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Prototypical Senior Leaders: A New Paradigm for Army Leader Development

by

Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey D. Witt
United States Army

Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey D. Witt
United States Army

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by

Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey D. Witt
United States Army

Colonel Robert M. Mundell
Department of Command, Leadership, and Management
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

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Prototypical Senior Leaders: A New Paradigm for Army Leader Development

> Leader development is the deliberate, continuous, and progressive process--founded in Army Values--that grows Soldiers and Army Civilians into competent and committed professional leaders of character.

> —Army Leader Development Strategy[1]

The Army Leader Development Strategy (ALDS) integrates and synchronizes leader development across three lines of effort--training, education, and experience. Central to the success of this strategy is the Army's ability to provide leaders with experience across three domains--institutional, operational and self-development in combination with peer and developmental support relationships.[2] Lasting leader development occurs within the operational domain where institutional training and education are applied through actual experience. The operational domain is also where social learning occurs and where modeled organizational norms for acceptable behavior become embedded in the belief systems of Soldiers and leaders.

Institutional education, standardized training, and self-development often supersede leader behavior patterns and social learning as the primary means for Army leader development resulting in missed subordinate leader developmental opportunities. Emerging leaders learn and enhance their skills by observing and emulating other successful leaders, and developing leadership styles through experimentation in diverse social settings. A new paradigm for leader development focuses on self-aware and authentic senior leaders enabled by standardized programs of instruction. In realizing this new paradigm for leader development, senior leaders must deliberately and consciously acknowledge their own behavior patterns as the most significant factor in subordinate leader development. Senior leader behavior patterns provide specific and abstract information that informs subordinates how to think, feel, and perceive in relation

to any stimulus in a social context. To succeed in this endeavor, senior leaders must assess and alter their own behavior patterns to align with Army goals and acknowledge the impact of social identity and behavior modeling on individuals and groups to maximize subordinate leader development and intellectual diversity.

This research expands on ALDS principles through an in-depth examination of the social identity theory and research on leader prototypes to include how prototypes form, evolve, and become dominant in the formation of individual, leader, and group identities. Social psychology concepts such as depersonalization, self-categorization, and social attraction are examined to emphasize how leader prototypes embed norms in organizations, establish individual and social identity, optimize subordinate developmental experiences, and at times disadvantage and marginalize divergent thought and minority group members. This research effort concludes with a presentation of authentic leadership as a model for senior leaders to consider in assessing and altering behavior patterns and attitudes that ultimately establish norms for Army leaders at all levels to emulate. Authentic leadership is not an ideal and standardized senior leader prototype. Rather, it identifies key attributes and qualities that senior leaders must emphasize to better develop subordinate leaders and to succeed in and between complex and diverse operating environments. Army senior leaders are the target audience of this research as they are stewards of the profession and best embody Army professional qualities and attributes. Furthermore, senior leaders represent ideal leader prototypes because the Army has acknowledged them through promotion and command and key leader selection processes as having best aligned with Army expectations and norms.

The Army is a leader-centric and hierarchal organization comprised of multiple social groups with varying levels of perceived social importance. Social group membership inspires individuals to grow together as a team, influences group member behavior, and legitimizes emerging leaders. Leadership and social identity within Army social group settings generates profound and enduring prototypical effects on subordinates in both negative and positive ways. For example, subordinates mentored by micro-managing leaders are more likely to mirror that tendency when placed in positions of authority. Conversely, empowering leaders that share responsibility for organizational outcomes are likely to engender those same qualities in subordinates. In both cases, behavior patterns displayed by prototypical leaders emerge as the key factor in subordinate leader development--hence the power of the social prototype. This dynamic is consistent with the social learning theory and aligns with the Army's renewed emphasis on the profession of arms by reinforcing the importance of senior leaders as stewards of the profession.

