

Servant Leadership to the Test

New Perspectives and Insights

Servant Leadership to the Test New Perspectives and Insights

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Foreword

At the beginning of my research, it was my intention to explore how leaders could help people find meaning in their work. The motivation for such endeavor was initially mainly personal. It was my own quest to understand what makes my life and my work meaningful. After all mortality is a given and it just seems a pitiful waste of precious time doing something that does not add up to something more than a paycheck. The choice of servant leadership was obvious. As a newcomer to this concept I was truly enamored with the idea of a leader that puts serving others first and sees that as the main motivation to lead. In my exploration of the concept I came across many different questions about what servant leadership is, how it can benefit people and organizations, and whether such an apparently idealistic leadership approach could be effective in different circumstances. As we progressed, we started making sense of what was bringing our different studies together: a fundamental interest in pushing the limits of servant leadership as a concept in all its paradoxes and apparent contradictions. In this effort, I hope to have contributed to the adoption of the notion of servant leadership in organizations. Our world, with all its environmental, social, technological, ethical and economic challenges, surely could use more servant leaders.

As for my own search for meaning, as I progressed and dwelled into unexplored territories, it became evident that meaning is not something you can find but instead something that unfolds. Meaning emerges when you have the courage to begin and the ability to embrace the uncertainty of what comes while holding to some vision, as pallid and vague it might become in the midst of your sufferings. But it is when you emotionally embrace your journey, in sadness and joy, that it becomes meaningful. This is maybe the

biggest personal lesson for me from this project: meaning is about understanding but meaningfulness is about living fully. I also came to realize that the biggest enemy towards a meaningful life is fear. But the worst fear of all is not the fear of dying but instead the fear of living. It is the fear of living that tolls our dreams and ambitions. So have no fear of living, embrace the fullest of what you can become and strive to achieve that.

The final and surely most important words go to my wonderful wife who makes me complete, my loving children who fill me with pride, my ever supporting and proud parents who I miss so much in Portugal, my parents-in-law who embraced me as a son, my close family in both Portugal and the Netherlands, my brothers and dearest friends, my mentors who put me on the path of scholarship and of course my tireless promoters, who believed in me all the way, even when I failed to believe in myself. It is to them that I have to thank for their love, for the learning and for their endless patience.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

“The highest type of ruler is one of whose existence the people are barely aware. Next comes one whom they love and praise. Next comes one whom they fear. Next comes one whom they despise and defy. When you are lacking in faith, others will be unfaithful to you. The Sage is self-effacing and scanty of words. When his task is accomplished and things have been completed, all the people say, ‘We ourselves have achieved it!’.”

Lao-Tzu in the *Tao Te Ching*, 604 BC - 531 BC

The essence of the leader as a servant seems to have been already captured by Lao-Tzu more than 2500 year ago, but we need to move to 1970 AC to see servant leadership emerging again from the ashes of time through the essay “The Servant as Leader” by Robert Greenleaf (1977). Since the seminal work of Greenleaf (1977) around 40 years ago and after the initial empirical studies in the late 90s (Laub, 1999), servant leadership seems to be slowly but surely gaining a solid place in academia (Liden et al., 2008; Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011) and as a practical model in organizations (e.g. Bogle, 2002; Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Glashagel, 2009; Lore, 1998; Melrose, 1998; Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Ruschman, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2009). This increasing interest is demonstrated through the different attempts to consolidate the notion of servant leadership and its operationalization which have resulted in multiple definitions and measures (e.g. Laub, 1999; Liden et al., 2008; Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Consequently, as the work on servant leadership expanded, additional research started to provide empirical proof of the effect of servant leadership on organizational performance and a varied range

of motivational constructs (e.g. Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Bobbio et al., 2012; Ehrhart, 2004; Herbst, 2003; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012; Neubert et al., 2008; Peterson, Galvin & Lange, 2012; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010).

As one observes this increasing consolidation of servant leadership as a concept and practical model, new questions still arise that add some complexity to the understanding of the mechanisms behind this leadership approach. While the impact of servant leadership on motivation and performance seems to become empirically validated, further understanding the contingency and contextual factors that condition its applicability is critical. Such factors can be essentially organizational (the systemic context) or relational (the effect of the leader-follower relationship). In particular, *stress-testing* servant leadership within different real-life relational and organizational circumstances is important. For example, is servant leadership suitable in the context of small self-organized teams as a shared process? Can servant leaders be effective in the context of highly demanding change such as in a large scale merger process? How effective is servant leadership for different hierarchical positions? Or, how do differences in self-other perceptions about servant leadership behavior affect performance? These are some of the main questions that our studies tried to address. The main purpose of this research can therefore be summarized as to further comprehend the effectiveness of servant leadership in different and demanding organizational and relational contexts, allowing scholars and practitioners to better understand its applicability.

About Servant Leadership

The roots of servant leadership

The term servant leadership was first introduced by Greenleaf (1977) after the Herman Hesse's novel *Journey to the East* (2003). This story portrays a leader whose main focus is to serve a group of travelers on a mythical journey. For Greenleaf (1977), "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature." Servant leadership has therefore a moral tone that makes it distinct from most other models of leadership, especially in the initial motivation of the leader, for who the aspiration for power or to lead is grounded on a higher and preceding need to serve. The servant leader is mainly concerned with the development and growth of followers, as Greenleaf (1977) continues: "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?" This moral aspect of servant leadership puts work in a whole new dimension both in terms of the process and the goals it entails. Collaboration and shared power are fundamental and work becomes itself a

vehicle for self and community development as highlighted by Spears (1996): “Servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision making.”

While for Greenleaf (1977) this moral backbone based on a deep sense of service and purpose formed an essential fundament, he also emphasized the importance of focused action and energized momentum for the servant leader to be truly effective. As Greenleaf (1977) highlighted: “...the leader needs more than inspiration. A leader ventures to say, ‘I will go; come with me!’ A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success.” This means that one can see servant leadership as a continuous balancing act between virtue (behaviors that reflect humility and an initial motivation to serve) and action (behaviors geared towards performance). The initial fundamental need to serve and the complex mix of virtue and action is what makes servant leadership so unique and distinct when compared to other leadership models, either more behaviorally focused like situational leadership (Hersey and Blanchard, 1969) or with a tendency to be centered on the leader’s own vision, like for example transformational leadership (Bass, 1999).

Why is servant leadership important

Leadership in organizations was defined by Yukl (2010) as influence processes that interpret events for followers, the choice of objectives for the group or organization, the organization of work to accomplish the objectives, the motivation of followers to achieve the objectives, the maintenance of cooperative relationships and teamwork, and the enlisting of outsiders to support and cooperate with the group or organization. From a

performance and utilitarian point of view one cannot object such definition. However, this view seems to fall somehow short on two particular aspects. First of all, it seems limited as a basis to explain organizational phenomena involving ethical or moral decisions. Secondly, it tends to see followers and their motivation as a means to an end, rather than the object of leadership itself. Other models like transformational leadership (Bass, 1999; Judge & Piccolo, 2004; Givens, 2008), authentic leadership (Gardner et al, 2005), ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006) or spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003) seem to address the ethical concern in their own way. These approaches are however still somehow leader centered, whereby the vision of the leader gains prevalence over the follower and even over the group or organization. Servant leadership on the other hand seems to provide an adequate answer to both ethical concerns and a genuine focus on the needs of others. With its emphasis on an initial motivation to serve, the servant leader provides a framework that puts the others at the center and with that creates a natural ethos for ethical decision making. This can make servant leadership a rather useful approach to face today's most pressing social and organizational challenges.

The importance of servant leadership can be further interpreted from three complementary perspectives, namely: business ethics, providing meaning to work and organizational adaptability.

- Business ethics: The corporate scandals of the 90s and 2000s (e.g. Adler, 2002; Carson, 2003; Crane & Matten, 2007; Fombrun & Foss, 2004) led to an increased attention on what is called the dark side of leadership (Conger, 1998; Hogg, 2004) and to a growing study of ethical leadership in organizations (e.g. Brown & Treviño, 2006). This is essentially a call for

the inclusion of virtue in the study and practice of organizational leadership. Virtues are essentially attributes of moral excellence that can induce responsible leadership (Cameron, 2011). By being a virtue based model and by putting the service to others at its core motivation (Greenleaf, 1977), servant leadership can be particularly suitable to address these concerns as it more naturally overcomes the potential risks of the dark side of leadership (Conger, 1998; Hogg, 2004), whereby self-centered personality traits can lead to power misuse by the leader.

- Providing meaning to work: In our post-traditional societies, affected by galloping globalization and increased technology advancement, the role that people assume in society becomes highly individualized and increasingly disentangled from social or religious norms (Giddens, 1990). As such, people expect more from their work as a fundament of their identity and as a source of fulfillment (Baumeister, 1992; de Sousa and van Dierendonck, 2010; Pratt & Ashforth, 2002; Rosso et al., 2010). Against this backdrop, one observes an increasing interest in the study of meaning in the context of work (Rosso et al, 2010). Work meaning was part of the original servant leadership ideas of Greenleaf (1977, p.142), forming a fundamental cornerstone of this theory: “The work exists for the person as much as the person exists for the work. Put another way, the business exists to provide meaningful work to the person as it exists to provide a product or service to the customer.” By focusing on the followers’ development and the need for work to provide meaning, servant leaders

can be particularly suited to address this increasingly important leadership challenge.

- Organizational adaptability: The increasing complexity, change and uncertainty of our world demands that organizations become more agile and adaptable (Bennet and Bennet, 2004). As such, in the last 20 years one observes a shift from viewing effective organizations as well-oiled machines, towards living and adaptable complex adaptive systems (Bennet & Bennet, 2004; de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2010; Dooley, 1997; Olson & Eoyang, 2001). Servant leadership can provide a very valuable model in this new view of organizations. By empowering followers to take part in shaping the destinies of the organization, stimulating cooperation and local decision making, while ensuring clear boundaries, servant leaders can create the conditions necessary for adaptability to emerge (de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2010), strengthening the resilience of organizations.

The increasing adoption of servant leadership as part of the cultural backbone of several private and public organizations seems to testify its importance and appeal in modern times. Examples of organizations that explicitly adopted servant leadership include Southwest Airlines, TD Industries, Herman Miller, The Toro Company or Men's Warehouse to name a few (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Glashagel, 2009; Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2009). Ruschman (2002) also highlighted how servant leadership seems to be present in many of the "100 best companies to work for in America".

The reason why these companies embraced servant leadership might have started from a moral and humanistic motivation, but research seems to demonstrate that servant leadership might just as well be a great driver of performance. Studies seem to be providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of servant leadership in generating both positive organizational and motivational outcomes. Several examples include community citizenship behavior (Liden et al., 2008), firm performance (Peterson, Galvin & Lange, 2012), school performance (Herbst, 2003), church performance (Ming, 2005), team effectiveness (Hu & Liden, 2011; Irving, 2005), job satisfaction (Anderson, 2005; Drury, 2004), trust (Dannhauser & Boshoff, 2006; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010), organizational commitment (Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011; Bobbio et al., 2012; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Liden et al., 2008; West & Bocârnea, 2008), a sense of justice, optimistic attitude and commitment to change (Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012), creativity (Neubert et al., 2008), integrity (Bobbio et al., 2012), organizational citizenship behavior (Ehrhart, 2004; Bobbio et al., 2012), engagement (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), and psychological empowerment (Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011). Other lines of research, while not necessarily explicitly naming servant leadership, show that behaviors typical of servant leadership like humility (Owens & Hekman, 2012) or empowerment (Spreitzer, 2008; Tuckey et al., 2012) positively contribute to organizational performance.

Reminding the initial purpose of this dissertation, it is in this trend that our research becomes particularly relevant. As mentioned before, given the increasing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of servant leadership and the growing number of organizations adopting it, it is important to further understand the applicability and

potential limits of this unique approach to leadership, which forms the main purpose of this dissertation.

The model of servant leadership used in this dissertation

Soon after the seminal work developed by Greenleaf, different branches of research developed in trying to provide a more solid scientific backbone to the notion of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011). After a careful and detailed analysis of existing literature and empirical research, van Dierendonck (2011) advanced that servant leadership is essentially “demonstrated by empowering and developing people; by expressing humility, authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, and stewardship; and by providing direction”. Based on this work, van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) later developed an instrument that captures the fundamental pillars of servant leadership through the following 8 dimensions, and in no particular order: empowerment, humility, accountability, stewardship, authenticity, forgiveness, courage and standing back. While more details are provided in chapters 2 to 5 of this dissertation, a short explanation of each of these dimensions is now provided.

Empowerment is essentially about encouraging autonomous decision making, sharing information and the coaching and mentoring of individuals for innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). *Humility*, which has been often referred to as a cornerstone of servant leadership (Russell, 2001; Patterson, 2003), is in essence about the modesty of leaders, as demonstrated in their ability to give priority to the interest of others, to recognize their own mistakes or to provide sufficient space for learning. *Accountability* concerns providing direction while taking in account the capabilities of people, as well as

their specific needs and possible contribution. Accountability is also about ensuring that people are responsible for their results. *Stewardship* is concerned with motivating people to take action while considering the common interest and ensuring the good of the whole. *Authenticity* is essentially about the expression of the ‘true self’, in ways that are consistent with our inner thoughts and feelings (Harter, 2002). Being authentic is then about being true to oneself and showing, both in private and in public, our genuine intentions, internal states and commitments (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). *Forgiveness* is basically demonstrated through the ability of letting go of previous offenses, differences or mistakes. In specific, McCullough et al (2000) make explicit references to letting go of perceived wrongdoings and not to carry a grudge into other contexts. *Courage* was seen by Russell and Stone (2002) as a unique form of pro-active behavior towards the creation of innovative approaches to old problems, while staying true to the values and convictions that form the individual internal compass for action. *Standing back* is defined as “the extent to which a leader puts the interest of others first and provides them with essential support and praise” (van Dierendonck, 2011). This dimension is a cornerstone of the whole notion of servant leadership, as it emphasizes the importance of being modest in one’s achievements and in sharing success with followers, hence of being of service.

Given the solid theoretical grounding of these 8 dimensions (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) supported by the prior work developed by van Dierendonck (2011), and the increasing evidence of the validity and reliability of the corresponding measure (Bobbio et al., 2012; Hakanen & Van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), this model was used throughout the different studies portrayed in this dissertation.

Overview of the dissertation

The main purpose of this research is to further understand the effectiveness of servant leadership in different relational and organizational contexts. As such, four empirical studies were conducted; two taking in account markedly different organizational contexts (small self-organized teams and large organizations being merged) and two others reflecting different relational considerations (the type of hierarchical relationship between the leader and the follower and the different self-other rating perceptions of leadership behavior). For each of these studies, a paper was prepared constituting chapters 2 to 5 of this thesis. One should note that as these papers were submitted for publication (jointly with my supervisor), they do have some overlaps especially concerning the notions of servant leadership and the different measures being used. At the end of the thesis, a general discussion is provided (chapter 6). A short description of each of these chapters will be now provided.

Chapter 2: Introducing a short measure of shared servant leadership and its relation to team performance through team behavioral integration

Our first study took the organizational context of self-organized teams, allowing us to observe how servant leadership can work as a shared process among team members in the context of a short and intense assignment. In specific, the research was designed to study the influence of shared servant leadership on objective team performance through the mediating effect of team behavioral integration (Lubatkin et al., 2006; Simsek et al. 2005). As a round-robin method was used (where all team members assess each other), a short measure of servant leadership was developed and validated, which eased the data

collection process. Two studies were conducted based on the same team assignment. Study 1 was based on 244 undergraduate students in 61 teams following a HRM business simulation of two weeks as part of their course. In the following year a similar second study was conducted, including 288 students in 72 teams.

The contribution of this chapter to the field of servant leadership is threefold: 1) for the first time servant leadership is studied as a shared process in self-organized teams instead of in a typical hierarchical leader-follower relationship, 2) it allowed further understanding the specific mechanisms through which servant leadership affects team behavior and therefore team performance and 3) it introduced a 4 dimensional short measure for the shared leadership context more suitable for extensive round-robin assessments, while keeping intact the essential distinguishing characteristics of servant leadership. Practitioners, including managers and HR professionals, can benefit from this study as it enables them to more easily assess shared servant leadership through a compact measure and help improve this way performance within teams.

Chapter 3: Servant Leadership and Engagement in a Merger process

This second study took place within the organizational context of a large scale merger process, which allowed testing how the servant leadership behavior of managers can affect motivation in the context of a dynamic and stringent change process. As such, this study becomes a sort of stress test on the applicability of servant leadership under such highly demanding work environments. In particular the relationship between servant leadership and engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006) was considered, while analyzing the mediating effect of organizational identification (van Knippenberg et al., 2001; &

Rousseau, 1998) and psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). A total of 1107 employees from two merging companies in Portugal soon after an acquisition process were included.

This chapter contributes in the following ways to our understanding of servant leadership: 1) for the first time a study on servant leadership is done in the context of a highly demanding and large scale change process, further allowing to understand its effectiveness in such environments, 2) it allows a better comprehension of the mechanisms through which servant leadership can ensure engagement during change, and finally 3) it increases the reach of the servant leadership survey used for this dissertation by testing its validity and reliability in a new cultural context (in Portugal). For practitioners, including managers and facilitators of change, this study allows them to understand how servant leadership can contribute towards effective change in organizations, helping to shape the corresponding support processes and learning initiatives.

Chapter 4: Servant Leadership Effectiveness at the Top: A Study on the Interplay between Leadership Humility, Action, and Power on Follower Engagement

Our third study focused on how the effectiveness of servant leadership changes across different hierarchical positions. In addition the research introduced a new way of looking at servant leadership by testing the interaction between the action and humble dimensions of the servant leader in generating follower engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006). By doing this, we aimed on one hand to understand whether servant leadership remains applicable for different hierarchical ranks and on the other hand to analyze if the core humble attitude of the servant leader can amplify the effectiveness of its action

oriented behaviors. In this study, a total sample of 232 people was included in a varied range of sectors and organizations.

The contribution of this chapter to servant leadership is based on two main aspects: 1) for the first time an empirical study was conducted where the interaction between the humble and action side of the servant leader is considered, and 2) the inclusion of hierarchical rank as a second moderation variable allowed observing how servant leadership effectiveness changes as one moves up in the organization, further testing its applicability for different levels of responsibility. From a practical point of view, this study allows managers and HR professionals to further understand the dynamics of servant leadership at different hierarchical levels, enabling the implementation of more effective leadership development initiatives in organizations.

Chapter 5: Servant Leaders as Natural Under-Estimators: a Self-Other Agreement Perspective

The fourth and final study was focused on how servant leadership behavior is perceived in dyadic leader-follower relationships, further elaborating on how different self-other perceptions can predict servant leadership effectiveness. Leadership effectiveness was measured through the amount of follower psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Self-other perceptions can include in-agreement/high scores, in-agreement/low scores, overestimation and underestimation (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Atwater & Yammarino, 1998). It was our specific interest to further understand whether servant leaders tend to under-estimate their own behavior, as a natural consequence of their initial motivation to serve, genuine focus and valorization of others and an implicit humble

attitude, rooted in an awareness of their own shortcomings. A total of 160 leader-follower dyads were incorporated in our study, corresponding to 36 different leaders.

The key contributions of this chapter for the servant leadership literature include: 1) the inclusion of self-other ratings into the study of dyadic servant leadership relations, which happens for the first time, and 2) further understanding whether servant leaders tend to underestimate their leadership competence when compared with other types of leaders. From a practical point of view, this chapter is particularly useful for HR and leadership development professionals who can better adjust their high potential scouting processes to detect (potential) servant leaders in the organization and adapt the corresponding learning and development practices to instill a servant leadership based organizational culture.

Chapter 6: General Discussion

This chapter presents the overall conclusions of the four empirical studies, while highlighting the most important implications of this thesis for our understanding of servant leadership and its applicability in different relational and organizational contexts. In addition, this chapter provides guidelines for future research, some limitations of the studies and general recommendations for practitioners, including managers and HR and leadership development professionals.

Chapter 2 - Introducing a Short Measure of Shared Servant Leadership and its Relation to Team Performance through Team Behavioral Integration

The research reported in this paper was designed to study the influence of shared servant leadership on team performance through the mediating effect of team behavioral integration, while validating a new short measure of shared servant leadership. A round-robin approach was used to collect data in two similar studies. Study 1 included 244 undergraduate students in 61 teams following an intense HRM business simulation of two weeks. The following year, study 2 included 288 students in 72 teams involved in the same simulation. The most important findings were that shared servant leadership was a strong determinant of team behavioral integration, information exchange worked as the main mediating process between shared servant leadership and team performance, and a new promising shortened four-dimensional measure of shared servant leadership was introduced.

Introduction

In today's organizations, there is a tendency to move towards more decentralized, team-based structures (Houghton & Yoko, 2005), which result from the need to adapt to an increasingly complex, uncertain and changing environment (Bennet & Bennet, 2004). In line with this trend, one can observe a growing interest in studying collectivistic forms of leadership, which include models such as team, shared, complex, network and collective leadership (Yammarino et al., 2012). These models represent also a shift from top-down management to leadership that is characterized by a more facilitating and motivational approach explicitly encouraging followers to take responsibility themselves (Bass et al., 2003).

From the aforementioned collectivist forms of leadership, shared leadership has received probably most attention in academia, with some empirical studies highlighting its impact on performance (Hoch, Pearce & Welzel, 2010; Pearce & Sims, 2002). This type of leadership, which highlights the importance of shared responsibility and mutual influence among team members in achieving team goals (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p.1; Yammarino et al., 2012) may indeed play a fundamental role in creating an encouraging and supportive team culture that can enable team members to find ways to effectively work together and integrate their individual actions (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). Being in its infant steps however, relatively to the century long research on leader-centered approaches to leadership, little is still known about the mechanisms through which shared leadership influences team functioning and performance.

Shared leadership is incorporated in this study from the perspective of servant leadership, which is on its own a novelty as other empirical studies so far in this area have

concentrated in other forms of leadership, noticeably transactional or transformational leadership (e.g. Avolio et al., 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Servant leadership has been positioned as one of the leadership theories with a strong focus on high-quality leader-follower relationships (van Dierendonck, 2011). It is a relatively new concept in academic leadership research, with the first empirical evidence in organizational contexts only now starting to become available (van Dierendonck, 2011). We posit that servant leadership might provide a rather appealing model for shared leadership. First of all because it is based on an initial motivation to serve (Greenleaf, 1977), whereby the team, its members and goals will naturally become more important than the self, secondly because it emphasizes empowerment, an essential characteristic of successful shared leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002; Yammarino et al., 2012), and finally, because it relies on humility (Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001; van Dierendonck, 2011) which coincides with the view that in collectivistic forms of leadership “it is only the collective that matters and single leaders *disappear* so to speak” (Yammarino et al., 2012)

The purpose of this study is therefore to further understand whether shared servant leadership, in particular within self-management teams, can affect objective team performance through the mediating role of team behavioral integration (collective behavior, information exchange and joint decision making). In addition this study allows testing the validity of a short servant leadership measure, which might be particularly suitable for assessing shared servant leadership through extensive round-robin surveys. Figure 2.1 depicts the conceptual model that guides this research.

Shared leadership: Definition and Operationalization

Shared leadership is defined as “a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both” (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p.1). Shared leadership changes the focus from a vertical leadership approach where one leader influences several followers to a horizontal approach where leadership becomes a joint activity of the team members showing leadership behavior towards each other (Bligh, Pearce, & Kohles, 2006). Especially in a learning environment where information sharing and knowledge creation is essential for team effectiveness, shared leadership may be of great value. Research on shared leadership has already shown its potential use in better understanding team effectiveness in terms of ratings by managers, customers and self-ratings (e.g. Hoch, Pearce, & Welzel, 2010; Pearce & Sims, 2002).

Shared leadership gains increased relevance in the context of self-management teams, as the absence of a clear hierarchy likely provides fertile ground for shared leadership to emerge. The ideas behind self-management teams originate from socio-technical systems theory (Stewart & Manz, 1995). It is a way of organizing that combines both the social and the technical aspects of work. Instead of working as individuals with individual targets, employees work together in teams and are jointly responsible for team targets. With the absence of a direct supervisor, these teams have relatively more freedom to plan their own work. This can bring a strong sense of empowerment within the individual team members and opens the way for a more shared form of leadership instead of the more traditional hierarchical type of leadership. One needs to bear in mind that despite the absence of an appointed leader within a self-management team, some kind of

informal leadership will likely appear (Wolff et al., 2002). It should even be noted that team leadership has been positioned as an essential determinant for team success (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). Team leaders help define team objectives, keep a team focused on team goals, and provide coordination between team members. Even in self-management teams these roles are necessary. What distinguishes shared leadership from centralized leadership, especially in self-managed teams, is that these leadership roles are often fulfilled by different team members instead of only one, in a fluid process. As was proposed by West et al. (2003), a lack of leadership clarity can be detrimental to team performance, especially if this leads to conflict over the leadership role or the direction that a team should take. Their study confirmed the relevance of leader clarity for team innovation. However, when one sees leadership as a process instead of a single power relationship between one leader and the followers, this clarity can be achieved through a mutually reinforcing shared leadership process. The extent to which one particular team member gains prominence in ensuring that clarity is of course dependent on the specific setup of a team.

