

Humanistic leadership in different cultures: defining the field by pushing boundaries

Introduction

Global challenges and crises including environmental degradation, distributional inequality and societal distrust point to the need to rethink business strategies as well as management theories and practices (George *et al.*, 2016). It is becoming increasingly clear that the sole focus on instrumental values, such as wealth, profit and growth is seriously flawed (Mackey and Sisodia, 2014). There has been considerable criticism of conventional management theories that are based on the fundamental assumptions of an “economistic” paradigm (e.g., Melé 2007; von Kimakowitz *et al.*, 2007; Pirson and Lawrence, 2010) and view humans as driven by rational interests aimed at maximizing utility (*homo economicus*). Both scholars and practitioners have called for the reincorporation of humanistic values into business theories, organizations and management practice (e.g., Dierksmeier, 2011; Mackey and Sisodia, 2014). Consequently, humanistic management, as a new management paradigm, is gaining increasing attention from academia as well as the business community. Google Scholar lists over 500 research papers and books on humanistic management, and a third of them were published in the past decade.

Humanistic management (HM) was first introduced by Swart (1973) to refer to “a new way to cope with old problems – motivation, work satisfaction, morale and productivity” (p. 42) and has since gone through several stages of development. Most of the earlier definitions regarded it as “a means for both productivity and for developing human potential” (Swart, 1973). Most notably, Pfeffer (1998) made it explicit when he suggested putting people first to achieve organizational success. The more recent people-focused definition was proposed by Melé in the early 2000s when he defined HM as “a management that emphasizes the human condition and is oriented to the development of human virtue, in all its forms, to its fullest extent” (Melé, 2003, p. 79). Over the past decade, Melé has written extensively on the topic (e.g., 2009a, b, 2013, 2016), Aceved (2012) also explored the relationship between individualistic business ethics and humanistic management.

In 2009, a group of scholars established the Humanistic Management Network (HMN) [1] as a global network of scholars, policy makers and management practitioners aiming to enhance the body of knowledge and promote humanistic management practices. To provide a common understanding and foundation for the work of the HMN, von Kimakowitz *et al.* (2011) defined humanistic management on the basis of unconditional respect for the dignity of life and formulated three interrelated pillars which are: (1) the unconditional respect for *dignity*; (2) the integration of *ethical reflection* in managerial decision making and (3) the active and ongoing engagement with *stakeholders*. In the past decade, many conceptual papers have included the integrated humanistic management model (Spitzeck, 2011), the theory and practice of people-centered business (Pirson and von Kimakowitz, 2014) and humanistic views in international management (Lupton and Pirson, 2014). In July 2016, HMN published its inaugural edition of the Humanistic Management Journal (now under IHMA, International Humanistic Management Association), which has published dozens of papers on humanistic management topics. However, most of the papers have been conceptual with a focus on the causes, challenges and trends in HM. In addition, the Humanism in Business book series at

The authors would like to acknowledge the help of Lin, Boxiang, a research assistant at Nottingham University Business School, for leading the coding team and for ensuring the coding accuracy of all the research papers.



Palgrave Macmillan (Part of Springer Nature) has grown to 17 books since its first publication in 2011.

In 2016, Melé further developed HM theory by developing seven propositions based on HM history: (1) wholeness, (2) comprehensive knowledge, (3) human dignity, (4) development, (5) common good, (6) transcendence and (7) stewardship-sustainability. To date, HM has been established as a sharp contrast to other types of management that are mostly oriented toward profits, with people as mere resources to serve this goal. So why do we need to focus on humanistic leadership? The answer is because humanistic leadership and humanistic management are not always regarded as the same. Although the field of leadership started as a subset of effective management (Kent, 1999), management and leadership are sometimes used synonymously and other times they are treated separately in the literature. Bennis (1998) suggested that the two concepts play distinctive roles, using “managers do things right and leaders do the right things” as the title of his paper. In reality, it takes both managers and leaders to accomplish goals (Kent, 2005) and in most societies; managers are leaders and vice versa. However, in societies with high power distance, such as China and Japan, only managers in executive positions are regarded as leaders and followers expect their leaders to act differently (Fu *et al.*, 2002). Although for societies where managers and leaders do not differ, developing humanistic management or humanistic leadership may achieve the same results. However, in societies where leaders and managers are distinguished, companies will not be able to implement humanistic management unless those at the top of the company are humanistic and develop a humanistic culture in the company. Thus, we focus on humanistic leadership rather than humanistic management in this Special Issue (SI).

Definitions of leadership vary from culture to culture and within cultures. When the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Project (GLOBE) first started in 1994, the 54 members took some time to reach a consensus on the definition. They defined leadership as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members” (House *et al.*, 2002, p. 5). In other words, the definition of leadership varies, but the outcomes of leadership for almost all leadership theories have been largely identical, including consensus on organizational performance as the criteria for leadership effectiveness. The outcome variables directly or indirectly relate to performance through attitudes and behaviors that directly affect performance. The outcomes of humanistic leadership focus on satisfying both the multiple needs of employees as well as company performance.

