter. Their motivation might also be affected by the complexity of the issues they face and the extent to which they feel "out of their depth" and/or still relevant. Do some harbor internal concerns about their contribution and purpose and those of the business for which they are expected to provide strategic

direction (Handy, 2002)? Are complexity, insecurity and uncertainty undermining motivation?

Whether or not it is desirable that a particular board is effective, motivated and energetic will depend upon whether or not the strategic direction it provides and the strategy it seeks to implement are appropriate and its decisions are sound. If they are mistaken or inappropriate, an energetic and motivated board may do great harm. There may be a significant gap between rhetoric and reality in relation to the strategic direction that is provided by a corporate board (Coulson-Thomas, 1992).

Some boards are rubber stamps, while others are composed of talkers. Organizations may prosper in spite of them, rather than because of them.

In line with applicable corporate governance requirements in many jurisdictions, boards are composed of both executive and non-executive or independent directors who may have differing perspectives, time commitments and awareness of what is happening. The two groups need to understand their collective responsibilities and the distinctive contributions that each can make, and synergy and effectiveness cannot be assumed (Coulson-Thomas, 1993a and 2007). Unity and harmony should not be achieved at the expense of questioning and challenge (Coulson-Thomas, 2017d).

The Contemporary Context

The contemporary business and market environment is uncertain, and for some directors it is a source of insecurity. It provides particular challenges for directors and boards and raises questions about the collective and

shared leadership they provide (Coulson-Thomas, 2018b). Questions can also be asked about whether the compliance, governance and risk management practices of some boards are excessively risk averse and preventing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (Coulson-Thomas, 2015; 2017a and 2017c). Might a board's motivation for agreement, standards and corporate policies inhibit the exploration, diversity and variety that can be conducive of them?

The issues faced by boards are becoming more complex, enduring and interdependent and responses to them often require more than incremental change (Coulson-Thomas, 2018a). More than a short-term perspective and a limited attention span may be required of both directors and investors (Kay, 2012). This paper examines the consequences for corporate boards of the growing complexity and interdependence of the issues they face in arenas such as digital and disruptive technologies and sustainability, and what this means for independent and other directors and how they operate within a boardroom team and as a board and how they are supported.

Evolving Issues Facing Boards in Recent Years

In multiple and international events organized by India's Institute of Directors, the agendas, presentations and discussions suggest increasing awareness, recognition and articulation of a number of complex issues and related factors that ought to concern corporate boards. Business leaders portray a business and market environment of change, uncertainty and insecurity. Boards are being simultaneously confronted with multiple and interrelated challenges and, at the same time,

new and unprecedented opportunities (Coulson-Thomas, 2018a). Because these challenges and opportunities may have various implications across a company, identifying which individual, group or department should be asked to address them is becoming more difficult.

Some issues remain at board level because there is no obvious area to which, or group to whom, they can be delegated. External and other parties may need to be involved, but identifying who to approach is difficult when few people and organizations appear to have authoritative and relevant expertise or offer compelling and actionable solutions. Some business leaders are finding that their company's and peers' past experiences and current capabilities, approaches, structures and practices are not necessarily appropriate for today's requirements. They face a relevance challenge.

External and shared threats are evolving and in some cases mutating (Coulson-Thomas, 2017b). They are increasingly having an impact upon many or most, if not all, companies, whether they are immediate such as the risk of hacking and cyber fraud, longer-term, or uncertain such as an impact of climate change such as more flooding that may or may not occur sooner than expected. Other examples include the challenges and opportunities offered by disruptive and digital technologies, new business models and the sharing and circular economies (Sundarajan, 2016), where certain areas of opportunity are open to many complementary enterprises. Like certain threats, some of them may require a collective response. However, an existing group, team or network may be incomplete,

whether in terms of capabilities, resources and skills, or legitimacy, scale and reach.

Deploying Enabling Technologies

Potential business applications of many technologies and their social implications are often foreseen generations before their adoption by most companies (Toffler, 1970). Why are so many directors and boards so painfully slow to adopt approaches and models whose advantages seem self-evident? Is the speed of innovation and pace of technological change outpacing the ability of organizations to cope with them? Why do many directors display a caution that goes beyond prudence? Why are they so determined to shun first mover advantage and suffocate creativity and prevent innovation and entrepreneurship? Technology that is considered threatening and disruptive by some boards may be grasped by more enterprising ones as enabling of novel possibilities and new approaches, business models and/or services. Could technology itself be used to bridge the digital divide?