The operationalization of shared leadership

Capturing shared leadership in teams is not easy. Previous attempts have often focused on the influence of the team as a whole or on how team members in general show leadership behavior (Gockel & Werth, 2010). For example, Pearce & Sims (2002) asked participants to rate their team members jointly on shared leadership. A similar approach was used by Avolio et al. (2003) and in a recent study by Hoch, et al. (2010). Basically, items from leadership measures are reformulated from ‘my leader...’ into ‘My team

members...'. The main disadvantage of these measures is their lack of accuracy as one cannot know the point of reference taken by respondents when evaluating the team as a whole (Gockel & Werth, 2010). No individual differentiation can be made for the level of shared leadership shown by and towards each of the team members. In order to overcome this problem, in the present study, shared leadership is measured through a round-robin approach whereby team members are individually assessed on their servant leadership behaviors towards each respondent, which makes it possible to consider it a relational construct (Mayo, Meindl & Pastor, 2004). The collective team average is then calculated, representing the total amount of servant leadership behavior demonstrated in the team, which should be more accurate than asking participants to rate the team as a whole. While this method has similarities with the social network analysis methods suggested by Gockel & Werth (2010) in terms of data collection, it has some distinct differences with regard to interpretation. In social network analysis, shared leadership is assessed mainly through the measures of centralization (the extent to which leadership is concentrated on a few individuals) and density (the amount of leadership in relation to the total possible score of a team) (Gockel & Werth, 2010). Such measures are indirect characteristics of the network topography, as they provide ratios (between 0 and 1) instead of actual leadership scores. In principle, the lower the centralization value, the more distributed (or shared) leadership will be. As centralization is only a measure of variance, Gockel & Werth (2010) suggest using both centralization and density to consider both dispersion and the amount of leadership (but still in indirect terms). Recent studies have used social network analysis in this fashion to measure shared leadership (e.g. Boies, Lvina & Martens, 2010; Engel Small & Rentsch, 2010; Mehra et al., 2006), with often contradictory findings. It is important to

recall that in order to calculate the level of centralization through the formula suggested by Freeman (1979, p.228), one needs to get in-degree and out-degree binary relations between team members, which means that the leadership survey needs either to ask yes/no type of questions with regard to one-to-one leadership influence (e.g. Mehra et al., 2006) or dichotomize leadership scores, depending on some base reference level (e.g. Meindl, Mayo & Pastor, 2002), which means that some level of information is necessarily lost. Based on these considerations and given the goals of our study we have decided to use the average of shared servant leadership as explained before instead of the social network analysis indicators of centralization and density. This is because, as we aimed to validate the short measure of servant leadership, it was important to ensure a direct measure of the amount of shared servant leadership in the team instead of using indirect ratios such as centralization and density. We see therefore our approach as an extension and improvement of the team rating approach suggested by Gockel & Werth (2010) through the inclusion of round-robin measures of servant leadership, helping to overcome the inaccuracy of team level measures.

Summarizing, by taking a round-robin approach as its base, the links between the members within each team can be incorporated in team level shared leadership scores. The team level score of this approach is comparable to those of Pearce and Sims (2002) and Avolio et al. (2003) insofar as it provides an overall measure of shared leadership but with more accuracy as it takes in account the individual results of each team member as seen by all other team members instead of asking overall team scores. This measure, which is used in our study, is called *team shared servant leadership* where a higher score signifies a higher amount of shared leadership behavior in a team.

Servant leadership as a Model for Shared Leadership

Robert Greenleaf (1904 – 1990) introduced the notion of servant leadership after reading Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East* (Greenleaf, 1977). This book portrays the archetype of a servant-first leader that inspired Greenleaf to extrapolate this notion to the context of modern organizations. Greenleaf's (1977) notion of servant leadership is very much focused on this initial motivation to serve as the following quote testifies: "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature." (Greenleaf, 1977). As such, the servant leader's major concern is the development and growth of others, as Greenleaf (1977) continues: "The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?". Larry Spears (1986) highlights how "servant leadership emphasizes increased service to others; a holistic approach to work; promoting a sense of community; and the sharing of power in decision making."

The relevance of servant leadership for team functioning has been demonstrated in several recent studies that focused on servant leadership in a hierarchical setting.

Walumbwa, Hartnell, & Oke (2010) showed that team level servant leadership was related to higher individual organizational commitment, self-efficacy and supervisor rated organizational citizenship behavior. Hu & Liden (2011) found that team-level servant leadership was related to team performance, team organizational citizenship behavior and team potency. The results of Schaubroeck, Lam & Peng (2011) are similar in that they compared team-level transformational leadership with team-level servant leadership and showed that servant leadership was related to team performance through affect-based trust in the leader and team psychological safety. All three studies confirm the relevance for team functioning of servant leadership as shown by the direct supervisor. The present study builds on their insights by its focus on shared servant leadership in self-management teams without a direct supervisor. As mentioned before, we see that the initial motivation to serve of servant leaders, reflected in a servant-first attitude (Greenleaf, 1977), combined with humility (Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2003; van Dierendonck, 2011), a genuine concern for others and the ability to perform while focusing on the good of the whole (van Dierendonck, 2011) will be conducive of a natural emergence of shared leadership. These aspects of servant leadership can be seen as supporting the antecedents of shared leadership suggested by Carson, Tesluk & Marrone (2007) such as shared purpose, social support or having a voice.

On the operationalization of servant leadership, despite the several definitions and measures of servant leadership, the recent measurement development study by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) provide a rather comprehensive and solid instrument, based on 8 dimensions and 30 items, namely: empowerment (7 items), accountability (3 items), standing back (3 items), humility (5 items), authenticity (4 items), courage (2

items), forgiveness (3 items), and stewardship (3 items). Given the extensive amount of mutual one-to-one estimates between team members in a round-robin approach as proposed here in order to calculate shared servant leadership, we opted to use only four key dimensions of empowerment, humility, accountability and stewardship in a shortened shared servant leadership measure focused specifically on the self-management team context. These four were also suggested by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) as belonging to the core aspects of servant leadership behavior. Team members who show servant-leadership behavior empower and develop the other team members, they show humility towards one another, provide direction in day-to-day work by mutually holding the others accountable, and emphasize the importance to act as stewards who work for the good of the team as a whole. While the other dimensions are still relevant to understand servant leadership behavior as a whole and within a larger hierarchical context, we believe that these four capture the essence of servant leadership and provide the necessary backbone to understand shared servant leadership behavior in the context of self-managed teams in short-term projects. This is because they are the ones, from all 8 dimensions, that most emphasize focused task performance (empowerment, stewardship, accountability), which is essential in team assignments, while creating a space for mutual adaptation and learning where no-one needs to take the lead alone (reinforced through humility). We will now explain the four dimensions of servant leadership used in this new short measure and their specific relevance and contribution for shared leadership.

Empowerment refers to a motivational concept which includes empowering leadership behavior for encouraging self-directed decision making, information sharing, and coaching for innovative performance (Konczak, Stelly & Trusty, 2000).

Empowerment is a base condition for shared leadership to emerge (Yammarino et al., 2012), whereby team members are able to trust each other on their ability to perform different tasks. It means that team members mutually encourage taking initiative, diligently share information, support each other in decision making and help others understanding new challenges and topics. In teams demonstrating high levels of shared leadership, one would expect members to often agree on sharing tasks such that those less knowledgeable can grow and learn, in a true mutually empowering fashion.

Humility is about modesty reflected in a servant-leader's tendency to give priority to the interest of others, acknowledging mistakes and giving room to learn. This particular dimension might be of specific importance for shared leadership to emerge. Being able to acknowledge one's own limitations and the fact that people can contribute in different ways and according to their level of development is essential for shared leadership to emerge. In addition, as a collectivist form of leadership, shared leadership means that any individual needs to be able to disappear into the background so to speak (Yammarino et al., 2012) when necessary, allowing others to assume leading roles as demanded by the task at hand.

Accountability is about providing direction taking into account other people's abilities, needs, and input, while holding them responsible for their achievements. This dimension is associated with the practical aspects of work, also present in servant leadership. Defining tasks, work processes, objectives, deadlines and control mechanisms remains critical for work to be done effectively. In a team with shared leadership this role might be shared among several members or eventually rotated. It also means that all members assume responsibility for each other's work and will mutually hold each other

accountable for their contribution. This shared responsibility and accountability forms a cornerstone of shared leadership behavior (Pearce & Conger, 2003).

Stewardship refers to stimulating others to act in the common interest and to take a viewpoint that focuses on the good of the whole. These core aspects have been shown to contribute to followers experiencing a more challenging work setting, a sense of psychological empowerment and higher organizational commitment (Asag-gau & Van Dierendonck, 2011). This aspect of servant leadership brings an element of self-transcendence, by putting others and the mission above the self. In other words, servant leaders do their work with a purpose that goes beyond self-interest. It is literally about putting yourself at the service of others or an objective that benefits the whole. In light of this definition, when all team members act as stewards, it becomes accepted that the team is more important than any individual, again a base condition for shared leadership to emerge (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Yammarino et al., 2012). Shared leadership implies that team members know and acknowledge the greater purpose of their team work and take pro-active action in reminding that to each other whenever needed (e.g. when the level of motivation is lower, when a crisis happens or when a new member joins the team).

Team behavioral integration

Team behavioral integration was suggested as a key fundamental trait of collective leadership (Friedrich et al., 2009; Yammarino et al., 2010; Yammarino et al., 2012). Likewise, we posit that shared leadership will be reflected in higher levels of team behavioral integration through aspects like collective behavior, information exchange and joint decision making.

As such, team behavioral integration is introduced into our theoretical model as a mediating variable to help understand the possible beneficial influence of shared leadership on team performance. Recently, behavioral integration has gained more attention as an essential element for understanding team processes within successful top management teams. It is believed to influence the way information is processed, decisions are taken and conflicts are handled. Originally proposed by Hambrick (1994), team behavioral integration consists of three interrelated components, namely collaborative behavior, information exchange and joint decision making. Its relevance was particularly emphasized by three studies that related top management team behavioral integration to company performance (Carmeli, 2008; Lubatkin et al., 2006; Simsek et al., 2005). Other studies showed its relevance for individual improvisation (Magni et al., 2009) and better quality of strategic decisions (Carmeli & Schaubroeck, 2006).

Interestingly, relatively little is known on how leadership – and more particularly leadership behavior - influences team behavioral integration. Indications for its relevance were reported by Simsek et al. (2005), who showed a positive influence of the CEO's collectivistic orientation and tenure. In another study, team leadership has been positioned as essential for developing shared mental models, collective information processing and team metacognition (Zaccaro et al. 2001). Also, shared leadership in teams has been related to greater collaboration, coordination, cooperation and group cohesion (Ensley, Pearson, & Pearce, 2003), which clearly overlaps with the three aspects of team behavioral integration. As a people-centered mutually supporting leadership model, servant leadership contains elements that may directly or indirectly enhance collective behavior, information exchange and joint decision making, the three main elements of team behavioral

integration. While we see all four aspects of servant leadership considered in this study contributing towards the three aspects of team behavioral integration, we see some particularly noteworthy linkages. Based on the definition given by Konczak, Stelly & Trusty (2000) empowerment will likely affect both information exchange and joint decision making, as it opens up the channels of communication in support of joint coordination. Stewardship will be particularly relevant for the aspect of collective behavior, as it emphasizes the importance of the whole and staying on course to achieve the team's objectives. Accountability is critical for joint decision making as it emphasizes the need to mutually agree on targets, task assignments, methods and processes while ensuring execution and performance. Humility will be instrumental in ensuring both information exchange and joint decision making as it will instill a culture of dialogue and genuine interest in mutual understanding. Finally, humility will also be critical in ensuring collective behavior because it amplifies the importance of others and the collective above self-interest. As such, it can be expected that if team members on average show more of these mutual and supportive servant leadership behavior towards each other, team behavioral integration in a team will be strengthened, which will lead to better overall team performance. This constitutes in fact our main hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: Shared servant leadership is positively related to team performance through team behavioral integration.

The present study contributes to the shared leadership literature in two ways. First, by introducing a round-robin method and a well-validated and compact servant leadership measure originally used for hierarchical leader-follower relations (van

Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), it provides a new and solid approach towards measuring the amount of shared leadership in a team, with more accuracy than traditional team rating surveys (e.g. Avolio et al., 2003; Pearce & Sims, 2002). Second, by studying the contribution of shared servant leadership towards team performance through team behavioral integration as a mediating process, we expect to be able to further understand the drivers of performance in self-managed teams and confirm the specific relevance of servant leadership in inducing shared leadership.

In a nutshell, the present study aims at testing the mediating effect of shared servant leadership on team performance through team behavioral integration. A round-robin approach was used to collect the data, which allows for a more accurate measure of the amount of shared servant leadership in a team. The study also aims at validating a new short measure of servant leadership. Several control variables were included to take into account possible third variable effects, namely academic competence and team familiarity.

Study 1

Methods

Participants

Participants were third year undergraduate Business Administration students participating in a HRM course that included a HRM-simulation of two weeks with intense teamwork in groups of four. Each team represented the HRM department of a company where HR relevant decisions had to be made for the company. These decisions had to be taken on a daily basis for eight days. In the morning, feedback was given on how

their company was doing in comparison to the companies of the other teams. New decisions had to be taken before the end of each day. It is important to note that no leader was appointed in the teams. They were instructed to function as a self-management team. The participants were asked to fill out a survey on their team functioning, one week after the simulation directly following handing in their final report, giving extra course credits.

Only the results of the teams that had all four members filling out the surveys were included in the study. This provides a full database with reports of all team members on each other. The sample included 61 teams, totaling 244 students (response percentage of 71%). Of them 65 % were male and 35% female. The average age was 21.0 ($SD = 1.5$) years.

Measures

Shared Servant Leadership. All participants were asked to rate the leadership behavior they perceived from their fellow team members in a round-robin fashion. For the developmental purpose of this survey, where we also wanted to test the validity of the short measure, all 30 items from the recently developed Servant Leadership Survey (SLS; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) were incorporated. The items were reformulated to indicate the level of servant leadership shown by each team members towards the person filling out the survey. Ratings were to be given on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from *never* to *very often*. For all participants, the answers to all items were averaged to indicate the mean level of the servant leadership behavior as received from the other team members.

Team shared servant leadership is the combined servant leader behavior of team members shown towards one another. This gives an indication of the average level of shared leadership in a team, which is similar to approach 1 in the Gockel & Werth (2010) paper but with the advantage of including round-robin measures for a more accurate assessment of the total average amount of shared leadership.

Behavioral integration. Behavioral integration was measured with the three-dimensional measure developed by Simsek et al. (2005), including collective behavior, information exchange and joint decision making. Each dimension was measured with three items. It was tested whether the operationalization of team behavioral integration acknowledged its three-dimensional conceptualization. This three-dimensional model of behavioral integration indeed showed a much better fit compared to the one-dimensional model ($X^2 = 42.24$, $df = 24$, $CFI = .93$, $TLI = .90$, $RMSEA = .11$, $SRMR = .07$, versus $X^2 = 121.49$, $df = 27$, $CFI = .64$, $TLI = .51$, $RMSEA = .24$, $SRMR = .13$). The internal consistencies were .85 for collective behavior (3 items), .75 for information exchange (3 items), and .74 for joint decision making (3 items).

Performance. During the simulation, the teams received feedback about their performance on several company indicators, generated by the simulation software. These indicators were also transformed into an overall score which was communicated to the teams after each round. Performance in this paper is their final ranking on the simulation, which gives an indication of their overall performance throughout the eight decision rounds. Their overall end score differentiated between 6 (for the teams whose score belonged to the lowest 10%) and 10 (for groups belonging to the highest 10%).

Control variables. Past research has argued that team member familiarity may affect team performance (e.g., Gruenfeld et al., 1996). Therefore, we took in member familiarity as a control variable. Respondents were to judge how well they knew each team member on a scale from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*very well*). These scores were added together and aggregated to team level to create a team score of familiarity.

Academic competence of the individual team members may also influence team performance. Respondents were asked to give an estimate of their average grade of other courses. Course grade is used as a proxy for general mental capacity, their learning style, and their motivation to put in an effort to reach high grades. These individual scores were averaged within a team for a score of a team's average academic competence.

No index for within group agreement was calculated for the control variables as team members are not necessarily similar in the degree to which they know their fellow team members, nor in their average grade. In this situation the team average would still be an accurate reflection of member familiarity and intellectual capacity (cf. Gruenfeld et al., 1996).

Results

Construct validity of the short shared servant leadership measure

In view of the different setup of this study where all team members rated each other instead of their hierarchical leader, the factorial validity of the hypothesized four-dimensional structure (humility, empowerment, stewardship and accountability) of the proposed shortened shared servant leadership survey had to be tested. The mean item-scores across team members were used as input for Mplus 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2009).

The nested (multi-level) structure of the dataset (i.e., participants in teams) was accounted for, thereby guaranteeing the correct error variances.

The fit of the hypothesized 4-dimensional structure was compared to a 1-dimensional structure (all items loading on one leadership dimension). The fit indices were $X^2 = 263,887$, $df = 129$, CFI = .91, TLI = .89, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .07, for the 4-dimensional model, and $X^2 = 648,989$, $df = 135$, CFI = .66, TLI = .61, RMSEA = .13, SRMR = .10, for the 1-dimensional model.

The 4-dimensional model clearly shows the best fit, confirming the underlying multi-dimensional structure of servant leadership within this context. However, one comparative fit index (TLI) was still below .90, indicating some misfit in the measurement model. Items that either loaded low (i.e., a standardized factor loading lower than .40) on their proposed dimension or where the modification indices indicated a cross-loading on one of the other dimensions were removed. This resulted in the removal of three items from empowerment, humility and stewardship (one item from each subscale). The resulting 4-dimensional model had excellent fit indices ($X^2 = 139,185$, $df = 84$, CFI = .93, TLI = .92, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .06). The 4-dimensional model with one underlying dimension showed a comparable fit: $X^2 = 157,561$, $df = 86$, CFI = .94, TLI = .93, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .06. These results confirm that shared servant leadership as measured in this paper is a 4-dimensional concept with one underlying second order factor. The internal consistencies are .80 for empowerment (6 items), .88 for accountability (3 items), .60 for stewardship (2 items), and .75 for humility (4 items). Overall, the reliability of these subscales is good. Please note that internal consistency also depends on the number of

items. Stewardship has only two items, .60 is with only two items still respectable (as will be seen later, this value is higher in study 2).

To test the validity of this shortened version, we compared the underlying variance of the full servant leadership scale with all 30 items with 8 dimensions to that of the reduced version with 15 items and only 4 dimensions. A model was tested where the four dimensions were allowed to load together on one second-order factor. In addition, all 30 items of the original scales were allowed to load one underlying factor. This factor signifies the total underlying servant leadership variance of the full measure. The second order servant leadership factor (representing the underlying variance of the four dimensions theorized to be most important for shared servant leadership in self-managed teams) was allowed to correlate with the leadership factor which was determined by all 30 items. The correlation between these two latent constructs was .90. In other words, the short scale consisting of only 4 out the 8 dimensions and half the number of items (15 instead of 30), still represents 81% of the variance of the full scale.

Shared Servant leadership and team functioning

Table 2.1 shows the individual mean values, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the variables of study 1. Before aggregating the data to team level, the consensus among the different team members was checked with regard to their assessment of team behavioral integration. For the team shared servant leadership scores this is not necessary as questions are based on the servant leadership behavior shown by each team member individually and not on the overall servant leadership level of the team.

For the case of team behavioral integration, the Rwg(j) scores (James, Demaree & Wolfe 1984) were calculated. The Rwg(j) scores were .86 for collective behavior, .92 for information exchange and .78 for joint decision making. Additional insight is gained through the intraclass correlation (ICC1). This correlation gives an estimate of the related consistency among the team members. The ICC1 scores were .19 for collective behavior, .16 for information exchange and .34 for joint decision making. Overall, it can be concluded that there is enough overlap between team members to calculate average team behavioral integration scores.

The conceptual models were tested with structural equation models with latent and manifest variables using Mplus 6 (Muthén & Muthén, 2009). To operationalize the latent construct of servant leadership, the four dimensions were used as manifest indicators. For the three team behavioral integration sub-dimensions, the items of each scale were used as indicators. In this way these latent constructs were determined by three or four indicators, which is the recommended practice if the goal is to study a variable for an overall level of generality and one wants to reduce the level of nuisance and bias that may come from working with the separate items directly (Bandalos, 2002). Team performance, academic competence and team familiarity were used as manifest variables.

Following Anderson and Gerbing (1988), we first tested the adequacy of the measurement model of the latent constructs before actually testing the relations in the full model. The relative fit indices were excellent ($\chi^2 = 73,569$, $df = 59$, $CFI = .96$, $TLI = .95$, $RMSEA = .06$, $SRMR = .07$), confirming our operationalization of shared servant leadership and team behavioral integration with four and three separate constructs respectively.

Following, the hypothesized model was tested, showing only a moderate fit ($\chi^2 = 146.286$, $df = 95$, $CFI = .88$, $TLI = .84$, $RMSEA = .09$, $SRMR = .09$). By checking the significance of the paths and the modification indices, several improvements were suggested. Interestingly, neither control variable (average team academic competence or team familiarity) were significantly related to team performance. As a result, they were removed from the model. Additionally, the paths between collective behavior and joint decision making and team performance were not significant. The adjusted model with the non-significant paths fixed at zero has an excellent fit. ($\chi^2 = 91.645$, $df = 71$, $CFI = .95$, $TLI = .93$, $RMSEA = .07$, $SRMR = .08$).

Figure 2.2 shows the standardized model. As can be seen, shared servant leadership is related to all three elements of behavioral integration. This shows that shared servant leadership behavior within self-management teams is closely related to a stronger collective functioning of that team. There is also an indirect relation to performance, notably more information exchange in the team is related to a better final (i.e. overall) performance.

As a final step, this indirect role of information exchange in the relationship between servant leadership and team performance was tested with bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The standardized estimated indirect coefficient was .21 ($p = .01$; 95% confidence interval ranged between .07 and .34), confirming its mediating role.

Conclusions

This first study seems to confirm the hypothesis that shared team servant leadership does have an effect on team behavioral integration. Most notably, within the

behavioral integration construct, information exchange seems to play a more prominent role in that mediating process towards performance, which confirms the prominence of this factor as suggested by Yammarino et al. (2012). The fact that academic competence and team familiarity do not seem to influence this set of relations only comes to strengthen the apparent power of shared servant leadership on bringing teams to a performing level.

Another important and promising development from this first study is the validity and reliability of the short measure for shared servant leadership based on 4 dimensions and 15 items, as opposed to the original for the hierarchical leader-follower context consisting of 8 dimensions and 30 items. This allows capturing the essence of servant leadership as a model based on four key dimensions: humility, empowerment, stewardship and accountability. On a more practical level, it eases research through the reduced number of items in the survey, which is quite relevant when using an extensive round-robin approach to measure team shared leadership.

In order to confirm the conclusions on the mediating effect of behavioral integration on the relationship between shared servant leadership and performance, and the factorial validity of the short measure of shared servant leadership, a second similar study was developed, which will now be explained.

Study 2

Methods

Participants

As in the first study, participants were third year undergraduate Business Administration students participating in a HRM course that included a HRM-simulation of two weeks with intense teamwork in groups of four (the first study was done with the class of 2010 and the second study with the class of 2011). Only the results of the teams that had all four members filling out the surveys were included in the study. This provides a full database with reports of all team members on each other. The sample included 72 teams, totaling 288 students (response percentage of 72%). Of them 62 % were male and 38% female. The average age was 20.9 ($SD = 1.3$) years.

Measures

Shared Servant Leadership. The 15 items reduced measure from study 1 was used for study 2. This would be important to confirm the factorial validity of the short measure developed in study 1.

Behavioral integration. Behavioral integration was measured with the three-dimensional measure developed by Simsek et al. (2005) as in study 1. The internal consistencies for this measure were .89 for collective behavior (3 items), .86 for information exchange (3 items), and .90 for joint decision making (3 items).

Performance. The same measure was used as in study 1. The end score on the simulation could range between 4.5 and 10.

Results

Factorial validity of the shared servant leadership measure.

The fit of the new developed 4-dimensional measure from study 1 was compared to a 1-dimensional structure (all items loading on one leadership dimension). The fit indices were $X^2 = 165.896$, $df = 84$, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .05, for the 4-dimensional model, and $X^2 = 535.909$, $df = 90$, CFI = .73, TLI = .68, RMSEA = .13, SRMR = .09, for the 1-dimensional model. The 4-dimensional model with one underlying dimension showed a comparable fit: $X^2 = 165.149$, $df = 86$, CFI = .95, TLI = .94, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .05. The standardized factor loading of the sub-dimensions on the second order factor were: .94 for empowerment, .51 for accountability, .88 for stewardship and .96 for humility. The internal consistencies are .81 for empowerment (6 items), .90 for accountability (3 items), .69 for stewardship (2 items), and .77 for humility (4 items). Taken together, these results confirm the factorial validity of the shared servant leadership measure as developed in study 1 as a 4-dimensional concept with one underlying second order factor.

