

The aesthetics of subversion: learning from the fringes of 'good' leadership

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The notion of balance is assumed in a variety of aspects of leadership such as task/relational orientation, control/autonomy, the leader person/function, and attending to competing organisational concerns. Such issues have also been framed as paradox in leadership, and this study is situated at the intersection between balance and paradox. A balanced leadership act is ephemeral and cannot be understood in terms of prescribed contingencies. Balanced leadership is an aesthetic experience that involves all faculties of perception and agency. This paper investigates how 'inappropriate' leader interventions and off-balance leadership is experienced, with the aim to inform the balanced act. The empirical material is from an experimental workshop with nine choral leaders who designed their own leadership interventions on the fringes of their regular practice. The research applied a hybrid methodology with a phenomenological point of departure. The analysis revealed that the impact of off-balance is experienced differently, depending on whether the intervention is of a task, relational, or existential nature. Even within the limited scope of the study, the findings point at several theoretical and practical implications.

Keywords: aesthetics, leadership paradox, choral leadership, authenticity, phenomenology

Acknowledgement: I would like to thank the nine students of choral conducting who co-created the leadership workshop that made this research possible. I would also like to thank the reviewers and the editor in the process of improving the paper.

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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Processes of organising and leading raise competing concerns and multiple tensions that elude simple contingencies and prescriptions (Smith and Lewis, 2011). Seemingly contradictory priorities, behaviours, and leader traits have been framed as paradox in leadership theory (Zhang et al., 2015), which calls for a quality of leadership that hinges on judgement, reflective practice and behavioural flexibility (Denison et al., 1995). Chester Barnard recognised nearly a century ago that leadership is inherently an aesthetic process both with regard to enactment and perception (Barnard, 1938). Fulfilling the leader function requires a sense of appropriateness and balance that is aesthetic rather than logical. The aesthetics of leadership attends to the *felt* meanings that are subjectively experienced by leaders and followers (Hansen et al., 2007). Leadership at its best is constituted by interventions that are perceived as appropriate in terms of type as well as proportion – a fundamental *fit* that even merits the label beautiful (Ladkin, 2008). The aim of this paper is to investigate how leadership is experienced by subverting it – avoiding 'appropriateness' and lingering with situations on the fringes of what is normally viewed as 'good' leadership. The organisational domain in question is music, where the aesthetics of the leadership process is particularly salient; ensemble members are visibly corporeally engaged, they explicitly rely on all faculties of perception, and individual meanings agglomerate into the shared sounding music. The empirical basis for the study is a one-day experimental workshop with a class of nine master-level students of choral conducting – each designing and leading their own off-balance scenario. The study is based on a phenomenological approach, complemented by selected aspects of paradox in leadership theory that connects to the notion of balance.

The notion of balance in leadership theory

Balance as something desirable implies that competing opposites somehow must be kept under control or moderated. Although *balanced leadership* can hardly be said to constitute a distinct research tradition or theory, it appears as an aspect of leadership in a variety of ways. Broadly speaking, it is used to characterise the dynamics between leader and followers. For example, it is used to denote the interplay between vertical and horizontal leadership, where the vertical leader temporarily enables and allows for horizontal leadership to happen between team members (Müller et al., 2017). The dichotomy verticality/horizontality parallels control/empowerment, although theories of empowering leadership have attended more to the empowerment process than the balancing issue (Cheong et al., 2016; Amundsen and Martinsen, 2014). Work on authenticity in leadership assumed from the outset that there had to be a balance between dominance and compliance as well as genuine worker empowerment (Duignan and Bhindi, 1997). The notion of balanced processing of information, perspectives, and concerns is explicitly included in authentic leadership theory and transformational leadership theory, but notably, not in theories of charismatic, servant, and spiritual leadership (Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Balance is also used to characterise leadership development, where balance requires the inclusion of various ways of knowing—declarative, procedural, experiential, and contextual (Jacob et al., 2015). Blended ways of knowing is also a premise for aesthetic leadership research at large (Sutherland and Jelinek, 2015; Taylor and Ladkin, 2009; Zeitner et al., 2016; Bathurst et al., 2010; Edwards et al., 2013).

The premise of various conceptions of balance is *not* that the middle of the road is consistently preferred, but at least that staying in the ditches is destructive. According to Einarsen et al. (2007), leadership is destructive when leader behaviour undermines the organisation's legitimate interests systematically and repeatedly. Such behaviour may or may not be intentional and comes in overtly negative guises such as criminal, abusive, and corruptive, as well the dark side of romanticised leadership such as charisma (Takala, 2010; Howell and Avolio, 1992; Kets de Vries, 2006). In the context of the present study, they

key point is that the occasional 'bad day' at work does not constitute bad leadership, only when it is not countered, tempered, or rectified – in other words: dynamically rebalanced.

The notion of balance is closely related to paradox in leadership, more precisely, *how to live with paradox*. Paradox is generally understood as 'contradictory yet interrelated elements (dualities) that exist simulatenously and persist over time [...]' (Smith and Lewis, 2011: 387). One way to manage paradox is to *not* reconcile opposites such as forerunner/follower, difficulty/easiness, and passion/professionalism (Zhang and Fong Foo, 2012). In the Chinese tradition, the interplay between *Yin* and *Yang* means that there is no absolute good or evil, rather, harmony means balance in the constant shifting between opposites (McElhatton and Jackson, 2012). Art organisations, in particular, are imbued with tensions and paradoxes that require embracing and exploring them rather than solving them (Sagiv and Yeheskel, 2020). The present study is positioned at this intersection between balance and paradox in leadership.

Coherence, harmony, and balance in musical leadership

Although the context for the present study is a musical organisation – a choral ensemble, it is not 'leading arts' that is the study object. Instead, it is the conductor's process with an ensemble that is exploited to investigate a general leadership issue. In this case, music serves as any organisational domain, albeit, with some key features that make the impact of leadership particularly observable from a research point of view. The conductor is an iconic leader role where various leadership facets come together in a visual/aural, immediate and rather dense way, a quality which has been used by scholars to study leadership more generally (Atik, 1994; Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Veleckis Nussbaum, 2005; Mintzberg, 1998). The role requires a wide behavioural repertoire and flexibility in dealing with an array of competing concerns (Hunt et al., 2004). These are negotiated and moderated to ensure a fit between the character of the music – 'the mission', leader intent, and ensemble members' contribution. Koivunen and Wennes (2011) studied orchestra conductors with an aesthetic lens. They found that the leadership process was characterised by three dimensions, which they labelled relational listening, aesthetic judgement, and kinaesthetic empathy.

Choral singers see musical leadership as a blended mastery: 'know the music, know the ensemble, know yourself' – a balanced act (Jansson, 2019: 882). Such coherence is also framed as harmony, in its literal sense as well as pervasively used in colloquial language. In the ancient Greek origin, harmony was used both to denote the concord of sounds and the planetary order of the cosmos (Proust, 2011). The tonal structure of music was seen as the remedy that would re-establish harmony in the troubled human soul, guided by the same numerical relationships that sustain planetary order.