The desire of many boards to protect past investments and preserve the status quo can prevent the creative destruction that Schumpeter (1975) associated with innovation and capitalism. Are directors and boards an example of an institution that was established to address a problem, in their case that of a separation of ownership and control, but is now a barrier to progress (Drucker, 1985)? Is the fault with the institution or with current board memberships? Will managing relationships with technology partners become a higher priority of boards that seek to embrace new technologies? What role will humans play in future organizations and business models, and how will this affect the

responsibilities that boards feel towards people (Kaplan, 2015)? What policies for inclusive innovation would reduce the risks and maximize the benefits of new technologies (Juma, 2016)?

How can automation and big data be used to secure competitive advantage? An AI application can sift large quantities of data and search for links, patterns and relationships, but can excessive and unthinking reliance upon standard models and approaches, programmed responses and “big data” be an obstacle to creative exploration and prevent chance discoveries? Being curious and exploring can be more enlightening than going automatic and traveling along a standard path (Tenner, 2018).

How many boards have strategies for ensuring the appropriate application of robotics and artificial intelligence? Directors need to think through implications and take a balanced and responsible view. Might the internet of things increase the opportunity for cyber fraud and crime and resulting damages claims? Can the potential of block chain be realized, given the computing power and energy consumption its applications can require? What are the implications of block chain for the governance of the internet? Might the evolution of some technologies and further innovation address many of the problems that early applications may create? Is the variety of questions one could ask and further uncertainty bewildering, unsettling and demotivating to some directors?

Sustainability and Business Models

The environment is an arena in which many people first became aware of interconnect-edness and unintentional consequences, such as the impact of pesticides upon wildlife

(Carson, 1962). In relation to sustainability, are a new approach to business and a paradigm shift required? How are companies performing in relation to corporate citizenship and social responsibility? Are they doing enough to support the achievement of Paris Agreement (2015) commitments and UN (2015) Strategic Development Goals? Is neoliberalism to blame for exclusion and excessive environmental exploitation (Monbiot, 2017), or is the freedom, dynamism and entrepreneurship it can unleash the key to stimulating the innovations we need to reverse the harm that has been caused? Do personal and political differences frustrate consensus?

Do more companies need to develop and/or adopt new and more sustainable and inclusive business models in relation to their demands for natural capital, impacts on the environment and implications for climate change? Do many boards still view sustainability in terms of enabling current models, practices and lifestyles to continue, rather than addressing the challenges and opportunities of enabling development to occur within the limits of what the natural world can cope with and our planet can accommodate? Are their green aspirations limited and their green credentials suspect?

Dauvergne (2018) questions whether a role for “big business” in sustainability is “like trusting arsonists to be our firefighters”. He suggests that many current corporate initiatives are insufficient to address the systemic sustainability challenges we face. While using rhetoric favorable to sustainability and initiating some worthy projects, do many companies actually need to encourage continuing consumption and growth if they

are to survive? In some cases, are they doing more harm than good, and do they need to be reined in? Is the driver of business lobbying sometimes to water down laws and regulations and so reduce their restraining impact upon corporate activities rather than to enhance initiatives to better address environmental and sustainability issues (Dauvergne, 2018)? Are corporate practices that external parties criticize demotivating for board members who pursue a directorial career in order to make a positive difference and desire to be respected?

Ensuring Sustainability and Resilience

What do many boards need to do differently in relation to sustainable and inclusive development and climate change? Do they understand the drivers of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability? Are they aware of the views of institutional investors in relation to climate change (IIGCC, 2017)? Are sustainability concerns and issues integrated into business strategy and the measures used to monitor and assess performance? Do corporate sustainability strategies and policies embrace supply and value chains? Directors, boards and companies need to ensure the full and fair appraisal of an organization’s environmental impact when its supply chain and life-cycle externalities and costs are taken into account (Leake, 2018).