As in study 1, we checked the overlap between team members in their estimation to confirm our use of aggregated team scores for team behavioral integration. The Rwg(j) scores (James, Demaree, & Wolfe, 1984) were .91 for collective behavior, .94 for information exchange and .89 for joint decision making. The ICC1 scores were .31 for collective behavior, .59 for information exchange and .41 for joint decision making, again allowing us to aggregate results at team level.

Model confirmation

Next, the model from study 1 was tested in this study to see if it could be replicated with an independent sample within a similar setting. The latent model was determined in the same way as in study 1. The fit was again good: $\chi^2 = 112.966$, $df = 71$, $CFI = .94$, $TLI = .92$, $RMSEA = .09$, $SRMR = .07$. There were no significant improvements suggested by the modification indices. The indirect role of information exchange in the relationship between servant leadership and team performance was again tested with bootstrapping (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). The standardized estimated indirect coefficient was .28 ($p < .001$; 95% confidence interval ranged between .16 and .40), confirming its mediating role. The standardized factor loadings of the resulting model can be found between brackets in Figure 2.2.

Table 2.2 shows the individual mean values, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the variables of study 2. The results of the second study confirmed the findings of the first study, both in terms of the mediating relationship between shared servant leadership, behavioral integration (in particular information exchange) and team performance, and the validity of the short version of the servant leadership measure. We now give a more general discussion on these findings and some indications for future research.

Conclusions

The research reported in this paper was designed to study the specific role of shared servant leadership in self-management teams. The fact that we were able to replicate results in two studies separated by one year gives us confidence in our main

findings. The most important findings were: 1) shared servant leadership has a very significant impact on behavioral integration, 2) information exchange plays a prominent role as a mediating variable between shared servant leadership and team performance, and 3) based on a round-robin approach of measuring shared leadership, a short measure of shared servant leadership was introduced consisting of four dimensions and 15 items which appears to be valid and reliable.

The results demonstrating the influence of shared servant leadership on behavioral integration are a clear contribution to the servant leadership field. In a time when collectivist forms of leadership and self-managed teams seem to be gaining relevance in organizational work, it is interesting to note how shared leadership processes and in particular shared servant leadership can be determinant in increasing collective behavior, information exchange and shared decision making. This also serves to confirm the perspective that leadership needs to be seen as a process and not only as a power relationship between an individual and his or her followers. It emphasizes leadership as a mutual process of taking ownership and initiative for work and growth. There are multiple paths to creating teams that function, and centralized leadership can surely be one of them, but our results seem to demonstrate that shared leadership can also be quite effective in that process. Further research will be needed to understand the specific conditions under which shared leadership or centralized leadership become more appropriate for generating behavioral integration. At the same time, through this study we show that servant leadership might be a model particularly suited for shared leadership approaches to team work. As an other-focused form of leadership, it might be just about the right model to

induce shared leadership in a team. Further investigation of the role of each of the specific servant leadership dimensions on behavioral integration will be important.

An essential theoretical contribution is that the study provided a better understanding of the role of specific behavioral integration aspects in mediating the relationship between shared leadership and performance. Behavioral integration, already an important aspect in top management teams (Lubatkin et al., 2006; Simsek et al. 2005), was shown to be influenced by the extent that team members showed servant leadership behavior towards each other. Our second finding suggests that information exchange is the most relevant dimension for the performance of self-management teams, which supports the importance attributed to this construct for shared leadership (Yammarino et al., 2012). It is likely, however, that the context will affect the relative importance of the separate team behavioral integration dimensions. We suggest that the particular influence of information exchange on team performance in our studies, compared to collective behavior and shared decision making, might have to do with the knowledge base and high intense nature of the simulations in both assignments. In other words, when work is mainly related to the production of knowledge in a short period of time, the ability to quickly tap into the team's existing knowledge becomes the main driver of performance. As such, we would expect collective behavior and shared decision making to take an increasingly important role on performance over longer projects or when time pressure is not so high. Given our outcomes and the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, future research of team behavior integration might take into account the differentiation between the three dimensions through, for example, a longitudinal study with projects that span over a longer period of time.

Finally, concerning the third finding of this paper on the short measure of shared servant leadership, one should realize that one cannot just use scales developed for more traditional leadership research within a shared leadership context. The servant leadership survey that was the base of the current measure had to be modified to meet psychometric criteria and, at the same time, be practical for a round-robin approach of measuring shared leadership. The results are promising. A four-dimensional shared servant leadership scale is introduced that is in line with earlier theorizing on servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). The version that came out of our theoretical arguments and was confirmed in the analyses across two studies encompasses four core dimensions of servant leadership, namely: empowerment, humility, accountability and stewardship. We were able to observe that the short scale still represented 81% of the variance of the full scale. With only 15 items, instead of 30, this shortened survey can easily be incorporated into future research on shared servant leadership and be of particular utility when using a round-robin approach with many mutual items between team members.

One possible limitation is the use of a student sample following a business simulation as the basis of the team work. However, this also has the advantage of guaranteeing the high response rate in most teams needed to test the hypothesis. This is very hard to realize in field studies. In addition, there is supporting evidence to the parallels that can be established between students and other populations in their behavior in achievement settings (e.g. Brown & Lord, 1999, Locke, 1986). The added advantages of the present design are that all teams had exactly the same assignment, eliminating the influence of aspects related to differing assignment complexities, and the fact that the study took place within a limited time-span where the simulation was the main activity of

the participants. Also, most team studies use supervisory ratings of performance. Here it is feedback provided by the simulation program itself, which gives it a more objective character. Finally, a major strength is that we were able to replicate the findings of one study in the second study one year later, under the same circumstances and with the same type of assignment. In any case, we recommend replicating this study in other contexts of work to further validate our findings on the impact of shared servant leadership on team behavioral integration and performance.

In conclusion, in view of the increasing popularity of collectivistic forms of leadership and self-management teams in particular, getting additional insights into the processes that influence their effectiveness is crucial. The findings of this study emphasize the important role of shared servant leadership on team behavioral integration and its potential effect on performance through information exchange, further supporting the idea that servant leadership might be particularly suitable for shared leadership. Moreover, we are able to confirm the specific relevance of the four dimensions of empowerment, humility, accountability and stewardship as the key fundamental aspects of shared servant leadership, as well as the validity of the corresponding short measure.

Table 2.1 Descriptives and Intercorrelations of Variables at Team Level (Study 1)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Academic competence	70.14	2.87									
2. Team familiarity	3.46	.83	.15								
3. Collective behavior	6.14	.48	.13	-.15							
4. Information exchange	4.94	.47	-.01	-.10	.38*						
5. Joint decision making	5.31	.41	-.01	.15	.53*	.43*					
6. Empowerment	3.36	.34	.00	.28*	.38*	.39*	.57*				
7. Accountability	3.41	.43	.18	.37	-.00	.08	.33*	.40*			
8. Stewardship	3.91	.40	.29*	-.02	.20	.08	.32*	.51*	.11		
9. Humility	3.01	.90	.13	.34	.25*	.31*	.37*	.73*	.31*	.48	
10. Team performance	7.92	1.34	-.08	-.12	.10	.56*	.16	.08	-.16	-.11	.12

Note. $n = 61$. * $p < .05$

Table 2.2 Descriptives and Intercorrelations of Variables at Team Level (Study 2)

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Collective behavior	6.00	.42							
2. Information exchange	5.17	.49	.38*						
3. Joint decision making	5.35	.50	.47*	.70*					
4. Empowerment	3.37	.38	.31*	.47*	.46*				
5. Accountability	3.32	.46	.30*	.46*	.34*	.43*			
6. Stewardship	3.21	.36	.16	.40*	.40*	.69*	.37*		
7. Humility	3.16	.37	.25*	.39*	.42*	.81*	.54*	.60*	
8. Team performance	7.47	1.74	.12	.50*	.44*	.16	.16	.11	.18

Note. $n = 72$. * $p < .05$

Figure 2.1 Conceptual model relating the variables of shared servant leadership, team behavioral integration and team performance.

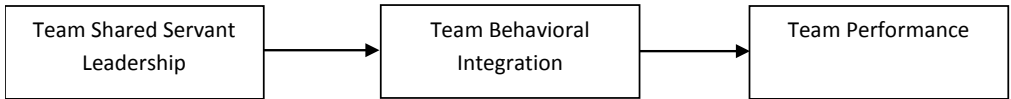
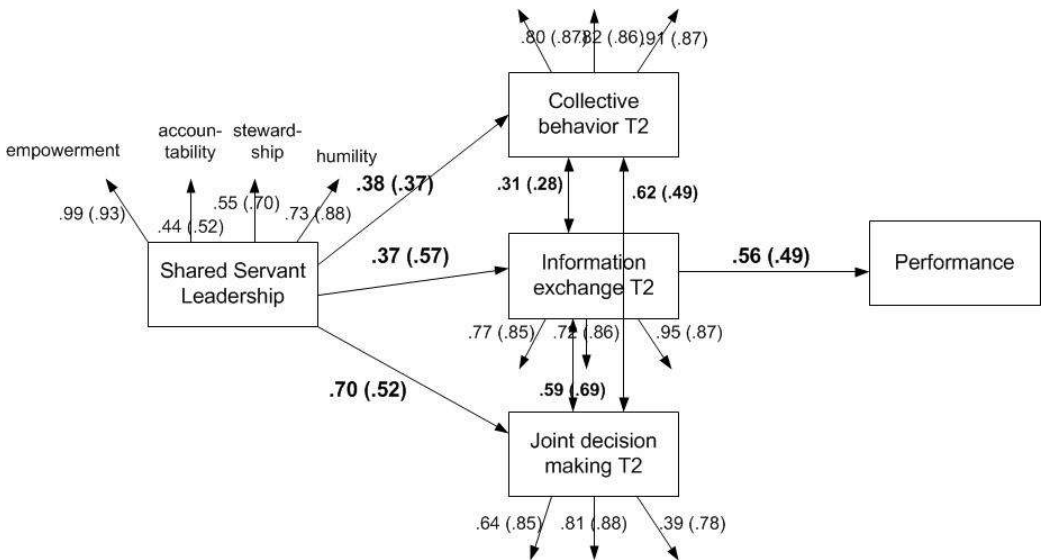


Figure 2.2 Shared servant leadership, team behavioral integration and team performance, Empirical model for study 1 and study 2.



Note. Depicted are the standardized values. Between brackets are the values for study 2.

Chapter 3 - Servant Leadership and Engagement in a Merger Process

This paper portrays the result of a study on the relationship between servant leadership and engagement, through the mediating effect of organizational identification and psychological empowerment, during a merger process. The study is based on a sample of 1107 employees from two merging Portuguese companies after an acquisition process. The most relevant findings are: 1) the servant leadership survey (SLS) used in this study proved to be valid and reliable in the Portuguese context and language, providing additional confirmation for the relevance of servant leadership across different cultures, 2) servant leadership strongly affected work engagement in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption and 3) both organizational identification and psychological empowerment acted as mediating variables, partially explaining the process through which servant leadership is related to engagement. The mediating role of psychological empowerment was particularly evident in this respect.

Introduction

The study of work engagement has gained significant attention in the last few years particularly with studies showing its relevance for corporate performance. These studies seem indeed to indicate that engaged employees are more committed to their organization (Hakanen et al, 2006) and perform better at work (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al, 2009). At the same time work engagement seems to lead to higher levels of psychological stability and overall well-being (Schaufeli et al, 2008; Xanthopoulou et al, 2009; Demerouti et al, 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Often seen as the antipode of burnout (Maslach et al, 2001), work engagement seems to lead to obvious professional and social benefits. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004, 2010) defined engagement as a positive and fulfilling work-related state of mind which is characterized by behaviors of vigor, dedication and absorption. Interestingly, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) proposed that engagement at the individual level is driven mainly by available job resources (support, autonomy, feedback, etc.) and personal resources (resilience, self-efficacy, optimism, etc.), while being negatively influenced by the level of job demands (work pressure, emotional, mental and physical demands), however no explicit mention is made of leadership as a potential resource.

In this paper, we focus on an external context that may be paradigmatic for the potential detrimental effect of job demands on engagement: two organizations in the middle of a merger process, with a large lay-off being planned and the need to align strategies between two fundamentally different business models and cultures. Organizational environments that are faced with fundamental changes as in a complex merger process, will increase job demands significantly which will most likely negatively

affect engagement if both job and personal resources are not adequately developed (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007). Previous studies already showed the possible detrimental influence of mergers in general on organizational identification (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg & Leeuwen, 2001; van Knippenberg et al., 2002) and of downsizing on commitment in particular (van Dierendonck & Jacobs, 2011). It is here that leadership may make all the difference. If within such a process, organizational leadership shows awareness for the specific resources and needs of the workforce, while enabling the provision of these job resources and the development of the necessary personal resources to adapt to the environment, this may make all the difference for work engagement. It is in this line of thought that van den Heuvel et al. (2010) suggested that managers would need to understand the particular individual differences in personal needs within their organization. In particular, managers who promote self-efficacy among their employees, pro-actively provide meaning to the change process and highlight the opportunities for learning and development that change may bring, will be able to support more successfully a change process (van den Heuvel et al. 2010).

Leadership that is particularly focused on the needs of employees is at the core of servant leadership. We were therefore interested in the relationship between servant leadership behaviors shown by management and the overall engagement of the workforce during an impactful change process, namely the merger between two organizations after an acquisition. With its people-centered focus, servant leadership might be in a position to offer the necessary job and personal resources necessary to withstand the demands of a complex and uncertain merge, and as such sustain work engagement.

Studies on the relationship between leadership and engagement are scarce and studies for the particular case of a merger & acquisition process focused on servant leadership seem to be lacking; which makes the current study rather unique. There is some first evidence of the relevance of leadership for engagement. For example, Tuckey et al (2012) focused specifically on empowering leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002), which is related to servant leadership and highlights behaviors that encourage self-management, autonomy, cooperation, personal learning, growth and seeing challenges as learning opportunities. Their study showed that, compared to transformational leadership, empowering leadership is more about the development of self-leadership skills and less about confirming the leader's vision.

By focusing on servant leadership, our study further expands on the work by Tuckey et al (2012). We opted to use the operationalization of the servant leadership model of van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), which incorporates empowerment as one of its principal dimensions, alongside with stewardship, humility, standing-back, courage, forgiveness, accountability and authenticity. Conceptually, both empowering and servant leadership privilege the follower as the agent of change, with the leader being at the service of followers in enabling their performance, growth and learning. However, being a more encompassing construct, servant leadership can give us a richer picture in understanding how different types of leader serving-like behaviors can help encourage engagement.

Servant leadership was shown to affect commitment to change through justice and optimism (Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012). The current study allows us to enrich our knowledge about the specific mechanisms involved in the relationship between servant

leadership and engagement during change, and in a merger process in particular. In order to test different mediating factors, measures of organizational identification were incorporated (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam, 2001; Hogg & Terry, 2000), which was shown to be of critical importance during merger processes (van Knippenberg & Leeuwen, 2001; van Knippenberg et al., 2002), and psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). The diagram on Figure 3.1 depicts the conceptual model that served as the basis for this study.

As an additional contribution, we aimed also to validate the Servant Leadership Survey (SLS) in a new national context (in this case in Portugal), extending the potential global appeal of this construct.

An explanation of the different constructs used in this study will now be provided in more detail, as well as the potential linkages between them as outlined in the conceptual model (Figure 3.1).

Servant leadership

The term servant leadership was first introduced by Greenleaf (1977) after Herman Hesse's novel "Journey to the East" (Greenleaf, 1977). This story portrays a leader whose main focus is to serve a group of travelers on a mythical journey. For Greenleaf (1977, p. 7), "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions... The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and

blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature." Servant leadership has therefore a more moral tone that differentiates it from most other models of leadership: the servant leader is mainly concerned with the development and growth of followers. As such, and in the context of our study, servant leaders will likely not allow a change process to overcome the needs and challenges of those most influenced by it: the employees. The paradox might be that by focusing on the employees and both their needed job and personal resources (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007), servant leaders might just be indirectly increasing the effectiveness of change itself as they enable workers to partake in the process and become change agents themselves. This induces greater levels of psychological empowerment, while increasing the level of identification with the organization and the intended change (through the leader as it representative), which will increase the feelings of vigor, dedication and absorption, hence engagement (Schaufeli and Bakker, 2004).

A deeper look into the different elements of servant leadership might help shed some more light into how it can positively affect change. Our operationalization of servant leadership is based on the model developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), which includes 8 dimensions: empowerment, humility, accountability, stewardship, authenticity, forgiveness, courage and standing-back. *Empowerment*, similarly to the notion of empowering leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002), is about encouraging autonomous decision making, sharing information and the coaching and mentoring of individuals for innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). Empowerment will take an important role in granting a sense of ownership among the workforce, which when adequately managed can function as a driver of successful organizational change (Pierce et al., 1991; Dirks et al., 1996;

Pierce et al., 2001). *Humility* is essentially about the modesty of the leader, as demonstrated in his or her ability to give priority to the interest of others, to recognize one's own mistakes and to provide sufficient space for learning. In this sense humility will be critical in creating a listening space and acknowledging that change can bring many uncertainties that need to be address. It will allow workers to feel listened to. *Accountability* concerns providing direction while taking in account the capabilities of people, as well as their specific needs and possible contribution. Accountability is also about ensuring that people are responsible for their results. This aspect is critical as it ensures operational execution. Without it, the ability to listen and to empathize with people's concerns during a change will not be translated into concrete actions, which could evolve into cynicism and skepticism about the organization's real intentions. *Stewardship* is concerned with motivating people to take action while considering the common interest and ensuring the good of the whole. Previous studies indicate that stewardship can contribute towards a more challenging work environment, increased psychological empowerment and organizational commitment (Asag-gau & Van Dierendonck, 2011). Stewardship will be critical to frame the change process into a larger strategic picture, such that workers can understand the purpose and intent of the process. Servant leaders as stewards also take an active role in helping to translate what the change might mean for each individual, addressing aspects of personal meaningfulness in work and at work (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003). *Authenticity* was defined by Harter (2002) as the expression of the 'true self', in ways that are consistent with our inner thoughts and feelings. Being authentic is therefore about being true to oneself and showing, both in private and in public, our genuine intentions, internal states and commitments (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). This

aspect of authenticity can be essential in creating an overall perception of fairness and transparency during the change process. In every change there is likely a natural suspicion about the intent of the change, as a natural defense mechanism to protect one's position in the organization. If leaders are perceived as authentic, it will create an atmosphere of openness and cooperation that can positively affect change. *Forgiveness* is demonstrated through the ability of letting go of previous offenses, differences or mistakes. McCullough et al (2000) make explicit references to letting go of perceived wrongdoings and not to carry a grudge into other contexts. Change processes, especially when they require fundamental transformations such as in a large merger between two entirely different organizations, will naturally create frictions that can even lead into conflicts among workers and between these and management. Acknowledging those differences and conflicts while being able to forgive any excesses and move on will be critical to ensure a positive flow towards the intended change. *Courage* was seen by Russell and Stone (2002) as a special form of pro-active behavior towards the creation of novel approaches to old problems, while staying true to the values and convictions that form the individual compass for action. It goes almost without saying that any change requires courage, as the leader will have to handle sometimes hard resistance and even direct confrontation. Being able to endure during the hard moments of a change process and to be able to absorb its unavoidable negative impact will be critical to ensure its continuity and ultimate success. Finally, *standing-back* is "the extent to which a leader puts the interest of others first and provides them with essential support and praise" (van Dierendonck, 2011). This dimension is essential to the whole notion of servant leadership, as it highlights the importance of being modest in one's achievements and in sharing success with followers. In the context

of change, the ability of the leader to stand-back will be important when intermediate successes and goals are reached as it stimulates the sense of ownership and empowerment among workers, fuelling this way the change process forward.

The eight-dimensional factor structure of this measure was confirmed in studies conducted in the Netherlands (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), UK (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), Italy (Bobbio et al., 2012) and Finland (Hakanen & Van Dierendonck, 2011). By using this measure in a new country (Portugal), this study is also contributing towards the confirmation of this operationalization of servant leadership across different countries and cultures. Given the confirmation of the factorial model in four different countries and languages, we expected that the Portuguese version would also support the underlying 8-factor model. This leads us to our first hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1: The factor structure of the servant leadership survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) will be replicated for the Portuguese language and context.

Engagement

The notion of work engagement was developed from the strand of positive psychology and has been considered the antithesis of burnout (Maslach et al. 2001). Taking this perspective, Schaufeli et al (2006) see engaged employees as being energized and connected to their work activities and able to deal well with their jobs. Schaufeli et al (2006) suggest that work engagement will be visible through vigor, dedication and absorption. *Vigor* is characterized by Schaufeli et al (2006) on the one hand by the energy and resilience demonstrated by employees in their work and on the other hand by their

willingness and persistence, even in face of difficulties. When looking at the different dimensions of servant leadership, one can see aspects like courage, authenticity, forgiveness, accountability and stewardship as having a very relevant contribution to increase vigor. These dimensions stimulate facing adversity with concrete and coherent action, supported by objective and open relationships, while not allowing personal differences to linger and hold people back from what needs to be done. This is particularly relevant in change processes, as in the case of our study. *Dedication* is explained by Schaufeli et al (2006) as a “sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” in work. Again, some servant leadership dimensions seem to have particular relevance here. Stewardship for example will allow people to understand the full meaning of their work in a larger organizational and social picture, giving it purpose, significance and ultimately a sense of pride in one’s work and organization. Other aspects like accountability and empowerment will be also instrumental as they will help creating those more operational challenges and goals that will instill a sense of personal achievement, competence and performance. *Absorption* is about the deep involvement one shows for his or her work, often characterized by a loss of a sense of time when working and even in difficulties to detach from work (Schaufeli et al, 2006). In a way, this comes close to the notion of flow as defined by Csikszentmihalyi (1996). In this regard, the servant leadership dimensions of empowerment, humility and standing-back will be instrumental as they create a sense of ownership and allow room for people to shape their work as they see fit, while adjusting to the particular level of skills and experience of each worker (a critical aspect for the state of flow as defended by Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Accountability will also be important as it will help establishing clear metrics of success, another important

aspect to achieve a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). Finally, empowerment, humility and standing-back contribute also to absorption by creating room for learning, creativity and innovation, which are intrinsically motivating and absorbing activities.

Following the model by Van Dierendonck (2011), and based on the different considerations so far, we propose that servant leadership can provide an effective path towards engagement, also in times of change. As a people-centered model and through its dimensions of stewardship, empowerment, accountability, forgiveness, authenticity, courage, humility and standing-back, servant leadership is likely in a position to strengthen both the necessary job and personal resources that sustain engagement, particularly when job demands are stringent as in a merger. This constitutes our second hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2: Servant leadership is positively related to engagement during an organizational merger.

Organizational Identification

Organizational identification is a social identity phenomenon, where the individual categorizes him or herself as being a member of the organization (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Haslam, 2001; Hogg & Terry, 2000) through a process of self-categorization (Turner, 1985; Turner et al, 1987). Hence, one can see organizational identification as an individual and organizational process of ascribing elements and characteristics of the organization to the definition of the self. This osmosis means that the individual will gradually adopt behaviors based on the norms and practices of the organization (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Turner et al., 1987). Not surprisingly, individuals who strongly identify themselves with the organization will more likely defend it and put

more discretionary effort into it (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Dutton et al., 1994). Studies demonstrate this stronger commitment to the organization in the form of organizational citizenship behavior (Mael & Ashforth, 1992), greater cooperation within groups (Kramer, 1991; Tyler, 1999) or increased loyalty leading to lower turnover (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Mael & Ashforth, 1995; Tyler, 1999).

We see organizational identification as a potential mediating variable between servant leadership and engagement. First of all, servant leadership incorporates several aspects that can contribute towards increased organizational identification. The combination of leadership behaviors inherently linked to the strategic goals of the organization, like stewardship and accountability, coupled with the enabling of workers to engage in an open dialogue with management and to execute their work with high-levels of autonomy, through aspects like humility, authenticity and empowerment, can be conducive of an environment where employees will feel identified with both management and the goals of the organization. On the other hand, this increased identification with the organization can generate higher levels of engagement, as reflected in terms of vigor, dedication and absorption towards work. This likely happens because, as a social identity process, the organization becomes an extension of the self, so that the success of the organization, and of the people working there, becomes a symbol of personal pride, fulfillment and self-realization. Based on this explanation, we formulate our third hypothesis.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational identification plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and engagement during an organizational merger.

