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Leading for Good in the Impulse Society

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Leading for Good in the Impulse Society

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who are leading for good in the Impulse Society, which is described by Tazioli (2014) as, A world where business shamelessly seeks the fastest reward, regardless of the long-term social consequences; where political leaders reflexively choose shortterm fixes over broad, sustainable social progress; where individuals feel increasingly exploited by a marketplace obsessed with our private cravings, yet oblivious to our spiritual well-being or the larger needs of our families and communities (“Book of the Week,” para. 1). To accomplish this work, the research uses a phenomenological approach to describe the experiences of five executive leaders who lead organizations that meet an established inclusion criteria. Interviews are the main source for the study. Inquiry consists of audio-recordings, documentation, and analysis of each individual’s experiences and practices as they relate to common leadership challenges which have been identified by the Center for Creative Leadership. The study provides insight into how executive leaders leading in the Impulse Society lead in a manner that promotes the common good of the society’s members. A list of the leadership dispositions and practices will be compiled to allow for the development of a leadership survey and to guide further research. This study contributes to the literature on modern leadership theory and practice through the identification of those leadership dispositions and practices that allow executives to lead for the common good in an environment that continuously reinforces shortsighted, self-interested leadership behaviors.

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Dedication

My dissertation is dedicated to my husband, John Gruninger. Without his support, encouragement, patience, and sense of humor, I would not be able to chase my dreams. I'm grateful for him every day.

I would also like to thank my Dissertation Chair, Dr. Michael Robinson, my Dissertation Committee Member, Dr. Linda Doty, and my Dissertation Reader, Dr. Kim VanDerLinden, for their guidance and support through this process.

Finally, I would like to thank my father, Nelson Menard, who shared a lot of pithy wisdom throughout my life. Some of his advice is publishable, but not his most useful and memorable insights.

Biographical Sketch

Kimberly Townsend is President and Chief Executive Officer of Loretto, a continuing care system located in New York, with assets in skilled nursing, housing, managed care, short term rehabilitation and medical adult day services.

Prior to joining Loretto, Ms. Townsend was the Associate General Counsel and Senior Director of Government Affairs for Welch Allyn, Inc. She has been an adjunct professor in the Whitman School of Management at Syracuse University, as well as the Syracuse University College of Law.

Ms. Townsend is currently a Governor's Appointee to the New York State Workforce Investment Board. She also serves as a board member and in board leadership positions for a number of non-profit organizations.

Ms. Townsend received her BS and MBA from the Whitman School of Management, her JD from Syracuse University College of Law and her MPA from the Maxwell School of Public Administration. She is admitted to practice by the New York, New Jersey and Washington, D.C. bars. Ms. Townsend entered the St. John Fisher College doctoral program for executive leadership and pursued her research in exceptional leadership under the direction of Dr. Michael Robinson and Dr. Linda Doty.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to explore the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who are leading for good in the Impulse Society, which is described by Tazioli (2014) as,

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To accomplish this work, the research uses a phenomenological approach to describe the experiences of five executive leaders who lead organizations that meet an established inclusion criteria. Interviews are the main source for the study. Inquiry consists of audio-recordings, documentation, and analysis of each individual’s experiences and practices as they relate to common leadership challenges which have been identified by the Center for Creative Leadership. The study provides insight into how executive leaders leading in the Impulse Society lead in a manner that promotes the common good of the society’s members. A list of the leadership dispositions and practices will be compiled to allow for the development of a leadership survey and to guide further research. This study contributes to the literature on modern leadership theory and practice through the identification of those leadership dispositions and practices that allow executives to lead for the common good in an environment that continuously reinforces shortsighted, self-interested leadership behaviors.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Roberts (2014) described two Americas that reflect divergent leadership decision-making dispositions and practices. The first America, post World War II, was a world marked by “communities [which] were . . . familiar and secure, stable jobs and relationships whose survival we did not need to worry about in bed at night . . . and people known as leaders who were trusted with the task of seeing that the rules were enforced” (p. 34). The government invested in its citizens’ education through the GI Bill. Wages were steadily increasing, and most employees were company men. Therefore, most mothers were able to stay home with young children; only 19% of mothers with small children worked (Cohany & Sok, 2007). Roberts notes that companies invested in the long-term security of their employees by offering defined benefit pension plans. With excellent benefits packages, health care, and diets, the average male lived 6 years longer than his grandfather, and families lived in houses twice as large as the generation before them. It was the golden era of America.

The second America began in the Reagan era of the 1980s, and its characteristics persist today. This society is marked by laissez-faire economic policy, deregulation, and changes in law that make it easier for businesses to move jobs offshore. It is a society of a few haves and many have-nots. This study explores the leadership dispositions and practices of executives who make decisions that promote the common good while operating in an environment that reinforces individuated, self-interested decision-making behaviors.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency Factbook (2016), the subprime mortgage crisis, falling home prices, investment bank failures, tight credit, and the global economic downturn pushed the United States into a recession by mid-2008. Wars in Iraq and Afghanistan required major shifts in national resources from domestic spending to military spending, which contributed to the growth of the budget deficit and public debt. All of these factors have contributed to the long-term problems for the United States, which include stagnation of wages for lower-income families, inadequate investment in deteriorating infrastructure, rapidly rising medical and pension costs of an aging population, and sizable budget deficits.

This context is the societal, economic, and business reality in which today's executive leads. For purposes of this study, "Impulse Society" is characterized as,

A world where business shamelessly seeks the fastest reward, regardless of the long-term social consequences; where political leaders reflexively choose short-term fixes over broad, sustainable social progress; where individuals feel increasingly exploited by a marketplace obsessed with our private cravings yet oblivious to our spiritual well-being or the larger needs of our families and communities (Tazioli, 2014, "Book of the Week," para.1)

The characteristics of the Impulse Society are creating a culturally, racially, politically, and financially divided society. The rules of our society which created a robust and respectful dialogue have been abandoned in an environment where compromise is a fatal flaw, stakes are high, and the expectations are that winner takes all. A better understanding of the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who make decisions for the common good in this environment might facilitate the

resolution of some of the social crises of our time, for example, racial divides, wage inequality, and intolerance.

Problem Statement

Given what is known about the environment of the Impulse Society, without change, executive leaders will continue to behave in short-term, self-interested ways. Indeed, self-interested leadership behaviors may increase as the environment continually reinforces these behaviors. Some executive leaders, however, make decisions that promote the common good.

Mickos (2015) described an environment where leaders feel the urgency of immediate action. Tasks that used to require advance planning and a long execution time can now be done immediately with the use of technology. Access to information is broader and through this access the world is being democratized as information is shared in real time across the world. While humanity spent thousands of years creating societies in which human lives were closely intertwined in a social fabric, through the use of technology, individuals are more granular, with more power at their fingertips and responsibility only for themselves. What was an indirect societal connection is now becoming a direct and immediate connection to the world through the digital age. The smartphone is a new, best colleague and the vehicle for immediate communication with the world.

In addition to immediacy of action, leaders also incur costs for changing a previously asserted position and a high level of accountability and pressure to maintain previous positions, even in the face of new facts. Debacker (2015), in an economic study of United States Senators, examined the political and reputational costs of “flip-

flopping,” or changing position. He notes that senators incur significant electoral costs when changing established positions or deviating, even in a minor way, from prior voting history. In models of electoral competition, senators incur greater costs when their new positions deviate from prior voting records, even if they deviate in relatively small degrees.

Indeed, Llopis (2013) stated that a leader’s persona, or personal brand, is scrutinized in the highly visible, highly accountable environment of the socially-connected setting. Development of a persona or personal brand is critical to one’s success as a leader and career advancement. Personal branding requires a full-time commitment to defining oneself as a leader and the manner in which one will serve others. Personal brand represents the moral face that the leader consistently delivers to those the leader serves. Leaders whose personal lives fail to support their leadership persona are subject to public embarrassment and ridicule.

Consequently, leaders operate in a complex social, economic, and managerial environment where they are inundated with information and are required to act with urgency, immediacy, and high accountability. These pressures occur in an environment where globalization, consumerization and financialization have changed the rules and frayed the traditional fabric of society. This is the Impulse Society leadership context. The purpose of this study is to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society, which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors.

Theoretical Rationale

Rational choice theory (RCT) illuminates leader decision-making behaviors in the Impulse Society. RCT is an economic theory that explains social phenomena as the outcome of the actions of individuals. According to Becker (1993), individual actors maximize their interests as they perceive them within the constraints of time, imperfect memories, intellectual capabilities, and available opportunities. Opportunities are created by the collective action of individuals, agencies, and organizations. RCT defines self-interested decision-making behavior in economic terms, which is utility maximization. When individuals act in ways that maximize their perceived utility, they behave in what they perceive to be their self-interest. RCT does not map the thought process of decision-making but instead predicts decision-making outcomes and patterns of decision-making behaviors based on individuals' tendencies to maximize their perceived self-interest.

Alchian (1950) stated that thriving economic systems rely on businesses' pursuit of profit maximization at the expense of workers' interest. Becker (1993) extended Alchian's premise and proposes that organizational decisions reflect the decision-making behaviors of individual business leaders. He sought to confirm Alchian's premise of utility maximization by studying individuals' consumption decisions within market-based systems. Through a series of experiments, Becker identified three key assumptions of RCT.

First, individuals' decisions are rational if they are based on available information which is perfect and complete or imperfect and incomplete. Faced with imperfect information, according to RCT, bounded rationalists bring biases from prior experiences into and demonstrate selective attention in current decision-making. In the Impulse

Society, executive leaders may be data rich yet poor in useful information. In these situations, executive leaders make decisions on instinct based on their prior experiences and gut feelings regarding a myriad of choices.

Becker's (1993) second assumption stated that individuals vary in the degree to which they express their self-interests, which are referred to as preferences. Becker asserted that some individuals express their preferences by openly maximizing their self-interests when decision-making. Executive decision-making is urgent, immediate, visible, and high stakes in the Impulse Society. There is little margin for changing direction, or flip-flopping, once a decision is made. This high pressure, high stakes environment may promote the drive to survive, leading to short-sighted and self-interested decision-making.

Becker's (1993) final assumption stated that observed social phenomena are aggregations of individuals' decision-making outcomes and the rules that those decision-makers have employed to reach those decisions. Udehn (2001) stated that social phenomena must be explained in the context of individuals' physical and psychic states, actions, interactions, social situations, and physical environment. When viewed from this multi-focal lens, the social phenomena described in the Impulse Society result from the decisions of individuals who are influenced by their observations and perceptions of many internal and external factors. The outcomes of their decision-making may be predicted by RCT. For example, when information is unclear or difficult to process, leaders are limited in their decision-making capability by poor quality information and instead rely on their previous experiences or evidence information pathologies as described above.

Becker later extended his studies of RCT to include decision-making behaviors in non-market, or social, settings. In 1992, he won the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economic Sciences for his use of RCT in his studies of discrimination, crime, and human capital. According to Gachter (2013), RCT has emerged as a parsimonious theoretical framework and a reliable predictor of decision-making outcomes when studying market- and non-market-based decisions that involve risk and uncertainty.

While RCT predicts that executive leaders will behave in alignment with their perceived self-interest, executive leaders exist within the Impulse Society that make decisions that promote the common good. Hayek (1994) stated the social goal for which society is to be organized is to further the common good, which is the general welfare of the society's members. Understanding their leadership dispositions and practices has the potential to suggest a new way of leading in an environment that reinforces short-sighted and selfish leader behaviors.

RCT provides a lens to predict leader decision-making outcomes in the Impulse Society, and it allows for the identification of leaders who demonstrate decision-making behaviors and traits that run counter to RCT. The identification of these leaders and their leadership dispositions and practices will lay the groundwork for the development of new leadership theory, *impulse leadership*.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society, which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors. Through interviewing executive leaders, a list of commonly-held

leadership dispositions and practices will be created which will be used to create a survey through future research efforts on executive leadership dispositions and practices in the Impulse Society.

Because it is difficult to predict how business leaders make decisions within the Impulse Society, it is difficult to mitigate the effects or address the limitations created by these decision-making behaviors. The inability to address the limitations prevents leaders from making decisions that promote the common good.

Research Question

From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and leadership practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors?

Potential Significance of the Study

The characteristics of the Impulse Society, as described above, are creating a culturally, racially, politically, and financially divided society. Brooks (2016) described the breakdown of productive discourse in the United States, as individuals and the leaders that represent them are no longer able to recognize the valid existence of groups, interests, and opinions that differ from their own. The rules of our society which created a robust and valuable dialogue have been abandoned in an environment where compromise is a fatal flaw, stakes are high, and the expectations are that winner takes all. Brooks noted that people are no longer able to balance their interests as part of a larger whole and fail to recognize the legitimacy of others' interests and opinions. In an environment of high expectations when compromise is necessary or promises are unmet,

people are angry and cynical. The conversation in the United States is polarized. In terms of upholding the ideals of a united country, there is widespread leadership failure.

A better understanding of the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who make decisions for the common good might inform decision- and policy-making to solve some of the social crises of our time, for example, racial divides, wage inequality, and fear. This study explores the leadership dispositions and practices of leaders who make decisions that promote the common good while operating in an environment that reinforces individuated, self-interested decision-making behaviors. For purposes of this research, common good is context-specific and relates to the leadership dispositions and practices that executive leaders undertake within the context of their organizations and the community, which may or may not gain recognition beyond their local and regional areas. These leaders are individuals who make a daily difference in the lives of others. They promote the common good while leading organizations that are in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society.

Stiglitz (2016) proposed that the United States lags behind most industrialized nations in many key indices due to structural constraints such as short-term thinking in decision-making, the upward redistribution of income, and little dedication of resources to long-term investments like education and infrastructure. He recommends that leaders consider changes to improve the quality of life for more Americans, including free public higher education, increased investments in infrastructure, expanded access to affordable child care and transportation, increases to the minimum wage, and increasing the income threshold for mandatory overtime.

Executive leaders are in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society. They lead in an environment that is dynamic, conflicted, and punishing. The environment is fast-paced and data rich yet information poor. Decision-making is urgent and immediate answers are required and shared in real time across the world through social media. Yet, in spite of the need to react quickly and decisively, it is an environment that offers little quarter to those leaders who, in a moment of reflection, change their minds. They are described as flip-floppers and they pay a high price for their change of heart. In the face of the challenges experienced by executive leaders in the Impulse Society, who are the leaders that will advance an agenda that promotes the common good? This research will create a better understanding of the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who make decisions for the common good in this environment. This effort might inform leadership decision- and policy-making to solve some of the social crises of our time, for example, racial divides, wage inequality, and intolerance.

The purpose of this study is to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors. Through the identification of these leadership dispositions and practices, a survey instrument may be created that would allow for further research into what constitutes great leadership in the Impulse Society—an impulse leadership model.

Definitions of Terms

For the purposes of this study, the following terms are defined:

Common good – The social goal for which society is to be organized in order to promote the common good, which is the general welfare of the society’s members. (Hayek, 1994).

Impulse Society –

A world where business shamelessly seeks the fastest reward, regardless of the long-term social consequences; where political leaders reflexively choose short-term fixes over broad, sustainable social progress; where individuals feel increasingly exploited by a marketplace obsessed with our private cravings yet oblivious to our spiritual well-being or the larger needs of our families and communities (Tazioli, 2014, “Book of the Week,” para. 1).

Leadership dispositions – “. . . thinking dispositions represent characteristics that animate, motivate, and direct our abilities toward good and productive things and are recognized in patterns of our frequently exhibited voluntary behaviours. Dispositions not only direct our strategic abilities but they help activate relevant content knowledge as well, bringing that knowledge to the forefront to better illuminate the situation at hand” (Ritchhart, 2002, p. 21).

