

PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS

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After pondering how we as scholars might help in the COVID-19 pandemic, we issued the following invitation on March 30, 2020.

As co-editors of Advances in Global Leadership, we have been pondering the role of global leadership in pandemics, given the current COVID-19 crisis. Because this topic has not been addressed previously, we decided to add to the forthcoming volume 13 a chapter entitled "Perspectives on Global Leadership and the COVID-19 Crisis" that consists of analyses written by global leaders, practitioners, and global leadership scholars. We would be honored if you would join this project and write at least a one or two page perspective by April 14th. We will curate all the submissions into one article that will be co-authored by all of you.

We realize this is a short time period (a necessity given the manuscript deadline), but we thought it would be interesting to put ourselves in the same type of context that global leaders find themselves in – inadequate time and ability to gather enough data to make firm conclusions, quick deadlines wherein a decision must be made, uncertainty, and high risk for having one's ideas and decisions be seen as being woefully in error when looked back upon from the future. In fact, we are giving you two full weeks to write when global leaders have to assess situations, analyze them, and then make decisions often in a day or less.

You are free to analyze and share your perspectives from any lens, perspective, angle, or genre of writing that you would like. The only boundary conditions are that your analysis should focus on how global leaders/global leadership has impacted the human response to the COVID-19 pandemic. AGL generally relies on the following construct definitions of global leadership:

The process of influencing the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors of a global community to work together synergistically toward a common vision and common goals (Adler, 2001; Festing, 2001).

The process and actions through which an individual inspires and influences a range of internal and external constituents from multiple national cultures and jurisdictions in a context characterized by significant levels of task and relationship complexity (adapted from Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall & Osland, 2017).

We hope that you will participate in this invitation to write under similar conditions that global leaders find themselves in – having to make decisions and take action on multiple issues simultaneously in a VUCA context – and that you will find the challenge to do so both an interesting and exciting one. Please let us know if you are up for the challenge.

To our delight, twenty-two collaborators accepted our challenge to share their insights and wisdom. We did not edit their work (other than the random comma, etc.). We also excerpted the work of two authors that was already in print. As with our usual submissions, we have divided them into Scholarly Perspectives and Practitioner Perspectives. Their order is chronological according to the date of submission (or publication in the case of the two excerpts). This chronology provides another window onto how rapidly the crisis unfolded and changed, along with our perspectives.

Please note that these perspectives reflect only the authors' opinions on topics of their choice; they do not reflect the opinions of their employers or the AGL editors.

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SCHOLARLY PERSPECTIVES

LEADERSHIP, COMPLEXITY AND CHANGE: LEARNING FROM THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

March 27, 2020

Richard Bolden

What a difference a few days make... Perhaps it's the sunny Spring days after a long, wet winter; the dog walks spent chatting with teenagers who would normally be off at school; the unexpected free space in my diary with no expectation that I should be in the office; or because so much of what we take for granted has changed so suddenly.

At the time of writing we are in the fourth day of the lockdown called by the UK government to slow the spread of the Covid-19 virus. It's been a tense few weeks as the wave of infections grew ever closer – no longer focussed within a far and distant sounding part of China but causing havoc across Italy, France, Spain, the UK and now it seems, pretty much every part of the world. A quarter of the global population – a staggering 2 billion people – are currently in some form of lockdown, confined to their homes in order to slow the spread of the virus and, in so doing, allow time for governments and health services to prepare for the spike in patient numbers and the inevitable rising death toll.

Almost overnight UWE, Bristol – like universities, schools and colleges around the world – closed its doors and shifted from face-to-face to online delivery. Staff and students have responded with huge adaptability – revising delivery and

assessment processes that would have taken months, if not years, through traditional channels. The speed and the scale of changes for organisations in every sector and location are unprecedented. Manufacturers have switched their operations to enable the production of essential items such as ventilators, face masks, hand sanitiser and paracetamol that are now in such high and urgent demand. Governments have drawn up detailed plans to support individuals and organisations at risk of redundancy/bankruptcy – casting aside the usual economic concerns to focus on social priorities such as protecting the vulnerable, supporting those in financial difficulty and strengthening core public services (particularly health and social care). And communities have rallied together in ways not seen since WWII – providing support and reassurance for the elderly and isolated, sacrificing personal liberties for collective benefit and finding new ways to connect, communicate and collaborate.

In the words of the Chinese curse we are indeed living in interesting times (1) – both fraught with risk and opportunity. The turbulence of the last few years has revealed deep divisions within society, as illustrated particularly clearly in the Brexit vote within the UK and Trump presidency in the US. The rise of populism has been associated with scepticism and distrust of experts and evidence, with social media providing the perfect echo chamber for amplifying the polarity of perspectives and questioning the nature of ‘truth’. Differing ideologies and beliefs have been positioned in opposition to one another – them and us, winners and losers, do or die – rather than as an inevitable and desirable characteristic of a diverse and inclusive society, which enables creativity, adaptability and resilience in times of complexity, uncertainty and change.

One of the remarkable consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic has been how quickly it has reset the dial on many of these issues – fostering calls for compassion, solidarity, and collective action. At times like this it is our similarities rather than our differences that define us. This is as true for those in positions of power and privilege as those who are marginalised and/or find themselves living in precarity. We are all susceptible to the virus, all have people we care about who are likely to become very ill or perhaps even die should they catch it, and will all be affected by the economic and social impacts of the outbreak – not just for the months that it lasts but for years to come. The capacity of individuals, families, organisations, communities and nations to weather the storm is not equal, however, with those with least access to financial, emotional, and other resources most likely to bear the brunt of the suffering.

An unexpected outcome of Covid-19 is the impact on the environment. The reduction in pollution levels around the world during just the relatively short time in which travel, manufacturing and other environmentally damaging activities have been reduced demonstrates both how directly human activity impacts on the environment and the remarkable ability of the environment, and the animals and plants within it, to recover if given the opportunity. For those who have been calling for a step-change for policy, practice and behaviour towards a more sustainable way of life there is no more compelling evidence of the extent to which this is possible and the environmental benefits it would produce.

For those of us interested in leadership research, education, and practice there are many important lessons to take from the current situation. I'm sure everyone will have their own take on events but as a starter for ten here are a few of my own takeaways so far.

- **Shared purpose** – after winning a significant majority in the general election of December 2019 Boris Johnson and his government focused on building a sense of urgency and commitment to 'getting Brexit done' that largely entrenched rather than unified opinions around this issue. With Covid-19 the focus has completely shifted to a shared purpose that unites rather than divides individuals and communities. It took a little while to get to this point but, for now at least, the nation is far more unified around a common purpose than it has been for many years.

- **Collective leadership** – whilst there is a tendency to equate 'leadership' with the traits and behaviours of individual 'leaders' the Covid-19 pandemic demonstrates the need for individuals and groups to work concurrently and collaboratively in order to achieve leadership outcomes. In daily news briefings, Prime Minister Johnson and members of the cabinet have stood alongside the Chief Medical Officer and other experts to provide clarity and direction to an uncertain population. Whilst this is perhaps the most visible 'leadership' at national level it is abundantly clear that it is dependent on significant acts of leadership elsewhere as well as the active 'followership' of those responding to calls for care and consideration.

- **Systems change** – the Covid-19 pandemic is an inherently complex problem that requires expertise and effort from multiple domains to make sense of the issues and to mobilise timely and effective responses. The concept of 'systems leadership', increasingly advocated within public services, highlights the need to influence and leverage engagement across organisational, professional and other boundaries. Frequently this means needing to lead without formal authority – to work with principles of complexity and systems thinking to initiate new patterns of behaviour that spread from one context to another. It also involves dismantling and rebuilding systems, structures, and processes – both physical and psychological – that constrain rather than enable transformation and change.

- **Sensemaking** – in times of ambiguity and uncertainty leadership has a key role to play in helping people to make sense of the situation(s) in which they find themselves. The people who will be recognised as 'leaders' are those who are able to frame the context in a way that acknowledges the nature and severity of the issue(s), addresses the concerns of their constituents and which provides a degree of clarity about the actions/responses that are required. Within the US Andrew Cuomo, the Governor of New York, has emerged as key national figure in mobilising the response to Covid-19 – providing far greater clarity and direction than Trump and now being mooted as the democratic candidate for the next US election despite not even standing as a nominee.

- **Place based leadership** – whilst many national figures have struggled to grapple with the scale and implications of the issues posed by Covid-19 local leaders have often responded far quicker and been more effective at mobilising public, private, voluntary and community groups and organisations to collaborate and respond. Place-based leadership is responsive to the context that surrounds it – drawing together multiple perspectives and expertise to address issues of concern to citizens within a particular locale

– and will be essential not only in dealing with the immediate effects of Covid-19 but in the long period of rebuilding and recovery that will follow the pandemic.

These are just a few initial reflections and there is far more that could be said. Looking forward I have no doubt that the Spring of 2020 will be seen as a defining moment in our understanding of and engagement with leadership, complexity and change. I only hope that we learn the lessons and make use of them to create a stronger, healthier, kinder, safer world rather than defaulting back to the divisive and destructive policies, practices and behaviours that preceded the current crisis.

Source: Published with permission of the Bristol Leadership and Change Centre Blog at

<https://blogs.uwe.ac.uk/leadership-and-change/leadership-complexity-and-change-learning-from-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

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COVID-19 AND CREATING THE FUTURE WE WANT

April 2, 2020

Dame Polly Courtice

Many people will be feeling uncertain, anxious and even scared. And, of course for others, this has already reached crisis point. But if there is any solace to be had, it is that we are facing this unique moment in history together, 7.8 billion of us, going through the same experience at the same time, creating an unprecedented bond between us.

It is tempting to talk about getting ‘back to normal’, but we will almost certainly not go back to the way things were. In fact, going back to ‘normal’ is also not what many millions of people aspire to or deserve. For many, the current system has failed to deliver health, wellbeing, and prosperity. Now that the lack of resilience in the ‘old’ system has been revealed, alongside our ability to mobilise vast sums of money and resources when the economy is at risk, expectations will have been raised about what else is now possible in the face of other crises.

Globally, we have to take this moment to reflect on the need to change and transform our society; to explore lessons from the past and reset our expectations for the future. The shocks to the system that we are experiencing now, and anticipate in future, raise so many questions about the things that we have taken for granted, and demonstrate what is possible when we need to respond urgently. Given how many system shocks we see as coming – this is a crucial time to be asking some big questions.

The way nation states govern, coordinate responses, and spend; the relationship between business, government and civil society; the relationship between globalisation and localism; the dominance of competition over cooperation; how and why we work and consume; our attitudes about what we value in society and how we relate to one another; what we need to let go of, and what new possibilities might open up. All these things are being challenged and disrupted. For some, this crisis will harden whatever views they previously held – but for others it will shape new possibilities and understanding. The reality is that our very way of life is likely to be profoundly changed forever. This is an opportunity to shape the future, not just respond to it.

There are some principles that we can trust in and rely upon. For example, the laws of nature, the laws of physics, the inter-connectedness of human and natural systems, the emerging clarity about our interdependence and what we value as societies, and the importance of science to inform evidence-led decision making.

These fundamental principles remind us that what we are experiencing now, despite its magnitude, is a mere dress rehearsal for the system shocks that lie ahead, unleashed by climate change and ecosystem collapse, and the inevitable impact on our human systems if left unaddressed. The decade that we earmarked for getting our climate on track for net zero by 2050 and making progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals will now play out in a new paradigm, where transformational change takes on wholly new possibilities. We can undoubtedly emerge as a stronger global community and more resilient society if we seize the opportunity of this crisis, of this wake-up call, to collectively chart a course towards the future we want.

Source: Published with permission of the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership at <https://www.cisl.cam.ac.uk/news/news-items/creating-the-future-we-want-and-covid-19>.