Whereas harmony depicts how multiple elements come together as a whole, balance implies a tensional relationship between *two* opposites, which is also given by the etymology of balance—from Latin *bi-lanx*. In the process of organising, it is not balance as a static position that is of interest, but balance as a dynamic phenomenon. Thus, harmony can be said to reside on a dynamic equilibrium, where multiple and even violent forces may be at play.

For the purpose of this study, a balanced leadership act is defined as a variety of interventions in the pursuit of organisational goals, where every given type of intervention has a contrasting intervention in such a way that none of them is allowed to take a sole and permanent position. An overall balanced leadership act therefore comprises an array of specific dichotomies that are dynamically balanced. For simplicity, it is used synonymously with harmony and coherence.

This may appear as a rather reductionistic view of an inherently aesthetic process, and the connection to aesthetic leadership theory needs some clarification. The study aligns with the fundamental premise that '[a]esthetic leadership is concerned with sensory knowledge

and felt meaning associated with leadership phenomena' (Hansen et al., 2007: 552). However, instead of promoting aesthetic knowing at the detriment of propositional knowing, I argue that in a reflective practice, they are intertwined. Aesthetic knowing is therefore our fullest range of knowing, which includes propositional knowing. One part of the tradition sees aesthetic leadership as a remedy to past and faltering practices (Bathurst et al., 2010; Bathurst and Monin, 2010; Fisher and Robbins, 2015). The present study has a more modest ambition – using aesthetic knowing as an epistemological aid in the research process. Aesthetic leadership research has aimed at understanding artistic leadership specifically (Koivunen and Wennes, 2011; Bathurst and Ladkin, 2012; Koivunen, 2003) as well as enriching the understanding of leadership at large (Beau, 2016; Biehl-Missal and Springborg, 2016; Duke et al., 2020; Jansson, 2018). One important strand of the latter is using aesthetic sensibilities to develop managers (Jansson, 2020; Edwards et al., 2013; Springborg and Sutherland, 2015; Sutherland et al., 2015). The present study looks at an artistic practice, however, not for its promise of 'artful leadership', but because of its sensory affordances in a simple and transparent setting.

Scholars of aesthetic leadership theory have conceptualised leadership processes as ongoing and with somewhat fluid relationships between leaders and followers (Guillet de Monthoux et al., 2007; Crevani, 2018). At the same time, a distinct leader such as the ensemble conductor may be conspicuously present and manage a host of mundane interventions on the practical level (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003a; Mintzberg, 1998). The objects of scrutiny in the present study are such interventions. The musical leader faces multiple balancing acts in the performing situation, throughout the preparation process, as well as within a single rehearsal. Rehearsing is an encounter between leader and team members that involves a continuous stream of judgement calls of artistic and pedagogic nature. Choices aim to select the most appropriate intervention in order to mobilise team efforts and move towards the desired artistic result. Examples include control versus letting go, stopping for error correction versus team self-correction, attending to details versus nurturing overall routine, and choosing what types of signals to give. The multi-modality of the role, including speech, vocal demonstration, gestures, and various technical aids, provides a wide menu of real-time interventions (Bonshor, 2017; Daugherty and Brunkan, 2013; Wöllner, 2008; Tskhay et al., 2014).

Research questions

Desirable situations might be more easily understood via their opposites, and being away from balanced situations elucidate the nature of balance. The aim was to draw insight from the fringes of what is normally viewed as 'good' leadership. Specifically, I asked the following research questions:

- (1) How are supposedly off-balance leadership situations experienced, and to what extent are they in fact perceived as extreme?
- (2) How does the level of discomfort with off-balance situations vary, how might we understand these variations, and how do they inform the notion of a balanced leadership act?

The questions reflect a phenomenological epistemology where the object of inquiry is 'balanced leadership act'. The approach was to subvert conventional practice and linger with off-balance situations – a practical case of *creative variation* that allowed a discussion of what is central and what is peripheral in the phenomenon (Gill, 2014). Subversion is here meant literally – to intentionally overthrow or undermine. The practical case was a workshop with nine master-level students of choral conducting.

Theoretical framework

The purpose of the workshop was for each participant to experience being outside their normal and supposedly balanced practice—to *feel* what off-balance meant to them. By

varying it, the study object (balance) could be 'brought into focal awareness' (Cheng, 2016: 284). The learning aim was to allow different situations to elucidate un-balanced acts, where each situation would provide different insights for the participating individuals. Seeking ways to describe ways that a group of people understand a phenomenon is what phenomenography aims at, an approach that has been developed primarily within the educational sciences (Svensson, 1997). However, the present paper does not focus on the participants' understanding as such, but the structure and meaning of the underlying phenomenon, which is the undertaking of phenomenological inquiry (Larsson and Holmström, 2007: 55). I make this point to accentuate the study's orientation towards leadership rather than pedagogy.

Phenomenological attitude

Phenomenology is a rather heterogeneous movement that from the outset has wrestled with different views on its knowledge project – focus on *what is* (ontology) versus *how we can know* (epistemology) (Schacht, 1972). In the present study, phenomenology is applied as a way to acquire knowledge of the experiencing of a balanced leadership act, and notably, more as experimental design than in a strict methodological sense. At the same time, the two components of the research question cannot readily be disentangled, as investigating how off-balance feels like is both a means and an end. The study therefore concurs with Zahavi's (2018: 27) view that 'phenomenology is at once analysing our way of understanding and experiencing the world, and at the same time, the objects and their modes of appearance'.

A long-standing issue is the role of existing knowledge and preconceptions in a phenomenological inquiry. Prominent scholars of phenomenological methodology view theory and conceptualisation as alien to phenomenology, whether adhering to a purely descriptive ideal (Giorgi, 1970) or considering interpretation as an integral part of description (van Manen, 1990). Zahavi (2019) takes issue with both and argues that qualitative research must be informed by key phenomenological notions such as intentionality, intuition, and empathy. The researcher should not refrain from 'adopting and employing a comprehensive theoretical framework concerning the subject's relation to himself or herself, to the world, and to others' (907). In fact, the key focus of phenomenological analysis is the triad *self–other–world*. In the context of the experimental workshop, the *others* comprise primarily the other participants but potentially reach into the wider communities of their professional practices. The *world* that is intuited is the music – as material and as collective music-making.

Experiencing paradox in leadership

On the organisational level, a paradox lens has been applied to understand classical tensions that must be managed, such as cooperation–competition, exploration–exploitation, and control–release (Farjoun, 2017). Smith and Lewis (2011) propose a categorisation of paradox based on four needs – belonging, learning, organising, and performing. For example, performing and belonging might clash when individual identities are incongruent with occupational demands. The tension between organising and learning arises as organisations seek routine, stability, and efficiency and at the same time need agility and flexibility. Organisations may also face context specific tensions, such as artistic versus business needs. According to Sagiv and Yeheskel (2020), art and culture organisations depend on three managerial functions being fulfilled – the dreamer, the doer, and the ambassador, with different and conflicting needs. Although reconciliation can happen on the organisational level, it also connects to the leadership process level as well as the individual leader. For some roles, such as the conductor, a single individual must cope with competing concerns. Hunt et al. (2004) outline eight conductor functions that compete for time and attention, such as producing, innovating, and mentoring. While these may be understood on the process level of leadership, the authors' focus is on demands on the individual conductor. The role requires a high degree of cognitive and behavioural complexity, which

is served by a combination of varied behavioural repertoire and the ability to differentiate behaviour.

