

# “Great Finns” - Perspectives on Greatness, Charisma, and Good Leadership”

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## SECTION 3 || General Issues in Management

### “Great Finns” – Perspectives on Greatness, Charisma, and Good Leadership

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#### Abstract

Across the years, the ways to exercise power and themes of greatness have inspired the human minds. Leadership has been defined in many ways over time. Sometimes it has been seen as a quality of certain great men, whereas at other times it has been seen as an ordinary skill to be learnt and taught. One particular type of leadership, namely, charismatic leadership has been a topic of interest for both researchers and managers. Nationality, masculinity, gender, heroism and ideology are concepts and phenomena strongly tied with charisma and greatness.

The aims of this article are:

- ◆ to put forward some themes on charisma, greatness and leadership based on the previous studies;
- ◆ to study what is greatness and what is valued and admired in a person ?

The empirical part of the article is based on data derived from the 2004 television programme *Great Finns*, the format of which the Finnish Broadcasting Company bought from the BBC.

On the basis of the present study, then, the primary significance of greatness can be defined as follows: Greatness is a historically significant and effective deed or achievement, which was initiated at a socially important moment and which specifically promotes Finnish identity, independence, and every-day well-being. Traditionally it has been stated that male stereotypes fit better to strategic management with visions and female stereotypes better to administrative and operational management. However, it might be fruitful to challenge this opinion, and make more critical research around the gender issues.

**Key words:** Charisma, greatness, leadership, gender.

**JEL classification:** M19.

#### 1. Introduction

Across the years, the ways to exercise power and themes of greatness have inspired the human minds. Leadership has been defined in many ways over time. Sometimes it has been seen as a quality of certain great men, whereas at other times it has been seen as an ordinary skill to be learnt and taught. One particular type of leadership, namely, charismatic leadership has been a topic of interest for both researchers and managers. The literate Finnish translation of the word charisma is “a gift of grace” (Aaltio and Takala, 2000). From the point of view of leadership, then, charisma implies charm and influentality based on the personal qualities of the leader. The leader’s “glow” and “personal strength” generate compliance and conformity in the followers. Gabriel (1997) states, that to many people in organizations (and society) top leaders do not appear altogether human. “The Big Boss” is the object of acute curiosity, fascination and gossip, the more so when followers rarely catch sight him/her, and then in ceremonial occasions. A physical and psychological gulf seems to separate top leaders from ordinary organizational members or citizens.

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who often fantasize about their leaders. In these fantasises, leaders can feature in different ways – as benevolent, father like figures, as demonic destroyers, saviors, heroes etc

But we need some new ideas and concepts when evaluating leadership and charisma. Nationality, masculinity, gender, heroism and ideology are concepts and phenomena strongly tied with charisma and greatness.

The aims of this article are:

- ◆ to put forward some themes on charisma, greatness and leadership based on the previous studies
- ◆ to study What is greatness? Sub-questions under this heading are: What is valued and admired in a person? What makes a person a hero, a great person, and a good leader? Why are ethical considerations necessary in making such distinctions and definitions?
- ◆ to study How are greatness, heroism, charisma, and leadership reflected in discourses? Sub-questions here include: What is perceived as significant from the point of view of qualities valued and what kind of a personal profile can be drawn from the descriptions? What directs one's formulation of the concept of greatness?

As methodological approach discourse analysis is used.

## **2. The Concepts of Charisma, Greatness and Leadership**

### ***2.1. Charisma***

Prior the 1980's, the charismatic leadership was a relative obscure research topic within the field of organizational behaviour. Since the late 1980's, however, the interest in the topic has grown significantly (Conger, Kanungo and Menon, 2000). Charismatic leadership in organizations has been recently focused in several organizational studies (like Steyrer, 1998; and Gardner, Avolio, 1998), even if the the basic conceptual (Bryman, 1992; Conger and Kanungo, 1987) as well as empirical (like House, 1977) work has been done in that field from 70's until now. Origin of charisma discourse dates back to Weber (1964). Weber asserted that the basis for follower attraction under charismatic leadership was a perception that the leader was extraordinary: "Charismatic leader is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least... exceptional powers and qualities... which are not accessible to the ordinary person but are regarded as divine or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader" (Weber, 1964).

In general, there is nowadays a tendency to focus on personality issues, like charisma of the leader, in relation to organizational contexts more often compared to earlier times. At the same time dramaturgical perspectives on leadership and charisma have emerged, and fantasies, intuitions, visions and other mental activities have been recognized to have role also in leadership (Harvey, 2001).

The interrelationships between the leader's inner world and its outcomes have effect on the nature of organizational culture and even strategic choices made in the company, as pointed out in the many investigations. Among the outcomes are so called "dark sides" of personality issues of leaders on organizations, as emphasized in the psychodynamic approaches (Kets de Vries, 1984).

Partly the discussion on charisma in leadership and organizations has carried the tone of danger. Charisma has been seen as politically dubious characteristics of individuals in the society and it has been searched the psychological mechanisms which lead to the emergence of charismatic leaders and their attraction to the people that follow them. For instance Lindholm has studied extremely destructive charismatic leaders like Hitler, Manson and Jim Jones and their impact on the society (Downtown, 1973; Conger, 1990). Totalitarian aspects of societies and truth manipulation practiced by charismatic leaders are seen negative and undesired consequences of it at societal

level. Images of charismatic leaders are coloured by these gloomy examples taken from the history.

