



Servant Leadership as a Humane Orientation: Using the GLOBE Study Construct of Humane Orientation to Show that Servant Leadership is More Global than Western

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This article suggests that servant leadership, as a model, is more global than Western in nature. Support for this premise comes from the use of the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness Research Program's (GLOBE) humane orientation construct and how this occurs in the cultural concepts from African (Ubuntu, Harambee); East Asian (Taoist, Confucianism); Mediterranean (Jewish); and Indian (Hindu) value systems. By illustrating that servant leadership is appropriate in various global cultures, this article recommends that not only is servant leadership a global leadership style but that servant leadership should be included in leadership development programs in Africa, Asia, and the Mediterranean as a means of producing humane leaders.

Servant leadership, as coined by Greenleaf (1970) and later developed by Page and Wong (2000); Farling, Stone, and Winston (1999); Sendjaj and Sarros (2002); Sendjaya (2003); Russell and Stone (2002); Patterson (2003); and Winston (2003), has been met with a common rejection of the idea when presented to non-U.S. audiences simply because it is a Western construct developed in the West for the West (anecdotal evidence from the primary author's experience). The purpose of this article is to present the non-Western aspect of the notion of servant leadership as it has been currently developed. The value of this article lies in its presentation of a foundation upon which developing nations in South America, Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe might base their leadership development programs. The confidence in this foundation comes from the extant use of the GLOBE study's determination of the humane orientation construct and the near universal acceptance of this construct in the 62 countries included in the GLOBE study.

Servant Leadership

Greenleaf (1970) based his understanding of the servant leadership concept on Hess' (1956) work in which Hess presented an allegory in which the servant of the traveling troupe was, in reality, the president of the group. Greenleaf (1970) attributed the ontological and axiological characteristics of the servant-president as an ideal to which all leaders should aspire. In Hess' allegory, the members of the traveling troupe represent different types of people and different types of worldviews, most of which are not Western in nature. This idea of servant as leader, as Hess presented it, is not a Western concept but rather an Eastern or Mediterranean concept. Greenleaf (1982) also described Jesus as a servant leader; if Greenleaf is correct, Jesus would be an example of a Mediterranean ideal rather than a Western ideal since Jesus lived in the Southern Mediterranean region.

According to Garrow (1986), Martin Luther King, Jr. described Ghandi as a servant leader because of Ghandi's devotion to serving the people of India rather than engaging in command-control leadership styles. If Ghandi was a servant leader who engaged in humane leadership activities, then the notion of servant leadership would be an Indian ideal rather than a Western ideal.

Bass (2000) contrasted servant leadership with transformational leadership by showing that servant leaders focus on the well-being of the followers even to the detriment of the organization, whereas transformational leaders do what they do for the followers in order to have the followers benefit the organization. Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003) built upon Bass' insights and developed a two-part model of servant leadership in which, according to Patterson, servant leaders, through a construct called *agapao* love (a moral love toward followers), develop a sense of humility in working with other people and seek to behave for altruistic reasons rather than self-serving reasons. In addition, Patterson posited that from humility and altruism, servant leaders seek to understand the follower's vision or calling and, in the process of this, build a sense of trust in the follower. Following the development of trust, the servant leader then empowers and serves the follower to achieve the follower's vision in the organization. Winston (2003) built upon Patterson's work and showed how the servant leader's service impacts the follower's *agapao* love and increases their self-efficacy and commitment to the leader. Followers, according to Winston (2003), would then behave for intrinsic motivational reasons since the followers seek to achieve their own vision within the organization and, in so doing, develop an identity with the leader and begin to act out of altruistic rather than self-serving reasons, thus leading to the follower's service to the leader which impacts the leader's *agapao* love and completes the circular model.

