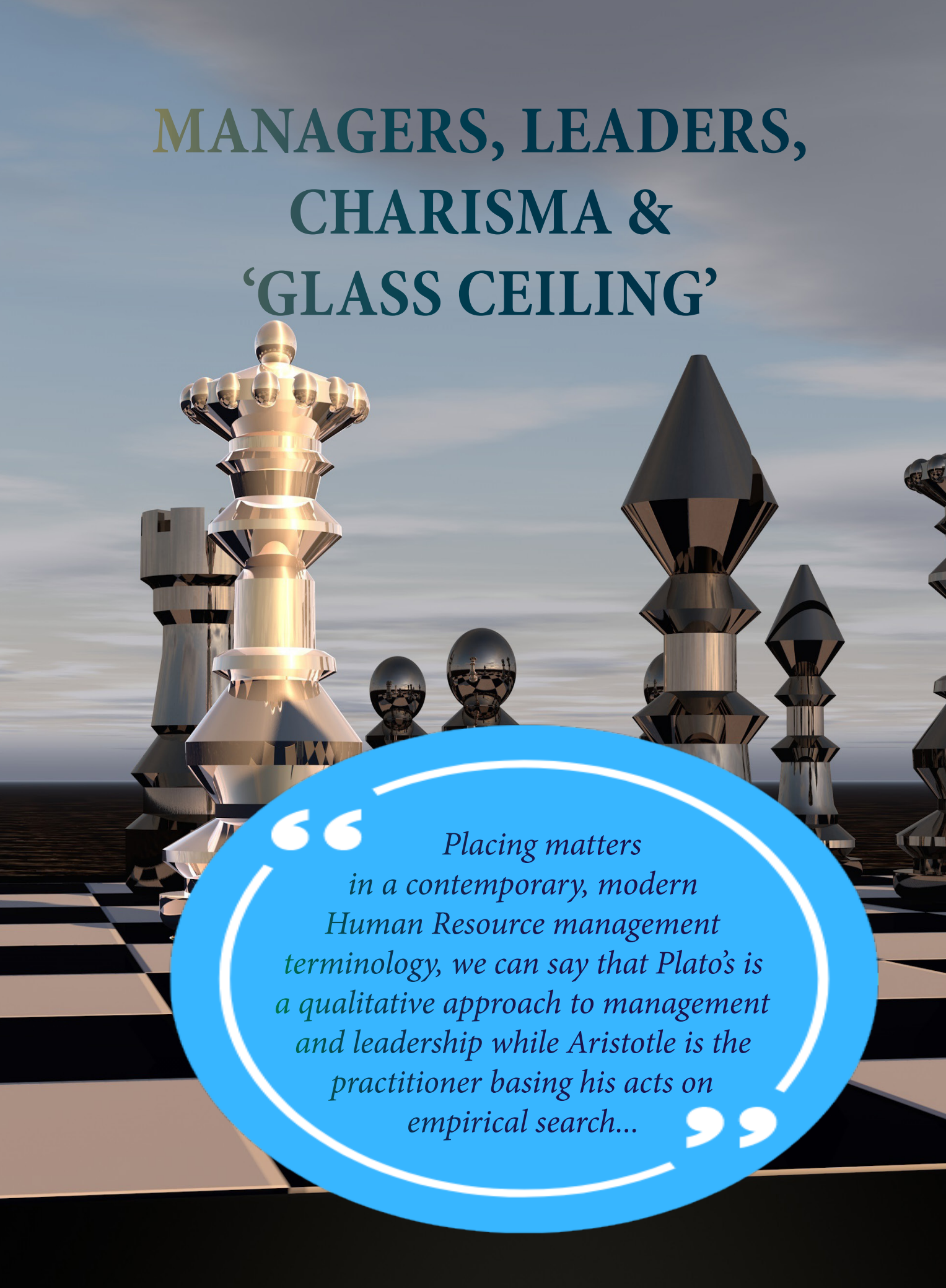


MANAGERS, LEADERS, CHARISMA & 'GLASS CEILING'

The background of the slide features a large, stylized chess set. The chess pieces are rendered in a metallic, reflective style. A prominent white king piece is on the left, and several black pieces, including a large rook and a king, are on the right. The chessboard is visible at the bottom, with alternating light and dark squares. A large, semi-transparent blue circle with a white border is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing a quote in white text. The quote is enclosed in large white quotation marks.

*“ Placing matters
in a contemporary, modern
Human Resource management
terminology, we can say that Plato’s is
a qualitative approach to management
and leadership while Aristotle is the
practitioner basing his acts on
empirical search... ”*

The concept of management draws from and is an object of study in philosophy, history, political science, sociology, psychology, military science and theology while the concept of leadership is also an area of interest and study for most of these fields.

A broad discussion has emerged concerning similarities and differences between leaders and managers as persons, and of leadership and management as a process revealed by observable behaviour of such persons.

Bennis and Nanus, in a book considered significant for management, considered managers as persons who master routines and accomplish prescribed activities in contrast to leaders who influence others and provide visions: “Managers are people who do things right and leaders are people who do the right things”.

Plato, Aristotle & Weber

For Plato, leaders are not born with the innate capacity to manage but must be carefully chosen and trained to do so and through proper education become aristocrats of merit and knowledge.

Aristotle did not favour aristocracy and insisted that leaders-managers should acquire ‘sophrosyne’ (Σωφροσύνη is a Greek term designating temperance and prudence and even a harmonious state of self-control).