In the 1990s, humanistic leadership was a collective term used to describe books examining the heart, soul and head of leadership (Feeney, 2003). Two notable examples are *The Leader of the Future: New Visions, Strategies and Practices for the Next Era* by Hesselbein *et al.* (1996) and *Leading with Soul: An Uncommon Journey of Spirit* by Bolman and Deal (1995). Both of these books promoted humanistic leadership, but very limited research has been conducted on humanistic leadership (Davila and Elvira, 2012). For example, little is known about how leadership can align with the aims of HM or how leadership practices can foster and support the implementation of HM principles within business organizations and effectively balance these with the pursuit of economic goals. Despite the rapid increase in research on HM, research on humanistic leadership has remained relatively sparse. A Google Scholar search found only 41 items.

Using the limited papers in the literature and our exposure to humanistic leaders in the field, we developed a working definition of humanistic leadership for this SI. We describe humanistic leaders as those, who (1) respect people as holistic human beings by taking care of their own needs as well as their followers’ multiple needs and motives; (2) continuously improve themselves while developing the followers to unleash their full potential and (3) recognize and try to take into account all stakeholders’ interests while striving to pursue the common good. We were not aware of the three pillars of HM when we worked on our working

definition. It was quite a big coincidence that our three dimensions turned out to be very close to the three pillars of humanistic management: dignity, ethical reflection and stakeholder engagement. We said the same thing only in different words. According to Ernst von Kimakowitz, cofounder of the HMN:

The respect for people as holistic human beings can only be brought to life when (1) overcoming an instrumental view on people in economic activities and this, in turn, is central for respecting their dignity; (2) constant self-improvement is not possible without self-reflection and hence it corresponds very well with the integration of ethical reflection in management decisions; and (3) serving the common good as a leader is best attained by engaging with stakeholders, which corresponds well with stakeholder engagement in the three stepped approach to humanistic management. In it, stakeholder engagement is described as the best way to ensure that management decisions respect the rights and interests of all those that are affected to build mutually beneficial relationships (i.e. serve the common good) [2].

By pointing out the connection between HM and humanistic leadership, we are making it clear that although we are highlighting leadership, what we are developing could also be of relevance to colleagues focusing on HM. GLOBE proposed and empirically supported culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory (CLT), which argues that leadership effectiveness is determined by the extent to which leaders' values are aligned with the company's core values and the normative values of society (House *et al.*, 2014). The purpose of this SI is to identify humanistic leadership characteristics and behaviors that have enabled leaders in different cultures to gain respect from local communities and substantially contributed to local economic development. We attempt to build a new leadership theory, using an indigenous lens that explicitly focuses on humans' well-being as the ultimate purpose with a focus on the common good, which can lead to a sustainable future.

In the following sections, we introduce the most frequently used definitions from the leading leadership theories and the major outcome variables tested in the empirical studies in these theories. We then briefly outline the content of each of the papers in the SI and highlight the leadership attributes and behaviors identified in the various papers to verify our working definition. We discussed implications and directions for future research.

An overview of existing leadership literature

Many theories have been developed since leadership was treated as an independent field of study over a century ago, and many are closely related to components in the humanistic leadership. We chose the five theories that have been most widely tested and also most relevant to humanistic leadership: transformational, authentic, ethical, servant and paternalistic leadership. We used Web of Science to search for the 50 most frequently cited papers for each of the first four, but had to also use Google Scholar to find the 50 papers on paternalistic leadership since the most frequently cited studies were published in Chinese. Because this leadership style tends to be more prevalent in Asian countries, we included three most frequently cited papers in Chinese.

We hired four students to code all the papers in NVivo. However, due to the limited space, we compare only the definition of the leadership theories and their outcome variables in this editorial to show the rationale for establishing a new humanistic leadership theory using an indigenous lens. We first briefly introduce the definition and most frequently tested outcome variables in each of these theories.

Transformational leadership

Since Bass (1985) first introduced transformational leadership based on Burns' (1978) transforming leadership (TFL), thousands of studies have been conducted. Of all the theories that have been studied, transformational leadership is the most widely and heavily tested theory. According to Google Scholar, the book transformational leadership by Bass and

Riggio (2006, 2nd edition) has been cited over 11,000 times and there are almost 14,000 publications with transformational leadership in the title. According to Yukl (1994), transformational leadership is a process in which leaders and followers assist each other to reach greater levels of morality and motivation. Effective transformational leaders have a number of common attributes, including seeing themselves as change agents, being risk takers, believing in people, caring about the needs of others, being open to learning, believing in disciplined thinking and analysis and being visionaries (Yukl, 1994). TFL is generally defined as demonstrating four types of behaviors – *individual consideration, inspiration motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence* [3] – that leaders engage in to motivate their follower to move beyond self-interest and work for the collective good (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Avolio and Yammarino, 2002). Transformational leaders act as *role models* who coach and mentor their followers to prepare them to assume more responsibilities (Sosik, 2006). In their communication with followers, transformational leaders also *emphasize the common ground and shared values* (Dong et al., 2017). Consistent with the definitions, these behaviors are geared toward making employees work harder and better for the organization. Performance (including group and individual) as the outcome variable appeared in almost half of the empirical studies. The other frequently used outcome variables included creativity, work engagement, citizenship behavior, commitment, leadership effectiveness, follower helping behavior, identification and job satisfaction.