Of interest to Patterson (2003) and Winston's (2003) combined model is that it is not aligned with Western thinking at all. Western thinking, which developed in the 1930s and 1940s (Argryis, 1957), posits that formal mechanistic organizations result in individuals being dependent upon, passive toward, and subordinate to the leader with employees having little control over their working environment. Argryis pointed out that designers of organizations admitted this problem and compensated by rewarding people for performance or compensating them for their dissatisfaction, allowing the employee to seek satisfaction outside of the organization. Argryis' comment was true in the late 1950s and is still true today in most Western organizations. This notion of authoritarian mechanistic forms of leadership still being used in Western organizations has been supported by Bates (1994) who wrote about the traditional leadership styles of the great man, charismatic leader, or the lionized-hero form of leadership

typically found in the United States. While other leadership theories have been developed since the 1920s and 1940s; including, but not limited to, transformational leadership, team leadership, and participative leadership; these more participative styles still focus on the leader or the organization rather than on the follower.

GLOBE Study

House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, and Gupta (2004) reported GLOBE's findings in an 818-page tome beyond the scope of this paper. The reader is encouraged to read the study in House et al.'s book in order to grasp the completeness of the large global study. The GLOBE study examined leadership and organizational behavior issues in 62 countries with the intention of building upon and expanding Hofstede's (1980) research on work-related values. The constructs studied in the GLOBE study included (a) performance orientation, (b) assertiveness, (c) future orientation, (d) humane orientation, (e) institutional collectivism, (f) gender egalitarianism, (g) power distance, (h) in-group collectivism, and (i) uncertain avoidance. One of the many aspects of the GLOBE study was the development of the notion of Cultural-Endorsed Implicit Leadership Theory (CLT) that proposes a leadership concept in which the cultural values of a people group would expect to be acted out in the lives and behaviors of its leaders. Like implicit leadership, which was the impetus for developing CLT, the presumption is that followers are more motivated to build relationships with and act in accord with the leader if the life and behaviors of the leader are in line with the follower's mental model of expected leadership. Dorfman, Hanges, and Brodbeck (2004) wrote the chapter on "Leadership and Cultural Variation" in House et al.'s book and determined that global leaders could be classified into six archetypes: (a) charismatic/value-based leadership, (b) team-oriented leadership, (c) participative leadership, (d) humane oriented leadership, (e) autonomous leadership, and (f) self-protective leadership. This present article focuses on the humane oriented leadership and posits that servant leadership fits within this archetype more than it fits in any other archetype, including charismatic/value-based leadership.

Leader integrity, as seen in the majority of the countries studied through the GLOBE study, is of interest to this article as an indicator of effective leadership as posited by Dorfman et al. (2004). Although leader integrity is not mentioned in the six archetypes, it will be part of the next section on humane orientation. Dorfman et al. rank-ordered the 10 regions of the GLOBE study as to the absolute CT scores on the six archetypes and showed that the higher scoring regions for humane orientation were Southern Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Anglo regions; the middle scoring regions were Confucian Asia, Latin America, Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Germanic Europe; while the lowest scoring regions were Latin Europe and Nordic Europe. This means that servant leadership, if it fits the humane orientation archetype as the present article posits, should be acceptable within 8 of the 10 regions. Javidan, House, and Dorfman (2004); in an earlier chapter of the House et al. (2004) book; pointed out that in all 10 regions, the score for valuing humane orientation is higher than practicing humane oriented behaviors. This is of interest to the study of servant leadership in that it might imply that a practical model of how to lead with a humane orientation is lacking and that using servant leadership in leadership development programs may inform leaders how to practice a humane oriented leadership style.

The GLOBE study sought to compare practiced versus valued concepts through the use of the following 7-point behaviorally anchored response items:

1. In this society, people are generally concerned about others. (practice)
2. In this society, people should be generally concerned about others. (value)
3. In this society, people are generally very sensitive toward others. (practice)
4. In this society, people should be encouraged to be sensitive toward others. (value)
5. In this organization, people are generally concerned about others. (practice)
6. In this organization, people should be generally concerned about others. (value)
7. In this organization, people are generally very sensitive toward others. (practice)
8. In this organization, people should be encouraged to be sensitive toward others. (value)