Social Learning Theory and Leader Prototypes

> Leaders and followers are interdependent roles embedded within a social system bounded by common group or category membership. Leadership dynamics may be significantly affected by social cognitive processes associated with group membership, specifically the processes of self-categorization and depersonalization.[3]

The social learning theory, conceptualized by Stanford University social science professor Albert Bandura characterizes the type of learning and development that takes place largely in the operational domain as subordinates observe and interact with social group leaders. Bandura theorizes that "virtually all learning phenomena resulting from direct experiences can occur on a vicarious basis through the observation of other people's behavior and its consequences for them."[4] Bandura notes that role modeling

plays an important role in social learning because most behavior patterns are "learned deliberately or inadvertently through the influence of example," particularly when behavioral pattern shortfalls prove costly.[5] Role modeling is "indispensable" when unique forms of learning are required to accomplish complex and challenging tasks in a social environment.[6] In essence, role modeling has a prototypical effect on subordinates, particularly in salient organizations where conformity to perceived and actual norms is an important factor in assimilation and acculturation.

Social psychologist Michael Hogg summarizes that prototypes are specific, multi-dimensional, and fuzzy sets of similar attributes that define and prescribe attitudes, feelings, and behaviors characterizing one social group and distinguishing it from other social groups.[7] Prototypes are socially shared group reality and comprise values, beliefs and norms for appropriate and desirable group member behavior.[8] Prototypes engender social identity and are used to stereotype and categorize in-group and out-group membership for individuals, other group members, and leaders. Typically the most prototypically representative group members become the most effective leaders.[9] Group members create, modify, and call forward differing prototypes in diverse contexts to guide perceptions that emphasize social group differences and similarities. Prototypes promote individual self-esteem and reduce personal and social uncertainty because group-shared attitudes, feelings, and behavior are prescribed by the prototype and are validated by other group members. Group members conform to and are influenced by prototypes because the prototype defines in-group membership and reinforces social acceptance or a strong sense of identity. Importantly, prototypes are not inherently positive or negative.

Strong in-group membership unifies military units, strengthens esprit d' corps, aligns collective efforts, and provides individual sense of belonging. Army social groups are characterized by distinct and well-defined prototypes of appearance, behavior, and values. In-group conformity is required for inexperienced Soldiers to follow unfamiliar leaders and accomplish tasks under uncertain combat circumstances. Doctrine and regulations govern behavior and dictate everything from appearance to tactics and procedures for virtually any situation. Soldiers strongly resembling Army prototypical behavior, appearance, and values emerge as leaders based on their ability to represent the in-group prototype. Positive in-group prototypical leader behavior inspires group members to trust that the leader represents the group's interests and therefore derives stronger influence over subordinates.

Prototypes can also foster unhealthy competition, reinforce groupthink, suppress cultural minority attributes, retard minority leadership development, and produce environments conducive to leader abuse of power.[10] When group and individual identities strongly merge, any negative behavior directed at other in-group members or in-group positions by out-group members, minorities, and divergent thought can be considered an attack against individual and group identity. In-group identification, strength of in-group/out-group distinction, and environmental uncertainty combine to increase the likelihood that attitudes, behaviors and judgments will be driven by social identity and group membership.[11] Volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environments combined with strong Army prototypes warrant a deeper understanding of the social-identity theory as a way of conceptualizing leaders as group members capable of influencing and improving subordinate behavior.

Social Identity is an individual's knowledge that he or she is a member of a certain emotional or value-significant social group whereby the individual derives social meaning and self-esteem.[12] Social identity combines social roles, group memberships, and outwardly displayed personal traits.[13] Individuals strongly identifying with group prototypes tend to perceive themselves in terms of group characteristics and allow the in-group to govern their perceptions, attitudes, and behavior.[14] In-group derived self-esteem defines how individuals see themselves and others, and forges a sense of "us" versus an individual sense of "I." "When the self is defined in collective terms (belonging to certain social groups); collective interest is experienced as self-interest, meaning individuals are intrinsically motivated to contribute to the collective good."[15] Group-based social identity normalizes behavior and encourages group members to contribute to the group because individual and group interests are merged. Individuals benefit when the group succeeds and interests are realized.

Leaders derive identity and influence from subordinate perceptions that they embody the group prototype, represent group values, and pursue in-group interests.[16] Group members treat the in-group prototype as a source of social reality and are more open to the influence of prototypical leaders and perceive the most prototypical leaders as more effective.[17] Individuals inherently follow and emulate successful leaders so they can best represent in-group prototypes and achieve professional success. Individuals not matching the in-group prototype are less likely to become leaders, and existing leaders not matching accepted prototypes are considered less favorable or influential. Thus, social-identity forms a basis for unconscious bias against divergent or underrepresented group members such as social or physical minorities. Perceptional

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bias impedes minority group members from becoming leaders and affects their ability to maintain favorable standing based on social-identity. As a result, out-group divergent and physical minorities look for ways to join the in-group in order to regain standing, esteem and influence in social group environments. The result is depersonalization and self-categorization.