Leadership practices – Despite differences in culture, gender, age, and other variables, revealed patterns of behavior (Kouzes and Posner, 2012).

Chapter Summary

The Impulse Society is one where individuals are continually seeking their self-interests in a complex and demanding environment. Leaders may pursue individuated, self-interested decision-making in an environment that reinforces and rewards selfish behavior.

This chapter describes the theoretical framework of rational choice theory as a means of predicting leader decision-making behavior in the Impulse Society. It provides insight into the characteristics that define the decision-making environment, such as incomplete and imperfect information, the expression of self-interest as a way to maximize one's perceived benefit, and the fact that organizational decision-making reflects the decisions of individuals.

Succeeding chapters will review findings related to theories that are relevant to the research problem, describe the research approach and methodology, share results and findings, discuss the limitations of the research, and will include the implications of the findings on the development of a new theory, impulse leadership.

Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

Introduction and Purpose

The purpose of this study is to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society, which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors. Many leadership theories explain aspects of leadership in the Impulse Society, but no theory adequately explains how some executive leaders, in spite of leading in an environment that reinforces self-interested behaviors, make decisions that promote the collective good.

For purposes of this study, Impulse Society is defined as,

A world where business shamelessly seeks the fastest reward, regardless of the long-term social consequences; where political leaders reflexively choose short-term fixes over broad, sustainable social progress; where individuals feel increasingly exploited by a marketplace obsessed with our private cravings yet oblivious to our spiritual well-being or the larger needs of our families and communities. (Tazioli, 2014, “Book of the Week,” para.1).

This chapter will explore the characteristics of the Impulse Society as well as the premises of the Transformational, Authentic, and Servant Leadership theories and their applications to executive leadership in the Impulse Society. It will also explore a predictive framework for executive leader decision-making behaviors in the Impulse Society, which is the rational choice theory (RCT). Finally, it will identify a gap in

current leadership theory and suggest another way of describing modern leadership: impulse leadership. A timeline of relevant world events and the development of these theories is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Timeline of Theories and World Events

1970
• Servant Leadership
• Nixon is President
• Invasion of Cambodia
• Kent State shootings
1976
• Rational choice theory
• Cold War
1978
• Transformational leadership theory
• Louise Brown IVF birth
• Jim Jones People's Temple suicides
2003
• Authentic leadership theory
• Enron scandal
• Tyco scandal

Characteristics of the impulse society. The current leadership environment is different than it has been in the past—it is faster, more complex, less forgiving, with more visible and immediate accountability. The Central Intelligence Agency (2016) stated that the United States is the most technologically advanced economy in the world. Today's leaders are overloaded with electronic communication—e-mails, texts, tweets and electronic report—making it difficult to sort and process information. Every second, on average, 6,000 tweets are tweeted on Twitter, which corresponds to 500 million tweets per day and around 200 billion tweets per year (Internetlivestats, 2015). Over 100 billion

e-mails are sent and received every day (Radicati Group, 2013). The average Fortune 500 leader spends 2 hours and 25 minutes each day answering e-mails (Rampton, 2014)).

Because of the volume of information, leaders face challenges in decision-making, as the environment imposes significant time constraints, task interruptions, and continuous distractions (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). The ability to process additional information and to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information declines (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). The decision-maker will become confused by available information, making it difficult to appropriately set priorities and execute tasks (Schick, Gordon, & Haka, 1990), reducing productivity and performance and hindering learning and innovation. This creates stress for the individual and inefficiencies for an organization (Jackson & Farzaneh, 2012).

The personal costs associated with information overload are significant. Bawden, Holtham and Courtney (1999) stated when information overload occurs, potentially useful information becomes a hindrance, not a help, to an individual's decision-making. Information overload leads to poor, incomplete or delayed decision-making as leaders sift through voluminous formal and informal data, searching for the critical information to make decisions. Information overload is defined as the point in which the available information supply exceeds that of the information processing capability of the decision-maker. Feeling of a loss of control, leaders experience paralysis by analysis, which leads to delayed decision-making, stress, and cognitive strain result (Bawden, 2001). Satisfaction declines and demotivation sets in as the decision-maker begins to lose perspective in some instances, or becomes overconfident in others (Schick et al., 1990).

In addition to the challenge of processing volumes of data, Klering, Weinhandl, and Thaler (2015) stated that leaders must process vast amounts of information in short periods of time in order to quickly make critical business and strategic decisions. Time constraints, too many information sources, and novel tasks put decision-makers at risk. The constraints of time and task simply do not allow for thoughtful analysis of information and a deliberate decision-making process (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). The executive leader also frequently battles distraction and fatigue. In one study, individuals took an average of 23 minutes and 15 seconds to return to a work task after an e-mail interruption (Pattison, 2008). Task interruptions, distractions, and fatigue impair the decision-maker's ability to efficiently process information (Eppler & Mengis, 2004).

While managing the pressures of voluminous information, distractions, and demands for quick decision making, leaders incur costs for changing a previously asserted position. Debacker (2015), in an economic study of United States Senators, examined the political and reputational costs of "flip-flopping," or changing position. He notes that senators incur significant electoral costs when changing established positions or deviating, even in a minor way, from prior voting history. In models of electoral competition, senators incur greater costs when their new positions deviate from prior voting records, even if they deviate in relatively small degrees. Leader decision-making, and the success or failure thereof, directly affect the professional and personal success of the decision-maker.

Advances in technology and other global trends have placed other demands on the executive leader. The erosion of the middle class impacts employees' work, financial, and family lives, which affects leaders' relationships with employees. Technological

advances have been a driving factor in the development of a two-tier labor market in which those at the bottom lack the education and the professional or technical skills of those at the top and, therefore, fail to get comparable pay raises, health insurance coverage, and other benefits. The globalization of trade, and especially the rise of manufacturing in low-wage countries such as China, has put additional downward pressure on wages. Since 1975, almost all the gains in household income have gone to the top 20% of households (Central Intelligence Agency, 2016). Globalization is a key factor in the development of a two-tiered economic system in the Impulse Society.

Gordon (2014) cited the erosion of the manufacturing base also has led to widespread worker wage concessions across the middle- and low-skill job classes. Only at its peak in the 1960s was the minimum wage sufficient to lift a family of three above the poverty line. While the federal minimum wage was only \$3.35 per hour in 1981 and is currently \$7.25 per hour in real dollars, when adjusted for inflation, the current federal minimum wage would need to be more than \$8 per hour to equal its buying power of the early 1980s and, more nearly, \$11 per hour to equal its buying power of the late 1960s.

Gordon (2014) also noted that compounding the income stagnation of the middle and lower classes is the uneven distribution of job-based benefits such as health care coverage and retirement programs; paid leave further imperils the financial security of the average American family. In addition, the out-of-pocket costs (premiums, co-payments, and deductibles) for covered workers has increased at a rate that exceeds inflation or earnings. From 1999 to 2003, the average annual premium for single coverage more than doubled from 2,200 dollars per year to 5,900 dollars. Furthermore, the loss of health care benefits with job loss results in health and financial losses for families.

Vanguard's America Saves Report (2016) stated the shift of retirement plans from defined benefit pension plans to defined contribution 401(k) plans has placed workers at risk in an uncertain market. In 2015, the median 401(k) balance was 29,000 dollars, resulting in over 50% of United States households unable to maintain their pre-retirement standard of living.

Economic pressures on the American family have led to the proliferation of detrimental consumer credit schemes. Collins (2015) stated that, as incomes decline and expenses increase for the average American worker, there has been the financialization of the United States economy, which is defined as the increased size and growing profitability of the financial sector at the expense of the rest of the economy. There is a dramatic increase in household debt taking new forms, including high-interest consumer credit, payday loans, and subprime mortgages that frequently prey upon the poor, making them poorer. Further, Perry (2012) noted the total sales of the finance sector has grown from 10% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1970 to 20% of GDP in 2010. At the same time, sales from manufacturing fell from a total of 24% of GDP in 1970 to 13% of GDP in 2010. Weissman (2013) cited the decline in manufacturing and commensurate rise in the relative importance of the financial sector shifted income from labor to capital, as evidenced by Wall Street profits which rose from less than 10% in 1982, the beginning of deregulation, to 30% of all corporate profits in 2013.

These labor and economic pressures have negatively impacted the American family and contributed to the breakdown of the social fabric of the American society. Samuelson (2013) noted that prolonged unemployment for certain members of the workforce contributes to the erosion of the social fabric. Men with a high school diploma

or less earn lower wages and are more frequently persistently unemployed. This fact makes them less attractive as husbands, contributing to the growth of single-parent families.

Samuelson (2013) also noted that the breakdown of marriage and the rise of single-parent families are significant factors in the erosion of social fabric. In 1980, about 18% of births were to unmarried women; by 2009, the proportion was 41%. Among Whites the increase in unwed births between 1980 and 1999 was from 11% to 36%, among African Americans from 56% to 72%, and among Hispanics from 37% to 53%. Between 1970 and 1990, the share of children living in two-parent families declined from 82% to 63%. Among Whites the decline is from 87% to 73%, among African Americans from 57% to 31%, and among Hispanics from 78% to 57%.

The causes of these changes relate to shifts in cultural norms and economic factors. Murray (2012) noted broader cultural changes -- for example, having a child out of wedlock -- have allowed breaking with certain traditional American norms to become more commonplace and acceptable. The advent of effective contraceptives in the 1960s enabled women to engage in sex without the fear of unwanted pregnancy and diminished the need for marriage. The waning power of religion undermined the importance of family, and the expansion of social welfare programs made it easier for women and their children to live without the economic benefits of marriage. Liberalized divorce laws, like “no-fault” divorce, led to an increase in divorces.

Economists Autor and Wasserman (2013) attributed the decline of marriage, which is concentrated among the poorly educated, to economic factors. From 1979 to 2010, the inflation-adjusted hourly wages for men age 25 to 39 years old with only a high

school diploma decreased 20%, while the wages of similarly situated women increased by 1%. Among those with some college (but no Bachelor's degree), women's wages increased 8% and men's wages decreased by 8%. In addition, fewer men and more women, proportionally, have jobs. From 1979 to 2007, the years prior to the recession, the share of male high school graduates with jobs decreased by 9%; similarly situated women's employment increased by 9%. These economic realities diminish the attractiveness of marriage.

Autor and Wasserman also noted that, on average, children in single-parent homes have lower grades in school, have a higher incidence of drug use, and have higher arrest rates than similarly situated children raised by two parents. They attribute these issues to the fact that two-parent families have more money and time to devote to raising their children. Boys seem especially at risk because they often lack a positive or stable same-sex role model leading to poorer school performance and achievement.

These social and financial shifts have created new demands on leaders as they seek to navigate through politically, financially, racially, and culturally complex webs of competing agendas and conflicts of interest. Existing leadership theory is challenged to address the complexities of a dynamic and divided culture where multiple stakeholders hold strong positions on various issues. These social and financial challenges demand a new type of leadership.

In *Quantum Leadership*, Porter-O'Grady and Malloch (2015) draw from complexity theory and chaos theory as they note the shift from a linear, Newtonian organizational design, which was characterized the Industrial Age, to a quantum organizational design created by a complex, dynamic, and fluid world. During the

Industrial Age, individuals led scripted lives working in fixed jobs in an environment that held unlimited resources. Lifetime employment with one employer was not unusual. In the current environment, leaders must envision the whole of a system as well as the impact of its individual parts, as teams work to create synergy around tasks that are often poorly defined and continuously changing. Change is now a constant in this new environment, and the leader serves as the agent of change, setting the vision of the future and inspiring others to seek it. As posited in Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, Quantum Leadership also envisions the leader as a role model for others who, through observation and imitation, are motivated to embrace change.

Leaders in the quantum environment must be aware that they are operating in complex adaptive systems and they must consider the impact of every action, behavior, and function on the multiple parts of the system. Understanding the external environment and the system's ability to respond and adapt in a sustainable way is the key strategic task of the quantum leader. Hierarchies, which served leaders well in the Industrial Age, are replaced by fluid management structures which allow for immediate, nimble responses to changing forces in the dynamic environment. Those who will succeed will "read the signposts" of change in the environment and will have the ability to enact change quickly and effectively (p. 34).

Because of the organizational and personal importance of leadership decision-making, organizations and executive leaders have an interest in better understanding leadership dispositions and practices in the current environment. Bennis (2003) stated that effective leader decision-makers are strategic thinkers able to mobilize people and

capital and they are selfless individuals. How does a selfless leader operate in the Impulse Society?

Center for Creative Leadership. For 40 years, the Center for Creative Leadership has been delivering innovative executive leadership solutions and research based on experience gained from working with tens of thousands of organizations and more than a million leaders across six continents and more than 130 countries. It draws from the real world experience of leaders across many cultures, industries and disciplines. In 2016, the Center for Creative Leadership published a white paper, “The challenges leaders face around the world: More similar than different,” drawing from 763 executive interviews from six countries. These leadership challenges reflect the characteristics of organizations operating in the Impulse Society, notably a continuous sense of urgency, requirement to respond to demands immediately, accountability to multiple stakeholders, high levels of visibility, particularly to failure, severe resource constraints, and the need to persuade employees and other stakeholders to remain engaged with the work of the organization in a distracting and demanding environment.

Reviews of the Literature

Exceptional executive leadership is a popular area of study among scholars in various disciplines. The research frequently focuses on what leaders should or could be doing, rather than their actual leadership dispositions and practices. Three leadership theories, Transformational, Authentic, and Servant Leadership theories, are reviewed, and an alternate explanation of leader behavior based on the economic theory of rational choice, are examined for fit with the current leadership environment.

Transformational leadership. Downton (1973) focused on the charismatic and effective elements of leadership, which he defined as transformational leadership, which is a process that changes and transforms followers by engaging their emotions, values, ethics, and motivations in pursuit of a long-term goal. Burns (1978) further linked the roles of leadership and followership by noting that leaders tap into the motivations of their followers to better equip them to reach organizational goals. Northouse (2016) described a process where the leader identifies and meets the needs of followers and influences them through the effective communication of a vision and charisma to accomplish goals beyond their expectations. As such, these goals can be positive or negative, which is known as pseudo-transformational leadership.

Burns (1978) noted that transformational leadership differs from traditional transactional leadership in that it creates a connection that elevates the motivations of followers to accomplish more than they might otherwise accomplish. Northouse (2016) distinguished transformational leadership from transactional leadership in terms of transactional leadership's focus on exchanges between the leader and follower in quid pro quo-type transactions; for example, if you vote for me, there will be no new taxes.

The most prominent scholars in transformational leadership theory are Bass (1990), Bennis and Nanus (1985), and Kouzes and Posner (2012). Bass (1990) identified four characteristics of transformational leadership which include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Idealized influence describes the emotional content of leadership, whereby the leader acts as a strong role model for followers who, in turn, seek to emulate the leader. The

charismatic leader ideally should have high moral standards as she evokes the respect and trust of followers, but it may not always be the case.

