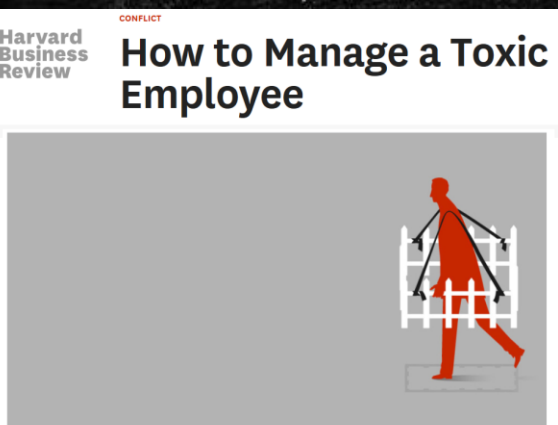
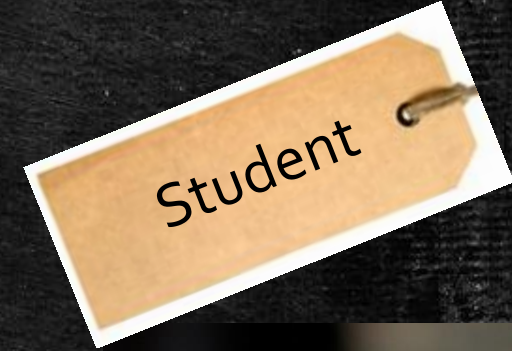


# Unhelpful Leadership Traits - the Military Context

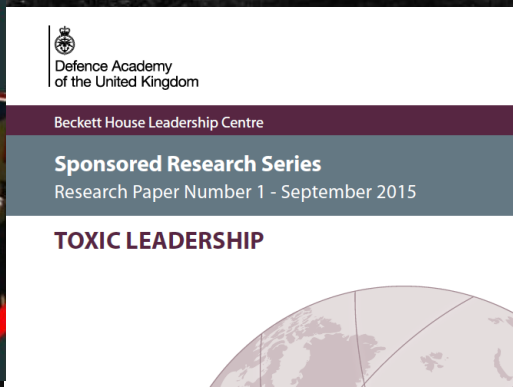
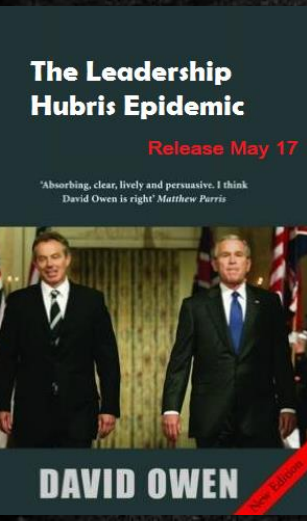


John Dagless



# Toxic Leadership is used as a label but...

- 2 Defining Characteristics:
  - the poisonous relationship that a toxic leader has with their subordinates.
  - the toxic leader's underlying motivation is generated through self-interest.



labels are definitive



# Context

---

- The British military as a department of State and a cluster of practising professions is inherently uncomfortable with negative leadership issues.
- Most reports and inquiries into military failings highlight leadership and cultural flaws.
- There remains a perception across the military that selfish leadership is a problem.
- Toxic and other negative leadership traits are not defined nor the true cost measured.

## The Cost...?

"Our analysis reveals that bullying is on the rise in Britain and it is more likely to be found in organisations that have **poor workplace climates** where this type of **behaviour can become institutionalised**."