Resilience, and having proper back up and the ability to rapidly recover in the face of natural and man-made disasters are essential. What more do boards need to do to ensure corporate and supply chain resilience? Corporate ability to cope with significant

shocks should be challenged by directors. Do large operations dependent upon just-in-time delivery sail too close to the wind? How would our levels of reserves and electrical systems deal with a sudden weakening of the earth's magnetic field or magnetic reversal (Mitchell, 2018)? Would it mean the end of life as we know it? Are questions not being asked because individual directors fear ridicule and alienating others?

In varying ways, from mosquitos carrying diseases to rising sea and river levels, nature can bite back. Do we sometimes have an over-romantic view of nature and would we benefit from a combination of realism and a sense of obligation to conserve and preserve it (Hale, 2016)? Do we also need the imagination that entrepreneurs and innovators display in creating practical and affordable solutions to particular problems? Is this where business could make a distinctive contribution? For this to happen, do the membership and practices of boards need to be reviewed?

When addressing challenges, it is often unlikely individuals and outsiders come up with novel solutions (Kuhn, 1962; and Stevenson, 2017). Do many boards need more people who think differently and ask fresh questions? Those who are 'clever' and 'important' often attract the attention of nomination committees. Are boards doing enough to encourage practical problem solvers?

Sustainability and Technology

Could greater use be made of technology to address environmental, sustainability and climate change issues? Would greater and faster deployment of climate engineering technology slow the pace of global warming, or might this carry unknown risks and

undermine energy conservation commitments (Keith, 2013)? Where there are areas of uncertainty and concern, what steps should companies with relevant capabilities take to increase our understanding and develop relevant technologies and potential solutions to the point at which they can be responsibly deployed? Do we know enough about the origins and drivers of motivation to make this happen (Haden, 2018)?

The potential to use a range of new technologies to impact upon the environment, change aspects of the natural world and create new forms of life gives rise to both new possibilities and questions of morality (Preston, 2018). They could create ethical dilemmas for directors as well as difficult choices for boards. As a community, competent directors know that if aspirations are to result in achievement, the fine words of corporate visions and mission statements must be matched by the practicalities of determined implementation. Where issues are complex and interrelated do uncertainty and insecurity result in diffidence and a lack of confidence to make things happen?

The stakes are high, but so are the payoffs from effective action to address environmental, sustainability and climate change concerns? Caradonna (2014) suggests that we are at a potential turning point: "The practice of sustainability could give rise to the world's third major socioeconomic transformation, after the Agricultural Revolution that took place 10,000 years ago, and the Industrial Revolutions of the late 18th and 19th century". Will it be a combination of disruptive technologies and/or a Sustainability Revolution that defines our age?

Will boards be providing leadership or reacting to seismic pressures and struggling to catch up?

The Contribution of Independent Directors

The corporate governance significance of non-executive or independent directors on corporate boards was recognized in the pre-corporate governance code era, but there was less understanding and acceptance of the importance of having enough of them, for example, to enable the effective working of audit committees (Tricker, 1978). Traditionally, the focus has often been upon the roles and recruitment of non-executive directors rather than their post-appointment integration into an effective boardroom team (Lindon-Travers, 1990).

More recently, has the role of independent directors been changing, and if so, in what ways? Do they have a special role in relation to particular interests, or should understanding and reconciling the interests of all stakeholders be a concern of every board member? How effective are independent directors at protecting stakeholder interests and concerns? Do they broaden the diversity and inclusiveness of boards and committees of boards, increase their performance and strengthen internal control? Are they properly supported in their roles?

The contribution that independent directors make to better corporate governance has been questioned (Kumar and Kumar, 2013). Given human nature and those attracted to the role, are we expecting too much? Have we lost sight of basic principles underlying unitary boards and the individual and collective duties and responsibilities of all directors?

Should they all exercise independent judgment and be free of obligations and vested and special interests that might prevent them from being objective? Do governance codes and practices encourage independent directors to act as a check upon executive directors, when all directors should be working together for the future success of companies? Do some boards fragment into executive and non-executive subsets?

How can one ensure that a selection process for new members of the board results in sufficient diversity in thinking and the independent judgment needed to prevent groupthink (Janis, 1972)? Do too many nomination committees produce shortlists that reflect the preoccupations of committee members and perpetuate their particular view of the world? Do we need to widen the gene pool from which potential independent directors are sought, as suggested by the Tyson Report (2003)? If certain groups, perspectives and viewpoints continue to be under-represented, what if any action should governments, regulators and boards themselves take to address this situation?