Bass (1990) further stated the transformational leader provides inspirational motivation which expresses both clear expectations to followers as well as messages that serve to motivate followers to act on the vision that has been set. This vision is intellectually stimulating and challenges followers to look at problems in new ways and to adopt innovative methods of reaching the shared vision. Finally, transformational leaders offer individualized consideration where they listen to the needs of the followers and provide a supportive environment for change. Leaders offer the individual follower the support that they need to accomplish the shared vision.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) asked leaders 90 questions from which they derived four strategies used by transformational leaders. First, transformational leaders provide a clear vision of the future which was believable, realistic, and attractive. The leaders work to help individuals within the organization understand their roles in the vision and they encourage followers to own the change. Second, transformational leaders are social architects, creating shared meaning in the organization that enabled followers to embrace a new organizational identity or new organizational values. Third, transformational leaders engender a high level of trust within the organization by acting in predictable and reliable ways. They stand true to their word and, in doing so, inspire others to embark in new directions, even if those directions involve great uncertainty. Finally, transformational leaders are self-aware and work from their strengths while acknowledging areas of weakness. Because of the leaders' strong senses of self, they invoke confidence in followers to explore areas outside of their typical comfort levels.

Kouzes and Posner (2012) interviewed 1,300 middle- and senior-level leaders in developing their model which describes five fundamental practices of transformational leadership. Transformational leaders model the way. Their clarity regarding their values and philosophy allows them to live their values as a model for others to follow. They remain true to their word and committed to their expressed values. Transformational leaders also inspire a shared vision. They listen to the hopes and dreams of others and are able to create and communicate a vision for the future that engages others in the journey. Third, transformational leaders challenge the process, or the status quo. They are willing to acknowledge what needs to change and they embrace change, causing others to break out of old, outdated ways of doing things and to step into new, innovative approaches to intransigent problems. In addition, transformational leaders also enable others to act. By building trust and promoting effective collaborations, transformational leaders create environments where people feel supported and able to envision and embrace changes that need to happen. Finally, transformational leaders encourage the heart. Transformational leaders understand that change is hard and they recognize and praise efforts of their followers, which inspires loyalty and creates a greater commitment to pursuing the shared vision.

These transformational leadership models focus on the behavior of leaders in inspiring growth and change in the lives of individuals and their organizations. The challenge of transformational leadership models in describing leadership dispositions and practices in the Impulse Society is time. It takes time to listen, formulate, and inspire engagement in and commitment to a shared vision. Executive leaders in the Impulse Society are driven by immediacy, urgency, and accountability. In addition, executive

leaders in the Impulse Society frequently work with followers they may never meet enabled by technology where the time is always now and the vision is subject to continual examination and refinement. Great leaders in the Impulse Society create movements that depend less on who they are and more on their ability to adapt their messages as their situations evolve in real time.

Authentic leadership. Chan (2005) described authentic leadership as a theory that focuses on whether leaders are real and true. Shamir and Eilam (2005) further stated that authentic leadership can be examined from the intrapersonal perspective of what is going on inside the leader. Is the leader self-aware and self-regulated, with a clear self-concept? Eagly (2005) examined whether the interaction between the leader and followers is authentic. Finally, Avolio, Walumbwa, and Weber (2009) examined whether authentic leadership is developmental in that the authenticity of the leader residing inside is waiting to be triggered by a critical life event.

Bill George's (2003) authentic leadership approach took a practical approach to authentic leadership. From his survey of 125 leaders, George found five basic characteristics of authentic leaders. Authentic leaders understand their purpose in life and they have strong values and perceptions of the "right" thing to do. They establish trusting relationships with others, they demonstrate self-discipline and act based on values. Authentic leaders are passionate about their mission (purpose in life). George states that modern leadership demands the softening of the boundaries between leaders and their followers and that greater proximity and understanding results in greater compassion in leaders, which is needed to be authentic. Authenticity requires awareness,

vulnerability, and a sense of compassion first towards oneself as the leader and then toward others.

Northouse (2016) noted that authentic leadership is a relatively young theory that emerged in the United States on the heels of 9/11, the banking collapse, and economic upheaval of the early 2000s. Because it has no precise definition and it can be viewed through many lenses (intrapersonal, interpersonal, and developmental), scholars have been conducting research to better define the parameters of authentic leadership.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) defined authentic leadership as

a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate, to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development (p. 94).

Through a comprehensive review of leadership literature and an interview with groups of content experts in the leadership field, Walumbwa and his colleagues (2008) identified four components of authentic leadership: self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency.

Self-awareness relates to leaders' understanding of themselves—their strengths and weaknesses, motivations, values, and their impact on others. It also includes leaders trusting their intuitions and acting on them based on their self-knowledge. Authentic leaders regulate their actions based on strong internal moral compasses that guide their behavior even in the midst of challenging circumstances. This characteristic relies on

leaders' abilities to control the extent to which others influence them. In this way, they remain true to their expressed values and beliefs.

Walumbwa et al. (2008) also noted that authentic leaders exhibit balanced processing, which is another self-regulating behavior. In balanced process, leaders seek multiple and contradictory perspectives prior to making important decisions and constantly remain open to opposing or new perspectives on current challenges. By remaining open to new ideas, yet grounded and transparent about their views, leaders are seen as authentic. Finally, authentic leaders demonstrate relational transparency by being open and honest in their dealings with others and remaining true to who they are. It is self-regulating because leaders can modulate their openness to others. It is enhanced when the leader shares his strengths, weaknesses, hopes, and failures with others in an appropriate way.

Luthens and Avolio (2003) cited common attributes of authentic leaders. They note that authentic leaders are confident, hopeful, optimistic, and resilient to change. These characteristics were born of critical life events that shaped who they are and how they relate to others and events. In an Impulse Society, due to time constraints, demands for immediate responses, information overload, and environmental pressures for immediate gratification, leaders in crisis may express their authentic selves in ways that are not noble and compassionate. Additional research, such as is proposed here, is needed to identify executive leadership dispositions and practices which lead to the expression of their best authentic selves in an Impulse Society.

Servant leadership. Servant leadership emerged through the work of Greenleaf (1970) who defined it as:

Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then the conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead...The best test...is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wise, 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, will they not be further deprived? (p. 15)

Spears (2002) identified 10 behaviors that emerge, leading to effective servant leadership. First, servant leaders listen to their followers and conceptualize, meaning that they have deep insight into the organization and they are able to anticipate and solve emerging issues. Second, through empathy and awareness, they foster emotional healing by their interest in the concerns and needs of their followers. Third, servant leaders put followers first before their own agendas. Servant leaders help their followers grow and succeed and behave ethically with openness and honesty with their followers; through persuasion, they empower others to make decisions on their own and to be self-sufficient; and finally, they create value for the community, leaving it a better place than when they began.

Liden, Panaccio, and Meuser (2014) noted three antecedent conditions must exist for servant leadership to manifest. First, the context and culture must support a leadership model where power is shared between the leader and follower. Second, the leader must have the traits and disposition to serve. It must be an indwelling passion. Finally, some followers do not want their leader to get to know, help, guide, and develop them. In these cases, servant leadership is ineffective. If these antecedent conditions exist, servant leaders demonstrate the following seven characteristics: listening, empathy,

healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and community-building.

Several scholars have begun to use the conceptual underpinnings of servant leadership in an attempt to build a theory around it. Russell and Stone (2002) developed a practical model that includes 20 attributes, nine functional characteristics and 11 characteristics which describe the servant leader. Likewise, Patterson (2003) created a value-based model of servant leadership that includes seven constructs that characterize the virtues of the servant leader.

The practical challenge of servant leadership in an Impulse Society is, while servant leadership as a philosophy and its behaviors are laudable, they are prescriptive and run counter to human nature, which includes personal autonomy and choice. Not all leaders want to put followers first, and that fact is acceptable in a world where autonomy and choice are valued. Leaders who are focused on promoting the collective good are promulgating an agenda for humanity, not only for their followers.

Rational choice theory. Goldthorpe (2007) defined rational choice theory (RCT) as a family of theories taken from the field of economics that explain social phenomena as the outcome of the actions of individuals who are acting rationally. Becker (1993) stated individuals are said to act rationally if they maximize their interests as they perceive them within the constraints of time, imperfect memories, intellectual capabilities, and available opportunities. Opportunities are created by the collective action of the other individuals, agencies, and organizations. RCT defines self-interested decision-making behavior as utility maximization. Individuals act in ways that maximize their perceived value. RCT does not map the thought process of decision-making but,

instead, predicts decision-making outcomes and patterns of decision-making behaviors based on individuals' tendencies to maximize their perceived value, which is defined in economic terms as utility.

Becker (1993) defined the core assumptions of RCT. First, decision-makers have logically consistent goals and, given these goals, they will consistently choose the best available option to achieve their goals. Becker's (1993) second assumption stated that individuals vary in the degree to which they express their self-interests, which are referred to as preferences. Becker asserted that individuals generally express their preferences by behaving in purely selfish ways, that is, openly maximizing their self-interests at all times.

Becker's (1993) final assumption stated that observed social phenomena are aggregations of individuals' decision-making outcomes and the rules that those decision-makers have employed to reach those decisions. According to Udehn (2001), "Social phenomena must be explained in terms of individuals, their physical and psychic states, actions, interactions, social situation, and physical environment" (p. 354). When viewed from this multi-focal lens, the social phenomena described in the Impulse Society result from the decisions of individuals who are influenced by their observations and perceptions of many internal and external factors. The outcomes of their decision-making may be predicted by RCT.

Becker (1993) noted that pure RCT assumes that individuals are rationalists; that is, they are consistently selecting choices in their best interests based on perfect information. There have been many critics of this assumption, which has not held in empirical research. Research demonstrates that individuals are rarely perfectly informed

of all choices and, consequently, they often appear to deviate from making choices that are in their obvious self-interest. Green and Shapiro in their book, *Pathologies of Rational Choice Theory* (1994), criticized the assumptions of RCT. They argue that RCT is reductionist and fails to account for the individual variations in thinking or cognitive anomalies. In addition, the authors state that RCT does not take into account the culture and context of decision-making behaviors and how these factors influence the ability to predict decision-making outcomes.

Green and Shapiro (1996) also stated that RCT ignores the impact of social embeddedness on decision-making, meaning that individuals' sense of obligations, preferences, and beliefs may lead them to act in ways that do not appear rational or self-interested. The concepts of reciprocity, where actors act with kindness toward others based on their assessments or beliefs that others will act kindly toward them, and altruism, defined as incurring cost to oneself for the benefit of others, are asserted as deviations from decision-making outcomes predicted by RCT.

For example, a terrorist suicide act may appear altruistic—an “irrational” sacrifice for the good of a cause or a group. In considering, however, the stigma, ostracism, or threat of eternal damnation faced by actors who reject a request or expectation to commit suicide, accepting martyrdom may be viewed as a rational act. Behavioral economics and evolutionary psychology theories study social dilemmas that purport to refute the validity of RCT.

Becker (1993) stated that culture and context are irrelevant in those situations where RCT works best, for example, in the study of decision-making under risk and uncertainty. According to Becker, idiosyncratic or random decision-making outcomes

distributed across a population are unlikely to significantly impact predictions of aggregate level decision-making outcomes. In these situations, he suggests, individuals are “general-purpose problem-solvers” who act with strong rationality, whether it is selecting a spouse, accepting martyrdom, or purchasing a dishwasher.

In examining what appears to be irrational decision-making, it is useful to consider the factors that affect how executive leaders process information in the Impulse Society. In general, decision-making quality is positively linked to the amount of information the decision-maker receives (Chewing & Harrell, 1990). At a certain point, however, the amount of information to be processed becomes overwhelming and actually diminishes one’s ability to make decisions. At this point, the ability to process additional information and to discriminate between relevant and irrelevant information declines (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). The decision-maker will become confused by available information making it difficult to rationally set priorities and execute tasks (Schick, Gordon, & Haka, 1990). Rational decision-making breaks down. The context of decision-making affects the decision-maker’s ability to effectively process information. Time constraints, too many information sources, and novel tasks put decision-makers at risk for information overload. The constraints of time and task simply do not allow for thoughtful analysis of information and a deliberate decision-making process (Eppler & Mengis, 2004). The characteristics of the Impulse Society—fast, complex, demanding, highly visible, with high stakes—create an environment where decision-making pathologies frequently arise.

In spite of phenomena which potentially erodes the core premises of RCT, RCT is still remarkably accurate in predicting decision-making behavior. The theoretical rigor of

RCT allows for the identification of the violations which impact predictive accuracy from those which do not (Gächter, 2013).

Decision-Making for the Common Good: On the surface, it appears that key tenets of RCT—rationality and selfishness—are often violated as evidenced by the decision-making behaviors of individuals. For example, some individuals support National Public Radio, they do not evade taxes, they diligently recycle as a way of protecting the environment, and they take part in collective actions that promote the welfare of society. These behaviors seem to refute the view of the self-regarding (selfish) decision-maker who consistently makes decisions that maximize her/his benefit (utility).

RCT proponents argue that there are many reasons why selfish individuals behave in prosocial ways. Cynically, individuals may be opportunistic, pretending to be unselfish, yet using deception to maximize their self-interest (Williamson, 1975). At times, others see their interests as being linked to the interests of others and may act in ways that appear to be cooperative or altruistic (Witteck, Sjinders & Nee, 2013).

RCT proponents note that many of the instruments used to measure selfishness as a core tenet of RCT are vignettes which explore attitudes and not actual behaviors. Instruments that measure attitudes can be influenced by social desirability bias, or the tendency of survey respondents to answer questions in a manner that will be viewed favorably by others. Social desirability bias results in the over-reporting "good behavior" or under-reporting "bad," or undesirable, behavior. RCT proponents argue that life experiences, like laboratory experiments, where decisions are not founded in attitude but are directly tied to financial incentives are likely to expose the self-regarding assumption of RCT (Becker, 1993). Gächter (2013) noted that some individuals, even in

experimental settings where the costs are fictitious, will tend to behave unselfishly up to a point, and that point is where unselfishness becomes too costly.

In an environment like the Impulse Society which reinforces self-interested behavior, are there executive leaders who are making decisions for the common good? If so, what leadership dispositions and practices lead to decision-making that promotes the common good? Are they promoting the common good because of intrinsic payoff related to their senses of self, or is there some other motivation that drives their leadership dispositions and practices?

Chapter Summary

The Impulse Society displays a relatively new set of leadership challenges. It offers the unrelenting pressure of too much information and too little time to appropriately assimilate in an environment that requires immediate responses with high accountability and visibility to failure. Many theories offer insights into aspects of leadership in the Impulse Society, but none fully explains the Impulse Society phenomena and how leaders operate within this environment.

RCT serves as a predictive lens for better understanding leadership decision-making in environments that are complex and competitive. RCT assumes that actors consistently make decisions and pursue goals that are in their self-interest. Empirical evidence suggests, however, that some actors at times will behave in prosocial, or unselfish, ways (Gachter, 2013).

Proponents of RCT state that even if individuals at times act in unselfish ways, that, taken as a whole, it is “in the noise” when considering the weight of evidence in favor of rational behavior. Alternately, other proponents posit that, because most

research on selfishness uses attitudinal measures rather than recollections of actual behavior, that a social desirability exists; that is, individuals answer survey questions in a way that paints themselves in the most favorable light—maximizing positive prosocial responses and minimizing negative selfish responses (Gächter, 2013).

Even RCT experimental studies using validated games that test for gift-giving, cooperation, trustworthiness, and reciprocity find that people will behave unselfishly until it becomes too costly to do so, at which point they will act in a way that preserves or improves self-interest (Gächter, 2013). The purpose of this study is to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good while leading organizations which are in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society, which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors.

Chapter 3: Research Design Methodology

General Perspective

The Impulse Society is described as, a world where business shamelessly seeks the fastest reward, regardless of the long-term social consequences; where political leaders reflexively choose short-term fixes over broad, sustainable social progress; where individuals feel increasingly exploited by a marketplace obsessed with our private cravings yet oblivious to our spiritual well-being or the larger needs of our families and communities (Tazioli, 2014, “Book of the Week,” para.1).

