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THE INSTITUTIONAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL
THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP: BRIDGING
A GAP OF 40 YEARS

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Abstract

The paper explores the similarities and differences between Selznick's institutional leadership theory and Pérez López's anthropological leadership model, while underscoring the significance of both authors' thoughts to contemporary research questions in mainstream leadership studies. The paper is divided into three major parts:

The first part highlights the institutional theory of leadership developed by Philip Selznick, a renowned sociologist whose works have had a lasting impact on organizational studies, as is shown by the continued allusions to his seminal ideas on institutionalism and leadership. Selznick's leadership theory (1957) postulates leadership as a managerial function to defend institutional integrity. In this first part, his theory's assumptions (time, space and values) are compared and contrasted with those of various leadership schools, such as the trait approach, the leadership style paradigm, situational relativity thinking, and transformational or charismatic leadership research. The consequences of Selznick's lack of clarity in the concept of "values" are explored.

The second part introduces the anthropological theory of leadership proposed by Pérez López (1991, 1993) and highlights its principal ideas. Pérez López defines the organization as an institution that coordinates human actions as a means to satisfy three types of human needs—material, cognitive and affective. This institution will aim to give meaning to all human activities. It will be concerned not only with what is done and how it is done but also with why it is done. In this regard, the manager as the leader will work to improve his subordinates' evaluative knowledge. He will help his subordinates find the real value of what they are doing, to evaluate the effects of their actions on other people, and to elevate their motives so that they learn to act from transcendent motives. In this way, the manager as leader will improve the organization's unity.

The third part evaluates how Pérez López learned from the strengths and weaknesses of his predecessor's valuable insights. It shows how he elaborated on the institutional perspective of organizations using a framework of human motivations, and how he gave more clarity to the nature of institutions, values and leadership, and the relationships between them. The complementarity between Pérez López and Selznick is found precisely at the level of analysis: Pérez López goes more deeply than Selznick into the core of organizational actions, namely the internal states and processes of individual persons. The paper ends by recommending the empirical testing of the anthropological theory of leadership.

THE INSTITUTIONAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL THEORIES OF LEADERSHIP: BRIDGING A GAP OF 40 YEARS

Philip Selznick is a renowned sociologist whose works *TVA and the Grass Roots* (1949) and *Leadership in Administration* (1957) are referred to as the inspirations of the neo-institutional school of organizational studies (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991). The first book focused on the administrative history of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), its evolution over time, and the changes in its goals and structure in response to external threats. The second formulated certain principles of organizational development and character-formation within the framework of a theory of institutional leadership. Its generalizations were derived from the author's observations of different organizational experiences such as the aforementioned TVA, a Bolshevik type of political party, and a number of military and business organizations.

Leadership in Administration had a lasting impact on organizational studies, as is evidenced by the continued allusions to Selznick's seminal ideas on leadership. Scott (1992: 68) noted that:

“Not only is Selznick's work recognized as providing the underpinnings for the institutionalist perspective, but his concern for the role of leaders in making critical decisions and in defining institutional values has contributed to the current interest in strategic decision-making and the creation of organizational cultures.”

Tushman and Romanelli (1985: 209) cited “Barnard's (1938) inculcation of belief and Selznick's (1957) embodiment of purpose” as important leadership functions both during convergence periods and during reorientation. Bryman (1992: 175) noticed that:

“the importance of leadership as the inculcation of values to give purpose to the organization was voiced by earlier writers [most notably, Selznick, 1957] but was given little attention in the bulk of theory and research.”

Peters and Waterman (1982: 117), authors of the best-seller *In Search of Excellence*, acknowledged that they were not inventing anything new since “Selznick and Barnard talked about culture and value shaping forty years ago” (see also Cauto, 1995; Badaracco and Ellsworth, 1989; Smircich and Morgan, 1982; Katz and Kahn, 1978).

While the field of modern leadership studies has hardly examined Selznick's contribution (cf. Bryman, 1992), the neo-institutional school is questioning whether Selznick's ideas can still be considered rightly as its inspiration since the “new” has substantially diverged from the “old” (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott, 1987).