In a study of people management in China, Zhang et al. (2015) identified five types of paradoxical leader behaviours: (1) self-centred/other-centred, (2) distance/closeness, (3) treating uniformly/individualisation, (4) enforcing requirements/allowing flexibility, and (5) decision control/autonomy. Paradox has also been studied on the leader trait level. Paradox inherent in a leader's authenticity is of particular interest, because the leader entity is the meeting point between the leader's concept of self and the demands of the leader function. There are situations where a fully authentic and transparent leader may be destructive and even unethical, for example, by exposing fear in a crisis (Ladkin and Taylor, 2010). Despite its inward perspective, authenticity is bounded by external expectations of the situation and implied professionalism. Paradox inherent in the leader's authenticity therefore involves emotional labour (Iszatt-White et al., 2021) and identity struggles (Nyberg and Sveningsson, 2014). A leader position assumes both the guise of a self-less function and a true human self. In the conductor role, synchronisation would be an example of the former and emotional expressivity of the latter.

Poole and van de Ven (1989) advocated four strategies for managing paradox: (1) acceptance – leave as is, (2) spatial separation, (3) temporal separation, and (4) synthesis – seeking a new view that accommodates the opposites. *Balance would be an example of temporal separation because it is achieved by the shifting between opposites.* However, one particular kind of synthesis would also be an ongoing temporal separation – a pendulum. Clegg et al. (2002) argue that the opposing poles of a paradox tend to be related in such a way that they depend on each other, where one feeds the other. Well-balanced leadership interventions may therefore be seen as an approach to coping with paradox, and notably, without resorting to contingent prescriptions for the opposing views.

The view that different propositions can be held without distress is a long tradition in Eastern thinking, such as friend/foe, reason/intuition, dark/light (McElhatton and Jackson, 2012). From a leadership point of view, it means that features are not absolutely good or evil and that a style may encompass for example strong discipline and benevolence. Even presumed negative traits such as narcissism may be productive when sufficiently moderated by humility (Zhang et al., 2017). Conversely, even positive leader traits and behaviours may be destructive, if combined with ethical myopia, as in Warner's (2007) case study of Shakespeare's King Henry V, without mutual trust (Takala, 2010), or leaving followers ungrounded (Ladkin, 2006).

The absence of unequivocally positive or negative traits, behaviours, and interventions does not rule out situational discomfort. In fact, negative experiences provide fuel to the balanced act. The notion of off-balance – an investigative tool in the present study, therefore not only implies the existence of a balancing point (which is ephemeral) but the existence of an opposite position as well as the significance of evolving time.

To summarise, the theoretical framework consists of the phenomenological triad *self-other-world* and the key terms related to coping with paradox – in particular temporal resolution and the equivocality of desirable/undesirable interventions. Interpretation of participants' experiencing of off-balance needs to be open for multiple levels of experience, whether it surfaces as individual, collective or task-related themes. With regard to the debate on an entitative versus relational view of leadership (Dachler and Hosking, 1995; Uhl-Bien, 2006), theories of paradox in leadership are somewhat agnostic. While attending to relational aspects of the experiment, the present study also recognises the leader entity as a conspicuous figure – the conductor, and therefore a legitimate level of analysis.

Method and material

The experimental situation was set up as a learning vehicle for the participants, where various unbalanced situations were intended to elucidate the feeling of *being there*, the urge to move away from them and thereby better understand the balanced act. According to variation theory, people are aware of the world in qualitatively different ways and that learning happens when critical aspects of the learning object varies while other aspects remain constant (Cheng, 2016; Lo, 2012). When developing a leadership practice, it could mean shifting the balance between control and empowerment, leading without subject matter knowledge, or the use of alternative communication modes. Specifically in the context of choral rehearsing, it could for example mean that a melody is learnt by varying tempo, with and without text, with and without technical aids, alone or together with others. More generally, a premise of phenomenology is that a phenomenon becomes salient by reduction, that is, by changing aspects of its appearance and describe what remains. The experiment was therefore a practical case of 'imaginative variation' in the Husserlian sense (Schacht, 1972: 9).

Ways of knowing

Leadership is an emergent phenomenon that is corporeally experienced (Guillet de Monthoux et al., 2007; Ladkin, 2013; Hansen et al., 2007). The embodied nature of leadership is particularly prominent in musical organisations because embodiment pervades interaction and communication. It is characterised by a multi-modality that not only applies to the leader gestalt but constitutes a toolbox for specific leader interventions, including hand gestures, posture, breath, eye-contact, vocal demonstration, and emotional mirroring (Wöllner, 2008; Skadsem, 1997; Napoles, 2013). It therefore manifests leadership as an aesthetic endeavour, both in terms of perception and enactment.

The seminal distinction between *knowing what* and *knowing how* was first made by (Ryle, 1946) and the notion of tacit knowledge (Polanyi, 1968) became key to understanding human practices. Heron and Reason (1997) distinguished between four ways of knowing: experiential, presentational (interpretive), propositional, and practical. Experiential knowing is the immediate, uninterpreted sensation of, for example, a hand movement. Presentational knowing is wordless realisation that the movement is an intentional signal. Knowing that it signals the beginning of a piece of music in a particular tempo is propositional and the ability to respond corporeally by singing or playing would be a practical knowledge. Propositional knowing relies on language and concepts. The other categories are commonly referred to as aesthetic - rooted in our sensory faculties. For the purpose of the present study, the key point is that the scenarios imply deliberate modification, boosting, or elimination of a particular communicative mode – and thereby a way of knowing. Moreover, the impact of an off-balance leadership situation might manifest itself through a particular blend of knowing. The four categories play different roles throughout the workshop process and the subsequent analysis.

Workshop set-up

Nine master programme students of choral conducting took part in a one-day workshop where they in turn acted as leader with the other eight as ensemble singers. Each student chose a scenario where they could explore an extreme situation of a kind they could not easily have done in the course of their regular practice. Examples include total avoidance of speech, excessive praise, and emotional detachment. After each scenario, the participants engaged in collective conversation on what happened. The nine scenarios are headlined as follows:

- Scenario 1: Sound and voice focus
- Scenario 2: Sole attention and excessive praise to one sub-group
- Scenario 3: Juxtaposed gender roles

- Scenario 4: Complex material without manuscript
- Scenario 5: Improvisation
- Scenario 6: Emotional detachment
- Scenario 7: Empowering the team – neglect of details
- Scenario 8: Complete absence of speech
- Scenario 9: Total abdication from leader behaviour

The scenarios are numbered according to the sequence in which they took place, which was randomly chosen. Each session lasted for twenty minutes. None of the participants knew what the other scenarios were, and no verbal introductions were given. Each participant brought with them the music material for their own session and a mix of familiar and new material was used. The scenarios were chosen to deliberately expose one or more elements that lie outside or on the fringe of regular practice. The participants' choice of scenario reflected their own interests as well as their individual and implicit pre-conceptions of risk level and degree of off-balance. Hence, some scenarios were expected to be rather extreme, whereas others might be seen as more mainstream. Therefore, the scenarios offered different potentials for addressing the research questions, largely outside the researcher's control.