At the same time charisma is stigmatized by the gloria given to a few and rare. Charisma can serve not only the personal interests of the leader, but also the larger society (Allert, Chatterjee, 1997; and Robbins, 1992, p. 151). Selfishness and narcissism of a charismatic leader may come together and lead to undesired consequences, whereas unselfishness and sacrificing features of a charismatic leader can be seen to cause desired and admirable consequences (see Takala, 1997). The nature of charisma is not very rational. It works between the leaders and the followers, it is evidently not very rational by nature, not based on authority of the leader given to him only because his or her overwhelming knowledge or experience but more based on the personal features of the one. Accepting charisma, from the followers point of view, can be seen as dubious and showing the tendency to become impressed by others, a kind of sign of weakness and subordination. Charisma of the leaders, and its acceptance on behalf of the followers might leave space for "irrational" forces in the society is the message of suspicious approach towards charismatic leadership. This gives extra space for persuasion and manipulation tendency in charismatic leadership processes. Charismatic followership (Takala, 2005) can be seen crucial in understanding the charismatic leadership and the processes where it takes place.

Overall, discussion on charisma has been held from the beginning of the century, but even the ancient philosophers like Plato (see Takala, 1998) talked about charisma, society and leadership. Political leaders were focused. Recent developments have brought insights that emphasize the organizational contexts of charismatic leadership, as well as its consequences on the organizations and followers. It looks as if charismatic leadership comes in question especially when visionarity, transformational role and emotionality of leadership are explored.

Plato's view of leadership, as a normative standpoint, was that a leader must be a man of power with a sincerely truth-seeking vision. This point of view comes close to the Weberian concept of charisma discussed above. Plato saw that a leader must have charisma, the gift of grace, to be successful in his actions. Without it, a leader is not able to do his job, to be the head of an organization. And this charisma is something mystical which cannot be obtained by force or by training. It is of divine origin (Takala, 1998).

Charisma, in terms used by Max Weber, means literally "the gift of grace". It is used by Weber to characterize self-appointed leaders followed up by people who are in distress and who need to follow the leader because they believe him to be extraordinarily qualified. The charismatic leaders' actions are enthusiastic, and in such extraordinary enthusiasm a way is given to fraternization and exuberant community sentiments. For this reason, charismatic heroes and prophets are viewed as truly revolutionary forces in history (see Gerth & Mills, 1964). Weber emphasizes that the charismatic leader is self-ordained and self-styled. The foundation for this self-styling is the charismatic leader's "mission". He sees his role and actions to be his destiny. The role of a follower is to acknowledge this destiny, and the authority of genuine charisma is derived from the duty of the followers to recognize the leader. The very nature of charismatic authority is unstable; this is because the source of charisma is continuously "moving on". It will never be stable and unchanging.

As Weber (1964) states, charismatic leadership usually arises in times of crisis when the basic values, institutions, and legitimacy of the organization are brought into question. Genuine charisma is connected with something "new". And in extraordinary situations this "new" thing calls forth a charismatic authoritarian structure so that charisma, at least temporarily, leads to actions, movements, and events which are extraordinary, not routine, and outside the sphere of everyday life. The evocation of pure charisma and charismatic leadership always leads at least temporarily away from the world of everyday life; it rejects or transcends routine life. Because pure charisma and charismatic leadership conflict with the existing, the established order, they work like a catalyst within an organization. But charisma is the specifically creative force in an organization only briefly before being unavoidably transformed or routinized into some more solid form.

The legitimacy of charisma and charismatic leadership is sociologically and psychologically attributed to the belief of the followers and is not so much the quality of the leader. The leader is in this respect important because he can "charismatically" evoke this sense of belief and can thereby demand obedience. Weber thought that the unavoidable fate of charisma is routinization and institutionalization. Pure charisma is personal, direct, radical and extraordinary (Pekonen, 1996). The authority of charisma is based on belief, after which the charismatic leadership as a movement is successful, then charisma becomes ordinary; charismatic leadership becomes routinized, depersonalized, and deradicalized. Therefore, the nature of belief may also be transformed (Weber, 1964).

The early developments of charisma and charismatic leadership have guided understandings in the field until now pointing the individual characteristics of the phenomena. Charisma is based on the aura of the exceptional quality of the leader and do not have its origins in the prototypical. The prototypical is downright "anti-charismatic" because it corresponds to normative expectations, to what is anticipated (Steyrer, 1998). Recent discussion on charisma has dealt more with the *organizational context* of using the charismatic way of leading and the processes of charismatic leadership between the leaders and the led. During the last 15 years research has been done at the area of charisma in leadership. According to Steyrer (1998, p. 807) charismatic leadership has been explored in different frames, like in comparing management and leadership, in comparing transformational and transactional leadership and in the analysis of charisma phenomenon. Examining leadership in terms of its dark sides for the organization and for the followers has triggered perspectives with origins of psychoanalysis, focused on questions on what is the impact of charismatic leadership influences on the followers and on the organization

## **2.2. Leadership**

Leadership theories can be divided into *transactional* and *transformational* ones. In transactional approach leaders are seen as people who guide and motivate their followers in the direction of established goals by clarifying their role and task requirements. There is also another type of leader who inspires followers to transcend their own self-interests for the good of the organization and who is capable of having a profound and extraordinary effect on his or her followers. Among these leaders, who can be called as transformational ones, are charismatic leaders like Mother Teresa and Lee Iacocca. They use their personal abilities to transform their followers values by raising the sense of importance and value of the tasks (Robbins, 1992, p. 151). The inspirationality of leadership function is emphasized in these approaches. In 1980's and 1990's research has been done on that area.