Psychological Empowerment

The psychological empowerment construct developed by Thomas and Velthouse (1990) explains motivation through four key orientations towards work, namely: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Psychological empowerment is therefore a construct applicable in a work context that indicates the extent to which people feel empowered. *Meaning*, within the context of the psychological empowerment construct, is seen as the value that the individual attaches to work, and the associated goals and purposes in face his or her own values and ideals (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). This notion of meaning is closely related to the concept of meaningfulness as described by Pratt and Ashforth (2003), which emphasizes the significance of work for the individual's identity and existential quest. *Competence* can be interpreted as the individual's belief in his capability to perform a certain task (Gist, 1987; Bandura, 1989). *Self-determination* is the widely recognized motivational construct developed by Deci, Connell and Ryan (1989), which basically spins around the notion of 'being in control', that is a sense of having a choice in initiating and regulating individual actions. Finally, *impact* was defined by Ashforth and Mael (1989) as the extent to which the individual feels he can have an effective influence on the organization's strategy and work processes.

In line with the work of Asag-gau and van Dierendonck (2011), we foresee that psychological empowerment can be a significant mechanism through which servant leadership affects engagement. To start with, the whole notion of empowerment is central to the servant leader, who sees followers as active agents of both personal and organizational growth. At its core, servant leadership is about enabling and developing fully empowered followers. The servant leadership dimension of empowerment is

naturally an important aspect, clearly affecting elements of competence and impact. But empowering leadership is not the only aspect that can affect engagement. Other servant leadership behaviors will also prove crucial, and multiple and complex linkages can occur. For example, stewardship will be an important instrument to provide meaning to work; humility and standing-back are base conditions for employee self-determination; forgiveness can create a learning environment that stimulates competence development; accountability makes impact visible and measurable, etc. The linkages are numerous and beyond the scope of this study (future studies should dwell into the details of these multiple connections between servant leadership and psychological empowerment for a deeper understanding). In a natural chain of relations, and as a personally energizing factor, psychological empowerment will likely affect work engagement. When we feel competent to realize our tasks; that we can determine the way we work and that our work is meaningful and has an impact, we will most likely feel invigorated, involved in our tasks and determined towards their completion. This leads to our fourth and last hypothesis.

Hypothesis 4: Psychological empowerment plays a mediating role in the relationship between servant leadership and engagement during an organizational merger.

Methods

Subjects

Participants were employees of two organizations being merged into one single entity after an acquisition process. The acquisition took place around 4 months before the survey was conducted. While the survey was being conducted, the new organization was still in the middle of this merger process. A total of 1355 employees

(constituting practically the whole population, with the exception of some board members) were asked to fill out an online survey during a period of 3 weeks. A total of 1107 people answered the survey, corresponding to a response rate of 81.7%. Average age was 39.6 years old and the average work experience was 15.1 years. 65% of respondents were male and 35% were female. From the original acquiring organization, being much smaller, a total of 66 employees answered the survey (5.96% of the total respondents). From the acquired organization, 964 employees answered the survey (87.08% of the total respondents) with the remaining 77 people (6.96% of the total respondents) coming previously from other organizations (hired after the acquisition).

As shown by van Knippenberg et al. (2002), domination plays an important role in a merger process and the corresponding sense of continuity in terms of organizational identification. After conducting several interviews and analyzing the organizational structure of the new organization, it was clear that the dominating organization, being much larger, was the acquired company. The new organizational structure, and the corresponding processes, was predominantly that of the acquired organization. It is however still important to refer that, despite the domination of the acquired organization with regard to the organizational structure, the image, communication and logo of the acquiring organization would be the ones to be adopted by the newly created entity. In order to provide a more objective measure of the level of domination, the number of key management positions being held by the acquired and the acquiring company in the new organization was counted. Out of 22 key management positions, 12 were taken by the acquired company, 6 by the acquiring company and 4 by newly hired external managers. This provides further confirmation that the acquired organization was indeed dominating.

Measures

Servant Leadership. All participants were asked to rate how they perceived the leadership behavior of their direct manager. All 30 items from the Servant Leadership Survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) were incorporated. The survey was translated into Portuguese by the first author. A 6 point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 6 (completely agree). The factorial validity and the internal consistency scores for this measure are presented in the results section ahead.

Organizational Identification. In order to measure organizational identification, the same approach was used as suggested by van Knippenberg et al. (2002). They suggested to use three items taken from several references, including: Kelly and Kelly (1994), Mael and Ashforth (1992), and Brown et al (1986). Both post-merger and pre-merger identification were assessed by asking the same three questions, first regarding the current organization and then regarding their previous organization, with the questions formulated in the present and past tense respectively. A 6-point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). The three questions for post-merger identification were: 'I identify strongly with the new (acquiring company name)', 'When someone criticizes the new (acquiring company name), it feels like a personal insult', 'I feel strong ties with the new (acquiring company name)'. For Pre-merger identification the same three questions were used but focused on the participant's former organization. Based on a single measure with three items, the internal consistency of the post-merger identification was .85 and .89 for pre-merger identification.

Pre-merger organizational identification was added to the analyses as a control variable to assess the impact of servant leadership independently of how much people felt identified with their previous organization before the merger.

Psychological Empowerment. The 12 item version of the measure developed by Spreitzer (1995) was used, which is based on the four-dimensional construct of Thomas and Velthouse (1990) explained before. Responses were given on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). Reliability was tested leading to internal consistencies of: .81 for impact (3 items), .84 for self-determination (3 items), .84 for meaning (3 items) and .80 for competence (3 items).

Engagement. In order to measure engagement, the short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale developed by Schaufeli et al. (2002) was used. This scale is composed by 9 self-assessment items concerning perceptions about work, around the dimensions of vigor, dedication and absorption. Ratings were given on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 6 (*completely agree*). The reliability of the engagement sub-scales was tested, demonstrating solid internal consistency measures of .91 for vigor (3 items), .91 for dedication (3 items) and .89 for absorption (3 items).

Results

Construct validity of the servant leadership measure

In view of the different cultural context of this study, taking place in Portugal, the factorial validity of the hypothesized eight-dimensional structure (humility, empowerment, stewardship, accountability, forgiveness, courage, authenticity and standing back) of the

servant leadership survey had to be tested. The item-scores were used as input for Mplus 6.1 (Muthén & Muthén, 2009).

The fit of the hypothesized 8-dimensional structure, with a second order single servant leadership variable, was compared to a 1-dimensional structure (all items loading on one leadership dimension). The fit indices were $X^2 = 2287.805$, $df = 397$, CFI = .91, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .066, SRMR = .057, for the 8-dimensional model, and $X^2 = 4790.879$, $df = 405$, CFI = .80, TLI = .79, RMSEA = .099, SRMR = .079, for the 1-dimensional model.

The 8-dimensional model shows the best fit, confirming the implicit multi-dimensional structure of servant leadership. The internal consistencies of the different subscales are .92 for empowerment (7 items), .74 for accountability (3 items), .79 for stewardship (3 items), .94 for humility (5 items), .71 for standing back (3 items), .71 for forgiveness (3 items), .75 for courage (2 items) and .79 for authenticity (4 items). Overall, the reliability of these subscales is good, all above .70, even for the shorter scales such as courage and forgiveness. This is positive given that internal consistency also depends on the number of items, which also explains the relative higher scores of empowerment and humility.

With respect to the factor loading of the separate dimensions on the underlying second-order servant leadership factor, it is noteworthy (see Figure 2) that the dimensions of courage (factor loading of .27) and forgiveness (factor loading of .26) contribute weakly. All other dimensions showed good factor loadings, especially: .96 (empowerment), .98 (stewardship), .93 (humility), and .91 (authenticity). Standing-back (.86) showed a somewhat lower factor loading and accountability (.46) an in-between

value. This is consistent with the original findings as reported by Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) with the developmental sample.

The above findings confirm hypothesis 1, that indeed the construct and corresponding measure of servant leadership as proposed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten(2011) is valid in the Portuguese context, extending the usefulness of this measure across different cultures.

The Mediating Model

Table 3.1 shows the mean values, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the variables of the study. In order to validate the other hypotheses, structural equation modeling with Mplus (Muthén and Muthén, 2009) was used, through a model with latent and manifest variables. Latent variables were determined by at least three indicators. This is the recommended practice when one wants to study a variable at an overall level of generality and when we want to reduce the level of nuisance and bias that occur when using separate items directly (Bandalos, 2002). The latent construct of servant leadership was operationalized through the 8 dimensions as manifest indicators. Engagement was operationalized in a single dimension with the 3 dimensions of vigor, dedication and absorption as manifest variables. Psychological empowerment was operationalized as a single dimension with the 4 dimensions of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact as manifest variables. Finally, the latent constructs of organizational identification before and after the merger process were constructed with the 3 survey items as indicators.

Following the recommendations of Anderson and Gerbing (1988), the fit of the measurement model of the other latent constructs was tested before actually testing the full

structural model. For engagement, the fit indices were $\chi^2 = 605.887$, $df = 24$, $CFI = .94$, $TLI = .91$, $RMSEA = .148$, $SRMR = .048$. With regard to psychological empowerment, the fit indices for the 4 latent variables loading on one single dimension were: $\chi^2 = 532.437$, $df = 50$, $CFI = .92$, $TLI = .90$, $RMSEA = .093$, $SRMR = .077$. In addition, the full measurement model was tested with all latent variables allowed to correlate with each other, providing good fit indices ($\chi^2 = 5414.751$, $df = 1356$, $CFI = .91$, $TLI = .90$, $RMSEA = .052$, $SRMR = .068$). Together with the factorial validity of the different measures explained before, these results demonstrate the good fit of the overall measurement model.

The hypothesized full structural equation model depicted in Figure 3.2 was then tested with the whole data-set, showing a good fit ($\chi^2 = 5554.103$, $df = 1358$, $CFI = .90$, $TLI = .90$, $RMSEA = .053$, $SRMR = .080$), with the total indirect effect between servant leadership and engagement being .28.

In order to check for the potential influence of domination, a sub-group analysis was done by testing the same model with three different sub-sets of data: 1) with the 964 employees of the acquired (dominating) organization, 2) the 66 employees of the acquiring (dominated) organization and 3) the 77 employees that came from an external organization. For the first data-set our model showed a similar fit when compared to the whole data-set ($\chi^2 = 5150.422$, $df = 1431$, $CFI = .90$, $TLI = .89$, $RMSEA = .054$, $SRMR = .082$). Unfortunately for the two other remaining cases, the covariance matrix of the model was not positive definite, probably because of the small sample size relatively to the amount of variables in the model. This did not allow us to test the effect of domination as a moderation variable in our model. A simpler look at the mean values does show however

that domination could indeed have some effect on the model results for the different parts of the organization, especially through the effect of organizational identification. For the employees of the acquiring organization (in this case the dominated one, due to its far smaller size), organizational identification went down from 5.09 on average to 3.75. Regarding the acquired organization (the dominating one), there is an opposite move from 4.16 before to 4.74 after. This potential moderating effect of domination should be researched further in future studies.

In order to control if the effect of servant leadership on engagement through the mediating effect of post-merger organizational identification would be independent of the level of pre-merger identification, a new structural model was created on Mplus with pre-merger identification loading on post-merger identification simultaneously with servant leadership. The results seem to confirm that the impact of servant leadership on both the mediating and dependent variables is indeed independent of the level of pre-merger identification. Pre-merger identification had no correlation with servant leadership behavior and the factor loading of servant leadership on post-merger identification changed only marginally, with model fit indices practically unchanged ($\chi^2 = 6094.734$, $df = 1518$, $CFI = .90$, $TLI = .89$, $RMSEA = .052$, $SRMR = .079$). The same was true for the total indirect effect between servant leadership and engagement, which remained practically the same in the model with pre-merger organizational identification loading on post-merger organizational identification. Similar conclusions were reached when the model which included the pre-merger identification loading on engagement directly was tested ($\chi^2 = 6109.929$, $df = 1518$, $CFI = .90$, $TLI = .89$, $RMSEA = .052$, $SRMR = .080$); again showing no visible change on the total indirect effect.

As shown in Figure 2, the standardized model indicates how servant leadership affects engagement through the mediating effect of both post-merger organizational identification and psychological empowerment, with the later having a stronger role in this process.

Conclusions

With regard to our initial objectives, this study provides some interesting developments and contributions towards the understanding of the relevance of servant leadership for work engagement, and in particular under conditions of significant change, as in a merger process.

Starting with our initial hypothesis, the results of this study seem to add to the gradual confirmation of the appeal of servant leadership as a valid construct across different cultures (hypothesis 1). We were able to replicate the results from previous studies in other national cultures (van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011; Bobbio et al., 2012) with regard to the factorial validity of the measure of van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011), this time in a Portuguese cultural context. Results also replicated the relatively lower impact of courage and forgiveness on the overall servant leadership construct. Such outcomes should be considered for future research, in order to further explore how these dimensions might be considered in light of the servant leadership model proposed by van Dierendonck (2011). A possible reason for the apparent lack of relevance of these sub-dimensions might be related to their more incidental nature. The higher standard deviations of both forgiveness and courage might be an indicator of this. Signs of courage and forgiveness are likely not as visible on a daily work routine and

will emerge only in certain special circumstances and not consistently for all workers. Moreover, while leaders might possess the qualities of courage and forgiveness they might not always externalize them in front of their workers. There might even cases when certain servant leadership behaviors cancel out others. For example, courage towards upper management in defending workers, often demonstrated during internal management meetings, might be hidden by behaviors of humility towards followers.

With regard to our second hypothesis, as shown by the Structural Equation Modeling, bootstrapping and correlation figures, the positive relationship between servant leadership and engagement during a merger process seems to be quite significant. This is an interesting expansion of the work done by Tuckey et al (2012) on the effect of empowering leadership on engagement. While including empowerment, servant leadership seems to add other aspects that reinforce the effectiveness of empowering leadership behaviors in inducing engagement. In particular, the servant leadership model of van Dierendonck (2011) seems to capture more explicitly aspects of day-to-day operational execution and providing direction (accountability), a broader and longer-term vision (stewardship), the importance of transparency (authenticity) and essential virtues that are unique to the servant leader initial motivation to serve (humility and standing-back). Such factors, together with empowerment, can be critical in inducing the engagement related feelings of vigor, dedication and absorption during change as explained in our article. Other studies seem to corroborate this need for a broader view. For example, on the specific role of leadership humility, recent empirical findings by Owens and Hekman (2012) seem to demonstrate its impact on engagement as well. When studying the possible mediation mechanisms of post-merger organizational identification (hypothesis 3) and

psychological empowerment (hypothesis 4), both are confirmed but it becomes apparent that psychological empowerment accounts for the most significant portion of the total indirect effect. It seems therefore that servant leadership has a greater effect on engagement through its ability to create a sense of empowerment than through the level of organizational identification that it can sustain during the merger process. This can be quite natural as the discontinuity on organizational identification is harder to contain by managers (the merger is an external unchangeable incidental event imposed from above) than the ability to influence aspects more related to daily operational work. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that servant leadership can still have a significant impact on organizational identification during the merger process, independently of how workers identified with their organization before the acquisition. Several studies alerted for the need of a sense of continuation during acquisition processes for the merger to be effective (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg & Leeuwen, 2001; van Knippenberg et al., 2002). Servant leadership seems then to be able to provide a fair response to that need of continuation, protecting the sense of personal identity of workers through their identification with the organization, which helps inducing engagement. The significant effect of servant leadership on psychological empowerment and consequently engagement seems to confirm its apparent power in addressing a key success factor in change processes, which is the sense of ownership that workers have of the change itself (Pierce et al., 1991; Dirks et al., 1996; Pierce et al., 2001). Such an inclusive leadership approach towards change, where workers themselves become active agents, partaking in the transformation process, supports more recent theories that support viewing the organization as a complex adaptive system (e.g. de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2010; Bennet & Bennet, 2004; Olson & Eoyang, 2001). Such a

view calls for a less intrusive leadership style where leaders strike a balancing act between a clear sense of direction and the ability to empower workers to shape the new organization as they move through the change themselves. Our findings seem to suggest that servant leaders could have an advantage in stimulating change through such an adaptive and co-evolving approach.

Looking at some of the weaknesses of our study, we could highlight two aspects. First of all, due to the small sample size of the dominated organization, we were not able to test for the effect of domination as a moderating effect on the relationship between leadership and engagement. Future studies should try to explore this further, as it is likely that the leadership behaviors that induce engagement might be different between the dominated and the dominating organization. The second aspect has to do with the cross-sectional nature of our study without the inclusion of actual individual performance results. Previous studies (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al, 2009) did already focus on the effect of engagement on performance, but incorporating that in the context of a merger process would have allowed validating those results under situations of particularly demanding job conditions and organizational stress.

Concluding, in an increasing globalized world, multinational corporations can more and more see servant leadership as a valid model that can permeate the whole organizational culture, inducing greater performance and the well-being of the workforce for increased engagement. The effect of servant leadership on engagement during a merger process, through the mediating effect of organizational identification and psychological empowerment, adds a dynamic element to this leadership model as being capable of addressing stringent demands during major organizational changes. Future studies should

maybe further concentrate on the individual effect of specific servant leadership dimensions on aspects of organizational identification, psychological empowerment and engagement.

As a final note, one should note how servant leadership seems to be gaining momentum as a valid and specific leadership model for organizational effectiveness across different cultures. In order to further understand what distinguishes servant leadership from other models, like for example transformational leadership, other studies should be done specifically aimed at a deeper understanding of differences and similarities between these constructs.

Table 3.1 Descriptives and Intercorrelations of Study Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
SL - Empowerment	4.51	0.85																
SL - Accountability	4.94	0.57	,389**															
SL - Humility	4.42	0.91	,840**	,344**														
SL - Standing Back	3.83	0.95	,653**	,242**	,664**													
SL - Stewardship	4.41	0.88	,807**	,379**	,809**	,633**												
SL - Forgiveness	3.65	1.00	,238**	-,094**	,278**	,058	,151**											
SL - Courage	3.48	1.13	,210**	,094**	,143**	,308**	,252**	-,308**										
SL - Authenticity	4.10	0.85	,735**	,298**	,750**	,686**	,732**	,092**	,333**									
Post-merge Org. Id.	4.69	0.87	,243**	,148**	,210**	,161**	,216**	,017	,001	,142**								
Pre-merge Org. Id.	4.20	1.15	,096**	,152**	,070**	,064*	,109**	,017	,015	,102**	,208**							
PE - Compliance	5.30	0.51	,061*	,193**	,025	-,011	,076*	,014	-,007	,008	,213**	,068*						
PE - Meaning	5.26	0.59	,161**	,261**	,087**	,063*	,132**	-,053	,060*	,083**	,306**	,120**	,522**					
PE - Self-Determination	4.33	0.86	,478**	,195**	,370**	,319**	,389**	,114**	,171**	,368**	,260**	,119**	,273**	,295**				
PE - Impact	4.49	0.84	,303**	,225**	,248**	,222**	,249**	-,038	,082**	,236**	,384**	,163**	,358**	,425**	,550**			
ENG - Vigor	4.89	0.80	,368**	,243**	,322**	,232**	,304**	,059*	,054	,248**	,562**	,162**	,389**	,477**	,419**	,487**		
ENG - Dedication	4.91	0.83	,388**	,252**	,328**	,226**	,327**	,051	,070*	,268**	,595**	,163**	,411**	,571**	,432**	,502**	,875**	
ENG - Absorption	5.13	0.69	,322**	,291**	,283**	,185**	,277**	,006	,059	,212**	,513**	,164**	,410**	,525**	,383**	,459**	,780**	,812**

Note. n = 1077. **p < .01, * p < .05

Figure 3.1 Conceptual model relating the variables of servant leadership, post-merger organizational identification, psychological empowerment and engagement.

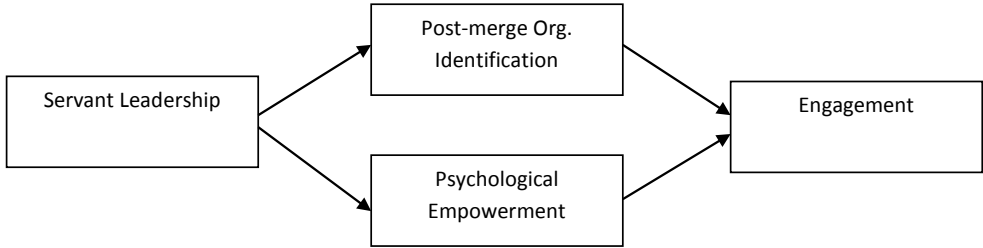
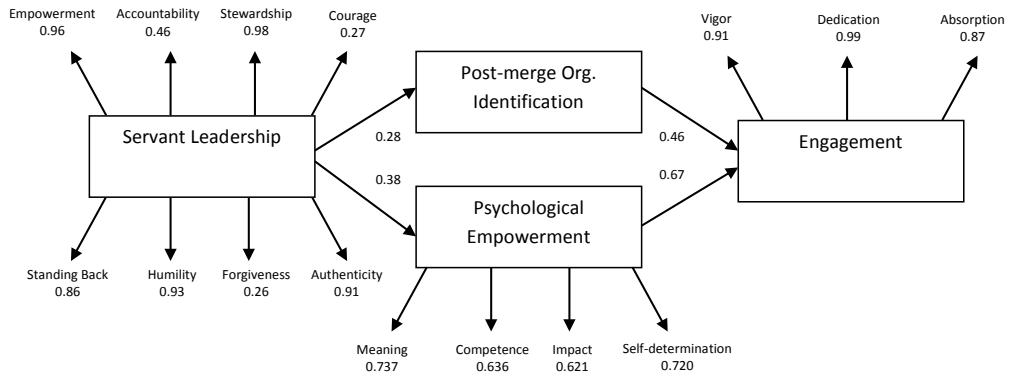


Figure 3.2 Structural model relating the variables of servant leadership, post-merger organizational identification, psychological empowerment and engagement (standardized values for factor loadings).



Chapter 4 - Servant Leadership Effectiveness at the Top: A Study on the Interplay between Leadership Humility, Action, and Power on Follower Engagement

This paper introduces a new perspective on servant leadership by testing the interplay between the action and humble behaviors of the leader in generating follower engagement, while considering the hierarchical rank as a contingency variable. Through a moderated moderation model, a study was conducted based on a sample of 232 people, potentially indicating that the humble-side of leaders in higher ranks has an amplifying effect on the impact of their action-side on work engagement among followers. By contrast, for leaders in lower ranks a humble attitude seems to reduce the leader effectiveness in creating engagement. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the specific mechanisms through which virtues such as the leader's humility and ability to stand-back interact with other more action-oriented leadership behaviors in inducing motivation and performance. Noticeably, in its entire spectrum of behaviors, servant leadership seems to be particularly effective for leaders in executive and high-level management positions.

Introduction

When servant leadership was first introduced through the seminal work of Robert Greenleaf (1977), it brought a moral dimension to the leadership field, which for many years had been somehow subdued to behavioral and contingency type of approaches (e.g. Fiedler, 1967; Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Lewin et al., 1939). In a similar trend, Burns (1978) advanced the notion of transforming leadership that later evolved into transformational leadership, likewise with a strong moral emphasis and in contrast with transactional leadership (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Since then, also intensified by the corporate scandals of the 90s and 2000s (e.g. Adler, 2002; Carson, 2003; Crane & Matten, 2007; Fombrun & Foss, 2004), this moral side of leadership has gained interest as a way of ensuring performance while addressing ethical concerns in business, leading to the first empirical data on servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011), ethical leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006) and the birth of other theories like authentic (Gardner et al, 2005) or spiritual leadership (Fry, 2003), to name a few. Additionally, scholars have recently tried to capture and operationalize this moral dimension of leadership into constructs of virtue (Arjoon, 2000; Cameron, 2011; Dale Thompson et al., 2008; Hackett & Wang, 2012; Pearce et al., 2006). Virtues represent attributes of moral excellence, which aggregate into an overall dimension of virtuousness that can instill responsible leadership behavior (Cameron, 2011). For Greenleaf (1977) this moral side or virtuousness was essential in forming the core motivation to serve of the servant leader, but it was not that virtue should replace effectiveness, but instead that both should co-exist and reinforce each other.

This dual mode of virtue and action was captured in the model of van Dierendonck (2011) and later confirmed through a second order factor analysis based on the servant leadership survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). While this brings supporting evidence for the co-existence of virtue and action for servant leaders, little is in fact known about how these two aspects interact with each other. This forms the essential motivation of this study. In particular, we were interested in further elaborating on how the virtues of humility and standing-back, which are at the core of an attitude of service (Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2003; van Dierendonck, 2011) interact with those action-driven dimensions of empowerment, accountability and stewardship (van Dierendonck, 2011) in inducing follower engagement.

Given also some recent advancements in the study of the role of humility on leadership effectiveness, in particular for leaders in higher positions of power (Collins, 2001; Owens & Hekman, 2012), we proposed to further investigate if those virtues of humility and standing-back would be more salient for servant leaders in higher ranks in an organization. In sum, our study aims to confirm the three-way interaction between the action-side of servant leadership (captured in the dimensions of empowerment, accountability and stewardship), the humble-side (captured in the virtues of humility and standing-back) and the hierarchical rank of the leader in inducing follower engagement (see Figure 4.1).

