Likeness to the Divinity? Virtues and Charismatic Leadership

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Abstract

Classical virtue theory provides a fruitful framework for understanding charismatic leadership. The article outlines the theory of virtues and demonstrates the contribution of virtues to the personality traits and behaviors that are associated with charisma. The virtue of magnanimity or high-mindedness is shown to play a special role. The virtue-based perspective to charismatic leadership clarifies disagreements concerning the definition and delineation of the concept of charisma. It also provides a novel framework for analyzing and criticizing charismatic leadership training programs. Finally, the article demonstrates that the dark side of charisma is a deformation caused by the absence of specific virtues such as prudence, justice or humility.

Keywords

1. Introduction

Charismatic leadership is a problematic concept. For one thing, the notion of charisma has ambiguous connotations. For some, charismatic leadership is a highly positive concept. Charisma is often looked for in executive recruitment, perhaps for both good and ill. There are also various kinds of training services for charismatic leadership, showing that charisma is seen as something to be aspired to (see Oppenheimer, 2008). Yet for many others, the word charisma has a negative connotation. It is taken to signify psychological manipulation of irrational crowds, and it is felt that it gives rise to the abuse of power and authority (see Khurana, 2002).

For another thing, many believe that the notion of charismatic leadership has been so overused that it has lost its original significance. According to Kellerman (2009), the word "charismatic" is too easily attached to all kinds of famous personalities, whereas real charisma is quite rare. Kellerman believes that truly charismatic leadership implies a near-religious experience: "In charismatic relationships followers think of their leaders as being near superhuman, as being endowed with qualities so special they deserve devotion and even blind faith." Yet, if charismatic leadership exists in that deeper sense of the word, then it certainly merits both practical and scholarly interest.

There is a burgeoning literature on the relationship between leadership and ethics (See for example Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999; Havard, 2007; Mendonca, 2001; Mendonca and Kanungo, 2006; Kanungo and Mendonca, 1996; Sison, 2003; Thoms, 2008). This article seeks to extend that discussion by articulating an explicit connection between the classical theory of virtues and the modern notion of charismatic leadership. I will claim that one can meaningfully talk about a phenomenon called charisma, and that the different images of charismatic leadership are rooted in something common. I will show that classical virtue theory provides an insightful perspective for understanding the phenomenon of charisma, and for analyzing its different manifestations and implications.

The first part of the article discusses different aspects of the dilemma of charismatic leadership based on Weber's original notion and subsequent scholarship. The second part outlines the classical theory of virtues and outlines the connections between charismatic leadership and virtues. The third part discusses concerns to do with the authenticity and acceptance of charismatic leaders, and shows how the theory of virtues can clarify certain tensions embedded in the concept of charismatic leadership. The conclusion indicates avenues for further research using a virtue-based perspective.

2. Charismatic Authority and Leadership: The Dilemma

The word charisma (from the Greek χάρισμα) originally meant some kind of divine or God-given gift (see Riggio, 2004). It acquired its place in modern discussions through Maximilian Weber's concept of charismatic authority. According to Weber (1947: 358-359), charisma is:

> a certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader.

Writing as a sociologist, Weber was making a broad classification to describe a form of influence based not on tradition or formal authority but rather on follower perceptions that a leader is endowed with exceptional qualities. It is important to note that Weber's concept of charisma points to something quite special, more so than in the ordinary usage of the word today. For example, one hears some people being called "charismatic" because of their enchanting and captivating personality; in Weber's idea, something deeper is a stake.

Weber's notion of charismatic authority was not overtly normative: he did not claim it to be essentially better or worse

than other types of authority. Nor did Weber confine the concept to specific sources of charisma, because from the viewpoint of sociology, what matters is the perception of the "followers" or "disciples," and that depends on the cultural conditions:

> In primitive circumstances this peculiar kind of deference is paid to prophets, to people with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, to leaders in the hunt, and heroes in war. […] How the quality in question would be ultimately judged from any ethical, aesthetic, or other such point of view is naturally entirely indifferent for purposes of definition. (Weber, 1947: 359)

Weber's seminal contribution attracted a substantial amount of interest and sparked a burgeoning literature in a number of fields – sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology, religious studies, leadership and organizational studies etc. The notion of charisma has also become part of common language, although it tends to be used in a shallower sense than in Weber's original text.

Weber's text does lend itself to a number of different interpretations. On the one hand, Weber talks about the exceptional qualities of the charismatic leader, and seems to assume that those qualities are, or should be, somehow true and authentic, not simply posited by the followers. On the other hand, Weber prefers to remain on the sociological level and refrain from making judgments about the origins of those qualities. In what follows, I will sketch two different strands of subsequent scholarship, one focusing on the external leader–follower relationship, the other examining the personality traits of charismatic leaders.

2.1 Demystification and the Dark Side of Charisma

In the sociological literature on charismatic authority, the emphasis has tended to be on the external description of a peculiar type of relationship. According to Willner (1984: 8), charisma is a specific type of relationship between a leader and followers: the charismatic relationship exists when the followers regard the leader as somehow superhuman and accept his or her statements without question. Charismatic leadership implies that the followers comply unconditionally with their leader's directives, and give the leader unqualified emotional commitment. Several other authors similarly hold that charisma really denotes a relationship rather than an individual personality attribute (see Wilson, 1973, 1975; Worsley, 1970).

Weber's original text lends some support to this interpretation. His commitment to non-normative sociology – which "must abstain from value judgments" (Weber, 1947: 359) – encourages the researcher to focus solely on clear, external facts. Now, the special gifts described by Weber are not scientifically ascertainable, so the student of charismatic relationships should limit the enquiry to the description of the phenomenon and its dynamics.

One problem with the purely relational definition of charismatic authority is that it leaves out many interesting questions. For example, the definition seems to encompass leaders ranging from Gandhi, Joan of Arc and Jesus of Nazareth to Hitler, Stalin and Mao (Magnarella, 1999: 239). But clearly it is relevant to ask whether it is appropriate to classify them all in the same category; but if we wish to differentiate between seemingly good and bad manifestations of charismatic authority, the relational definition offers little guidance.

Another difficulty is that even the external and non-normative research on charismatic authority tends to make tacit value judgments about its object. Thus, a common feature of this strand of research is the demystification of the charismatic phenomenon. This is natural, because it is difficult for the re-

searcher to remain entirely silent on the issue of the roots of the charismatic relationship, and methodological presuppositions of social science easily lead the scholar to conclude that there can be no real basis for the attribution of divine or otherwise special gifts to the leader, so what really must be happening is some kind of an illusion.