Acas Chair, Sir Brendan Barber

The report highlights how bullying can have many direct costs to companies, including:

- Sickness and absenteeism
- Higher labour turnover (including the loss of people who are experienced)
- Lower organisational performance and quality of service
- Reduced productivity
- Employee assistance/counselling and occupational health costs
- Industrial action and unrest
- Loss of public goodwill and reputational damage
- Lost organisational resources and management time



The screenshot shows the top of a news website. At the top right is the 'CITYA.M.' logo with the tagline 'BUSINESS WITH PERSONALITY'. Below the logo is the 'Acas' logo with the text '(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service)'. A navigation bar contains links for 'News', 'Opinion', 'Money', 'Life & Style', 'Sport', and 'Trending:'. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for 'Companies', 'Economics', 'Politics', 'Tech', 'Science', 'Media', 'Entrepreneurs', and 'The Capitalist'. The main content area shows a breadcrumb 'Home > News' followed by a large headline: 'Workplace bullying costs the economy almost £18bn a year, according to a new report'. Below the headline is the author 'by James Nickerson' and a sub-headline '1.5% GDP, ↑ 4% fm 1998'. The date and time '16 November 2015 9:23am' are in the bottom right corner.

# The Cost...?

"Our analysis reveals that bullying is on the rise in Britain and it is more likely to be found in organisations that have **poor workplace climates** where this type of **behaviour can become institutionalised**."

Acas Chair, Sir Brendan Barber


- Health and Safety Executive. *Stress-Related and Psychological Disorders in Great Britain 2014* – MoD, Education and Health.
- Ministry of Defence continues to lose over **110 000\* days a year** to work-related stress.
- Ministry of Defence, *UK Regular Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey 2016*, **11% stated they had been subjected to bullying, harassment or discrimination**.
- Army Leadership Review: Army Division Response 2015 – **90%** of respondents had observed personnel displaying 'toxic leadership' traits in one or more rank.

\*MoD 191000 Active Personnel, 48000 Civil Servants. 2030 per 100 000 defence employees suffer from stress. Each takes an average of 23 days off per a case of stress, depression or anxiety



The screenshot shows a news article on the CityA.M. website. The header includes the Acas logo (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) and the CityA.M. logo (BUSINESS WITH PERSONALITY). The navigation bar features categories like News, Opinion, Money, Life & Style, and Sport. The article title is "Workplace bullying costs the economy almost £18bn a year, according to a new report" by James Nickerson. A sub-headline states "1.5% GDP, ↑ 4% fm 1998" and the date is "16 November 2015 9:23am".

# Negative Leadership an oxymoron



BR 1  
PART 6

ANNEX 2 IC  
VALUES AND STANDARDS

- 1. Introduction**  
The values and standards set out below have been selected as being those that experience has shown are vital for success on operations. It is only by fully accepting and living them 24/7, whether on deployed operations, peacetime basing or officially, that we can build the framework which is so crucial to Operations Capability.
- 2. Commitment**  
Selfless personal commitment is the foundation of Naval Service and enables us to demonstrate a sense of authority and purpose. We must be prepared to serve wherever and whenever we are required, and to look beyond our own interests. This means that we accept that we will be expected to put the needs of the mission, and our team, ahead of our own interests.
- 3. Courage**  
Courage creates the strength to withstand fighting spirit, the essential element which turns us from fighting force into a winning force. We must have the physical courage to carry on with our task regardless of danger and discomfort, and the moral courage always to do what we know is right.
- 4. Discipline**  
The Royal Service must be a disciplined service if it is to be effective. We must therefore obey all lawful orders from our superiors. Self-discipline is fundamental; being able to discipline ourselves will ensure the respect and trust of others, and enable us to cope with the difficult, individual decisions we will have to make during our service.
- 5. Respect For Others**  
Each one of us has the exceptional responsibility of bearing arms, either collectively as part of our unit, or individually, and when necessary, causing considerable loss. In addition, we will sometimes have to live and work under extremely difficult conditions. In such circumstances, it is particularly important that we show the greatest respect, tolerance, understanding, and compassion for others, regardless of their personal background, race, religion and beliefs, and we have the fundamental right to expect to be treated with the same degree of respect and dignity by all with whom we serve.
- 6. Integrity**  
Integrity is the quality of an individual's character: that encompasses honesty, sincerity, reliability, and unselfishness. It is an essential requirement of both leadership and command. Values we maintain our integrity, others will trust us and teamwork will flourish. Putting integrity into practice some times requires us to show moral courage, because our decisions may not always be popular. This is not always easy, however, doing the right thing will always earn respect.
- 7. Loyalty**  
The Nation, the Royal Service and those with whom we serve rely on our commitment, dedication and support. We must therefore be loyal to our leaders, those that we lead, our team, and our duty. These are the values we will expect to be held dear.

