New Leadership Approach for Better Public Management*

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This research paper studies the use of a new approach to leadership with reasoning in management in public institutions. Management is almost as old as the mankind, and has been used in different parts of the world ranging from the Great Wall of China to the orbiting space station. However, within the globalization process, team management is no longer composed of mainly homogeneous groups from the same, or similar, cultural environments. People from different cultures embody a variety of personalities, as well as a variety of ways of doing things. It is increasingly important and desirable to understand these differences and how they require different approaches to leadership and management. The basic principles of military leadership were created during the long period of Warring States in China’s past. The need for self-defence gave birth to different methods of martial arts as integral to warfare. However, those martial arts were shaped by cultural environment in which they were born, and adopted their structures and patterns of practice out of the necessities of the period. In this paper we present an underlying principle of martial arts philosophy tied to a personal growth that could be unconstrained by culture based on Far-East concept that emphasizes the “whole personality” for leadership for a public management.

Keywords: Confucianism, Daoism, martial art, multi-cultural, management

Words by Anais Nin—“we don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are” illustrate today’s global situation in leadership and business. One of recent very popular vision is thought by a Chinese Political Economist Minqi Li and expressed in his book The Rise of China and the Demise of the Capitalist World Economy. In it the author suggests some important solutions for the projected ills of the capitalist economies. Anyhow, the book is more about the “demise of the capitalist world-economy” than about the “rise of China”. He explains that we do not live in “normal” times. In the coming century, instead of expecting more “development”, more “modernization”, more upward mobility, more of the same pattern of systemic dynamics that we have observed and with which we have become familiarized over the past five or six centuries, it may be more appropriate to expect more bifurcations, more chaos, more transformations and transitions, and more “turns” and “tricks” of the world history (Li, 2008). The book also integrates a critique of the capitalist response to the environmental and climate crisis or so-called “sustainable development”, arguing that it

* Acknowledgements: The author thanks European project CONNEC that made possible for his stay at the Xi’an Technological University (XATU), China; the participants Dr. Li Chunqing, Dean of School of Economics and Management and Li Gang both at XATU who helped in research of original Chinese texts and cooperated in this research. Professor Sam Lanfranco is also acknowledged for correcting English language in this document.

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constitutes a fundamental contradiction of the contemporary world, and one that capitalism cannot resolve (Yan, 2009).

Namely the globalization process impacts the environment and the way how organizations are structured, team management and leadership are carried out. People from different cultures work together and embody a variety of personalities, as well as a variety of ways of doing things. A leader is supposed to be able to work with people and predict behaviours, and not to give and take offence. It is increasingly important and desirable to understand these differences and how they require different approaches to leadership and management that must aim to sustainability of our planet first and then business. We are therefore in need of new ways of leadership.

This paper is deliberately indifferent to issues dealing with (inter)cultural aspects of leadership, organizational culture, team management and motivation as there are numerous articles on those subjects. Nevertheless some basic cultural concepts to frame the objective of a research are discussed. Already in 2006 *Editorial: From Cultural Values to Cross Cultural Interfaces*, Jackson and Aycan were arguing that:

> The way interactions are managed raises issues of both effectiveness and appropriateness of leadership, management styles and practices, and organizational policies. These aspects in turn are related to cultural values … and may raise important ethical issues that relate to multiple stakeholders interests.

Although still today very important concerns they are keeping out the whole plethora of personal behaviours that are identical to all of us and thus cultural independent. Somehow this is indirectly implied in thoughts of Chevrier (2009):

> The point is not to deny the differences that people themselves hold to but to underline the fact that if culture is not defined as shared identities, values, practices and meanings but as shared references on the right way to organize social life, unexpected cultural unity emerges.