Depersonalization occurs when group members are no longer viewed as unique and multi-faceted individuals but are viewed as matches to relevant in-group or out-group prototypes. Depersonalization differentiates groups and normalizes group perceptions, attitudes, feelings, and behaviors.[18] Depersonalization affects individual feelings and perceptions about each other and leaders based on prototype comparison. Leaders are inherently more persuasive because they embody group norms and match the prototype. Group members attribute leader influence, popularity and the ability to lead solely on close prototype resemblance. New group members perceive group characteristics based on leader-generated prototypes because the leader inherently represents success.

Depersonalized individuals inherently adopt in-group positions as their own based on assumptions that they will likely agree with similar others and because they find in-group messages especially credible and informative.[19] Put another way, individuals are easily persuaded by in-group messages and typically tune out divergent out-group messages. Group members inherently trust and believe in individuals that are similar to the in-group based on social identity and unconscious heuristics that lead group members to believe that they hold values similar to the in-group. Depersonalized in-group persuasion is dangerous for leaders who instinctively accept in-group positions

or decisions without scrutinizing in-group rationale or considering out-group alternatives. Depersonalization forms the basis of groupthink where in-group members share the same view, and any divergent argument is stereotyped as an out-group position and guarded against. More troubling is that in certain social contexts, in-group membership and affiliation overtakes our perception of ourselves as unique and diverse individuals.

Self-categorization occurs when group members view themselves in terms of in-group characteristics and as interchangeable with other in-group members.[20] Self-categorization associates a group member's attitudes, feelings and behavior with the favorable in-group prototype. Self-categorization changes how group members think, perceive, and act, and guides what they aspire to become. People act or want to act in such a way that they find acceptance among others perceived most like them.[21] Group members suppress individual characteristics and attributes associated with out-group prototypes in order to highlight or demonstrate in-group characteristics and gain in-group acceptance and higher self-esteem. Self-categorization may be an unconscious shift by minorities to better represent a prototype based on a need to "fit in" with a social in-group. Self-categorization may also include conscious steps taken to achieve in-group success, rewards, and influence or to merely avoid out-group stereotyping and stigma. Self-categorization is essentially a means to offset depersonalization and social attraction.

Social attraction or consensual liking is stronger for more prototypical group members in comparison to less prototypical members.[22] In-group members are inherently more liked than out-group members based on a natural tendency for people to embrace others they perceive as similar to them. Social attraction is enhanced by

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highly prototypical in-group members who demonstrate strong loyalty, group-norming behavior, and selfless group-serving attributes.[23] Social attraction is important to leader-subordinate dynamics because people are more likely to agree with people they like and are more likely to comply with requests and orders given by prototypical leaders. Social attraction becomes detrimental when leaders abuse prototype prestige and status.

Highly prototypical in-group members attract more attention, exercise more influence and are subjectively more important than less representative out-group members. Leaders are attracted to in-group members who possess attributes similar to themselves and are less attracted to out-group members who do not fit accepted prototypes. In-group members are perceived to be trustworthy, more likely to be correct and quickly become confidants where they can influence leaders more than out-group peers. As a result, leaders typically advance or assess in-group prototypes higher in evaluation comparisons based on perceived loyalty, trustworthiness and resemblance to the leader's attributes which have become the default prototype for success.

Leaders who display highly prototypical behavior and in-group favoritism are perceived as more socially attractive and legitimate.[24] This perception provides leaders with a loyal power base and opportunity to exercise incredible influence over the in-group with potentially negative consequences. Self-serving leaders use in-group prototypes to marginalize competing leaders who may not match in-group prototypes. Self-serving leaders may also centralize power by accentuating in-group prototypes to appear more attractive, publically criticizing in-group deviants, and polarizing in-group members against an out-group.[25]

Highly prototypical groups with in-group influence over leaders degrade decision-making and foster groupthink. Prototypical in-groups propagate mindsets of assumptions, methods or notions. Mindsets incentivize behaviors and choices due to a subconscious belief that an individual would naturally agree with those similar to them and question out-group positions. In-group inertia or groupthink is difficult to overcome as the in-group exercises considerable social-acceptance power over group members and will go to great ends to protect against divergent thoughts that conflict with in-group prototypical values.