2 IC-1  
October 2010

AC 63812

# A British Soldier's Values and Standards




## Ethos, Core Values and Standards

GOV.UK

Search



[See more information about this Statutory guidance](#)

Statutory guidance

## The Civil Service code

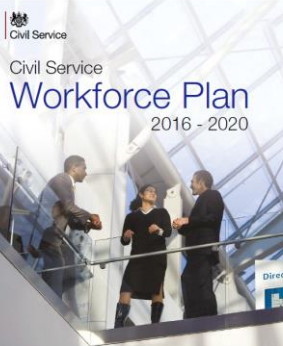
Updated 16 March 2015

### Contents

- Civil Service values
- Standards of behaviour
- Rights and responsibilities

## Service Test

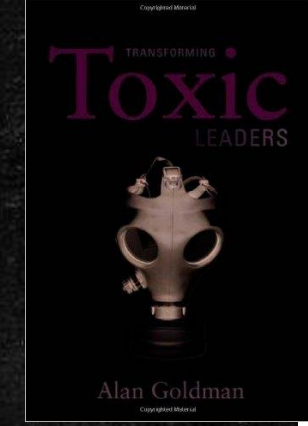
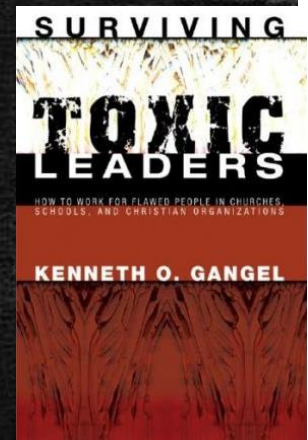
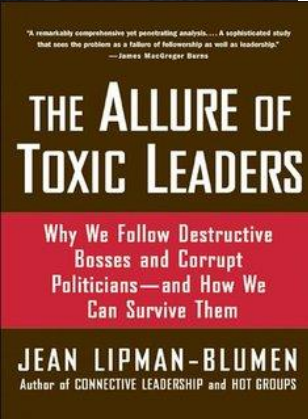
“Have the actions or behaviour of an individual adversely impacted, or are they likely to impact, on the efficiency or operational effectiveness of the [Naval Service, Army, Royal Air Force]?”

Civil Service  
Workforce Plan  
2016 - 2020

Realising our vision of A Better Civil Service  
Improved outcomes from effective leaders and skilled people, in a great place to work.





## Characteristics

- Incompetence
- Malfunctioning
- Maladjusted
- Sense of Inadequacy
- Malcontent
- Irresponsible
- Amoral
- Cowardice
- Insatiable ambition
- Egotism
- Arrogance
- Selfish values
- Avarice and Greed
- Lack of integrity
- Deception
- Malevolent
- Malicious
- Malfeasant

Dysfunctional



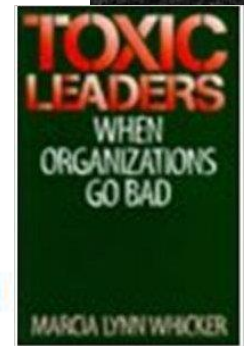
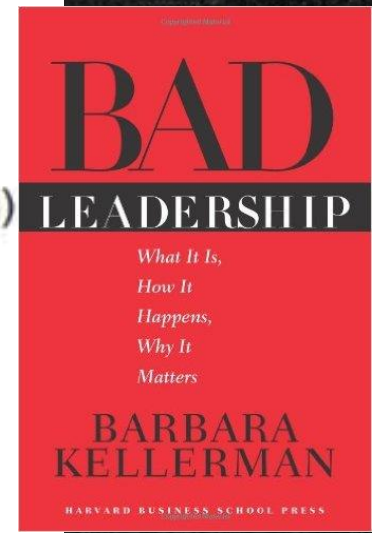
Toxic