In the *Editorial Cross Cultural Management in the Age of Globalization*, Bird and Fang (2009) addressed the issue of non-cultural phenomena by defining two paradoxical movements of cultures “Cultural ecology contributes to containing cultures, making them a special, idiosyncratic and unique phenomenon; whereas Cultural learning contributes to opening cultures, pushing them towards a common, non-idiosyncratic and globally interwoven phenomenon”. Further on Lee (2010) argued that “few studies have, either conceptually or empirically, explicitly addressed: (1) the possible negative effects of holding one single cultural identity to excess, or (2) the potential advantages of not identifying with any culture”.

This paper focuses the investigation on above questions of behaviour unconstrained by culture that we all (mostly) unconsciously experience and how it could be used in leadership. Hong (2010) was approaching the cultural unrelated behaviour with his research that bound together knowledge of a person from two cultural environments and contended that “researchers have not yet recognized that bicultural employees are a growing, yet unexploited workforce with latent skills that could play a role in addressing challenges within multi-cultural teams”. With a different approach also Brannen and Thomas (2010) concluded that “biculturals… represent a growing and underexplored demographic”. The very similar motif was guiding Gillespie et al. (2010) when they were “exploring possible implications of different acculturation statuses—primaculturalism, assimilation, biculturalism, and cultural independence—for managers…”.

Hence this study is attempting to analyse concept that is cultural independent through the nature of martial arts philosophy. Warfare that could be one of the ultimate goals of martial arts training shows that we all
behave the “same” (breathe, posture, movements, etc.) in extreme or fighting conditions. From this we can
deduct that non-violent part of martial art philosophy can be used for leadership with emphasis on public
management. The intent of research is not to re-formulate the theories based on Sun Zi’s *The Art of War* (lived
c. 544-496 B.C.) that are already widely discussed and used in different fields of management but rather take a
different approach in which the fundamental martial arts philosophy is tied to a personal growth in view of
far-East concept that emphasizes the “whole personality” and “follow the Natural Way”.

The martial arts were presented in society from the early times of humankind, and in different parts of the
world they were shaped by different cultural influences. In this paper Chinese philosophy based on Daoism and
Confucianism with their impact on cultural environment of far-East and therefore on martial arts is studied.
Then the values originating from those martial arts philosophies are projected at a personal level of leadership
style to influence others within public institutions management (PM).

**Theoretical Background**

**Multi-cultural Environments**

Management is as old as humankind. It is evident in the formidable achievements of ancient civilizations
and great empires of the past, reflected in the building of the pyramids, the Great Wall of China, and the Greek,
Roman and Aztec temples, to name a few. In the present era of globalization we face, perhaps more than ever,
the challenge of managing public institutions consists of non-homogenous multi-cultural teams. While global
economic barriers are going down as a result of trade liberalization and changes in the technologies of
command and control across time and space, cultural barriers are becoming increasingly important (Javidan &
House, 2001, p. 289). This presents the management with a challenge, as management styles and methods
apply with varying success from one environment to the other. In the paper Bredillet et al. (2010) presented
empirical evidence from a study of 74 countries, and provided some key findings how national culture
impacted on form and success of various forms of management. It is shown that successful management
deployment is negatively correlated with the power distance and negatively correlated with the uncertainty
avoidance, but not correlated with the individuality or with the masculinity dimensions. The study found that
project management deployment is positively correlated with the GDP/Capita, although this is not surprising
since higher GDP/Capita represents greater resources for deployment.

In his book Turner (2010) based on Hofstede’s approach described the problem of international projects
and pointed out that “when working on international projects, we need to understand the approaches of
different cultures, to be able to work with people and predict behaviours, and not to give and take offence”.
Therefore, for the complex mix of cultural, spatial and temporal factors in an increasingly globalized world,
existing management tools no longer suffice. What is need is a new generation of tools designed to support the
collaborative processes and knowledge networking within a distributed multi-polar and multi-cultural
environment. In the contemporary information society “knowledge workers”\(^1\) are going to be the primary force
determining which companies, economies and nations are successful and which are not. Their successful
deployment and management are the key source of growth and innovation for new products and services.
Managing such workers is not simply a matter of making them work harder, or more skilfully. A new strategy
of leadership and managerial control is required to promote the individual creativity, as well as greater

\(^1\) The term was first coined by Peter Drucker around 1959 for those people who worked primary with information or one who
developed and used knowledge in the workplace.
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collaborative effort, including knowledge networking and task deployment.