Current leadership literature indicates a gap in the articulation of the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who promote the common good in the Impulse Society. This study used qualitative research methods, specifically, individual, semi-structured interviews with executive leaders who are currently leading organizations that promote the common good as defined by organizational characteristics identified by Hickman and Sorenson (2014). Common leadership challenge scenarios will be used to elicit the feelings and actions of leaders as they face these challenges. The scenarios emerged from interviews conducted with 763 executive leaders from China/Hong Kong, Egypt, India, Singapore, Spain, United Kingdom, and United States by the Center for Creative Leadership, a leading global provider of leadership development. The

research was published in a 2016 white paper entitled, “The challenges leaders face around the world: More similar than different.”

The research question for this study was: From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors? For purposes of this research, common good is defined as the social goal for which society is to be organized in order to promote the common good, which is the general welfare of the society’s members (Hayek, 1994).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) stated that “. . . qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3). Patton (2002) further stated that phenomenological approaches, which are unique to qualitative research methods, are appropriate to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of the individual lived experience. According to Marshall and Rossman (2016), exploratory research questions are those questions that are intended to better understand phenomena or those questions that are used to generate a hypothesis for further investigation.

Phenomenology as a philosophy was founded by Husserl around 1900, and then was further developed by Heidegger, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty (1962) stated that the goal of phenomenology is to describe a phenomenon, not to analyze it. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated that phenomenology requires understanding social phenomena from the actors’ own perspectives and describing their life world as they experienced it. Perception is reality. Further, rather than describing an individual

phenomenon as experienced by an individual, phenomenological research searches for the common essences of the phenomenon as experienced through the experiences of individuals. The process of determining the essence of the phenomenon was described initially by Husserl, who states while phenomenon varies freely based on the thoughts and experiences of individuals, some themes remain constant. These common themes are the essence of the phenomenon. This study sought to identify the essential leadership practices and dispositions of executive leaders who lead for common good in the Impulse Society.

Research Context

Companies were eliminated using a similar organizational selection process as employed by Collins (2001) in his seminal work, *Good to Great*. Roberts (2014) described the characteristics of organizations operating in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society. These organizations operate in an efficient market which is volume-based and share-price-maximizing; they require relentless cycles of capital and innovation in order to succeed; they serve markets where the consumer abhors delay and adversity; they experience continuous pressure to maximize commercial and technological efficiencies; they operate in labor markets where individuals no longer see work as a necessity or an obligation but, instead, exercise substantially more control over how and how much they engage; they exhibit ever-increasing capacity to communicate and connect digitally, which creates a compulsion to resolve issues immediately using these channels; they experience a constant state of urgency; and they demonstrate the shift from internal business problem-solving to an external problem-solving with multiple stakeholders that

is iterative and public. Cut 1 included only organizations that met the criteria set forth above as organizations that are impacted by the Impulse Society.

Cut 2 used the indicators from Hickman and Sorenson's (2014) review of the WorldBlu Survey of Most Democratic Workplaces' 10 factors of workplace freedom. Organizational democracy is defined as "a system of organization that is based on freedom instead of fear and control. It's a way of designing organizations to amplify the possibilities of human potential—and the organization as a whole." An organization makes it onto the WorldBlu List through a survey process their employees complete, which evaluates the overall design of an organization along a fear-based to freedom-centered continuum based on the WorldBlu 10 Principles of Organizational Democracy. Those organizations scoring 3.5 or higher on a 0-5.0 scale become WorldBlu-certified democratic workplaces.

Hickman and Sorenson (2014) identified the following characteristics of organizations that promote democratic organizational principles within the current environment. These organizations cultivate purpose and a sense of mission as a shared lived experience, they generate and sustain a culture where their missions and promoting the common good are guiding principles in decision-making, they are thoughtful in the selection of new employees, they foster the collective capacity of the organization, they engage employees in meaningful work through the development of strong relationships, and they are learning organizations that are open to change. In addition to the Roberts criteria described above, organizations that exhibited the characteristics described by Hickman and Sorenson (2014) were selected for inclusion in this study.

The determination that an organization met the criteria will be validated in one of two ways: three published articles which validated meeting the above criteria were collected as further confirmation that the organization promotes the public good in the Impulse Society or information from the organization's website expressing the Hickman and Sorenson (2014) characteristics as core strategic objectives in its mission, vision, and values. Validating indicators were noted in the Organization Profile form (Appendix A). If insufficient substantiation exists that an organization meets the above criteria, the organization were eliminated from the potential organizational sample pool (Cut 4).

Research Participants

Marshall and Rossman (2016) stated that the use of an appropriate sampling strategy is critically important as it affects the credibility, trustworthiness, and transferability of the research study. This study used criterion sampling to select participants based on a predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2002). Creswell (2009) stated criterion sampling is useful for identifying participants whose experiences are rich with meaning.

Hickman and Sorenson (2014) further described the leadership dispositions and practices of leaders who promote the common good in the organizations which they lead. The leadership dispositions and practices include: a commitment to and ownership of the organization's mission, which promotes the common good; encouragement of each employee to contribute their best effort or work to achieve the organization's mission; encouraging each other to act for the common good, which creates a common bond across the organization; enabling others to act; commitment to take action visibly and

invisibly to promote the shared mission; willingness to rise above self-interest to promote the shared mission; and making resources available to achieve the mission.

Greenleaf (1970) described the leader that leads for the common good. He defines the servant-leader as,

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 . . . (p. 15)

Liden et al. (2008) identified servant leadership practices as conceptualizing, a process in which the leader seeks to thoroughly understand the organization and its people, emotional healing, which requires sensitivity toward others and their feelings, putting followers first, helping followers grow and succeed, behaving ethically, empowering followers, and creating value for the community. These traits closely mirror those described by Hickman and Sorenson (2014) in their study of leaders and also served as a point of reference in assessing leaders who lead organizations demonstrating Hickman and Sorenson's characteristics.

The selection of the participants followed Collins' (2001) cut selection process. In Cuts 1 through 4, organizations were identified that meet the criteria as organizations that promote the common good in the Impulse Society as defined by Roberts (2014) and Hickman and Sorenson (2014), which were validated by external publications or website analysis. In Cut 5, the current executive leaders of the noted organizations were identified. Luo et al. (2013) in a recent Harvard Business Review article cited a study

that indicated that chief executive officers (CEOs) achieve their optimal effectiveness in their roles at 4.8 years. A minimal tenure of 4 years as CEO were an additional criteria in the study to ensure the current CEO has contributed to the organization's identification as an organization that promotes the common good in the Impulse Society.

Creswell (2009) stated sample size is determined by the complexity of the phenomenon studied, the type of qualitative design, the richness and extensive use of data, resource constraints, and saturation. Research participants of this study are executive leaders which are expert or elite interviewees based on Marshall and Rossman's (2016) definition of individuals who are considered to be "influential, prominent, and/or well-informed in an organization or community." The authors identify several challenges in interviewing elites, notably, access, adaptation of the interview structure, power, and power sharing. Creswell (1998) recommended undertaking between five and 20 interviews for a phenomenological study. Mertens and Wilson (2012) suggested utilizing approximately six participants as a recommended sample size in phenomenological studies. This study included interviews with four to seven executive leaders.

The following process was used to select interview candidates. First, several organizations were identified as fitting the criteria of both operating in the Impulse Society as defined by Roberts (2014) and then meeting the Hickman and Sorenson (2014) criteria (Cuts 1 through 3). These initial assessments were validated by either three published articles or website content as described above (Cut 4). Organizations whose leaders have less than 4 years of tenure in their roles as CEOs were eliminated (Cut 5). Executive leaders who remain were assessed based on Hickman and Sorenson's (2016)

and Liden's et al. (2008) leadership characteristics. Leaders who pass all screens were contacted by telephone, letter, and e-mail, informed regarding the purpose of the study, and requested to commit 1 hour of their time to the interview.

Individual interviews with executive leaders were conducted. The interview protocol allowed interviewees to express their feelings, beliefs, and experiences related to several common leadership challenge scenarios which were identified by the Center for Creative Leadership (2016) in its white paper, "The challenges leaders face around the world: More similar than different." After the purpose of the study, key definitions or assumptions, and the provisions to protect the confidentiality of interviewees' identities was shared, interviewees were asked to sign an informed consent form. All interviewees were informed that they are participating voluntarily in the study and, as such, are not required to answer any questions if they do not want to respond. It was noted that all interviews are confidential. To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were assigned to all interviewees who participate in the study. Any questions or concerns regarding the study were addressed prior to the commencement of the interview.

Instruments Used in Data Collection

According to Bogner et al. (2009), an elite interview must be guided by an interview protocol which reflects the unique experience of elites in order to collect data from participants. The interview protocol serves as an instrument for structuring the interview and highlighting the direction of the interview giving limited access to the elite interviewee.

In this study, a priori (determined beforehand) scenarios, which are common leadership challenges identified by the Center for Creative Leadership (2016) in

interviews with 763 executive leaders from six countries, were used to guide the writing of the interview protocol questions. Saldaña (2016) described the process of using a priori themes, which stem from articulated research questions, purposes, and goals, as a guide in writing the interview protocol questions. He recommends the use of analytic memos as a way of mitigating researcher bias when using a priori themes to develop interview questions. Ahern (1999) also urged researchers to use reflexivity to identify areas of potential bias and to “bracket” them so their impact on the research process is minimized. An analytic memo was developed to address potential biases, for example, how the researcher personally relates to the participants of the study and/or the phenomenon, any personal or ethical dilemmas with the study, and tentative answers for the study’s research questions.

A preliminary interview protocol using a priori scenarios was developed (see Appendix B) based on the Center for Creative Leadership (2016) in “The challenges leaders face around the world: More similar than different.” These leadership challenges reflect the characteristics of organizations operating in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society, notably, a continuous sense of urgency, requirement to respond to demands immediately, accountability to multiple stakeholders, high levels of visibility, particularly to failure, severe resource constraints, and the need to persuade employees and other stakeholders to remain engaged with the work of the organization in a distracting and demanding environment. According to Creswell (2009), an interview protocol contains four types of questions: introductory, transition, key, and closing. Introductory questions elicit general and non-intrusive information in a nonthreatening manner. They are intended to build rapport. These questions requested information regarding the

interviewees' background and time in the executive leadership roles. Transition questions link the introductory questions to the key questions, which are the questions most related to the research question and the purpose of the study. The development of effective key questions is essential to eliciting valuable information on the research question. These questions relate to the common leadership challenge scenarios. Finally, closing questions are easy to answer and allow for the seamless closure of the interview. These questions requested any questions or concerns in the debrief of the interview. Questions were open-ended in order to obtain rich data.

The preliminary interview protocol was shared with experts in conducting interviews. The purpose of the study was shared with experts and a request was made for feedback on the preliminary interview protocol. The preliminary interview protocol was refined based on expert feedback.

Best practices also recommend that interview protocols are developed iteratively—questions are developed, tested, and refined based on what one learns from asking participants questions (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006). Creswell (2007) noted that qualitative research, by its nature, is emergent. The goal of qualitative research is to learn about the research question from the participants of the study and to maintain the flexibility to do so in real time as information emerges from the interview. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) stated that interview quality is demonstrated when the collected data is rich and a self-reliant story emerges that requires minimal interpretation or explanation. The interview protocol was revised based on quality of data from initial interviews.

Creswell (2013) stated that validation is the process used in qualitative research to ensure rigor, which is research which is credible, dependable, confirmable and

transferable. Miles and Huberman (1994) further stated that there are no absolute decision-making rules for establishing validity of qualitative research. The authors state that, in order to ensure qualitative research validity, the focus is on analyzing the sources of potential bias that might invalidate the qualitative research findings. Tactics like thick, rich description, weighing the evidence, following up on surprise answers, probing for rival explanations, getting feedback on the interview from interview participants, also known as member checking, ensure validity. In this study, the use of analytic memos to bracket bias, undertaking a pilot of interview protocol and revising it based on preliminary data, and member-checking assisted in ensuring research validity.

Data Analysis

Prior to the interview, an Organization Profile Form (Appendix A) was completed on the identified organizations who meet the study criteria. All information collected and recorded on the Organization Profile Form regarding the organization and its executive leader was reviewed to ensure that clarifying interview questions are appropriate and relevant. All information that has been shared with the interviewee—for example, written requests to participate as well as responses to those requests—were noted for reference during the interview. A file with all information collected to date in the Organization Profile Form, as well as timing of requests, were compiled and accessible for review during the interview.

Two procedures were used to record the interview. First, a digital recording was taken of the interview. Second, field notes were taken during the interview in order to record the interviewee's gestures, expressions, and other nonverbal cues. Both the digital

recording and the field notes were stored on a personal computer which is backed up nightly to a backup server.

Wertz (2005) described the process of preparing raw data for analysis. First, the interview recordings are transcribed into interview transcripts. Once in written form, data is openly read without the research focus in mind in order to grasp the participant's expression and meaning in the broadest context. Then reduction begins. Redundancy and incidental or irrelevant expressions may be eliminated if they do not contribute to the meaning of the description. Kruth (2015) noted that, as extraneous words are removed and the data units are broken down into categories, it is desirable that categories are illustrated using direct text and quotes from within the original data.

Charmaz (2014) described coding as a means to generate the bones of data analysis, whereas integration assembles those bones into a working skeleton (p. 113). In this study, pattern coding was used to generate the framework of the data analysis and code weaving will be used to provide the integration of the codes into a cohesive whole.

This study undertook data analysis in three phases. During Phase 1, the researcher read and reread the transcripts of the interviews to become intimate with the data. The researcher then used a descriptive coding method which involved closely studying the data by comparing the interview data for similarities and differences. Descriptive coding was the entry point to provide the researcher with preliminary codes or themes for further investigation (Saldaña, 2016).

Phase 2 employed pattern coding. According to Saldaña (2016), pattern codes are explanations that allow the researcher to make inferences from emerging themes that make sense within the context of the research questions. Pattern coding is useful as a

secondary coding process to allow the researcher to identify major themes and to examine explanations contained in the data. Pattern coding also can assist with the identification of patterns of human relationships (Saldaña, 2016).

During Phase 3, the researcher used a coding method called codeweaving in which Saldaña (2016) describes the integration of key words from pattern coding into an analytic memo narrative. Codeweaving is a practical first step in fitting all of the data puzzle pieces together in a cohesive manner (p. 48). In this stage, the goal was to identify major themes in the study and search for themes in the data that addressed the research question.

The researcher began by reading and rereading the data, then began breaking down each interview transcript into descriptive codes or themes, noting similarities and differences in the interviews. The list of similarities and differences from cycle one of the coding process are noted in Appendix C. Analytic memos, both written and audio versions, were created during this process.

Wertz (2005) stated that identification of preliminary themes or codes is used to categorize data, but these preliminary codes are only preparatory for a more in-depth, detailed analysis of the data. In phenomenological research, the identification of any coding of data is merely preparatory in that it organizes data conveniently for a more in-depth and structural analysis that follows. The purpose of this study was to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good while leading organizations that are in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society, which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors.

Summary of Methodology

This study proposed to use a qualitative research tool, which was individual, semi-structured interviews, to study the phenomenon of executives who lead organizations that promote the common good in the Impulse Society, as described by Roberts (2014). Specifically, the research question for this study is: From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors? For purposes of this research, common good was defined as the social goal for which society is to be organized in order to promote the common good, which is the general welfare of the society's members (Hayek, 1994). Patton (2002) stated that phenomenological approaches, which are unique to qualitative research methods, are appropriate to explore, describe, and analyze the meaning of the individual lived experience.