Highly Dysfunctional

Highly Toxic

## Types

- Absentee
- Incompetent (Kellerman)
- Co-dependent
- Passive-aggressive
- Busybody
- Paranoid
- Rigid* (Kellerman)
- Controller
- Compulsive
- Intemperate* (Kellerman)
- Enforcer* (Whicker)
- Narcissistic
- Callous* (Kellerman)
- Street Fighter* (Whicker)
- Corrupt* (Kellerman)
- Insular* (Kellerman)
- Bully* (Whicker)
- Evil* (Kellerman)



Colonel Denise Williams' Spectrum of Leadership Characteristics and Types (2006)





# The “Dark Triad”

Worzel and Szyarto, (1998)

## Emotional Intelligence and IQ

*“Truly effective leaders are distinguished by a high degree of emotional intelligence, which indicates self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skill.”*

- Goldman, 1996

## Narcissism

charming, enigmatic and alluring to seniors as they are risk takers; they can be seen to think outside the box and are driven to achieve results

- Doty and Fenlason, 2012

## Machiavellianism

interpersonal behaviour that advocates deception and manipulation for an individual’s self-interest

- Jakobwitz and Egan, 2006

## Psychopathy

can be selfish and contrived, with superficial charm and exploitative

- Furtner, Rauthmann and Sachse, 2011

# Understanding Negative Leadership



Adapted from Padilla, A., Hogan, R. and Kaiser, R. (2007) **The Toxic Triangle**

# The Military Toxic Triangle

'Professions are granted the privilege of autonomy because society holds them to a high standard. The military profession is held to the highest standard of all....

## Leader

- Abuse of rank's primacy
- Control passage of information
- Manipulates:
  - values & standards
  - system & loyalties

## Followers

- Obedience
- Tolerance – also linked to posting cycle
- Resilient follower construct
- Loyalty, anti-whistle-blowing culture

## Environment

- Military bureaucracy
- Checks & balances aligned to Chain of Command
- Output focussed, top-down appraisal system
- Unconscious bias

*'The risks of poor or toxic leadership are much greater in the military than they are in civilian organisations.'*

Major General Craig Orme,  
Australian Army, 2011



**NEW**

# Army Leadership Doctrine-Toxic Triangle



## Toxic Leader

- Autocratic
- Narcissistic
- Manipulative
- Intimidating
- Overly Competitive
- Discriminatory

## Susceptible Followers

- |                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Conformers          | Colluders   |
| - Need authority    | - Ambition  |
| - Need to belong    | - Imitation |
| - Low confidence    | - Poor V&S  |
| - Self preservation |             |