Consider a dominant leadership theory of the last ten years, transformational or visionary leadership. James M. Burns coined the term "transformational leadership" in 1978 in reaction to the "transactional" leadership of the previous two decades. Burns and others criticized the leadership theories and contingency models of the 1970s and 1980s for being contractual, mechanical, and promoting procedures over purpose. These observers argued the need for a leadership that would be unifying and encouraging from the heart rather than merely utilitarian. It has been difficult for the potential-leader in-the-trenches to distinguish between the transformational leadership of today and the charismatic, great man, "leaders are born not made" theory of old. Attempts to clarify this distinction by focusing on concepts such as common vision, core values, and empowerment have only clouded the issue. Too often, the examples given evoke the traditional perceptions described earlier. Creating and communicating a common vision seem to many to be a task beyond comprehension, let alone completion. The ability to inspire others via value-related activities or empowerment appears to be largely a function of personality and charisma. When Jack Welch, the transformational leader of GE, comments on the subject, he suggested as if the concept of leadership and the character of the leader are one and the same: Good business leaders create a vision, articulate the vision, passionately own the vision, and relentlessly drive it to completion. Above all else, though, good leaders are open. They go up, down, and around their organization to reach people. They don't stick to the established channels. They're informal. They're straight with people. They make a religion out of being accessible. They never get bored telling their story (Appelbaum, Leroux, Hebert).

Olsson (2002) has studied leadership as archetype, e.g. in New Zealand. She states that two parallel paradigms of leadership as archetype emerge from the New Zealand executives self-representations. The Ulysses paradigm reiterates a pattern of “*heroic masculinity*” and includes more acceptance of confrontation, while the Xena (female) paradigm provides an emphasis on the humour and on the motivation of others. In both paradigms leadership can involve self-sacrifice and even isolation. Yet the dominant theme is of the passion and excitement of the quest. Xena and Ulysses enact parallel patterns. Together they constitute the gendered heroes.

Ball and Carter (2002) take a critical stance and advocates an approach to the study of charismatic leadership which acknowledges historical, political and economic origins of the production and dissemination of knowledge about it, and its effects on the everyday manager. This approach is necessarily inclusive of Foucaultian notions which see power as everywhere, pervading the minutiae of social relations, and strategically codifying in vast institutions and practices. They suggest that the grand discourse of new managerialism influences everyday managers to project a charismatic identity in order for them to get results in their departments in terms of staff commitment, motivation and empowerment. Managers of today are all subject to the charismatic gaze.

### **2.3. The question of followership**

The willingness of followers to be influenced by the charismatic leader is in part based upon their *trust* in the leader. Given the often lofty visions of charismatic leaders and the implementation challenges that these visions pose, follower trust is essential to goal accomplishment and, as such, to the long term viability of the mission. The charismatic leader must therefore endeavour to foster deep levels of follower trust. Three qualities of a leader contribute significantly to follower trust. These include (1) identifying and articulating a vision; (2) setting an example for followers that is consistent with the values of the leader espouses; and (3) promoting group cooperation and the acceptance of group goals. Follower trust is also built through a demonstrated concern for follower needs, risk taking, personal sacrifices, and unconventional expertise. Specifically, leaders will be perceived trustworthy when they advocate their position in a disinterested manner and demonstrate a concern for followers’ needs rather than their own self-interest. Charismatic leaders do so by making such qualities appear extraordinary. They transform their concern for followers’ needs into a total dedication and commitment to a common cause they share, and they express these qualities in a disinterested and selfless manner. They build trust in themselves by engaging in exemplary acts that are perceived by followers as involving great personal risk, cost, and energy. The personal risk might include the possible loss of personal finances, the possibility of being fired or demoted, and the potential loss of formal or informal status, power, authority, and credibility (Conger, Kanungo, Rabindra and Menon, 2000).

The establishment of a shared vision and collective identity, coupled with strong follower commitment to the leader and elevated effort, can produce high levels of internal cohesion, value congruence, and performance potential. Many leaders want to be charismatic. Charismatic leaders are seen to be effective and influential. They have personal power which is not a typical feature of the “ordinary” leader. However, there seem to be a “dark side of charisma” and some communicative problems between the leader and their followers. Charismatic leadership processes might leave more space for persuasion and manipulation processes between the leaders and the led, and therefore ethical questions may be of relevance. The charismatic leader uses *power* over his/her followers, but also his/her followers have power over the leader. So, this relation is interactive by its nature. The *ethics* of charismatic leader is a question of how to use power, i.e. how and in what manner. The aims and vehicles of leading are the main objects, when one evaluates the ethical behaviour of the charismatic leader (see Takala, 2005).

The appeal of “Greatness” is often combined with *narcissism*. Narcissistic personalities both claim to long for “strong leaders”, and yet are unwilling to accept leader’s claim to authority for any period of time. To a narcissistic individual, any notion of leadership is both necessary and unbearable. It is necessary as a psychological defense against anxiety, at the same time it is unbearable since it threatens the autonomy and self delusions of the ego. The only acceptable leader is one

who not only has truly outstanding qualities but one who must constantly “prove” these qualities. Narcissists, therefore, find themselves profoundly ambivalent in their relations to their leaders. According to Gabriel organization peopled by narcissists, all leadership romance is eventually doomed, ending in cynism, with leaders seen as impostors and usurpers. The stronger the romance with specific leaders, the greater the final disappointment which they are likely to generate (Gabriel, 1997).