Management and Leadership

Although there are numerous studies of cultural impact on management, leadership, team building, motivation, etc., a brief introduction to cross-cultural leadership is presented later on. This is done to outline the importance of a different approach to the issues that are most of the time hidden and are underlying our behaviour. People share a lot of the same habits, reactions, behaviours, etc., that are rather cultural independent therefore are effectively and efficiently used in martial arts training and teaching. To understand them we should understand both cultural and non-cultural dependent ones, martial arts as well as cultural environment in which they were brought in.

Multi-culturalism and Leadership

To date there has been a fair amount of research on cross-cultural leadership and management. The first leadership and management studies on the subject of cultural differences were conducted in the 1950s (Negandhi, 1983, p. 17), reflecting the post-war, post-colonial rise of globalizing influences. This was followed by significant research in the final third of the last century. Adler (1983, p. 29) proposed six approaches to researching cross-cultural management issues: parochial, ethnocentric, polycentric, comparative, geocentric and synergistic.

According to Bony (2010), the literature on national culture and management can be summarized by three main positions and their corresponding underlying assumptions:

(1) Management has nothing to do with national culture. Management is governed by objective practices and autonomous actors (Peters & Waterman, 1982);

(2) Culture is characterized by its uniqueness. Consequently, there are no common dimensions and no possible direct comparisons between cultures (Chapman, 1996). Management practices therefore have to be unique to their cultural setting;

(3) Cross Cultural Studies (CCS) measure national cultures along a few dimensions (Hofstede). The CCS approach is criticized for theoretical and methodological biases (Berry et al., 2002; Kim et al., 1994; Chapman, 1996), however it remains very popular among international managers.

Harzing (2004) in her citation of a panel described the most important future benefits of multi-culturalism: the increase of creativity and innovation; demonstrating more sensitivity in dealing with foreign customers; creating a super-organizational culture; using the best of all cultures; etc., which revealed that people in modern organizations came from different cultures and with a variety of personalities. Their impact and contributions vary depending on culture of accepting organization. Today life in the global village presents people with frequent opportunities to mix with those of a different cultural background than their own. This can present challenges when they are members of an institutional team focused on defined deliverables.

One example of an element of cultural diversity is the attitude toward punishment in the Western as opposed to the attitude toward punishment in Eastern culture. The Christian roots of Western culture carry the notions of “heaven” and “hell”, two dissimilarities that are detached from “earth”. Punishment for wrong-doing comes in some form of a “hell”, whereas rewards are “heavenly”. Both are permanent. These cultural notions pressure westerners to do no wrong. Eastern philosophy does not know of such polarization, and only professes the existence of “heaven” and “earth”. Failure is seen as “punishment” in itself, and so much more severe as in “saving face”, especially if one keeps repeating the failure or one does not learn from it.
Another important distinct tradition of far-East is the emphasis on the whole personality or oneness of body and mind as opposed to western philosophy that distinguishes human spirit and the body.

The new globalised world necessitates labour mobility across dissimilar environments. This can lead to individual dislocation and disorientation, as well as a management need to deal with elements of mistrust, prejudice, and different work culture behaviour (work ethic, attitudes, sabotage, etc.). Tolerance and the acceptance of diversity are integral and key to a successful leadership and management styles.

The knowledge and information accumulated through several thousand years of leadership and management in non-western multi-cultural environments can significantly contribute toward the success of leadership and management styles. Much more as they are integral ingredient of the way the martial arts are taught and performed and are extended to everyday life. Such a perspective goes beyond the western traditional Cartesian (Aristotle-Descartes) dualistic principle, according to which this world comes into two distinguish but equal complementing parts: spirit-body, good-evil, etc.