It is not clear whether Weber would have accepted these interpretations and, dying in 1920, he did not live to comment on the proper application of his theory to the political monsters of later decades. What is clear is that this portrayal of charismatic leadership has become widespread and influential. In many cultures, the word charisma has come to possess a negative connotation. In the words of one Mexican manager: "I think that charisma is one of the most dangerous things that exist, because one pays the consequences" (see Den Hartog et al., 1999: 243).

The skeptical and negative understanding of charismatic leadership is summarized in the expression "dark side of charisma" (see Conger, 1989, 1990; Sankowsky, 1995). The charismatic relationship is thus seen as lending itself to the abuse of power, and it is often suspected that there is something dubious and fraudulent about the personality of the charismatic leader. This perception of charisma has received further stimulus from powerful but problematic political leaders, and also from controversial religious leaders such as Sun Myung Moon, Jim Jones and David Koresh.

One is, however, inclined to think that this depiction is taking things too far by defining perverse instances of charismatic leader as the normal case. Moreover, Weber's concept of charisma does not imply the no-questions-asked, unconditional-surrender type of behavior that Willner and others have associated with charismatic authority. And in any case, a purely relational definition fails to address the question of what exactly gives rise to that special type of relationship.

2.2 Personality Traits, Communication and Impression Management

In leadership and organizational studies on charisma, the emphasis has been more on the personality of the leader, and the methodology has been mostly psychological. In other words, this strand of research focuses on the other fundamental aspect of Weber's definition, i.e. the exceptional powers or qualities of the charismatic leader. It is noteworthy that, in leadership scholarship, the notion of charisma usually carries a positive connotation, although not without qualification. Conger (1999: 151) notes that charismatic leadership "is often perceived to describe an esoteric and rarer form of leadership."

A number of different theories of charisma have been proposed (see Conger, 1999, for a general overview). Although there are differing interpretations on specific issues, there is also convergence and mutual compatibility among the different theories.

Several authors agree that the key to charismatic leadership is the ability to effectively communicate and pursue a vision (Conger, 1999; Den Hartog et al., 1999; House, 1999; House and Howell, 1992; House and Shamir, 1993; Shea and Howell, 1999). A vision in this context means not just any kind of goal, but something that conveys hope and optimism, a better life and a better future. On the part of the leader, the communication of a vision requires courage and conviction. It means that charismatic leaders must be willing to take risks and not always play safe.

Charisma is also related to other attributes such as "encouraging, positive, motivational, confidence builder, dynamic, and foresight" (Den Hartog et al., 1999: 240). Charismatic leaders are attractive personalities, and they make others want to iden-

tify with them and emulate them; thus such characteristics as integrity, trustworthiness and moral responsibility are important for charisma. This feature of charisma closely relates to Weber's idea of exemplariness. The charismatic leader is not followed simply because others expect to obtain some external benefits by following the leader, but especially because the person awakens in others the desire to be transformed and become more like the leader.

An interesting question is the relationship between personality traits and communication. Certain qualities alone will not turn anyone into a charismatic leader, unless that person is able to communicate those traits to others. This has led some commentators to argue that what really matters is communication skills – and that charisma can therefore be learned and trained (Howell and Frost, 1989; Oppenheimer, 2008).

In terms of communication style, some have argued that a charismatic leader should be expressive, self-confident, dynamic, forceful and persuasive (see Wofford, 1999). On the other hand, many charismatic personalities have been kind and soft-spoken (see House, 1999: 568-569). Contrary to what is sometimes thought, charisma is not mere physical attractiveness; in fact, some physically unattractive persons have been highly charismatic – just think of Churchill or St Paul. Words are especially important, yet it is not so much a question of aesthetics and poetry, but of expressing ideas that stand for something that inspire other people (Emrich et al., 2001). Style does matter, though. Dry and strictly analytical language will not evoke charisma; image-based words are more powerful, because they provoke the imagination and help to generate a lively vision – Martin Luther King's I Have a Dream speech is a case in point.

Yet it might be that the most important element in charismatic communication is the most elusive element of all: nonverbal communication. According to communications expert John Neffinger, facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice are even more important than the choice of words to successful communication (see Argetsinger, 2007; see also Oppenheimer, 2008; Vedantam, 2006). A crucial factor is to possess a posture and gestures that convey both strength and warmth. The ability to smile naturally is also crucial, because it communicates warmth as well as authenticity. Fake-looking expressions, in contrast, destroy emotional communication.

The problem with the communication approach to charisma is that it risks reducing it to superficial outward appearance, which may have little to do with the real personality. In other words, charismatic leadership ends up being based on shrewd image building or impression management (see House, 1977). Some authors have even suggested that charisma is a technical skill that can be learned and enacted (see Howell and Trust, 1989).

There is no doubt that communication is important, but that alone is not enough for genuine charisma in the Weberian sense. Weber himself thought that charismatic authority must be based on something authentic, not fake. For example, Weber (1947: 359) writes that "Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, […] cannot be classified in this way with absolute certainty since there is a possibility that he was a very sophisticated type of deliberate swindler." Many authors also remain skeptical about the extent to which charisma may be enacted (Beyer, 1999b). Note that many leaders who are frequently cited as having been highly charismatic – including Gandhi, Mandela, and Mother Teresa – cannot be easily fitted into the straitjacket of impression management, and their success and influence cannot be explained merely on the basis of their communications skills. Moreover, even if due respect is given to the communication approach to charismatic leadership, the question that remains is why certain types of communication and public image are perceived as charismatic.

Table 1 summarizes the different perspectives covered above. Two things need to be noted. First, the perspectives are complementary, not mutually exclusive. Second, there are many other perspectives to charismatic leadership not discussed here (see Conger, 1999). In what follows, I will outline the relationship between classical virtue theory and charismatic leadership, focusing on the personality trait perspective.