Ensuring and Supporting Independent Judgment

Directors face a variety of dilemmas (Dunne, 2005). When discussing them and other issues in the boardroom, they are expected to exercise independent judgment. The value added by independent directors can depend upon the extent to which independent and executive directors understand each other's role and duties and their distinct perspectives and contributions, and how these differ from those of executive management (Coulson-Thomas, 1993b and 2007; Makhija, 2016; and Nath,

2016). Do some directors misunderstand what independent and executive directors can each bring to the party, notwithstanding their common and shared legal duties and responsibilities? Is the distinction between direction and management both misunderstood and not observed on some boards?

Do boards and audit committees on which independent directors can be especially helpful periodically consider the quality of audit work undertaken (IAASB, 2014)? Do directors always have the information they need to be informed and effective? How might more value be obtained from a regular activity such as the preparation of annual accounts and the annual audit of draft accounts? Do many directors have sufficient knowledge and understanding of accounting and finance to make a meaningful contribution when annual accounts have to be approved? Does narrative reporting adequately explain the interrelated nature of the challenges and opportunities faced (ACCA, 2017)? Are movements and trends over recent years made explicit and discussed by the board? What are the changes and these trends telling the board? Could more use be made of key numbers to suggest “what if” type questions and enable boards to better discuss the implications?

Do some CEOs and board chairs actually prefer rubber stamp boards and compliant directors who nod business through, when effective governance requires independence of mind and the courage of directors to speak up when they disagree? How can the resolve of individual directors under fire be bolstered? If robust debates leading to differences and disputes do occur, how should they be handled

(Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2017)? Independence can be a state of mind. Independent directors and those such as internal auditors who support boards in assessment, assurance and investigatory roles should be aware of and disclose any factors that either inhibit or constrain their independence and objectivity, or might appear to others to be doing so (CIIA, 2017).

The Way Ahead

Innovation can have its enemies (Juma, 2016). Board discussions of new technologies sometimes need to balance the hoped for advantages put by their advocates against the costs of disruption and the risks to moral values, human health, and environmental safety raised by detractors and opponents. Might benefits to some people be outweighed by the potential risks and costs to a larger number? Some innovations threaten social identities. There can be a tension between the need for innovation and the pressure to maintain continuity, social order, and stability (Juma, 2016). How many boards have the will and understanding to contribute to public debates on policy and other changes needed to manage technological changes from a societal as well as a corporate perspective?

Are we expecting too much of corporate governance and naïve to expect that most people will pay more than lip service to pious principles set out in codes of practice and statements of values? Is the reality that within all stakeholder groups most people are to a significant degree self-motivated, self-interested and selfish? Do they watch each other with an element of jealousy, concerned that they are not at a disadvantage and missing out, and trying to match or better their peers?

Is it human nature to try to take advantage wherever possible and to the extent to which one can get away with it? Is it inevitable that as regulations, laws and tax codes become more complex to prevent abuse, people and their professional advisers will become ever more imaginative at exploiting loopholes?

To prevent abuse, should one look elsewhere? Are there other and complementary arenas in which further action could be taken that might be more successful in influencing behaviors and conduct? Should greater effort be devoted to director and board development and the selection of directors who are better able to articulate and secure support for a change of direction, or strike a better balance between the contending interests of different stakeholders and those of the company itself? Should more robust legal action be taken against directors who fail in their Companies Act duties and board members and others who abuse their positions (Garratt, 2017)? Is there scope for strengthening competition policy and steps to ensure the free and fair operation of markets?

Governance Arrangements for Addressing Complex Issues

It has long been recognized that in relation to many boards there are missing elements (Mueller, 1981). There are a variety of questions that can be asked about the adequacy of contemporary corporate governance (Coulson-Thomas, 2018c). Many boards used to find that their annual calendar of meetings and board practices allowed them to deal with most discrete issues as and when they arose. Many directors felt that being available to address self-contained issues that cropped up between annual meetings of shareholders was a

justification for their existence and role. The departmental structure of organizations meant that issues could be categorized and routed to appropriate specialists who could handle them with or without intervention from the board, while others carried on the general work of the organization.