In-group persuasion, self-liking and out-group dissuasion counter group diversity. As a result, racial, ethnic and gender minorities may find it difficult to assume in-group membership and leadership roles because they are less prototypical than majority in-groups.[26] This is particularly evident in uncertain contexts with strong socially-cast prototypes where speech, attitude and leadership style are important.[27] In-group categorization restricts social and intellectual minorities from offering unique perspectives and thought patterns. Divergent "out-of-the-box" thinkers may be ostracized to out-groups more than visible social minorities who suppress out-group attributes to meet in-group prototype requirements. Leaders must consider the environment and in-group prototype social behavior in order to consciously include out-group members in the interest of diversity and freedom of thought. Diversity and freedom of thought allows Leaders to create new leader prototypes as the environmental and organizational context changes.

Social groups and self-identity is difficult to fully understand without considering the context in which the group exists. Context sets boundaries where leaders and

followers determine and negotiate demands and constraints placed on them, and decide what actions, attitudes and emotions are appropriate in a given environment.[28] Context also influences group stability and legitimacy, social status, distinctiveness and individual commitment. All of these factors engender depersonalization, and assist in forming self-identity. Importantly, context informs group members about their social position, level of personal security and relays social categorization information.[29]

Individual identity and diversity is freely expressed in organizations where individuals are not defined by group identity and where there is little threat of in-group exclusion of out-group members. Organizations with increased group distinctiveness and in-group exclusion drive strong individual reactions as group members seek to enhance their positive sense of self, achieve belonging, or try to cover individual shortcomings through group membership.[30]

As senior leaders ascend through promotion, the organizations they lead become larger and more diverse, and the environments they operate in become more complex. As a result, they may find themselves unable to perform successfully at higher levels in new organizations or in different conditions. Likewise, senior leaders may demonstrate a propensity to continue to gravitate towards tasks they were rewarded for in the past even though these tasks may no longer apply given these new conditions. Therefore, senior leaders must migrate towards a new leader prototype and identity to maintain relevancy in this new context.

<center>Prototype Migration</center>

Although professional identity is a relatively stable set of attributes, senior leader beliefs, motives, preferences, talents and values evolve over time with experience and feedback.[31] Contextual change drives senior leaders to develop new "possible selves" in

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which they re-evaluate, revise, and structure themselves to become more effective.[32]

Prototype migration is difficult because assuming a new identity requires unlearning old styles and losing a secure sense of self. Migration requires new behaviors that negate or replace time spent on practiced activities and relationships that previously defined a leader over the course of his or her career.[33] New contexts may also require senior leaders to refine social influence skills to manage change, communicate informally, delegate complex tasks, and develop subordinates.[34] Core values may also need to change to increase the importance of making other leaders more productive and to replace short-term operational outlooks with long-term strategic vision.[35]

Prototype migration occurs when senior leaders disengage from anchored identities to explore "provisional selves" that they refine through practice and feedback, which requires senior leaders to progress through separation, transition and incorporation.[36] Leaders incur psychological separation as they distance themselves from familiar tasks and roles to embrace new roles and responsibilities.[37] As this transformation takes place, senior leaders may feel less comfortable and competent in these new found roles. This transition results in a significant degree of disequilibrium, particularly when valued identities that were essential to self-esteem begin to morph into new uncertain identities.[38] Transition occurs as senior leaders migrate between command and staff responsibilities, direct and organizational roles or as a senior leader transitions from operational to strategic-level leader responsibilities.

As senior leaders transition into the strategic realm they require time and space to 'violate rules' or experiment with new identities without requirements to adhere to consistency and rationality.[39] Violating these rules does not infer an abandonment of

legal and moral commitment, rather it allows emerging senior leaders to develop new cognitive processes required to enhance discretionary judgment and inform decision-making processes. Incorporation takes place when individuals process internal reflection practices and consider external feedback to compare their public behavior with a provisional identity to determine appropriate match and authenticity.[40] Leaders must see their new role as authentic, legitimate and value-added for the prototype to be useful. Ultimately, the challenge is not to teach leaders and subordinates, but to provide them the tools and reflective opportunities to visualize where they are and help them achieve an aspirational prototype.