Authentic leadership

Authentic leadership (AL) was first introduced by Bill George in 2003 as a response to the crisis of confidence in current corporate and government leaders (George et al., 2016). Luthans and Avolio (2003, p. 243) identified an authentic leader as “*confident, hopeful, optimistic, resilient, transparent, moral/ethical, future-oriented, and gives priority to developing associates to be leaders.*” However, the most popular definition for authentic leadership was developed by Walumbwa et al. (2008). They wrote that AL is “a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and *promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development*” (p. 95). Leaders who engage in transformational behaviors but are driven by self-interests are labeled as pseudo-transformational (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999), so many scholars studying AL are also studying transformational leadership, and some literature is directly related to both styles. For example, Macik-Frey et al. (2009) suggested that AL, in essence, promotes people’s positive health including physical, mental, social and psychological components of well-being, through the dimensions of inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation and idealized influence (Ryff and Singer, 1998). Like transformational leadership, group/individual task performance is also the most frequently tested outcome variable in authentic leadership. Other dependent variables (DVs) have included job satisfaction, creativity and turnover intention and work engagement.

Ethical leadership

Corporate scandals at the end of the 20th century led to the birth of ethical leadership (EL). Treviño et al. (2000, 2003) first identified EL and argued that ethical leaders are *altruistic, honest, trustworthy and principled decision-makers, who care about the well-being of their followers and broader society.* However, the most frequently used definition was by Brown et al. (2005, p. 120), who described ethical leaders as “*considerate, trustworthy, and morally upright* individuals who make just decisions, candidly communicate acceptable ethical standards to their followers, and become excellent role models, by practicing these ethical standards themselves.” In the following year, Brown and Treviño (2006) and in many of their

later publications in the following years (2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012) also argued that ethical leadership is the demonstration of *normatively appropriate conduct* through personal actions and interpersonal relationships, and the promotion of such conduct to followers through two-way communication, reinforcement and decision-making. In 2008, the authors listed characteristics of ethical leaders to include honesty, integrity, altruism, trustworthiness, collective motivation and justice. Citizenship behavior, commitment and task performance have been the most frequently tested outcome variables. Other variables include job satisfaction, leader-member exchange, creativity, trust and leader effectiveness.

Servant leadership

Greenleaf was the first to propose servant leadership. However, his explanation of servant leadership changed from article to article published in 1970, although a common feature of all the articles was a leader's willingness and primary motivation to serve. In 1977, Greenleaf published a dozen more papers and offered another variation of servant leadership, but again he emphasized "the natural feeling to serve, and to serve first." In 2002, Greenleaf compared servant leadership with other types of leadership styles and pointed out that *other theories focused on the well-being of the organization, while servant leadership focused on the well-being of followers*. Many other researchers have also studied SL. However, like Greenleaf, they introduced the theory in their own way. For example, Graham (1991) regarded servant leadership as a model of leadership that is both inspirational and contains moral safeguards. Smith *et al.* (2004) and Stone *et al.* (2004) referred to servant leadership as a leadership approach that is "service-oriented, moral-laden, follower-centric, and holistic-minded." Liden *et al.* (2008) consolidated the literature and developed a 28-item measurement with seven dimensions, including *behaving ethically, conceptual skills, creating value for the community, emotional healing, empowerment, helping subordinates grow and succeed and putting subordinates first*. Group/individual task performance has been the most frequently tested outcome variable. The next most popular DV has been citizenship behavior, but other tested DVs include creativity, commitment and work engagement.

Paternalistic leadership

Compared to the other four leadership theories, paternalistic leadership (PL) has been cited the least, particularly by articles published in top journals. It may be that this type of leadership is regarded as more prevalent in Eastern countries, particularly those that have been heavily influenced by Confucian family culture. It was first proposed by Silin in 1976 as a type of leadership with features such as didacticism, moral authority, centralized authority, maintenance of social distance with subordinates, ill-defined intentions and control tactics. As a result of the rapid development of the Asian economy, Taiwanese scholars Farh and Cheng (2000) conceptualized the leadership and developed a measure. They defined PL as "*a leadership style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence and moral integrity in a personalistic atmosphere*" (2000, p. 94). In 2006, Farh *et al.* refined the measure and developed three dimensions: *authoritarian, benevolent and moral*. This measure has been the most frequently used in empirical studies. Frequently used outcome variables of PL include job satisfaction, OCB at different levels, innovative behavior, in-role job performance and organizational commitment.

Independently, the characteristics identified by each of the five leadership theories closely connects to humanistic leadership (please note the italicized text in each of the theories). However, humanistic leadership is like a hybrid (Davila and Elvira, 2012), which includes all the essential leadership attributes and behaviors that no single other leadership style can replace. From the cases of humanistic leaders we have read, heard and studied, we argue that what differentiates this type of leadership from all other theories is its well-rounded purpose: it treats people as holistic individuals with multiple needs and motives; it strives to

simultaneously develop the leader as well as the followers; and most of all, it aims to take care of the interests of multiple stakeholders, while striving to pursue the common good. Inspired by culturally endorsed implicit leadership theory, we took the opportunity of the SI to gather examples of such leaders in different cultures and introduce them in the following section.

In addition to the five theories, we also examined the literature on moral leadership (ML), but the scattered status of the results prompted us to exclude it. As Gini (1997a) pointed out, it is difficult to define leadership, but it is even more difficult to define ML. Studies have presented various definitions of ML and implications for practice, but, to date, there is no commonly accepted definition (Maldonado and Lacey, 2001). Some of the findings on moral leaders are that moral leaders are defined as having a positive, lasting influence on others and/or the world (Roepke, 1995). ML is based on justice, unity and love in relation to the group, mankind and the task to be accomplished (Vinkhuyzen and Karisson-Vinkhuyzen, 2014). Studies on ML are connected to business ethics (Gini, 1997b) and various other leadership styles, such as transformational leadership (Currie and Lockett, 2007; Whetstone, 2002), authentic leadership (Lester and Vogelgesang, 2005), servant leadership (Whetstone, 2002) or part of paternalistic leadership (Wu, 2012). Most of the studies are conceptual with only a few empirical studies. The outcomes tested include work performance (Wu, 2012), creativity and leader-member exchange (LMX) (Gu *et al.*, 2015). Despite these findings, there are no clear conclusions, so we decided not to include ML in the comparison.