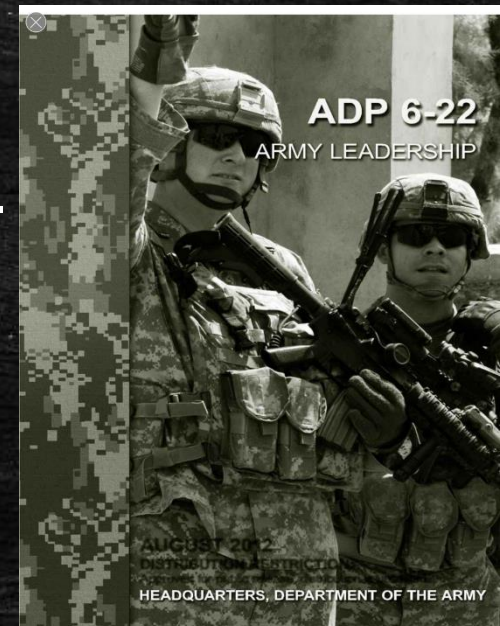
## Conducive Environment

- Instability
- Perceived Threat
- Questionable V&S
- Absence of Governance

*Due release 5 Oct 16*

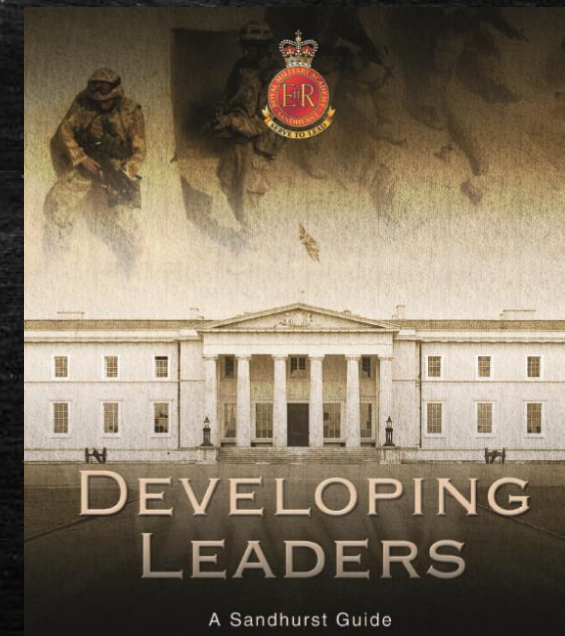
'Toxic leadership is a combination of self-centred attitudes, motivations, and behaviors that have adverse effects on subordinates, the organization, and mission performance. This leader lacks concern for others and the climate of the organization, which leads to short- and long-term negative effects. The toxic leader operates with an inflated sense of self-worth and from acute self-interest. Toxic leaders consistently use dysfunctional behaviors to deceive, intimidate, coerce, or unfairly punish others to get what they want for themselves.'

United States Headquarters, Department of the Army.  
Army Doctrine Publication 6-22, Army Leadership.



Toxic leaders can be defined as: 'Individuals who by virtue of their destructive behaviours and their dysfunctional personal qualities or characteristics, inflict serious and enduring harm on the individuals, groups and organisations that they lead.'

*Jean Limpan-Blumen, The Allure of Toxic Leaders*



Footnote p26

**NEW**

# Army Leadership Doctrine-Definition



## What are Toxic Leaders?

Toxic leadership is a combination of selfish attitudes, motivations, and behaviours that have **adverse effects on** both **subordinates** and the organisation. The toxic leader lacks emotional intelligence and has little concern for others, acting only in **self interest**. **Toxic leaders make maximum use of their positional power** and will often employ dysfunctional behaviours to deceive, intimidate and coerce people to work for them. Toxic leaders may achieve the task in the short term, but fail to develop individuals and build strong teams.

# The Leader

Mission Command is built on mutual trust – ‘Leaders have a duty to provide guidance, including resources and constraints that allow their subordinates to use their initiative and judgement. In return **subordinates have a duty to act with loyalty and discipline...**



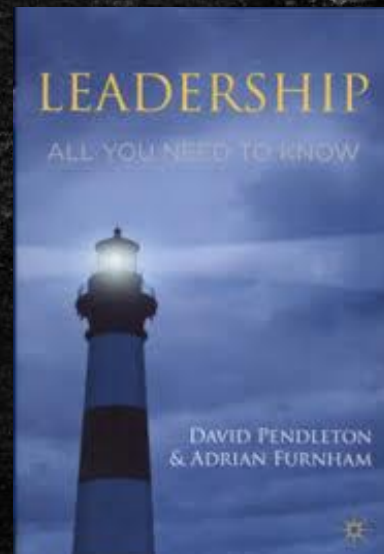
## Leader

- Abuse of rank's primacy
- Control passage of information
- Manipulates:
  - values & standards
  - system & loyalties