Servant Leadership: a balancing act between virtue and action

For Greenleaf (1977), the moral foundation of the servant leader is built on a motivation to serve. As eloquently put by Greenleaf himself (2002, p. 7), "The servant-

leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions". However, while Greenleaf (1977) clearly highlighted the importance of the moral backbone or virtuousness of the servant leader, he also emphasized that being a servant leader is not the same as servitude and that such leaders need also to show initiative, assume risks and take ownership for action in order to be truly effective. The following statement testifies that: "...the leader needs more than inspiration. A leader ventures to say, 'I will go; come with me!' A leader initiates, provides the ideas and the structure, and takes the risk of failure along with the chance of success." (Greenleaf, 2002, p.29). This means that, servant leadership implies a balancing act between behaviors that instill action and efficacy and virtuous behaviors based on humility and an initial motivation to serve. So, whereas it may be possible to speak about servant leadership as one specific way of leadership, at a deeper level, and as mentioned before there seem to be two underlying encompassing dimensions: a virtuousness side and an action-driven side, both co-existing and complementing each other.

These two aspects of servant leadership (virtue and action) are captured in the full range of behaviors of the servant leadership model of van Dierendonck (2011). Additional studies seem not only to confirm this potential split between virtue and action through a second order factor analysis (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) but also to point towards a potential sub-set of five dimensions that could form the core aspects of servant leadership behavior, namely: humility, standing-back, empowerment, accountability and stewardship

(Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011). As such, our research was focused on this core set of 5 servant leadership behaviors.

As mentioned before, *humility* forms the essential backbone of the servant leader (Patterson, 2003; Russell, 2001). As incorporated in the servant leadership construct of van Dierendonck (2011), humility is translated into three essential aspects: (1) the ability to put one's accomplishments and talents in perspective (Patterson 2003), (2) admitting one's fallibility and mistakes (Morris et al. 2005), and (3) understanding of one's strong and weak points. As such, "servant leaders acknowledge their limitations and therefore actively seek the contributions of others in order to overcome those limitations" (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Humility is further supported by the leader's ability of *standing-back* (van Dierendonck, 2011), which "is about the extent to which a leader gives priority to the interest of others first and gives them the necessary support and credits... (and) is also about retreating into the background when a task has successfully been accomplished" (van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011). In other words, one could advance that humility and the supporting dimension of standing-back work in tandem, helping to foster a learning environment that encourages experimentation and creativity. In his review article, van Dierendonck (2011) also combined these two measurement variables of humility and standing-back of the Servant Leadership Survey (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) into one overarching conceptual dimension. We suggest that humility and standing-back are closely related virtues as they express a moral concern for others above the self, forming this way the fundamental virtuous foundation of the servant-first leader (the humble-side).

The other 3 dimensions of servant leadership used in this study can be combined into the second underlying dimension. Starting with empowerment, this construct has

many similarities with the notion of empowering leadership (Pearce & Sims, 2002) and is essentially about encouraging autonomous decision making, sharing information and the coaching and mentoring of individuals for increased innovative performance (Konczak et al., 2000). *Accountability* allows the servant leader to provide direction while considering the specific capabilities of people, as well as their particular needs and possible areas of contribution. In the end, accountability makes sure that people feel responsible for their results. Finally, *stewardship* is a dimension that ensures that the common interest and the good of the whole are taken in account, while establishing a comprehensive framework for providing meaning to work and ensuring consistent action. One can already notice how these three servant leadership dimensions distinguish themselves from humility and standing-back in their action-oriented focus, as they all reflect behaviors that actively stimulate both individual and organizational performance while ensuring congruent direction. In light of this shared action-focus, we suggest that these three dimensions of empowerment, stewardship and accountability form the action-oriented side of the servant leader (the action-side).

In summary, we suggest that the core set of 5 servant leadership dimensions as suggested by Asag-gau and Van Dierendonck (2011) can be split into a humble-side, based on the virtues of humility and standing-back, and an action-side captured in the constructs of empowerment, stewardship and accountability.

The relationship between servant leadership and engagement

Engagement is considered as the antithesis of burnout (Maslach et al. 2001). Schaufeli et al. (2006) characterize engaged employees as demonstrating behaviors of

energy and connection to their work, while being able to deal well with the demands of their jobs. Schaufeli et al. (2006) further split engagement into three main components: vigor, dedication and absorption. *Vigor* is shown by the energy and resilience demonstrated by workers and by their willingness and persistence in face of difficulties (Schaufeli et al., 2006). *Dedication* is explained by Schaufeli et al (2006) as those behaviors that demonstrate a “sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration, pride, and challenge” in work. Finally, Schaufeli et al (2006) advance that *absorption* is reflected in the involvement shown in work, which can be characterized by a loss of a sense of time and an unwillingness to stop when working.

In recent years several scholars have been able to empirically demonstrate the importance of engagement in generating organizational commitment (Hakanen et al., 2006) and work performance (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). Other studies, more focused on aspects of personal well-being, have shown how engagement can contribute towards higher levels of psychological soundness (Demerouti et al., 2001; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Schaufeli et al., 2008; Xanthopoulou et al., 2009). When looking at the antecedents of engagement, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) advanced two key individual aspects that positively contribute to engagement. First, through the available job resources reflected in aspects like organizational support, management feedback or the level of autonomy, among others, and secondly through personal resources such as resilience, self-efficacy or optimism. At the same time, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) suggest that engagement will be negatively influenced by the level of job demands, including aspects like work pressure and the emotional, mental and physical demands of the work at hand.

When looking at the notion and antecedents of engagement presented before, one can see servant leadership as potentially playing an important role in creating the conditions for engagement to flourish in organizations. Servant leadership is oriented to the followers' needs and development (van Dierendonck, 2011) through pro-active individual support and the creation of a work environment that fosters personal growth. This communicates to followers that the organization, in the person of the leader, cares about them and stimulates their development through their own work. For the servant leader, work is an instrument of personal growth and realization through which the organization fulfills both its business and social mission. Such a serving and empowering attitude can be inductive of engagement as demonstrated in different empirical studies. For instance, Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) argued that a social supportive work environment reduces job demands, helps in achieving work goals and stimulates personal growth, learning and development which are all part of servant leadership. In an extensive study to validate their new measure of servant leadership, van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) found supporting evidence for the potential impact of servant leadership on workforce engagement. In other empirical studies, aspects closely related to servant leadership like humility (Owens et al., 2013) and empowerment (Tuckey et al., 2012), were also found to be strongly related to engagement. We therefore suggest that both the action-side and the humble-side of the servant leader as advanced before will be positively related to engagement, which constitutes our first hypothesis.

- **Hypothesis 1:** Both the action-side and the humble-side of servant leadership will have a significant impact on the overall level of work engagement among followers.

A closer look on the role of humility within servant leadership

The etymological origin of humility is based on the Latin word *humilis* (on the ground) which is derived from the word *humus* (earth) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2010). In this sense, one can say that humility literally brings someone down to earth. In accordance, humility was qualified by Park and Peterson (2003) as a temperance virtue that grounds and stabilizes one's self-perception. Grenberg (2005) further suggests that humility is a sort of meta-virtue sustaining other virtues like forgiveness, courage, wisdom and compassion.

The importance of humility for leaders was captured by Snyder (2010), who includes it as an essential value of leadership. Other scholars highlight the importance of humility in keeping the leader's achievements and strengths in perspective, while focusing more on others than on self-interest (Fairholm & Fairholm, 2000; Sandage & Wiens, 2001), which is congruent with the tempering effect suggested by Park and Peterson (2003). In more practical terms, Owens and Hekman (2012) propose that the leader's humility can be split essentially around "three categories: (1) acknowledging personal limits, (2) spotlighting followers' strengths and contributions, and (3) modeling teachability". These three aspects coincide clearly with the combined notions of humility and standing-back (the humble-side) as suggested by van Dierendonck (2011) in his servant leadership model, namely regarding putting one's accomplishments and talents in perspective, admitting one's errors, understanding own strengths and weaknesses and valorizing the strengths and achievements of others. Based on an empirical qualitative study, Owens and Hekman (2012) further propose that a leader's humble behaviors can have two main outcomes: (1) at the individual level it can increase the sense of personal

freedom and engagement among followers by legitimizing their developmental journey, and (2) at the organizational level, it increases the fluidity of the organization by legitimizing uncertainty. This emphasizes that the leader's humility can affect performance both by improving the quality of the leader-follower relationship (individual level) and through the creation of a learning and adaptive organization (systemic level). In a later study, these three categories have been captured in a quantitative instrument of leader expressed humility, which was shown to correlate with aspects like job engagement, job satisfaction and team learning goal orientation (Owens et al., 2013).

The importance of humility from this systemic view can be seen from the need to address a far more complex and uncertain environment (e.g. Bennet & Bennet, 2004; Senge, 1990; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Weick, 2001), which calls for leadership styles that are more inclusive and based on bottom-up approaches. Models like participative leadership (Kim, 2002) and level 5 leadership (Collins, 2001), or those emerging from complex adaptive theories like complex leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2007), collaborative leadership (Bennet & Bennet, 2004) or complex adaptive leadership (Obolensky, 2010), incorporate explicitly or implicitly humility as a fundamental trait of the leader to create adaptive and resilient organizations. In a similar trend, de Sousa and van Dierendonck (2010) also highlight how servant leadership, as a model essentially based on humility, can have an effect on organizational performance by fostering meaningfulness and complex adaptive behaviors in knowledge driven organizations. When looking at the specific contribution of the virtue of humility, it could basically work as a catalyst for effective action-oriented servant leadership behavior reflected in aspects like empowerment, stewardship and providing

direction (which translates into accountability). This potential amplifying role of humility will be elaborated in the next section.

The amplifying effect of humility on leadership effectiveness

On the specific role of the humble-side, we propose that this will function as a moderating variable, strengthening the effectiveness of the action-side in generating engagement. This proposition is supported by the idea that a humble attitude can improve the leader-follower relationship and team dynamics through the increased levels of trust.

Trust is related to the level of confidence that an individual has towards another's competence and willingness to act fairly, ethically and in a predictable way (Nyhan, 2000). The importance of trust as a cornerstone of servant leadership was often emphasized by several scholars, including Greenleaf himself (Farling et al., 1999; Greenleaf, 1977; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Liden et al., 2008; Russell, 2001; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sarkus, 1996; Spears, 1998; Tatum, 1995; van Dierendonck, 2011). We posit that the creation of trust by servant leaders is essentially rooted in their humility and ability to stand-back. Taking Nyhan's (2000) definition, we advance that the behaviors of humility and standing-back (van Dierendonck, 2011) will be instrumental in enhancing the effectiveness of the action side of servant leadership because they (i) balance relative perceptions of competence in relation to the leader (higher levels of self-confidence and realistic expectations with regard to the leader), (ii) generate a stronger feeling of fairness (sharing success), (iii) communicate a service attitude that goes beyond self-interest (ethical behavior) and (iv) confirm a learning culture, reassuring that learning by mistakes is accepted (predictable behavior).

In summary, we suggest that the humble-side of servant leaders can work as catalyst of their action-side by improving the relationship of trust with and among followers. This interaction between the humble-side and the action-side of servant leadership and the impact on the motivational construct of engagement forms the second hypothesis of this study:

- **Hypothesis 2:** The humble-side of servant leadership will work as moderating variable by amplifying the effect of the action-side on work engagement among followers.

Hierarchical rank: power as a contingency factor

When elaborating on the positive impact of humility on the leader's effectiveness, Owens and Hekman (2012) also advance possible contingency factors that might condition this impact. One of these factors is the level of perceived competence felt by followers with regard to the leader. Based on several interviews conducted in a qualitative study, it becomes apparent that humility is only effective when followers recognize that the leader is competent and able (Owens & Hekman, 2012). In addition, for leaders in higher ranks (CEOs and executives), "competence... would be less likely to be called into question than would be likely in the case of a lower-level leader" (Owens & Hekman, 2012). This essentially could mean that the amplifying effect of humility will be stronger for leaders in upper ranks, as their competence is perceived as being higher.

A deeper look into the bases of power as proposed by French and Raven (1959) might help further elaborate on these aspects of perceived competence and hierarchical position and their influence on the effect of humility on leader's effectiveness. Power and

leadership are strongly interrelated, which is evident in the different definitions given for these two concepts. For example, Stoner and Freeman (1985) define power essentially as the capacity to influence and shape the behaviors and attitudes of individuals and groups. On the other hand, Yukl (2006, p. 8) defines leadership as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives”. Both definitions share that *influence* is the essential defining element of both constructs. From a systemic point of view however, the difference seems to rely on the fact that power is seen as a potential to influence (a relatively stable measure of potency), while leadership seems to be more associated with the process and dynamics to exercise that influence (the behaviors that are conducive of exercising that influencing power). One’s level of power will influence one’s ability to lead and of course, effective leadership will increase one’s power or potential to influence, in a positive and reinforcing feedback loop.

French and Raven (1959) advanced initially that power can have 5 bases or sources. These evolved later to 6 bases (Raven, 1965), namely: coercion (the ability to influence based on the possibility of punishment or penalty), reward (the power to compensate for achieving certain targets), legitimacy (power based on a certain recognized right to influence, like for example a job title), expertise (based on the perception about one’s level of knowledge and skills for a certain job), reference (power that stems from a strong sense of identification and admiration) and information (essentially the capacity to communicate either through logical or emotional reasoning, eloquence or charisma). Taking these 6 bases of power as a guiding framework, one could advance that for leaders in upper ranks, the legitimacy provided by their hierarchical position induces higher levels

of perceived expertise, strengthening their “natural” power and the potential positive effect of humility on their effectiveness.

A similar possibility seems to be implicit in Collins’ (2001) leadership model, which is based on 5 levels. Level 1 is called the “Highly Capable Individual”, essentially based on a contribution through talent, knowledge, skills and good work habits. Level 2 further adds the ability of the individual to contribute towards team objectives and to work effectively with team members. This level is called the “Contributing Team Member”. At level 3, there is a stronger component of management of both people and resources towards the organization’s objectives. Collins (2001) calls this the “Competent Manager”. Level 4, the “Effective Leader”, adds the ability of the leader to generate commitment towards a compelling vision and high performance standards. Finally, at level 5, the “Executive” is able to endure greatness through what Collins (2001) calls a paradoxical mix between a strong professional will and humility. While such levels do not necessarily have to correspond to positions in the organization, they seem to provide a natural ranking as people move from professionals and team members to middle, senior and executive management positions, with humility gaining relevance at the highest level. However reasonable these different arguments might seem, there is apparently a clear lack of empirical evidence on the impact of this contingency factor of hierarchical rank on the effect of humility on leadership effectiveness. This leads us to the third hypothesis formulated for this study.

- **Hypothesis 3:** The higher the position of the leader in the organization, the stronger will be the amplifying effect of the humble-side of servant leadership on the relationship between the action-side and work engagement among followers.

Methods

Subjects

Participants were employees from a varied range of organizations in Portugal from different sectors. A total of 236 people answered the survey in different hierarchical positions. 56.3% of the sample was male and 43.7% female. 44.1% of respondents were between 35 and 44 years old, 31.9% between 25 and 34, 16.4% between 45 and 54, 5.9% higher than 55 and 1.7% below 25 years old. In terms of their distribution in hierarchical ranking, 2.9% were at board level, 34.0% at director level, 24.0% at senior management level, 11.8% at junior management level, 20.6% at intermediate non-managerial level and another 2.9% as junior professionals. 2 respondents answered as being freelancers and 2 others as unemployed. In order to ensure that all participants were currently in a stable job and reporting to a direct manager, these 4 persons were taken out of the sample, giving a sample size of 232 persons. In terms of size of the organizational they worked in, the sample was quite fairly distributed, with 29.4% of respondents being from organizations bigger than 1000 people, 24.0% between 250 and 999, 21.4% between 50 and 249, 16.8% between 10 and 49 and 8.4% below 10 people.

Measures

Servant Leadership. All participants reported on how they perceived the leadership behaviors of their direct manager through items taken from the Servant Leadership Survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011). A 7 point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 7 (completely agree). The items

related to stewardship (3 items), accountability (3 items) and empowerment (7 items) were composed into the action-side measure of servant leadership (captured in a variable called SLACTION). The internal consistency of this overall measure was .94 with the 13 items. On the other hand, the items of humility (5 items) and standing-back (3 items) were composed into one humble-side dimension of servant leadership (captured in a variable named SLHUMBLE). The internal consistency of this measure was .93 with the 8 items. According to Nunnally (1978) and Kline (1999), a cronbach alpha of .70 is acceptable for a survey, meaning that the score for both SLACTION and SLHUMBLE is very good.

Engagement. The short version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Schaufeli et al. (2002) was used. The scale includes 9 self-assessment items on vigor, dedication and absorption. Ratings were given on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*). Results were composed into one single indicator of engagement (the variable was called ENGAGE) with an overall internal consistency of .94, which is again a very good score.

Hierarchical rank. In order to determine the hierarchical position in their organization, participants were asked to classify their current rank according to 6 possible categories: board level (1), director level (2), senior management level (3), junior management level (4), intermediate non-managerial level (5) and junior professional (6). For this particular study it was critical to ensure that the sample included people currently employed such that their relative position in the hierarchical rank could be determined. 4 participants responded 'other' but did provide a detailed job title which allowed re-classifying them according to the 6 categories. The hierarchical position was captured in a variable called RANK.

Results

The Regression Models

In order to validate the three hypotheses advanced before, three analytical steps were conducted based on a multiple linear regression, a single moderation and a moderated moderation model as suggested by Hayes, 2013. Further details and respective results of this study are provided next

Table 4.1 shows the mean values, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the variables of the study. As mentioned before, in order to validate the three hypotheses advanced before, three regression analytical steps were conducted. In order to test the first hypotheses, a multiple linear regression analysis was done, with SLACTION, SLHUMBLE and RANK as independent variables and ENGAGE as dependent variable. For the second hypotheses, a bootstrapping technique was used in SPSS using model 1 of the PROCESS script as provided by Hayes (2013). This single moderation model incorporated SLACTION as independent variable, SLHUMBLE as moderating variable, ENGAGE as a dependent variable and RANK as a covariate. This model allowed interpreting the conditional effect of the two-way interaction between SLACTION and SLHUMBLE. Finally, in order to test the third hypotheses, the same bootstrapping technique was used in SPSS but using model 3 of the PROCESS script as provided by Hayes (2013). This so called moderated moderation model was tested by having SLACTION as independent variable, SLHUMBLE as primary moderating variable, RANK as a secondary moderating variable and ENGAGE as dependent variable. This model allowed observing the conditional effect of the three-way interaction between

SLACTION, SLHUMBLE and RANK. We will now present the results of these three analytical steps.

Results of the three analytical steps

Table 4.2 shows the results for the different steps, including the coefficients and the statistical significance of the two-way and three-way interactions.

As can be seen in Table 4.2, when considering SLACTION ($b = .286$, $se = .091$, $p < .01$), SLHUMBLE ($b = .184$, $se = .080$, $p < .05$) and RANK ($b = -.214$, $se = .044$, $p < .01$) as independent variables in a multiple linear regression, the model accounts for 38.45% of the variance on engagement. Step 2 adds the two-way interaction between SLACTION and SLHUMBLE in a single moderation, which is statistically not significant ($b = -.015$, $se = .033$, $p = .653$), leaving the overall R^2 practically unchanged when compared to the previous step. With step 3, we incorporated the three-way interaction between SLACTION, SLHUMBLE and RANK in a moderated moderation model. This three-way interaction was found to be statistically significant ($b = -.061$, $se = .025$, $p < .05$), with a 95% confidence interval between $-.11$ and $-.012$, meaning that we are at least 95% certain that the interaction coefficient is not zero. This three-way interaction accounts for an additional 1.61% of the variance of the model (incremental R^2), with a total R^2 of .405.

The diagram on Figure 4.2 allows observing the effect of the three-way interaction on the impact of the action-side of servant leadership on engagement for different hierarchical ranks (high, medium and low). As it can be seen, for higher ranks the humble-side will increase the effect of the action-side on engagement. For lower ranks, the opposite effect seems to be happening with the humble-side reducing the effect of the

action-side of the servant leader on engagement. As for medium ranks, although it is evident that the humble-side positively effects engagement, it does not change the nature of the relationship between the action-side and this motivational construct.

When probing the interaction for different moderator values (see Table 4.3), one can observe that the conditional effect of the action-side is significant for most points (results were mean centered to ease interpretation). The changes in the conditional effects clearly show how that the three-way interaction affects the relationship between the action-side and engagement, as explained above. Using the Johnson-Neyman technique (Bauer and Curran, 2005), the significance region for the three-way interaction is given for mean-centered values of SLHUMBLE below -2.141 (high ranks) and above 1.497 (low ranks), which is consistent with the previous analysis.

Conclusions

This study provides two important contributions. First of all, it contributes to a better understanding of servant leadership by specifically detailing how the humility related dimensions of the servant-leader, captured in an overarching service attitude through humility and standing-back (the humble-side), and the action-driven dimensions, observed in aspects like empowerment, accountability and stewardship (the action-side) affect engagement. This comes to sustain the potential split of the different dimensions of servant leadership as advanced by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) and the original thinking of Greenleaf (1977) whereby servant leadership entails both a concern for people (virtue) and the ability to mobilize them for performance and growth (action). At the same time, the positive impact of servant leadership on engagement is once again confirmed

through an empirical study, further supporting previous findings (van Dierendonck and Nuijten, 2011).

Secondly, this article contributes to comprehending the role of hierarchy and power in explaining leadership effectiveness. More specifically, we were able to provide empirical evidence on the amplifying effect of the humble-side of the servant leader on leadership effectiveness, through an increased impact of the action-side on engagement for leaders in higher ranks. These findings seem to concur with the previous work on the role of leadership humility by Owens and Hekman (2012) and Collins (2001). By contrast, a humble attitude might be somehow detrimental for the leader effectiveness in lower ranks. This might raise the possibility that, in its entire spectrum of behaviors, servant leadership could be a model particularly effective for executive and board-level positions and maybe less for more practical hands-on line management positions.

Going into more detail into the three hypotheses of this study one can advance the following conclusions. First of all, as seen in the correlation figures of Table 4.1 and the multiple linear regression analysis of Table 4.2, both the action and humble sides of servant leadership seem to have a significant effect on engagement, confirming our first hypothesis. When considering a single interaction we cannot observe an amplifying effect of the humble-side of the servant leader on the impact of the action-side on engagement, which does not allow us to confirm hypothesis 2. However, when the hierarchical rank is introduced as a secondary moderating variable, we observe a significant three-way interaction where the humble-side of the servant leader significantly amplifies the effect of the action-side on follower engagement for leaders in higher ranks at board and executive level, which confirms hypothesis 3. The fact that the amplifying effect of the humble-side

only becomes visible when the hierarchical rank is introduced in a three way regression model comes to demonstrate the importance of incorporating additional contingency variables in the further study of servant leadership and the specific mechanisms through which it can affect performance.

When looking at possible limitations of this study, one should consider the fact that the sample was collected through the database of a business school in Portugal which can be seen both as a limitation but also as strength. The members in our sample were participants that actively participated in training and advanced education programs in the business school, which could bias our sample around organizations with a learning culture. On the other side, this also gave us a sample with that was well spread terms of organizations, industries and hierarchical ranks, which strengthens our confidence in the potential representativeness of our conclusions. In addition, the national Portuguese culture might have a significant influence on perceptions about humility, power and leadership as different studies seem to show (Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede, 1993; House et al., 2002; House et al., 2004), which calls for more replications of our findings in other countries. As such, future research would certainly be welcome that addresses these concerns by for example incorporating measures that can capture the nature of the corporate culture and include organizations in different national cultures to further validate these findings.

One additional note concerns the contingency factor of hierarchical rank considered in this study. Hierarchical rank has been used as an objective indicator of both legitimate and expertise power (French and Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965), sustaining the proposition advanced by Owens and Hekman (2012) regarding the relationship between hierarchical position and perceived competence. It could be insightful for future research to

include a measure of power bases (e.g. Rahim, 1988) that would allow distinguishing the specific impact of the different sources of power on the relationship between humility and leadership effectiveness.

Another possible limitation is the cross-sectional character of the study. However, rank is an objective assessment that most people will know well, minimizing common method bias concerns (Chang et al., 2010). Also, the most intriguing finding in this study was the three-way interaction effect, where common-source variance is a far lesser issue. It has been shown that within regression analysis, artificial interactions caused by common method bias are unlikely (Evans, 1985). These and other studies actually warn against the very real possibility of Type 2 errors when trying to detect interaction effects. A rough rule suggested by Evans (1985) is to take 1% of the explained variance as the criterion as to whether a significant effect exists. With additional explained variance of 2% for the three-way interaction on employee engagement, this criterion was met.