An Aspirational Senior Leader Prototype – Authentic Leadership

There is no one-size-fits-all senior leader prototype, and because the prototype must accommodate diverse contexts, he or she must be authentic and be individually based. An ideal prototype extends beyond transactional and transformational leadership to what is described as authentic leadership. Authentic leadership centers on values and ethics with an overarching emphasis on developing desirable attributes that allow senior leaders to negotiate volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous environments. Evolving strategic environments will place great demands on senior leaders and the organization's they lead. Senior leaders will face information overload, disruptive technologies and will be required to lead across diverse generations and in cross cultural environments.[41] Therefore, they must be able to move past cultural ethnocentric tendencies to appreciate, leverage and exploit unique and divergent perspectives. Senior leaders will also struggle to define complex problems with little reliance on straightforward answers and procedures which will require them to understand complex

systems, recognize strategy shortfalls and adapt to changing conditions by maximizing available talent and applying creative solutions.

A cognitive shift towards authentic leadership begins with the development of a heightened sense of self awareness, and requires a senior leader to self-regulate. As a senior leader undergoes this transformation, character development, the ability to become more open to divergent experiences, learning to lead and manage diversity emerge as equally important. The cumulative effect of these desired attributes and qualities allow the emerging senior leader to lead and operate in diverse and complex environments, and more importantly role model the type of prototypical behavior patterns essential to subordinate leader development.

Self-awareness and leader development is context dependent, multi-dimensional and the objective interpretation of an "ideal self" (aspire to be), an "ought self" (should be) and an "actual self."[42] A senior leader's ability to closely align these three dimensions of self is achieved through three interconnected cognitive processes-- reflection, reflexivity, and critical reflexivity. A Harvard Business article titled, *Learning By Thinking: How Reflection Aids Performance*, defines reflection as "the intentional attempt to synthesize, and articulate the key lessons taught by experience."[43] This description of reflection allows senior leaders to build on and or modify past experiences and behavior patterns accordingly as they fulfill their new roles and responsibilities in the Army profession. It also allows them to better understand who they are and how their personality traits and other defining qualities best align with these new roles and responsibilities. In building on the power of reflection, senior leaders must next engage in reflexive (reflexivity) thought that allows them to become consciously aware of deeply

held assumptions that have been applied in a factual manner. More importantly in the context of leadership, reflexive thought allows a senior leader to evaluate and understand how these assumptions directly influence their behavior patterns and how in turn these behavior patterns influence subordinate thought, emotion, and perception.[44] The final step in this cognitive process is critical reflexivity. This advanced stage of reflection entails gaining reflexive control of deeply held assumptions by suspending and or developing new assumptions to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of complex problems, and to consider divergent thoughts in pursuit of the truth.[45] This heightened sense of self-awareness allows senior leaders to demonstrate behavior patterns that engender similar qualities in subordinate leaders and bridges the gap between our "actual selves" and "possible selves," making adjustments and structuring an effective senior leader prototype. "Self-awareness is where an individual comes to understand his or her unique talents, strengths, sense of purpose, core values, beliefs and emotions within the context they operate in over extended time."[46]

Achieving true self-awareness of beliefs, biases and behavior is difficult due to changing context, past personal experience and psychological bias in perceiving information about one's self. "The experiences of a successful tactical-level leader can prejudice the individual into believing that the best predictor for future success is past behavior."[47] Self-knowledge is imperfect because our reflexive knowledge is formed in a social environment open to unconscious bias and subjective misrepresentation.[48] Individuals often perceive what they aspire to and blend their "ideal self" with an "actual self." Objectivity can only result from a combination of external feedback and individual reflection on behavior, bias, and unconscious discrimination impacting our individual

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feelings, attitudes and perceptions.[49] External feedback is not just the responsibility of

the leader. Peer-level feedback and coaching is often more useful as individuals are

more likely to relate to trusted individuals similar in rank and experience.

The next critical step in becoming the ideal and authentic senior leader prototype

is the ability to self-regulate. Self-regulation fosters trust and builds teams required to

operate in ambiguity. Authentic leaders are motivated by personal convictions rather

than status and have the self-discipline to understand and act consistently based on

personal values, emotions, experiences, and beliefs.[50] Authentic leaders make

decisions and take action based on their identification of what is "right" versus actions

taken to merely avert negative consequences or to conform to expectations. Authentic

leaders are perceived as honest, credible and morally straightforward due to their ability

to act upon appropriate beliefs regardless of in-group prototype pressures they face.