Placing matters in a contemporary, modern Human Resource management terminology we can say that Plato’s is a qualitative approach to management and leadership

while Aristotle is the practitioner basing his acts on empirical search.

Weber brought to modern sociology and by extension to management theory the ancient Greek term of “charisma” which means a gift of grace, a mysterious personality characteristic of an individual personality.

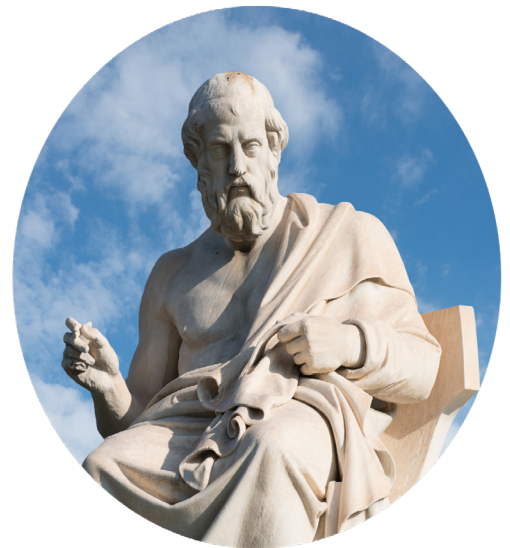
Managers and leaders appeal to their subordinates and followers because of their heroic, religious or ethical aptitudes, skills or dexterities irrespective of the reality of actually being so or

“Great Men” and the Business world

As management theories developed in the last few decades, the “Great Man” concept in politics and religion shifted to the business world. A corollary to this was the introduction of the theory differentiating transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Transactional leadership in management theory presupposes an exchange process of mutual dependence founded in the authority structure of an enterprise or organization. This type of managerial leadership appeals to the subordinates and follower’s self-interest and the manager-leader’s clarification of work tasks and expectations, and corresponding rewards or punishments.

Transformational leadership shows the significance of human relations qualities in the crucial interdependency of the manager-leader-subordinate-follower relationship, resulting in elevated dedication to goal achievement in private or public enterprises and organizations.





‘CHARISMA’ REVISITED?

Transformational leadership theories, denoting inspirational leadership, are very closely related to the concept of “charisma”.

Charismatic managers in modern companies who display conviction and take stands can capture not only the imagination but the hearts and loyalty of their subordinates and colleagues. In the modern production floors and executive management suites they create inspirational motivation towards achievement of corporate or organizational visions.

Transformational management generates awareness of the mission or vision of the company and motivates subordinates and colleagues to look beyond their own interest toward those that will benefit the enterprise or the organization.

Transformational managers motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performances.

Transformational managers motivate others to do more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible. They set more challenging expectations and typically achieve higher performances.

The case of 'glass-ceiling' for women managers

'Would things have been different in 2008 if instead of Lehman Brothers we had been dealing with Lehman Sisters?' The obviously well intended ironic question, heard widely in World Mass Media, is not completely irrelevant. The comment, caustic but succinct, brought forth a reality facing talented women in education, corporate life and politics.

While women outnumber men in college and university enrolment, percentage-wise, they are by far outnumbered by their male colleagues.

Making excuses

A stereotype is that women prefer family life to career, and will sooner or later abstain from full-time employment as marriage and motherhood prevent them from devoting the same amounts of energy and effort in advancing their careers compared to their male counterparts.

This being said, women who are willing to refrain from creating a family are not promoted to the highest management ranks despite the fact that they possess all the necessary training, skills, experience and leadership talents, often surpassing those of their male competitors.

How corporations and societies are losing out

Preventing women from their right to rise to the highest levels of management is a fact that can cost dearly although it may not be reflected in corporate annual balance sheets.

When education, experience, skills, and talents held by female managers are not properly utilized, corporations lose, and, by extension, so do societies at large. This brings to mind the widely researched subject of "tacit knowledge" left unused.

The 'glass ceiling': a widespread practice

Two decades ago, Cotter et al (2001) found that the 'glass ceiling' phenomenon in the USA continues to exist not only despite the introduction and enforcement of the historic "Civil Rights Act of 1964", which aimed at banning all forms of discrimination, but also despite the Title II of the Civil Rights Act of 1991 which established the 'Glass Ceiling Commission'.

A February 2011, a survey by the "Institute of Leadership and Management" reported by the BBC, suggested that things are not much better for British women managers. The BBC reported that 3/4 of the women taking part in this survey are still facing barriers to promotion to higher corporate positions.

Education: no exception

The cards seem to be stacked against women managers in corporate life but things do not appear to be better in academic life. Statistics show that in many colleges and universities, women are enrolled in larger numbers than men but looking at the staff rosters of teaching and research personnel, it is a reality that men outnumber women. Even a superficial glance of top executives in educational institutions will reveal that there are more men holding the positions of Rectors and Vice rectors, Chancellors and Vice

Chancellors and Deans than women.

Women managers, unite!

Viewing reality from a Weberian perspective, we can see that in the 21st century private and public enterprises and organizations, on a global scale, continue to operate under a patriarchal type of authority structure.

I will close this short glimpse at the detrimental 'glass ceiling' phenomenon doing injustice to talented women and creating large financial and socio-psychological costs, wondering how much more time we need until the day a woman manager will paraphrase another historically significant maxim, that of Marx and Engels, calling women managers to unite, "as they will have nothing to lose but a lot to gain by smashing the glass ceiling which keeps them trapped in the middle rungs of corporations and organizations".



Prof. Georgios Piperopoulos
Honorary Professor in
Management & Marketing
at Durham University
Business School
United Kingdom