In conclusion, the results of our study are quite promising as they seem to provide quantitative empirical evidence on the potential split between the virtue and action sides of the servant leader (Greenleaf, 1977; van Dierendonck and Nuijten 2011). At the same time evidence is given on the specific workings of humility, and the accompanying behavior of standing-back, on leadership effectiveness, while incorporating the specific role of hierarchical position as a contingency variable, further sustaining the propositions suggested by Owens and Hekman (2012) and Collins (2001). Interestingly, and somehow surprisingly, the reversed effect takes place for leaders in lower ranks where we can observe that the lower the scores of the humble-side, the higher the impact of the action-side on engagement. Such findings could lead us to conclude that in its wholeness,

including humility and standing-back, servant leadership is particularly effective for leaders in higher ranks and probably less so for managers working at lower levels in the organization, maybe more concerned with practical day to day operations. This is something that deserves further attention in future research. As a final note, our study comes to confirm the comprehensive reach and applicability of the servant leadership model developed by van Dierendonck (2011), adequately capturing the multiple and complex set of virtues and behaviors of leadership in driving performance in different contexts and situations.

- Servant Leadership Effectiveness at the Top: A Study on the Interplay between Leadership Humility, Action, and Power on Follower Engagement

Table 4.1 Descriptives and intercorrelations of study variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3
SLACTION	4.981	1.204			
SLHUMBLE	4.165	1.370	.854**		
ENGAGE	5.410	1.101	.553**	.539**	
RANK	3.250	1.308	-.170**	-.163*	-.345**

n = 232. **p < .01, * p < .05, RANK is in reversed order (lower numbers = higher ranks)

Table 4.2 Regression Results

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
	Betas	Betas	Betas
Intercept	3.91**	6.124**	5.426**
SLACTION	0.29**	0.269**	0.293**
SLHUMBLE	0.19*	0.192*	0.152
RANK	3.91**	-0.214**	-0.131*
SLACTIONxSLHUMBLE		-0.015	-0.001
SLACTIONxRANK			-0.002
SLHUMBLExRANK			0.004
SLACTIONxSLHUMBLExRANK			-0.061*
R	.620	.620	.636
R-sq	.385	.385	.405
F	47.479**	35.535**	21.777**
ΔR-sq		<.000	.016
F _Δ		.203	6.046*

** p < .01, * p < .05

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*Table 4.3 Conditional effects for different values of the moderators using
PROCESS by Hayes (2013)*

RANK	SLHUMBLE	Effect	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
-1.308	-1.370	0.186	0.129	1.448	0.149	-0.067	0.440
-1.308	0.000	0.295	0.142	2.081	0.039	0.016	0.575
-1.308	1.370	0.404	0.181	2.230	0.027	0.047	0.761
0.000	-1.370	0.294	0.091	3.214	0.002	0.114	0.474
0.000	0.000	0.293	0.099	2.962	0.003	0.098	0.488
0.000	1.370	0.292	0.124	2.356	0.019	0.048	0.536
1.308	-1.370	0.401	0.125	3.201	0.002	0.154	0.648
1.308	0.000	0.290	0.131	2.225	0.027	0.033	0.548

Notes: Values are mean-centered. RANK is in reversed order (lower numbers = higher ranks).

Figure 4.1 Conceptual three-way interaction that forms the basis of this study

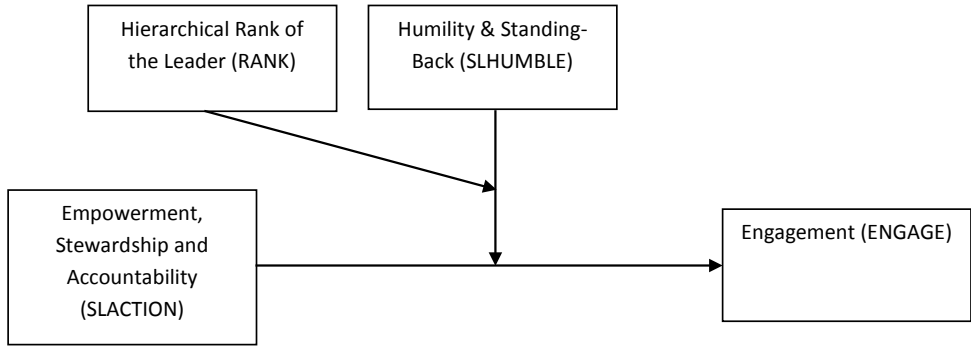
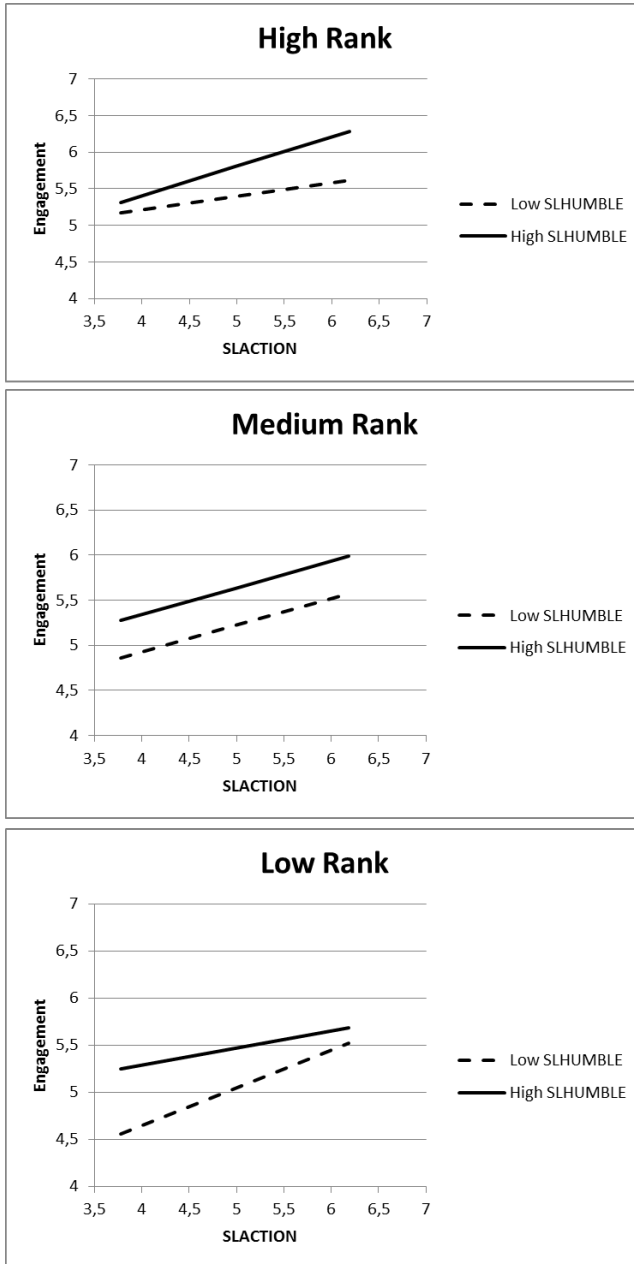


Figure 4.2 Effect of the three-way interaction between SLACTION, SLHUMBLE and RANK

and RANK



Chapter 5 - Servant Leaders as Natural Under-Estimators: a Self-Other Agreement

Perspective

This article further elaborates on the role of self-other agreement and disagreement in predicting leadership effectiveness for the specific case of servant leadership, a model that through this study is for the first time considered in the self-other ratings literature. Our findings indicate that under-estimation acts as the stronger predictor of servant leadership effectiveness in inducing greater levels of psychological empowerment among subordinates, when compared to self-other agreement and over-estimation. This could sustain the view that servant leaders are natural under-estimators because of their initial motivation to serve, genuine focus and valorization of others and an implicit humble attitude, rooted in an awareness of their own shortcomings.

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges facing leaders is developing an awareness of how they come across to others in the organization. That is, whether their behavior has the intended effect. Paraphrasing singer-songwriter Randy Newman (1972), for most leaders it is indeed a crazy game and it is lonely at the top. In their Business Week cover story of April 1991, Byrne et al. (1991) alerted for the risks of the CEO disease, a term that was later also used by Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee (2001) to express the difficulty of leaders in getting honest feedback about their behavior and performance from their subordinates and peers. Several scholars emphasized that such a limitation in accurate perception may be detrimental for the leader's development and effectiveness (Bass, 1990; House et al. 1991; Day, 2001; Goleman et al., 2001). This is essentially a matter of accurate self-awareness, which in research has been captured in the study of Self-Other Agreement or SOA (Fleenor et al., 2010). Research around SOA has helped shed some more light on how agreement and disagreement of self and other perceptions of leadership behavior affects leadership effectiveness. Previous studies showed that indeed high self-other agreement is related to leadership effectiveness (Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Atwater et al., 1995; Atwater et al., 1998, Halverson et al., 2002), and that over-estimation is related to being perceived as less effective (Atwater et al., 1998). These results confirm the importance of self-awareness for leaders. However, what remains unclear is the mechanism behind the influence of under-estimation (Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Fleenor et al., 2010). In addition, SOA studies so far made use of transformational or organization specific leadership measures (Fleenor et al., 2010). As such, while the importance of self-awareness, hence self-other agreement, for leadership

effectiveness (Bass, 1990; House et al. 1991; Day, 2001; Goleman et al., 2001) and for leadership development (Day, 2001) seems to be uncontested, we propose that a better understanding of under-estimation will provide a richer picture on how self and other perceptions of leadership affect performance, in particular when one considers more altruistic or less self-centered models such as servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977). This becomes particularly relevant when one observes an increasing number of companies adopting servant leadership as part of their culture and management practices (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Glashagel, 2009; Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2009). As suggested by Greenleaf (1977), servant leadership emphasizes an attitude of being of service, in support of developing others, which is based on a strong sense of humility (Russell, 2001; Patterson, 2003; van Dierendonck, 2011). Based on this, we advance that servant leaders are the likely under-estimators, not necessarily because they are not aware of their skills and limitations, but because they value others more than themselves. This focus on others by servant leaders is expected to impact performance through enhancing a stronger sense of psychological empowerment among followers, reflected on motivational aspects of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). The main purpose of the present study is therefore to provide a deeper understanding of SOA for servant leadership behavior in relation to the psychological empowerment of followers.

Self-Other Agreement and Leadership Effectiveness

The importance of understanding the effect of self-other agreement or disagreement on leadership effectiveness has been acknowledged by several scholars

(Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Fleenor et al., 2010; Halverson et al., 2002; Van Velsor et al., 1993). In the context of leadership, Fleenor et al. (2010) define self-other agreement as “the degree of agreement or congruence between a leader’s self-ratings and the ratings of others, usually coworkers such as superiors, peers and subordinates”. SOA brings forward the potential positive role of self-awareness on leadership effectiveness (Fleenor et al., 2010), which validates the need and relevance of considering the followers’ perspectives in leadership development feedback tools like 360-degree surveys and coaching (Bass, 1990; House et al. 1991; Day, 2001; Goleman et al, 2001). Despite some opposing views (Fleenor et al, 1996; Brutus et al, 1999), the majority of research findings so far (e.g. Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Atwater et al., 1995; Halverson et al., 2002) seem indeed to sustain the case for SOA as a key variable in understanding leadership performance. While certain studies suggest that combining a mix of different types of raters (peers, subordinates, superiors, etc.) may increase the reliability and validity of this measure (Le Breton et al., 2003), other studies (e.g. Halverson, 2002; Atwater and Yammarino, 1992) show that subordinate evaluations are more accurate when it comes to actual leadership behavior and are therefore to be preferred when considering SOA analysis.

Atwater et al. (1998) emphasized the need to consider the direction and magnitude of self-other agreement in more detail, further distinguishing different possible patterns on the relationship between self-other evaluations and leadership effectiveness. In general, Atwater and Yammarino (1997) proposed that high self-other ratings could be split into 4 basic categories: over-estimators, under-estimators, in-agreement/good estimators and in-agreement/poor estimators. Atwater and Yammarino (1997) provided

empirical support for the premise that in-agreement/good estimators would likely be more indicative of effective leaders, hereby confirming the case for self-awareness as an important condition for effective leadership (Bass, 1992; House et al. 1991; Day, 2001; Goleman et al., 2001). Over-estimators would show poorer results, under-estimators mixed performance results and in-agreement/poor estimators the worst results (Atwater and Yammarino, 1997). In general terms, these patterns have been consistently retrieved in different studies (Atwater, Roush & Fischthal, 1995; Van Velsor et al., 1993; Halverson et al., 2002). However, in another study, Atwater et al. (1998) found strong supporting evidence for under-estimation as a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness, in par with high in-agreement scores, which could be based, as the authors suggest, on a willingness to learn and to please others by some leaders. As advanced before, further understanding this aspect of under-estimation forms a fundamental motivation of this study, especially within the context of servant leadership by using the model suggested by van Dierendonck (2011). Given that previous studies have focused on transformational and organization specific leadership measures (Fleenor et al., 2010), the inclusion of servant leadership is on its own a contribution to the study of self-other agreement.

The Servant Leader: The Natural Under-Estimator?

Servant leadership was advanced by Greenleaf (1977) as a model resting on a strong focus on the needs of others instead of those of oneself or those of the organization (Russell, 2001; Van Dierendonck, 2011). When Robert Greenleaf (1977) introduced and elaborated on his vision of the servant leader, he clearly distinguished it from other forms of leadership in a fundamental aspect: the motivation that people have to choose to strive

for a leadership position. Servant leadership is distinct from other leadership theories because at its foundational level it presupposes that the aspiration to lead is rooted in an initial motivation to serve. In other words, leadership is defined as a means to an end of essentially serving others. The following passage is testimony to that: "The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions" (Greenleaf , 2002, p. 7). Such principle should not be taken lightly, as it helps understanding why SOA may work differently for servant leaders compared to other types of leaders.

First of all, it is less likely that servant leaders have a self-image of being the natural leader in a group. It is the urge to serve and to contribute to others, sometimes probably forced by extraneous circumstances (e.g. a crisis or some form of injustice), that motivates them to assume a leading role. This is likely seen by them as a transient state, something that takes them out of a natural position of being there for others. So even when persons with a strong inclination to serve the needs of others find themselves leading, they will likely keep seeing themselves as servants, which is probably translated into observable behaviors of humility (Russell, 2001; Patterson, 2003; van Dierendonck, 2011), reservation and standing-back (van Dierendonck, 2011). Secondly, when the main concern of servant leaders is to serve a self-transcending purpose and the well-being and development of others, the natural locus of their energy and attention will be not the self but instead the other, those they propose to serve. Thirdly, and finally, because servant leaders naturally value the potential and unique competencies in everyone (not the same as thinking

everyone is equally competent) there will be a natural tendency to underrate their own capabilities in relation to those of others, especially if these are those the leader wants to serve. From a self-other rating point of view, this brings a new possible explanation for the underlying mechanism behind under-estimation in predicting leadership performance. We posit that in the case of servant leaders, under-estimation is not caused by a possible lack of self-confidence, as potentially suggested by Atwater and Yammarino (1997), or a lack of self-awareness but is likely more due to their natural valorization of the other in face of the self. As such, under-estimation might be seen as a proxy for an overall attitude of being of service (particularly reflected on humility and standing-back), an essential trait of the servant leader.

Psychological Empowerment as a Measure of Servant Leadership Effectiveness

Several studies point to the effectiveness of servant leaders in generating positive motivational outcomes among followers, including for example organizational commitment (Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Bobbio et al., 2012), a sense of justice, an optimistic attitude and commitment to change (Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012), creativity (Neubert et al., 2008), integrity (Bobbio et al., 2012), organizational citizenship behavior (Ehrhart, 2004; Bobbio et al., 2012), or trust (Joseph & Winston, 2005). Our preference was however to include a measure of leadership effectiveness that would be more indicative of a strong dyadic leader-follower relationship and at the same time known to be strongly related to objective performance. We found that psychological empowerment (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990) would fit these criteria. From a dyadic point of view, psychological empowerment can be considered as being especially

relevant for servant leadership (Asag-gau & van Dierendonck, 2011), as it closely relates to the core motivation of the servant leader of being of service, putting the followers at a central position, while enabling them to be at their best. Secondly, from an objective performance perspective, psychological empowerment was found to be related to several concrete and tangible individual, team and organizational outcomes in multiple studies (e.g, Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009; Hechanova et al., 2006; Liden et al., 2006; Srivastava, 2006; Hall, 2006; Seibert et al., 2004; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995). This makes psychological empowerment an ideal candidate to be the dependent variable of our study.

A closer look at the notion of psychological empowerment further distinguishes it as a motivational construct built on four key work orientations, namely: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). When looking at these different dimensions of psychological empowerment, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) advance that *meaning*, relates to the significance of work for someone's life and how it supports purpose, values and ideals. This highlights the importance that work can have in sustaining an individual's identity and in providing an adequate response to a broader existential need for meaningfulness (Pratt and Ashforth, 2003). Regarding *self-determination*, Thomas and Velthouse (1990) based it on the theory of Deci, Connell and Ryan (1989), who relate it to the need for autonomy and assuming control over one's destiny and work; hence of having a choice in initiating and regulating individual actions. *Competence* reflects the perception that an individual has of the capability to perform tasks and activities, which is based on the notions advanced by Gist (1987) and Bandura (1989). In other words, feeling competent contributes to a sense of empowerment because it gives

a feeling of being able to cope with the different demands and complexities of the tasks at hand. Finally, for Thomas and Velthouse (1990) *impact* is related to the perception that one's work matters and makes a difference, or as advanced by Ashforth and Mael (1989), that the individual perceives having a real influence on the work surroundings.

A more detailed look into the potential effect of servant leadership on these aspects of psychological empowerment highlights several possible relationships with the 8 key dimensions of empowerment, humility, accountability, stewardship, authenticity, forgiveness, courage and standing-back suggested by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) in their servant leadership survey. For example, stewardship will help provide meaning to work while limiting the action space, which can indirectly induce a stronger sense of self-determination, competence and impact (by reducing unnecessary uncertainty). Humility and standing-back, as fundamental attributes of an attitude of being of service, can give workers a stronger sense of autonomy (self-determination) and competence (not feeling inferior to the leader). Forgiveness can help by creating a learning space where errors can occur, again contributing to self-determination but also allowing for competencies to be developed. Courage can be instrumental in ensuring a protected environment from external factors that can negatively affect work and reduce self-determination, keeping the action space of workers as much as possible immune to negative influences (e.g. by securing resources from upper management in times of difficulties or tempering unrealistic customer demands). Accountability will contribute to make the impact of work visible through clear performance indicators and reporting mechanisms. Authenticity ensures that empowering behaviors are well intended and rely on genuine trust, amplifying its effect on the sense of empowerment. While not being exhaustive, these theory based relationships

provide in our view sufficient support to advance that servant leadership has a significant effect on psychological empowerment.

Having outlined the notions of self-other agreement, servant leadership and psychological empowerment, and the claim that under-estimation will function as the stronger predictor of servant leadership effectiveness, we are now in a position to formulate the base hypothesis of this study in more specific terms.

Hypothesis: Self-other under-estimation will be a stronger predictor of servant leadership effectiveness, reflected in higher levels of psychological empowerment among followers, when compared to self-other agreement and over-estimation.

Methods

Subjects

Participants were middle management professionals from a varied range of organizations mostly in the engineering sector, following an executive program at a business school in Portugal. The initial group of 53 managers was asked to fill in a survey, with a self-evaluation on measures of servant leadership and psychological empowerment. At the same time, each participant was asked to select different individuals, including peers, subordinates and superiors, who could provide an evaluation on the participant's servant leadership behaviors and their own individual level of psychological empowerment. A total of 249 individuals answered the survey evaluating their respective participant. For the purpose of this research, we were interested in understanding the dyadic leader-follower relationship and their different perceptions of leadership behavior

and the relation to psychological empowerment, so peers and superiors were excluded, leaving a total of 160 leader-follower dyads (with a final sample of 36 managers). Data was organized around the followers, allowing us to run several tests on the dyadic relationship with their leaders. 33 of the leaders were male and 3 were female, while for the followers 71.3 % were male and 28.7% female. Average age for the leaders was 34.2 years old and for the followers 32.4.

Measures

Servant Leadership. The Servant Leadership Survey developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) was used for both the self and other evaluation of the leader. In order to keep a consistent nomenclature with the self-other rating literature and increase readability, from here on the leader self-evaluation variable is called SLSelf and the follower evaluation of the leader is called SLOther. A 6 point Likert scale was used ranging from 1 (completely disagree) to 6 (completely agree). All 30 items were composed into one single measure of servant leadership for both self and follower evaluations. The internal consistency of this measure was .93 for the followers and .82 for the leaders, which according to Nunnally (1978) and Kline (1999), is a very good score for a survey.

Psychological Empowerment. The 12 item instrument developed by Spreitzer (1995) was used, which was combined into one single measure of psychological empowerment. Only the follower evaluations of their own perceived psychological empowerment were considered, forming our dependent variable. Like for servant leadership, ratings were given on a 6 point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*completely*

disagree) to 6 (*completely agree*). Overall internal consistency was .86, again a good score.

Results

Polynomial regression analysis

In Table 5.1 it is possible to see the mean values, standard deviations and inter-correlations of the variables used in this study. Interestingly, two immediate observations stand out. First of all, there is no significant correlation between SLSelf and SLOther, eliminating concerns about co-linearity in our analysis. Secondly, SLOther is significantly correlated to psychological empowerment, which seems to support the idea that servant leadership can indeed have a strong effect on this motivational construct. Following the recommendations by Edwards (1993, 1994, 2002), Edwards and Parry (1993) and Fleenor et al. (2010), a polynomial regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the nature of the self-other servant leadership ratings in relation to psychological empowerment. This method is preferred above difference scores, which was often used in the beginning of self-other ratings research (see Fleenor et al., 2010 for a review of different methods). According to Edwards (1993) difference scores, however convenient and intuitive they might be, bring several problems related to ambiguity and reliability. At the same time, by using polynomial regression analysis we are able to detect non-linear effects in different directions of self-other combinations (Edwards, 1993). The essential method suggested by Edwards (2002) involves observing the change in R^2 when introducing the quadratic and interaction elements between self and other evaluations into the linear regression formula.

When the change in R^2 is significant, one should be in the presence of a non-linear relationship which can be further analyzed.

Table 5.2 presents the regression steps done in our analysis. Step 1 is based on a linear regression with psychological empowerment as dependent variable and self and other evaluations as independent variables. The regression formula for this step (see Table 2) is significant ($F = 24.09$, $p < .01$), accounting for 24 % of the variance on psychological empowerment. In step 2, the interaction between self and other evaluations (SLSelf x SLOther) as well as the quadratic elements (SLSelf² and SLOther²) are added. As it can be observed, there is a significant increase in R^2 in this step ($\Delta R^2 = .07$; $F_{(3,154)} = 5.46$, $p < .01$), meaning that there is a significant non-linear relationship between psychological empowerment and the self-other evaluations of servant leadership. The resulting regression formula (see Table 2) is significant ($F = 13.737$, $p < .01$), accounting for approximately 31% of the variance on psychological empowerment (an additional 7% compared to step 1).

3D surface analysis

Edwards (2002) suggests using 3D surface analysis in order to further understand how different directions of self-other scores affect leadership effectiveness. Two basic analyses are of interest here: i) understanding how leadership effectiveness changes along the in-agreement line (self-evaluation = other evaluation), and ii) how leadership effectiveness changes along the disagreement line (self-evaluation = - other evaluation). The 3D plot of the regression formula of model 2 presented in Figure 5.1 can support the analysis that now follows.

For the first condition (self-evaluation = other-evaluation), the values $a1 = b1 + b2$ and $a2 = b3 + b4 + b5$ are of interest, where $b1$ is the coefficient for SL_{Self} , $b2$ for SL_{Other} , $b3$ for SL_{Other}^2 , $b4$ for $SL_{Self} \times SL_{Other}$ and $b5$ for SL_{Self}^2 . These formulas for $a1$ and $a2$ are obtained by simply replacing SL_{Other} with SL_{Self} (or vice-versa) in the regression formula, where $a1$ indicates the slope of the line and $a2$ the curvature of that same line. As for the second condition (self-evaluation = - other-evaluation), the values $x1 = b1 - b2$ and $x2 = b3 - b4 + b5$ become of interest, again telling the slope and curvature respectively but along the disagreement line. The statistical significance of these values can be determined through hypothesis testing (or coefficient constraints testing) as suggested by Edwards (2002). For the case of the 3D surface corresponding to model 2, the following values were found. For the in-agreement line (self-evaluation = other-evaluation), $a1 = 5.77$ ($p < .07$) and $a2 = -.56$ ($p < .09$), meaning that we are in the presence of a steep positive slope and slightly convex curve. This essentially tells us (as it can be observed in Figure 5.1), that psychological empowerment is very low (1 to 2) for in-agreement/poor evaluations and grows until a very high level (5 to 6) for in-agreement/high scores, although slowing down towards the higher scores. As for the disagreement line (self-evaluation = - other-evaluation), $x1 = .32$ ($p > .1$) and $x2 = .52$ ($p < .01$), which tells us that we are in the presence of a slight upward slope with a moderate concave form. With the support of the 3D surface in Figure 5.1, we can observe that in essence these results tell that for over-estimators psychological empowerment is moderately high (3 to 5), which then gradually grows to very high levels (5 to 6) for the under-estimators, with an accelerated growth as we approach the extreme under-estimators.