3. Virtues: Charisma as Perfection of Character

There are at least two reasons why ancient Greek philosophy provides a natural source for ideas in trying to understand the deeper sense of charisma. One is that the word itself comes from classical Greek. The second and more important reason

Approach	Author examples	Key concepts	Strengths	Weaknesses
Classical	Weber (1947)	Supernatural, superhuman or exceptional powers or qualities, regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary	Broad, encompassing definition; "value-free"	Lack of distinctions, calls for explanation; more apt for study of primitive society and religious communities
Relational	Sankowsky (1995), Willner (1984), Wilson (1973)	Unconditional surrender, unqualified emotional commitment, "blind faith"	Explanation of abuse of power, "dark side of charisma"	May treat perverse instances as paradigmatic; lacks explanation of the relationship
Personality traits	Bass (1985), Beyer (1999), Conger (1989), Conger (1989), House (1977, 1999)	Exemplariness, courage and conviction, integrity, trustworthiness; emulation	May explain the resulting relationship and perception of others	Identification and measurement difficulties apart from external behavior
Communication	Emrich et al. (2001), Gardner and Avolio (1998), Howell and Frost (1989), Roach (2007), Shamir et al. (1993)	Expressive, self-confident, persuasive, visionary; "impression management"	Conducive to experimental study; training methods	Risks reduction to superficial appearance and technique; unclear whether charisma can be enacted

Table 1. Different perspectives to charisma.

is that the Greeks developed a rich philosophy of character development known as the theory of virtues, which, I will argue, provides a fruitful perspective for understanding many issue related to the phenomenon of charismatic leadership. Although the theory of virtues, or virtue ethics, gained its most systematic treatment in Greek philosophy, the idea of virtues is common to most if not all civilizations, and there is a surprising convergence on the types of traits that are perceived as virtues (see Lewis, 2001: Appendix).

The argument builds on the fact that Weber's definition of charismatic authority hinges on exceptional powers and qualities that are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary. Leaving aside the notion of divine origin, let us focus on exemplariness – in other words, excellence, perfection, or virtue in the classical sense of the word. What follows is a brief summary of the classical approach to virtue theory and its application to charismatic leadership.

3.1 An Overview of Classical Virtue Theory

In ancient Greek philosophy, virtues were seen as perfections – or excellences – of character, acquired mainly through the repetition of good acts. At least since Plato, the idea of the virtues was organized around the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance (see Agathon's speech in praise of Love in Plato's Symposium, although the origin may be earlier: Pieper, 1966: xi). In the Nicomachean Ethics, Plato's student Aristotle developed a rich account of the theory of virtues, and subsequent literature has tended to take it as the fundamental point of reference (see Aristotle, 1980). In recent decades, academic philosophy has witnessed a kind of renaissance of virtue ethics (see Pieper, 1966; Geach, 1977; Foot, 1978; MacIntyre, 1984; Kruschwitz and Roberts, 1987).

The interesting question for us is not so much the ethical and normative dimension of virtues as the theory of virtues as a descriptive account of the perfection of human personality – i.e. a moral psychology. There is a rich literature of the moral psychology view of virtues that takes into account more recent work in psychology (see Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Authors such as Doris (1998, 2002) and Harman (1999, 2000) have criticized this view, claiming that situational factors are more determining of choice than moral character. The principal difficulty with their view seems to lie in a misleading reconstruction of character traits and the dubious interpretation of limited empirical data such as Milgram's experiment (see the counter-critique by Athanassoulis, 2000; Kamtekar, 2004; Kupperman, 2001; Miller, 2003; Montmarquet, 2003; Sabini and Silver, 2005; Solomon, 2003; Sreenivasan, 2002). In this article, I limit the discussion to the classical approach.

The development of virtue. According to the classical doctrine, no one is born virtuous or excellent. In each person there are passions and impulses, which militate against the right and rational exercise of one's freedom. One of the effects of virtue is to gain a greater inner unity and harmony between reason, will and passions. In the words of Aristotle (1980: I.13): "the impulses of incontinent people move in contrary directions. [Whereas] in the continent man [the soul] obeys the rational principle [logos] – and presumably in the temperate and brave man it is still more obedient; for in him it speaks, on all matters, with the same voice as the rational principle."

Another distinction is sometimes made between nature-given temperament and moral character. The first is an innate reality, whereas the latter is shaped over time by education, environment and the exercise of one's freedom. Different temperaments imply that, in order to perfect their personality and thus become truly virtuous, people have to struggle in different ways, depending on their natural propensities. But temperaments as such are not virtues.

Virtues grow by repetition: "intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching […], while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit" (Aristotle, 1980: II.1). It is again clear that virtues do not arise in us by nature, but "we are adapted by nature to receive them, and are made perfect by habit" (ibid.). It may be helpful to point out that the modern English word habit does not quite convey the meaning of Greek hexis or Latin habitus (see Sachs, 2005). Rather, the concept refers to a kind of ability – an inner strength, power or skill – that is developed by the constant and repeated exercise of virtuous acts, similarly to various practical skills that are mastered by the repetition of the relevant acts. Thus, by doing just deeds one becomes an increasingly and stably just person, and so also with prudence, courage and self-control. On the other hand, the exercise of vicious acts – foolishness, injustice, cowardice, overindulgence and so on – fosters the weakening and degradation of moral character and, consequently, of the whole personality.

Implicit in the classical theory of virtue is the idea that there is certain stability about one's character, whether it be virtuous or vicious. That stability is translated into a tendency – weaker or stronger depending on the deep-rootedness of the virtue or the vice – to behave in accordance with that character in future situations too. Therefore one cannot normally change one's character overnight for better or for worse, because that implies an inner transformation that requires the development of a habitus which, as said, takes times and repetition.

The doctrine of virtues does not imply any specific stand on the perennial question of how much in our personality is based on innate qualities as opposed to education, the environment and other external factors. The theory is compatible with the fact that people may have all kinds of natural gifts as well as moral propensities that have an impact on later development. It does, however, underline the fact that the perfection of personality is a complex interplay of numerous factors that cannot really be separated from one another, even if we can conceptually distinguish them.

Moreover, some personality traits, which are commonly assumed to be natural or innate, may not be so in fact. It is difficult for us to know such things with any precision, because the development of character starts straight after birth if not earlier. Often, what is seen as an innate trait may really be the result of the complex interaction between the educational and environmental conditions, on the one hand, and the free responses of the person, on the other hand, going back all the way to earliest childhood. It is therefore natural that Aristotle (1980: II.1) should write: "It makes no small difference, then, whether we form habits of one kind or of another from our very youth; it makes a very great difference, or rather all the difference."