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GLOBAL LEADERSHIP FAILURE: A CASE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

April 3, 2020

Vlad Vaiman and Margarita Vaiman

Our leaders are failing us once again. Once again, after SARS, Ebola, the 2008-09 worldwide economic recession, and other pivotal events, our governments cannot and will not work together synergistically toward a common goal. That common goal now is to defeat probably the most serious global threat to our civilization that we have seen in generations, the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic has brought to the forefront the deep failures of our leaders to work together, and this time the outcome of these failures can be truly devastating. Any global problem of this nature, significance, and scale definitely requires a global approach (Brown, 2020).

So, what prevents our leaders from getting together to find that global approach? After a few decades of speedy globalization, the world has fairly recently started to experience a multitude of opposite trends. Nationalist, and sometimes, openly extremist movements in the USA, Austria, Brazil, Denmark, Hungary, the UK, and several other countries have gained some popular support, found their ways to their country's parliaments, and begun influencing – now through the legislative power – both internal and external policies of their respective societies. These policies sowed much division and created deep societal fractures not only within their own countries but also in the international arena, which lead to even more profound divisions even between long-term economic and political allies. And now, when we all need to unite to face the existential threat of COVID-19, our leaders and governments find themselves more isolated, uncooperative, and helpless than ever before. Despite China making a decision to hide the outbreak from public eye in the beginning of 2020, the EU, the USA and the UK apparently knew about an upcoming pandemic already in November-December 2019 but never shared any details with each other and did nothing proactively to get ready.

Another important issue is that there seems to be no single country or leader out there willing and able to take charge in the fight against the pandemic. The traditional world leader, the United States, has vacated this “position” at the end of 2016, when “America First!” slogan has become a prominent feature of its official foreign policy. And even if they wanted to, the USA could not lead the world in this fight, given the magnitude of trouble the country itself is having while dealing with the pandemic. To start, there is still no nationwide policy that would regulate the government response to the pandemic. Out of fifty states, about a quarter (as of April 2, 2020) has no stay-at-home orders, despite continuous warnings from experts. Also, there seems to be at least two feuding power centers governing the COVID-19 response in the White House – one led officially by the Vice President, the other one, unofficial, led by the President's son-in-law. In addition, there is a constant confusion emanating from conflicting messages coming out of the White House and the President in particular, who gives one type information one day, and then something completely opposite the next. All in all, this paints a clear picture of the top leadership's failure to deal effectively with a national emergency within one of the largest and certainly the richest country in the world. So, relying on the United States and its leadership at this point is not an option.

There is some good news though. Faced with a lack of competence and leadership both locally and on the global scale, other constituents picked up the

slack and stepped up to the fore. A considerable number of business and community leaders around the world – entrepreneurs, CEOs, university presidents, clergy, scientists – as well as philanthropists, NGOs, and many others have taken great initiatives to lead and safeguard those they serve (Slaughter, 2020). One excellent example of such initiatives is Open Source Ventilator, a project led by a global virtual team of scientists, journalists, business people, professors, engineers, designers, medical professionals, and other volunteers working together to develop a low-cost, and more importantly, an open-source ventilator to help save lives and facilitate the recovery of COVID-19 patients (OSV, 2020). There are hundreds of similar examples all around the world, which should give those affected by COVID-19 and the rest of us much needed optimism and comfort.

Not all hope is lost for our leaders, however. We strongly believe that a solid collaborative global response is still possible. To accomplish that, each country should follow the following recommendations. First, create a small but nimble inter-governmental agency that would coordinate worldwide medical efforts related to COVID-19s – collecting, processing, and disseminating statistics on the spread of the disease, symptoms, effects of medications, etc. Yes, there is WHO, but it does not seem to be able to deal with global emergencies the way a smaller agency would. It is therefore important to ensure that each country starts sharing its COVID-19 information with each other and that new agency in order to have access to the up-to-date information and a possible course of action. Second, each country should commit to emergency economic measures, such as temporary elimination to tariffs and other barriers to supply chains, thereby providing an easier flow of health-related products and medications. Third, each country should declare a temporary moratorium on tax collection and guarantee payments to workers who lost their jobs, as well as to everyone forced to stay at home to uphold the quarantine. Those countries that cannot afford to implement these measures should be guaranteed assistance from international financial institutions (e.g., the World Bank). There are quite a few other measures, but the ones described above could be a good start. Only united and with the help of our global leaders, will we able to beat any global emergency, including COVID-19.

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THE BAT EFFECT: *GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IS NORMAL LEADERSHIP* IN TIMES OF CRISIS

April 8, 2020

Kristine (Rikke) Nielsen

The concept of the butterfly effect known from chaos theory illustrates the idea that small changes such as the movement of the wings of a butterfly can cause large scale systemic change. In terms of the corona crisis, it was presumably not the metaphorical wings of a butterfly, but the actual wings of a bat that set in motion a train of events that led to the global Covid-19 pandemic. The crisis has swept across the planet demonstrating the global interconnectedness of business, pleasure and politics.

The Olympics of Everything has been cancelled, disrupted or even closed. At the same time, for a large group of managers, work life goes on under conditions close to business as usual: The global leaders. Now, however, these everyday working conditions of geographical dispersion, VUCA-environment and paradox coping have become common property of managers in general during the crisis. Even managers of small, local businesses are now experiencing and exercising “extreme leadership” – a term that has been used to characterize the job role of global leaders (Osland, Bird & Oddou, 2012, p. 107). While the interconnectedness of countries, businesses and people is not new per se, this point has been taken home and to the extreme in a new way and include new groups. This exemplifies that global leadership research and practical knowledge of global leadership is also relevant for non-global groups of businesses, managers and employees – in particular in times of crisis, but also more generally in times of “normal.” The Covid-19 pandemic illustrates how “leadership” and “global leadership” – in theory and practice

– could benefit from more joint exploration going forward (Osland, Nielsen, Mendenhall & Bird, 2020; AGL’s Volume 13 Call for Papers).

Global crisis – local responses

The increasingly blurred boundaries between “home” and “away” in a globalized world may have caused or exacerbated the Covid-19 crisis, and the crisis itself have united businesses and populations in a common global quest to combat corona. The responses to the crisis, however, have been extremely local. Governments and health authorities have pursued highly different paths to deal with Covid-19 depending on the institutional set-up and the national cultural values. Borders have been closed, and people have been encouraged to show citizenship by buying local products. This emphasizes the fact that organizations and interactions may be global, but business is local and subjected to the very different local responses of different nations. We are in a situation of decentralized, yet interconnected globality.

This emphasizes the need to continuously pay attention to the “local” as an integral element of global leadership, not is opposite – even for managers operating in a truly global environment. Global leadership has been defined as ‘the processes and actions through which an individual influences a range of internal and external constituents from multiple national cultures and jurisdictions in a context characterized by significant levels of task and relationship complexity’ (Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2017, p. 556). Covid-19 crisis, refugee crisis, financial crisis, and climate crisis are all examples of global crises with (too?) local responses. In time of crisis, the aspect of the GL definition that highlights coping with a broad range of jurisdictions and cultures comes to the fore.

Rapidly developing pandemic vs. natural catastrophe in slow motion

Unlike the rapidly developing Covid-19 pandemic, the climate crisis develops more slowly and has been referred to as a natural catastrophe in slow motion. COP26 has been postponed due to the Covid-19 crisis, while global warming continues – but we also see a window of opportunity opening. What if governments and business acted with the same agility and resolve in handling the climate crisis as they do in confronting Covid-19 In terms of public/political global leadership, one might hope that Western governments will develop a new understanding for the not-so-active stance on combatting climate change of developing countries, because they have now experienced firsthand/remembered how your worldview can be clouded, when short term challenges prevent you from seeing the bigger picture. At the same time, citizens across the globe have experienced how for instance air pollution in cities have dropped to historically low levels reminding us that even one month of united abstinence can make a big difference for the common climate good – if we act decisively.

Burning platform – learning platform

Being apart together and leading from a distance through digital communication channels is an integral part of global leaders’ collaborative repertoire. Global leaders working under conditions of limited physical contact need to be virtually intelligent – and they need co-workers and employees that possess technological dexterity. During the Covid-19 crisis, the use of virtual collaboration, teaching and meeting has exploded, creating a burning platform for a giant naturally occurring experiment of digital transformation. Both experienced virtual collaborators and well as newcomers have had to reimagine their work entirely or take their digital interactions to a higher level.

This virtual collaboration system stress test can also be considered a “learning platform” for global leaders going forward. An enormous creativity has been unleashed in term of new ways of handling present absence, and we should tap into/crowdsource the collective wisdom and creativity in terms of what can be do achieved together even if we are apart. Many employees have experienced a steep learning curve, transforming their work life in ways that seemed unrealistic and unsustainable only months ago. When the

dust settles (and the Western world goes back to thinking about the stress and obesity epidemic as their main health concerns...), global leaders and global leadership researchers should be careful to harvest the learnings about virtual connectivity from this period. Among other things, we could reflect on the amount of (inefficient?) time we usually spend on spending time together in vivo, what the exact nature of the “presence premium” actually is, and how being together at the same time is a necessary requirement for efficient virtual collaboration.

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Dynamic Balancing as a Core Quality for Global Leaders in Crisis Time

April 13, 2020

Yih-Teen Lee

With the unexpected spread of Covid-19 across the whole world, human beings have encountered the biggest crisis in modern history. There is an increased urgency to sustain health care systems to save life. Business organizations, at the same time, are seriously

affected and feel uncertain about their survival in the future as a result of extended confinement measures. Millions of workers have lost their jobs and filed for unemployment benefits, if available. If not, they are simply left to survive on their own. Although no one is capable of fully comprehending the impact of Covid-19 at this moment, human beings need to act collectively and quickly to confront such unprecedented challenges. Given global leaders' role in enacting the "process of influencing the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors of a global community to work together synergistically toward a common vision and common goals" (Adler, 2001; Festing, 2001) "in a context characterized by significant levels of task and relationship complexity" (adapted from Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall & Osland, 2016), they are expected to assume crucial responsibilities in leading people and societies to navigate safely through this huge storm and rebuild the future when the crisis passes.

Honored to share some humble reflections on the roles of global leadership in such crisis time, I center my thoughts around the concept of *dynamic balancing*, which refers to the ever-evolving and ongoing process of attending competing demands and formulating one's response to address multiple logics simultaneously. Global leaders need to cultivate a dynamic balancing mindset, and consciously activate it in formulating their vision and behavioral strategies in specific context. I present three specific dimensions of dynamic balancing for global leadership in the current crisis.

The first dimension that requires dynamic balancing in global leadership is *global collaboration – local protection*. Facing a crisis of this scale and scope, well-coordinated collective efforts are necessary for inventing effective medical treatments, for mobilizing resources and materials globally, and for designing adequate economic mechanisms to save businesses and jobs. Yet, what we are seeing so far, at least at the country level, has not been very encouraging. Whereas it is virtuous and fully legitimate for governments and leaders to protect and take care of their own people in difficult times, an overly self-protective attitude, and the actions it engenders, may prevent countries from collaborating to effectively tackle the crisis. Those in global leadership positions are expected to embrace broader visions with longer time horizons and embrace the profound interdependency of human beings in critical global affairs, in formulating their strategic responses. In fact, isolation and self-protection may not be fruitful even in the short run, if the scale and scope of the challenge are larger than the capability of any single company or country. This seems to be the case in the Covid-19 crisis.

A second, and related, dimension is the dynamic balancing of *long-term – short-term perspective*. Without doubt, global leaders face pressing demands and imperatives of urgency on many fronts during times of crisis. We work against the clock in crisis periods. Whereas global leaders need to ensure short-term needs are met in a fast and efficient way, they also need to exercise their balancing capability to foster long-term thinking and foresee future consequences of their decisions. In fact, in critical moments, the decision we make now will determine how our world and life will become in many years. It is, therefore, the responsibility of global leadership to instill such dynamic balance in their day-to-day decision-making.