Analytical process

The conversations following each scenario were sound-recorded. They were set up and treated as unstructured group interviews. Two questions were asked; (1) What was going on here? and (2) How did you experience this scenario? The participants responded and engaged in discussions in free flowing format with some facilitation. I acted in the role as participating observer and facilitator. The discussions reflected both the leader's experience and the team members' experience in a rather erratic interplay. A stringent attribution of leader and follower effects therefore became increasingly blurred as the workshop evolved. The participants gave their consent in writing to let the material be used for research and alias names are used in the presentation.

The scenarios were video-recorded for reference purposes, however, participant experiences were principally captured via the conversations, supported by researcher notes. The analysis sought to describe the nature of the experiences and the impact that each scenario had on the participants. The process can be summarised in terms of these four stages:

- (1) The workshop itself: '*doing* phenomenology'– where the participants and the researcher engaged in experiential, presentational, and practical knowing of off-balance situations.
- (2) Debrief: conversations - where the participants sought to articulate and exchange presentational knowing, with rudiments of propositional knowing.
- (3) Interpretation: initial interpretation of conversations, where the researcher sought a thematic structure in the presentational/propositional knowledge from stage (2).
- (4) Meaning condensation: completing the analysis by highlighting the most salient impact of each scenario in light of the thematic structure (Kvale, 2007).

Analytical extracts for three of the scenarios are shown in the Appendix. The process represents a hybrid methodology that changed focus along the way. The initial stages were founded on a phenomenological attitude, however, it did not follow phenomenological methodology in a strict sense (van Manen, 1990). Stages (1) and (2) reflected to some degree a praxis oriented, collaborative research paradigm (Raelin, 2016; Heron and Reason, 1997), where the participants collaboratively engaged in both execution and reflection. Towards the completion, the logic became more inductive and the discussion more conceptual. This process reflects an abductive logic, which is an iterative process of

conjecturing about the world in an interplay between existing knowledge and new discovery (Timmermans and Tavory, 2012; Rennie, 2012).

Experiencing the scenarios

The participants designed their own scenarios without coordinating or sharing their ideas. The workshop therefore comprised a random set of off-balance situations. Scenarios 1 and 5 were perceived as rather mainstream by the team and only felt outside the somewhat narrower comfort zones for these two leaders. The other seven scenarios exposed experiential themes pertinent to the research questions. The themes emerging from the analysis fall into the two categories shown in table 1. Each scenario exposed only some of the themes, which, when seen together, form the shown thematic structure. Selected key observations are described here and a simplified overview is shown in table 2.

Table 1: Emerging themes.

Theme category A: <i>Experiential level</i>	Theme category B: <i>Impact type</i>
<p>A1 Task level (concerns the technical or subject matter features of the intervention)</p> <p>A2 Relational level (concerns what goes on between the participants and how it affects them)</p> <p>A3 Existential level (relates to who the participants are, their identities, values, and felt meaning)</p>	<p>B1 Efficiency (impact on time usage, effort, and progress)</p> <p>B2 Effectiveness (impact on intended result, added benefits, and learning)</p> <p>B3 Affective impact (perception of discomfort, annoyance, indifference, excitement or other affective states)</p>

Excessive attention and praise to one sub-group

Jakob chose in scenario 2 to experiment with an extremely biased handling of the team—giving all his attention to the soprano group (high-pitched female voices) and neglecting everyone else. In addition, this group was given only praise and positive reinforcement, irrespective of their actual contribution. To reinforce his divisive demeanour towards the end of his session, he made all the singers turn around and face outward in the semi-circle that had formed. No-one had eye contact with one another anymore.

The soprano part was quite difficult and it did not sound particularly nice. Unconditional positive feedback was perceived by everyone as awkward. The sopranos found it as useless as it was uncomfortable. The others felt like bewildered bystanders – observers rather than contributors. It was overall a very unmusical and negative experience. Despite the extremity of the session, everyone viewed biased attention from a conductor to be a rather recurring experience in their regular practices. One striking effect occurred when Jakob made the team turn around and face outwards, as expressed by one of the neglected participants:

I felt that I had to protect you [all]. I was afraid of what [Jakob] might do when we had our backs against him [...] I thought it was very unpleasant. [...] I was afraid that he would make [intrusive] approaches. He had just sent such horrid signals.

Her statement expresses a certain existential anxiety, driven by a relational ambiguity and a strong feeling of insincerity on the part of Jakob. There was a perception of incoherence between leader propositions and the team's aesthetic knowing. The reaction came even though she knew very well that the session was merely an experiment and Jakob was a benevolent and amicable colleague. His demeanour nonetheless raised a high level of

anxiety and during the discussion the group was rather surprised about this impact given the otherwise safe environment.

Juxtaposed gender roles

The background for Helen's scenario 3 was that she in her regular practice feared that she treated male and female singers differently, beyond what the singing voice by itself warrants. She therefore wanted to juxtapose the parts in a folk tune by letting the females sing the male part and vice versa. In addition, she wanted to be less accommodating and forthcoming, that is, avoid constant preoccupation with having her team members on board.

The role switch forced her to focus on the music material rather on *who* sings the part. Her habitual pattern was therefore no longer applicable. Gender roles in the music were confounded and seemed to fall out of sight. By not being able to see her interventions through a 'who-lens', she was left with the 'what/how-lens'. Helen expressed an enormous relief by being able to just move ahead and not constantly seek support for her actions. The participants noticed that she gave very little feedback, without having an issue with it. However, one consequence of her no-nonsense approach was a rather serene and inexpressive appearance:

You wouldn't have lost anything by looking happy. That was what I missed the most.

I was super confused. But what you *did* was really good.

At first sight, the two components of her scenario appear to be disconnected and independent. However, the common theme was departure from her habitual 'who-bias'. By creating the 'wrong' gender set-up, not only did she remove her self-recognised gender bias but also de-emphasised her excessive relational orientation – to the extent that she was no longer a friendly face. She made a wholesale attention shift from relationships to task, which for her was a great relief and for the team very efficient. On the existential level, Helen challenged her concept of self, which was observed somewhat negatively by the team but accepted within the remit of an experiment.

Emotional detachment

Christian chose in scenario 6 to experiment with a disengaged style. He was sitting in front of the team with a relaxed posture and his legs crossed. He conducted technically correct, but with no will power or emotional expression. Although he had voluntarily chosen the scenario, after a few minutes, he stopped the experiment:

I am unable to continue. This is the worst I've ever done. It is extremely exhausting [...] I want to express *music*. This is just weird. Everyone here gets that. It's just ludicrous.