- Military leaders are a product of their environments, a failure of leadership represents organisational and individual peccability
- “Rank has its privileges”
- The military's overriding desire for strong, heroic, and visionary leaders makes it particularly susceptible to the allure of specific demographic

The military's genetic self-image as a specialist in violence –‘warrior spirit’ Mosko  
(Transactional and Transformational tension)

- Personality is considered to be around three times more powerful than intelligence in determining leadership emergence Pendelton & Furnham, 2012





# Need for Diversity...

## The Leader's lot...



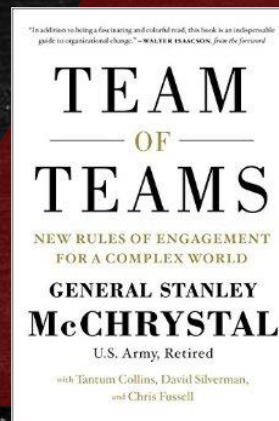
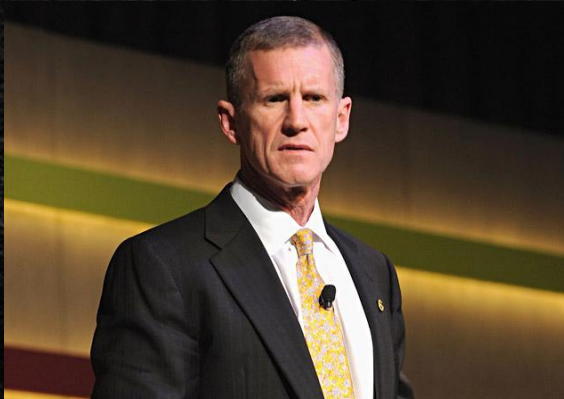
The Future of Leadership

Margaret Heffernan

BBC RADIO 4

Contemporary operations tend to lack temporal parameters and the ethical dimension as in Iraq and Afghanistan, together with the increasing application of criminal and human rights legislation, has re-affirmed the need for strong and well understood values and standards, particularly when operating under duress.

**“A world that was complicated could be dealt with in slightly mechanical processes, but now it’s complex [non-linear]. The difference between complicated and complex is really important as it’s impossible to predict what is going to happen in complexity.”**



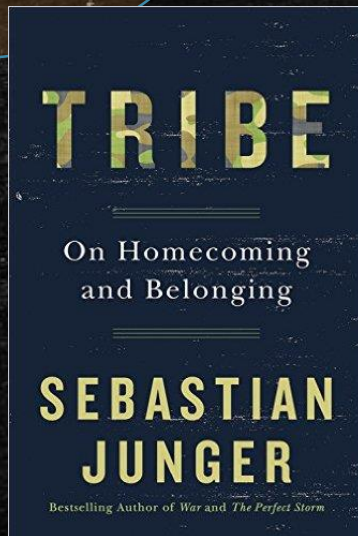
*In complex environments, resilience often spells success, while even the most brilliantly engineered fixed solutions are often insufficient or counterproductive. p76*

The military leader has to be capable of handling volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous situations; using inference, improvisation, divergent thinking, creativity and intuition to overcome adversary...

# The Environment

## Environment

- Military bureaucracy
- Checks & balances aligned to Chain of Command
- Output focussed, top-down appraisal system
- Unconscious bias