**Origin of Martial Arts**

The terms of “martial arts” and “fighting arts” refer to the training systems and methods and traditions for exercising body and spirit with a purpose of effective armed and/or unarmed combat. At the same time, they define at a level of skill an individual possesses, to respond to the physical or psychical threats or attacks in a hostile environment. Today, the term is usually associated with various unarmed Asian martial arts (Karate Do, Judo, Taekwondo, Wing Chun, Aikido, etc.) and martial arts using (mostly cold) weaponry (Kendo, Ninjutsu, Battojutsu, etc.). In reality, the terms encompass a whole range of martial arts from around the world (Boxing, Savate, Capoeira, Jeet Kune Do, Krav Maga, fencing, etc.).

In the past, the main objective of the martial arts was effective and efficient combat, which regularly resulted in mortality or it was causing some degrees of injury, often very severe. Today, the martial arts are being used in more than one way:

1. Direct usage of martial arts serves the original purpose. It is only used in extreme situations by military, police and such like organizations;

2. In the latter half of the last century, we had seen the martial arts evolve to encompass activities which did not inflict serious injuries. They purposefully take a form for use in the exercise, sport and competitions, and for self-defence. The original hardness and the basic war-like spirit of martial arts has been somewhat attenuated, as the sportsman-like competitive “point collecting” objective came to the fore;

3. The development of skill however remains the main focus of the martial arts. There is a presence of a tradition of learning from a teacher who carries out the instruction and the transfer of the knowledge in a physical, psychological and spiritual sense (via the Sensei, Shifu or Grandmaster). In the process one strives to achieve a harmony between the outer world, one’s body and one’s inner energy. When in balance, one feels content, healthy and energized.

**Chinese Philosophy**

The keystone in Chinese philosophy is a humanism that has attracted the attention of Chinese philosophers throughout the ages. This humanism does not imply indifference to a supreme power or to nature. Instead, the general conclusion is that of the unity of man and “heaven”. This spirit of synthesis has characterized the entire history of Chinese philosophy.

Daoism stands alongside Confucianism as one of the two great philosophical systems of China. There are
two more philosophies as well but less important to development of Chinese culture. One is Mohism or Mò Jiā literally “School of Mo” referred to Master Mo or Mò Zǐ (lived c. 470-391 B.C.). Mohism (Mo) is best known for the concept of “impartial love” or “universal love” and is seen as a major rival to Confucianism (Ru). The second is known as Legalism or Fǎ Jiā literally “School of law” and is a utilitarian political philosophy that does not address higher questions like the nature and purpose of life. Both of them evolved at about the same time as Confucianism and Daoism during the “Spring and Autumn Period” (from c. 770 to 481 B.C.) and “Warring States Period” (from c. 403 to unification of China under the Qin Dynasty at 221 B.C.)—the period during c. 1046-256 B.C. of the Zhou Dynasty.

**Daoism principles.** Daoism embodies the fundamental concept of Chinese philosophy (the thought of Chinese culture, from earliest times to the present). Definitions of Daoism are varied and controversial because of the complex twists in its development, and because it has played a significant role in the long history of China.

Daoism stands alongside Confucianism as one of the two great philosophical systems of China. Traditionally it is traced to the mythical philosopher Lao Zi—“Old Master”, although Daoism philosophy owes more to Master Zhuang Zi (4th Century B.C.). Daoism is an umbrella that covers a range of similarly motivated philosophical doctrines.