*Characteristics* that differentiate charismatic leaders from noncharismatic ones are seen by Robbins (1992, p. 151) self-confidence, complete confidence in their judgment and ability, a vision, idealized goal that proposes a future better than the status quo, strong convictions in that vision, willingness to take high risks and engage in self-sacrifice to achieve their vision, behaviour out of the ordinary as well as radical change taking instead of caretakers of the status quo. Prototypicality is out of charismatic leadership, because it corresponds to normative expectations, to what is anticipated. Charisma is based on the aura of the exceptional/exemplary quality of a leader (Steyrer, 1998, p. 811). In general, leadership is that part of executive action that is directly attributed to the inner life of the leader, to her personal vision, her imagination and fantasies. The self-confidence that she/he manifests and her/his ability to impress and to persuade others rely on certain theatricality (Lapierre, 1991, p. 72).

The term charisma has been used to represent different concepts during different phases of leadership research. From its origins in the New Testament, the concepts of charisma is transmogrified from a divine personal characteristic into a constellation of situationally appropriate behaviours, and then into a characteristic of organizational cultures that substitute for personal leader. The *multiplicity* of charisma has extended charismatic leadership theory from the domain of theology to multiple facets of the organizational sciences. Shifting conceptualizations of charisma that emphasize different elements have facilitated the study of leaders traits, leader behaviours, situational contingencies, leader and the organizational communication (Takala, 1997) and organizational cultures (Paul, Costley, Howell and Dorfman, 2002).

Let us take an example and consider the phenomenon of Finnish leadership, specifically from the viewpoint of charismatic leadership. According to Kostamo (2004), the history of the Finns offers a relevant context in which to examine the particular features of Finnish leadership. The so-called Winter War, fought in 1939-1940 against the Soviet Union, was a major historical event which moulded our national spirit and also shaped our leadership styles. There is a significant relationship between Finnish independence and World War II. The fact that Finland was able to retain her sovereignty as a result of the war, in contrast to many other small countries, has been considered a miracle by many. However, the country was obligated to pay heavy war indemnities to the Soviet Union. The whole nation joined in this massive effort, which further strengthened the national spirit. Nowadays Finland is a modern information society, an industrialised country with large metal, pulp and paper industries, and also a leader in ICT technology. All this recent history contributes to the phenomenon of Finnish leadership. In his book *The Unknown Soldier*, Vainö Linna portrays a “good” leader in the Finnish sense. Lieutenant Koskela is a man of honour with inborn skills of leadership. His leadership style could be called “leading amidst his followers”. He is “one of the guys”, not a superior officer above the ranks. And he certainly has charisma: his followers’ bindings to him are based on emotion, not on formal status. As a leader he is able to build trust and commitment. Koskela is an archetype of the Finnish leader. Other charismatic figures in Finnish history include Field Marshal *Mannerheim*, wartime commander-in-chief of the Finnish army, and President *Kekkonen*, who led the country for a record 25 years. Both are good examples of Finnish masculine charisma. Still, this kind of role model could well be problematic for modern leaders. The archetype of a “Great Warrior” might pave the road for an authoritative model of leading. Finnish leaders are known for their straightforward leadership style, which is often referred to as “management by perkele”. The phrase contains a swearword in the Finnish language, implying that in the extreme this style of leading can mean rude and commanding management practices (see Takala, 2005).

### 3. Discourse analysis as the research method

The term “*discourse*” has been defined as sets of arrangements that bring social objects into being (Parker, 1992). In using the term “organizational discourse” we refer to structured collections of texts embodied in the practices of talking and writing that bring organizationally related objects into being as these texts are produced, disseminated, and consumed. Consequently *texts* can be considered to be a manifestation of discourse and the discursive “unit” on which the researcher focuses (Grant and Hardy, 2004). Accordingly “discourse analysis” is the systematic study of the texts, in this study e.g., studying comments put forward in the Internet.

The study of organizational discourse does not, however simply entail particular practices of data collection and analysis revolving around the study of texts. Discourse helps us to construct reality through the “way it rules in” certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write or conduct oneself” and also “rules out” limits and restricts other way of talking, writing and answering. Discourse acts as a powerful ordering force in organizations, and in the society too (see Grant and Hardy, 2004). In this study, the formation of discourses are seen as a way to look the comments of greatness from variety of perspectives. Greatness seen as discursive phenomenon needs so called “language-focus”. It is becoming increasingly recognized that language contributes to the reproduction or transformation “of existing social and power relations”. Language use – in speech and writings – is form of social practice that both shapes and is shaped by social structures. The processes of discursive constitution are not ideologically neutral, though they appear naturalised, so that underlying assumptions are often opaque of the readers of the texts (Coupland, 2005).

How meanings are negotiated in the society? And how *struggles* are shaped in the societal practices? These points are set forth in this study. Organizations (Finnish citizens, or “voters”) do not start out “possessing” meaning: their meaning and meanings are created and contested as a result of discursive interactions among societal actors and organizational publics with different interests. As a result, a dominant meaning often emerges as alternative discourses are subverted on marginalized. This article contributes to our understanding of these processes. More specifically, we try to demonstrate how dominant meanings are cemented in the discourse of greatness and charisma, presented in the jargon and comments about “Great Finns”.