Humane Orientation Construct

Kabasakal and Bodur (2004), in their definition of humane, cited Aristotle's definition of friendship: "a person becomes a friend when he is loved and returns that love, and this is recognized by both people in question" (p. 565). This is similar to Lewis' (1971) notion of friendship as appreciative love. Kabasakal and Bodur cited Plato's notion that it is "possible to love someone without feeling affectionate" (p. 565). Finally, Kabasakal and Bodur referred to Socrates' idea that "winning a friend is above all else a fulfillment of a fundamental human need and desire" (p. 565). This notion of friendship and love is in keeping with Patterson's (2003) and Winston's (2003) circular model of servant leadership which begins with the notion of agapao love that both Patterson and Winston defined as doing the right thing at the right time for the right person and relates the concept of friendship. Winston (2002) presented the concept of agapao as being part of a continuum with the biblical Greek concept of agape. While agape is a sacrificial form of love, agapao is a friendship form of love/relationship.

Kabasakal and Bodur (2004) pointed out the global nature of the humane orientation in their inclusion of the Judaism, Christian, and Islamic consideration of God as being associated with "ultimate goodness" (p. 565) and that Buddhism and Taoism direct followers of the respective faiths to be in harmony with each other and do what is good. Kabasakal and Bodur stated that cultures characterized by high to middle inclusion of the humane orientation should value altruism, benevolence, kindness, love, and generosity as motivation factors both for leaders-to-followers and for followers-to-leaders. These values are in keeping with the notion of servant leadership as proposed by Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003) in their model of servant leadership. The concept of agapao includes benevolence, kindness, and generosity; and the whole concept of agapao is considered a form of love. Figure 1 shows that both Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003) included altruism in each of their portions of the circular model.

Kabasakal and Bodur (2004) pointed out an interesting finding from the GLOBE study's investigation of the humane orientation construct: the countries with the highest humane orientation value score (Nigeria, Finland, Singapore, and Austria) are among the lowest scoring countries for humane oriented practices. Although these four countries do not practice humane orientation in the leadership roles, there is a strong desire for humane orientation. Servant leadership may provide a model by which leadership development programs could present to leaders in these countries how to lead in ways that are in line with the followers' CLT.

Kabasakal and Bodur (2004) posited that the more humane the country's orientation, the more right wing and the less socialist the country is as supported by the correlation of the humane orientation practice score with the GLOBE study's question on beliefs as being to the left or right ($r = .54, n = 37, p < .01$). Of interest, Kabasakal and Bodur reported that there is no

significant correlation when using the humane orientation values score. Kabaskal and Bodur proposed that the correlation may occur “because low-humane countries need more formal and organized support systems” (p. 377). Therefore, servant leadership may be seen as more acceptable in societies that tend to be right wing and less socialist in ideology.