Cardinal virtues. The words that are used to signify specific virtues are not always understood correctly. Pieper (1966) repeatedly points out that contemporary language tends to significantly depart from the classical sense of the words when referring to the virtues. Therefore their traditional meaning is briefly outlined in the following.

The cardinal virtue of prudence is far from the timorous, danger-shunning, small-minded self-preservation that the word may bring to mind in modern parlance. Rather, prudence is "the perfected ability to make good choices" (Pieper, 1966: 6) – nothing more, and nothing less. The virtue of justice is not mere equity and fair play, but something much more interior to the person. In the words of Aquinas (1920: II-II, 58, 1): "Justice

is a habit [habitus], whereby a man renders to each one his due with a constant and perpetual will." The specific requirements of the virtue of justice are a much more complex question, as moral philosophy informs us; the relevance of justice as a virtue is that it concerns not so much those requirements (which can only be perceived with the virtue of prudence), but the stable and perfected volitional dispositions of a person to really want to fulfill the requirements of justice in each and every concrete situation.

Fortitude or courage is not fearlessness (which is actually a vice by way of defect), although in its classical core, it is readiness to fall in battle (Aristotle, 1980: III.6). More generally, courage is the perfected ability to stay the course and resist pressures of all kinds, whether that requires boldness and daring or endurance and patience (see Havard, 2007: 70-78; Pieper, 1966: 126-133). Temperance or self-control is neither a fear of exuberance (which again would be a vice), nor mere moderation in eating and drinking, but the ability to lead oneself, i.e. to subordinate passions (emotions and feelings) to the spirit and direct them towards that which is truly and not only superficially good (see Havard, 2007: 80-90; Pieper, 1966: 145-152).

The classical approach organizes the virtues around the four cardinal virtues, yet there are countless other virtues too, including thoughtfulness, decisiveness, kindness, gratitude, faithfulness, industriousness, cheerfulness, modesty, purity and so on. The various "minor" virtues can, however, be rooted in the cardinal virtues to which they are related by way of implication or analogy (see also Peterson and Seligman, 2004). Thus, for example, thoughtfulness and decisiveness are aspects of prudence; kindness, gratitude and faithfulness are different instances of justice; industriousness and cheerfulness flow from courage; and modesty and purity stems from self-control. The word cardinal stems from the Latin cardines meaning "hinges," because the other virtues move around and depend on the cardinal virtues. That is not to say that they are of less value; rather, it is precisely those more specific virtues that give depth and content to the cardinal virtues.

Magnanimity and humility. There are two virtues that tend to be neglected but that are fundamental for from the viewpoint of charismatic leadership. They are two "virtues of the heart": magnanimity and humility (see Pieper, 1966: 189-192). Magnanimity or high-mindedness is "the striving of the mind toward great things" (Pieper, 1966: 189). According to Aristotle (1980: IV.3), magnanimity is "a sort of crown of the virtues." That is a strong statement, but not in vain, because Aristotle holds that a magnanimous person strives for greatness in everything, including all the other virtues. Magnanimity is manifested in various ways depending on the context; it for example gives rises to visionary ability, creativity, idealism, sense of mission, and the ability to constantly challenge others and oneself (see Havard, 2007: 3-26; Aquinas, 1920: II-II, 129).

At first sight, humility seems to be directly at odds with magnanimity, but that is again a reflection of the distorted notion of humility in modern language. Humility as a classical virtue has nothing to do with small-mindedness, inferiority complexes and the disparagement of one's being and doing. "The ground of humility is man's estimation of himself according to truth. And that is almost all there is to it" (Pieper, 1966: 189). In social life, humility is mainly manifested as a constant desire to serve others and the common good; in organizations it translates into altruistic motives, preference for team-work and inclusion, ability to delegate power, concern for continuity, and ability – even a desire – to hear different opinions and receive constructive criticism (see Havard, 2008: 27-44).

It is interesting to notice that the largely neglected virtues of magnanimity and humility have recently attracted attention in leadership scholarship. Magnanimity can easily be related to leadership, but the connection between humility and leadership seems odd and unlikely to most people. However, the influential (albeit methodologically imperfect: see Niendorf and Beck, 2008, and Resnick and Smunt, 2008) study by Collins (2001a, 2001b) found that humility is a defining characteristic of some exceptional corporate leaders. Collins points out that one reason for the neglect of humility in leadership literature is that genuinely humble leaders tend to go unnoticed, precisely because they do not wish to attract attention, whereas egocentric personalities often gain fame and influence even when their true and long-term effect on their corporations turns out problematic.

Perhaps taking the cue from Collins, Havard (2007: xvii-xviii) argues that it is precisely the rare but powerful combination of magnanimity and humility that creates truly great leaders:

> Leaders are defined by their magnanimity and humility. They always have a dream, which they invariably transform into a vision and a mission. It is magnanimity – the striving of the spirit towards great ends – that confers this lofty state of mind. But leadership consists of more than just "thinking big". A leader is always a servant – of those in his professional, familial, and social circle, his countrymen, and indeed the whole of humanity. And the essence of service is humility. Leaders who practice humility respect the innate dignity of other people, and especially of fellow participants in a joint mission.

Unity of virtues. The multitude of different virtues can seem perplexing, and one may wonder how it is possible to become truly virtuous if there are so many different excellences to be mastered. One might also pose a serious objection to the classical theory of virtues by pointing out that, surely, prudence and fortitude sound like nice things, but they can also be used for evil purposes, and so one might question whether they are good qualities at all. The answer to these concerns can be found from the subtle but fundamental tenet of the classical doctrine of virtues, known as the unity of virtues.

It is said that "virtues grow together like the five fingers of the hand" (see Aquinas, 1920: I-II, 66, 2). The systematic nature of classical virtue theory becomes evident if we consider the claim that no virtue stands on its own, but all are intimately related to one another. The names given to different virtues are simply means for analyzing and distinguishing, but real virtues are qualities of concrete persons, who cannot be sliced up and cut apart without ending the life of the person.

So, for example, justice and fortitude – as genuine virtues – are really different aspects of a whole. On the one hand, courage combined with the lack of justice can become a force for evil: "injustice corrupts the fruits of fortitude" (Pieper, 1966: 64-65). On the other hand, as Havard (2007: 121) graphically puts it: "Many politicians, lacking courage, make a travesty of justice. Think of Pontius Pilate and his brand of justice: 'I could find no substance in any of the charges you bring against him [Jesus of Nazareth] … so I will scourge him…' Here is the frightening logic of a coward."