Conclusions

This study contributes to the self-other agreement leadership literature by highlighting how the different categories of self-other agreement and disagreement can have multiple interpretations depending on the leadership model being used. For the first time servant leadership was included in a self-other leadership empirical study. Our findings seem to confirm the initial hypothesis of our study through the recommended polynomial regression methodology for self-other analysis (Edwards, 1993, 1994, 2002). This means that for the case of servant leadership, under-estimation functions as the stronger predictor of leadership effectiveness, measured through their impact on follower psychological empowerment. Such findings contrast with previous studies based on measures of transformational and organization-specific leadership where under-estimation did not function so strongly as a predictor of leadership effectiveness (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Atwater & Yammarino, 1998; Atwater, Roush & Fischtal, 1995; Van Velsor et al., 1993; Halverson et al., 2002). This could be indicative of the specific nature of servant leaders, for whom under-estimation might be a natural consequence of an initial motivation to serve, a genuine focus and valorization of others and an implicit humble attitude, rooted in an awareness of their own shortcomings. This is a striking difference with the idea that under-estimation might be associated with low self-confidence, as advanced by Atwater and Yammarino (1997).

When looking at the remaining three self-other rating categories suggested by Atwater and Yammarino (1997) in more detail one can observe that the results of our study for in-agreement/poor scores, over-estimation and in-agreement/high scores show results are consistent with previous research (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Atwater &

Yammarino, 1998; Atwater, Roush & Fischtal, 1995; Van Velsor et al., 1993; Halverson et al., 2002). Several additional comments should still be made on the findings for these categories in light of the servant leadership model. First of all, in-agreement/poor scores still remain as an indicator of poor performance. When both the leader and the follower concur on the lack of leadership capabilities, performance, measured through psychological empowerment was indeed low. As in other leadership models, this remains true for servant leadership.

With regard to over-estimation, we can still observe self-other scores as having some form of relationship to performance, albeit markedly less than in-agreement/high scores and under-estimation. This comes somehow at odds with the reasoning presented before on why servant leaders will naturally under-estimate their capabilities. We suggest that the potential reason behind these results lies in two aspects: i) the multi-dimensional nature of the servant leadership construct that was used and ii) the paradoxical nature of servant leadership self-assessment. The servant leadership survey of van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) used in this study incorporates 8 dimensions, some of which can be considered to form a core aspect of servant leadership and others being maybe less servant-leadership specific. For example, humility and standing-back would be traits very specific to the servant leader, forming a distinct sort of moral backbone (Asag-Gau & Dierendonck, 2011). This means that a leader might score high on characteristics like accountability or stewardship, which can overlap with other leadership approaches, but lower on those characteristics that would serve as a base condition to be a servant leader (i.e. humility and standing-back). So over-estimation could be caused not by the typical servant leader but by other type of leaders who happen to score high on dimensions that are relevant also, but

not only, for servant leadership and that can also affect psychological empowerment. On the other hand there is an inherent and hard to solve paradox in self-assessing the unique measures of humility or standing-back for the case of servant leadership. Self-assessing humility is a bit of an oxymoron. A humble person will find it hard to score himself high on humility or standing-back for the apparent contradiction of the questions to start with. In that sense, giving the self a high-score on humility might be a sign of the exact opposite, the lack of humility. This could mean that over-estimation would be pointing more towards other forms of leadership, likely more self-centered relatively to servant leadership.

Finally, the fact that in-agreement/high scores continue to play an important role in predicting performance for servant leadership (although as it can be observed in Figure 5.1, under-estimation functions as a stronger predictor and contains the higher portion of the very good performers), might be potentially related to a natural self-perception adjusting process, probably more evident for more experienced servant leaders. In other words, servant leaders' natural tendency is to under-estimate their capabilities, but as they grow in their career and the results of their work come to fruition (also in relation to other less servant-like managers), they might adjust their self-perception in a more congruent way with factual performance and in relation to other managers around them. Such increase in self-rating would likely come not from self-inflation but instead from a more accurate self-assessment, especially on those generic leadership capabilities like for example stewardship, empowerment or accountability. Future studies could try to assess this by including for example control variables such as years of management experience.

It is important to reflect on some limitations of this study. One aspect has to do with the impossibility of getting objective job relative performance measures, as in the

case of other self-other rating studies (e.g. Halverson et al., 2002). This was due on the one hand to the difficulties in getting access to internal company specific data and on the other hand to the fact that respondents come from various organizations making it hard to objectively measure performance while controlling for organizational specific characteristics. While including a measure of psychological empowerment, which is known to affect objective performance (e.g, Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009; Hechanova et al., 2006; Liden et al., 2006; Srivastava, 2006; Hall, 2006; Seibert et al., 2004; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995), helps get some confidence in our results; there is potentially room for common method variance in the setup of our study. As such we suggest that future studies should try to incorporate objective measures of individual performance as a dependent variable to further ensure the absence of common method bias (Chang et al., 2010). Another factor has to do with national cultural characteristics and their influence on perceptions of what is considered good leadership (Hofstede, 1993; House et al., 2002; House et al., 2004) but also whether voicing one's achievements and capabilities is socially acceptable. Atwater et al. (2009) did start on this path by highlighting how cultural aspects like assertiveness, power distance or individualism moderate the relationship between self and other ratings. An interesting venue of research in this regard would be to analyze how these cultural variables would affect the relationship between self-other ratings of servant leadership and performance within a multinational organizational context.

In conclusion, this study expands the field of self-other agreement leadership literature by incorporating a servant leadership measure, allowing us to understand this model from a more complex and dyadic perspective. In specific, it becomes apparent that

under-estimation can function as a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness for servant leaders (measured through follower psychological empowerment), which contrasts with other types of leaders. We would like to suggest future research to further develop this new path and in particular to elaborate on the specific workings of the different dimensions of servant leadership in relation to self-other ratings (e.g. How does one go about self-assessing humility? What happens to the servant leaders' behavior when they know their self-other scores? Can humility be learned with the support of self-other ratings?). Finally, for practitioners of leadership development and people management professionals involved in performance evaluation, our study shows that self-awareness (or self-other high scores agreement to be more exact) might not always be the best indicator of leadership effectiveness and that the best leaders in the organization might just as well be the under-estimators, performing under the radar. For those organizations willing to adopt servant leadership more strongly in their culture and management practices, following on the footsteps of others (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Glashagel, 2009; Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2009), paying attention to these under-estimators becomes even more important.

Table 5.1 Descriptives and intercorrelations of study variables

	Mean	SD	1	2
SLSelf	4.71	.41		
SLOther	4.59	.58	-.12	
Psych. Empowerment	4.97	.56	-.09	.48**

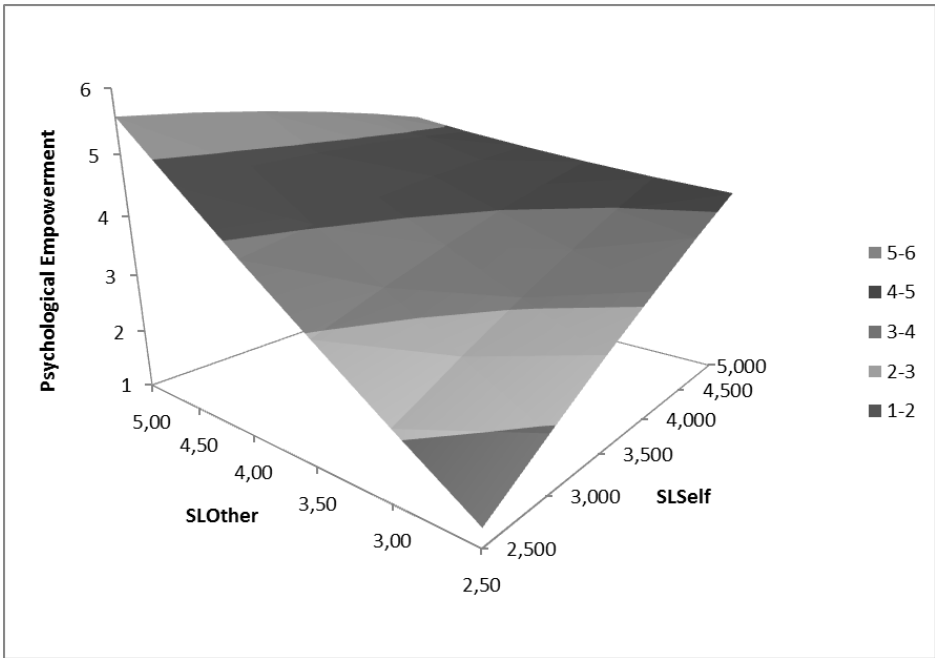
n = 160. **p < .01, * p < .05

Table 5.2 Regression Results

	Model 1	Model 2
	Betas	Betas
Intercept	3.02**	-9.60
SLSelf	-.04	3.04
SLOther	.47**	2.72*
SLSelf x SLOther		-.54**
SLOther x SLOther		.05
SLSelf x SLSelf		-.07
R	.49	.56
R ²	.24	.31
F (2,157)	24.09**	13.74**
ΔR ²		.07
F_(3,154)		5.46**

** p < .01, * p < .05

Figure 5.1 3D response surface of the regression model 2



Chapter 6 - General Discussion

“Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundation of humility.”

Saint Augustine, 354 – 430 AC

We start the sixth and final chapter of this dissertation by reminding the main purpose of our research. With the increasing evidence on the positive organizational and motivational outcomes of servant leadership (e.g. Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck, 2011; Barbuto & Wheeler, 2006; Bobbio et al., 2012; Ehrhart, 2004; Herbst, 2003; Jaramillo et al., 2009; Joseph & Winston, 2005; Kool & van Dierendonck, 2012; Neubert et al., 2008; Peterson, Galvin & Lange, 2012; Sendjaya & Pekerti, 2010), our research aimed to further broaden our understanding of the processes through which servant leadership can be effective. In particular it was our goal to comprehend the effectiveness of servant leadership in different and demanding organizational and relational contexts, allowing scholars and practitioners to better understand its applicability.

It is quite remarkable to observe the growth of servant leadership in scholarship (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck, 2011) and as an organizational practice (e.g. Bogle, 2002; Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Glashagel, 2009; Lore, 1998; Melrose, 1998; Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Ruschman, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2009). Maybe Greenleaf himself would not imagine that his seminal essay “The Servant as Leader”, first published in 1970 could generate such an impact 40 years later. As the concept matures and gains share of mind throughout the world, servant leadership needs to expand into new territories and have its boundaries tested by the scrutiny of science. Through four empirical

studies this dissertation further elaborated on four key essential questions, dwelling into new unexplored contextual and relational areas for servant leadership. Is servant leadership suitable in the context of small self-organized teams as a shared process? Can servant leaders be effective in the context of highly demanding change such as in a large scale merger process? How effective is servant leadership for different hierarchical positions? How do differences in self-other perceptions about servant leadership behavior affect performance?

We will now further expand on the findings of each of our chapters, elaborate on the theoretical contributions of this dissertation, include suggestions for future research, explain some of the limitations of our research, outline some key implications for practitioners and end with some concluding remarks concerning each of the initial and aforementioned questions that were at the basis of this study.

Summary of main findings

Chapter 2: Introducing a Short Measure of Shared Servant Leadership and its Relation to Team Performance through Team Behavioral Integration

This chapter concerned the study of servant leadership as a shared process in the organizational context of self-management teams. Two similar studies, conducted in separate years were included. Study 1 incorporated 244 undergraduate students in 61 teams going through an intense HRM business simulation of two weeks. The second study included 288 students in 72 teams. The main findings in both studies were similar.

The first finding was that team behavioral integration, a construct known to be critical in top management teams (Lubatkin et al., 2006; Simsek et al. 2005), was shown to

be influenced by the extent that team members showed servant leadership behavior towards each other. As such, it seems that the amount of shared servant leadership present in a team contributes to improved joint decision making, increased information exchange and collective behavior.

The second finding of this study illustrates that information exchange worked as the most relevant dimension in mediating the relationship between shared servant leadership and the performance of self-management teams. Such finding comes to confirm the relative importance of this construct for shared leadership as suggested by Yammarino et al. (2012). This might be particularly true for knowledge intensive assignments in a short period of time, as in the case of both our studies, whereby the ability to quickly tap into the team's existing knowledge becomes critical for success.

The third main finding concerns the validity and reliability of a short four-dimensional measure, which supports earlier theorizing on servant leadership (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). This measure includes four core dimensions of servant leadership, which while not embracing the whole spectrum of servant leadership behaviors, cover its most essential aspects namely: empowerment, humility, accountability and stewardship. In our first study within this chapter, this short scale was still able to represent 81% of the variance of the full scale (in the second study only the short measure was used). By reducing the measure from 30 to 15 items, this instrument can be particularly useful in shared servant leadership studies when using an exhaustive round-robin approach where all team members evaluate each other.

Chapter 3: Servant Leadership and Engagement in a Merger Process

The second study of our research was run in the context of a large scale merger between two organizations in Portugal. This allowed us to test the applicability of servant leadership under a highly demanding work environment, namely in a major organizational change process, including a significant number of layoffs. The relationship between servant leadership and follower engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006) in these merging organizations was included, while incorporating the mediating effect of organizational identification (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg et al., 2001) and psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). A total of 1107 employees from the two original companies were surveyed at a time when the re-organization was at full speed, a few months after the initial acquisition.

Several findings are worth notice. The first one concerns the validity and reliability of the servant leadership measure developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) in a new national culture, further extending on previous findings in other countries (Bobbio et al., 2012; Hakanen & Van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). As in previous studies, our results also replicated the apparent reduced contribution of courage and forgiveness to the overall servant leadership construct. We speculate that this could be caused by the incidental nature of these sub-dimensions, less observable in daily management practice, something that could be considered in future research.

The second finding is that even during a stringent change process, servant leadership is significantly positively related to follower engagement, as demonstrated by the Structural Equation Modeling, bootstrapping and correlation figures of our study.

Servant leadership was already shown to be related to engagement in a previous study (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Likewise empowerment and humility, both fundamental aspects of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011) were found to have a strong relation to engagement when analyzed separately (Owens and Hekman, 2012; Tuckey et al., 2012). The difference this time is that a particularly difficult organizational context was considered. In our study servant leadership did pass this stringent test, indicating its power to generate engagement even under a significant and fundamental organizational change, with all its risks and demands on follower motivation.

The third finding is related to the mediating mechanisms through which servant leadership could affect engagement. We were able to observe a partial mediation by both the level of post-merger organizational identification and follower psychological empowerment. Most noticeably, psychological empowerment, while incorporating the dimensions of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) accounts for the most significant portion of the total indirect effect. We advanced that this is because psychological empowerment is more within the direct sphere of influence of the leader than the creation of a deeper sense of organizational identification, as the new identity of the newly formed company was itself still under construction. Nevertheless, servant leadership was still significantly related to organizational identification with the newly formed entity, being a potential contributor to the need for a sense of continuation during acquisition processes, an important factor for a successful integration (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg & Leeuwen, 2001; van Knippenberg et al., 2002).

Chapter 4: Servant Leadership Effectiveness at the Top: A Study on the Interplay between Leadership Humility, Action, and Power on Follower Engagement

The third study of this dissertation was developed to further understand the effectiveness of servant leadership from the perspective of a leader-follower relationship across different hierarchical positions in an organization. This would allow us to assess the applicability of servant leadership in different levels of responsibility. At the same time we tried to analyze how the action and virtue sides of the servant leader interact for these different hierarchical levels. To measure leadership effectiveness we incorporated the construct of engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006) as our dependent variable, building on the findings of our previous study portrayed in chapter 3. A total of 232 people participated in our study, working at different hierarchical levels in organizations from a diversified range of sectors.

Two main findings stand out from this study. First of all, we were able to confirm the potential split between the virtue and action aspects of servant leadership as suggested by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) and in the original writings of Greenleaf (1977). This split reflects both a concern for people (virtue) and the ability to mobilize them for performance and growth (action). Our study operationalized virtue as the humble-side through the dimensions of humility and standing-back, both forming the distinct servant-first attitude of the servant leader. The action-side was constructed with the dimensions of stewardship, empowerment and accountability, which reflect the essential processes through which the servant leader ensures that tasks are coherently accomplished.

The second finding concerns our suggested moderated moderation model, whereby the humble-side of the servant leader works as a first moderator and the

hierarchical rank as a second moderator affecting the relationship between the action-side of servant leadership and engagement. Our findings show a significant three-way interaction, meaning that the humble-side of the servant leader amplifies the impact of the action-side of servant leadership on engagement but only for leaders in higher ranks. Such findings seem to provide further empirical evidence on the importance of leadership humility (Owens and Hekman, 2012) and in particular for leaders in higher positions, as suggested by the level 5 leadership model proposed by Collins (2001). By contrast, the humble-side seemed to be somehow detrimental for leadership effectiveness in terms of engagement in the lower hierarchical positions.

Chapter 5: Servant Leaders as Natural Under-Estimators: a Self-Other Agreement Perspective

The fourth and final study of this dissertation is focused on the leader-follower relationship and in particular on how different self-other perceptions of servant leadership can predict leadership effectiveness. The study was based on 160 leader-follower dyads, corresponding to 36 different leaders. To measure leadership effectiveness, the level of follower psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) was measured for each of these relationships.

The main finding of this study was that for the case of servant leadership, through the recommended polynomial regression methodology for self-other perception analysis (Edwards, 1993, 1994, 2002), underestimation functions as the stronger predictor of leadership effectiveness in terms of impact on psychological empowerment. In previous studies, based on transformational leadership (Bass, 1999) and organization specific

measures, in-agreement/high scores functioned as the strongest predictor (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Atwater & Yammarino, 1998; Atwater, Roush & Fischtal, 1995; Van Velsor et al., 1993; Halverson et al., 2002). Our empirical results seem to indicate that servant leaders might be natural under-estimators when compared to other types of leaders, because of their initial motivation to serve, genuine care and valorization of others and implicit humble attitude, based on an awareness of their own shortcomings.

With regard to the other self-other rating categories, namely in-agreement/poor scores, over-estimation and in-agreement/high scores, our study showed a good level of consistency with previous research (Atwater & Yammarino, 1997; Atwater & Yammarino, 1998; Atwater, Roush & Fischtal, 1995; Van Velsor et al., 1993; Halverson et al., 2002). In-agreement/poor scores still remain as an indicator of poor performance. Over-estimation, still shows some form of relationship with performance, which could be caused by i) the multi-dimensional nature of the servant leadership construct and ii) the paradoxical nature of self-assessing servant leadership. Regarding the former, a leader could score low on virtue related aspects like humility or standing-back, which form a key fundamental backbone of servant leadership (Asag-Gau & Dierendonck, 2011) and score particularly high on other dimensions (e.g. accountability or stewardship) that might overlap with other more self-centered leadership models, and still able to have to an effect on psychological empowerment. On the other hand, asking a servant leader to self-assess humility is a bit of an oxymoron. So over-estimation might in fact be an indicator of other types of leadership. Finally, in-agreement/high scores were still found to have an important role in predicting performance for servant leadership (although less than underestimation).

We advanced that this might be caused by a natural self-perception adjusting process by some servant leaders, especially for those with more management experience.

Theoretical implications and directions for future research

The results of the studies presented before allowed expanding the field of servant leadership into new areas and give us new insights into the effectiveness of servant leadership in different organizational contexts and into the leader-follower relational dynamic. We will now present some of the main theoretical implications that result from our studies as well as the new questions they arise that could serve as motivation for future research.

Shared servant leadership as a collectivistic form of leadership

Our first study comes to confirm that servant leadership can be effective as a shared process within self-managed teams in inducing objective performance. Servant leadership was already known to be effective in teams in a traditional hierarchical setting (Hartnell, & Oke, 2010; Hu & Liden, 2011; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011, Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012). This time we show that shared servant leadership could be considered as a viable addition to the group of collectivistic forms of leadership suggested by Yammarino et al. (2012). Teams where members demonstrate mutual behaviors of servant leadership might create an ethos for shared responsibility and mutual influence, which are known as key attributes of shared leadership in affecting team performance (Pearce & Conger, 2003, p.1; Yammarino, 2012). Such ethos could be essentially derived from the initial motivation to serve of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977), whereby the

team and its goals gain prominence over each individual member. On a more practical note, different aspects of the servant leadership model of van Dierendonck (2011) could contribute to successful shared leadership. For example empowerment, which is known to be a critical contributor to shared leadership effectiveness (Pearce & Sims, 2002; Yammarino, 2012), can be critical in creating an environment of mutual trust in the ability to accomplish tasks while helping and coaching each other along the way. Humility for example could be critical in creating a learning environment where members truly listen to each other and acknowledge everyone's contribution. In addition, humility could support the importance of the collective in shared leadership where the single leader "disappears", as defended by Yammarino et al. (2012). Other possible mutually reinforcing influences of the different servant leadership dimensions could include reminding each other of the team purpose (stewardship), encouraging each other to persist in times of stress and difficulty (courage), actively helping each other through differences and conflicts (forgiveness), being open and honest to one another (authenticity) and granting space for others to lead and take the stage when needed (standing-back). As such, based on the model of van Dierendonck (2011), shared servant leadership could be supportive of an encouraging and supportive team culture that enables team members to find ways to effectively work together and integrate their individual actions (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2001). In addition, the different dimensions of servant leadership seem to be supporting of the antecedents of shared leadership including a shared purpose, social support and having a voice (Carson et al., 2007).

Taking the different considerations so far, further understanding servant leadership as a shared process in teams should be stimulated. In particular, further

analyzing the linkages between its different dimensions and the specific aspects of team of behavioral integration would be important. As we have seen in our study, information exchange functioned as the main mediating mechanism in explaining the relationship between servant leadership and team performance. Something that we suggest could be caused by the knowledge intensive nature and short time of the assignments in our study. Considering other assignment contexts (e.g. a long-term project or a factory setting) would be interesting to see whether shared servant leadership would affect team behavioral integration and performance in different ways.

Capturing the essence of servant leadership through a new 4-dimensional short measure

The first study allowed developing a new 4-dimensional short measure of servant leadership, which can be particularly useful in exhaustive round-robin assessments to assess shared servant leadership in teams. This shorter construct has however other important theoretical implications.

The operationalization of servant leadership developed by Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) provides a rather complete instrument, based on 8 dimensions and 30 items, namely: empowerment (7 items), accountability (3 items), standing back (3 items), humility (5 items), authenticity (4 items), courage (2 items), forgiveness (3 items), and stewardship (3 items). In their original studies that led to the development of this instrument, the authors already emphasized that four characteristics of servant leadership in particular could be regarded as primary or core aspects of servant leadership behavior (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). These core dimensions included empowerment,

stewardship, accountability and humility. The short scale used in our first study with 15 items encompassing only these 4 aspects was still able to represent 81% of the variance of the full scale, which seems to confirm the initial proposition of van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011). This has important theoretical implications as one might consider servant leadership as having two levels of interpretation. At the first and core level, the behaviors of empowerment, stewardship, accountability and humility, could be said to form the base conditions for one to even consider being in the presence of a servant leader. In other words, one could see this core as the necessary but not sufficient conditions for fully effective servant leadership. At a second level, one could consider the other four dimensions of authenticity, courage, forgiveness and standing-back, as supporting the core behaviors in enabling servant leadership effectiveness in its fullness.

We suggest that future research tries to elaborate further on this dual level perspective of servant leadership. An interesting venue of analysis would be for example to consider these two levels as separate clusters in a moderated model, whereby the supporting group (authenticity, courage, forgiveness and standing-back) would work as a possible amplifying factor on the impact of the core group (empowerment, stewardship, accountability and humility) on some measure of performance or follower motivation (e.g. engagement or psychological empowerment).

Servant leadership as an effective approach for dynamic adaptability

Our second study was able to show that servant leadership can be an effective approach to ensure follower engagement in the context of a stringent merger process, first of all by ensuring a sense of continuation during the whole process, which is known to be a

critical factor in such cases (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg et al, 2001) and secondly by positively affecting the level of follower psychological empowerment. The later aspect could be critical in creating a sense of ownership among the workforce (Pierce et al., 1991; Dirks et al., 1996; Pierce et al., 2001), by allowing workers themselves to become active agents, partaking in the transformation process. From a different angle, it seems that servant leadership can provide both the job and personal resources necessary to induce engagement even in times of difficult change (Bakker and Demerouti, 2007).