### 4. The empirical consideration – discourses of charisma, greatness and leadership

#### 4.1. Research questions and “textual” background of the study

How do Finns argue for greatness? Can a good leader and the person voted in 2004 as the *Greatest Finn* be characterised in the same way? What are the descriptive profiles of these two? These are issues that we explore in our article. The more specific research questions are the following:

1. *What is greatness?* Sub-questions under this heading are: What is valued and admired in a person? What makes a person a hero, a great person, and a good leader? Why are ethical considerations necessary in making such distinctions and definitions?
2. *How are greatness, heroism, charisma, and leadership reflected in discourses?* Sub-questions here include: What is perceived as significant from the point of view of qualities valued and what kind of a personal profile can be drawn from the descriptions? What directs one’s formulation of the concept of greatness?

The empirical part of the article is based on data derived from the 2004 television programme *Great Finns*, the format of which the Finnish Broadcasting Company bought from the BBC. The programme series was composed of the following phases. The first voting for the greatest Finn was done in spring 2004 as a nomination voting in which the viewers voted for their own candidates as the greatest Finn. To support this voting, a committee comprising experts and academics elected 99 great Finns as the candidates for the second voting. These persons included scientists



and artists, politicians and opinion leaders, influential persons representing the economic and entrepreneurial community, spiritual leaders and benefactors, as well as sports heroes and entertainers. The viewers cast their votes on a candidate from this list or outside the list between 29 February and 15 March 2004. Some 75,000 votes were given over the two-week period. The viewers chose one hundred greatest Finns, including great men and women, living and deceased. Some needed no introduction, but the list also included some surprising and more unknown persons. There were 32 candidates who had not been on the original list of candidates. Ten people in the ranking order of votes were entered in the final phase for the title of the greatest Finn. After this, the ten candidates were ranked according to their "greatness" during 31 October and 5 December, 2004. *The Greatest Finn* was then published on the eve of Finland's Independence Day, 6 December, 2004. Simultaneously with the TV programmes and votings, an Internet discussion was running on the topic. Our research is mainly based on the discussion related to the question of "What is greatness?" The purpose of the analysis is to address this question, as well as how "greatness" is constructed through discourse. Concepts and thoughts derived from the data are also presented in connection with the analysis of the main theoretical concepts of the present study.

#### 4.2. Forming the discourses

##### 4.2.1. The main discourses on greatness

This chapter summarises the most significant elements of greatness emerging from the discourses used by Finnish voters to describe greatness. Their views on greatness be classified into two categories: a) realistic discourses on achievement and influentiality, and b) philosophical discourses on values and virtues, which we refer to as the main discourses on greatness. Their order of significance was obtained by tabulating the frequency of the different arguments. The following table gives a summary and comparison of the shaping of the main discourses of this study.

Table 1

Summary of the main discourses

Greatness	<u>Realistic discourse of achievement</u>	<u>Discourse of values and virtues</u>
Subject	I, the individual	We, togetherness
Constituents	The individual in relation to his/her actions and achievements The individual in relation to time, history	Man in relation to other human beings, nature, being Man in relation to timelessness, immortality
Character	Concrete, distinct, realistic	Abstract, striving toward the ideal
Measurable	Yes	No
Degree of influentiality	High	Relative
Occurrence	In times of crisis, evolution, transition	Situation-bound
Focus	National level	Universal, level of mankind
Rhetoric methods of argumentation	Threatening, comparison, basis of existence and identity	No justification, philosophy of good vs. bad, ethics, morals, religion

When the frequencies of the different elements of greatness were measured we found that four out of five definitions had to do with concrete deeds and power of influence in different spheres of life, toward different objects and in relation to time. One argumentation in five, correspondingly, defined greatness in the name of equality, solidarity, values and virtues.

In the achievement discourses, the significance of an action was usually evaluated in relation to time. The endurance of acts and their impacts against the ravages of time, for both past and future generations alike, emerged as the primary criterion for greatness in the discourses of achievement. A long historical life span was regarded as one condition for greatness.

What rose as second in importance in the achievement texts was the frequently mentioned need to determine comparable measures before defining relevant arguments for greatness. Voters wanted some classification and measures by which to evaluate the achievements – for example, the significance of an act in relation to its object, time or influentiality. The basic idea in these comments was to position the evaluators in the same perspective and context in order to achieve a fair and just outcome.

In estimating the greatness of an act in terms of its object of influence, we found that the significance of an act's influentiality on Finland and the Finns surpassed global and international concerns. Values like sacrificing oneself for the cause of the fatherland and national sovereignty, together with so-called "unsung heroism" – toiling for the good of the Finnish people, doing one's duty, clearing the path for future generations – show that greatness actually means great deeds for the good of "Finnishness", in war as in peace and in everyday domestic life. We interpret this to mean that greatness in the eyes of the voters was based on actions that reflect honesty and a sense of responsibility and represent commitment and dedication in the frame of one's own sphere of life.

However, in the light of the achievement discourses, Finns do not emerge as mere "parochial patriotic fanatics" – as the advocates of the above standpoints were called by one voter. Voters also saw greatness in actions that they valued from the perspective of their global influentiality. For example, Finnish achievements in various scientific disciplines of international significance and influence gained support from the voters.