More recently developed leadership styles including spiritual leadership, responsible leadership and responsible global leadership have also attracted increasing attention. They are directly related to RL, but due to the limited space, we did not include them here in this brief literature review. We will include them when we do the full literature review in the future. In the following section, we briefly summarize the stories of leaders presented by various papers in the SI.

Humanistic leaders in different cultures

The papers in this SI are based on qualitative data collected through interviews and archival materials. The stories demonstrate the effects of humanistic leadership practices in business organizations, educational institutions and a very special community, the Amish community. The connections of such practices with the local cultural values are also discussed. The papers in the SI are from eight cultures: China, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, UAE and the Amish in the US. The stories are also diverse; some are about a single leader (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, UAE), others are about a group of leaders (China, India, Thai, US Amish). Most of the papers tell stories of the leader(s), but the Thai paper used expatriates as a mirror to reflect the characteristics of humanistic leaders in Thailand. Although not representative of all cultures, these examples clearly show the common features of humanistic leaders and the connections with local cultures.

The first paper, “Humanistic Leadership in a Chinese Context”, introduced three examples of Chinese humanistic leaders who put people ahead of profits and incorporated traditional philosophies into their management practices. Based on data from many interviews, the authors identified their common characteristics that correspond to the three components of the definition of humanistic leadership: (1) they offer humanistic care and treat people as holistic human beings; (2) they simultaneously pursue the development of themselves and others and (3) they take care of the interests of multiple stakeholders for the common good. The authors integrated the characteristics of the three leaders with the core values they identified in Confucianism as well as literature on Confucian leadership. They then developed a framework of Confucian humanistic leadership consisting of five attributes: (1) *Tui ji ji ren* (understand others by putting oneself into others’ position); (2) *Yi yi wei li* (making a profit by doing the right thing); (3) *Xiu ji da ren* (developing others by cultivating themselves first);

(4) *Zhi xing he yi* (aligning the knowing with doing) and (5) *Yun zhi jue zhong* (seeking the balancing point amid different things). The five attributes interact with and mutually reinforce each other; they often operate in sequence. They also argue that future studies should further examine the processes and mechanism of developing Confucian humanistic leadership so such leadership could be conscientiously developed.

The Taiwanese paper, “Humanistic Paradigm in Leadership Practice – A Case Study of a Confucian Entrepreneur”, explored the humanistic leadership of Mr. C., a Confucian leader and how he showed humanistic concern in corporate management to pursue the common good. The findings suggest that a humanistic leader’s characteristics and behaviors align with the five Confucian virtues (humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and integrity) which, in turn, initiate a positive cycle from primary stakeholders to secondary stakeholders to serve the collective happiness. It focusses mainly on human nature and considers the content of goodness against materialism while respecting the rights and interests of all stakeholders. Humanistic leaders who are dedicated to the Confucian philosophy of five constant virtues are committed to establishing proper conduct and balanced relationships with each stakeholder even if there is sometimes a short-term loss. They guide people based on the following virtues: regulating them through their sense of propriety, serving as role models, cultivating people of virtue and competence through training and education and treating others fairly and honestly with information transparency. These findings offer new reflections beyond traditional leadership perspectives and reveal the dynamics inside and outside the company. In terms of business practice, the findings suggest that Confucian-based humanistic leaders should prioritize a people-oriented view by regarding primary stakeholders who directly participate in or entertain formal relationships with the firm as “important partners.” In summary, this study offers an alternative leadership paradigm for businesses adhering to Confucian virtues to move forward into a sustainable future, while yielding benefits for all stakeholders.

The South Korean paper, “South Korean Humanistic Leadership”, introduced Mr. Kook-Hyun Moon, the former CEO of Yuhan–Kimberly and current CEO of Hansoll Textile, was written as an exemplary case of a humanistic leader in the South Korean context. The authors examined Mr. Moon’s leadership when he was working at Yuhan–Kimberly, the leading health and hygiene company in South Korea. The authors use the case to exemplify the humanistic leadership characteristics in South Korea, whose traditional values and philosophies have remained prevalent despite the significant social and political changes it has gone through in the past few decades. Driven by his “respect for all mankind,” which reflects the fundamental Korean values of *홍익인간* (*Hongik Ingan*, benefiting mankind), Moon’s leadership manifested (1) benevolence (seeking the greater good), (2) sincerity (building trusting relationships with multiple stakeholders) and (3) continuous learning and innovation (developing self and others). The authors hoped that readers would learn from Mr. Moon’s story that employees and other stakeholders are holistic human beings and should be treated as such. Leaders must continuously develop themselves to be able to help others discover and reach their potential. Finally, leaders must consider the implications for employees, the company, community and society as a whole when they develop and implement business plans and consider how to improve human welfare and social and environmental responsibilities for the greater good.