We would like to extend that servant leadership, as an inclusive leadership approach, could be instrumental not only in the context of more or less formal change processes but in stimulating organizational adaptability in general further supporting the need to address increasingly dynamic, complex and uncertain environments (Senge, 1990; Weick, 2001; Bennet & Bennet, 2004 and Uhl-Bien, 2006). As such, servant leadership could stand along-side leadership models like complex leadership (Uhl-Bien et al, 2007), collaborative leadership (Bennet & Bennet, 2004) or complex adaptive leadership (Obolensky, 2010) in creating organizations that behave as a complex adaptive system (de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2010; Bennet & Bennet, 2004; Olson & Eoyang, 2001). This claim is based on the fact that servant leadership seems to have the necessary ingredients to provide an adequate answer to the three main conditions that determine the ability of a system to self-organize. Olson and Eyoang (2001) defined these conditions as: (1) a well-defined “container” which sets the purpose and boundaries of the organization, (2) having and making optimal use of the “significant differences” in the organization that reflect the diversity of the environment where it operates, and finally (3) significant “transforming exchanges” between agents, through an open but purposeful flow of information,

knowledge, actions and decisions. As a model that puts the overall purpose of the organization at its core, acknowledges and stimulates the uniqueness of each individual and values community and mutual support, servant leadership might be particularly suited to address such conditions. We would like to suggest that future research tries to understand this potential link between servant leadership and complex adaptive behavior in organizations more explicitly. For example, studies could try to analyze the possible relationship between servant leadership behaviors of managers and the characteristics of the corresponding organizational units in terms of the three conditions for self-organization to emerge as proposed by Olson and Eoyang (2001) and described above. Another non-exclusive possibility could involve making a comparative analysis between servant leadership and models emerging from complex adaptive theories such as complex leadership (Uhl-Bien et al, 2007), collaborative leadership (Bennet & Bennet, 2004) and complex adaptive leadership (Obolensky, 2010)

Servant leadership as a model with multi-cultural applicability

Through our second study we were able to test the validity and reliability of the servant leadership instrument developed by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) in a new country, namely in Portugal. In previous studies the eight-dimensional factor structure of this measure was confirmed in the Netherlands (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), UK (Van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011), Italy (Bobbio et al., 2012) and Finland (Hakanen & Van Dierendonck, 2011). As one observes this construct being successfully validated in different countries, it becomes apparent that servant leadership seems to have applicability in different cultural settings. Despite the fact that all these studies were conducted in

Europe, there are still significant and noteworthy cultural differences between these countries. For example, the contrasting differences in terms of power distance, individuality, and uncertainty avoidance between countries like the Netherlands and Portugal are particularly noteworthy (Hofstede, n.d), further attesting the contrasts between central and southern Europe. Regardless, servant leadership seems to show positive results on aspects of engagement both in Portugal, as shown in our second and third studies, and in the Netherlands (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011).

It is hard to explain how two countries with such significant cultural differences still show similar results with regard to the impact of servant leadership on engagement and other motivational constructs. A possible explanation could lie on the fact that despite the differences between what is perceived as good leadership through cultural and social norms (Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede, 1993; House et al., 2002; House et al., 2004), people are still essentially the same when it comes to work motivation, and in particular on aspects like engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006), psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990) or the need for self-determination (Deci, Connell & Ryan, 1989). This could mean that there could be a difference between what people say is good leadership and what they actually experience as being good leadership. On the other hand, from a relational perspective, as indicated in our fourth study, cultural aspects like assertiveness, power distance or individualism could moderate the relationship between self and other leadership ratings (Atwater et al., 2009). At any rate, further investigating how cultural aspects can affect the impact of servant leadership is important. Assessing and including cultural variables both at the leader and follower side alongside measures of servant leadership and performance would help shed some more light on this important topic.

Servant leadership and power: a balancing act between the humble and the action side

The results of the third study of this dissertation seem to provide empirical evidence on the potential split between the virtue and action sides of the servant leader as proposed by Greenleaf (1977) in his original writings, and also suggested by van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) and Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck (2011). Virtues, as defended by Cameron (2011), represent attributes of moral excellence that can instill responsible leadership behavior. Greenleaf (1977) proposed that this moral side, which formed the core motivation to serve of the servant leader, should co-exist and reinforce an action-side, focused on achieving results and rallying others behind a common purpose. Following on the work of Asag-Gau & van Dierendonck (2011), in our third study we operationalized virtue as the servant leader's humble-side through the dimensions of humility and standing-back. The action-side included the dimensions of empowerment, accountability and stewardship, which can be said to be more task and performance focused.

We were able to show that for leaders in higher ranks (and only for them) the humble-side worked as an amplifier of the effect of the action-side of the servant leader in generating engagement among followers. This means that especially for leaders with higher levels of responsibility, striking the right balance between virtue (the humble-side) and action could gain increasing importance for leadership effectiveness. Such findings seem to align with previous studies on the importance of humility (Owner & Hekman, 2012) and in particular at the top management to achieve great performance, as in the work developed by Collins (2001) on level 5 leadership. As such, it seems that servant

leadership could be a model particularly suited for senior managers and maybe less so for junior managers. On the other hand, studies conducted at the operational team level, such as in our own first study in this dissertation, have shown servant leadership to be also effective (Hartnell, & Oke, 2010; Hu & Liden, 2011; Schaubroeck, Lam, & Peng, 2011).

Based on these apparently paradoxical results, we suggest that this amplifying effect of the humble-side might be at the fundamental level caused by aspects concerned with perceived competence (Owner & Hekman, 2012) and power (French & Raven, 1977), and not per se because of the hierarchical position (although these are obviously related). In other words, when people are perceived as competent or as having power, a humble attitude can amplify their ability to lead through the action oriented aspects of stewardship, empowerment and accountability. Our study incorporated the actual hierarchical rank as a moderating variable, which, considering the different bases of power suggested by French and Raven (1977) could be seen essentially as a source of legitimate power.

Instead of just focusing on the hierarchical rank, we suggest future research to measure the leader power bases from the follower perspective, for example through the instrument developed by Rahim (1988). This instrument measures the power bases based on the constructs developed by French and Raven (1977), namely: coercion (the ability to influence based on the possibility of punishment or penalty), legitimacy (power based on a certain recognized right to influence, like for example a job title), reward (the power to compensate for achieving certain targets), expertise (based on the perception about one's level of knowledge and skills for a certain job), reference (power that stems from a strong sense of identification and admiration) and information (essentially the capacity to communicate either through logical or emotional reasoning, eloquence or charisma). By

doing this we can further understand how different power bases affect the relationship between the humble and the action side of servant leaders and therefore their effectiveness.

Servant leaders as natural under-estimators

The fourth study presented in this dissertation allowed analyzing how different self-other leadership perceptions can predict the effectiveness of servant leadership in generating psychological empowerment. This is a rather new area in the study of servant leadership. In our study it became apparent that under-estimation worked as the stronger predictor, which contrasted with previous studies (e.g. Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Atwater et al., 1995; Atwater et al., 1998, Halverson et al., 2002) concentrated on transformational and organization specific leadership models. This comes to confirm the unique and distinct nature of servant leaders, especially in their initial motivation to serve, genuine focus and valorization of others and natural humble attitude, which we posit explains why they tend to be under-estimators. In other words, under-estimation can be explained not so much because servant leaders are not aware of their limitations but instead because they could potentially value the strengths of others more than other types of leaders.

This is not to say that self-other agreement is not important. In fact our study still shows it to be a strong predictor of leadership effectiveness also for the case of servant leadership, which we hypothesize might be more evident for older and more experience servant leaders. What it tells is that under-estimation cannot be always seen as a sign of lack of confidence or of limited self-awareness, but as natural tendency for the case of servant leaders. Through this study we were able to shed some more light into the often

hard to understand aspect of under-estimation in the self-other agreement literature (Fleenor et al., 2010).

Being the first study on self-other agreement for servant leadership, many new questions arise that should be further researched. An important aspect concerns the apparent paradox of asking a servant leader to give an accurate self-assessment. This holds for any of the dimensions of the servant leadership model we used (van Dierendonck, 2011) but in particular for the dimension of humility. Asking someone if they are humble is a bit of an oxymoron. Future research should try to understand how self-assessment for the case of servant leadership should be interpreted and eventually adjusted. Another interesting research venue would be to analyze the effect of showing a servant leader the results of a self-other assessment in their practical behaviors in the workplace and on consequent self-assessments. Knowing of the importance attributed to self-awareness for leadership development (Bass, 1990; House et al. 1991; Day, 2001; Goleman et al., 2001), further understanding how such feedback works for the case of servant leadership would be important.

Limitations

In this section we present some of the limitations of our four studies, while presenting some additional recommendations for future research in this regard.

One aspect that is common to the three later studies of this dissertation (chapters 3 to 5) is the cross-sectional nature of the collected data. Despite the strong theoretical grounding behind the proposed set of relationships and correlational analysis conducted in these studies, longitudinal data is necessary if one wants to gain insight into possible

causal relations (Cook & Campbell, 1979; Taris & Kompier, 2003). Difficulties in getting longitudinal data for research purposes are well known, as they demand more time and effort from participants (something we were able to more easily overcome in our first study by having samples of students). In addition, another limitation that is shared between these three studies is that performance was measured in terms of perceived motivation through constructs like organizational identification (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg et al., 2001), engagement (Schaufeli, et al., 2006) and psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Such a design might raise some concerns regarding common-method bias, whereby a systematic error variance is shared among variables because they rely on the same data collection method (Chang et al., 2010). Having participants answering in different moments and getting objective performance results, is of course preferred (Chang et al., 2010). There were specific reasons for why it was not possible to get longitudinal and objective performance data in these three studies. In the case of the study from chapter 3, due to the demands of the change process and as requested by management, we were not authorized to burden participants with an extensive survey involving practically the whole organization in two different moments. In addition, measuring objective performance in a consistent way while two organizations are being merged and with different standards and metrics is hard at best. The studies from chapters 4 and 5 had other challenges. Chapter 4 involved a large scale survey with many different organizations, and therefore with different objective performance metrics. It was also not possible to consider assessing the sample in two different moments as there was not a reliable way of ensuring that respondents would be the same with the questionnaire instrument that was used. The study in chapter 5 also involved different organizations, which made it again hard to include a

consistent objective performance measure for the reasons already mentioned before. In an effort to increase the strength of our data, a second measurement moment was in fact included in this study, but the response rate was unfortunately not enough to make it statistically usable. In any case, in defense of our methodology, we took care of including motivational measures that were known from previous research to be positively related to objective performance. This was evidently the case for organizational identification (e.g. Mael & Tetrick, 1992; Rikketa, 2005; van Knippenberg, 2000), engagement (e.g. Bakker & Bal, 2010; Xanthopoulou et al, 2009) and psychological empowerment (e.g. Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Tuuli & Rowlinson, 2009; Hechanova et al., 2006; Liden et al., 2006; Srivastava, 2006; Hall, 2006; Seibert et al., 2004; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Spreitzer, 1995). In addition, there are some noticeable positive aspects in the data collected in these three studies. The study on chapter 3 had an unusually large response rate with more than 1000 participants, which allows us to feel quite confident about the strength of our findings. In the study of chapter 4, the sample is still quite significant (236 participants) and with a widespread distribution in terms of organizations, sectors and hierarchical positions, again strengthening the quality of our data. Finally with regard to chapter 5, the fact that data collection was multilevel, with at least four followers for each leader arranged in 160 dyads, is also an important qualitative aspect to consider in terms of the strength of the study. Most obviously, we would still welcome future research that tries to replicate the design of these three studies in a longitudinal fashion while including additional objective performance measures to further attest the validity of our findings.

The first study of this dissertation (chapter 2) deserves different considerations. It has a longitudinal setup involving the measurement of objective performance, which helps

overcoming the concerns on causality and common-method bias explained before. However, the fact that we made use of a sample of business school students might be seen as a limitation in terms of possible extrapolations into the more practical world of organizations. Regardless, there seems to be supporting evidence to the parallels that can be established between students and other populations within achievement driven contexts (e.g. Brown & Lord, 1999, Locke, 1986). There are also several strengths in the design of this study which are worth mentioning. Using a sample of students was important in ensuring a high level of response in a rather experimental and exhaustive setup where team members had to evaluate each other in a round-robin approach. Including a sample of students also allowed us to more easily build the longitudinal design, which increases our confidence about the potential cause and effect relationship between shared servant leadership and performance. Having an educational context allowed us also to control for the nature of the assignment between the two different studies separated by one year, eliminating many concerns regarding differences in task complexity and demands. The fact that students were fully dedicated around a single project during that time was also important as it reduced external influences that could affect the responses to our different questionnaires (which would likely be the case in a work context in an organization). Finally, as mentioned before this design allowed getting more easily objective and consistent performance results across samples, something more difficult to attain in organizational contexts, which helps avoiding concerns on common-method bias (Chang et al., 2010). All these different aspects contributed to the establishment of parallels and conclusions between the two different samples of this study. At any rate, replicating this setup in other work-related contexts would be highly recommended in order to further

validate our findings concerning the effect of shared servant leadership on team behavioral integration and performance.

Practical implications

While the main focus of this dissertation is still essentially academic, we foresee several potential practical implications that can help executives, line managers and HR managers (especially learning & development specialists) in organizations. We will further expand on our observations around the areas of strategic leadership, team leadership and leadership development, while taking a less academic angle, all being relevant for executives, line managers and HR managers alike.

Strategic leadership

When looking at the more strategic level of leadership, two main things stand-out from our research: i) the importance of striking a balance between the humble and action sides of leadership to ensure effectiveness and ii) the relevance of involving people and creating a sense of ownership for increased organizational adaptability (including during change).

Our third study (chapter 4) clearly showed that leaders in high level functions that demonstrate a humble attitude can greatly amplify their effectiveness in generating engagement in the organization. Within our notion of servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011), this humble attitude is a consequence of an initial motivation to serve and is essentially reflected on behaviors of humility (recognizing one's own limitations and mistakes and valorizing the strengths of others) and standing-back (giving the stage and

recognition to others, especially in cases of success). When leaders demonstrate these humble behaviors, their action side, which includes stewardship (providing direction), accountability (setting and managing goals) and empowerment (providing the tools and responsibilities for action), becomes more effective in inducing a sense of engagement among workers (more vigor, dedication and absorption). Our findings come to support the work of Collins (2001) on level 5 leadership, whereby humility was shown to be a common trait among senior executives of truly great companies. The amplifying mechanism of the humble-side might function when people recognize the power and competence of their managers. This combination of competence, a credible source of power and the ability to induce action while being humble and focused on others (essential traits of the servant leader) seems to be rather powerful for managers in senior leadership positions.

From our second study (chapter 3), we were able to observe that managers with a servant leadership profile were in a better position to ensure engagement of their workforce even during a very demanding change process as in a merger between two companies. These managers achieved this by creating a sense of psychological empowerment and identification with the newly formed organization. For executives this means that successful change cannot only rely on well-structured top-down plans but needs to be grounded in managers that involve people and can create a sense of ownership. As an executive, creating a servant leadership culture might therefore be a powerful instrument, not just to ensure successful change processes but in general to increase the ability of organizations to adapt more quickly to an ever-changing and increasingly complex environment (de Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2010; Bennet & Bennet, 2004; Olson &

Eoyang, 2001). Studies on the organizational performance of servant led companies seem to support this view (Freiberg & Freiberg, 1996; Glashagel, 2009; Spears, 1998; Spears & Lawrence, 2002; Sipe & Frick, 2009).

Team leadership

The current trend towards more decentralized team-based work (Houghton & Yoko, 2005) and leadership models that encourage facilitation and ownership (Bass et al., 2003) is also a natural consequence of the aforementioned need to adapt more quickly to a fast paced and globalized world, where everything is interconnected (Bennet & Bennet, 2004). It is against this backdrop that shared leadership, as a form of collectivistic leadership (Yammarino et al., 2012), gains specific relevance. In addition, this movement calls for a look at leadership that puts more emphasis on the process rather than on traditional hierarchical leader-follower relationships. Leadership is in essence a process of influence (Yukl, 2010) and whether that influence should be exercised by one person alone, in turns or as a fluid mutually reinforcing dynamic is dependent on the context.

In our first study (chapter 2) we were able to show that shared servant leadership in the context of a knowledge intensive and time compressed assignment with self-managed teams was particularly effective in inducing objective team performance. It became evident that this leadership approach was able to induce a stronger level of team behavioral integration (Lubatkin et al., 2006; Simsek et al. 2005), and particularly effective in improving the flow of information exchange, resulting in better team results. As such, these findings highlight on one hand the potential benefit of servant leadership as a model that emphasizes collective learning, ownership and mutual responsibility but also, on the

other hand, that leadership can be effective when seen as a process where individual members can assume multiple contributing roles. At the same time, the objective and time span of the assignment was made very clear to participants, emphasizing again the need to set the boundaries for a system to be able to self-organize (Bennet & Bennet, 2004; Olson & Eoyang, 2001).

In light of these findings, we suggest that managers look at team leadership more as a process rather than a “simple” leader-follower relationship. This could enable them to allow individual members to assume a more active contributing role in the leadership process, whereby influence is exercised at multiple levels. As such, shared leadership can more naturally emerge, where members themselves empower and make each other accountable for the team tasks and results, allowing line-managers to focus more on those learning and strategic aspects that can enable their teams to really excel. In true servant leadership fashion, clarity and direction remain important, but having the humbleness and ability to stand-back, while empowering and supporting both the teams and the individual members in their tasks can be a potent formula for team effectiveness.

Leadership development

One of the aspects that stood out from our studies is the confirmation that servant leadership can be an effective approach in different cultural contexts. As such, motivational aspects like engagement (Schaufeli et al., 2006), identification with the organization (Rousseau, 1998; van Knippenberg et al., 2002) or psychological empowerment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990), which are shown to be positively influenced by servant leaders seem to be important for workers in different parts of the world (Bobbio

et al., 2012; Hakanen & Van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck, 2011; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). This means that managers and HR professionals should be able to distinguish between cultural aspects that influence what people perceive as being good leadership (e.g. House et al., 2002; House et al., 2004), and what people actually care for when being led. There seems to be an essential set of leadership behaviors that can be effective across cultures and organizational layers and our studies show that our servant leadership model (van Dierendonck, 2011) encompasses surely some of them. As such, while capturing organization and national specific leadership attributes still remains important to adapt to certain culture sensitive aspects, there seems to be a relatively fixed range of leadership behaviors that could be included as part of leadership development initiatives across multiple sites and layers of the organization. Core aspects of servant leadership like empowerment, stewardship, accountability, humility and the ability to stand-back (van Dierendonck, 2011) could belong to that group.

In light of the importance of shared team leadership mentioned before, leadership development should be able to focus not only on the individual traits of the formal manager but also on the dynamic set of influence relationships and processes that can sustain a team (leadership as a shared process). As such, managers and HR professionals could make use of round-robin approaches to measure shared leadership whereby each member assesses all others on leadership behaviors. Such assessments can help managers understand what they might need to do to increase the amount of shared leadership in a team. Using a compact but well validated instrument, as the one on shared servant leadership presented in chapter 2 of this dissertation, becomes critical to get accurate and reliable information.

One additional aspect, as was made evident in chapter 5, is that servant leaders are natural under-estimators. Because of their initial motivation to serve, genuine concern and valorization of others and humble attitude, servant leaders might not naturally stand out in the organization as “natural leaders”. Our views of leadership are probably still too much influenced by the images of authority and charisma which, although sometimes useful, might actually function as derailers of effective leadership (Conger, 1998; Hogg, 2004). Our study in chapter 5 showed that when comparing self and follower perceptions of leadership behaviors, those managers that under-estimated their leadership capabilities showed better results in terms of follower psychological empowerment. Self-other agreement (and in specific high in-agreement scores) still showed a strong predictive power of performance, confirming previous studies (e.g. Atwater and Yammarino, 1992; Atwater and Yammarino, 1997; Atwater et al., 1995; Atwater et al., 1998, Halverson et al., 2002) but it becomes evident that servant leaders might tend to under-estimate themselves. We still support the idea that organizations should promote self-awareness among managers as a way to increase leadership effectiveness (Bass, 1990; House et al. 1991; Day, 2001; Goleman et al., 2001) through appropriate leadership development programs (Day, 2001), but paying more attention to those acting behind the scenes will be important to capture important leadership talent.

Finally, we would like to share a few words on the aspect of humility, an essential backbone of the servant leader (Russell, 2001; Patterson, 2003). As it was said at the start of this section, striking a balance between the humble and action side of leadership can be quite effective when managers are perceived as being competent and powerful. But how would one go about developing humility, especially in a corporate world still strongly

populated by self-indulging senior managers? As we mentioned in our third study (chapter 4), the etymological origin of humility comes from the Latin word *humilis* (on the ground) which originated from the word *humus* (earth) (Online Etymology Dictionary, 2010). Humility literally brings someone down to earth. As such, developing humility probably calls for leadership development experiences where the focus is not so much about behavioral adjustments but about the essential and fundamental values and motives of managers. Understanding beliefs and the fundamental drivers of motivation in the context of the whole life, not just getting results at work, will become critical. Leadership development approaches based on models like Theory U (Senge et al. 2005; Scharmer; 2009) might be particularly effective at this as it puts participants through a journey (co-initiating, co-sensing, “presencing”, co-creation and co-evolving) that involves thought, emotion and will, whereby “presencing” implies a deeper connection to the self. This method seems to show that once managers experience reality from the perspective of others and understand their source of motivation most deeply, they will more naturally develop an awareness of themselves in a larger picture and in relation to others. Such awareness can increase a sense of humility and potentially induce a natural motivation to serve, which, as defended by Robert Greenleaf (1977) is the fundamental starting point for becoming a servant leader.

Concluding thoughts

We have now arrived at the very final part of this dissertation. When revisiting the four initial questions outlined in the introduction, our studies have been able to provide some possible answers. And so our research shows that servant leadership can be suitable

in the context of small self-organized teams as a shared process. That servant leaders can be effective in the context of highly demanding change such as in a large scale merger process. That servant leadership, as a balancing act between a humble and an action side, seems to be rather effective, especially for competent managers in executive positions. And finally, that servant leaders seem to be natural under-estimators, working and servicing under the radar.

This dissertation aimed to expand the field of servant leadership by testing its applicability in different organizational contexts and further detailing its implicit leader-follower relational mechanisms. In essence, given the increasing evidence of the positive effect of servant leaders on organizational and motivational outcomes, we wanted to put servant leadership to the test. And the results are promising: we would dare to say that servant leadership has passed our test with distinction.

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NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING

Ter ondersteuning van de groeiende acceptatie van dienend leiderschap en het empirische bewijs van de effectiviteit ervan, richt deze dissertatie zich op de toepasbaarheid van dienend leiderschap binnen verschillende organisatorische en relationele contexten. Twee van de in totaal vier empirische studies zijn gericht op contrasterende organisatorische perspectieven. In de eerste studie is een nieuw korte vragenlijst voor dienend leiderschap ontwikkeld welke in het bijzonder geschikt is als meetinstrument voor de beoordeling van de mate gedeeld dienend leiderschap. De resultaten in deze studie laten zien dat gedeeld dienend leiderschap binnen kleine zelfsturende teams een positief effect heeft op team-gedragintegratie en op team-prestatie. De tweede studie maakte inzichtelijk dat dienend leiderschap effectief kan zijn bij het betrokken laten voelen van werknemers bij belangrijke, grote veranderprocessen die onzekerheid met zich meebrengen. Zij doen dit door het vergroten van de identificatie met de organisatie en het versterken van het gevoel van psychologische empowerment. Bij de twee andere studies binnen deze dissertatie ligt de nadruk op relationele factoren. De derde studie geeft een beter begrip van de interactie tussen de deugdzaam kant en de actie kant van de dienende leider. De deugdzaamheid van de dienende leider berust op een houding van bescheidenheid en zich op de achtergrond houden, dit vergroot de impact van de actie kant op de betrokkenheid van de volger, maar dit effect is alleen zichtbaar wanneer de leider een hoge machtspositie heeft. De vierde en laatste studie richt zich op de verschillen tussen de eigen perceptie van leiderschap en die van anderen. Hieruit is geconcludeerd dat het erop lijkt dat dienende leiders hun eigen leiderschap gedrag onderschatten wat waarschijnlijk voortkomt uit hun bescheiden aard. Tot slot geeft deze dissertatie

aanvullend bewijs over de geschiktheid van dienend leiderschap binnen verschillende nationale culturen doordat het onderzoek is uitgevoerd bij diversen Portugese organisaties. Samengevat, laat het onderzoek binnen deze dissertatie zien dat het er op lijkt dat dienend leiderschap toepasbaar is binnen een grote verscheidenheid van contexten en dat bescheidenheid een kritische rol speelt voor een beter grip van de houding en van de effectiviteit van dienende leiders.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Milton Sousa is currently Interim Academic Director (MBA and EMBA) and Associate Director (EMBA) at the Rotterdam School of Management, Erasmus University.

Milton graduated in Electrical and Computer Engineering at the University of Porto in 1998. In 2003 he finished his MBA at Nimbias/Bradford University with Distinction. Milton Sousa initiated his career as an Engineer at Philips Research in the Netherlands, after which he moved into business as product and business development manager at Philips Semiconductors and later at Chipidea Microelectronics. After 8 years in the semiconductors industry, Milton started working as a consultant on Innovation and Organization Development at Sociedade Portuguesa de Inovação and afterwards at the HR consulting firm Hay Group. In 2009 he started his own business, Leaders2Be, offering talent and leadership development solutions for business schools, universities and companies. Since 2010 Milton is also Executive Director of the Estoril Conferences, a large international forum on globalization that gathers renowned world leaders from business, academia and public sector. In that quality he has worked with institutions like the UN, World Bank, European Commission, NATO and several world-class universities.

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