Cultural acts and their contribution to the shaping of a Finnish identity were also seen to describe greatness. These were deeds that had had a decisive impact on the birth and development of the Finnish language. Scientific achievements also had their advocates among the voters – especially Finnish achievements in the field of medicine, mentioned in numerous comments.

In summary, the messages in the *Great Finns* discussion forum indicate that, for Finns, greatness above all denotes good and honest deeds, true achievements that are significant to the Finnish identity and to Finnish society, throughout history and into the future. Greatness refers to a heroism of hard work, of sacrifice and of knowledge: immortality that spans generations.

The other main discourse, a more philosophical discourse on values, defined greatness without specifying either action, object or actor, and instead emphasised the equality of all human beings and the impossibility of putting people or their life's work into a ranking order. Selecting the greatest Finnish individual or deed was seen to underestimate the solidarity and collaboration of the Finnish people and to underrate human dignity and equality. Greatness was considered as something more than just reputation, fame or actions, and also relative to and dependent on the perspective taken. In the value discourses, various values and virtues and acts that withstood ethical examination were treated as synonymous with greatness, but without concretising any achievements. Greatness in these discourses crystallises into a value which underlines equality and collaboration, into a hyperonym for different virtues and ethical attitudes and acts. The texts imply an ideal goal but do not delineate the context: greatness is in every human being and in people together, in their virtues and their goodness, and there are no measures by which to measure it.

#### ***4.3. Profiles of ten great Finns and voters' evaluation of the elements of greatness***

The finalists were evaluated on a scale of 1-5 by online voters on 7 December 2004 in connection with Internet voting, and are listed in ranking order by the number of collected votes. The evaluation results of the finalists in the *Greatest Finn* competition are presented in Table 2.

Evaluation of the finalists in the *Greatest Finn* competition

What makes this finn great?	Genius	Courage	Leadership	Empathy	Legacy to posterity	Personal average
1. Mannerheim	4.05	4.67	4.81	3.77	4.78	4.41
2. Ryti	4.04	4.77	4.56	4.06	4.7	4.42
3. Kekkonen	4.16	4.57	4.73	3.94	4.55	4.39
4. Ehrnrooth	4.11	4.86	4.83	4.53	4.88	4.64
5. Halonen	3.97	4.64	4.49	4.74	4.53	4.47
6. Ylppö	4.29	4.41	3.89	4.71	4.85	4.43
7. Agricola	4.22	4.13	3.26	3.51	4.89	4.00
8. Sibelius	4.77	3.96	3.13	3.49	4.89	4.05
9. Kivi	4.56	4.44	2.52	4.14	4.83	4.1
10. Lönnrot	4.26	4.22	3.09	3.93	4.87	4.07
Finalists' average	4.24	4.47	3.93	4.08	4.78	4.30

### *Men's and women's favourites*

Based on the information given by the online voters, it appears that men and women voters had different favourites for the title of *The Greatest Finn*. The three favourite candidates of male voters were C.G.E. Mannerheim, Risto Ryti and Urho Kekkonen, while the top three among female voters were C.G.E. Mannerheim, Tarja Halonen and Arvo Ylppö. (<http://www.yle.fi/suuretsuomalaiset>)

The results of the votes and the voters' evaluations make it possible to draw certain conclusions about the elements of greatness in general and in the case of individual candidates:

- ◆ Legacy to posterity received the highest points as an element of greatness (average points for all finalists: 4.78). Voters evaluated the legacy of Agricola and Sibelius to be the most valuable, the average points for both being 4.89. They were followed very close behind by Ehrnrooth (4.88) ja Lönnrot (4.87). Tarja Halonen, the only living candidate, collected the lowest average and even she received 4.53 points.
- ◆ Courage was ranked as the next criterion for greatness (average of all finalists 4.47). The "bravest of the brave" was Ehrnrooth (4.86), while Sibelius was deemed to possess least courage (3.96).
- ◆ The criterion of Genius received an average of 4.24 points. Sibelius (4.77) was considered to possess the highest degree of genius whereas Tarja Halonen received the lowest average points (3.97). Kivi also obtained a fairly high average for genius (4.56).
- ◆ The lowest average points among the five greatness criteria were given to Empathy (4.08) and Leadership (3.93). President Halonen was considered most empathetic (4.74), slightly ahead of Ylppö (4.71). Sibelius, in turn, was estimated to be the least empathetic of the finalists (3.49).
- ◆ Ehrnrooth received the best points for Leadership (4.83), with Mannerheim close behind (4.81). The weakest leader in the voters' view turned out to be Kivi (2.52). Leadership was also the criterion for which the range of variation was widest (2.52-4.83). The total average points given to Finnish leadership were lowered further by the relatively low points of the other cultural representatives: Agricola (3.26), Sibelius (3.13) and Lönnrot (3.09). On the other hand, the professional leaders raised the overall average correspondingly. It is easy to compare leadership among the representatives of culture and science, on one hand, and governmental and military leaders, on the other hand, simply by dividing the table in half at the middle. Of the ten

greatest Finns, the top five in the table are representatives of the national government, of the fatherland and of leadership in the nation's independence. Leadership among them reaches an overall average of 4.68. The representatives of care and culture occupy the latter five rankings, collecting an overall leadership average of only 3.18.