As issues become more complex, inter-related and significant in their possible implications, their categorization can be more problematic. Addressing them may require a multidisciplinary and—when a company's own capabilities are insufficient to deal with them—a collective approach. Such issues may be increasingly regarded as strategic or existential rather than simply as operational matters. Some directors may wonder whether they have the mandate and legitimacy to tackle them without reference to shareholders, or other stakeholders such as creditors or affected communities where their involvement would be desirable (Arneson, 2003; FRC, 2012; and Montagnon, 2016).

The implications and impacts of technology, and digital technologies in particular, have long been recognized as potential 'gamechangers' and as boardroom issues (Kaye, 1989). This raises the long-standing question of whether more technological or scientific expertise is needed in corporate boardrooms (Kenward, 1991). However, those who can understand the interactions of different specialisms are difficult to find. Traditional board and governance practices may not be capable of handling a collective response to complex and related challenges such as climate change and sustainability. Boards now need to consider who should be involved and what new

mechanisms are required to build the understanding and develop, approve and implement the responses required.

Required Responses

Interdependence is recognized in the view of the world as a self-regulating ecosystem (Lovelock, 1995). More systems thinking is required in corporate boardrooms and in support of boards to better understand and map interdependencies, identify points of greatest potential impact, agree warning signs or 'traffic lights' and establish control limits. It may be feasible to identify areas for action that might interrupt or moderate certain interdependencies and their impacts. It may also be possible to model some systems that at first sight seem excessively complex and/or use scenario planning.

Traditional board activities such as making choices, setting priorities and reconciling contending stakeholder interests may still be required. However, in many companies urgent action is required to develop or acquire systems, multidisciplinary and complex and interrelated problem-solving competences. More issues may need to be handled by multidisciplinary, multi-location and multi-organizational working parties and project and program groups and teams. Their effective management and governance might benefit from the more effective use of digital technologies. As already alluded to, AI applications may help people to analyze and learn from complex datasets.

Many companies would benefit from a fundamental and periodic review of board and committee responsibilities, business and operating models, and corporate policies and guidelines. Greater attention could be given

to more affordable, quicker and less disruptive approaches to change, knowledge and talent management and ways of helping people to cope with more complex challenges and simultaneously deliver multiple objectives (Coulson-Thomas, 2012a and b, 2013). Approaches and support that benefit both people and organization can increase motivation.

Boards should question whether they and senior management have the openness, flexibility and intellectual ability and energy to confront complex and interrelated issues, are providing the required transformational leadership, and are doing enough to stimulate, support and enable creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship (Coulson-Thomas, 2017c and 2018b). They could also consider whether they are instilling and building a corporate culture that is inclusive and conducive and supportive of questioning and challenge and the devotion of thought and time to the analysis and understanding of difficult and interdependent issues (FRC, 2016).

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Agency and Communion[†]

Ronald J Burke*

This paper reviews two concepts that have only recently been applied to effective leadership: Agency and Communion. Agency refers to behaviors and attitudes that are authoritative, demanding and self-advocating; Communion refers to behaviors and attitudes that are caring, other-serving, and participative. Men get rewarded for being agentic, women get punished for being both agentic and communal. In this paper, examples of both agentic and communal behaviors and attitudes are described. Since effective leadership includes both agency and communion, ways of integrating and combining them are also offered.

I have been interested in leadership for over 50 years and have taught in MBA programs and executive development offerings during this time. In my MBA teaching, I most often taught a first year required course in Organizational Behavior. Our textbook had a chapter on leadership, and one of the three-hour meetings of the course was exclusively focused on leadership. I showed two Harvard Business School videos illustrating different leadership styles and approaches, and my students were required to write a 4-6 page paper on leadership, one of four such papers required over the 13-week semester. In the second year of the MBA program, we offered an elective course on Leadership, which unfortunately was undersubscribed.

I have been involved in editing books on leaders and leadership (Burke and Cooper, 2006; and Rothstein and Burke, 2010). I have published research studies on potential

benefits of servant leadership as discussed by Greenleaf (1977) in Koyuncu *et al.* (2014) and on empowering leadership as outlined by Spreitzer (1995) in Burke *et al.* (2015) and Burke *et al.* (2016), and on toxic and destructive leadership (Burke, 2017).