By contrast, Juan Antonio Pérez López (1993: 117) appreciated the valuable insights he took from Selznick:

“Thus, for example, we can find in Selznick a very good analysis of what he calls ‘opportunistic adaptation strategies’, which are those that harm organizations’ distinctive competencies and mission in their attempts to exploit certain opportunities offered by the environment. The same author gives a conception of leadership as the management action that seeks to institutionalize the organization, turning it into an instrument at the service of satisfying human needs by elevating the motives of the organization’s members.”

In another instance, Pérez López (1993: 73n) praised the way the question of institutionalization had been “splendidly tackled by Philip Selznick, and constitutes the central thesis of his classic work *Leadership in Administration*”. However, he also pointed out that Selznick’s excellent discussion had been marked “within the limitations of his strictly sociological approach” (ibid.).

This paper will explore the similarities and differences between Selznick’s institutional leadership theory and Pérez López’s anthropological leadership paradigm, while highlighting the significance of their work to contemporary research in mainstream leadership studies.

I. Selznick’s Institutional Leadership and Modern Leadership Theories

Echoing Chester Barnard’s (1938) concept of leadership as a function of the executive, Selznick (1957) considered leadership as a specialized form of activity or a kind of work or function that is better understood within the larger framework of an organization as an institution. The process of institutionalization happens when organizational members value the rational and impersonal formal system beyond its technical role and transform it into a unique device for fulfilling personal and group needs. Hence, Selznick calls for a corresponding paradigm shift in the way the executive sees and accomplishes his/her leadership functions (1). He argues thus: “The executive becomes a statesman as he makes the transition from administrative management to institutional leadership” (pp. 4 and 154).

The institutional leader, according to Selznick, is an agent of institutionalization. His primary task lies in promoting and protecting values. His problem is “to choose key values and to create a social structure that embodies them” (p.60). When the values are tenuous or insecure, it is the function of leadership to defend institutional integrity. In this regard, Selznick argues that:

“the role of the institutional leader should be clearly distinguished from that of the ‘interpersonal’ leader. The latter’s task is to smooth the path of human interaction, ease communication, evoke personal devotion, and allay anxiety. His expertness has relatively little to do with the content; he is more concerned with persons than with policies. His main contribution is to the efficiency of the enterprise” (pp. 27-28).

(1) In this document, singular indeterminate pronouns are meant to be applicable to either gender.

How does Selznick's institutional leadership paradigm compare with other leadership theories? First of all, he does not tackle the task of identifying the personal qualities required of leaders "here and how", although he presumes that executives must have the necessary traits and abilities to be able to carry out their leadership functions. He takes a less static view of leadership in that he pays attention, not so much to existing traits, as to the leader's continuous learning to identify with the institution and its requirements for survival through self-conception, self-knowledge, and self-summoning (2).

By contrast, the overemphasis on leader traits in other leadership theories seems to beg the question of how relevant these traits are in a leadership process, or whether they evolve over time and through experience in the organization. Hence, Stogdill (1948) concluded, from his review of 124 trait studies, that a person does not become a leader by virtue of a combination of traits, but that the pattern of his personal characteristics must bear some relevant relationship to the characteristics, activities and goals of his followers. Other scholars situate the "trait theory revisited" within a situational perspective (House and Baetz, 1979; also, Locke et al., 1991). Research into charismatic leadership revives the interest in the personal qualities of the charismatic leader while seemingly ignoring the relevant context (House et al., 1991; Howell and Avolio, 1992). In the light of numerous works on leadership traits, the process of developing such traits or of becoming a better leader is viewed as still generally unknown (Bennis, 1996).

What accounts for the fact that Selznick's theory is relatively unbounded in time? The author used a psychological analogy to understand the institutionalization process and intensive longitudinal empirical investigations. He made use mainly of conceptual tools from Psychology and Sociology to analyze the static and dynamic adaptations of individuals and the organizations formed by their human members. Thus, Selznick was able to perceive that, in the course of time, an organization develops its own character and distinctive competence, nurtures various individual and group interests, adapts to its environment, and accordingly demands statesmanship for its survival rather than mere administrative management.