The experiment was simply too painful for him. It violated everything that was important to him. It rattled his existential foundation. Music is not something he could fool around with, and he appeared ready to leave the workshop overall. The group accepted the discontinuation. Instead, on the spot, everyone engaged in a discussion about the nature of personal comfort zones. Christian admitted that he in fact not only had problems with his own scenario, but also with the other team members going outside their regular boundaries.

Effectiveness and efficiency by aesthetic deprivation

Several participants chose to create off-balance by removing a sensory mode or action type. Johannes rehearsed in scenario 4 a complex polyphonic piece without sheet music available

for the singers, who had to rely on his vocal demonstration only. A simile would be learning a landscape by looking at someone talking through its paths without being given a map. The approach worked but was very time consuming and it was a frustrating experience not to have the full picture. But it gave the participants insight into the nitty gritty details of how it all fit together—the threads of the polyphonic weaving.

You open your ears and become incredibly focused. And you listen to the whole. The impact was deep learning of a small fragment of the piece, at a depth of knowing rarely endeavoured – it provided a new quality of effectiveness. However, progression in terms of level of completion suffered greatly – it was a highly inefficient process. Propositional knowing was completely removed from the equation, thereby heavily compelling the team to intensely rely on doing and sensing.

Yasmin chose in scenario 8 to rehearse with complete absences of voice communication. The absence of speech revealed how speech easily gets in the way unless the spoken word is more precise than other signalling modes. But even indexal needs, such as telling who to engage and where, were quite well served by Yasmin's hands.

She tells you where we are, but she says nothing in between. It is so delightful, and progress is so speedy.

Ensemble-work as uninterrupted flow feels good – delightful – and leader interventions easily become intrusive. In particular, leader speech competes with ensemble task time. In Yasmin's scenario, the absence of speech demonstrated how less talk promotes efficiency – as long as indexal needs can be served. The reduced availability of propositional knowledge allowed immersion into tacit knowing.

David's point of departure in scenario 7 was that he had tended to be overly detail oriented as a leader. He chose to experiment with the opposite scenario—working only with the overarching idea, the context of the work, and musical expression. Team reactions were strikingly mixed, from contentment to frustration. On one hand, the session allowed ample ensemble time and efficient non-verbal communication. On the other hand, effectiveness was impaired as errors were left unsolved, although gradually reduced by individual self-correction. The scenario was most extreme for David because it repressed his traditional inclination and he somehow struggled to find alternative leader contributions.

Total abdication from leader behaviour

Karen chose in scenario 9 to abstain from initiating or facilitating any kind of intervention. She just set the stage: placed the singers in a circle and had everyone pick up their book with a canon of sheet music. In addition to not assuming a regular leader role, at times she withdrew from the situation by yawning overtly, picking up her mobile phone, and she even left the room for a minute.

In the void created by Karen, members of the group stepped in. They picked a piece to sing. However, they did not put much energy into it and took little responsibility for the music-making. One of them proposed to do the piece again but it was sung in a disengaged manner. There were moments of silence as well as moments of awkward laughter but no process or progress. The leaderless group was empowering members in one sense but the leader who abdicated left the ensemble demobilised—while still being present. The team experienced frustration and resignation:

[I feel] the extremes. I get angry. An then I want to help out.

It doesn't work if someone steps in and take over when it has not been decided.

The scenario demonstrated a subtle transition between anarchy and distributed leadership. During the conversation, David suggested to redo the experiment where everyone took responsibility as opposed to no one taking responsibility. This turned out to be a productive and co-creative session. It demonstrated that the problem with the leadership process in Karen's scenario was not the absence of a single leader but the void that she imposed by still being present. She stole the opportunity for distributed leadership to arise – poisoned the relational space, so to speak. Her disengaged presence impaired team member agency, extinguishing any spark of motivation and enthusiasm beyond dutiful rerun of the piece. A redeeming feature of the scenario was that the team awoke to their own agency after the scenario.

Table 2: Simplified overview of scenario experiences

No	Participant	Scenario	Key observations	Experience by level		
				Task	Relational	Existential
1	Mona	Sound and voice focus	Ensemble contact, somewhat erratic efficiency *)	n	+	n
2	Jakob	Excessive attention and praise to one sub-group	Confusion and ridicule, evolving uncertainty and fear	-	-	-
3	Helen	Juxtaposed gender roles	On-task activity, novel experience	n	+	+
4	Johannes	Complex task without manuscript	Effortful in-depth learning, very slow progress	+	+	n
5	Kirsten	Improvisation	Varying comfort zones *)	n	+	n
6	Christian	Emotional detachment	Discomfort, unmusical performance, scenario discontinued	-	-	-
7	David	Neglect of details, excessive empowerment	Team self-correction	+	+	n
8	Yasmin	Absence of speech and vocal sound	On-task focus	+	n	n
9	Karen	Abdication from leader behaviour	Demobilised team, team largely failed to compensate	-	-	n

+ (positive), n (neutral), - (negative)

* within normalcy, not seen as off-balance.

Negotiated meaning

The degree of perceived off-balance varied greatly across the nine scenarios. Some of these experiences were attractive and others were unattractive. Some of them had a strong emotional impact, whereas others were more mundane. The conversations seemed to have a meaning negotiation function and reflected a striking level of consensus with regard to how the team was impacted. The few exceptions arose from varying leader comfort zones, which was overtly recognised by the participants. The team as a collective seemed to be more generous than single individuals in terms of accepting off-balance. One interpretation is that individual comfort zones agglomerate into an enlarged ensemble comfort zone, a process which might, but not necessarily include the leader. The following discussion of impact therefore oscillates between the team level and the individual level as well as between the leader entity and the relationships.

Discussion

The analysis exposed three types of impact – headlined as efficiency, effectiveness, and affective impact. These appeared initially rather distinctly but became more interlinked as each scenario evolved. For example, removing a communicative mode such as speech, was found interesting and productive for a very short while, because it provided a novel way of knowing – it was effective. However, its fascination waned as soon as they realised what was lost and efficiency suffered. The unconditional praising of one group was acceptable (possibly even appreciated) within the first minute or so, but it quickly became confusing and eventually frightening. What temporarily appeared as effective turned into a negative affective impact. An enduring exposure seemed to drive a stronger degree of

unattractiveness than an occasional exposure. What might be an interesting off-piste moment eventually becomes unproductive in the overall process. Conversely, a momentary negative impact, such as the abdication of the leader, may be forgotten or forgiven once the team assumes collective leadership. At a given point in time, efficiency and effectiveness seemed to be competing in a mutually excluding way. The examples above demonstrate how balance can be interpreted as temporal resolution of paradox (Poole and van de Ven, 1989) and that variation implies living with oscillating opposites that might be positive as well as negative – they *depend* on each other (Clegg et al., 2002). A *series of off-balance interventions could over time even constitute an overall balanced process*, because they moderate each other and sustain interest and attention. Exposure and temporal resolution is found to be a key factor in explaining how off-balance is experienced. The other key factor is the level at which an off-balance intervention is experienced – task, relational, or existential level.