**Confucianism principles.** The word “Confucianism” suggests a tradition that was “founded” by Confucius (Kong Zi), who lived 2,500 years ago. However, “Confucianism” does not refer simply to one man or one collection of scriptures. We now know that the ideals, values, and behaviours which we call “Confucianism” are actually predated by Confucius at least 1,000 years. Interestingly, the word “Confucianism” does not exist in the Chinese language but rather it is called Ru Jiao (Scholar Teach). Consequently, “Confucianism” refers to all of the values and practices of the Ru tradition, which include the veneration of ancestors; education in history and culture (poetry, music, painting and calligraphy); the cultivation of harmonious, hierarchical relations in one’s family and social life; and the grounding of moral teachings and ethical principles in a religious or cosmic reality (Nadeau, 2008).

**Comparing Daoism and Confucianism.** Confucianism and Daoism, which may be said to constitute the Yin and Yang of Chinese culture, at first seem to be polar opposites of each other. But as with Yin and Yang they both interchange and comprise each other however in dissimilar conducts. Confucianism focuses on the social, earthly orientation of everyday life and political organization. Daoism places much more focus on the relationship of the individual with himself, on achieving an inner harmony. The former stresses hierarchical relations focusing on the parent-child, kingdom-family pattern: the highest authority is maternal force that creates a range of “ten thousand” singularities. Where Daoism says the way to do is to be, Confucianism disagrees saying the way to be is to do. Daoism says the Dao (the Way) makes people great, Confucianism teaches that people make the Dao great. Daoists believe the greater whole to be nature. Confucianists feel it be a society. Daoists look to nature because they see it as our creator and being our creator we should realize our potential to become a part of it once again. Daoism is the guidance of the way. Confucianism follows the way of doing (McCombs, 1997). Confucianism looks outward to accomplish this, while Daoism looks inward. Both Daoism and Confucianism urge humankind to shed their individuality for this goal. They both contend that

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individualism holds the individual back as well as fragments, the essence of the greater whole. Even if different, both philosophies focus on the goal of self-improvement.

**New Way to a Leadership Approach**

As said before we are in our globalized world indeed in a need of a different leaders and leadership methodology. Today there are important challenging (new) factors in management: languages, time zones, channels/modes of communication, physical distance, and of course a large and variable mixture of cultural factors. They all influence the work processes, decision-making, management, work habits and even get embodied in national work-related legislation.

**Today’s Leadership**

Looking from management perspective they perform tasks, manage people and do business. According to this narrow opinion there exist numerous methodologies and tools helping managers to manage business and people. Just to name some:

1. In Japan at Toyota Motor Company, Taichii Ohno and Shigeo Shingo began to incorporate Henry Ford production and other techniques into an approach called the Toyota Production System or Just-In-Time (JIT) Production. The inventory strategy strives to improve a business’s return on investment by reducing in-process inventory and associated carrying costs;

2. Lean organization: the core idea is to maximize customer value while minimizing waste. Simply, lean means creating more value for customers with less resource;

3. Iwao Kobayashi’s 20 keys: he has created a longer list that can be used in manufacturing audits. It reads very much like a “who’s who” of manufacturing innovations and hence makes a very useful checklist;

4. Six Sigma (6σ) is a business management strategy originally developed by Motorola, USA in 1981. It was initially targeted to quantify the defects occurred during manufacturing processes, and to reduce those defects to a very small level;

5. Business Process Reengineering (BPR) is a top-down approach in which organizations become more efficient and modernize. Reengineering is a fundamental rethinking and radical redesign of business processes to achieve dramatic improvements in cost, quality, speed, and service;

6. The Self Directed Work Team (SDWT) is perhaps the most powerful organization concept that motivates coordinates, solves problems, and makes decision better than individuals. This performance comes at a price: decisions are slow, work teams require extensive training and months to mature;

7. Total Quality Management (TQM) is a set of management practices throughout the organization, geared to ensure that the organization consistently meets or exceeds to satisfy the customer, satisfy the supplier, and continuously improves the business processes. TQM concept was coined by W. Edwards Deming;

8. Others.

But do all those methodologies and tools really act the way we need today?