Tripathi and Kumar in their paper, “Humanistic Leadership in the Tata Group: The Synergy in Personal Values, Organizational Strategy, and National Cultural Ethos”, explored the characteristics of humanistic leadership in one of the largest and oldest organizations in the Indian subcontinent, the Tata group. Founded in 1868, decades before India became independent from British rule in 1947, the Tata group is a \$100-billion-plus, multi-company organization employing 700,000 employees worldwide. The researchers began on the premise that there is theoretical convergence between humanistic leadership tenets and Tata’s motto

of leadership with trust, Tata's values of integrity, pioneering, unity, responsibility, and excellence and the founder's deep convictions. They concluded that the Tata group is an amalgamation of personal values (good thoughts, word and deed) with national cultural ethos (dharma, karma and jnana). The authors used narrative stories from top-management leaders using semi-structured interviews to gain a deeper understanding of how the values are translated into leadership behaviors. Thematic analyses of the stories revealed that humanistic leadership is realized through (1) adherence to the founder's philosophy and the basic core values, (2) leadership with trust, (3) community as the key purpose of the enterprise, (4) senior leaders as mentors and role-models, (5) abiding by the ethical code of conduct, (6) employee-focus and (7) tacit alignment with Indian cultural values. These leadership values are conveyed and institutionalized in the organization through strategic initiatives such as the Tata Business Excellence Model, Tata Code of Conduct, Tata Trusts and the preservation of the Founder's Legacy. This synergy of personal values, national cultural ethos, and organizational strategy helps the Tata group realize the humanistic leadership objectives, while also achieving success as a business.

Ono and Ikegami studied Konosuke Matsushita, founder of Matsushita Electric Company (now Panasonic), known as the "Father of Humanistic Management in Japan." In their paper, "A Mechanism of Humanistic Leadership for Success: Lessons from Konosuke Matsushita", the authors identified a mechanism of humanistic leadership that led the company to success by analyzing archival data from "Collected Sayings of Konosuke Matsushita," which comprises 45 volumes covering his conversations with his employees, annual planning meetings of the company, company events and conferences for entrepreneurs. The mechanism starts by setting forth a company philosophy that defines a mission and a call to contribute to society. As a humanistic leader, Matsushita treated his followers fairly and developed them into honorable human beings. These practices ensured strong company performance. Matsushita understood from a young age that humanistic leadership strives to pursue the common good, or "co-existence and co-prosperity." In his mid-30s, Matsushita declared the social mission of the company: banish poverty, bring happiness to people's lives and make this world a better place. Ten years later, shortly after Second World War ended in 1946, Matsushita founded the Peace and Happiness through Prosperity (PHP) Institute. He was truly a pioneer in humanistic leadership.

The UAE paper, "Humanistic leadership in the UAE Context", described a prominent humanistic leader of a well-known private university in Dubai. He is also a scientist and a researcher, as well as a highly respected person in the national community of the UAE. As an Islamic country, UAE has attracted attention not only due to its economic success but also with its notable humanistic initiatives on happiness and tolerance targeting well-being and unity in its diverse community. Anadol and Behery interviewed the leader and seven of his followers and then analyzed the transcripts to identify seven themes – humility, respect, care, fairness, transparency, wellbeing orientation, generosity, family focus and will with humanistic determination – as components for a humanistic leadership framework in the UAE context. These themes coincide with salient Islamic values and existing humanistic leadership theories.

The article by Keim and Shadnam, "Leading in an Amish Paradise: Humanistic Leadership in the Old Order Amish", sheds light on humanistic leadership in the Amish community in the US. Rather than managerial leadership in a single business organization, they examined community leadership of Bishops who guide and interact with individual and organizational actors. The themes that they identified portray a leadership approach that is starkly different from common forms of leadership. It avoids concentration of power and privilege in one leader figure or a selected group of elite leaders. The Amish approach also sacrifices community growth to preserve a flat structure where the leader, businesspeople and their families know one another intimately in multiple contexts beyond the workplace.

Given the restricted power, extra work and lack of privilege associated with the leadership position, it is a highly undesirable position that people take on only when their name comes out of the lot. The community approach the authors adopted has significant merits because it situates humanistic leadership in the context where people experience being whole human persons, which is the context of community (Selznick, 1992). Any understanding of humanistic leadership rests upon an explicit or implicit description of human beings; therefore, humanistic leadership cannot stay within the confines of the workplace and it ignores what makes people whole in their families, friendships, social engagements and even lonely worship. The case of Amish leadership shows that people come to understand leadership and humanism as well as other relevant concepts such as dignity, ethics and reflexivity not through abstract scholarly discussions, but rather through the lens of their own unique community culture. To lead Amish people, or any other people, one needs to thoroughly understand the corresponding culture.

The Thai paper, “Humanistic Leadership in Thailand: A Mix of Indigenous and Global Aspects using a Cross-Cultural Perspective”, adds a cross-cultural context by focusing on expatriate experiences in leading local Thai employees. Kainzbauer and Vora interviewed 24 expatriates and two local Thai leaders to present a unique perspective on humanistic leadership in the Thai context. The results suggest that while humanistic leadership practices seem to be fundamental to leading in Thailand, a culturally sensitive indigenous approach to humanistic leadership is needed. The results also revealed that the specific behaviors of guiding, bridging, emotionally supporting, socializing and indirectly communicating are ways to demonstrate humanistic leadership in a Thai context. The cultural values of Thailand, including compassion, humility and friendliness, are salient to humanistic leadership and expand our understanding about the culture-leadership connection. In particular, the links among these themes align with Asian holistic thinking where relationships and interdependencies among these themes exist. The findings provide evidence that leadership research in an international context benefits from considering more etic, global perspectives, as well as the local context. Furthermore, considering research on intercultural dynamics, how leadership is impacted by the relationship between expatriates and locals is a fruitful area of research.