Task level

Some of the scenarios were experienced solely on the task level, where interpersonal and individual issues did not surface. Within the workshop, technical off-balance was both highly generative as well as useless. Technical interventions may be more or less interesting. They may even trigger some excitement or boredom. However, they remain within the remit of instrumental assessment – they are essentially more or less efficient or effective in pursuit of team progress. Technical off-balance is merely a reflection of tool-mix. Most technical interventions have some merit, depending on appropriate timing and dosage. What the participants had expected to be extreme proved surprisingly to be rather useful – even fun, and widened their ways of knowing. Inappropriate technical interventions seem at worst to be inefficient, if they endure beyond the momentary excitement. Even the more enjoyable scenarios from a technical viewpoint would probably have ended up as undesirable whenever becoming too much.

Existential level

Some of the scenarios affected the participants in a deeper sense, beyond the matter-of-fact task level. Existential off-balance, perceived as lack of sincerity, commitment, and volition was experienced as unequivocally uncomfortable for the team as well as the leader. Violating the self is painful because it evokes identity struggles, which was explicitly articulated by Christian in scenario 5. It exemplifies the conceptual problem with authentic leadership as a style – it is difficult for the leader to remain authentic when the organisational setting contradicts authenticity (Nyberg and Sveningsson, 2014). In other scenarios, participants experienced occasional incongruence between person and function without loss of authenticity. However, Christian was not able to reconcile his self and his function *to the degree* that he was compelled to exit the role. For the team at large, the experience was unpleasant, albeit to a lesser degree, but would probably not have been sustainable on an ongoing basis.

Technical interventions, such as learning without a manuscript or only being provided non-verbal cues, may be more or less useful, but they remain as rather distant elements on a *wide menu* of interventions. On the other hand, experiencing the emotionally detached and disengaged leader comes as a *gestalt* perception that invades the entire space where leadership unfolds. Even when the leader abdicates but remains present, this shared space is occupied by its imposed void. The experiences that affected *who* the participants were – near the self, were of greater consequence than more trivial technical matters. Proximity to the self affects the degree to which an experience matters to the participant, that is, the difficulty with which one can distance oneself from the experience.

In the domain of musical leadership, existential off-balance has been found to be a showstopper; other leader contributions become futile (Jansson, 2019). Existential off-balance confounds and impairs relationships, thereby subverting the leadership process.

Cracks in the leader's existential foundation, such as lack of presence or desire to lead, easily move the leadership process beyond the point of no return, that is, the balanced act is permanently lost.

Existential off-balance on the part of the leader (as perceived by followers) was degenerative in the workshop. Without any contrasting or moderating feature, it had few redeeming qualities. However, it is imaginable that it can be embedded in a paradox such as the blend of narcissism/humility that has been found to be potentially productive (Zhang et al., 2017).

Relational level

Relational off-balance is more of an ambiguous middle ground. Some relational off-balance situations were perceived as a fun game – resembling technical experiments. One example is the juxtaposition of gender roles. It might have been awkward for some, but not truly uncomfortable. On the other hand, the attention bias toward one of the sub-groups was extremely uncomfortable. It was not so much the relational bias as such that was threatening but the uncertainty it opened with regard to the leader's sincerity. Whether this was a case of leader authenticity lacking or authenticity without relational accountability (Painter-Morland and Deslandes, 2017) didn't matter – it was in either case a dark abyss. In scenario 9, the abdicating leader evoked some amusement, but there was a more serious undertone. When Karen let go of all control, there could be no genuine empowering, and when there was no empowerment, the process became erratic. The team experienced what Cheong et al. (2016) call the burden of empowerment. There was a cost of autonomy as the team in a rather bewildered manner attempted to respond. The type of distributed leadership that unfolded can probably best be categorised as 'spontaneous misalignment' (Bolden, 2011: 258).

Experiencing leadership as a multi-layered phenomenon

One of the enduring and most robust conceptions throughout the theory canon of leadership behaviour is the dichotomy of task/relational orientation (Behrendt et al., 2016). It captures the process of organising as both inextricably inter-personal and oriented towards doing something. The distinction is also reflected in established taxonomies of leader competencies (Campion et al., 2011; Le Deist and Winterton, 2005). Within the tradition of situational and contingency leadership theories, task/relations are considered as alternative leader behaviours. Despite their conceptual and practical attractiveness, these theories have been difficult to verify empirically (Graeff, 1997; Thompson and Vecchio, 2009). One of the reasons is the problem of defining a situation as a prescriptive frame (Vroom and Jago, 2007). The present study demonstrates another problem – that the *tasks and relations are experiential qualities of leadership that are simultaneously present rather than mutually exclusive styles*. Blake and Mouton (1982) argued decades ago that a combined strong people and task orientation is the most effective managerial approach. Although they rejected the notion of a single best style, they still saw people and tasks as leadership orientations. The workshop analysis instead suggests that task and relations fluidly and constantly move to the fore- or background. A task-oriented intervention may be experienced on the relational level and vice versa.

This conceptual twist further points at another problem in leadership theory – how to integrate 'doing-oriented' theories with 'being-oriented' notions, such as authenticity, ethics, spirituality, self-awareness, and self-efficacy (Caldwell and Hayes, 2016; Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Cunliffe, 2009). In their comprehensive review of leadership theories, Dinh et al. (2014) argue that more attention should be given to how leadership processes unfold over time and how they occur simultaneously at multiple levels of analysis. The present study is a very modest response to this call by suggesting that the *existential features of leadership should be seen as a third experiential layer in addition to tasks and relationships*. Even within the limited scope of this workshop, the emergence of these three levels of experience was clear, made evident by unsolicited accounts of participant

descriptions: (1) the task level – concerning what the object of joint engagement is about, (2) the relational level – concerning how the engagement unfolds between participants, and (3) the existential level – concerning who the participants are in a deep sense.

A rather unexpected connection arises between these three experiential levels and Koivunen and Wennes' (2011) three aesthetic facets of leadership in symphony orchestras, where each seem to correspond to an experiential level. *Aesthetic judgement* might draw on a leader's complete habitus, but it will surface as task interventions in the leadership process. *Kinaesthetic empathy* is an embodied connection between individuals, involving all faculties of perception and agency. Notably, it presupposes connection to the self – a highly existential experience. *Relational listening* goes beyond hearing – it denotes the active engagement between ensemble members and the music. Koivunen and Wennes' (58) 'claim that symphony orchestra conductors engage in a specific form of leadership that consists of relational, aesthetic and embodied processes.' The results of the present study indicate that these processes also have distinct experiential qualities, which in turn may entail different consequences when disrupted.

Placing the existential level alongside tasks and relations is different from viewing existential features of leadership as a 'style'. Here, the concept of authentic leadership is of particular interest. As a distinct leadership type, it has been critiqued for certain conceptual weaknesses (Ford and Harding, 2011; Iszatt-White et al., 2021), and Einola and Alvesson (2021) even argue that leadership and authenticity should be kept apart as study objects. However, authenticity as a component of an individual's existential foundation is undisputedly key to how the leader self is exposed and relationships unfold (Jansson, 2019; Ladkin and Taylor, 2010; Avolio and Gardner, 2005). Painter-Morland and Deslandes (2017) point out that the notion of authenticity bridges an entitative and relational view of leadership through what they call 'relational accountability' (440). In sum, this suggests that existential features of the leadership process (as well as the leader) provide an experiential dimension on the part of followers that is both distinct from the relationship as such but at the same time a basis for it.