Firstly, people are more complex than those tools and methodologies. Those methodologies and tools are all lacking the core issues that people distinguish and shape. We all have our values that are a general social policy of what is socially desirable and what is not. Indeed we are talking about general tendencies, what would be more desirable behaviour, so we can say also that it is our belief and behaviour. Values are practically invisible until you practice them. Then there is the system of social norms that can be seen as building block of
social institutions (family, education system, political system, legislation), which continually submit a system of norms to new members of society that actually create them. And at the end we are playing different roles and are having different statuses in societies that we live in. In the process of socialization we all learn the social roles, which are bringing into our social life order and predictability.

For example, in his book *Irrationality*, psychologist Stuart Sutherland reviled the fundamental questions about the role of reward: both the psychologist and the layman tended to assume that if you wanted to get people to do something, rewarding them for it, whether by praise or sweets or money, was the best way to go about it. In the short run this may be true. But this goes against one major psychological theory of motivation which alleges that if people are rewarded for some activities, the desire to engage in it will eventually become autonomous: they will be motivated to perform that activity even without reward (Sutherland Stuart, 1994).

Secondly, in fact, some management policies used in organizations today are eerily similar to those used by totalitarian regimes around the world (Warneka, 2006). That’s the reason why many managers have been for years and years chained in the same managerial processes. Well, there are some good practices but are mostly too narrow to cover today’s needs. Various of them dealt mostly with organizational principles as in the case of a good approach that Elyahu M. Goldratt introduced long ago in his book *The Goal*, where he explained that improvement for a company was not so much to reduce costs but to increase throughput in synchronized efforts: the contribution of any single person to the organization’s purpose was strongly dependent upon the performance of others (Goldratt & Cox, 1997). Then again others deal separately with personal behaviour as in the very first classical book from Daniel Goleman—*Emotional Intelligence*, or group behaviour in Immelman’s *Great Boss Dead Boss* with insights into tribal behaviour and how the dynamic of individual and collective security and value can truly be practically understood and applied. And there are more methodologies and tools just offering cross-functional teams, decentralization/centralization, more frequent/better employee communication solutions which come and go but for the most part in born conflict brought by today’s free market economy remains.

**De Leadership**

Based on all previously described knowledge the following is an addition to it and not trying to present a new separate methodology. In this paper a brief outline of the basic views, thoughts, concepts and directions that are studied from the principles, learning processes and history of martial arts, and which may be used in management and leadership is presented. The sources that were studied could be presented as the following ancient wisdom: “wise manager is like water; it goes without saying—water purifies and refreshes all living creatures; water without restraint and fear trickles through the surface of most of the things; water is fluid and adaptive; water is in harmony with the law of nature”, then reflected into the leadership process as for instance previous wisdom applied to a manager.

Manager works without complaining in any circumstance, with any man and deals with any question which comes their way. He/she works for a benefit of others and works well regardless of pay. Manager speaks to others in simple terms and sincerely, and interferes in the team only to create an agreement and common understanding. Manager is not forceful, hence the team does not mind and does not resist. (Heider, 1985)

Warneka (2006) in his book *Leading People the Black Belt Way* divided the principles of leadership originating from martial arts into three basic categories:

1. Relaxation and opening;
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(2) Grounding;
(3) Equilibrium.

These three basic categories are in present study extended and enriched since they are extremely wide and too universal in both martial arts and everyday life. The proposed methodology rooted in martial arts principles and introduced in this paper is supplemental to all current but brings an original approach to how a leader exerts an influence on a team. Following *Dao De Jing* by Lao Zi, a Chinese classic text which has the foremost rule of Daoism “Follow the Natural Way” as a principle of life, and by means of a model of *Ba gua*—“eight lines” which define the eight principals of reality, methodology consists of eight basic cultural independent principles applied by a leader in steering the work in a given team (Berce, 2011). It should be noted here that these are not rules or steps that can be used separately but elementary pieces of a whole personality of a leadership process refined for a more straightforward understanding:

(1) Control

The martial arts teach self-control of the body and the mind (ego). They start with hard training, where a student (e.g., karate, kick boxing, etc.) has to overcome the threshold of pain from received and given punches. Only when one is relaxed is one in control of oneself. If one is not able to control oneself, how does one expect to control others? The wise leader, for that matter, creates an atmosphere of clarity of purpose and a sense of unity. One works selflessly; one simply allows the team to do what needs doing;

(2) Trust

There is a saying in martial arts: “Trust our friends to beat us so that our enemies cannot!” This saying is about “trust”. Good leader equally understands the processes in the team, as well as, the fact that leadership does not require the application of force or pressure. Good leaders trust their people. A well-led team is not a battlefield of egos, as there is no place for individual “victories” or “defeats” in teamwork;

(3) Stability

One cannot fight successfully and master their opponent without stability and balance in place. It means that we should properly adjust our stance. How we “shape” our body to “adjust” our bones that have to support the muscles in a relaxed way. With our stance, gaze and movements we are communicating our mental, physical and emotional state. Being “on the ground” (well-grounded) reflects our terms and our values—those that we expect from our subordinates. A good leader is focused, standing firmly on the ground, and one knows where one stands and what one is supposed to do;

(4) Adjustment

A China proverb says: “The grass abates in the direction from which the wind blows!”. A martial artist has to keep adjusting to the surroundings and opponent. Any hesitance on their part will result in lost time and opportunity giving the opponent an advantage. Therefore, if you drive yourself too much, this does not produce fruit, if you try to rush into things, this does not lead anywhere. The same is true for managing a team. If the manager is too aggressive, subordinate members “die like grass”. If a manager is too soft, they do not take him seriously;

(5) Responsiveness

The martial arts are about being soft, and they are not about brutal power. They were originally created to give a physically weaker person a better fighting chance against a stronger one. When one is challenged one could “allow being surprised” or indeed “be surprised”, and one responds in one or another way. A wise leader
is aware that too much interference hinders the work process of a team. A wise leader is calm and collected and leads by example;

(6) Least of effort

If we observe nature we see that everything is done as effortless as possible, or with the smallest possible effort which is genuinely used in martial arts. Nature, in spite of dealing with extremely huge things and events, conserves “energy”, e.g., big tree growth with little “effort”, the seas do not get tired of waving, birds fly with ease, an ant can hold 100 times of its weight and appears to work effortlessly. Therefore, good leader knows that any is harmful and it represents a physical and intellectual hindrance. When things are done effortlessly that leaves the impression of everything running smoothly and harmoniously, there is no stopping, no fuss, no dissatisfaction and most importantly, all is achieved without resorting to giving orders or spending time on extensive persuasion;

(7) Steering

In the martial arts it is very important to be able to integrate all the power and capabilities of our entire organism to effectively carry out an activity. For this we need a coordination of our body and our spirit. For each movement it is necessary to first relax tension in our musculature. We have to be alert only to our opponent, since any external disturbance can reduce our focus (e.g., light). A fist fight is like a bull fight. The toreador is not stopping the bull (the “opponent”) with his body. That is not even possible. The toreador lets the bull pass and then, at the right moment, he slays the bull with his sword. People have their own ideas, concepts, knowledge, etc., and they all like to excel. Good leader will take advantage of that. Good leadership embraces people’s interests, knowledge and their abilities. Good leader is like water, one is not destructive, but slowly and gradually employs one’s energy to mould and steer;

(8) Responsibility

Practicing the principles of martial arts can empower one with extreme capabilities that can be used to different ends in different situations. One can cure, can immobilize or can (could) kill just with a pressure or hit to certain points. It is one’s responsibility as to how one would use this knowledge and these martial arts weapons. Assuming responsibility is, by all means, one of the more demanding requirements in leadership. It translates into commitment to finish something. Some people like hiding from responsibility for their deeds, actions and decisions. Wise leaders never attempt to absolve themselves from their responsibilities, nor do they impose their value system on others.