Similar connections can be found for the other virtues, too. For example, deep-seated intemperance – an uncontrolled craving for power, money and pleasures – spoils all the other virtues: it blinds the intellect, perverts the will, and makes a person cowardly (Pieper, 1966: 21-22, 203).

In the traditional system of virtues, prudence holds a special place. This may be surprising, because strictly speaking, prudence is an intellectual virtue, not a moral one. The reason for

the primacy of prudence is that, as the classical expression has it, prudence is the "measure" of justice, fortitude, temperance and all the other virtues (Pieper, 1966: 7). The meaning of this expression becomes clear when one considers the fact that the specifically moral virtues cannot guide themselves. It takes prudence – that is, the perfected ability to perceive the reality as it is and to make good choices – to see what each virtue requires in each concrete situation. Justice without prudence is mere "good intention" and "meaning well" – a good start, but still very far from perfection. Pieper (1966: 8) sums it up eloquently: "The intrinsic goodness of man […] consists in this, that 'reason perfected in the cognition of truth' shall inwardly shape and imprint his volition and action."

3.2 Virtues and Charisma: The Specific Connection

The goal of the present article is not to defend or challenge the specifics of classical virtue theory, but to show how it may account for the phenomenon that has come to be called charisma. Although there are different theories of what constitutes charisma, a closer look at the various statements and descriptions reveals that most of the qualities attributed to charismatic leaders are rooted in one or more classical virtues.

Magnanimity. Magnanimity or high-mindedness is the virtue that most clearly stands out in descriptions of charismatic leaders. There is a strong consensus that what really differentiates charismatic leaders is their ability to communicate and pursue an inspiring, compelling and credible vision. Yet, as those how have been entrusted with the task of formulating a corporate or organizational vision know well, it is not easy to be truly visionary – and it is all the more difficult to be so with conviction and consistency. In order to be genuine, that ability cannot be just a technical communication skill, but an inner disposition towards the pursuit of great things. And that is what virtue theory calls magnanimity.

Psychologist Frank Bernieri highlights an important aspect of charisma thus: "A charismatic person never plays it small" (see Flora, 2005). That could almost be a definition of magnanimity. But charisma is also revealed in many other things that flow from magnanimous personality; for example, charismatic leaders are seen as having passion for a cause, commitment and energy – all of them qualities without which a superficial magnanimity would be nothing but idle day-dreaming (Havard, 2007: 22-23). "Vanity loves the honor and prestige that comes from great things, whereas magnanimity loves the work and effort that has to be done to achieve them," writes Garrigou-Lagrange (1989: 84).

In social and organizational settings, magnanimity is manifested among other things in the persistent desire to challenge oneself and others – and, by implication, in a hatred for and disgust of mediocrity and an attitude of resignation. This, too, is characteristic of charismatic leaders: they communicate high expectations but also express confidence in others' capabilities in meeting those expectations (Howell and Trust, 1989; Shea and Howell, 1999).

Part of the inspiration stirred by to charismatic leaders is due to their practical idealism and realistic optimism. Veteran White House reporter Helen Thomas says the following about J. F. Kennedy, whom many considered a charismatic president: "He was inspiring and magnetic. He gave us hope. [He] radiated that onward-and-upward good feeling" (see Flora, 2005). Again, the ability to instill hope and optimism is not an isolated skill, but is rooted in a magnanimous person's capacity for seeing beyond the immediate reality and even enjoying the need to overcome various challenges.

Humility. Apart from magnanimity, the role of the other virtues for charismatic leadership is a little less clear in light of the existing literature, but some connections can be seen. The virtue of humility is especially interesting. For example, Joseph Roach (2007) says that charisma is about being both grand and approachable; and, as was mentioned earlier, John Neffinger talks about the combination of strength plus warmth (see Oppenheimer, 2008). The words used are different and have particular nuances, but they are very closely related to the classical virtues of magnanimity and humility – precisely the two virtues that have been seen by some recent authors as the essential requirements of true leadership. Indeed, when one thinks of the most famous charismatic leaders – Jesus of Nazareth, Buddha, Gandhi, Mandela, Mother Teresa and the like – the quality of humility immediately comes to mind (House, 1999). It is, in the end, not so difficult to concur with Havard (2007: xviii): "Charisma in leadership stems from visionary greatness (magnanimity) and devotion to service (humility). Magnanimity and humility are virtues of the heart par excellence, giving leaders who possess them a charismatic touch."

Collins (2001b), however, seems to suggest that his Level 5 leaders (i.e. leaders who possess a rare combination of fierce resolve and humility) were not charismatic, implying that humility is incompatible with charismatic leadership. Yet a closer look makes one wonder whether Collins' assertion is not too hasty. The executives in question were visionary, courageous and able to radically transform their corporations. They instilled enthusiasm and commitment in their employees, and were held in high regard by the latter. On all accounts, Collins' description of Level 5 leaders is compatible with the usual definitions of charismatic leaders, even if it also has other elements. What Collins seems to have had in mind is the common, negative perception of charisma – psychological influence and egocentric exuberance –, and he quite rightly wanted to dissociate his cases from that image. (The same negative notion of charisma is found in Khurana, 2002, whose archetypical "charismatic leader" is Jack Welch. For a critique of Welch's leadership, see Sison, 2003: 129-138).

There are other reasons why it is natural that humility is rarely mentioned in connection with charismatic leadership. The existing literature is based on a different theoretical framework in which humility does not feature highly; before Collins' controversial studies, many would have felt that humility is directly at odds with effective leadership. Although empirical studies might help to draw attention to neglected factors, it does not happen automatically, because empirical research on complex phenomena does not consist in the mere collection of facts, but helps to strengthen, modify or reject specific research hypotheses.

Cardinal virtues. The importance given here to humility and magnanimity should not be taken to mean that the other virtues are of no relevance. Firstly, one characteristic of effective leaders is competence, which is rooted in the cardinal virtue of prudence. Without the competence that prudence gives, charismatic leaders cannot inspire the commitment of others.

Secondly, such qualities as integrity, trustworthiness and moral responsibility – different instances of the cardinal virtue of justice – are also cited as contributing to charisma. The image of a deeply just person stirs others to trust in, identify with, and emulate the charismatic leader.