The third dimension for dynamic balancing is on *positive – negative emotions*. People experience fear, anxiety, anger, and frustration when their health, family, job, and business are threatened or hit by crisis. Uncertainty and ambiguity usually provoke self-defensiveness. Although negative emotions can be functional in keeping people focused on critical issues and urging people to mobilize resources to address a problem, they can have detrimental effects when they cause people to become narrow-minded and lose the vision to see broader possibilities with longer time horizons. It is the role of global leaders to instill positive emotions, with a sense of hope and love, to enable their people to see

possible directions ahead. As a result, people may broaden their perspectives and build creative solutions to solve current challenges with enhanced level of global collaboration.

Global leaders need to mobilize both poles of these dualities and manage these seemingly opposite elements in resolving problems and leading people to collectively create a better future. However, it does not imply that global leaders should always favor the former end of the three pairs of duality (i.e., global collaboration, long-term perspective, and positive emotions). Balancing is the key. This should be a dynamic process with constant monitoring, contingently reinforcing certain poles when the balance is driven to the other ends by situated exogenous and endogenous factors. Under crisis, it is understandable that leaders respond to short-term local protective needs, sharing the gravity of negative emotions with their people. However, it is exactly in such moments that global leaders should mindfully activate dynamic balancing to bring in broader perspective and better equilibrium that allows better quality decision making. This is not an easy task. To do so, global leaders need courage and wisdom to make tough decisions that, if made in the spirit of dynamic balancing, will pave the way for a brighter future for all of humanity.

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LEADERS' RESPONSES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS: A FAILURE OF RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

April 14, 2020

Günter K. Stahl

Throughout the COVID-19 crisis we have seen examples of leaders at all levels of government, business, and civil society who rose to the challenge, took personal ownership, and demonstrated authentic human concern. One of the iconic moments of this pandemic was when sailors aboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt applauded their commander, Capt. Brett Crozier, as he disembarked the ship for the last time – an overwhelming show of support for their leader who was relieved of his command by his superiors. Docked in Guam, COVID-19 was racing through the USS Theodore Roosevelt. The Navy physicians on the aircraft carrier estimated that at least 50 of his sailors would die if all 5,000 personnel remained onboard in tight quarters. Crozier requested that the vast majority of his crew be evacuated and quarantined while the ship was professionally cleaned. His direct superiors denied this request and searched for other solutions. After four days of

waiting while the virus continued to spread throughout the ship, Crozier sent a letter to 20 other Naval officers in the Pacific region sharing his request for evacuation. One of the recipients leaked the letter to the press and Crozier was sacked for circulating the letter broadly via unsecured email.

While what he did might technically have been a breach of security, Capt. Crozier has been viewed by many as having done the right thing. For U.S. military officers, a foundational leadership principle is that the well-being of the sailors and soldiers always come first, and that they should never be put at unnecessary risk. According to John Kirkby, a retired rear admiral in the US Navy, the removal of a commander who had his crew “at the center of his heart and mind in every decision” right in the middle of a potentially deadly epidemic aboard his ship “was reckless and foolish”, sending “a horrible message to other commanding officers” (John Kirkby, CNN, April 3, 2020). In other words, Crozier engaged in responsible leadership that broke rules that minimally impacted Naval security in the face of irresponsible leadership from on high.

There is another important leadership lesson to be learned from this case. In times of crisis, top-level leaders – be it in government, the military, or business – need to empower those who lead on the front lines, and not punish mistakes. Missteps can happen, as in the case of the above Navy officer who skipped the chain of command. But failing to act would have been much worse in a situation where the virus would have assuredly raged through the aircraft carrier. Effective crisis management requires qualities such as sound judgment, decisiveness, the ability to take quick action in the face of critical threats, and empathy and genuine care and concern – qualities that Capt. Crozier exhibited in the crisis and that his superiors seemed to be sorely missing.

Among the many glaring failures of leadership and accountability that we witnessed as the crisis unfolded were the actions, or non-actions, of many world leaders. While many democratic governments bungled their response to COVID-19 through their denials, delayed responses, and lack of preparedness for a crisis of this magnitude, many authoritarian leaders endangered the lives of millions with their lies and deceptions, the suppression of information, and with attempts to use the crisis for political gain. Hungary’s Viktor Orbán, for example, seized the opportunity of the outbreak to expand his powers to rule by decree, with no end date, and imposed further restrictions on free speech.

Not surprisingly, trust in governmental/ political leaders suffered in the crisis. In the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer’s 10-country survey on trust and the coronavirus, politicians and government officials were the least trusted sources of information, along with journalists and the news media (Edelman 2020 special report). Corporate executives ended up in the middle of the ranking; and scientists and health authorities emerged as the most credible source of information, with eighty-five percent of respondents saying they wanted to hear more from scientists and less from politicians; and nearly 60 percent worrying that the crisis was being used for political gain.

Amongst the many cases of government leaders who mishandled the crisis are some notable exceptions. For example, led by *Tsai Ing-wen*, Taiwan’s first female *president*, the Taiwanese government was quick to respond to the crisis and

took early decisive measures, including a travel ban, strict punishments for anyone found breaching home quarantine orders, and large-scale testing. Business leaders, too, have gained the trust of their employees and other stakeholders by responding decisively and responsibly to the coronavirus outbreak. Despite some glaring failures of leadership and accountability on the part of corporate executives (e.g., the Uber CEO's refusal to take responsibility for the health and safety of their workers during the COVID-19 crisis), it was encouraging to see that businesses from Alibaba to Amazon were mobilizing to help in the fight against the global pandemic (World Economic Forum, 2020). For example, Jack Ma, through the Alibaba foundation, donated 1.1 million testing kits, 6 million masks, and 60,000 protective suits and face shields to be sent out to African countries.

Despite these notable exceptions, what is clear is that from a responsible leadership perspective (Mendenhall, Zilinskaite, Stahl & Clapp-Smith, 2020), most political and business leaders failed to adequately address the global dimension of the crisis. A global challenge such as the coronavirus outbreak requires a global response; but instead of coordination and collaboration across national borders we saw countries sealing off their borders in an attempt to slow the spread of the pandemic, blaming other countries and competing for scarce resources, and even engaging in absurd conspiracy theories. Responding to a 'grand challenge' like a pandemic requires cross-country and cross-sector collaboration (e.g., partnerships with NGOs, public sector entities, and even competitors). Nitin Nohria (2020), in a lucid description of what organizations need to survive a pandemic, stresses the importance of distributed leadership (as opposed to centralized leadership), networked structure (as opposed to hierarchical structure) and dispersed workforce (as opposed to concentrated workforce), pointing to the need for "a global network of people drawn from throughout the organization that can coordinate and adapt as events unfold, reacting immediately and appropriately to disruptions" (p. 3). He also highlights the importance of global alliances, suggesting that companies should co-develop adequate crisis responses with partners and even competitors.

The bottom line of all this is simple: Local self-isolation and social distancing may be adequate measures to curb the spread of the virus from an epidemiological perspective. In global politics and business, they are a recipe for disaster.

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**LOOKING BACK FROM 2030: DREAMING ABOUT GLOBAL
LEADERSHIP AFTER THE GREAT CORONA PANDEMIC OF 2020
A “CRI DE COEUR” FOR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP POST THE GREAT
PANDEMIC OF 2020**

April 14, 2020

Nakiye Boyacigiller

Emerita Professor and Former Dean Nakiye Boyacigiller looked down on the faces of the graduating class of 2030 of the Sabanci Business School. She loved commencement exercises and relished the chance to share her experiences with students. She had been particularly happy to accept the invitation this year since she was worried that the younger generation did not know much about the bad old days of parochialism, unfettered capitalism and the military industrial complex that constantly put profits before people. That is until the Great Corona Pandemic of 2020 (hereafter simply pandemic) changed all that.

The pandemic had ravaged the world and led to a huge number of deaths irrespective of national borders. While the percent of deaths was higher in less developed economies, the shared experience of helplessness changed how people in the industrialized world viewed their poorer brethren. The Coronavirus could have killed them too, easily. This realization led to an empathy toward the “other” that heretofore had been lacking when it came to relations between the haves and havenots. For the first time, “We Are The World” became meaningful beyond being an idealistic song title.

This change in popular sentiment and concern for others led to profound changes in many institutions. During the pandemic, some of the most amazing change was seen in the pharmaceutical industry (Big Pharma). Contrary to its own past history, Big Pharma had pledged that once a vaccine was found they were

going to provide it gratis worldwide through an industry-wide fund! Still there was a race to be the first to discover and develop a vaccine against the coronavirus. Competition continued to be the core cultural value underpinning the relations between the firms themselves. Three companies were vying to be the first: BigPharmaA (US), BigPharmaB (Switzerland) and BigPharma (Japan). All were in a race to be first to develop a vaccine that could be tested and then distributed post haste. The world was waiting for them anxiously. Millions of lives were at stake. Their respective teams were working 18-20 hour shifts. The then CEO of BigPharmaA, Ziya Esen, worried how long he could expect his team to keep up this pace. In looking for an answer to this dilemma it occurred to Ziya that perhaps working together with their competitors could help them achieve success quicker. Collaborating rather than competing. He reached out to his counterparts at BigPharmaB and BigPharmaC. Ziya knew they were testing similar compounds. They could use the fact they were across 15 time zones to work on the project 24 hours a day. When one team went to sleep the other would take up the work. This would involve sharing data from and access to their respective laboratories. Opening up the laboratories to their direct competitors obviously needed to be signed off by their respective boards of directors. Here again the reaction was surprising, no obstacle was raised, as long as this was going to help the vaccines get to the world faster!

The whole economic system changed for the better. For years Business School faculty like Nakiye had taught about social responsibility and business ethics. Now, finally stakeholders other than shareholders were influencing corporate decisions. The parochialism that was so evident amongst political leaders around the world (exemplified by President Trump of the US) was the complete opposite to the corporate response to the Covid-19. Activists around the world fighting the pandemic, and soon climate change, began to look to managers in multinational corporations for global leadership. In time, most leadership positions within the corporate sector as well as the political sector would be held by individuals with a global mindset.

Nakiye sighed. She had lost several good friends to Corvid 19 herself. Yet as she ended her talk and began taking questions from the graduates she smiled. During her 30+ years as a business school professor who believed in the inherent goodness of people she had often been teased as being too naive. But she had never given up hope. All it took was just a worldwide pandemic to change the world for the better, by reminding people of our joint destiny.

Nakiye A. Boyacigiller is Emerita Professor of Management from both Sabanci University (Istanbul, Turkey) where she served 10 years as Dean of Sabanci Business School and from San Jose State University (California). Born in the US and educated in Turkey, France and the US, her research, teaching and leadership activities all reflect her interests in enhancing the effectiveness of multicultural work groups and cross border collaboration. A dedicated and award-winning teacher and scholar Boyacigiller was active in the international community of business school educators, holding advisory board memberships at GIBS (South Africa), WU (Austria) and at AACSB amongst others. A Fellow of the Academy

of International Business (AIB), Boyacigiller has held leadership positions in the top academic associations in her field including most significantly Chair of the International Division of the Academy of Management (1997) and President of AIB (2014-15).

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THE ROLE OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN A PANDEMIC: BEING POSITIVE?

April 14, 2020

Tina Huesing

At a time when “the pulse of the world beats as one”¹ we look for guidance from health experts and we look for leadership, particularly from our heads of states. They influence the thinking and behaviors of people within the borders of their country and beyond. In a global pandemic global leader emerge, and their different approaches to leadership are discussed and compared. While political leaders work with health experts and develop measures that regulate public life, business leaders need to lead their organizations through the economic downturn and out of the economic crisis.