A key observation is that the impact of off-balance varies across the task, relational, and existential levels. The different qualities of impact is illustrated in figure 1. Existential off-balance is closest to the self, whereas task off-balance is more distant. Relational off-balance can assume different guises, resembling a technical intervention as well as being of existential nature. The quantity of the exposure also matters, determining the level of acceptance of off-balance. The end points occasional/enduring and remote/near define four categories of extremes: the thrilling detour, the passing threat, the inefficient attempt, and the untenable act.

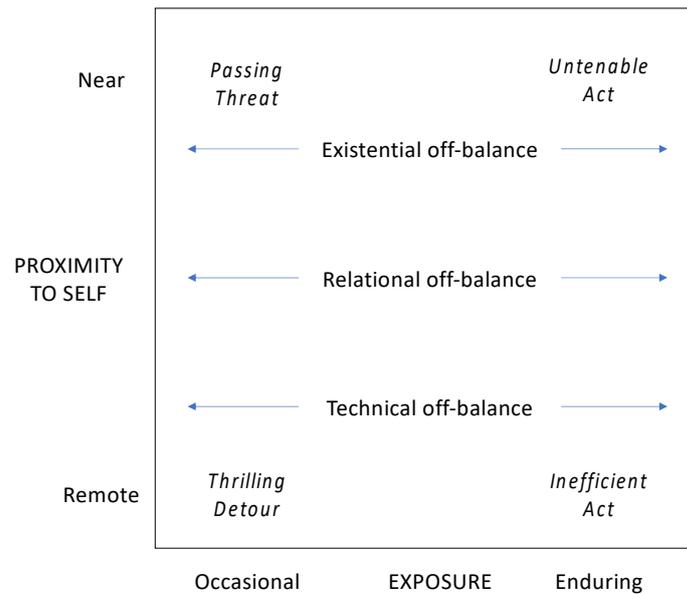


Figure 1: The impact of off-balance

The redeeming quality of an instance of off-balance is the move away from it, which means that subsequent off-balance interventions could in fact present an overall balanced act. This exemplifies one of the problems with situational leadership theories – it is not clear what a 'situation' means (Thompson and Vecchio, 2009; Vroom and Jago, 2007). While reasonably stable taxonomies of situations might be established on the macro level, the notion of situation on the micro level, the mundane level of 'doing leadership' (Alvesson and Sveningsson, 2003b), a situation is an ephemeral phenomenon. This is particularly striking in the context of musical leadership, where the evolving musical flow provides constantly shifting 'situations', where the leadership process unfolds at a level of granularity that eludes prescription (Jansson, 2018). Prescribed interventions go wrong if not varied and non-prescribed interventions are not necessarily 'wrong' as temporary outswings. Here, leadership might be more easily understood by drawing on art experience, which is a constant play between the familiar and the unexpected. The balance is given by the individual's horizon of understanding (Gadamer, 1975). In order to move people, in an artistic or a leadership sense, interventions must be familiar enough to allow participation and novel enough to retain interest. A balanced act is akin to catching the wave when surfing; not ahead of the wave and not behind the wave.

Concluding remarks

The finding that off-balance interventions are perceived differently across the task, relational, and existential layers have implications for theory as well as practice. For theory, it means that leadership is experienced as a whole, where 'doing' and 'being' aspects cannot easily be disconnected as they are constantly present and interact. For practice, it means that team processes probably can accommodate more variation and more extremes in terms of task interventions (and some relational interventions), in the interest of pursuing efficiency as well as effectiveness. On the other hand, existential off-balance (and some relational off-balance) is largely destructive and runs the risk of derailing team and leadership processes.

The main limitation of the study is the limited and arbitrary selection of scenarios, which reflected individual participant interests and could not be expected to saturate the investigated phenomenon. A wider and more systematic design of scenarios would have provided a more comprehensive set of research data. On the other hand, the workshop presented near-real-life situations within the context of choral leadership. This allowed participants to experiment with aspects of their own practice and the researcher to

investigate the structure of off-balance impact. The various ways of aesthetic knowing were explicitly reflected in the methodological steps, which proved to be fruitful in the pursuit of leadership as an experiential phenomenon.

The experience of relational off-balance was ambiguous – at times appearing technical and at times existential. This observation presents some opportunities as well as threats. There is an opportunity to experiment with identities and roles to invigorate teams and develop leadership skills through aesthetic experience. For example, Sutherland et al. (2015) let participants experience the embodied nature of power by conducting a choir. Jansson (2020; 2021) let a senior management team develop their working relationships through singing together and conducting. Because of the existential impact, such interventions require explicit and agreed upon ethical ground rules. The experiment in the present study was a form of collaborative leadership research (Raelin, 2016), where the participants, at least to some degree, were engaged in the knowledge generation. Further research into the emotional and ethical aspects of such co-creation is needed.

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About the Author

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<p>Salient themes</p>	<p>Facilitator's interpretation</p>	<p>How it was experienced by the leader</p>	<p>How it was experienced by the team</p>	<p>Facilitator's observations</p>
<p>Relational ambiguity</p>	<p>The group receiving the excessive attention and positive feedback felt the most uncomfortable. Despite being the centre of attention, they felt shut out of the choir. The others felt in fact the need to help out, although might spend an entire rehearsal on one group. Because you like it, want to demonstrate your ideals [...], and then later move to the big group. This is rather common."</p>	<p>"One has had moments where this has happened. This is definitely not good."</p>	<p>"It is awkward when someone says that everything is great when it is very bad. I thought 'this can't be right, what's wrong here?' You don't expect that someone says so much wrong things."</p>	<p>The soprano group was given all attention and was praised irrespective of actual achievement. Jakob's demeanour was soft and pleasant. Towards the end of the session, Jakob made the singers turn around in a semi-circle facing outwards. He clapped his hand to lead the music. The choir appeared rather disconnected, laughing, neglecting signals.</p>
<p>Discomfort</p>	<p>Jakob's lack of sincerity was initially confusing but laid the ground for uncertainty and fear as to his intentions. As long as everyone could see Jakob's face, the discomfort arose from ambiguity in their relationships with him. With their backs against him, the experience became much more of an existential threat. Although everyone knew it was an experiment, Jakob's lack of sincerity opened a new set of unknown and therefore scary interventions on his part.</p>	<p>Facilitator: Did you get any joy from playing this role? "No, not really. You think you have some control, but you don't."</p>	<p>"I was quite provoked – what are you doing? Then I saw it." - Facilitator: It looked like you wanted to stop the session? "Yes, it was well done. And by the way, such choral leaders exist across the country, although it is completely sick."</p>	<p>"I got a flashback to those psychological experiments in the sixties where you had people following orders, because Jakob was quite serious. It was nasty. If you wanted to lead a choir in that way, you probably could do it and the singers would buy it. Jakob did it in a scary way, I bought the role, and it was nasty."</p>
<p>Existential threat</p>	<p>Jakob's low key and gentle style seemed to make the experience scarier. The mismatch between appearance and an unknown reality disconnected the leader from the team. The disconnect provided a certain existential danger. The disconnect was also experienced by the leader as lack of impact.</p>	<p>"You lose confidence in a choral leader how all the time tells a group that it is doing great."</p>	<p>"I felt that I had to help. I didn't care about our gang, so at least I have to do a good job. I can't remember the last time I was so tense. I was afraid of being attacked, but it affects the voice [...]."</p>	<p>"It was extremely unpleasant. Then memories of choral leaders from the past came to my mind."</p>