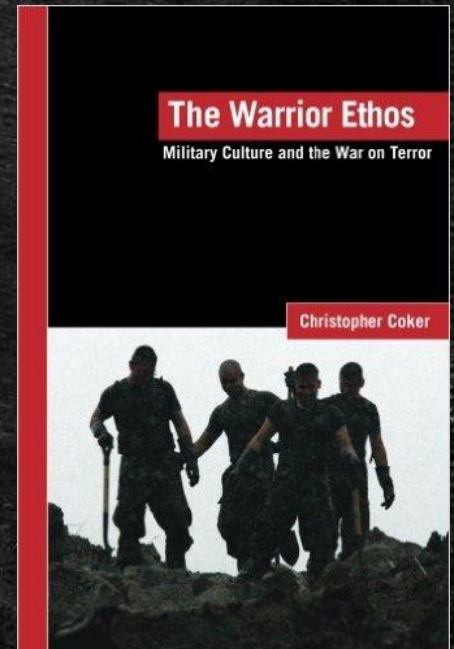


Today's modern Western 'warrior' exists in a political and civil context completely different from that of their ancestors. Currently soldiers are domesticated; "they serve the state, which provides a moral framework within which to act legitimately" and they are expected to deliver force with precision, as soldiers are treated almost like any other professional vocation.

Coker, 2007

*Humans don't mind hardship, in fact they thrive on it; what they mind is not feeling necessary. Modern society has perfected the art of people not feeling necessary.*

Junger, 2016



# The Environment - Culture

---

Organisational culture is a dynamic phenomenon that determines human behavioural thinking and influences us in a variety of ways. It is intrinsically linked to the intangible of leadership since it regulates our behaviour, informs and rationalises group or organisational values, and informs our underlying unconscious beliefs that we often take for granted. *Once set, culture determines the criteria for leadership and inadvertently directs who will and will not be a leader.*

Schein, 2010

‘Real cultural change is achieved by selectively applying effort and resources to key pressure points in the institution.’

Wong, 2014

# The Environment

## Environment

- Military bureaucracy
- Checks & balances aligned to Chain of Command
- Output focussed, top-down appraisal system
- Unconscious bias

- Bureaucracy encourages the deliberate manipulation of information to distort, conceal, or not report Tirole, 1986

- Leaders who focussed on achieving some notion of deliverable success tended to score 20% higher than their colleagues Buren & Safferstone, 2009

Organisations tend to select their leaders on results rather than potential; placing charisma and confidence above integrity and courage Cohn & Jay, 2011

- The mix of relatively short posting cycles, ambiguity in output, and a focus on results plays to the toxic leader's strengths and hides longer term costs

- Poor Leaders are harder to identify from the top down
- Defence lacks an effective independent and impartial third-party to enforce external checks and balance

# Followership

## Followers

- Obedience
- Tolerance – also linked to posting cycle
- Resilient follower construct
- Loyalty, anti-whistle-blowing culture

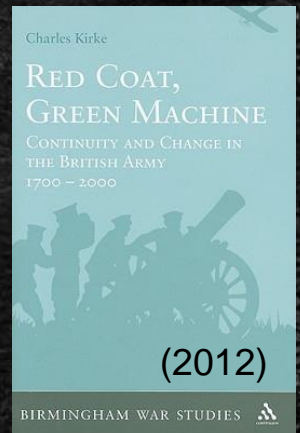
- Military's cultural deference to rank, its anti whistle-blowing ethos, its loyalty to the chain of command and to the organisation(s).

- Kirke's 4 social structures within the military:

- formal command structure
- informal structure
- loyalty/ identity structure
- functional structure

Robust framework that transcends the rank and discipline system

- The posting scheme creates the situation whereby individuals that work for a toxic leader generally only do so for a limited period of time - tolerance



# Leadership, Command and Power

Influential thinker on power is still Machiavelli  
Power, strong to the point of ruthlessness...

adversarial & manipulative

Keltner argues many leaders forget what got them to the top in the first place - an understanding of people  
behavioural, structural/ hierarchical – increases distance

What will be more important in the future is less coherence power but more empathy and listening...

The idea of servant leadership - Attitude as well as action...