- ◆ Even though the cultural representatives fall behind the leaders with respect to leadership, they pass the leaders by a narrow margin in their legacy to posterity. The legacy left by Ylppö, Agricola, Sibelius, Kivi and Lönnrot received a high overall average, 4.87. But Finns also value highly the work that has been done and is being done for the fatherland: the overall average obtained by Mannerheim, Ryti, Kekkonen, Ehrnrooth and Halonen is 4.69. This result matches the heated debate on patriotism and the war memories in the discussion forum *Great Finns*.
- ◆ By summing up the averages of all ten finalists for the five greatness criteria it is possible to form a "profile of greatness", which obtains an overall average of 4.3. In other words, this is the average of the finalists' averages, which might be called "the overall grade for greatness among great Finns". Calculated for the five criteria at the individual level, Ehrnrooth (4.64) gets the highest profile, leaving Agricola (4.00) to mind the rear. This ranking order is not the same as the order of the ten greatest Finns based on the number of votes. When the ten greatest Finns by the number of votes, the ten greatest by the points of the greatness profile, and the five most appreciated elements of greatness are placed into ranking order and next to each other, we get the following results:

Table 3

Results of the vote for *The Greatest Finn*

A	B	C
Ten Greatest Finns by number of <u>votes</u> (total 363 731 votes)	Ten Greatest Finns by <u>greatness profile</u> (on a scale of 1-5)	Elements of greatness based on finalists' <u>averages</u>
Mannerheim (104 244)	1. Ehrnrooth (4.64)	1. Legacy to posterity (4.78)
Ryti (80 790)	2. Halonen (4.47)	2. Courage (4.47)
Kekkonen (57 456)	3. Ylppö (4.43)	3. Genius (4.24)
Ehrnrooth (27 477)	4. Ryti (4.42)	4. Empathy (4.08)
Halonen (26 536)	5. Mannerheim (4.41)	5. Leadership (3.93)
Ylppö (22 136)	6. Kekkonen (4.39)	
Agricola (15 794)	7. Kivi (4.1)	
Sibelius ( 15 397)	8. Lönnrot ( 4.07)	
Kivi (7 622)	9. Sibelius ( 4.05)	
Lönnrot (6 099)	10. Agricola (4.00)	

Column A: Greatest Finns, ranking order of voting results with collected votes in parentheses. Column B: Greatest Finns in ranking order by point averages for elements of greatness given by voters. Column C: Total averages of the ten finalists' elements of greatness evaluated on a scale of 1- 5. The tables and their interpretation are based on WWW information published by the Finnish Broadcasting Company (Appendix 1).

A synthesis that could be drawn from a discourse analysis of the discussion forum *Great Finns* and the results of the vote for *The Greatest Finn* is that greatness in the Finnish context might be inter-

puted as being personified in Carl Gustav Mannerheim, who emerged as *The Greatest Finn*. He represents those deeds and achievements which seem to meet the most significant criteria for greatness: firstly, endurance against time, especially of efforts made for the Finnish nation, the fatherland and national sovereignty. Mannerheim got his votes from both women and men, and rose to his post as an esteemed hero particularly for his leadership skills. From the viewpoint of his legacy to posterity, however, he is surpassed by all five cultural representatives: Agricola, Sibelius, Lönnrot, Ylppö and Kivi. Mannerheim won his status as *The Greatest Finn* by collecting the highest number of votes, but he loses to Adolf Ehrnrooth on the personal average of the elements of greatness (genius, courage, leadership, empathy, legacy to posterity). Ehrnrooth obtained a higher overall average, 4.64, for all elements of greatness and he is, by these criteria, *The Greatest Finn*. However, according to the rules of the *Great Finns* programme format, Mannerheim was the clear favourite of the voters. By gaining the overwhelming majority of the votes it is he who is “the greatest of the great”.

Voters used various expressions in the discourses of the discussion forum to describe what they considered as the most significant evidence of greatness: endurance against time of a candidate's actions and achievements, immortality, remaining in history, etc. The online voters gave the highest average points to the criterion “legacy to posterity”. Greatness was also characterised in the discussion forum by virtues and personality characteristics. In the competition for *The Greatest Finn*, the other criteria for the candidates' greatness included courage, genius, empathy and leadership. Of these, courage and empathy emerged as determinants of greatness in the discourses as well. However, the overall picture of the personality traits by which greatness was described in the discourses (lovingness, fairness, a desire for peace) appears more gentle and literally more virtuous than the elements of greatness set down in the programme concept (leadership, genius, etc.).

## 5. Results and discussion

We see that following concepts are crucial in the evaluation of the results.

- ◆ ideology
- ◆ hegemony
- ◆ gender

### *Ideology*

Ideology means those ruling definitions and ideas which are emergent in the society.

The discussion on values partly reveals the significance of the basic Finnish values – *home* and *fatherland* – making them quite transparent. *Religion* was not so pronounced in the comments, surpassed as a significant value by *fairness or justice*. The quantitative distribution of the different types of main discourses looks interesting in that it allows for a rough interpretation of classifying four out of five (80%) Finns as “doers” while every fifth Finn (20 %) is a “thinker” by type. This classification is the outcome of surface observation and would require a more in-depth approach for verification. As the procedure for producing (i.e. writing) the research data was uniform for the informants, in other words, an Internet discussion list with uniform question items, we have deliberately not addressed the issue of discourse contextuality in this paper. When the findings of the study are related to the concepts and topics addressed in this study, it appears that the most significant values for Finns are concrete, historical actions and achievements. It is through them that true **greatness** is manifested. In addition, fairness and impartiality are important in evaluating greatness. The significance thus established can be interpreted on the basis of the discourses concerning the parameters and categorisations used – these kinds of discourses came second to the assessment of how timeless and lasting the actions taken actually were. It seems, then, that it was felt that greatness cannot be evaluated without first establishing some criteria.