Thirdly, courage is frequently cited as contributing to charisma: charismatic leaders are daring risk-takers. Courage in the classical sense is also closely related to magnanimity, and the interaction of these two virtues in a concrete person may be

so strong that it seems almost misleading to distinguish them from one another. For example, the realization of a bold vision requires patience and endurance, which are capabilities rooted in the virtue of fortitude.

Finally, the role of the cardinal virtue of self-control or temperance is less evident, but it is relevant in an indirect way. The virtue of temperance is mostly manifested in private acts, which one might not even consider when investigating the phenomenon of leadership. Pieper (1966: 147) helpfully points out that temperance "is distinguished from the other cardinal virtues by the fact that it refers exclusively to the active man himself." One might say that temperance is a silent virtue: it does not attract attention to itself, and one only really notices it when it is lacking.

On the other hand, the unity of virtues implies that temperance is necessary for the perfection of all the other virtues. For example, one may lack prudence simply for want of experience, but the different forms of genuine imprudence – thoughtlessness, indecisiveness, and cunning (false prudence) – are rooted in specific moral vices such as disorderly love of money and pleasures, desperate self-preservation and an over-riding concern for confirmation and security (see Pieper, 1966: 20-21). Havard (2007: 81) maintains that intemperance "undermines courage (the capacity to stay the course) and justice: someone who craves power, money, or pleasure is hardly likely to take into account the common good or respect the dignity of those he deals with." Lastly, temperance is a prerequisite for magnanimity and humility, because those virtues contain the stable and perfected ability to rise above petty concerns and to forget about oneself in the service of others.

Table 2 provides a sketch of the impact of different virtues and vices on leadership and charisma.

4. Authenticity and Acceptance

In Weber's thesis on charismatic authority, there is an interesting tension between the authenticity of the charismatic leader and the necessity, for the validity of charisma, of the leader's acceptance as such by a group of followers or disciples (see Weber, 1947: 359). On the one hand, it seems that charisma is something that a leader either has or does not have; on the other hand, charisma is made dependent on the perception of others. This tension is important for the virtue-based perspective to charismatic leadership. Here charisma is primarily understood as a character trait, but in practice it cannot be separated from how the leader is perceived by others. The question of authenticity is especially important, and it turns out that the virtue perspective sheds new light on the so-called dark side of charisma.

4.1 Not All Is Gold That Glitters: Authenticity, Imperfections and False Charisma

Central cases and imperfections. A frequent source of confusion and pointless disagreement in this and so many other topics is that we tend to silently assume that all theoretical terms have a flatly univocal meaning. The ancient Greeks realized that it was the wrong approach, and so Aristotle (1980: VIII.4), in his famous discussion of friendship, notes that there are various types of friendship, but some of them are more genuine than others. He effectively employs what Finnis (1980) calls the central case technique, and which resembles Weber's somewhat less clear notion of the ideal type (Weber, 1997: 88):

> By exploiting the systematic multi-significance of one's theoretical terms […], one can differentiate the mature from the undeveloped in human affairs, the sophisticated from the primitive, the flourishing from the corrupt, the fine specimen from the deviant case […] – but all without ignoring or banishing to another discipline the undeveloped, primitive, corrupt, deviant or other "qualified sense" or "extended sense" instances of the subject-matter. (Finnis, 1980: 10-11)

It is evident that, just as the concept of virtue cannot be applied in a simplistic yes-or-no manner, so it is also with the notion of charisma. One may possess some virtues to some extent, but very few or none of us have reached absolute perfection in any virtue. It is likewise with charisma. Remembering this helps to avoid futile debates on how strictly we should define the concept of charismatic leadership. Some authors contend that truly charismatic leadership is rare (Beyer, 1999a; House, 1999), while others use the term more liberally (see Conger, 1999). Both approaches are flawed if taken to extremes, in which either

Virtue	Definition and key concepts	Contrary vices	Impact of virtue on charisma/leadership	Impact of vices on charisma/leadership
Prudence	Ability to make right decisions; objectivity; competence; wisdom	Thoughtlessness, indecisiveness, incompetence, rationalizations	Ability to take responsibility; instills trust in one's decisions; long-term success	Inability to lead; disorder, chaos; long-term failure
Justice	Will to give everyone their due; fairness; equity	Injustice, unfairness, dishonesty, partiality	Promotion of common good; sense of community; mutual trust	Abuse of power; feelings of betrayal; lack of trust
Fortitude/ courage	Ability to stay the course and resists pressures	Cowardice; (excess: recklessness)	Perseverance, endurance, facing obstacles; conviction, risk-tasking	Inhibition, fear of risks and uncertainty, inability to act; (reckless risk-taking)
Temperance/ self-control	Ability to subordinate passions to the spirit	Licentiousness or self-indulgence; (insensibility)	Calm, maturity, dignity; fosters confidence	Undermines trust; leads to imprudence and injustice
Magnanimity/ high-mindedness	Ability to strive for great things, to challenge oneself and others	Pusillanimity or small-mindedness; (undue ambition)	Sense of mission; visionary objectives; inspiration; constant improvement	Stagnation, mediocrity, pettiness; (pursuit of unrealistic goals)
Humility	Ability to overcome selfishness and serve others	Pride, self-importance; (false humility)	Empowerment, team-play, warmth, approachability	Abuse of others, disrespect, exploitation, selfishness

Table 2. Principal virtues and vices, and their impact on leadership and charisma.

charisma is a rare talent that one simply does or does not possess, or that charisma is relatively common and that is all there is to it. Yet they are both right and mutually compatible if it is understood that there are many shades of charismatic leaders, some being closer to, and some farther from, the central case.

The notion of the central case can be easily grasped by comparing ideal cases of charismatic personality with those that we might consider perhaps or somewhat charismatic. As to the first group, alongside some modern examples of highly charismatic individuals, it is interesting to consider Karl Jaspers' notion of "paradigmatic individuals" (Jaspers, 1962: 97-106). Jaspers explicitly refers to Socrates, Buddha, Confucius and Christ, but maintains that others might also have been chosen. Two things can be said about Jaspers' paradigmatic individuals here. The first is that they were not merely influential people, but persons who attracted devoted disciples and established entire moral traditions (among other things). The second is that, as Alderman (1987: 52) points out, "the cases of Buddha, Christ, and Confucius make it overwhelmingly obvious that character is the final line of moral appeal in diverse moral traditions." The same is true of Socrates, whose moral tradition is precisely virtue ethics.