Criterion sampling was used to identify participants whose experiences are rich with meaning (Creswell, 2009). First, organizations were identified that operate in an environment demonstrating the characteristics of the Impulse Society as described by Roberts (2014). Then, organizations were selected that demonstrate the characteristics described by Hickman and Sorenson (2014) based on a survey of 21 organizations and 415 employees from the WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces. Finally, a recent Harvard Business Review article cited a study that indicated that CEOs achieve their optimal effectiveness in their roles at 4.8 years (Luo et al., 2013). A minimum tenure of 4 years as CEO was an additional criterion in the study to ensure the current CEO has contributed to organizational culture that promotes the common good. Four to

seven executive leaders from organizations that evidence characteristics identified by Roberts (2014) and Hickman and Sorenson (2014) and who have at least 4 years tenure in the executive role were selected for inclusion in the study. The selection validated by three published articles describing the organization's leadership in promoting the common good or from the organization's website where the Hickman and Sorenson (2014) characteristics are central to the organization's mission, vision, and values.

A priori (determined beforehand) scenarios, which were identified by the Center for Creative Leadership's white paper of common leadership challenges, were used to guide the writing of the interview protocol questions. Saldaña (2016) described the process of using a priori themes which stem from articulated research questions, purposes, and goals as a guide in writing the interview protocol questions. Ahern (1999) also urged researchers using reflexivity to identify areas of potential bias to "bracket" them so their impact on the research process is minimized. In order to ensure qualitative research validity, tactics including the use of analytic memos to bracket bias, undertaking a pilot of interview protocol and revising it based on preliminary data, and getting feedback on the interview from interview participants, also known as member checking, were used.

Interview digital recordings were transcribed into interview transcripts. Once in written form, preliminary themes or codes were identified to categorize data. Descriptive coding, which involves closely studying the data and comparing them for similarities and differences, was used. After descriptive coding, pattern coding will determine which of the initial codes leads to inferences of emerging themes that make sense in the context of the research questions. Finally, the actual integration of key words from first and second

cycle coding were integrated in an analytic memo narrative in a process known as codeweaving. Saldaña (2016) described codeweaving as “a practical first step in fitting all of the data puzzle pieces together in a cohesive manner” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 48).

Chapter 4: Results

Research Question

The purpose of the study was to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society, which was described as an environment that continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested behaviors.

The following research question guided the study: From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors? For purposes of this research, common good was defined as the social goal for which society is to be organized in order to promote the common good, which is the general welfare of the society's members (Hayek, 1994).

Process for research question. The research question was addressed by conducting in-depth, face-to-face interviews with five executive leaders who were leading organizations in operating environments that met the characteristics of the Impulse Society, as described by Roberts (2014). It was determined that these individuals were well-positioned to speak to the common leadership challenge scenarios contained in the interview questionnaire because their organizations were operating in environments that met the characteristics described by Roberts. Each executive had a minimum tenure of 4 years as an executive leader within the organization to ensure that

they contributed to organizational culture that promoted the common good. The selection was validated by three published articles which described the organization's commitment to promoting the common good. The chapter focuses on the findings from the interviews with the executive leaders and the relationship of the findings to the purpose of the study.

Data Analysis and Findings

The first section describes the interview processes followed and the outcomes of the interview process. This section then focuses on the results of the interviews and the subsequent data analysis, which led to the identification of themes that emerged from the interviews. Exploration of ways in which these findings fill gaps in current leadership literature set the stage for the final chapter.

The interview process. Five executive leaders agreed to participate in the study. Two executive leaders were unable to participate due to scheduling challenges. Individual interviews were conducted at the executives' places of business in Syracuse, New York (4) and by teleconference (1). Informed consent forms were collected from each interviewee and remain on file with the researcher. Interviewees were offered the opportunity to review the transcripts of their interviews, but all declined.

Data analysis. Data analysis took place in three phases. During Phase 1, the researcher used a descriptive coding method which involved closely studying the data by comparing the interview data for similarities and differences (Saldaña, 2016). Phase 2 employed pattern coding that allowed the researcher to make inferences from emerging themes that make sense within the context of the research questions (Saldaña, 2016). During Phase 3, the researcher used a coding method called codeweaving in which Saldaña (2016) describes the integration of key words from pattern coding into an

analytic memo narrative. The list of similarities and differences from cycle one of the coding process are in Appendix C. A list of pattern codes under each major theme is available under Appendix D. These themes were compared to the literature review in Chapter 2 to identify gaps in current leadership literature that were further explicated by this study.

Research question: From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors? The results of data analysis yielded six major themes and 12 sub-themes which are contained in Table 4.1. A profile of executive leadership emerged that promotes the common good in an urgent, chaotic, and dynamic environment.

Theme 1: In the midst of chaos, these leaders used purposeful delay. All of the leaders that were interviewed noted that they were operating in an urgent, chaotic environment. These leaders had common tactics that they used to slow things down in the face of demands for action in the fast-paced environment. They used these tactics as a means of giving themselves time to process the situation.

Table 4.1

Themes and Sub-themes

Themes	Subthemes	Description
Purposeful delay	Deemphasize urgency	Every situation seems urgent. Few truly are.
	Proven tactics	Don't swing at the first ball. Process your situation.
Established hierarchies	Structure formation	Structure establishes roles and authority.
	Chaos minimization	When boundaries are clear, chaos is minimized.
Strict accountability	Extreme delegation	Leaders delegate beyond the recipient's current capability.
	Clear expectations	Expectations establish the rules of the game.
Flexibility and resilience	Energy conservation	Organizational and personal energy are at a premium.
	Behavioral dexterity	Reevaluation of thinking and actions is frequently required.
Personal loyalty	Relationship mastery	People are loyal to individuals, not organizations.
	Trust-oriented	It is not expertise, but relationships, that count under fire.
Leadership persona	Strategic thinkers	These leaders analyze the short, medium, and long game at all times.
	Deliberate actors	These leaders continuously evaluate the impact of their attitudes and actions on the situation and those around them.

I always like to use a sports analogy . . . It's a baseball analogy but I think it fits so many situations. You learn not to swing at the first pitch. Immediately you've got a staff person that has a crisis on their hands and a lot of times it's their own crisis. It's invented by them. It really isn't a crisis, but they think it is.

Sometimes the best thing to do is say I'll see you in a couple of hours. Why don't you cool down? Why don't you go get some coffee? Why don't you go out and just take a walk? By the time they come back usually they have the answer.

They've figured it out or at that point you can help them figure it out. Similarly, sometimes you have a key stakeholder saying, 'I've got to talk to you right away about something.' You can't get back to the person immediately. By the time you talk to them, they've cooled down. So, it isn't always swinging at the first pitch and saying, 'I've got to deal with this right now.' P4

I don't interpret everything as being urgent. Things that are urgent I think I have a pretty good sense of. If it has to do with a patient or resident safety issue, a colleague safety issue, an accreditation issue, compliance issues, and behavioral issues, you know, those things I think are classified as urgent. I know when I get an e-mail from my boss that, by definition, becomes urgent and I prioritize those things . . . I don't really struggle with interpreting everything as urgent. I think if you interpret everything as urgent that's a bigger problem . . . because you're going to have a hard time managing and leading if there's difficulty discerning what's urgent and what's not. We always talk about the tyranny of the urgent. P5

These leaders had common tactics of slowing things down when a situation seems to demand an immediate response.

So you quickly look at yourself closer and learn to take a breath before you make a decision to have to request a change. Unless it's life-threatening nothing is that critical that has to be changed immediately. That really was an awakening for me but it also helped me in terms of just personal development and also being very aware of my surroundings when I make decisions and when I have conversations with people to fix whatever the issue might be . . . You've got to be really cautious. P1

When I'm confronted with a piece of information or an event or a situation, what I have to trust is in that moment they're either based on a previous experience or just quieting myself down enough where I can be present with that particular situation that my sense of what to do will emerge . . . It's that moment where you are, first off, if you're startled that's the first sign. Secondly, I'm startled so I need to pause here for a second and really kind of consider this piece of information . . . so I'm discerning what really requires my attention. Then third, based on stopping, pausing allowing the response to kind of emerge either based on experience or intuition or a combination or both . . . Something startles me, I pause, I allow a response to emerge, and then I move forward. P3

These leaders frequently used delaying tactics as a means of providing themselves time to carefully process a situation in the moment.

The first thing I do is, I pay attention to how fast somebody is talking to me. I kind of modulate myself to speak almost more slowly. I'm aware of my own presence around when somebody's coming at me with we have to do this now. I slow down and I always tell people, let's slow down, and take me through this

again. I will have people sometimes explain to me two or three times what the issue is and each time they explain it I might hear a little bit more information. All I'm trying to do in that first exchange is to fully understand why this person is so amped up or why this is being portrayed as a crisis. Then I might ask once I have a better understanding of it why do you think something has to happen right now. If it's not clear to me, what do you believe would happen if we delayed making this decision? What do you think would happen? What's your best thinking about that? It's not like I have a series of questions. It's more, take me through it, help me to understand it . . . It's very in the moment. But what I'm aware of is I slow down and I'm not buying into your crisis. I'm going to be calm and cool and just try to gather information and then figure out what we need to do from there. P3

It doesn't mean that I'm not [reacting] underneath, or that my heart isn't a beating heart, or that I'm not experiencing some anxiety about what is being told to me. Almost always, there is a couple of seconds where I'm like, 'Oh my God, this sounds really horrible. What are we going to do?' There's fear, there's all the things that I think any normal person would experience when they're hearing awful news. But I am able to kind of put that to the side very quickly or box it and then move into, 'Okay, tell me again.' I buy time. Tell me again what happened? I heard it the first time but all I'm doing is buying some time so I can figure out the next three things that we need to do. So some of it is experience and I think some of it is just your psychological predisposition to deal with this kind of stuff. P3

These leaders relied on their experience and intuition in determining which situations require immediate action and which situations could wait while more data is gathered.

A lot of these are things I would call experiential where after a while you learn from experience that this is a better way to handle this kind of juggling of priorities . . . My mantra that I try to use is I try to get back on something that someone, at least in their mind, feels that there is an urgency to respond to on the same day, by the next day. I try not to let it linger more than that. But if you feel you've got to do the same hour, it's impossible, especially if you want a well thought out response. P4

I've always trusted my assessment side of my brain right, the rational side of my brain. I'm very good at that part but it's now also trusting this kind of intuitive place that says, 'Wait a minute, spend some time on this. There's something important here that can be learned or developed as a result of this.' I think it's that intuitive part that has really probably grown more as time has gone on in my work as a leader. P3

Discernment was needed by these leaders to determine which situations are urgent and require immediate action and which situations are only perceived by some as urgent and more data can be gathered. In those situations that require immediate action, These leaders were comfortable with taking action without perfect information. They led well in uncertainty.

I think that's the job of a leader is that you have less than perfect information and you're never going to get perfect information. There's almost always urgency

around making decisions. I think when I'm confronted with that what I try to do is to really ask, is this urgent? Because sometimes there's a felt need that something is truly urgent and has to be done right then and there and when you ask a few questions you discover that well maybe this isn't quite as urgent as we think it is and that we actually have a little bit more time to gather more information. So my job is to not get swept up into somebody else's sense of urgency or crisis. My job is to slow down the ball and take a breath and ask a few questions. But if it's a truly an urgent situation and a decision has to be made and we don't have perfect information, that's what I do. You contemplate the information you have. You make the best decision you can make based on the information you have at the time. I don't know what my batting average is but most times I get it right but sometimes you don't. You know why, because you didn't have all of the information. I would become totally disabled if I couldn't make decisions or if I had to have perfect information to do it. You make a peace with that. P3

It's important for managers to find multiple modes in which they can get their information so they aren't just basing decisions on what I call management land just what their direct reports give to them. They may have their reasons but not always sinister or intentional just may be their perception or their filter. You want to have other ways in which you get information. P2

These leaders viewed slowing down the urgency of the operating environment and decision-making as a means of self-preservation.

When I was at the Kennedy School, Robert Reich, who was the Secretary of Labor for President Clinton, spoke . . . He talked about melting as a leader and as an administrator. If you try take too much in and you try to do too much and you want to handle every priority, you begin to basically melt and you have that meltdown . . . At times you have to put some things aside -- not for a long time, not to procrastinate -- but for a little bit so you can deal intelligently with a couple of things and then go back and kind of take those in order of how they should be taken . . .

Theme 2: These leaders established hierarchical organizations. These leaders established hierarchical organizations to create order in a chaotic environment. They also established hierarchical organizations in order to create clear decision-making authority. This structure conserved personal and organizational capacity for rapid, but strategic, action in dynamic environments.

In our organization we have a hierarchy or are hierarchical in terms of how we operate. It's a classical organizational design. I'm a firm believer in hierarchy and it doesn't mean that we are always top down. The information flows bottom up and top down, but there has to be clear structures in place so that folks have the opportunity to get the information they need, have the opportunity to discuss it, and then decision-making can flow out of that structure . . . So these structures are in place and they are tried and true . . . You can have these structures and decision-making can get waylaid. You have to be really clear about where decisions reside, which group gets to decide what. P3

These leaders were disciplined at setting goals for themselves and for their teams. It was through clear communication of goals and expectations that personal and organizational energy are conserved to deal with daily challenges.

So every day I'm clear about my goals and the things I'm trying to accomplish and that guides me in the use of my time. I'm also trying to be the arbiter of goals with my senior management team so that they're not getting stuck around things that they don't need to get stuck with and I am really trying to put our energies into those activities that really advance goals and mission of the organization. P3

Theme 3: These leaders hold a strict accountability standard. Ultimately, they effectively delegated tasks, set clear expectations, and hold employees accountable for their actions. They were also mindful of stretching the skills of their staff as a career development tool, but also as a means of increasing organizational capacity.

The opportunity to delegate is a tremendous opportunity for career development. In my experience, I try and stretch the people who I work with. The only way you can . . . help them to develop in their career is by giving them stretch goals or delegating things to them that they may not be particularly comfortable with. That's how you grow. I've always thought that everyone ought to be in a position where they're comfortable with about half . . . to 75% of the things that they're doing. Then, you know, stretch by 25% in the things that I'm asking them to do. They may be things they've never done before or they may not feel like they have any experience in or know what to do. But that's a good thing. I think that's how people grow and develop. I've had the pleasure of having people thank me over time for giving them stretch assignments. P5

These leaders were also clear in expectation setting. Because of clear expectation setting, they were adept at holding employees accountable, including leading very difficult conversations with employees on their performance.