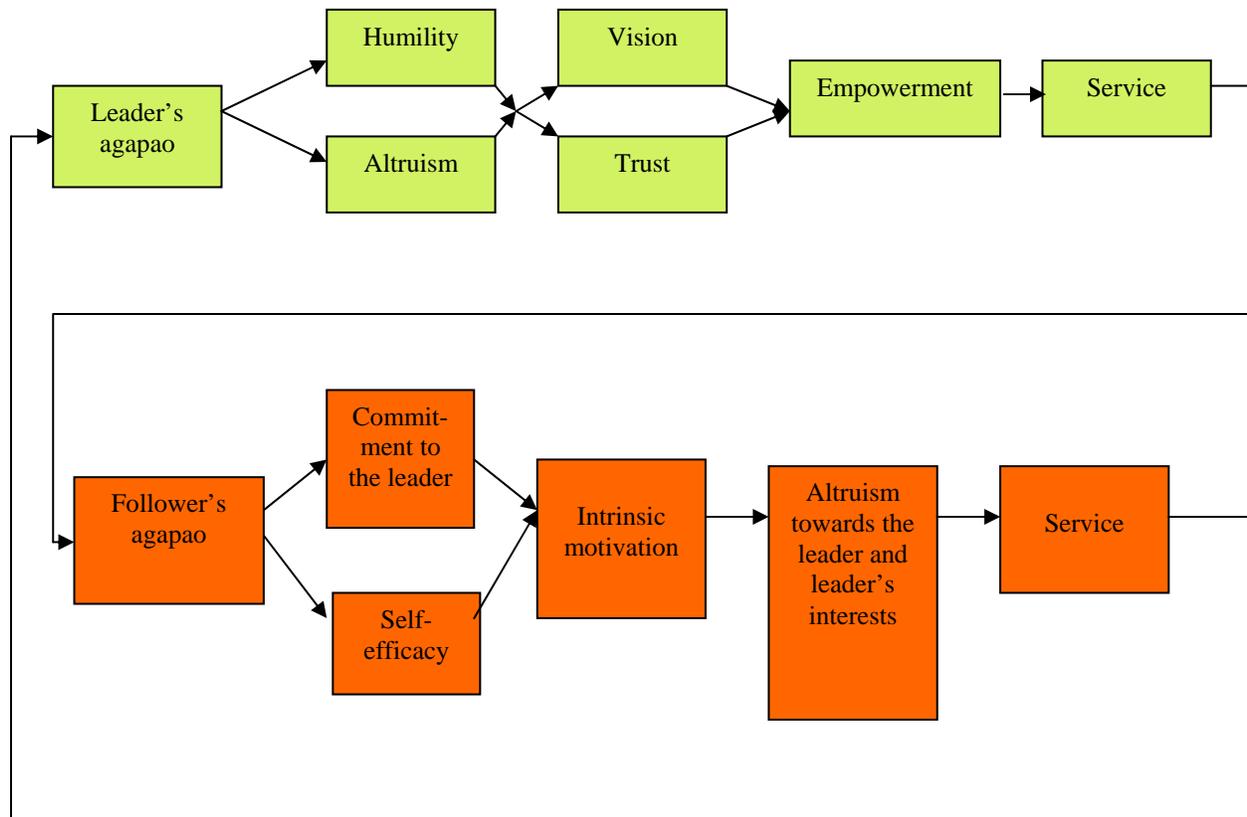


Figure 1. Patterson's (2003, upper) and Winston's (2003, lower) combined model of servant leadership.

Kabasakal and Bodur (2004), in summarizing literature on leadership characteristics, pointed out that the current leadership literature does not generally characterize leaders as humane; but, they went on to say that in the more humane oriented countries covered in the GLOBE study, leaders tend to emphasize a more idealistic focus rather than a self-aggrandizement focus. This ties to servant leadership in that Greenleaf (1970), Page and Wong (2000), Farling et al. (1999), Sarros and Sendjaya (2002), Sendjaya (2003), Russell and Stone (2002), Patterson (2003), and Winston (2003) have stated that servant leaders focus more on humility and less on self and focus more on the needs of others and the higher-order values of duty and social responsibility than on the needs of self. Thus, servant leadership as a concept is compatible with the humane concept as presented in the GLOBE study.

Global Concepts That Undergird a Humane Construct

This section provides additional support for servant leadership as a more global than Western concept by examining cultural concepts from Africa (Ubuntu, Harambee), East Asia (Taoist, Confucianism), the Mediterranean (Jewish), and India (Hindu). This section is not meant to be exhaustive of all cultures but is meant to show support for the ideals upon which servant leadership is based.

Ubuntu

Ubuntu is a worldview expressed by Southern-African Bantu-language speaking people groups and is defined by Mangaliso (2001) as “humaneness – a pervasive spirit of caring and community, harmony, and hospitality, respect, and responsiveness—that individuals and groups display for one another” (p. 24). Haegert (2000), in a conceptual article, presented an ethic of care for African nursing that relies on Ubuntu and takes the definition of Ubuntu deeper by tying the concept to an African Proverb: “a person is a person through other persons” or sometimes rendered as “I am because we are; we are because I am,” thus demonstrating Ubuntu as a collectivist worldview. Mbigi and Maree (1995) have supported this collectivist view in their description of Ubuntu as a metaphor for group solidarity. Although the concept of Ubuntu focuses on the person; it stresses supportiveness, sharing, listening, building community, and cooperation. Krause and Powell (2002) added to Mbigi and Maree’s definition by explaining Ubuntu as group solidarity, compassion, respect, human dignity, and collective unity.