It might be objected that perhaps not all of Jaspers' paradigmatic individuals, or the various contemporary charismatic leaders, are really ideal embodiments of charisma. That may or may not be so, but this uncertainty only vindicates the necessity of the central case approach. The consideration of various definitely-not-central cases of charismatic leader – from Bill Clinton and John Edwards to Hitler and Mao – makes to point even plainer. That consideration is also helpful for another reason: it highlights the error of imagining the different shades of charismatic leadership as a two-dimensional continuum of either more or less charismatic personality. Deviations from the central case can take multiple forms – which is probably one reason why the very concept of charisma seems so elusive.

Finnis (1980: 11) also points out that "the study of [peripheral cases] is illuminated by thinking of them as watered-down versions of the central case, or sometimes as exploitations of human attitudes shaped by reference to the central case." Both types of departure from genuine charisma can be identified, and are discussed in the following.

Learning and enacting. One of the concerns with the authenticity of charisma is whether it can be learnt or enacted. There is a rich literature on this question. Some authors claim that empirical findings support the proposal that charismatic behavior can be enacted (see Howell and Frost, 1989), while others are skeptical of the long-term effect of merely external behaviors (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999).

As a side note, it is interesting how Jim Collins (2001a; 2001b) discusses whether one might be a Level 5 leader, and concludes that he does not know: "We would love to be able to give you a list of steps for getting to Level 5 – other than contracting cancer, going through a religious conversion, or getting different parents – but we have no solid research data that would support a credible list." (Collins, 2001b: 75-76)

If the classical theory of virtue is correct, then there is no doubt that one can, at least in principle, develop the relevant virtues that seem to give rise to charismatic leadership. Indeed, when Havard (2007: 107) proclaims that "leaders are not born, they are trained," he refers to nothing else than what Plato and Aristotle thought with regard to education generally. Note that Collins' tentative list for factors that may facilitate an inner transformation towards humility and other virtues – a serious illness, a religious conversion, or better parents – is perfectly in

line with the virtue theory of the ancients.

In contemporary usage, training has a different connotation, one that is more linked with external skills such as communication skills. It was mentioned earlier that some psychologists and communications experts have reduced the concept of charisma to particular messages and non-verbal cues. In light of the theory of virtues, this view is at once instructive and flawed.

On the one hand, it is instructive, because communication matters: we cannot see directly into the deepest inner core of any person. The various non-verbal cues that some authors associate with charisma are not isolated features; they are important, because they communicate something, and what they communicate is the personality of the speaker. Anyone can claim to be visionary, courageous, benevolent, and even humble, but such declarations would most likely be met with disdain and amusement. In contrast, non-verbals proclaim without words, and they are strongly relied on by others precisely because it is so difficult to feign some of them. Smile is the classic example of a non-verbal signal that communicates a range of positive qualities – including kindness, warmth, intelligence and honesty – yet counterfeit smiles are as easily detected as they are detested (see Ambadar, Cohn and Reed, 2009; Forgas and East, 2008; Krumhuber, Manstead and Kappas, 2007; Schmidt, Bhattacharya and Denlinger, 2009). Indeed, some communication experts believe that the most effective way of developing non-verbal communication is to learn to experience and control the relevant emotions (see Argetsinger, 2007).

On the other hand, the communication approach is flawed, because there is a fundamental distinction between truthful and false non-verbal communication. In the central case of charismatic leaders, their non-verbals reflect their true character. In contrast, the fake charismatic leader may be nothing but a product of visionary speech-writing and subtle performance-coaching, the bogus leader being just a skilful actor playing a pre-established role in the script. Such "charisma," however, is unlikely to last long (Bass and Steidlmeier, 1999: 197-198).

The dark side of charisma. The central case technique suggests that even the "dark side" instances have something to do with charisma. In short, the dark side of charismatic leadership is based on an appearance of virtues (especially magnanimity) combined with a major defect in one or more other virtues.

One manifestation of the dark side of charisma is imprudence. Visionary personalities may attract their followers down avenues that are not worth treading: "Sometimes, charismatics may destroy a company through wild and unchallenged ambitions that produce an unrealistic vision" (Sankowsky, 1995: 64). According to the doctrine of unity of virtues, superficial ambition without prudence is not a virtue at all: it becomes the vice of over-ambition. Moreover, imprudence tends to be caused by moral defects, such as an unrestrained desire for money or power.

Another type of dark side is the case of narcissistic charismatic leaders, who manipulate others into serving their egoistic goals. Narcissists may demonstrate magnanimity – "the charismatic narcissistic leader tends to promote a grandiose vision," writes Sankowsky (1995: 65) – but that vision is not for the common good, because narcissists suffer from "a grandiose sense of self-importance, a preoccupation with fantasies of unlimited success [so that they] act as if they are entitled to receive the service of others and tend toward exploitative and manipulative behavior" (Sankowsky, 1995: 64). In the language of virtues, narcissism is a pathological form of pride, the opposite of humility. The special challenge with narcissistic leaders is that they seem to be skillful at identifying others' hopes and expectations, and their

victims tend to be blinded by superficial illusions painted by the narcissists.

Perhaps the most important type of materialization of the dark side of charisma is the combination of magnanimity and injustice. Obviously injustice is also present in the case of narcissistic leaders, but it is made most manifest in the so-called Hitler-dilemma. Were Hitler, Mao and other political monsters charismatic leaders? Yes and no.

On the one hand, such leaders do exhibit at least the appearance of some virtues. They may communicate a grand vision (albeit a morally flawed one), and portray courage in pursuing that vision. They may offer hope, and here it is necessary to underline the importance of peculiar historical and psycho-social contexts. They may even possess, in the sight of a specific audience in a specific historical setting, an appearance of justice – a perverted type of justice, but of justice nonetheless: for instance, of reparation of past injustices and restoration of lost dignity.

On the other hand, these cases confirm Ambrose's saying that "fortitude without justice is a source of evil (iniquitatis materia)" (cited in Pieper, 1966: 65). One might add: just as genuine magnanimity, supported by all the other virtues, is a source of the greatest goods, so the appearance of magnanimity without justice is a source of the greatest evils. For nothing inspires more powerfully to action than the promise of some great good – even if that good be ultimately an illusion.