I try and create clear goals. Here's what I'm delegating to you and here's what I need for you to accomplish. It's either time sensitive or goal sensitive. There has to be some sort of measurable . . . outcome. Sometimes those measures are more process oriented than they are numerical, but whenever possible I try to put some sort of a tangible, numerical goal. You really have to define clear goals because that's really a manager's responsibility. P5

I've learned that you have to clarify expectations. To the shining star employee, sometimes those are just verbal clarifications. You're on the same page, you're really clicking, and you know that you've got somebody that's a partner with you. Sometimes you do it in other meaningful ways, like you have to clarify it on paper to some employees because they're not there . . . Then sometimes you have to follow the rules because you've got that third employee that is not engaged in the work of the organization. They're there because they're waiting for their retirement to occur, or they're waiting for another job to happen, or they're just plain miserable. So . . . you have to do that on paper regularly and use the rules of the organization to keep that person at least focused and on track to at least perform . . . adequately. I've had all of those kinds of experiences. I would say that some of those things are the hardest and the least favorite of my career in terms of supervising people. P4

Sometimes people are afraid to be candid with other people and I've never had that problem. It's either going to go one of two ways, and it's going to be your choice, not mine . . . As long as you communicate with them and as long as they have a clear delineation of what the expectation is, I can't think of a time when I have failed at that. [People ask], 'How the hell is it that people that you fire, they hug you on their way out the door.' I said, 'You know what, expectations.' They know that I'm going to help them, that I'm going to do what I can for them, but they also know that if they've done something wrong. They know that they're getting fired when I call them to my office because I've already set them up for it. If you do this, here is what's going to happen. So it's not a big conversation. It's the reality, you know you did it. You know what's going to happen. P1

Ultimately, these leaders hold themselves accountable for failures. Delegation to, expectation setting with, and accountability of employees was not done primarily to empower the employee, but they are aware that most failures will become visible to the public. There was a need to provide evidence of prudent management when failures occur.

I trust and verify. Not everybody had the same level of ethics that I do. I don't want to be caught out there making decisions or doing things based on [nothing] and some of that obviously comes with trust in a relationship I may have with a person and what I have seen occur with them. So some people I'm much more willing where that is less of an issue but other people that is certainly more of an issue. It's a trust and verify or show me because I want to make sure that I'm not just hanging out here. P2

None of us are bigger than ministry preservation. Ministry preservation means that if I can no longer serve in this position, then that's the most important thing to do. So no one is more important than the mission. I think that as long as there is general understanding about that, everybody tries to do their best to keep the mission sustainable, but when it's not [working], you have to take dramatic actions. People understand that when you get to that point. P5

Theme 4: While these leaders are, on one hand, hierarchical and demanding, they are also flexible in their thinking and highly resilient. It conserved personal and organizational capacity for acting in a chaotic environment. They had a predisposition to act. They constantly analyzed the conditions of their operating environments and their organizations' placement in it. They favored continuous, incremental change in their dynamic environments.

There's incomplete inaccurate information that you just have to get accustomed to dealing with and getting comfortable around. You evaluate the opportunities and you evaluate the situation and you use your judgment to choose a course. You try 'A' and over time if 'A' doesn't work out, you modify that. It becomes plan 'B', and if plan 'B' doesn't work out, you modify it again to plan 'C'. So you just have to learn how to make those decisions. You know, evaluate and adapt. I think that organizations oftentimes get paralyzed by over-analysis and the inability to make a decision because of uncertainty. Well, the fact is there is always uncertainty because no one knows the future. Even things that look like they're the absolute right things to do when they get executed or when the decision gets made sometimes fail to execute, or things that come up that you

hadn't anticipated. It just becomes a way of life and I think the more you do it the more you get comfortable around it. P5

Part of the way they created order out of chaos is by breaking overwhelming situations into parts and fostering metered actions. They simplified the environment for those around them.

In the media business there's a lot of pressure to hit a budget. It's always sales, sales, what have you sold for me today? My perspective was always different. It's not . . . what you've sold for me today as much as it is, let's talk about your overall numbers. Let's look at each case, each account, one by one, and take your time. I think too often we bundle it all together and we don't take it step by step and . . . people get afraid by that big number and that big objective and they just don't pare it down to the little steps that take you to get to there . . . It's by taking it one step at a time and one project at a time and one person at a time. P1

A lot of information comes my way and I have to be a very good consumer of that information and decide almost immediately, 'What are the key issues that I need to work on and get involved with versus what are the issues that others can get involved with or we can put to the side?' So there is this constant evaluation that is going on in terms of strategic use of my time. When I'm thinking about use of my time it's almost always in advancing the mission or the goals that we've set for the organization. When we spend too much time as a senior management team talking about an issue or there's lack of clarity around what we're trying to get done, my job is to say, 'Okay what's the goal? What is it that we're trying to accomplish?' That question, I think, guides us. P3

In my view is to create organization out of chaos and if you've assigned someone a project to complete and it's in somewhat of a chaotic environment you have to simplify it and say these are the three things I want you to accomplish with this assignment. Then you meet periodically to see how they are relative to the goals and you offer assistance, advice and help whenever you can if they're struggling with achieving it. P5

Theme 5: These leaders believe in personal loyalty. People are loyal to individuals, not organizations. Therefore, they focused considerable attention on creating trusting relationships and they were deliberate in developing trusting relationships. Subject matter expertise was less important to them than the ability to develop trusting relationships. Trust was bilateral and includes the leader's confidence in staff work product and the expectation that staff would publicly support leadership.

People are loyal to individuals, not organizations. It is just that simple. P3

It comes down to trust and it comes down to relationships. I haven't said much about relationships through our conversation but those are very critical. I think trust, information, and relationships are key [to leadership and organizational success]. P5

These leaders were deliberate in developing trusting relationships. They spent significant time and energy considering what is needed to develop a trusting relationship with each of their staff members. Trust was a means to motivating staff to accomplish organizational goals. People would go above and beyond when they experienced a trusting relationship with their leader.

Again it has everything to do with relationship . . . it's about the relationship you have with that person no matter who it is. I'm not saying a personal-level relationship. I'm just saying the relationship at the professional level . . . You have to look at the room and look at the people and figure out how they're going to want to be treated because everyone is motivated by something differently. P1 How I manage people is really more individualized based on what their needs are because not everyone is motivated by the same thing . . . I'm not the warm fuzzy person, but for some people I have to be more of that because that's how I can get the best out of them. I think it's very shortsighted . . . if you ask them [a manager], 'How do you manage people?' and they tell you one way. I will tell you they probably have difficulty with people who don't respond to that . . . Some people will say, 'Why I do I have to do that to get them to do their job, they're getting a paycheck.' Well, money isn't always a motivator for everyone, and if my goal is to get a particular outcome I have to be conscious of how I do that. P2 Relationship is very important to me and there are things that people will do and can help you do beyond what a job says if there is a relationship. P2

Subject matter expertise was less important to them than expertise in developing trusting relationships. They regarded trusting relationships between leaders and their staffs as critical to motivating employees to achieve exceptional results.

We hit budget that year. Everyone in the company was like, 'How did that station hit budget when she doesn't even know anything about TV?' Well, it doesn't matter. You don't need to know anything about TV. You don't need to know anything about anything you sell as long as you know how to treat people the

right way, and you know how to lead, and you know how to be that person that can motivate somebody out of a hole. P1

I don't feel as a good manager or a good leader that I have to be the expert in all of the areas. My job is to bring all of that together and have us moving in the same direction. I give people opportunities . . . In fact I have heard my staff say, 'You're much more big tent kind of person' and I am, because a lot of times I may not know who always has the knowledge and expertise. A friend of mine who does organizational development always says that the answer is always in the room . . . It may not be the person who has the title. P2

Trust was essential in terms of the leader trusting staff's work product. One leader hesitated to delegate to his staff because he lacked trust in their abilities to execute the task.

This is the question that troubled me the most personally from where I am right now because . . . I've resigned myself that I can do things better myself. This has been what I would identify as a weakness . . . I've trusted some people, but over the years I probably had less success with that than I would have liked, because [of them] not having done it quite the way I thought you were going to do it or quite the way I wanted you to do it . . . I'd say trying to delegate is a huge word for me. You trust people and then they let you down . . . In this case you trust people and then all of the sudden the trust certainly wasn't warranted. P4

Trust was also essential in terms of staff's public support of leadership. Once a decision was made, unified support by all business leaders was expected and required.

I think that you have to be very transparent with people. I have very open meetings . . . I encourage people to be open, honest and to speak whatever in a respectful way . . . People learn that you don't always get your way . . . I say, 'Everybody is welcome to disagree, but when we come to a decision, regardless of what your position was, outside of the room everybody supports it one hundred and 10%.' So, in my view, that's . . . the ideal dynamics of a team. Where you can disagree on things, but walk out in unity. For the most part I've seen that. That has been successful. P5

These leaders saw part of their role as making their employees' jobs easier. Leaders who were interviewed mentioned that they work for their employees. They saw, by making employees' lives better, they furthered their own interests and their organizations' objectives.

I work for them. How can I make your job easier today? Then, the tables will turn. They'll come back to you. I really believe that. I mean I've done that my entire career, always begin with the end in mind. What is that I can do to help you get through this part, because it's going to make my life easier in the end too? P1

I feel like my job is to make the staff's job just a little bit easier. I can't make it a lot easier, but to make it a little bit easier. I come to work every day trying to figure out how to do that and to also make sure that the clients that we serve are getting the best possible service . . . I give people as much autonomy and responsibility as they can tolerate and maybe even more than they can tolerate. So while I'm supporting them, I'm also saying, 'Yeah, you have a lot going on,

but I need you to be a highly autonomous, highly responsible individual. I want you to own it. I want you to have your palm on the ball. I'm coaching, you know, and you're in the game and I want you to take a high degree of ownership for what takes place in the organization . . . If folks feel they have high degree of autonomy and responsibility and ownership for what happens in the organization, then even though there are all of these other things happening -- all these distractions and it's hard or this or that -- at least they're leading. They're part of the world, they are a leader. P3

Theme 6: These leaders thoughtfully cultivate a presence or persona.

Because a leader's persona, or personal brand, was scrutinized in the highly visible, highly accountable environment (Llopis, 2013) of the Impulse Society, these leaders created and displayed a confident and in-charge persona in the midst of chaos. They explicitly stated, and encouraged others, to be thoughtful in cultivating their leadership presence. They also acknowledged that the price of leadership is that a leader must always be aware of the impact of her or his behavior on others. Leaders must be a better person than who they are in their private lives.

They believed that maintaining a leadership persona is critical in the midst of a chaotic operating environment.

I feel like there's two parts that I play. The first part is to stop the world from spinning when I'm working with folks that directly report to me. We are going to stop the world and we are going to try to understand what you're up against. I think my ability to manage and supervise staff, a big part of that is to hear what's going on for them. To reorient, to do some reorientation around what is truly

important here and where are you getting wrapped around the wheel, maybe unnecessarily, and to give permission to folks to say it's okay that you're struggling with all of these things. P3

I believe when things get chaotic, that's your best opportunity to lead. That's where you really get to show what you're made of as a leader . . . Earlier in my career, when I used to think things were really hard, [I thought] maybe I should do more. What I'm learning now and over time is that things are really hard and I've got really good people, together we're going to figure this out . . . P3

I learned early on that when difficult things were happening around me or when emotional things were happening around me, that I did not join in those emotional things. My job was more to . . . distance myself from it and either mediate or figure [things] out, not get emotional, but figure out what needs to happen. I think that while there's a downside to being emotionally repressed, the upside is that you're a good person to have around in a crisis. Because you're not overreacting. You're a nonreactive presence. You are kind of a neutral presence that can help people sort through things.

I'm the leader, but I don't always know what to do. When it's crisis, that's a whole different [situation]. There is, I think, a role and a persona. It's probably maybe more natural to me because of the way I'm built, but that I feel it is really important for me to play a role. It's being available. It's being willing to . . . direct the activity of this particular crisis. If it's a big one, like that murder, I was very directive through listening and consulting, but also directing the action and being on site, going to the location wherever that crisis is. Being on site, being

with staff, being visible and meeting with staff every day, we did problem meetings every morning after that crisis for two weeks. What happened over the last 24 hours? How do we plan the next 24 hours? What do we need to do with press? What do we need to do with staff? What do we need to do with risk management? Let's meet again tomorrow and evaluate our activity for the last 24 hours and plan again. In those situations it's very clear to me that I need to be present, available, and oftentimes directive. Listening, gathering information and that's a case where you're making decisions all the time without perfect information. That's very, very clear to me that's the role that I need to play. P3

I think you have to be very intentional about your response and you have to bring the right people together in a room, [which is] better than on a phone than in an e-mail . . . Here's the situation, and here's how we're going to handle it. Here is who is going to be the media spokesperson. I think you need to be very intentional and strategic with [crises] and I've learned that . . . it's what a leader needs to do. P4

They explicitly stated, and encouraged others, to be thoughtful in cultivating their leadership presence.

I went to a historically Black college as an undergraduate . . . they know the workplace that young people are going into, especially young people of color. If they don't teach and train you, if they don't already know some of those things, it doesn't matter what your GPA is or how intelligent you are, it can keep you from getting places, again where your knowledge and skills could take you. I always tell people, the first thing people look at is how you look, how you present. The

next thing is when you open your mouth. So having very good communication skills is very important. People generally are looking to see if you look like a fit for the environment that you're working in. Right, wrong or otherwise. P2

These leaders recognized that the price of leadership is that one must always be aware of the impact of one's behavior on others. Leaders must be better people in their leadership roles than one may be in the private life.

I think it's important for . . . a master leader to be very self-aware. Aware of their strengths and aware of their shortcomings, aware of how they may come across when I say certain things . . . Being aware of the impact, and I would say, even being aware of the impact of me just being in this seat . . . especially for women and for people of color because there are not many opportunities for people to see folks of color in leadership positions . . . that [it] can be empowering for people to see folks that look like them, especially if there are not a lot of them. P2

In my mind, [there is] the price that you pay to lead. You have to deal with all of the other stuff that's uncomfortable and difficult. If it's always easy then anybody can do this job. It's when things get really hard, that's what tests my mettle. P3

I say to the leaders that I work with, 'You're always on.' If you want to be a leader, that's the price you pay. If you don't want to always be on, then don't be a leader, but you can't have it both ways. I usually have that conversation with people who are leaders who are doing things that are compromising their authority and accountability. Probably this comes up most when CEOs who have worked for me and live in communities and in particular small communities. I always say, 'You're a big fish in a small pond. It doesn't matter where you are,

you're always on and that's the price you pay for being in your role. If you can't pay that price then don't be in the role.' There's a cost . . . Management is suffering. Telling people that they don't have a job anymore and doing some of the difficult things that has to be done by management could be considered suffering. If you're not willing to make the sacrifices that a leader has to make, then don't be a leader, because you can't have it both ways. P5

Summary of Results

In summary, these leaders recognized that they are operating in chaotic and urgent environments that could lead to poor leadership decisions. The response of these leaders was to deliberately slow down their decision-making time frames in order to buy time to gather more facts or better process complex problems. They slowed things down by employing several tactics, including delayed responses to requests, thoughtful questioning, and deliberate data-gathering. They resisted responding to the urgency of the immediate situation and frequently felt that 'the tyranny of the urgent' derailed the organization and its leadership from the tasks that were critical to accomplishing the organization's mission.

These leaders tended to establish and lead hierarchical organizations where ownership of decision-making authority is clear. This clarity freed organizational capacity to deal with the challenges of a dynamic environment. They also delegated tasks, set clear expectations, and held staff accountable for their performance. By setting clear expectations and accountabilities, leaders were able to provide evidence of prudent management in an environment where failures were visible to the public and, frequently, fatal to the leader.

While these leaders often led organizations that were hierarchical and demanded a high degree of accountability, these leaders tended to be flexible in their thinking, particularly in terms of their responses to volatile operating conditions. They were predisposed to action, working in incremental ways as conditions change or new information emerges. They were resilient individuals: if their plans were not working as they expected, they willingly changed course.

These leaders believed that people are loyal to individuals, not organizations. Because of this belief, they spent much of their managerial time and energy on building relationships and trust and motivating employees to exceed expectations through strong, trusting relationships. Trust was bilateral, with employees investing trust in the them and they invested trust in employees' work products and relying on employees' loyalty and public support. Trusting relationships were viewed as critical success factors in a demanding environment.