Practical implications

While the leadership literature has made numerous claims about and calls for more people-oriented leadership, far more is known about what humanistic leadership is rather than how to pursue this type of leadership in practice. Research presented in this SI addresses this problem and advances our understanding of how humanistic leaders actually lead, the specific strategies and practices humanistic leaders use and how accomplished leaders translate the principles of humanistic leadership to actions that are applicable in a specific cultural context. This SI presents the full story of leadership styles in particular cultures to provide insights for leaders.

For that reason, in this SI corporate business leaders, entrepreneurs and business owners will find examples of how to lead by focusing on people with a more holistic rather than functional purpose, how to optimize rather than prioritize business operations and management practices for effectiveness rather than efficiency and how to engage with multiple stakeholders. Practitioners will also find examples of actions humanistic leaders take in different cultures.

Instead of providing prescriptions about the significance and impact of particular practices or effectiveness of particular strategies—typically derived from quantitative research—the qualitative studies included in this SI offer practitioners role models. As such, studies presented in this SI hold practical value for business leaders who already operate in or will work and lead their businesses in cultures that are analyzed here.

While we believe it is always a good time to promote humanistic leadership, this is a unique time when all business leaders are facing dilemmas and are forced to re-evaluate their leadership styles. In particular, they often need to balance pressures from shareholders and still consider the common good, or choose between people and profits. We trust that inspirations from the humanistic leaders exemplified in this SI will encourage leaders' critical ethical reflection about themselves and guide their decision making so they will be able to make these difficult decisions with a focus on people in business.

Limitations and future research agenda

Given the short timeline of the call for papers, the cultures we included are not representative of all major cultural groups in the world. However, the papers we included for the SI still reflect interesting dynamics by presenting examples of humanistic leadership in four societies that have been heavily influenced by Confucianism (China, Korea, Japan and Taiwan) and four societies that have been influenced by Christian, Islamic and Buddhist traditions. Despite the small number of cases presented here, the results revealed a few common features among the humanistic leaders in different cultures, but they also reflect the many differences. The leaders represent various industries with different ownership systems, but more systematic analysis of the data is warranted in future research. Thus, we plan to follow up on this line of research. The interview data from different cultures will be further analyzed and the results will be closely compared to identify the culturally sensitive characteristics as well as the universally endorsed characteristics. Our goal is to develop a theory that is universally applicable but culturally sensitive.

Another limitation is the obvious absence of female leaders in this SI even though female leaders are becoming more visible. For example, in India, Ms. Rajashree Birla of the Aditya-Birla Group, an Indian global conglomerate and a Fortune500 company, emphasized the need for critical self-reflection of business leaders, seeing people who work holistically and working together with communities for a better common present and future (Birla, 2011; Casio, 2011). In Italy, Ms. Chiara Lubich established a network of enterprises called "Economy of Communion" to unite entrepreneurs who implement humanistic principles of management in their businesses (Lemanski, 2019). The network has now grown to over one thousand enterprises on all continents. Future research of humanistic leadership should pay more attention to include female leaders as examples.

Conclusion

We are pleased to see a growing trend in the world to urge business owners not to focus on making a profit but to focus on finding profitable solutions to solve the world's problems. In their book, *Conscious Capitalism*, Mackey and Raj Sisodia (2014) demonstrated that leadership matters. They showed how to become conscious leaders, which is identical to what we call humanistic leaders who integrate their hearts with their heads by developing self-awareness and emotional intelligence, while empowering other people to do the same. In June 2020, McKinsey & Company reported a conversation with Hubert Joly, in which the former chairman and CEO of the American company Best Buy described his broad-based realization that an excessive focus on profits is wrong. He stated that he believed in leading with purpose and humanity: "At the end of the day, a company is a human organization made of individuals working together in pursuit of a goal. These individuals produce value for all stakeholders. They are the source, not simply a resource" (Simpson, 2020, p. 2). We hope this SI will inspire leadership researchers to more explicitly examine the humanity core in leadership and inspire leaders to be more humanistic in their leadership endeavors so everyone can benefit and work together to create the common good.

Pingping Fu*International Business Management, Nottingham University Ningbo China, Ningbo, China***Ernst Von Kimakowitz***Humanistic Management Network, Geneva, Switzerland and
University of Lucerne, Lucerne, Switzerland***Michal Lemanski***International Business Management, University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Ningbo,
China, and***Leigh Anne Liu***Robinson College of Business, George State University, Atlanta, Georgia, USA***Notes**

1. www.humanisticmanagement.network
2. Ernst von Kimakowitz made this statement after meeting with the China Chapter team of the Humanistic Management Network in Geneva in June 2019.
3. The attributes and behaviors are italicized by the authors to make it easier for them to be identified.