Ubuntu inspires us to expose ourselves to others, to encounter the difference of their humanness so as to inform and enrich our own (Sindane, 1994). Thus understood, the African proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu* translates as: “To be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognising the humanity of others in its infinite variety of content and form” (Van der Merwe, 1996, p. 1).

Ubuntu has similarities to Patterson’s (2003) definition of servant leadership in that servant leadership focuses on the well-being of the follower while seeing the organization’s interests as secondary, thus creating a community of followers within the organization. Patterson’s model of servant leadership begins with *agapao* love as presented in Winston’s (2002) work “to love in a social or moral sense, embracing the judgment and the deliberate assent of the will as a matter of principle, duty, and propriety” (p. 5). The unique term *hesed* is difficult to translate in English but is often rendered as “steadfast love” and “kindness” by translators. The Mediterranean concept of *hesed* and its Greek equivalent *agapao* carry the meaning of an active involvement in the world marked by kindness, love, and altruism (Knight, 1999). It is important to note here that one concept alone, in this case Ubuntu, is not reason enough to accept servant leadership as global but rather to see that there are various concepts around the world that speak to a humane consideration of others.

Harambee

Koshal (2005) examined the role of the Swahili concept of harambee as it relates to the acceptance of servant leadership in Kenya. Koshal defined harambee as doing things quickly and collectively with a forward connotation. Harambee embodies and reflects the strong ancient value of mutual assistance, joint effort, mutual social responsibility, and community self-

reliance. Koshal further pointed out that the notion of service in Patterson's (2003) model of servant leadership is like the harambee philosophy which is

guided by the principle of collective good rather than individual gain [thus positioning service] as putting others' welfare (e.g., employees, customers, and community) and interest first. Service is caring for others enough to facilitate their growth, development and success without expecting any reward. (p. 10)

According to Koshal's (2005) study, participants "expressed strong feelings about sacrificing for the sake of others. Their view of sacrificing is embedded in the way they give their time, their resources, and even themselves for the work of others" (p. 125). The Swahili concept of harambee includes a sense of service by leaders to followers and followers to leaders which is line with Patterson's (2003) and Winston's (2003) model of servant leadership.

Taoist

Templeton (1999) stated that "[s]eeing Agape in the Tao is like trying to separate a wave from the ocean" (p. 69). Agape is the biblical Greek concept of sacrificial love and has the same root as agapao but is more philosophical in nature than agapao which is more behavioral in context. Since Taoism was developed as a contrast to Confucianism, it is worth including both cultures in this document to show how servant leadership can fit both concepts. The Taoist beliefs include; according to Johnson (2000); that leaders maintain a low profile, lead by example, and empower people through ownership of the task to do the work. Johnson included the following quotation from the Te Cheng: "when the master governs, the people are hardly aware that he exists. Next best is the leader who is loved. Next is one who is feared. The worst is one who is despised" (p. 85). The focus in the Tao of love and respect is in line with servant leadership.

Confucianism

Within the teachings of Confucius' *The Analects*, according to Yuan (2002), is the concept of jen that is summed up as "the humanity in humans, the benevolence or universal love" (p. 109). Yuan went on to say that jen includes the elements of "love, altruism, kindness, charity, compassion, goodness, perfect virtue, true selfhood, etc." (p. 109). These aspects of jen seem very similar to the notions of servant leadership as presented in the work of Patterson (2003) and Winston (2002, 2003), thus supporting the idea that servant leadership fits well with Asian cultural beliefs. Writing about Chinese cultural values, Lu (1998) pointed out that Mozi, the founder of the school of thought called Mohism, redefined a Confucian concept of li which contained the idea that "a true sense of benevolence, righteousness, and morality, is motivated by self-interest and mutual benefits . . . [and that] . . . whoever loves others is loved by others; whoever benefits others is benefited by others" (p. 96). Although the tenants of servant leadership, according to Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003), focus on loving and benefiting others; their servant leadership model shows a circular relationship in which followers do, in fact, love and benefit the leader; thus supporting the idea that servant leadership could fit well with Confucian values.