Effective leadership is vital to organizational success. There is a shortage of effective talent (Michaels *et al.*, 2001), and perhaps up to half of the current crop of leaders are falling short (Hogan and Hogan, 2001).

I propose Agency and Communion as essential behavioral characteristics of effective leaders. The title of this paper is the result of work I have been involved in on women in management and serving on corporate boards of directors (Vinnicombe *et al.*, 2012; and 2013; and Burke and Richardsen, 2017). It stemmed from research and writing on women leaders but is applicable to both women and men in their leadership roles.

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Consider the following:

- Women face a double bind in leadership. They get “punished” for being too aggressive and “punished” for being too weak (Catalyst, 2007).
- Women’s career progress is slowed by undertaking “maintenance” or “house-keeping” tasks that add little value to performance and advancement (Babcock *et al.*, 2017). This effect has even been observed in female-dominated professions such as nursing.
- Women who do advance more often than not occupy staff roles (human resources, administration) that have no bottom line accountabilities (Wittenberg-Cox and Maitland, 2008).

Smith *et al.* (2018) undertook a study of peer evaluations of 4,344 US Naval Academy students from a predesigned list of attributes. Women and men received similar number of positive descriptive attributes but women received more negative descriptive attributes than men did, these being predominantly feminine. Women Naval Academy students lacked competence in terms of agentic functioning for their future leadership roles.

Agency and Communion

Zheng *et al.* (2018a and 2018b) highlight the tension top-level women managers faced in balancing agency and communion. Agency involved being demanding, authoritative, self-advocating and distant. Communion involved being caring, participative, other-serving and approachable.

Women managers faced a dilemma in navigating the tensions they faced leading in organizations between exhibiting agency and communion. Zheng *et al.* (2018a)

interviewed 64 US women executives working in a range of industries. Women acknowledging these tensions used five mechanisms to bring together agentic and communal behaviors. These were situational accentuating, sequencing, overlapping, complementing and reframing.

Women leaders more than men leaders experience these tensions because of gender-related career obstacles. The leader role is stereotypically linked to the male gender role (e.g., aggressive, dominant, self-confident). Women are expected to be communal (kind, nurturant, sympathetic, - nice). This has been labeled as “think manager, think male” (Schein and Davidson, 1993) and found to exist everywhere.

Both women and men managers and professionals can successfully integrate agency and communion resulting in a wider range of cognitions and work behaviors. Agency and communion are compatible and can be inter-related. Leadership development offerings need to encourage individuals to try out new ways of thinking and acting to achieve this blending.

Zheng *et al.* (2018a) give examples of how one can combine/pair/blend demanding and caring, authoritative and participative, self-advocating and other-serving, and distant and approachable. Here are some examples of this blending:

- Demanding and Caring: Requiring high performance but bringing fun to work.
- Authoritative and Participative: Be confident but solicit and value the comments of others.
- Self-Advocating and Other-Serving: Strive to achieve one’s own goals but also help others achieve theirs.

- Distant and Approachable: Act professional and interact informally.

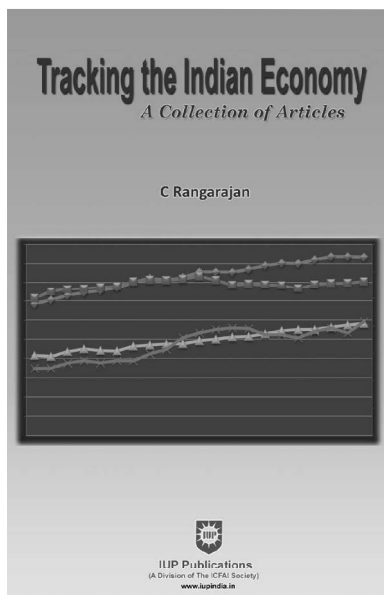
Effective leadership requires both agency and communion. Thus, addressing leadership materials in both university MBA settings and management development programs offered by organizations need to address both. There does not need to be a tension between agency and communion. Effective leaders are able to integrate and exhibit both.☺

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