French and Raven's (1959) Identified 6 types of power:  
Reward; Coercive; Legitimate; Expert; Referent & Informational Power

Dacher  
Keltner

**THE  
POWER  
PARADOX**

How we gain and  
lose influence

(2016)



# How endemic is toxic leadership?



- Lt General (Retired) Ulmer 'estimated that roughly 8-12% of Army Officers above the rank of Colonel or higher are toxic and need to be removed' (Steele 2011)
- 2014 Center for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL) reported counterproductive behaviours were seen amongst:
  - 10% Generals • 20% Captains and Sergeant Majors • 30% Corporals
  - Number of leaders demonstrating 'toxic' behaviours **estimated to be below 4%**
- Armed Forces Continuous Attitude Survey (AFCAS) 2016 (Annex B Table B4.8.)  
Percentage of respondents that **do not trust** their immediate superior:
  - 14% Royal Navy • 17% Army • 17% Air Force
- Kusy & Holloway, *Toxic Workplace (2009)* – Civilian comparison?
  - 27% of workers had been mistreated at some point in their career
  - 94% of respondents had worked with someone toxic in their career



# So What

---

- Senior leadership failure or complicity?
- If the military wishes to deal with toxic leadership and other negative leadership it must:
  - Understand it
  - Define it
  - Act

## Acknowledging that:

- negative leaders erode the values and standards that the military sees as vital to its success
- bad leaders get results
- any decision or indecision will have generational implications
- the term 'toxic leader' has become a label
- good, as well as bad leaders will continue to be branded as toxic by subordinates who may question their leader's actions and motives







## A “Toxic” Mix & the Danger of Normative Behavior

“There was a **culture of not complaining** or of raising concerns. BBC staff felt – and were sometimes told – that it was not in their best interests to pursue a complaint. **Loyalty** to and **pride** in a programme could hinder the sharing of concerns; there was a reluctance to rock the boat.

The management structure of the BBC was not only **hierarchical** but deeply **deferential**. Staff were **reluctant to speak** out to their managers because they felt it was not their place to do so. Also there was a **culture of separation, competition and even hostility between different parts** of the BBC so that concerns arising in one part would not be discussed with another.

There was also a **macho culture...**”



# General Sir Nick Carter, KCB, CBE, DSO, ADC Gen

---

*"The way we lead must be based on mutual trust between leaders and those they lead."*






*"The environment in which we are called to operate is increasingly uncertain, complex and dispersed and demands that we maximise the talent of our people."*

Daily Telegraph – 3 Jun 16



# The Military Toxic Triangle



Characteristics	Maturists (pre-1945)	Baby Boomers (1945-1960)	Generation X (1961-1980)	Generation Y (1981-1995)	Generation Z (Born after 1995)
Formative experiences	Second World War Rationing Fixed-gender roles Rock 'n' Roll Nuclear families Defined gender roles — particularly for women	Cold War Post-War boom "Swinging Sixties" Apollo Moon landings Youth culture Woodstock Family-orientated Rise of the teenager	End of Cold War Fall of Berlin Wall Reagan / Corbachev Thatcherism Live Aid Introduction of first PC Early mobile technology Latch-key kids; rising levels of divorce	9/11 terrorist attacks PlayStation Social media Invasion of Iraq Reality TV Google Earth Glastonbury	Economic downturn Global warming Global focus Mobile devices Energy crisis Arab Spring Produce own media Cloud computing Wiki-leaks
Percentage in U.K. workforce*	3%	33%	35%	29%	Currently employed in either part-time jobs or new apprenticeships
Aspiration	Home ownership	The secret life of an army officer: I'm a liberal who wouldn't vote for war			
Attitude toward technology	Largely disengaged				
Attitude toward career	Jobs are for life	<p>Anonymous Monday 22 August 2016 08.00 BST</p> <p><b>theguardian</b> website of the year</p> <p>“ Your average soldier or officer is still essentially a flawed human, working for other flawed humans ”</p>			
Signature product	 Automobile				
Communication media	 Formal letter				
Communication preference	 Face-to-face				
Preference when making financial decisions	 Face-to-face meetings				

\*Percentages are approximate at the time of publication.