Leaders emerge who operate in one country and are admired and listened to across larger cultural contexts and geographies. Political leaders appeal to everyone within their countries to follow new guidelines (mainly restrictions) and at the same time influence stakeholders outside of their own countries. Global business leaders address their stakeholders around the world and reassure their customers by adjusting business policies. What do leaders with global appeal have in common?

Numerous leadership studies include comments on leaders’ personality and especially the need to be positive: e.g., extraversion with positive energy, being inspirational, expressing confidence, being charismatic (Burns, 2010; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). And this desire for positivity seems to be universal. “Ideal leaders everywhere in the world are expected to develop a vision, inspire others, and create a successful performance oriented team” (Dorfman, Javidan, Hanges, Dastmalchian, & House, 2012, p. 507). Books like “How to be a positive leader” (Dutton & Spreitzer, 2014) advise us that being positive and optimistic is important, even during tough times. Maybe especially during a crisis, leaders need to encourage and motivate their followers, and to do so, they need to exude positivity and be confidence builders. Positive leaders achieve better results. Business leaders who downsize their operations and lay off employees are expected to do so while putting on a hopeful face and painting a positive picture of the future. This was the advice in previous economic downturns and this will again be the guidance now.

But do inspirational leaders, those who stay positive even in the face of a global pandemic, provide the best kind of leader to lead us out of this crisis and toward the best possible outcomes?

If a leader needs to always be positive to be effective, does that allow for a realistic picture of the current situation? How honest is the leader when a dire

situation is presented as easy to overcome? Recently ratings of political leaders who paint a more realistic picture of a difficult situation have gone up more than ratings of more optimistic, positive leaders. German Chancellor Angela Merkel painted a dark picture when she warned that up to 70% of the country's population - some 58 million people - could contract Covid-19 (press conference March 11, 2020). Afterwards, she announced far-reaching restrictions to manage the health crisis. The vast majority of Germans approved of the measures that were implemented and wholeheartedly follow the restrictions imposed on them. Even as consumer confidence plummeted, Merkel's approval ratings shot up (ICS, Consumer Consult March 24, 2020). Chancellor Merkel's comments were reported not only in Germany but in Europe and throughout the world. For her somber presentation of the situation she is admired well beyond the confines of her country.

The "rallying around the flag" (Mueller, 1970) might not last, but it does suggest that business leaders who will need to make painful decisions might want to take a more realistic, evidence-based stand rather than an optimistic, positive approach when communicating with their stakeholders around the world. If the global leader communicates a realistic picture of the challenging situation the organization is in, this message will have universal appeal and will allow the followers to embrace the difficult changes that will have to be implemented. Global leaders who understand that honesty and facts are valued more than optimism will enable their followers to draw the right conclusions instead of feeling gaslighted.

This does not mean there is no hope. On the contrary. The crisis can provide an opportunity to question long-held beliefs about the business that might no longer be true (Drucker, 1994). Facing the dire facts can lead to questioning the fundamentals, using this time to explore options, experimenting not just with flextime and flexplace work arrangements but with other aspects of the business as well. Then the doors are open to learning, innovation and a bright future.

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LEVERAGING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC TO DEVELOP GLOBAL LEADERS

April 14, 2020

Christof Miska and Milda Zilinskaite

Global leadership in a VUCA – volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous – world has become the norm (Miska, Stahl, & Economou, 2020). Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic redefines VUCA and poses unprecedented challenges for global leaders: national protectionism becoming legitimized, unemployment numbers raising to record-highs, and fundamental personal rights being curbed – all in the name of health protection. These developments make the roles of global leaders appear less relevant, passing the torch to political leaders of local national governments. Even more so, the need for pro-active leadership development seems less relevant and is subject to postponement until after the crisis, perhaps due to anxiety, helplessness or simply the focus being entirely on the situation at hand. However, we believe that the circumstances of turmoil and disorder associated with the COVID-19 pandemic actually provide a unique developmental opportunity for global leaders. In what follows, we describe a student-initiated component we added to our Leadership Lab at WU Executive Academy, in the hope to support students’ learning journey despite – or rather due to – an ongoing global crisis.

WU Executive Academy is the post-graduate business school at WU Vienna University of Economics and Business in Austria. It offers a range of executive business and certification programs, with an annual enrollment of over 2,000 managers and high potentials. The student body is highly diverse, with more than 80 nationalities and a great variety of professional backgrounds represented. In 2018, we launched the Leadership Lab as a compulsory part of the entire first year of the Professional MBA (PMBA) program (typically approx. 100 participants per cohort). This largely virtual course is intended to foster leadership growth, providing reflection opportunities that connect learning points from the various courses to students’ personal development. From a didactical point of view, the Leadership Lab fosters cognitive, affective, and behavioral facets in order to generate a learning context characterized by experiential rigor (Black & Mendenhall, 1989; Mendenhall, 2018). Our regular “Online Reflection Intervention” assignments vary in scope and requirements: from artistic work, to

personalizing sustainable development, to empowering each other as classmates, to discussing PMBA learnings with strangers, and more. Yet they all consistently emphasize the notion of impact via encouraging students to consider the effects that their learning creates not only on themselves but also – through their leadership – on their immediate social networks, organizations, and the broader society.

When in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic started hitting Europe, a student approached us suggesting that we may consider this new context as part of the Leadership Lab. Prompted by this request, which we believe sprung at least partially because there was a learning infrastructure in place for it to occur, we designed an optional online intervention on leadership in times of crisis. The assignment comprises a discussion forum with a number of open-ended reflection questions, each dedicated to a specific thematic strand. It encourages students to reflect upon leadership development under the novel circumstances – with the majority of the cohort under lock-down in their homes across the various countries where they reside. We found the nature of the pandemic to align well with the experiential rigor of the Leadership Lab, since crises habitually involve cognitive, affective, and behavioral facets. According to Ellis et al., (2014), systematic reflection requires three components – self-explanation (a process during which leaders analyze their own behaviors to generate explanations about success or failure), data verification (a process during which leaders aim to think of alternate explanations of events before changing their mental models, and to sidestep potential biases), and feedback (both on overall success and failure as well as on the process of reflection). In posing reflection questions, we broadly followed this approach and considered the first two components directly. For example, we asked students: “What have I learned/observed about myself and my reaction to the situation?” or “Has any of my learning in the PMBA program so far contributed to the way I think about the outbreak or to solution seeking?” (self-explanation) as well as “How could we, as a group (PMBA cohort), contribute to solution seeking?” (data verification; due to students’ geographical co-location in various countries with diverse crisis-management approaches). For the third component, rather than evaluating and judging student performance, we trusted that the process of virtual interaction would provide an organic and self-reinforcing feedback loop; thus, we ourselves started engaging in the discussion as co-learners rather than instructors.

While at the time of writing, the intervention had only started, we could observe students engaging in reflection on their own behaviors in response to the pandemic. In addition, they exchanged specific expertise relevant to actively managing the crisis; they shared hands-on solutions implemented in their workplaces (e.g., an online communication channel for informal virtual socializing within their work teams); and discussed global organizations’ innovative approaches. As follows, with the students’ permission, we share excerpts of some of their early contributions:

- A student from Russia described learning with regard to evaluating her control of the situation: “In the beginning, I checked news, socials and tweets ... I was frustrated ... We are all losing control now; the degree of uncertainty is enormous. It hurts us a lot ... it destroys our self-identification. And my solution was ... [to learn to ask myself] – can I control [the situation]? If [the answer is] no – ‘go by and forget.’ If yes – don’t cry and do what you can

do.” In a follow-up post, the same student described the leadership steps she took to raise the battered morale of her team in the face of significant financial cuts within her company.

- Reflecting on an analytical framework from a past course, a Slovak student asked himself and classmates whether one could employ a similar strategy in analyzing state-level responses to COVID-19: “I see that some of the SCM [Supply Chain Management] principles can be applied to many complex systems in our world, not just organizations. Perhaps, the same frameworks (What, How, How Much and Business / Technical / Leadership dimensions) can be applied to approach the problems we are facing with [COVID-19] ... Would be happy to hear some feedback ...”
- Expressing hope in the global leadership potential of his cohort as a whole, a Romanian student wrote: “Within all our fields, if we manage to get beyond the noise, we could identify some emerging trends and synergies that would [create] a greater positive impact for our communities (companies, cities, countries, etc.)”

Overall, while thorough evaluation of this initiative’s impact on students’ leadership development and competence advancement will only be feasible retrospectively after more time has passed, at this stage we can draw two conclusions. First, taking global leadership development seriously makes it imperative to leverage ongoing rough contexts and situations for learning purposes, even if presently such endeavors might not appear of immediate relevance. Otherwise, we risk developing status-quo leaders capable of dealing with normality or post-factum of a crisis but not as much with the realities of a global leadership context rich in complexity, flow, and presence (Mendenhall et al., 2012). Second, in times where crises seemingly justify national protectionism and de-globalization, it is even more urgent to foster the cross-national and cultural aspects associated with perception, relationships and self-management competencies (Bird et al., 2010) of global leadership.

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LEADING THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL JOLTS

April 15, 2020

Allan Bird

A Global Environmental Jolt

On December 31, 2019 the Chinese government announced treatment of a novel infectious coronavirus. One month later, on January 30 the World Health Organization announced a global health emergency. Over the next 30 days, as the outbreak of infections extended to all continents save one, national governments began implementing a range of policies, many of them culminating in regional and national quarantines and the closure of non-essential businesses. Unemployment soared even as GNP for many countries declined by 25 percent or more through the first quarter of 2020. On March 11, the World Health Organization declared the outbreak a global pandemic.

Practitioners and academics have long characterized the global environment as extremely complex, reflecting a dynamic mix of diversity, interdependence, ambiguity, and flux (Osland, Bird & Oddou, 2012). The Covid-19 pandemic represents a singular event within that complex environment. It is too early to determine whether it reflects what evolutionary scientists refer to as punctuated equilibrium – a cataclysmic period precipitating a dramatic shift to a new equilibrium. But its impact -- like that of a powerful earthquake – is both extraordinary and global. It is a global environmental jolt.

Environmental jolts are defined as “transient perturbations whose occurrences are difficult to foresee and whose impacts on organizations are disruptive and potentially inimical” (Meyer, 1982: 515). Environmental jolts are noteworthy because they: 1) expose critical linkages, 2) test the integrity and

resilience of leaders and their organizations, 3) surface values, and 4) reveal mindsets undergirding adaptive responses. They give rise to unconventional behaviors and afford latitude for experimentation. They also represent unique opportunities to explore the range and contours of global leader capability.

Several features of the pandemic create distinctive challenges for global leaders. First, the jolt exerts impact on multiple fronts – economic, political, social, and medical/health – with the latter imposing particular, uncommon concerns. Second, because of both the health aspects and the size of the economic and social impact, there has been a strong negative affective element. Fear and anxiety are prevalent and have led to overreactions which, in turn, have increased stress, thereby leading to more fear and anxiety. Third, established social support networks, both work/career-related and personal/social, have been curtailed, leading to greater challenges in maintaining psychological health. Coupled with changes in work procedures, many of which decrease or constrain interpersonal interactions, the psychological toll of the jolt is substantial. Fourth, the suddenness and severity of the jolt quickly absorbed slack resources and forced many organizations to substantially curtail major portions of their business operations as well as furlough or cut back work hours for a sizable percentage of their workforce.