References

- Avolio, B.J. and Yammarino, F. (2002), "Introduction to, and overview of, transformational and charismatic leadership", in Avolio, B.J. and Yammarino, F. (Eds), *Transformational and Charismatic Leadership: The Road Ahead (Vol. 2 of Monographs in Leadership and Management)*, Elsevier, St. Louis, MO, pp. 27-33.
- Bass, B.M. and Riggio, R.E. (2006), *Transformational Leadership*, 2nd ed., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, London, LD.
- Bass, B.M. and Steidlmeier, P. (1999), "Ethics, character, and authentic transformational leadership behavior", *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 181-217.
- Bass, B.M. (1985), *Leadership and Performance Beyond Expectations*, Free Press, New York, NY.
- Bennis, W. (1998), "Managers do things right. Leaders do the right thing", in *Management Gurus*, Gabler Verlag, Wiesbaden, pp. 47-52.
- Birla, R. (2011), "The spinning of the wheel", *The Smart Manager*, Vol. 10 No. 3, pp. 92-98.
- Brown, M.E. and Treviño, L.K. (2006), "Ethical leadership: a review and future directions", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 17 No. 6, pp. 595-616.
- Brown, M.E., Treviño, L.K. and Harrison, D.A. (2005), "Ethical leadership: a social learning perspective for construct development and testing", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, Vol. 97 No. 2, pp. 117-134.
- Burns, J.M. (1978), *Leadership*, Harper and Row, New York, NY.
- Casio, W. (2011), *Doing Well by Doing Good: Global Sustainability at Aditya Birla Group*, SHRM Foundation.
- Davila, A. and Elvira, M.M. (2012), "Humanistic leadership: lessons from Latin America", *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 47 No. 4, pp. 548-554.
- Dierksmeier, C. (2011), "The freedom-responsibility Nexus in management philosophy and business ethics", 2011, *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 101, pp. 263-283, doi: [10.1007/s10551-010-0721-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-010-0721-9).

- Dong, Y., Bartol, K.M., Zhang, Z.X. and Li, C. (2017), "Enhancing employee creativity via individual skill development and team knowledge sharing: influences of dual-focused transformational leadership", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 439-458.
- Farh, J.L. and Cheng, B.S. (2000), "A cultural analysis of paternalistic leadership in Chinese organizations", in Li, J.T., Tsui, A.S. and Weldon, E. (Eds), *Management and Organizations in the Chinese Context*, Macmillan, London, LD, pp. 94-127.
- Farh, J.L., Cheng, B.S., Chou, L.F. and Chu, X.P. (2006), "Authority and benevolence: employees' responses to paternalistic leadership in China", in Tsui, A.S., Bian, Y. and Cheng, L. (Eds), *China's Domestic Private Firms: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Management and Performance*, Sharpe, New York, NY, pp. 230-260.
- Fu, P.P., Farr, J., Peng, S.Q., Wang, E.P., et al. (2002), "Characteristics and processes of top management teams in Chinese entrepreneurial high-tech firms", in Tsui, A. and Lau, C.M. (Eds), *The Management of Enterprises in the People's Republic of China*, Kluwer Academic Press, pp. 375-416.
- Gini, A. (1997a), "Moral leadership and business ethics", *Journal of Leadership Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 64-81.
- Gini, A. (1997b), "Moral leadership: an overview", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 16, pp. 323-330.
- Graham, J.W. (1991), "Servant-leadership in organizations: inspirational and moral", *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 105-119.
- Greenleaf, R.K. (1970), *The Servant as Leader*, Center for Servant Leadership.
- Greenleaf, R.K. (1977), *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, Paulist Press, New York, NY.
- Greenleaf, R.K. (2002), *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 25th anniversary ed., Paulist Press, New York, NY.
- House, R., et al. (2002), "Understanding cultures and implicit leadership theories across the globe: an introduction to project GLOBE", *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 37 No. 1, pp. 3-10.
- House, R., Dorfman, P., Javidan, M., Javidan, M., Hanges, P. and Sully de Luque, M. (2014), *Strategic Leadership across Cultures*, SAGE Publications.
- Kent, T.W. (1999), "Leadership", in Kilpatrick, A.O. and Johnson, J.A. (Eds), *Handbook of Health Administration and Policy*, Marcel Dekker, New York, pp. 961-969.
- Kent, T.W. (2005), "Leading and managing: it takes two to tango", *Management Decision*, Vol. 43 Nos 7/8, pp. 1010-1017.
- Lemanski, M.K. (2019), "Economy of communion and the multinational corporation", *paper presented at the 7th Annual Humanistic Management Conference*, Krakow, Poland, October 10-11, 2019.
- Liden, R.C., Wayne, S.J., Zhao, H. and Henderson, D. (2008), "Servant leadership: development of a multidimensional measure and multilevel assessment", *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 19 No. 2, pp. 161-177.
- Luthans, F. and Avolio, B.J. (2003), "Authentic leadership: a positive developmental approach", in Cameron, K.S., Dutton, J.E. and Quinn, R.E. (Eds), *Positive Organizational Scholarship*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, San Francisco, pp. 241-261.
- Macik-Frey, M., Quick, J.C. and Cooper, C.L. (2009), "Authentic leadership as a pathway to positive health", *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior*, Vol. 30 No. 3, pp. 453-458.
- Mackey, J. and Sisodia, R. (2014), *Conscious Capitalism, with a New Preface by the Authors: Liberating the Heroic Spirit of Business*.
- Maldonado, N. and Lacey, C. (2001), "Defining moral leadership: perspectives of 12 leaders", *Florida Journal of Educational Research*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 79-101.
- Melé, D. (2003), "The challenge of humanistic management", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 44 No. 1, pp. 77-8837.