Salient themes	<p>Relational orientation</p> <p>Task orientation</p> <p>Efficiency</p> <p>Concept of self</p>	<p>Helen's regular mode is to be sensitive to team member needs, at the expense of getting things done and move ahead.</p> <p>The juxtaposing of gender roles made regular feedback format unavailable because the sounding music could not be judged by her regular standards.</p> <p>She made use of a male/female stereotype to express a lingering need to rebalance her attention towards the task at the expense of probing and negotiating team comfort.</p> <p>Normally, her concept of self has pivoted from such re-balancing but she was liberated by being less occupied by the team due to more limited relational menu. The re-balancing did not threaten her concept of self because it was framed by the scenario set-up.</p> <p>The team did not have any problems with her no-nonsense style as such, although it was found a bit too serene.</p>	<p>"It makes one think through how one treats male and female voices."</p> <p>"I am so used to throwing out 'great, nice...', which I couldn't do here. [...] It was difficult, but it was lovely not having to do that. I am obsessed with having my singers feel comfortable. Now it was just a matter of getting what I wanted, this is what I had decided to do. And that was not so difficult here."</p> <p>"I didn't dare to look to happy – to be too much my regular self."</p> <p>"Helen is often a smiling person. There I wanted to try to play a man by being really clear. No reflection, just move on, without too much regard for this or that. [Like] the common stereotype of men in leader positions, who are really skilled at something and can get away with anything because they are skilled. Women who do that will get into trouble in their job. I really didn't want to play a man, just be clear and distinct, shed away all the other stuff. It was rather nice. Normally, I am afraid of being too strict."</p> <p>- Participant: Would you wish that you could be stricter as a choral leader?</p> <p>"Yes, I often feel that I have to lift the singers; but now and then, what I really want to say is get you act together, but I don't dare to."</p>
Facilitator's observations	<p>Females were given the male part and males were given the female part in the music.</p> <p>Instructions were brief and execution was efficient.</p> <p>By removing the normal conding of gender and musical parts, parts of the conventional leadership let's move on, let's fix the next bit.</p> <p>"You didn't waste a second"</p> <p>"It was boring not to have the melody."</p>	<p>Females were given the male part and males were given the female part in the music.</p> <p>"It was fun to toss around roles."</p> <p>"It was nice to be the ones who provide the steady basis."</p> <p>"This was no fun."</p> <p>"It was boring not to have the melody."</p> <p>"You didn't waste a second"</p> <p>"Helen is often a smiling person. There I wanted to try to play a man by being really clear. No reflection, just move on, without too much regard for this or that. [Like] the common stereotype of men in leader positions, who are really skilled at something and can get away with anything because they are skilled. Women who do that will get into trouble in their job. I really didn't want to play a man, just be clear and distinct, shed away all the other stuff. It was rather nice. Normally, I am afraid of being too strict."</p> <p>- Participant: Would you wish that you could be stricter as a choral leader?</p> <p>"Yes, I often feel that I have to lift the singers; but now and then, what I really want to say is get you act together, but I don't dare to."</p>	<p>Facilitator's observations</p> <p>Females were given the male part and males were given the female part in the music.</p> <p>Instructions were brief and execution was efficient.</p> <p>By removing the normal conding of gender and musical parts, parts of the conventional leadership let's move on, let's fix the next bit.</p> <p>"You didn't waste a second"</p> <p>"It was boring not to have the melody."</p> <p>"This was no fun."</p> <p>"It was boring not to have the melody."</p> <p>"You didn't waste a second"</p> <p>"Helen is often a smiling person. There I wanted to try to play a man by being really clear. No reflection, just move on, without too much regard for this or that. [Like] the common stereotype of men in leader positions, who are really skilled at something and can get away with anything because they are skilled. Women who do that will get into trouble in their job. I really didn't want to play a man, just be clear and distinct, shed away all the other stuff. It was rather nice. Normally, I am afraid of being too strict."</p> <p>- Participant: Would you wish that you could be stricter as a choral leader?</p> <p>"Yes, I often feel that I have to lift the singers; but now and then, what I really want to say is get you act together, but I don't dare to."</p>
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Appendix 1B Analytical extract
Scenario 3: Helen – Juxtaposed gender roles

Salient themes	Facilitator's interpretation	Facilitator's interpretation	Facilitator's observations
Task orientation	The leadership process centred entirely on the task at hand. Any relational issues were in the background. At the outset, there was an extreme asymmetry in terms of understanding of the task	The few times I felt the need to speak, I could have explained something very quickly, but most of the time, I thought that it would take more time to explain than to demonstrate. I am a chatterbox, and I am able to waste a lot of rehearsal time [...] efficiency.	A polyphonic piece (multiple voices rather than I had thought. beforehand, I took a thousand-fold more time than I had thought. Confirming laughter). Challenging. I became aware of my own brain churning [collective confirming laughter]. Now that I see it, it's not difficult at all [collective confirming laughter].
Effectiveness	Removing all but one communicative mode (vocal demonstration) forced the team to rely entirely on this mode. A unimodal process gave rise to a different quality of effectiveness at the expense of time usage and efficiency.	I don't know if there is a better solution than just sitting by the piano, but this was precisely what I didn't want to do here. This is interesting: how far can you really get by just using your hearing?	"Difficult, but fun. Challenging. I became aware of my own brain churning [collective confirming laughter]. Now that I see it, it's not difficult at all [collective confirming laughter].
Efficiency	The leader was very well prepared and used a stepwise and deliberate process to expose the structure of the piece and demonstrate how it should sound. The piece was composed by Jonas.	The leader was very well prepared and used a stepwise and deliberate process to expose the structure of the piece and demonstrate how it should sound. The piece was composed by Jonas.	The leader was very well prepared and used a stepwise and deliberate process to expose the structure of the piece and demonstrate how it should sound. The piece was composed by Jonas.
Effortful	For Jonas, on the other hand, it was liberating being prevented from his habit of talking too much as a choral leader.	I don't know if there is a better solution than just sitting by the piano, but this was precisely what I didn't want to do here. This is interesting: how far can you really get by just using your hearing?	The leader was very well prepared and used a stepwise and deliberate process to expose the structure of the piece and demonstrate how it should sound. The piece was composed by Jonas.
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