Implications for Global Leadership

Given these considerations, global leaders confront several distinctive challenges. First, it appears the pandemic has shifted global leader roles. Reiche, Bird, Mendenhall and Osland (2017) delineate a typology of global leader roles defined by variations in task complexity and relationship complexity. The pandemic jolt pushed leadership roles in the direction of heightened complexity along both dimensions. It triggered changes in task complexity by increasing the variety and flux of tasks to be performed. Task variety expanded through the introduction of new activities required to maintain existing operations under new conditions as well as through increases in coordination activities both internally with other units and externally with similarly-affected buyers and suppliers. Flux intensified as a consequence of rapidly shifting actions on the part of national and local governments. Relationship complexity grew through configurational changes in boundaries in response to increases in virtual work as well as through adjustments in the variety and nature of interdependences.

Paradoxically, even as global leaders experienced sizable resource losses thereby constraining actionable options, they found themselves with more latitude for experimentation. The impact of the jolt shook things up and softened the ground for initiatives that would have been difficult to implement just months earlier. Global leaders with a change orientation are finding myriad opportunities to create new organizational structures, develop new products and services, and to revise supplier and buyer relationships.

One of the defining characteristics of global leadership is the volume of boundary spanning required. The pandemic has pushed that further, compelling leaders to communicate in more and varied ways with stakeholders of all varieties. The size and extent of the jolt is also encouraging more collaborative

behavior as individual organizations acknowledge that resolving many issues on their own has become more difficult given resource constraints.

Finally, as is often the case with environmental jolts, facades crumble away and the non-essential recedes into the background even as the essential comes to the fore. Global leaders are both coerced and set free to focus on that which is most essential: The process of influencing the thinking, attitudes, and behaviors of a global community to work together synergistically toward a common vision and common goals.

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PERSPECTIVES ON GLOBAL LEADERSHIP AND THE COVID-19 CRISIS

April 15, 2020

Tim Soutphommasane

Interpreting events as they are still unfolding carries the risk of premature pronouncement. Yet we can confidently say that the COVID-19 pandemic has been a global crisis characterized by national responses. It has, at least at the time of writing, not revealed much in the form of global leadership.

Rather, we have seen the opposite: the re-assertion of nationalism and the return of the nation-state. Countries have gone their different ways in responding to COVID-19, with varying success in suppressing the rate of infection. There has been little in the way of global coordination or cooperation, despite ample warning from international authorities for years about the risks of a global pandemic.

Many have almost reverted to type, with policy responses seemingly bearing the imprint of national characteristics, or at least that of their national political cultures. Consider China, the US, the UK, Singapore or Hungary (to name a few). COVID-19 seems only to have made national differences grow more distinct.

We seem to be returning to a world where national boundaries will again loom large. Countries have pulled up their drawbridges; the free movement of people has been put on hold. It is possible we are seeing a definitive break from the globalised age most of us had come to know as normal.

Indeed, crises create new realities, and it is likely that we will never return to the old normal. Like it or not, we are arguably now in a transition to something else. The nature of the choices we have are, in broad terms, clear. On the one hand, there is the tempting retreat to a narrow safety, founded on fear and sovereignty. Across continents, we have already seen racism and xenophobia emerge as the default popular response. The dangerous trend towards nationalist populism and authoritarianism will only now deepen.

The alternative is not, as some would say, globalisation or cosmopolitanism. At least, not anything that resembles a superseding of the nation-state. That ideal was perhaps always illusory. The only other alternative available is nationalism — of a kind apart from jingoism.

Nationalism does come in multiple forms. It need not mean nasty exclusion or aggression. While it is not always expressed in such ways, national sentiment can also be inclusive and generous. It can be an engine for social trust and cooperation. Progressive nation-building — mobilizing national identities, but in ways that are consistent with civil liberties, democratic equality and social justice — may just be the most compelling option available for post-COVID-19 economic and social recovery. Bringing that into reality will, however, demand courageous and imaginative leadership of the kind we have not seen since reconstruction following the Second World War.

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**WHERE ARE THE RESPONSIBLE GLOBAL LEADERS?
COVID-19 EXPOSES A HUGE LEADERSHIP GAP IN SOME OF THE
WORLD'S MOST ADVANCED NATIONS**

April 16, 2020

Thomas Maak and Nicola M. Pless

The Covid-19 pandemic has shed light on a significant and fatal lack of responsible global leadership. To begin with, the first thing an observer notes is the fact that despite rather high numbers of infections the number of fatalities in countries like Germany, South Korea, and Switzerland is low. In contrast, in countries with similarly advanced health systems such as the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the richest nation on earth, the United States of America, is up to 10 times higher.

Looking for an explanation for the differences is a tricky business as testing regimes are different, so are infrastructure and intensive care coverage. Also, the measures taken in these countries are driven by a vastly different sense of urgency. Still, watching the developments in the UK and the US one cannot help but notice one factor that exacerbates the threat posed by the Covid-19 virus, and that is *bad leadership* (e.g. Kellerman, 2004).

To put it more bluntly, President Trump and Prime Minister Johnson have endangered their countries and own peoples by being, well, themselves: double-dealing and self-inflated narcissists (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/05/opinion/trump-coronavirus.html>), rather than *responsible global leaders in crisis*. Gladly, the British Prime Minister survived his own infection, but it is telling that his health, and not his failures, blunders, and the fact that people are dying by the hundreds, became the dominant story. (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/16/opinion/coronavirus-boris-johnson.html>)

In contrast, the calm, considerate and caring approach taken by Mrs Merkel in Germany or the science-based, compassionate but decisive leadership of Jacinta Adern in New Zealand with clear communication and wide-spread testing and treatment has not only helped to save many lives but has worked in congenial ways with well-equipped, professional health systems lead by experts working towards a systemic response to the crisis.

Narcissism is not a crime, but it is a psychological disorder that can lead to devastating consequences in times of crisis when the world needs leaders who take charge, build teams of experts around them, consider their responses in light of evidence and scientific advancements, communicate in a calm but compassionate way, with the greater public good in mind. Narcissistic leaders tend to expose “a grandiose sense of self-importance, are preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, believes that they are “special”, require excessive admiration, have rather unreasonable expectations of favourable treatment or automatic compliance with their expectations, and lack empathy.” (American Psychiatric Association, DSM 5) In other words, they are rule-book narcissists.

Mr. Johnson was picked for his office as a great tactician and communicator and finally gave the UK its Brexit. But as the virus spread into Europe in February, he went on a holiday with his fiancée somewhere in the British countryside. He only acknowledged that the virus was the country’s top priority when the FTSE index went into freefall. But instead of decisive action and coordinating the government’s emergency response team, he took the weekend off giving the virus three more days to run its course. He then started to entertain – like the Netherlands – the idea of letting the virus run its course to increase “herd immunity”, against

the strong advice of experts. His performance since has been contradictory, indecisive, and out of tune, and as a consequence the UK has lost precious time, and Mr. Johnson narrowly escaped his own fatal infection.

As for Mr. Trump, well he has done what a narcissistic leader would do: downplaying the severity of the looming pandemic (“it’s going to be just fine”), blaming it on others (“a Chinese virus”) and when he could no longer ignore the developments making an attempt to take the glory as a “war-time president” to fight the “silent enemy”. He then confused numbers, made false or misleading claims regarding potential treatment, and Fox News and his allies on the religious right helped spread dangerous messages that Covid-19 was nothing but a “hoax” – much like climate change. Worse still, rather than uniting the country he encouraged the state governors to compete for limited medical supplies and allowed an incoherent response to the crisis, allowing the virus to spread, which had devastating consequences in New York and especially in the South, where many Americans are uninsured.

Leadership in crisis must be decisive, cautious but compassionate, self-transcendent and geared towards helping others, with a clear set of priorities and a good sense of the systemic risks involved – based on evidence and science, not on hunches, gut feelings, and self-serving ideologies. The bad leadership of Mr. Johnson and Mr. Trump has cost both countries, whose health systems are ill-prepared, very precious time, and as a consequence, sadly, too many people have died.

When the world recovers from this unprecedented crisis, we as scholars must analyse leadership failure and stress the need for responsible global leaders (Maak & Pless, 2009), reiterating their qualities. We need leaders with a global mindset (Beechler & Javidan, 2007), who feel responsible to all stakeholders, who listen to others and base their actions on a moral compass (Paine, 2006) and a shared concern for the well-being of their constituencies and humanity as a whole (Pless, 2007). Leaders, who are inclusive and compassionate and see the “bigger picture” – connecting past, present and future as stewards of their countries and organizations. Or, as Anne Tsui (2020) has put it recently, “let us exercise responsible leadership ourselves by studying and advancing responsible leadership, as well as other valuable topics, to contribute to the making of a better world post-Covid-19.”

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EVERY LEADER NEEDS A GLOBAL LENS

April 17, 2020

Tsedal Neeley

The fact that a microscopic organism first discovered in Wuhan, China has brought much of the world to a near standstill in a matter of weeks proves beyond a doubt that we are living in an era of global interconnectedness. With its unexpected and

unknown appearance and interconnected parts, the coronavirus (hereafter referred to as COVID-19) has spread worldwide at a velocity that has taken billions of people, institutions, and organizations by surprise. More than ever, COVID-19 has demonstrated that every leader must have a global lens whether they operate in a domestic or a global context.

What's more, the nature of the pandemic has rendered the world increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA), a term first used by the U.S. military to describe the environment that military leaders must operate within. VUCA—as a concept as well as a term—has also long applied to the modern business environment faced by global leaders. What we know, through experience and research, about the leadership qualities and aptitudes needed to meet VUCA conditions are now intensely crucial. These aptitudes, which every leader needs to develop are *global awareness, anticipation and adaptation*.

Awareness of the essential nature of converging global issues is a first step in gaining global leadership aptitude necessary today. Leaders do not have the luxury of listening solely to news in their part of the world but should strive to maintain a pulse on international events. The regular consumption of international media allows for an understanding of events, geopolitical or otherwise. For example, a mayor of a large city in the United States should have been keenly aware of the COVID-19 situation in Wuhan and cancelled a gathering of 1.4 million people in February of 2020. One way of achieving this knowledge is ensuring that senior leadership teams have the requisite international work experiences that equip them with a broader awareness of scenarios that may occur and the corresponding responses to counteract any arising issues. This awareness becomes more applicable as one looks for and finds corresponding challenges and solutions that are similar to that which one has encountered in the past.

Anticipating the impact of events in one part of the world on another is a skill that global leaders must constantly sharpen, especially as it relates to global dynamics interfacing with local dynamics. Anticipating how world events affect local sensitivities is a key capability within global leadership aptitude. For example, as governments, in an attempt to slow the pandemic, mandate stay-at-home orders for millions of people, many of the supply chains delivering regular household goods have become severely impacted as consumer purchasing habits have changed. Teams that include members who stem from diverse geographies can become a competitive advantage through their innate ability to anticipate how global events may impact the business and local or regional economies. Conversely, a leadership team with a narrower lens has a reduced ability to anticipate global macroeconomic trends.

Adapting effectively arises from a diversity of approaches, which itself comes from a talent pool that is broadly representative of nationalities, societies, cultures, religions, racial backgrounds, and so forth. Adaptation is also linked to relevance, as leaders strive to become or maintain participation in different business environments. Diversity inspires the creative thinking necessary to undergo adaptation in ever-changing markets. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the race to come up with a viable vaccine to protect the global population from COVID-19—virologists and other medical researchers are teaming internationally to discover a solution; many have already mastered the art of adaptation, adjusting to novel working environments, vastly different funding sources, political contexts or other scenarios. Creativity and innovation arising from diversity improves everyone's ability to adapt to change.

COVID-19 meets every VUCA condition imaginable. Its enormous cost has revealed to the world that the only way to survive VUCA conditions is for leaders

to maintain a global lens and develop the global aptitudes necessary to navigate constant changes.