- Melé, D. (2009a), "Current trends in humanism and business", in Spitzbeck, H., Pirson, M., Amann, W., Khan, S. and Von Kimakowitz, E. (Eds), *Humanism in Business*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Melé, D. (2009b), "Editorial introduction: "towards a more humanistic management"", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 88 No. 3, pp. 413-416.
- Melé, D. (2013), "Antecedents and current situation of humanistic management", *African Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 7 No. 2, p. 52.
- Melé, D. (2016), "Understanding humanistic management", *Humanistic Management Journal*, Vol. 1, pp. 33-55.
- Pfeffer, J. (1998), *The Human Equation: Building Profits by Putting People First*, Harvard Business School Press, Boston.
- Pirson, M.A. and Lawrence, P.R. (2010), "Humanism in business - towards a paradigm shift?", *Journal of Business Ethics*, Vol. 93 No. 4, pp. 553-565.
- Ryff, C.D. and Singer, B. (1998), "The contours of positive human health", *Psychological Inquiry*, Vol. 9 No. 1, pp. 1-28.
- Selznick, P. (1992), *The Moral Commonwealth: Social Theory and the Promise of Community*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Simpson, B. (2020), *Leading with Purpose and Humanity: A Conversation with Hubert Joly*, MacKinsey & Company, June 1-6.
- Smith, B.N., Montagno, R.V. and Kuzmenko, T.N. (2004), "Transformational and servant leadership: content and contextual comparisons", *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 10 No. 4, pp. 80-92.
- Sosik, J.J. (2006), "Full range leadership: model, research, extensions and training", in Cooper, C. and Burke, R. (Eds), *Inspiring Leadership*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 33-66.
- Stone, A.G., Russel, R.F. and Patterson, K. (2004), "Transformational versus servant leadership: a difference in leader focus", *The Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, Vol. 25 No. 4, pp. 349-361.
- Swart, J.C. (1973), "The worth of humanistic management: some contemporary examples", *Business Horizons*, Vol. 16 No. 3, pp. 41-50.
- Treviño, L.K., Hartman, L.P. and Brown, M. (2000), "Moral person and moral manager: how executives develop a reputation for ethical leadership", *California Management Review*, Vol. 42 No. 4, pp. 128-42.
- Treviño, L.K., Brown, M. and Hartman, L.P. (2003), "A qualitative investigation of perceived executive ethical leadership: perceptions from inside and outside the executive suite", *Human Relations*, Vol. 56 No. 1, pp. 5-33.
- Vinkhuyzen, O.M. and Karisson-Vinkhuyzen, S.I. (2014), "The role of moral leadership for sustainable production and consumption", *Journal of Cleaner Production*, Vol. 63 No. 15, pp. 102-113.
- von Kimakowitz, E., Pirson, M., Dierksmeier, C., Spitzbeck, H. and Amann, W. (2011), "Humanistic management", in von Kimakowitz, E., Spitzbeck, H., Pirson, M., Dierksmeier, C. and Amann, W. (Eds), *Humanistic Management in Practice*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills.
- Walumbwa, F.O., Avolio, B.J., Gardner, W.L., Wernsing, T.S. and Peterson, S.J. (2008), "Authentic leadership: development and validation of a theory-based measure", *Journal of Management*, Vol. 34 No. 1, pp. 89-126.
- Whetstone, J. (2002), "Personalism and moral leadership: the servant leader with a transforming vision", *Business Ethics: A European Review*, Vol. 11 No. 4, pp. 385-392.
- Wu, M. (2012), "Moral leadership and work performance", *Chinese Management Studies*, Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 284-299.
- Yukl, G. (1994), *Leadership in Organizations*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ.

Further reading

- Avolio, B.J., Walumbwa, F.O. and Weber, T.J. (2009), "Leadership: current theories, research, and future directions", *Annual Review of Psychology*, Vol. 60, pp. 421-449.
- Banks, G.C., McCauley, K.D., Gardner, W.L. and Guler, C.E. (2016), "A meta-analytic review of authentic and transformational leadership: a test for redundancy", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 634-652.
- Dinh, J.E., Lord, R.G., Gardner, W., L., Meuser, J.D., Liden, R.C. and Hu, J. (2014), "Leadership theory and research in the new millennium: current theoretical trends and changing perspectives", *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 25, pp. 36-62.
- Hannah, S., Lester, P. and Vogelgesang, G.R. (2005), "Moral leadership: explicating the moral component of authentic leadership", in *Authentic Leadership Theory and Practice: Origins, Effects and Development Monographs in Leadership and Management*, Vol. 3, pp. 43-81.
- House, R., *et al.* (2001), "Project GLOBE: an introduction", *Applied Psychology: International Review*, Vol. 50 No. 4, pp. 489-505.
- Pirson, M.A. (2017), *Humanistic Management: Protecting Dignity and Promoting Well-Being*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Plas, J.M. (1996), *Person-centered Leadership: An American Approach to Participatory Management*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Silin, R.H. (1976), *Leadership and Values: The Organization of Large-Scale Taiwanese Enterprises (No. 62)*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Waddock, S. (2016), "Developing humanistic leadership education", *Humanist Management Journal*, Vol. 1, pp. 57-73, doi: [10.1007/s41463-016-0003-5](https://doi.org/10.1007/s41463-016-0003-5).
- Winston, B. and Ryan, B. (2008), "Servant leadership as a humane orientation: using the GLOBE study construct of humane orientation to show that servant leadership is more global than Western", *International Journal of Leadership Studies*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 212-222.