And to take responsibility one has to control oneself… and the De Leadership circle is connected.

Conclusions

In this paper we explored a new territory, that of applying the principles of the martial arts to the leadership process and public management, which blends oneness of mind and body of a leader. This practice is then used to help leader in leading others. Leadership is a very complex practice, with success depending on many factors. The proposed methodology reconsiders the main implications of the philosophies behind the martial arts, as they apply to leadership and team management. While teams involve collaboration, they nevertheless are usually led by only one person. And that person carries all from control up to responsibility that the work would be done. For that he/she needs to be capable of steering people, by the way they perform most excellent in carrying out the goal. The martial arts, their philosophies and their teachings can help to highlight the elements required in this kind of leadership. Knowing these elements one can be able to
remarkably well carry out the process of leading people independently of their cultural background.

As well better leadership and consecutive public management can also benefit from an awareness of the differences in the ways of thinking coming from environments influenced by Confucianism or Daoism or Buddhism on the one side, and the philosophical orientation of the West on the other (Lee, 1997). While the Chinese martial arts are predominantly rhythmic in movement, the western approaches (box, savate) tend to be more dynamic and tense. Daoism wants to be in harmony with nature, the western approach is to control the nature (spurred by the western way of life).

Martial arts in the East have a focus on (martial) way and mental culture united with body, while in the West their perspective is sportier and competitive, where winning becomes their main objective. We could say, using Daoism concept, that eastern is a “soft” approach as in Yin, and western is “hard” as in Yang.

Daoism mentality is like a bamboo tree which is quick to bend with a wind, but in its absence becomes stronger. The West is like an oak tree unperturbed by the wind, only to be (unfortunately) pulled out by a hurricane later on (e.g., financial crisis). There are other areas where similar contrasts can be made. The West is not economical with energy, whereas martial arts (including Tai Chi) are good at preserving it and only calling on it in an emergency.

Everyone who aspires to be a leader, even if only to lead oneself, or to work as part of a team managing a project, has a choice whether to immerse one, absorb and use this diversity of principles from the martial arts in the leadership process.

Confucius says: “Who is alone, as befits, is in no need of giving orders for things to work. Who alone is not, as befits, he can command the obedience but nobody will follow”.

Effective leaders have an awareness of what’s going on in the team and they deal with it according to their understanding of it, at the time. Such effectiveness is, then, neither premeditated nor can it be borne out of any prearranged formal agreement, this is similar to the challenges in the martial arts.

Therefore, to conclude this preliminary work with reference to a De (meaning morality/virtue) based on leadership approach one should understand that leadership is best exercised when group of people, upon finishing some assignments, is led to believe that they’ve done it all alone by themselves!

The proposed De Leadership Approach is still a rudimentary methodology but reveals some basic values that are common to all humans and are therefore independent of cultural behaviour. This paper presents a doctrine of Daoism where leadership is professed in a way of a wise man or sage that leads by staying behind, by enabling rather than visibly directing others, and governs him and others by keeping to the way and combines it with fundamental martial arts philosophy (stance, breathing, focus, stability, soft, etc.). With abet of the model of Ba gua we created eight leadership moral principles. They are cultural independent and commonly understood due to the simplicity of their nature and exercised by all people most of the times instinctively. But they are to be followed as a whole and not partial if a good leadership approach is to be successfully used in different multi-cultural environments.

This research field on the application of the philosophy and principles of the martial arts to leadership is still very broad. It will require much more understanding of Chinese culture and martial arts practices, both as they play a role in De Leadership and especially for management in public organisations, as they offer a different perspective on leadership and management understood in the West. This is the intention of further research work to be carried out in this area.
References