Self-regulation includes unbiased collection and interpretation of self-reflection

information, authentic behavior and relational transparency resulting in high levels of

organizational openness, individual self-awareness and relational trust.[51] This

foundational and aspirational state of being forms a firm foundation to enhance

character development because it reveals biases and assumptions pertaining to one's

character that would otherwise remain unchallenged.

Army doctrine identifies character as a key leader attribute required to lead

others, develop others and achieve results. Character encompasses Army Values,

empathy and discipline. Authentic leaders have positive moral perspective, courage and

resiliency to address ethical issues and sustain moral actions.[52] Moral character, values

and trustworthiness are the foundation of positive command climates. Weak leaders can

be strengthened through mentorship and leader development but legal, moral and ethical failures will destroy organizations. Authentic leaders internalize and demonstrate integrity and ethical values as an individual and a leader. Authentic leaders build their reputation and perceived effectiveness on trustworthiness, high moral standards and positive psychological capacities they bring to their leadership role.[53] Character extends to self-sacrificing behavior where leaders place subordinates and organizations ahead of personal interests, preferences or mental models of "what right looks like." While not a new concept to leadership philosophy, senior leaders must constantly remind themselves to model selfless service prototypes by making conscious choices that are best for the Army, organizational performance, and garner subordinate trust. Character modeling includes avoiding actions that appear to be self-serving or that abuse subordinate success for personal gain. Strengthened by a stronger character, authentic senior leaders are more likely to recognize the importance of demonstrating openness to new experiences.

Authentic leaders consider multiple perspectives of an issue and assess information in a balanced manner.[54] Authentic leaders seek out and appreciate diverse cultural perspectives, and information for its potential relevance to complex situations. Authentic leaders tolerate and explore opposing perspectives to challenge conventional thinking, foster innovation, and align diverse points of view towards collective goals. Authentic leaders are intellectually curious, and foster new ideas and innovation despite the risk to organizational stability and individual personal security. However, authentic leaders must maintain basic individual social stability and expectations while encouraging new ideas and unconventional thought.

Because individuals are inherently biased against openness based on personal experience, self-categorization, and self-attraction, authentic leaders must recognize and account for individual and group bias and counter bias with conscious efforts to consider diverse perspectives during decision making processes. Leaders propagate openness through deliberate and consistent modeling of critical and creative thinking, and by leveraging divergent ethical perspectives in everyday events and complex planning situations. These types of leaders are naturally more effective in leading and managing diversity.

Social organizations with similar thought patterns limit innovation. Senior leaders must diversify perspectives to offset social-attraction, overcome bias, innovate, and culturally strengthen organizations. They must consistently model a leader prototype favoring dialog and respect for diverse viewpoints. Visible diversity such as race, ethnicity and gender must be maintained not as a "fairness quota" but as a pathway to explore divergent perspectives. Diverse group members leverage unique historical and life experiences that form different perspectives that other group members are not readily conscious of. As a result, leaders must take deliberate steps to moderate in-group social behavior, depersonalization and social-attraction to maintain diversity. A visibly diverse organization of different genders and ethnicities where members suppress individual viewpoints and minority attributes may appear as an outward success but is equally as unproductive as a homogenous organization.

Leaders encourage diversity of thought by seeking out and valuing divergent thinkers and varying personality types. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a common reference of personality preference, behavior and decision-making based on:

Introversion/Extroversion, Sensing/Intuition, Thinking/Feeling and Judging/Perceiving. Large organizations with direct leaders reinforce preferences of "Sensing (obtaining verifiable facts), Thinking (analytical and systematic, wanting to come to an objective decision) and Judging (making decisions quickly and moving on)."[55] Strategic leader responsibilities pose greater decision-making challenges and often better align with Intuition, Feeling and Perceiving.[56] Intuition, Feeling and Perceiving preferences lend themselves to future-oriented abstract concepts, subjective approaches and extended data gathering but can lead to indecisive, overly-divergent or easily swayed leaders. MBTI preference does not dictate contextual behavior and is best used as a basis for self-awareness and establishing diversity rather than as a prototype selection method. Diverse personality types across social groups allow the group to efficiently function in many contexts. Diverse group members with many personality types offset each other's strengths and weaknesses and maximize group effectiveness by limiting groupthink.