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Global Epidemic of Blindness **April 21, 2020**

Orly Levy

For more than two decades we have assumed or rather hoped that world leaders will develop a *global mindset* — the ability to see and understand the world from a global perspective (Levy, Beechler, Taylor, & Boyacigiller, 2007). But as years went by, we have witnessed evermore the emergence of what can be termed a *global blindset* — a profound inability to see and comprehend the world from a global perspective (Levy, 2017). This global shortsightedness is increasingly evident with the coronavirus pandemic — a *global risk* event that has a significant negative impact on multiple countries over an extended period and therefore requires a globally coordinated response (see Beck, 2012 on global risks).

With the human and economic costs of the delayed response now mounting, it is worth asking why has the coronavirus pandemic gone either unforeseen, denied, or downplayed? Why have so many leaders across the world been ‘blind’ to potentially devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic?

Why did President Xi Jinping of China engage in delaying tactics for 6 key days? (Associated Press, 2020). Why did President Trump downplay the coronavirus threat with a mix of facts and false statements? Why was the British Prime minister Boris Johnson slow to recognize the risks, taking a mid-February holiday at his country home and skipping five Cobra meetings on the virus? (Calvert, Arbuthnott, & Leake, 2020). Why did the Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador encourage his people to eat out at restaurants well into the pandemic? And why did the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro nullify the coronavirus risk by labelling it “a little cold”?

Why these leaders appear to be following each other, first walking unconcerned, then with “hesitation, alarm, stumbling, and falling” (Arnheim,

1974: 88), as if they were a group of coordinated figures in Bruegel's *The Blind Leading the Blind*? As Britain's foreign minister, Dominic Raab, said "There's no doubt: We can't have business as usual after this crisis, and we'll have to ask the hard questions about how it came about and about how it could've been stopped earlier" (Reuters, 2020). The hard question is first and foremost why so many world leaders *did not* develop a global mindset. Why have they failed to recognize the complexity of a world that, for good and for bad, is exceedingly interconnected and interdependent. Why have they gone 'blind'? Or maybe have been "...Blind but seeing, Blind people who can see, but do not see" like the afflicted in Saramago's (1999: 292) novel *Blindness*?

While we cannot unequivocally associate the lack of global mindset with political ideology or regime type, we can tentatively trace this global epidemic of blindness to three broad factors. The *rise of nationalism* and the *widespread rejection of science* both have had an immediate and detrimental effect on the response to the coronavirus outbreak. A third factor, a *rigged system of wealth*, commonly referred to as crony capitalism or kleptocracy, have had systemic corrosive effect, eroding the duty of care of many world leaders.

Rise of nationalism. Much has been written about the rise of neo-nationalism in response to globalization and to growing social inequality, from Modi's Hindu nationalist party in India, to China's and Turkey's mission to restore their former imperial glory, Trump's adoption of immigration and trade policies "with our own interests foremost in mind," the upsurge of far-right politics and ideology in Europe, and the British, Catalan, and Scottish separatist nationalism, to name but a few. What are the implications of nationalism for foreseeing and 'seeing' global risks, for recognizing coronavirus as a global health crisis?

As it seems, nationalist mindset promotes the denial of both the *risk* dimension and the *global* dimension of global risks, the coronavirus pandemic included. First, the risk associated with the coronavirus outbreak was concealed and denied as Chinese leaders double down on their efforts to suppress vital information, placing their grip on power, public persona as omnipotent, and national image above free and accurate global flow of information that is essential in confronting pandemics. Further, the risk was also downplayed just because the virus surfaced in another country, as if labelling it 'foreign' will make it less risky, Trump's 'Chinese virus' is a case in point. Second, nationalist mentality has led to rejecting global coordination, although the coronavirus pandemic is a global health crisis that requires a global solution (see, for example, Albright, 2020). To the extent that the global dimension was recognized, it fueled international competition for resources rather than cooperation, as the recent bidding war among nations for vital medical supplies and ban on exporting essential medical equipment demonstrate. As it seems, foreseeing and 'seeing' global risks is exceedingly difficult with a narrow nationalist vision.

Rejection of science. There is already a widespread rejection, politization, and manipulation of science for political and economic purposes manifested in such debates on climate change and vaccination. The coronavirus pandemic appears to be yet another casualty of an anti-science assault. In China, early

warnings about a “strange new virus” issued as early as the end of December were rejected and suppressed. In the US, epidemiological models of the coronavirus threat were met with suspicion and distrust as if they were a hoax meant to bring down Trump (Krugman, 2020). Russia launched yet another campaign of health misinformation, promoting the theory that the coronavirus pandemic was propagated by American scientists. In Brazil, Bolsonaro's rejection of the scientific consensus on the gravity of the coronavirus outbreak has state governors up in arms.

The anti-science discourse, which often goes hand in hand with rightwing nationalism, religious conservatism, and industry interest groups, has already downgraded the status and validity of scientific findings and experts. It provided a vocabulary with which to cast doubt, dismiss, and dispel scientific evidence under the guise of ‘measured response’ supposedly led by capable leaders. Scientists, in contrast, were portrayed as fanning a social panic. Those world leaders who were shortsighted about the coronavirus pandemic typically have a cavalier relation with truth, facts, and evidence; some are actively involved in dismantling scientific institutions and sidelining scientific evidence. Therefore, it should come as no surprise that there were blind to the potentially devastating effects projected by scientists.

Rigged system of wealth. In increasing number of countries, a rigged system of wealth accumulation and distribution have come to dominate life; depending on geography and linguistic preferences, this system has been called *crony capitalism*, *kleptocracy*, *plutocracy*, and *corporatocracy*, among others. While scholars have offered various explanations for the mechanisms that ‘rig’ the system, there is a relatively broad consensus on its effects: Economic inefficiency, massive inequality, underfunding of public services, and curbed economic and social opportunities for most citizens (see, for example, Stiglitz, 2016). But above all, such system breeds profound social corruption.

Why might corruption affect the (in)ability of world leaders to ‘see’? The short answer is that corruption blinds as Moses imparts to his people shortly before his death: “You shall not pervert justice; you shall not show partiality, nor take a bribe, for a bribe blinds the eyes of the wise and twists the words of the righteous” (Deuteronomy, 16:19).² A system characterized by widespread social injustice and corruption blinds even the wise because it leads to an endemic indifference and tunnel vision. World leaders fail to ‘see’ the threat either because they are disinterested in ‘seeing’, unconcerned with what they are ‘seeing,’ or see the world through a narrow self-interest prism, which is driven by short-term political and economic gains. Further, a rigged system is typically underprepared for handling a major crisis that requires significant public funds and infrastructures. Therefore, denying the crisis becomes the ‘go-to’ response given shortage of resources and capabilities. Many world leaders are heavily invested in a self-congratulating, self-referential status quo that is corrupting and insulating; it makes it impossible for them to adapt or even understand that their vision is obsolete in a world that has changed dramatically.

As it seems, the combination of ramped nationalism, anti-science discourse, and endemic corruption, have bred an epidemic of different kind: Global epidemic of blindness.

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**When Arrogance Kills
Humility Becomes Our Most Powerful Form of Leadership
April 22, 2020**

Nancy J. Adler

The pandemic, and its horrible cost in human life, present us with an extremely complex and dangerous crisis. To act effectively, leaders, including the best of our physicians, politicians, scientists, and businesspeople, need the courage to embrace humility in ways that, sadly, remain all-too-rare in the 21st century. Faced with such high levels of ambiguity, leaders need to repeatedly respond by openly admitting that “We don’t know” rather than confidently asserting what the public craves to hear. What we so fervently want to hear goes beyond what we know to be true. That lack of truth could easily undermine the health and safety of all of us. Leaders everywhere now recognize that announcements embedded in false certainty (and arrogance), such as those made in the US in early March 2020, diminished the sense of urgency and threat and thereby hindered desperately needed rapid action:

“Excuse our arrogance ... we have the best health care system on the planet...So, ... it’s not going to be as bad [here] as it was in other countries.”ⁱ

Sadly, within a month, the US became the world’s Covid-19 epicenter, with more deaths than any other country. With this virus, no country is unique. No country is safe.

In times of extreme uncertainty, we trust leaders who reliably exhibit honesty and humility. But humility alone is not enough to successfully fight Covid-19 nor to return society and the global economy to vibrant functioning. Leaders initial, truthful statement, “We don’t know,” must always be followed by: “And this is what we are doing to find out.” “This is the research we’re initiating.” “This is the widespread testing we’ve started.” “These are the people from around the world that we’ve reached out to so we can learn from their successes and not have to repeat their failures.”

As citizens, driven by our intense desire for quicker, better outcomes, we remain tempted to invent all-knowing experts when, in fact, there are none. We

crave certainty when the reality is that there is none. Our job as citizens is to support our leaders in telling us the truth, including in saying “We don’t know yet.”

¹ Goodman, J. David (2020) How Delays and Unheeded Warnings Hindered New York’s Virus Fight. *New York Times*, April 8.

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Trust is a systems skill, not just an interpersonal skill

April 26, 2020

Martha L. Maznevski

In dialogue with senior global leaders navigating through the pandemic, I notice their responses tend to fall into one of two patterns. Those patterns suggest the global leadership should examine building trust as a systems skill, not only as an interpersonal skill. Leaders showing both patterns started the same way early in the crisis. They clarified the same set of priorities: health and safety first, then business continuity. Then they diverged.

Leaders in the first pattern see their office as headquarters of the war room. Everything reports daily in to them, and they send out the orders daily. There are many orders, many reports, and the leader works on overdrive to keep things under control. The message is: “trust me and the war room, we know what you should be doing.” It works – health and safety records are good, and business continuity is cautiously optimistic. But the local leaders are experiencing very high levels of anxiety and stress. They spend a lot of time in meetings following up on the orders and collecting information. One person I spoke with in a company led like this spends at least 90 additional minutes each day filling out the form to record exactly what she has done during her eight-hour day. Local leaders and employees in these firms feel they are barely hanging on, and they worry about the future.

Leaders in the second pattern see their office as more of a listening hub. They track the global pandemic trends and science and provide the information to the global network. They continuously communicate whether and how the main priorities need to be adjusted. The message is: We trust you, you know what you should be doing. Otherwise their main actions are checking in with the local

offices to ask “What are you worried about this week? What are you proud of this week? How can I help?” This also works – health and safety records are good, the business continuity is cautiously optimistic. However, the stories inside the local organizations are quite different. Local leaders are exhausted but energized, proud of what they are accomplishing. They feel connected with their local communities, making a difference there. They are innovating and sharing ideas with the global leader about new ways of moving forward post-pandemic. In short, they are acting in ways that reinforce trust throughout the system.

Trust is a belief in the good intentions of another, and a willingness to be vulnerable oneself to the actions and decisions of another. Trust is developed over time based on experiences of reliability, and belief in shared values. Both of these pandemic patterns rely on trust in the system, but its nature and role are quite different. In the first pattern, local leaders are asked to trust the global leader. Formal authority and coercive power ensure control, but trust helps. If local leaders trust the global leader and the system of information reporting, they are more likely to put in the effort to report and to implement as directed. In the second pattern, the global leader trusts the local decision makers and the global system of sharing, operating, and decision-making. There is more trust in the system of leadership – the global leader is more willing to be vulnerable to the actions and decisions of the local leaders, and local leaders are more willing to take (cautious) risks in innovating. Both patterns may get their organizations through the pandemic, but the second one is much more likely to have a healthier organization on the other side. One of the leaders in the second pattern explained that, “This is a time to trust. To provide some clear priorities, then to trust and support. *And you needed to build that trust before the crisis. If you didn’t have it then, you can’t energize it now* [italics added], so you have to control.”

This pandemic differentiates global leaders who have built that system of trust before the crisis from those who have not. In this way it highlights the importance of trust as a systems skill, not only a personal skill. Leaders in this second group build trust between themselves and others, and in addition they shape networks and communities of people who trust each other and who act in ways that increase their trustworthiness.