Finally, when these leaders faced crises, they deliberately demonstrated a leadership presence or persona and took actions which inspired the confidence of their staffs and others. They were available in crisis, present in their thinking, and directive in their decision-making approach, relieving staff by making the difficult calls. They viewed owning difficult tasks as part of the role and the cost of leadership.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The goal of this study was to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society, which is an environment that continually reinforces shortsighted, self-interested behaviors. A list of the leadership dispositions and practices was compiled from the study's interviews, which may guide the development of a leadership survey and further research, which is beyond the scope of this study.

The following research question guided the study: From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and leadership practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors?

The first phase of the research process involved identifying and selecting organizations that operate in an environment demonstrating the characteristics of the Impulse Society as described by Roberts (2014). Then, organizations were selected that demonstrated the characteristics of organizations that promote democratic organizational principles as described by Hickman and Sorenson (2014) based on a survey of 21 organizations and 415 employees from the WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces. The second phase of the research process involved selecting interviewees from the eligible group of organizations which were selected using the process described above. Based on a recent study that indicated chief executives achieve their optimal

effectiveness in their roles at 4.8 years (Luo et al., 2013), seven current chief executives were invited to interview for the study. Five current chief executives were selected as interviewees for the study.

The final chapter of this study will discuss the themes and subthemes that emerged from interviews with the executive leaders profiled in this study, and it will connect the themes to relevant findings in past and current leadership research. In addition, the chapter will propose implications of this study's findings on the body of leadership literature. It will also propose recommendations to executive leaders and others regarding leadership dispositions and practices that promote decision-making for the common good while leading organizations in the Impulse Society. In addition, through the identification of these leadership dispositions and practices, a survey instrument may be created which would allow for further research into what constitutes great leadership in the Impulse Society—an impulse leadership model.

Implications of the Findings

Given what is known about the environment of the Impulse Society, without change, executive leaders will continue to behave in short-term, self-interested ways. Indeed, self-interested leadership behaviors may increase as the environment continually reinforces these behaviors. Executive leaders exist, however, who make decisions that promote the common good. In this study, five executive leaders who were identified as promoting the common good in the Impulse Society were interviewed on eight common leadership challenges which emerged from interviews conducted with 763 executive leaders from six nations by the Center for Creative Leadership (2016), a leading global provider of leadership development.

The characteristics of the Impulse Society are creating a culturally, racially, politically, and financially divided society. Brooks (2016) describes the breakdown of productive discourse in the United States, as individuals and the leaders that represent them are no longer able to recognize the valid existence of groups, interests, and opinions that differ from their own. The rules of our society which created a robust and valuable dialogue have been abandoned in an environment where compromise is a fatal flaw, stakes are high, and the expectations are that winner takes all. Brooks notes that people are no longer able to balance their interests as part of a larger whole and fail to recognize the legitimacy of others' interests and opinions. In an environment of high expectations when compromise is necessary or promises are unmet, people are angry and cynical. The conversation in the United States is polarized. In terms of upholding the ideals of a united country, there is widespread leadership failure.

A better understanding of the leadership dispositions and practices of executive leaders who make decisions for the common good might inform decision- and policy-making to solve some of the social crises of our time, for example, racial divides, wage inequality, and fear of the other. For purposes of this research, common good is context-specific and relates to the leadership dispositions and practices that executive leaders undertake within the context of their organizations and the community, which may or may not gain recognition beyond their local and regional areas. These leaders are individuals who make a difference in others' lives every day. They are leaders who promote the common good.

Six major themes emerge from interviews with the executive leaders who were participants in this research study. They lead organizations in the crosshairs of the

Impulse Society, however they are not impulsive. They have various tactics, values, and focus in their leadership, including:

1. Purposeful delay
2. Established hierarchies
3. Strict accountability
4. Flexibly and resilience
5. Personal loyalty
6. Leadership persona

The Impulse Society displays a relatively new set of leadership challenges. It offers the unrelenting pressure of too much information and too little time to appropriately assimilate in an environment that requires immediate responses with high accountability and visibility to failure. Many theories offer insights into aspects of leadership in the Impulse Society, but none fully explains the Impulse Society phenomena and how leaders operate within this environment.

Transformational Leadership models, for example like those described by Kouzes and Posner (2012), focus on the leadership behaviors required to inspire growth and change in the lives of individuals and their organizations. The challenge of implementing Transformational Leadership models in the Impulse Society is that it takes time to listen, formulate, and inspire engagement in and commitment to a shared vision.

All of the leaders that were interviewed in this study noted that they were operating in an urgent, chaotic environment. In the midst of chaos, however, they purposefully delayed action. They have tactics that they use to slow things down in the face of demands for action in the face-paced environment. They slow things down

primarily as a way of giving themselves time to process situations rather than as a means of developing relationships. These leaders, however, see the value of developing relationships because of their belief that individuals are loyal to individuals and not organizations. None of the interviewed leaders spoke to the tenets of Transformational leadership, for example, the specific ways they encouraged a shared vision or the importance of modeling behaviors for others to follow. They also did not refer to tactics they used to encourage others to model their leadership behaviors, as would be suggested in Bandura's social learning theory (1977). Instead, they spoke to self-managing in crisis as a way of reducing the stress of those around them. Great leaders in the Impulse Society create movements based on their ability to adapt their messages and behaviors as situations evolve in real time.

George's (2003) authentic leadership approach describes five basic characteristics of authentic leaders. Authentic leaders understand their purpose in life and they have strong values and perceptions of the "right" thing to do. They establish trusting relationships with others, they demonstrate self-discipline and act based on values. Authentic leaders are passionate about their purpose in life. Authenticity requires awareness, vulnerability, and a sense of compassion first towards oneself as the leader and then toward others.

Leaders interviewed in this study report facing time constraints, demands for immediate responses, information overload, and chaos. Many reported on relying on discernment, prior experiences, and intuition to guide their decision-making processes. None reported relying on a universal principle of what is "right"; instead, they focused on what was right for the situation they currently faced. While many of the leaders

described positive experiences in their upbringing, none pointed to religion or values from their upbringing as a guidepost in their current leadership behaviors. While they focused on developing relationships, they did so with the purpose of creating personal loyalty and the ability to trust and rely on individuals to perform well within the organization.

Greenleaf (1970) states,

Servant leadership begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then the conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead . . . The best test . . . is: Do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wise, 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, will they not be further deprived? (p. 15)

Three of the leaders that were interviewed as part of this study indicated that they saw it as part of their roles to make the lives of their employees easier and they consciously worked to develop the leadership of those around them. None of them mentioned servanthood as an expressed goal, but instead they worked to ensure that their employees felt supported because of the high level of accountability that the environment demands. All of the executive leaders set clear expectations and all of these leaders held employees to high standards. These three leaders felt a heightened sense of responsibility to help employees accomplish lofty goals. By supporting the employee, it paved the way for clear and direct conversations when expectations were not being met.

In this study, rational choice theory (RCT) served as a predictive lens for better understanding leadership decision-making in environments that are complex and

competitive, like the Impulse Society. RCT assumes that actors consistently make decisions and pursue goals that are in their self-interest (Gächter, 2013). RCT experimental studies, however, which test for gift-giving, cooperation, trustworthiness, and reciprocity find that people often behave unselfishly until it becomes too costly to do so, at which point they will act in a way that preserves or improves self-interest (Gächter, 2013).

Proponents of RCT argue that even if individuals at times act in unselfish ways, that, taken as a whole, it is “in the noise” when considering the weight of evidence in favor of rational behavior. Other researchers note, however, at times individuals act in unselfish and even self-destructive ways because they perceive these behaviors to be in their self-interest. For example, while suicide bombing appears to be antithetical to self-interest, taken in the context of a society that views this sacrifice as honorific martyrdom, some individuals perceive it as being in their self-interests (Gächter, 2013).

Indeed, in this study, these executive leaders thoughtfully cultivate a presence or persona, purposely behaving in prosocial and sacrificial ways which they see as being in their self-interest as well as the interest of their organizations. In addition, they explicitly encourage others to be thoughtful in cultivating their leadership presence. These executive leaders view constant awareness and vigilance in managing their behaviors as the cost of leadership. These executive leaders believe that leaders must be better people than who they are in their private lives. The sacrifice of being one’s authentic self is the price of the privilege of leading. In this way, these leaders see their prosocial behaviors as acting in their self-interest.

The notion of individuals acting rationally, yet unselfishly, has been a topic of discussion in economic and philosophical literature for hundreds of years. Wernhane (2016) notes that Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* stated that economic actors are not purely self-maximizing at all times. Smith observed that rational people are not free to act solely in their narrow self-interests because, in doing so, they limit the viability of those interests over time. Cooperation with and fairness in dealing with others is required to achieve long term goals. Even rational actors see that it is to their advantage to behave in a just manner in order to promote their interest over time.

The executive leaders that were interviewed noted the responsibility of leaders is to become better people than the individuals who they lead. It is this sense of responsibility that leads them to behave unselfishly and even, at times, sacrificially, denying the accomplishment of their interests for the good of others and their organizations. Attention to leading in a manner that promotes the common good was explicit in their thinking.

There are several other scholarly approaches to why individuals, particularly leaders, behave in ways that often promote the common good, even in circumstances where it would be easier to behave in one's self-interest. Some of these approaches relate to the leader's world view, for example, the just world hypothesis. Other approaches focus on the strength of the moral identity of the individual. Finally, some approaches describe the leader's reaction to crisis and rising to challenges in a way that promotes the common good.

The just world hypothesis, which was promulgated by Lerner (1965, 1980) posits that people must believe in a just world where everyone gets what they deserve and

deserves what they get. Individuals, therefore, are motivated to behave in a just way in dealing with others because it supports this world view. It creates a sense of order in their world (Lerner & Miller, 1978). In a just world, individuals cannot behave purely selfishly and they cannot seek to maximize their interests at all times because this level of selfishness would lead to injustice where individuals would not receive what they deserve and would not deserve what they receive. In an unjust world, bad things happen to good people and good things happen to bad people.

In addition to individuals behaving in a manner that contributes to a just world, there is the strong sense that good deeds will be rewarded in the future and that sacrificial efforts made will lead to success. In the world view of an individual who believes in a just world, a positive future is not a coincidence, it is a reward that is earned for the individual's unselfish behavior and character (Lerner, 1977). For people who believe in justice, they strive for justice in their daily lives in order to maintain their belief in a just world (Lerner & Miller, 1978).

The leaders in this study did not focus on an eventual reward for their actions nor did they express a belief in a world where things are just or fair. Many of the interviewed leaders expressed a conscious desire to be grounded in the present moment as a way of supporting staff ("being available") and relying on their intuitive sense of situations. Some leaders noted, in fact, life was not just, and it is dangerous for a leader to be "hanging out there" because the operating environment is difficult and unforgiving.

There is a substantial body of organizational management literature on why people advance their interests over those of the common good. Relatively little research,

however, is focused on moral behavior, prosocial behavior, and unselfish behavior, particularly in organizational contexts.

Research on moral identity attempts to study why individuals, particularly leaders, behave in a way that promotes the common good. Some of these studies focus on the effects of power on moral identity and leader behavior. While it is held that power corrupts, there are leaders who use their personal and organizational power in a way that advances the interests of humanity and their organizations (DeCelles et al., 2012). Some researchers state that power can lead to perspective-taking and increased moral sensitivity, such that leaders increase the emphasis of others' needs above their own.

In addition to the research on the positive impact that power can play in a leader's behavior towards others, there has been parallel research related to moral identity, or the extent to which an individual holds morality as part of his/her self-concept. Individuals with a higher sense of moral identity would be expected to behave less selfishly than individuals with a lower sense of moral identity.

It would be easy to characterize individuals with low moral identity as being "bad" people and individuals with high moral identity as being good people. DeCelles et al. found that when individuals with low moral identity were placed in positions of power, they typically behaved in more self-interested ways than those individuals with a high sense of moral identity. The researchers noted individuals with low moral identity are not "bad people," but they are less aware of the moral implications of their behavior because morality is not core to their self-concept. Individuals who have a high sense of moral identity, like the executive leaders that were interviewed, spend personal time and

energy considering others' well-being and how their leadership promotes the common good.

Much research has been done on leader behavior in crisis. This literature is relevant to these leaders as the interviewees describe their operating environments as "chaotic" and demanding, which are characteristics of crisis. Studies have found that many factors influence how leaders behave and make decisions in crisis, including leaders' thinking styles, their reactions to stress, and their ability to deal with uncertainty. Rational choice theory would predict that in environments that are risky and uncertain like the Impulse Society, individuals will behave in short-sighted, self-interested ways. Leaders who were interviewed in this study, however, in the face of continuous crises, were thoughtful, deliberate, and strategic in their behaviors, and carefully considered what was in the long-term best interest for themselves as well as their organizations. In this way, they appear to be anomalous to RCT in their behaviors.

Leaders have habitual thinking styles and most leaders interviewed described a methodical way of analyzing situations and used tactics to slow down the need for immediate action in order to take time to process the crisis at hand and to collect additional data. Phrases like "not swinging at the first pitch" or "it's my job to slow the world down" refer to executive leaders' disposition and practice of approaching challenges in a purposefully non-reactive way. The conscious use of tactics to slow down the apparent urgency of every situation serves as a governor of reactive, undisciplined decision-making by the leader. This approach is part of what makes these leaders successful in their environments.

Crisis decision-making is unique as it places the leader under considerable stress. The type of crisis, whether it is external to the leader, for example, a public health or safety crisis, or internal to the leader, for example, decision-making in a personal or family health crisis, affects the leader's ability to move through stress to make decisions. Many of the leaders who were interviewed discussed an immediate sense of panic and confusion with some of the situations that they faced, yet they also knew that their demeanor and reaction to crisis situations impacted the confidence and morale of the people around them. For this reason, they consciously worked to maintain a cool persona and were fully present in crisis. Deliberate non-reactivity was a continual theme with these leaders, and it was true whether it came naturally to the leader or whether it required a deliberate decision to manage themselves.

Leader decision-making in crisis also involves a high degree of uncertainty in leaders' environments. One leader opined that if all the information were known, the right decision would be clear. One leader stated if anyone could do his job, then he would not be the one called to lead. Likewise, other leaders who were interviewed discussed the need to become very comfortable with high levels of uncertainty, as they never encountered a crisis circumstance where all facts were known and the decision was clear.

The leaders interviewed, however, were not foolish risk-takers. Each practiced delaying immediate reactions to situations, particularly to crises. Leaders took the time to absorb the facts as they were shared and allowed for additional time for new facts to emerge. Each of the leaders described their decision-making styles as relying on the integration of experience and intuition as a means of reaching an appropriate solution to

the challenges that they faced each day. Each leader was flexible in their thinking and behaviors and they were open to changing course if a particular solution was not working. Each relied on the views of their colleagues in developing solutions to problematic situations where limited information was available, but each stated that in the end, the responsibility for sound decision-making fell squarely on their shoulders. The weight of responsibility in final decisions, like the imperative to behave in a way befitting a leader, is part of the cost of being a leader.

In the study of these leaders, a few unanticipated findings emerged. The balance between healthy self-interest, for example, the explicit consideration of the finite nature of political capital when making hard decisions, and the promotion of the common good, were unanticipated by this author. Leaders are complex people. On one hand, they think very deliberately about the impact of their behaviors on the people around them and they are highly intentional in managing their responses and behaviors, particularly in times of crisis. On the other hand, they also set very clear expectations with staff and hold others highly accountable for performance outcomes. The juxtaposition of great care and concern for others with a strong demand for results was described by each interviewee. The complexity of their leadership practices reflected the complexity of their operating environments. It served to create order in chaos and clear rules in an environment that seemed out of control.