A Way Forward

Leadership development cannot be structured, dictated or mandated. Structured leader training programs may breed dependency, convince people that someone else is responsible for their development, and encourage people to wait for direction on training to improve.[57] This applies in the Army where junior leaders remain in their comfort zone 'waiting' for a senior to take notice, offer areas to improve on, or for their career manager to schedule their next military education course. It is our role as senior leaders to assist subordinates in taking ownership of developmental opportunities, facilitating prototype transitions and fostering environments that model an appreciation for diversity.

Leader development is not only what should be taught in leadership courses and doctrine but how subordinate leaders can be helped to learn.[58] Leaders develop interpersonal and management skills through experience, observation, and practice. Leader development is fostered by designing experiences that account for social identity and encourage developing leaders to observe, emulate, and take risks with diverse 'selves' to see which works best.[59] Authentic leaders develop subordinates through transparent behavior modeling and guiding subordinates through effective self-awareness and self-development programs.[60] Positive modeling of self-awareness, self-regulation, character development, and diversity leadership and management are among the primary mechanisms for leaders to influence subordinates.[61]

Many individuals express skepticism at being coached by leaders, whom they believe are not working on development areas themselves.[62] It is incredibly important for leaders to demonstrate self-reflection and self-development to subordinates. Sharing self-developmental observations and goals during counseling establishes leader credibility and demonstrates the prototypical value of self-reflective improvement. Senior leader transparency provides subordinates with a better understanding of successful leader prototypes beyond mere social acceptance to appreciate individual professional development.

"People engaged in self-exploration and experimentation learn best when others similar to themselves are experiencing similar issues."[63] Self-assessment, leader development, and mentorship must be applied across the organization so individuals perceive an in-group prototype of self-assessment and leader development. Leader development goals should aspire towards more effective leaders – not towards

eliminating out-groups or transitioning out-groups to a current prototype. Leaders must

be aware of social attraction and balance mentoring and development across the

organization. Likewise, leaders cannot remain focused on out-group individuals at the

risk of in-group personnel remaining fixed and constrained by their own biased beliefs

and oblivious to changing contexts.

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

> Coaching, mentoring, empowering, tolerance for mistakes, providing
> constructive feedback and leading by example are universally accepted
> principles of effective leadership. . .yet, the evidence is clear that, in
> general, many Army leaders do not follow these principles.[64]

While there are a myriad of causes, our greatest developmental challenge is

senior leader conscious and subconscious behavior coupled with inconsistent prototype

modeling. Meaningful and lasting leader development rests with senior leader self-

awareness, modeling, and the establishment of developmental opportunities in varying

social contexts. This is easier said than accomplished. The Army is a compilation of

social groups with unique missions and procedures executed and applied in highly

volatile environments. The same social factors that make Army units stronger have the

potential to reduce adaptability required to operate in future environments. Leaders

must understand and leverage the power of social learning and make conscious efforts

to mitigate social-attraction and depersonalization to ensure social pressures do not

overcome organizational diversity. Awareness and mitigation are required to limit the

effects of group bias and suppression of individuality in both visible and intellectual

thought patterns.

The leader development challenge is the creation of social experiences that

embed developmental principles into the workplace.[65] Leaders must continually adjust

prototypes through continuous and transparent self-assessment to maintain salience with changing context. Leaders must establish prototypes based on self-awareness, self-regulation, character development, openness, and diversity leadership. Authentic leadership is an effective model to guide and develop ideal prototypical behavior patterns. Authentic senior leaders understand that individual skills and charisma are insufficient for changing conditions and success relies upon fostering diverse and adaptive leaders throughout the depth of organizations. Ultimately, success depends on senior leaders who understand self-development, subordinate development, and how to apply subordinates and partners with diverse strengths and skills to uncertain situations through communication, vision and alignment. Leader development should incentivize individual ownership, allow individuals to honestly assess themselves with the assistance of mentors and peers and facilitate individual developmental career paths versus structured prototypes of success. Above all else, senior leaders should honestly assess subordinates not by how well they resemble successful prototypes but by how their intellectual diversity and team skills contribute to better understanding and success in complex environments. To do this, senior leaders must believe in and model the traits and attributes we seek.

Endnotes

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