What does “building systemic trust” look like as a skill? Is it an aggregate of interpersonal skills? Is it a subset of what we already call “community building”? How do we recognize it, before a crisis? Do we see it only in its effect on organizational culture, or can we identify the dynamics in process? Systems thinking is the least developed conceptually of the global leadership skills – the pandemic shows us it is time for us to get working on it.

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Dr. Maznevski completed her Ph.D. at Ivey with research on multicultural teams and has expanded that research stream throughout her career. Her current research unlocks the performance dynamics of lateral teams – teams that coordinate across multi-unit organizations such as global key account teams or matrixed product or function groups. She co-authors the popular textbook, *International Management Behavior*, and publishes in leading journals, including *Journal of International Business Studies* and *Strategic Management Journal*.

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PRACTITIONER PERSPECTIVES

As mentioned above, we also invited global leaders and coaches/consultants to write about COVID-19. Because their essays are best understood in context, we placed their bios before their reflections.

Danielle Bjerre Lyndgaard holds both a Master of Science in Economics and Business Administration and a Master of Management Development from the Copenhagen Business School. She is a Senior Advisor at the Confederation of Danish Industry (DI). In addition to a range of other initiatives related to (global) leadership development, she is responsible for leadership development programs targeting experienced managers as well as foreign managers working in Denmark and globally. Her research interests focus on global leadership development and the paradoxes and complexity in global collaboration. She co-authored six books on (global) leadership and HR. She is a member of the Global Leadership Academy - an academia-practitioner research collaboration with 12 Danish MNCs under the auspices of DI. The research-based management tools developed in this project were published in a practitioner toolkit titled *Grasping Global Leadership – Tools for “Next Practice* (Nielsen & Lyndgaard, 2018). They are used in global leadership practice and executive global leadership training and are available to the public www.globalledelse.dk/eng. When the Covid-19 crisis began, one of Danielle’s primary tasks was to help Danish industry adapt as quickly as possible to the virtual workplace.

WHAT NON-GLOBAL LEADERS CAN LEARN FROM GLOBAL LEADERSHIP IN TIMES OF PANDEMICS

April 6, 2020

Danielle Lynggaard

Many domestic leaders are no stranger to some degree of virtual leadership, but there is no doubt that global leaders are some of the best trained in leading from a distance. Of necessity, they are highly experienced in using virtual media to

connect with their teams and the individual employee. As a consequence of Covid-19, countries and companies around the world asked many of their employees to work from their homes to minimize the spread of contagion. Suddenly in spring 2020, leaders across the world have had to adapt to distance leadership overnight. Non-global leaders instantly had to perform distance leadership, virtual leadership, creating and strengthening mutual confidence, and leading conflicts from a distance. Non-global leaders suddenly had to succeed in the context of complexity and uncertainty that results from not being geographically close to all their employees.

In times of a pandemic, such as Covid-19, uncertainty increases complexity, and leaders search for tools and best practices to grasp the new temporary reality in which they must succeed. For decades global leaders have performed in an environment of high complexity. Applying the tools and best practices from the global leadership field has become not only relevant, but indeed a necessity for many non-global leaders.

The complexity under the Covid-19 circumstances is characterized by a need for flexibility and a displacement in working hours. Many employees working from home have to both work full time and take care of their children who can no longer attend nursery school. Furthermore, some employees must home-school their children and teenagers. They no longer have the advantage of face-to-face meetings when leading employees of different nationalities. And they must make decisions fast and in an environment of great instability and uncertainty, both businesswise and personally. Thus, non-global leadership during a pandemic resembles almost 1:1 the complexity that global leaders face daily.

This insight was helpful when numerous members of the Confederation of Danish Industry called asking for help in shifting to a virtual workplace. We realized that they could learn from global leadership practices and shared one of the global leadership development tools developed by an academic-industry partnership, based on research and best practice.

GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL WORK

Step 1 Communicate your ambition for the work of the team in the coming period and the situation in which it is to be done. Be especially clear about the common objectives and hold 1:1 (virtual) sessions with each of the employees and communicate their targets to them clearly and precisely.

Step 2 The team formulates a shared purpose based on the leader's ambition and the team's goals.

- Why should we do what we are doing together? What purpose does it serve?

- How does it contribute to the company's overall objectives?

Step 3 Based on the goals, the employees specify the concrete performance targets.

- What exactly are we aiming to deliver? When do we have to deliver? What quality are we expected to deliver? How much do we have to deliver?

Step 4 Based on the framework that has been communicated, the team works to formulate shared attitudes/values defining how they intend to work together to achieve the agreed goals.

- What is important to you in your work together?

- How can you ensure that you build and maintain trust in each other despite not being together from day to day? How do you want to communicate with each other? How do you resolve disagreements and conflicts within the team? How should your collaboration work from day to day? Do you need to agree on a common language? Response times to e-mails? Anything else?

Step 5 There should be agreements on roles and responsibilities in the team.

- Regarding the goals we have to achieve, what skills do we need and who in the team has these skills? Do we need any skills that are not present in the team right now? How could we compensate for this?

- What roles do we need in the team? How do we arrive at the best match between roles and skills? What responsibilities go with the various roles? Who does what in continuation of Step 3?

Step 6 To build a shared commitment, agreements should be made on the obligations of the team members to each other.

- How do we ensure that we help each other even though we do not all see each other every day? How and when do we ask each other for help? What can we expect from each other from day to day? What do we do if we find that a colleague seems pressured or depressed or does not get back to us as agreed?

- How do we celebrate our successes in the virtual universe?

Step 7 To ensure that the team fulfils its agreements and mutual commitments, the collaboration should be evaluated as the work progresses. The team should agree on how to do this.

- How often do we follow up and evaluate our work together in the team? How do we evaluate?

- How often do we evaluate our work products and our ability to produce the expected results?

- How do we ensure that we learn from our failures – and our successes?

The tool has proven to be very helpful to non-global leaders right from the first days of the Covid-19 situation in Denmark. It is a perfect example of how global leaders can help inspire and educate their non-global leadership colleagues during a pandemic.

Page Break **Robert “Steve” Terrell**, Ed.D., is founder and President of Aspire Consulting, LLC, an Executive Leadership Development coaching and consulting firm. He conducts research and consults on global leadership, global leadership development, and experience-based leader development. He is the author of *Learning Mindset for Leaders: Leveraging Experience to Accelerate Development*, a practical handbook that serves as a workbook companion to a virtual leadership development program. He has written case studies, book chapters, and articles for leading professional publishers. His consulting clients are typically Fortune 500 companies in financial services, pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, health care, insurance, federal government, and assorted others.

PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER COVID-19 – PART 1

April 8, 2020

Steve Terrell

Today is March 27, 2020. The coronavirus pandemic has yet to peak in the US and here in Florida we, like the rest of the country, are waiting and wondering. Wondering when it will end, how many more will be infected, who in our circle of family, friends, and colleagues will fall ill before it's all over. Wondering what life will be like after the virus has changed everything. Wondering if we'll even have a "post-Covid-19" life, or if it will stay with us forever, shape-shifting and hovering over us like a malevolent, invisible ghoul.

We can't know what life will be like until it begins taking shape out of the remnants of a burned-out society. We can, however, prepare for an age of increased and unending Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) by enacting a learning mindset, and applying the skills required to learn and grow from the experience of living through this challenging time. And, by doing so, we will also be more prepared to influence our future.

A learning mindset is an attitude that predisposes you to be open to new experiences, to believe you can and will learn, and to intentionally grow and develop from your experience. According to research conducted at the University of Virginia, "Managers with a 'learning mindset' are characterized by a continuous sense of ongoing learning and transformation and received the highest job performance ratings of all those studied."¹ And, in an article published by *Harvard Business Review* online, Gottfredson and Reina pointed out that "A learning mindset involves being motivated toward increasing one's competence and mastering something new.... Leaders with a learning mindset, compared to those with a performance mindset, are more mentally primed to increase their competence, engage in deep-level learning strategies, seek out feedback, and exert more of an effort. They are also persistent, adaptable, willing to cooperate, and tend to perform at a higher level."²

It is especially important to have a learning mindset during challenging or difficult situations, because those are the very experiences that offer significant risks of failure as well as opportunities for personal development. People with a learning mindset who encounter difficult challenges have a strong tendency to create something of value from the crucible of negative experiences. As a result, they create their own virtuous cycle of learning and performance, enabling them to learn more from their experiences, which in turn results in their being more resilient and performing better in VUCA conditions. This leads to achievement of better results and reinforces the importance and value of the learning mindset.

Developing a learning mindset is not a panacea. There is no silver bullet or cure-all. The virus is on its own timeline, and we must only deal with its reality, not fantasize that we can bend reality to suit our needs. However, applying the learning mindset concept to "Life After Covid-19" is a way of being fully present in our world, intentionally taking responsibility for our life and way forward, and purposefully transforming ourselves through experience.

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POST COVID-19, HOW WILL I COACH GLOBAL LEADERS DIFFERENTLY?

April 9, 2020

Sully Taylor

As I look at the landscape of global leaders influencing the trajectory of this pandemic of COVID-19, I ask myself: where are the successful responses? Where are the failures? Who is responding well, and what does that look like? I think we can safely say that managing our way through crises such as COVID-19 with the least amount of damage to people and economies is going to be one of the crucial challenges for global leaders in the future. It is going to take close, quick and coordinated cooperation among global leaders of all stripes – business, political, non-profit – from many nations. The conditions that give rise to pandemic diseases are likely to grow, not diminish, as the world population continues to increase and the crowding into urban areas continues even as the destruction of what sustains a healthy global living environment (clean air, clean water, etc.) marches on.

So if the world will need global leaders to be even better prepared to deal with pandemics such as these, what do I believe have been the underlying dimensions that have characterized failure, and those that have characterized success? And how do I as someone involved in the development of global

leaders *want my beliefs about these dimensions to instill how I coach and what I coach to?*

Let me start by speaking to what I keenly feel that I need to be coaching to, in particular the theory or beliefs I hold of what constitutes human development. Robert Kegan argues that there are three major plateaus of adult mental development, which he calls the socialized mind, the self-authoring mind and the self-transforming mind (Kegan and Lahey, 2009). All are tied to the level of mental complexity that person has developed. The key aspect of the highest plateau, which only about 7% of all leaders exhibit, is the ability to have a viewpoint or vision, but to be able to step back and see it objectively, and to seek out learning that tests or modifies it. With a self-transforming mind “we can step back from and reflect on the limits of our own ideology or personal authority; see that any one system or self-organization is in some way partial or incomplete; be friendlier toward contradiction and opposites; seek to hold on to multiple systems rather than projecting all but one onto the other. Our self coheres through its ability not to confuse internal consistency with wholeness or completeness, and through its alignment with the dialectic, rather than either pole” (Kegan and Lahey, 2009: p. 17).

Leaders at this third level are guided by purpose and intention but are always open to acknowledging the limits of their own beliefs and understanding; and are willing to hold contradictions but make decisions while being aware of them. They acknowledge their interdependence with others and exhibit the humility needed to continuously learn. These leaders are able to meet the adaptive challenges that are required by global pandemics and make adaptive changes that ... can only be met by transforming your mindset, by advancing to a more sophisticated stage of mental development” (Kegan and Lahey, p. 29).

My commitment: I am committed to constantly asking myself what plateau my client is inhabiting and helping her move to as high a point on the adult mental development curve as possible.

A second part of what I want to be coaching to concerns the leader’s purpose. Throughout our engagement we explore how adopting a particular business strategy, or learning a certain skill, or making a particular decision or holding certain conversations helps them achieve their purpose(s) – or not. I have usually remained fairly agnostic about what clients create for their purpose(s), although I do urge them to think how their purpose(s) serves the world. Yet this can become an abdication of the responsibility to support their development of a wider and higher vision of their leadership and its impact.