In this way, these leaders could be viewed as manipulative—closely managing their behaviors and responses to situations in deliberate ways for an intended effect on the situation and those around them. The intentionality of their behavior could be viewed as a means of self-preservation. None of the leaders interviewed focused time describing

the mission of their organizations or religious views, but instead they discussed the art and science of leadership, which was a commitment to conscious living. Some mentioned being present, using intuition, or relying on experience as a guide, but all were clear that the environment in which they lead is complex, urgent, demanding, and unforgiving. By consciously considering their actions and the impacts of their actions on others, they live to fight another day as leaders, which is a good thing for their organizations and their communities. It is not necessary for the leader to be wholly authentic or unselfish. It is only necessary that they continue to lead, and in the Impulse Society that takes wits, wiles, and a healthy amount of intentionality.

Finally, in spite of, or perhaps as a reaction to, the complexity and chaos of their operating environments, these leaders established hierarchies within their organizations in order to conserve personal and organizational capacity to react to the volatility of their external environments. While Quantum Leadership states that the need for hierarchy has all but disappeared in the current operating context, these leaders continue to find hierarchy a useful tool in creating order and structure in a complex and unpredictable world.

Limitations

This research has numerous limitations, as it was intended merely to be suggestive of further study of the leadership dispositions and practices of leaders in the Impulse Society. First, the research sample was a criterion sample, not a random sample, of executive leaders. Second, the sample size was relatively small, which is appropriate for quantitative research, with five leaders selected for in-depth interviews. The

commonality in leadership dispositions and practices, however, was remarkably consistent given the small sample size.

Finally, it is notable that the researcher is likewise the leader of an organization that operates in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society. The experience could lead to bias in the study of leadership. The researcher, however, took steps to ensure that bias was mitigated in the study by creating reflective memos as well as closely following the interview protocol with minimal deviations, for example, asking follow up questions that clarified an interviewer's response.

In conducting the interviews, two of the questions, which related to e-mail volume and partnership formation, yielded answers related to tactical activities (for example, putting e-mail in folders) rather than strategic considerations (such as handling of crisis). The researcher did not eliminate those questions from the interview protocol and continued to ask them but focused more time on the remaining questions that yielded answers that related to the dispositions and practices of leaders operating organizations in the Impulse Society.

Aside from the limitations described above, no other weaknesses were experienced in the course of the research and the data collected from interviewees was rich and suggestive of future areas of study.

Recommendations

The research methodology used in this study, which was individual interviews with executive leaders, could easily be replicated by other researchers. If the same or similar results were found in interviews with more leaders, these results would strengthen the validity of the finding of this study with respect to the leadership dispositions and

practices of leading for the common good in the Impulse Society. Additional study could be conducted with leaders of publicly-traded or more geographically-dispersed organizations to determine if regulatory and market scrutiny or geography play a role on what constitutes exceptional leadership in this environment. The interview protocol was based on several common leadership challenge scenarios as identified by the Center for Creative Leadership (2016), and it should have broad applicability across various sectors, sizes, and geography of organizations. This assumption could be validated through further research.

Leaders are operating organizations in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society. In the face of the challenges experienced by leaders in the Impulse Society, additional research into the dispositions and practices of leaders will promote a better understanding of what constitutes exceptional leadership in the promotion of the common good in the Impulse Society. Understanding the leadership dispositions and practices of these leaders might inform how leaders are selected, leadership training, and organizational governance, which could improve organizational effectiveness while promoting social justice through the promotion of the common good. Finally, further research could lead to the development of a survey instrument to identify potential leaders who demonstrate the dispositions and practices that will promote leadership.

Conclusion

The Impulse Society is one where individuals are continually seeking their self-interests in a complex and demanding environment. Leaders may pursue individuated, self-interested decision-making in an environment that reinforces and rewards selfish behavior. The study explored the applicability of rational choice theory as a means of

predicting leadership behaviors in the Impulse Society. The study was designed to provide insight into the phenomena of leading an organization in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society, and the leadership dispositions and practices that promote leading for the common good in the environment. The study was designed to contribute to the national debate on what constitutes exceptional leadership in an environment which creates a relatively new set of leadership challenges for leaders.

Problem statement. Given what is known about the environment of the Impulse Society, without change executive leaders will continue to behave in short-term, self-interested ways. Indeed, self-interested leadership behaviors may increase as the environment continually reinforces these behaviors. Executive leaders may exist, however, who make decisions that promote the common good.

Theoretical rationale. RCT serves as a predictive lens for better understanding leadership decision-making in environments that are complex and competitive. RCT assumes that actors consistently make decisions and pursue goals that are in their self-interest. Empirical evidence suggests, however, that some actors at times will behave in prosocial, or unselfish, ways (Gächter, 2013).

Proponents of RCT state that even if individuals at times act in unselfish ways, that, taken as a whole, it is “in the noise” when considering the weight of evidence in favor of rational behavior. Alternately, other proponents posit that, because most research on selfishness uses attitudinal measures rather than recollections of actual behavior, that a social desirability exists; that is, individuals answer survey questions in a way that paints themselves in the most favorable light—maximizing positive prosocial responses and minimizing negative selfish responses (Gächter, 2013).

Even RCT experimental studies using validated games that test for gift-giving, cooperation, trustworthiness, and reciprocity find that people will behave unselfishly until it becomes too costly to do so, at which point they will act in a way that preserves or improves self-interest (Gächter, 2013). The purpose of this study was to identify and interview leaders who demonstrate leadership dispositions and leadership practices that promote the common good within the context of the Impulse Society, which continually reinforces short-sighted, self-interested decision-making behaviors.

Review of the literature. The study explored the characteristics of the Impulse Society as well as the premises of the Transformational, Authentic, and Servant Leadership theories and their applications to executive leadership in the Impulse Society. It also explored a predictive framework for executive leader decision-making behaviors in the Impulse Society, which is the rational choice theory (RCT). Current leadership theories do not fully explain the dispositions and practices of leaders promoting the common good in the Impulse Society. The results of the study suggest another way of describing modern leadership: impulse leadership.

Research methodology. The study used a qualitative research tool, which was individual, semi-structured interviews, to study the phenomenon of executives who lead organizations that promote the common good in the Impulse Society, as described by Roberts (2014). Specifically, the research sought to answer the question: From the perspective of an executive leader who is leading in the Impulse Society, what leadership dispositions and practices promote decision-making that benefits the common good in an environment that reinforces self-interested decision-making behaviors? There were three phases of the research process. First, criterion sampling was used to identify

organizations that operate in an environment demonstrating the characteristics of the Impulse Society as described by Roberts (2014). Then, organization selection was validated using the characteristics of organizations that promote democratic workplaces, as described by Hickman and Sorenson (2014) and based on their survey of 21 organizations and 415 employees from the WorldBlu List of Most Democratic Workplaces. Finally, a minimum tenure of 4 years as CEO of the selected organizations was an additional criterion in the study to ensure the current CEO contributed to organizational culture that promotes the common good. Five executive leaders were interviewed using a priori (determined beforehand) scenarios, which were identified by the Center for Creative Leadership's (2016) white paper of common leadership challenges, which were used to guide the writing of the interview protocol questions.

Findings and discussion. Interview digital recordings were transcribed into interview transcripts. Once in written form, preliminary themes or codes were identified through the use of descriptive coding, which compared interviews for similarities and differences. Pattern coding was then used to determine which of the initial codes led to inferences of emerging themes that make sense in the context of the research questions. Finally, the actual integration of key words from first and second cycle coding were integrated in an analytic memo narrative in a process known as codeweaving (Saldaña, 2016).

The three-step coding process led to the identification of the following themes in the research: The six major themes were:

1. In the midst of chaos, these leaders reduce the sense of urgency by purposefully slowing things down.

2. These leaders establish and lead hierarchical organizations. Hierarchy creates structure in a chaotic environment.
3. Leaders delegate tasks, set clear expectations, and then hold staff accountable.
4. While these leaders use hierarchies and accountability to create dependable decision-making structures, they conserve personal and organizational capacity to think flexibly and are resilient in their dynamic environments.
5. Leaders believe that people are loyal to individuals, not organizations. They, therefore, focus much of their time primarily on relationship-building.
6. Leaders thoughtfully cultivate their leadership persona, particularly in crises.

Discussion. The study yielded interesting findings regarding the dispositions and practices of leaders in the Impulse Society. First, leaders recognize that they are operating in chaotic and urgent environments that could lead to poor leadership decisions. Consequently, when faced with challenging situations, leaders deliberately slow down decision-making using several tactics, such as thoughtful questioning and delayed responses, in order to buy time to gather facts or process complex problems. They resist “the tyranny of the urgent” which could derail their organizations from accomplishing the tasks that are critical to the organization’s mission.

Leaders also tend to establish and lead hierarchical organizations where decision-making authority is clear. The clarity frees organizational capacity to deal with the challenges of a dynamic environment. They delegate tasks, set clear expectations, and hold staff highly accountable for their performance. By setting clear expectations and accountabilities, leaders are able to provide evidence of prudent management in an environment where failures are visible and often fatal to the leader.

While leaders lead organizations that are hierarchical and demand a high degree of accountability, they tend to be flexible in their thinking, particularly in terms of their responses to volatile operating conditions. Because leaders are predisposed to action, they embrace incremental change as conditions change or new information emerges. They are resilient: if their plans are not working, they willingly change course.

Leaders also believe that people are loyal to individuals, not organizations. Because of this belief, leaders spend much time and energy on building trusting relationships, which motivates employees to go above and beyond the norm in creating exceptional work products and demonstrating loyalty and public support for the leader's decisions.

Finally, when leaders face crises, they intentionally model a leadership presence or persona which engages in actions that inspire the confidence of the individuals around them. The persona includes availability in crisis, presence, strategic thinking, and confident, directive decision-making. By demonstrating a "take charge" demeanor, staff are relieved from making difficult calls. Leaders view the ownership of difficult tasks and the call to be intentional in their behaviors and actions as part of the cost of leadership. The drive to be better people and better leaders is what animates leaders' ability to promote the common good, even while leading organizations in the crosshairs of the Impulse Society.

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Appendix A

Organization Profile Form (DRAFT)

Organization:

Industry:

Indicators of operational impact of the Impulse Society:

Indicators of Hickman and Sorenson (2014) criteria:

Length of tenure of chief executive:

List of publications that cite organizational impact for common good or website content review:

Dates of contact:

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Prior to the interview, the following directions will be spoken to the participants:

To facilitate our note-taking, I would like to audiotape our conversations today. Please sign the release form. For your information, only researchers on the project will be privy to the tapes, which will be eventually destroyed after they are transcribed. In addition, you must sign a form devised to meet human subject requirements. Essentially, this document states that (1) all information will be held confidential, (2) your participation is voluntary and you may stop at any time if you feel uncomfortable, and (3) I do not intend to inflict any harm. Thank you for agreeing to participate.

I have planned this interview to last no longer than one hour. During this time, I have several questions that I would like to cover.

I am conducting this study to learn more about executive leaders' dispositions and practices in leading organizations that promote the common good. Common good is defined as the social goal for which society is to be organized in order to promote the general welfare of the society's members. I am going to ask you some questions and present some scenarios now. If you do not want to answer a question or if you feel uncomfortable, just let me know and I will stop the interview.

Below is a list of questions. During the interview, additional questions may be asked for clarification purposes.

A. Interviewee Background

How long have you been ...

_____ in your present position?

_____ at your organization?

Interesting background information on interviewee:

Where did you grow up?

How would you describe your upbringing?

Now I will present some statements to you regarding common challenges that leaders face around the world. I will then ask you a few questions regarding each statement.

Workload is very challenging at times. There are lots of different critical projects and activities going on with limited resources to accomplish them. Juggling priorities is always at the forefront.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

It is challenging to motivate a large group of staff who have been working with the organization for varying time periods. Some of the staff have been in the same position without a promotion for a while, and others are up-and-comers. I believe some staff may not be fully engaged in the work of the organization.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

I am challenged by multiple demands and distractions. There is not enough time in the day. I am trying to motivate my direct reports to fill in for me on the tasks previously done by myself. I am trying to develop the business knowledge and expertise that is required to succeed in this environment. I am also helping them to gain the trust and commitment of their direct reports.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

I am trying to create a really collaborative and high performing team in a dynamic and challenging environment.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

I am leading an organization through a period of significant change. It involves changes in priorities, in how we allocate resources, and, potentially, reductions in head count.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

I am working to enhance the visibility and reputation of my organization in the local and regional environment.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

I am trying to convince and influence other stakeholders to partner with us in accomplishing our strategic objectives.

Have you encountered this situation in your organization?

If so, what did you do to manage it?

How did it make you feel?

As we end this interview, are there any other experiences, thoughts, or concerns you would like to share with me based on what we have discussed today?

Thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

Appendix C

Similarities and Differences

People are loyal to individuals, not organizations. All interviewees discussed trust—the need to trust team members in terms of their work product and their personal commitment to the leader, not the organization. Not all leaders delegate work, but those leaders who do not delegate saw it as an undesirable trait, faulting themselves, staff expertise, and the urgency of the environment to act.

These leaders are deliberate and strategic in how they present themselves. They are not transparent or they do not behave as their authentic selves. They are thinking strategically in every situation regarding how to present a confident and in-charge presence.

These leaders discussed “slowing things down” and “not swinging at the first pitch.”

They confirmed that every situation is initially presented as an urgent one. They saw their role as being the person to slow things down, and they deliberately used various tactics to slow decision making down to allow themselves time to process the situation.

These leaders spoke of empowering employees, clearly stating expectations, and then holding employees accountable. This tactic was not a means of sharing power or developing the employee, as all of the leaders were hierarchical in their thinking. In a demanding and fast paced environment, all leaders recognized that ultimately, they are responsible for failure. Clarity is important as a means to provide cover in a highly visible world.

Some leaders did not refer to mission in their interviews.

Appendix D

Pattern Codes

In the midst of chaos, Leaders purposely slow things down.

Tactics to slow things down.

Use these tactics as a way of giving themselves time to process the situation.

Leaders thoughtfully cultivate a presence or persona.

This persona is confident and in charge in the midst of chaos.

They explicitly state, and encourage others, to be thoughtful in cultivating their leadership presence.

The price of leadership is that you must always be aware of the impact of your behaviors on others. You must be better than who you may be in your private life.

Maintaining this persona is particularly important in the midst of chaos.

Leaders believe people are loyal to individuals, not organizations.

Trust is essential in terms of personal commitment and loyalty to the leader.

Trust is essential in terms of the leader trusting staff's work product.

Leaders are deliberate in developing trusting relationships.

Subject matter expertise is less important than expertise in developing trusting relationships.

Leaders establish hierarchical organizations.

They do so to create order out of chaos.

They study principles of organizational development.

They are not, however, command and control leaders. They effectively delegate tasks.

Leaders delegate tasks, set clear expectations, and then hold staff accountable.

Ultimately, leaders hold themselves and others accountable for failures.

The delegation, expectation setting, and accountability process is not done to share power or empower the employee. It is to provide cover to the leader in the event of failure.

While leaders are, on one hand, hierarchical and demanding, they are also flexible in their thinking and highly resilient.

They have a predisposition to act.

Part of the way they create order out of chaos is by fostering metered and incremental change.

Change management is guided by the principle of slowing things down.

Leaders see part of their role is making employees jobs easier.

They work for the employee.