Jewish

The Ten Commandments form the base of the Jewish faith and are summed up in two statements: (a) loving God and (b) loving people (Luke 10:27, New American Standard). This sentiment can also be found in Leviticus 19:18: “but you shall love your neighbor as yourself.” The Talmud, according to Lamm (2005), calls for all people to engage in kindness over charity. Lamm stated that the Talmud implies that charity occurs as a reaction to seeing pain or suffering. Kindness is an internal attitude referred to as *chessed* and means “giving of oneself to helping another without regard to compensation.” Kindness, as Lamm defined it, is similar to the servant leadership variable of altruism that both Patterson (2003) and Winston (2003) included in their servant leadership model.

Cohen (1949) included a section on moral life as portrayed in the Talmud and posited that the following virtues are essential to Jewish culture: (a) brotherly love, (b) humility, (c) charity, (d) honesty, (e) forgiveness, and (f) temperance. The notions of love, humility, and charity are reflected in Patterson’s (2003) and Winston’s (2003) model as *agapao* love; thus showing a potential acceptance of servant leadership in Jewish culture. Cohen also pointed out that the Talmud speaks to the manner in which masters are to treat workers and how workers are to perform to the best of their abilities for the master. While the Talmud does not address the specific nature of the master’s service to the worker; Cohen pointed out that the master is to provide the needed tools, schedules, pay, etc. that are necessary for the worker to complete his task with specific attention given to the welfare of the worker. Cohen did not provide much about the service obligations of the worker beyond the need to be diligent and loyal. However, what Cohen did present agrees with the tenets of servant leadership as presented by Greenleaf (1982), Page and Wong (2000), Farling et al. (1999), Sarros and Sendjaya (2002), Sendjaya (2003), Russell and Stone (2002), Patterson (2003), and Winston (2003).

Hindu

Templeton (1999) pointed out that the *Bharavaad-Gita* teaches that those following the Hindu beliefs should be characterized by compassion and generosity, avoidance of immorality, the will to give, and the will to serve. Interestingly, according to the *Hindu Times*, Payal Agarwal (2005), a Hindu, was credited with the same saying as the Taoist saying:

A leader is best when people barely know his presence, not so good when people must obey and acclaim him. Worse when they despise him. But of a good leader who talks little when his work is complete and his aim fulfilled, they will say, “We did it ourselves!”

The article goes on to advise leaders to be caring, exercise authority with discretion, give the benefit of the doubt to employees, and build a group of caring and happy people. All of these items are in line with the tenets of servant leadership.

Conclusion

Throughout this article, the purpose has been to show the relevance of servant leadership as a model that is more global than Western in nature. This article used the GLOBE study construct of humane orientation and the cultural concepts from Africa (Ubuntu, Harambee), East Asia (Taoist, Confucianism), the Mediterranean (Jewish), and India (Hindu). Specific attention

was given to the leader characteristics of humility, care, concern, benevolence, altruism, service, fairness, and friendship related definitions of love. All of these characteristics are part of the servant leadership concept, and the overlap between servant leadership and the global acceptance of the humane orientation is evidence that servant leadership can be presented as a global rather than a Western concept.

As long as the concept of servant leadership is incorrectly deemed a Western concept, people who see Western thought as contrary to local beliefs or a form of colonialism seeking to impose values and beliefs over the local beliefs will be reluctant to accept it; and the world may miss out on a humane form of leadership. Research studies by Nelson (2003) and Serrano (2005) have shown the viability of the servant leadership concepts among black South African leaders (Nelson) and Latin American leaders (Serrano). By showing that servant leadership is appropriate in various global cultures, this article recommends that servant leadership be included in leadership development programs in Africa, Asia, and the Mediterranean as a means of producing humane leaders.

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