4.2 Universality, Particularity and Acceptance

As Weber and subsequent authors point out, certain personality traits alone do not constitute charismatic leadership, because charisma in the sociological sense requires the formation of a special type of relationship. How exactly such a relationship ends up being formed and what external factors facilitate that process is a complex question. For example, it is often claimed that a crisis situation is needed for the development of the charismatic relationship, but Bass (1999) argues that the claim is not supported by empirical results. All of that is compatible with the virtue-based approach to charisma, and only complements it. Indeed, some authors deem it possible that charisma remains latent until success makes it manifest (see Beyer, 1999a; House, 1999).

Yet the notion of acceptance does have direct relevance for the proposal made here. For surely, it might be argued, the notion of virtues is a culturally and historically relative concept; it cannot give us any universally applicable criteria for analyzing and assessing the charismatic phenomenon, because people disagree on what is virtuous. This argument seems to be partly correct, partly mistaken.

It is true that people may disagree on the content of the virtues, just as they may agree on all manner of things (rightly or wrongly). But the interesting thing about disagreement on the virtues is this: it ordinarily consists of disagreement on what is virtuous, not what the virtues (in their general form) are. People may have diverging views on what is the just solution to this or that dilemma, or how a courageous or self-controlled person should react to a specific situation, but it is rare to find a person who understands the meaning of words and sincerely thinks that injustice, cowardice and intemperance are good and admirable traits of personality. The disagreement, therefore, concerns the practical application of the virtues to concrete situations, and it is only natural that there should be some variance of opinion, even within a specific culture and community. That is exactly what it means when the classical theory says that prudence is the measure of all the virtues; and in matters of prudence, it is possible to err. A different problem arises when people do not care to act in accordance with the virtues, or do not even know that there are such things; but evil and ignorance as such do not constitute disagreement.

The claim to universality is supported by the findings of Den Hartog et al. (1999). In an extensive empirical study covering 62 different cultures, the group investigated whether the attributes of charismatic and transformational leadership were universally endorsed. They concluded that the "results support the hypothesis that specific aspects of charismatic/transformational leadership are strongly and universally endorsed across cultures" (1999: 219).

This should not be taken to mean that charismatic leaders are, therefore, always accepted by all people. In practice, quite the opposite is the case. "No prophet has ever regarded his quality as dependent on the attitudes of the masses toward him" (Weber, 1947: 359-360) – and frequently prophets, and other charismatic leaders, have met with opposition and even intense hostility. Socrates was condemned to death on artificial charges; Gandhi was imprisoned and assassinated; Mandela served 27 years in prison; Mother Teresa was accused (in an extreme display of journalistic absurdity) of being a fraudster that did it all for money. True charisma has nothing to do with the ability to please everyone. Charismatic personalities can be especially annoying, because they challenge the status quo and call others to change, including interiorly.

The criticism against the cultural-historical universality of the virtue-based approach to charisma is, however, partially correct. Magnarella (1999) wonders whether Gandhi's celibacy would have been taken as a sign of spiritual strength and exemplariness in all cultures. Den Hartog et al. (1999) similarly highlight cultural factors that influence the effectiveness of different leadership styles; for example, the ideal style of communication differs greatly between China and Latin America. Beyer (1999a) and House (1999) agree that different contexts may make different personal qualities and behaviors more or less attractive, persuasive or effective. Thus it seems that the notion of charisma must be culturally conditioned.

This, however, is compatible with virtue theory. Judgments on the concrete manifestations of virtue – or exemplariness generally – will naturally depend on culturally conditioned preconceptions about what constitutes perfection of character. A charismatic leader must, by definition, be some kind of visionary, but

> there are different ways to communicate a vision ranging from the quiet, soft-spoken manner of Gandhi, Mandela, and Mother Teresa to the more "macho" oratory of J.F. Kennedy, Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Jack Welch. [A] vision in China is normally expressed in a non-aggressive manner[;] the explanation for this may lie in the influence of Confucian values (e.g. kindness, benevolence) that make people wary of leaders giving pompous talks without engaging in specific action and dislike leaders who are arrogant and distant. [In contrast,] although Indian leaders must be flexible in this regard, bold, assertive styles are generally preferred to quiet and nurturing styles. (Hartog et al., 1999: 243-244)

Note that, in this summary of cultural differences, the messages conveyed by successful communication styles in different cultures are not arbitrary: they are rooted in specific virtues that the communicator wishes to demonstrate – humility, benevolence, courage, boldness, and others.

5. Conclusion

I have argued that the classical theory of virtues provides a fruitful framework for understanding the nature of charismatic leadership. Charisma can be seen as stemming from specific virtues, especially the neglected virtue of magnanimity or high-mindedness. I have also argued that the theory of virtues helps to clarify persistent tensions embedded in the concept of charisma, especially those related to authenticity and acceptance.

The connection between virtues and charisma provides a different vocabulary and perspective with numerous possibilities for further research. On the theoretical level, the virtue perspective might be used to sort out conceptual and definitional problems related to the notions of charismatic and transformational leaders (see Yukl, 1999). One could also investigate in more detail (and perhaps also empirically) how defects in specific virtues influence the totality of the charismatic leader, including how moral vice deforms apparent magnanimity.

On the level of empirical research, a major question is how the theory of virtues could be used more explicitly in modeling and measurements instruments. There are evident difficulties in measuring virtues, but it may be possible to create useful proxy measures. Sison (2003: chapter 7) proposes some proxies for virtue and vice in organizations (including employee turnover and misconduct), but much more work is needed.

Another approach would be to test the efficacy – both short and long-term – of different approaches to charismatic training, for example the superficial communication skills approach versus the virtue (character development) approach. The hypothesis that specific vices lead to the distortion of charismatic leadership could also be explored empirically.

On the practical level, the virtue perspective to charisma could be used to develop more detailed virtue-based training or coaching methods and programs (see Isaacs, 2001, for a sophisticated character building program for children and young people). It might also be used to develop principles for executive selection, especially to combat the tendency to hire clever celebrities with problematic moral characters (see Khurana, 2002).

Finally, going back to Weber's original definition of charisma, it is interesting to ask whether there might be a deeper connection between virtue and the notion of divine gifts, or godlikeness. An intriguing hint is provided by Gregory of Nyssa, who writes that "the goal of the virtuous life is likeness to the Divinity" (De Beatitudinibus, oratio 1: Gregory of Nyssa, 2000: 26).

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