Besides timelessness and the necessity of evaluation criteria, the findings also show some other characteristics of greatness which were mutually equally important among the Finnish informants. These include pro-patriotic actions and deeds, sacrifices made for independence, cultural achieve-

ments promoting Finnish culture and identity, as well as outcomes of everyday heroism. In addition, the number of discourses in the same ranking of significance included the more philosophical discourses on equality which did not analyse or specify the actual deed or actor.

On the basis of the present study, then, the primary significance of greatness can be defined as follows: Greatness is a historically significant and effective deed or achievement, which was initiated at a socially important moment and which specifically promotes Finnish identity, independence, and every-day well-being.

### ***The hegemony of masculine heroism***

Hegemony means to us those mental structures of domination and power present in the society.

The key concepts of the study are in many ways interrelated. Charisma is particularly connected with greatness and heroism. Many candidates in the *Greatest Finn* competition are symbols of Finnish competencies, great men and women, and their charisma is first and foremost based on exemplary heroism. A considerable number of the discourses analysed in the study indicates that the concept of charisma is composed – in accordance with Weber – of special talent and exceptional influence, which leads to heroism under unusual circumstances and in intensive situations and which may vary from sacrifice to exceptional ability and competency. Weber's view of the concretisation of charisma is quite suitable as a comparison point for both the war heroism during Finnish independence and for the creation and admiration of the long-standing cultural and scientific innovations of difficult times. The charisma born out of actions has also always had a kind of a niche created by the circumstances of the time in question. Admiring every-day heroism and defining it as greatness are also in accordance with Weber's writings in that the goals of charismatic persons do now have to be revolutionary in any sense to cause change in traditional practices and value rankings. Further, his definition of charisma as a personal virtue is reflected in the discourses of the present study, which characterise charisma by combining sacrifice, dedication, and intensity of influence with the personality and visionary skill of a person. Through charisma, a charismatic person convinces others to believe in his/her goal. Even in this respect, then, it would be quite difficult to surpass Mannerheim as the symbol of both Finnish greatness and charisma.

Charisma in the empirical section of this study is intertwined with heroism, virtues, and admiration of leadership. Although the thinking patterns of Weber's times are still visible in today's discourses, the definition of charisma is now more situational, embedded in the admiration of deeds, achievements or actors' virtues. In other words, the multifaceted equation of charisma is composed of suitable persons, an opportunity, and goals to be shared. There is no accurate formula to the equation, as the interactive nature of charisma still lacks unambiguous verbalisation. Thus, charisma remains a fascinating and mysterious phenomenon, regardless of the fact that some more aspects of a joint understanding of its nature have become more evident through this study, too. The concepts of greatness, charisma and leadership, however, gain their justified admiration and appreciation only when complemented by the qualifier "ethically proper". "Ethically proper greatness, ethically proper charisma, and ethically proper leadership" and the related actions indicate high morality in their intentions and outcomes. An ethical analysis is needed to reveal potential deceitfulness, manipulation, and pursuit of own interests.

In *conclusion* and as a general statement, then, the study indicates that greatness is primarily an outcome of historical deeds and achievements, that charisma is born out of both exemplary and every-day heroism, and that leadership is a combination of multi-talent and greatness. The social significance of these concepts is at its greatest in the contexts of "Finnishness" and patriotism.

Leadership theories can be read identifying with forms and realizations of "idealized masculinity". Theory of charismatic leadership is developed ignoring the idea of gendered organizational realities. Understanding it as a gendered field in leadership means a way to develop its essence towards multiplicity of values, including those typical for female and male stereotypes. Post-weberian theories of leadership and charisma are fruitful in understanding the *gendered* nature of charismatic leadership. The close connection between transformational leadership and leadership-

charisma is nearer to male stereotypes with established risk-taking, change orientation, and affirmation. Traditionally it is said that male stereotypes fit better to strategic management with visions and female stereotypes better to administrative and operational management. However, it might be fruitful to challenge this opinion, and make more critical research around the gender issues. There are much fewer female leaders than men, and there are much fewer charismatic female leaders than male ones. The whole idea that leaders use power, fit better to male ideals compared to female ones. Transformational leadership, part of any charismatic leadership with a strong, visionary and change agent-type of leading style fits better to male stereotypes than to female ones. Again the bad consequences of charismatic leadership style look to be gendered again: men's actions lead to warring, women's to chaos and manipulation that threatens the ruling class ways that are suggestive. They both use the magic, the divine vision and the holy truth with divine origin, but end with bad consequences: killing people or rising patriotism that leads to war. A bad female charismatic leader might look as a witch, and a bad male charismatic leader as a devil, the sins they commit with, differs. A good charismatic leader is portrayed as self-sacrificing, inegoistic, and visionary in a sense that does not hurt anybody else, but works for other, more commonly shared and accepted targets, the holy mother and the humble saint would be the examples (see Aaltio and Takala, 2005).

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