There must be a moral vision that guides me as I support them in defining their purpose(s), a moral vision of what constitutes a thriving and healthy person, business, community and world. It must be a ‘loose’ moral vision. Why is this needed? Because when faced with a challenge as important and far-reaching as the COVID pandemic, leaders who automatically prioritize their responsibility for creating thriving, healthy communities will be guided to make choices that may be ‘against’ their short term bottom lines or political futures, knowing that the bigger, long-term outcomes matter more than they do.

For me, a fairly ‘loose’ moral vision that can guide me is the Noble Eightfold Path from Buddhism, which constitutes ‘a practical, direct experience method for finding meaning and peace in your life...each of the eight path factors defines one aspect of behavioral development (e.g., right view, right intention, right speech) needed for you to move from suffering to joy” (Moffitt, p. 227) - and by extension and implication, helping others move from suffering to joy as well. It would constantly probe whether a client’s intended actions were likely to be beneficial or harmful to others. It would constantly ask: “in service of what”, with the ‘what’ being a consideration of something or someone beyond the client himself.

My commitment: I am committed to deepening my own understanding and practice of the Noble Eightfold Path, such that it informs the way in which I pursue my own life and coaching purposes(s), and to more consciously imbue my coaching explorations with my clients with moral wisdom.

Neither of these two commitments are possible without the third: having the capability of expressing what needs to be said to a client. This is about having the skill AND the courage to use all of the “voices” of a ‘mindful coach’ (Silsbee, 2010). In particular, the three ‘sharpeners’ voices of reflector, teacher and guide are required to support the development of greater mental complexity and greater adherence to the principles of the Eightfold Path. The reflector voice especially supports the growth of the client’s self-awareness, of how his actions or thoughts support his purpose(s) (or don’t). This is the voice that provides direct and honest feedback, that helps him see himself as others do, that recognizes that as a coach we do not serve when we accept that the client knows himself best. Of course, when using this “voice” we must be careful to never make the client feel inadequate, and we must be cautious of any agenda or judgment that arises in us as a coach.

My commitment: I am committed to cultivating deeper understanding of the role of sharpener voices in the development of leaders and especially deeper courage to deploy these voices when necessary and developing ever keener understanding of how to use such sharpener voices in culturally appropriate ways.

This is how I will be different as a coach of global leaders when this is over.

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WORK IN THE TIME OF COVID-19

April 14, 2020

Lisa Ruiz

The pandemic of Covid-19 has changed the world and the way we work and live in a matter of weeks. As global leaders, we have had to adapt and respond to the urgent widespread health emergency. We are still in the middle of the crisis and so our level of success in managing through is still to be decided. I am frequently reminded of the concept of expert cognition as real-time problem solving (Osland, Bird & Oddou, 2012; Osland, Oddou, Bird & Osland, 2013) that I first encountered in a doctoral class on global leadership.

Teams across the company began assessing which roles and functions needed to be on-site and which could work remotely. For those needing to be on site, a strategy for health surveillance of staff was coupled with a plan to maintain enough separation between employees. The operations group needed to ensure that there was plan for more frequent and cleaning and rotating shifts. With offices around the world, the timing of these transitions has been occurring in waves.

For those working from home, it was important to ensure that everyone had what they needed to be effective, including keyboards, printers, and monitors. IT staff needed to ensure that the servers and bandwidth were in place to support the increased usage of virtual meeting platforms. As issues arise, we work together to strategize and come up with a creative solution.

Communication has been a key component of the Covid-19 strategy. Leadership throughout the organization is making a concerted effort to communicate so that all employees are informed and connected across the globe. All communications share the information but also focus on the human element. Employees have been encouraged to share their stories and post pictures from the home-work environment. To date we have met all our commitments and are also supporting the communities in which we work. I think we are rising to the challenge.

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Osland, J., Oddou, G., Bird, A., & Osland, A. (2013). Exceptional global leadership as cognitive expertise in the domain of global change. *European Journal of International Management*, 7(5), 517-534.

Page Break **Heini Shi** is a Professor of Practice in Management at New York University Shanghai (NYU Shanghai). Dr. Shi has global policy and business experience in over 40 countries where she directed complex project implementation, created public-private partnerships, and advised on market expansion strategies. Shi has developed leadership programs and taught at leading business schools in Europe, China, and the United States. Shi worked as Program Manager at the World Bank, United Nations Conference of Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), where she designed and managed economic policy and social development projects. She was also an advisor to the multinational law firm Allen & Overy, consulting with European firms on their Chinese investments.

CREATE A NEW WORLD

April 14, 2020

Heini Shi

Tens of millions of people have lost their jobs since the Covid-19 outbreak, while the World Trade Organization predicts that in 2020 international trade of goods may plunge up to 32% or more as a result of the pandemic. The world will be a different place after the pandemic, so will be the businesses and the consumerist society we have known. There will not be a “normal” to which we can return.

While scientists research potential cures and politicians debate the misconduct of others, business leaders must re-assess risks associated with the liability of supply chains, assets, and operations, and most importantly, employees’ lives. It becomes apparent that production of key components concentrated in certain geographic areas is risky - from large automobile parts to tiny raw materials in antibiotics (known as active pharmaceutical ingredients) - any unexpected event can interrupt supply chains causing devastating ripple effects.

What will the business landscape look like after this seismic event? The global production will inevitably reorganize, starting with those of high value-added and “strategic” importance whose definition may be flexible in ‘war-time’ with a virus as the enemy. Initial steps are already being taken when Japan announced to financially support firms to pull out from China, the “World Factory”, and to relocate in other countries. While it is unrealistic to predict patterns of the future global companies, I believe there may be three possible directions. First, even though the initial investments will be substantial, companies may use robotics, 3D technologies, and the Internet of Things to efficiently manufacture certain products in their home countries at a comparable cost with that of some emerging economies where the labor costs, among others, have consistently increased.

Second, reducing overhead, shortening supply chains, and seeking synergy may be initial steps to take, but they could imply further concentration of resources and possibly conflict with the local firms, especially the vulnerable small and medium ones. Third, societies have now become highly divided with respect to values and ideologies. It is plausible that global production will reorganize at a geographic level through greater regional integration, and among nations sharing similar value systems and administrative rules.

This historic event is affecting more than 200 countries and may last longer than we anticipate. Under this scenario, what should business leaders do in the new reality? The other side of the coin for a crisis can be opportunity. The world situation calls for a new type of leadership from the private sector. I would advocate this following new approach with the acronym of **CREATE**:

Creativity (for problem-solving)

Uncertainty is the new normal. More companies should place creativity as a core value of their business practices, focusing on solving problems. In the midst of crises, business communities around the world are creatively and promptly solving problems. GM, Ford, and GE Healthcare are collaborating to produce ventilators, while Tesla and Virgin Galactic have developed similar devices. Another example is in Taiwan, where new facial mask production plants were opened within a month and have now surged to be the world's number two producer of this essential medical gear by producing 13 million masks every day.

Resilience

During the outbreak, this unshakable leadership attribute is constantly evoked around the world as people are coping with significant distress in their personal and professional lives. Under a pandemic, the positions of all the players -- people, organizations, and governments -- in society can alter quickly. Acceptance of the possibility of change is the first step towards preparing for it. Defining a sense of purpose, along with sound business expertise and trust, could be beneficial in a time of hardship.

Empathy (for partnership)

Empathy in today's context of an escalating crisis is particularly pivotal in establishing and consolidating partnerships and global cooperation. Only united organizations can survive and thrive.

Action (for sustainability)

Massive loss of human lives and resources in this pandemic has showcased the transience and impermanence of life. The outbreak is often seen as a consequence of our consistent ignoring of sustainability, including the environment, workforce health, and other human rights. I am not alone in hoping that the pandemic serves as a wakeup call. It is time to lean forward and act now and search for remedies and new solutions to people's needs.

Technological Savvy

How can we lead teams remotely? In a time of mass confinement, this question has greater urgency and need for exploration. Technological savvy is now a key competence for leaders as it provides a foundation for effective leadership. Technology offers opportunities to

leaders and their teams to create appropriate tools to collaborate innovatively and productively.

Embrace

Leading in the digital era requires a new skill set and mindfulness of timeframe. Optimizing efforts to stay healthy (mentally and physically) and maintain a positive attitude is essential. I subscribe to Mike Tyson's saying, "Everybody has a plan until they get punched in the mouth." The world under pandemic is a world in combat. Leaders surely need to strategize and design different scenarios, but they must swiftly adjust when confronted with problems. Embrace the new challenges and CREATE a new world!

Page Break **Alessandro Girola** is a programming coordinator at the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in New York City. In his work, he coordinates projects and initiatives focused on preventing intercultural tensions and crises, combatting stereotypes, discrimination and xenophobia, as well supporting innovative grassroots initiatives contributing to intercultural dialogue. After receiving degrees in Economics from Bocconi University and in International Affairs from Columbia University, he gained extensive experience working in the financial sector, academia, and various international organizations, including the African Development Bank and UN Women.

Disclaimer: the views expressed in this piece are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations.

THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY AND GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATIONS IN PANDEMICS: IN SUPPORT OF SOCIAL COHESION

April 16, 2020

Alessandro Girola

The outbreak of COVID-19, which has now infected over two million³ people, has resulted in the death of thousands of people worldwide. Well over 100 countries across the globe have instituted either a partial or full lockdown, affecting billions, and many others have restricted the freedom of movement for some or all of their citizens.

The rapid spread has also made clear how interconnected the world we live in has become, and, at the same time, how interdependent we are. As the virus affects everybody and does not know borders or walls, this crisis is reminding us all of our common humanity, and how our lives are so reliant on reciprocal support. Despite this, COVID-19 is risking undermining the social cohesion within countries, as its impact reaches deep into our society. Increased instances of hate speech and stigmatization of certain groups unjustly perceived to be associated with the spread of the virus have been reported.

This crisis should be a wake-up call to remind global leaders that cooperation and collaboration is crucial and a whole-of-society approach is needed. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Nobel Laureate and the President of Liberia during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa in 2014, wrote in a recent open letter to BBC

reflecting on the current situation and the lesson learnt from the past outbreak: “Fear drove people to run, to hide, to hoard to protect their own when the only solution is and remains based in the community.” As we are adjusting to this new normal in the era of the COVID-19, global leaders should recognize that civil society plays a critical role in supporting communities. The work of civil society and grassroots organizations (CSOs), faith-based organizations (FBOs) and youth-led organizations is essential in keeping large marginalized populations connected and informed, particularly at the local level. In many parts of the world, such organizations are among the few that are assisting vulnerable populations and adapting, often in creative ways, responses to the local community context. Since they often serve as one of the main communication channels, they have the potential to support social cohesion, particularly in moments of crisis. During this period, CSOs, FBOs and youth-led organizations around the globe are supporting volunteerism, running awareness campaigns, contributing to the dissemination of a message of solidarity, and staying at the forefront of keeping communities connected and informed. Now more than ever, their work is essential and must be supported as part of an all-of-society approach needed to beat this pandemic.

CONCLUSION

We hope you enjoyed this buffet of thoughtful ideas from world-class thinkers and doers as much as we did. We are extremely grateful to the contributors to this chapter for pushing other commitments to the back-burner in order to share their perspectives and wisdom. For health care workers and those personally affected by COVID-19, this is an incredibly busy and stressful time. We send our heartfelt thanks to the former, our condolences to those who have lost loved ones, and our deep sympathy to those who have lost jobs and income and struggle with basic survival in an economic collapse. Many of us have been quarantined in recent months and given an opportunity to reflect on a great number of issues, including our own lives and purpose. We would like to end with a poem by Pablo Neruda that seems especially apt for these times, when “facades crumble away as the non-essential recedes into the background even as the essential comes to the fore” (Allan Bird, this volume, p. ??).

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