Another difference between Selznick's institutional leadership theory and modern leadership research relates to the former's spatial assumptions. Selznick conceptualizes leadership within an organization and considers the need for leadership in defining institutional missions (external and internal), in creating an organization that is distinctively adapted to these ends, and in the continuous appraisal of the organizational design. He was concerned with leadership in large organizations in the 1950s when the leadership style approaches were being replaced by situational or contingent models of leadership. The latter schools investigated leadership in small-group contexts or in terms of the leader-follower relationship, not in the context of a wider organizational structure. Thus, they were seen as having established the essence of supervisory work rather than of leadership (Smith and Peterson, 1988).

The institutional leadership model also differs from modern transformational, charismatic or visionary leadership approaches that pay attention to the operations of actual organizations and behaviors of top leaders. The latter have been found to be descriptive and to lack the basic theoretical research (Bass, 1995; Bryman, 1992) needed to be able to present

(2) Although Selznick was not able to explain these processes, he nonetheless described both the functional and dysfunctional consequences if a leader stagnates, remains or goes beyond limited views of organizational problems and opportunities. Thus, we believe that his theory captures the interesting insights of leadership scholars who focus on the positive points of leadership as well as those who write about its "dark side" (e.g. Conger, 1990).

consistent conclusions about the nature of organizational leadership. In contrast, Selznick proposed a conceptual framework that finds little interest in describing visible leader behavior or establishing causal links between explicit phenomena or “leadership style” and “organizational effectiveness”. He did not actively search for patterns of accomplishments, exemplary practices or transformational skills. Instead, he inferred the achievements of leadership mostly from null occurrences or “defaults”. According to him, “leadership is lacking when it is needed” (p. 25), when it fails to set goals, or when it fails to take into account the far-reaching consequences of decisions for institutional integrity.

In this regard, another strength of Selznick’s institutional leadership is its less implicit value assumptions. Selznick rejected positivism and its echoes in the theories of administration: “A radical separation of fact and value –too often identified with the logical distinction between fact *statements* and preference *statements*– encourages the divorce of means and ends. On this view, values belong to an alien realm, outside the pale of scientific assessment” (pp. 79-80). Selznick’s penetrating insight into the values that underlie organizational behavior called attention to the essential role of leadership in defining the ends of institutions. Selznick also went beyond the role of leadership in inculcating values to consider the problems, disorders, and other unintended and far-reaching consequences, that leadership decisions can have for the organization’s economic, social, and moral dimensions.

Within mainstream leadership research, Chemers (1995: 97) points to a major research gap in “the lack of attention to the leaders and followers, as people... with very little understanding of the values, needs, motives which give rise to the observed behaviors”. Hollander (1990) raises “more value-oriented questions” for charismatic leadership research, such as: Toward what ends does the leader direct his followers? What concerns does he have for them? Cronin (1995: 29) voices the concern that leadership training is likely to be more preoccupied with skills, techniques, and the means of getting things done. He asks: “But leadership for what? A focus on means divorced from ends makes people –especially intellectuals– ill at ease”.

The concept of “values” is central to Selznick’s framework. The art of institution building is the art of the creative leader who is able to “fashion an organism that embodies new and enduring values” (p. 153). Selznick requires that the leader himself first embody those values in a “moral experience, when the individual existentially chooses self-defining values and strives to make himself an authentic representative of them, that is, to hold them genuinely rather than superficially” (p. 60n). On the other hand, the followers must combine loyalty to the enterprise with a sensitive awareness of the values by which it is guided. “Loyalty by itself is not enough, just as blind patriotism is insufficient” (p. 150).

While “values” is a key concept in the institutional leadership paradigm, it also represents its most notable theoretical gap. Selznick does not specify what makes up the “values”, how they are formed, or where they come from. He describes “*social values*” as “objects of desire that are capable of sustaining group identity. This includes any set of goals or standards that can form the basis of shared perspectives and group feeling” (p. 121). He acknowledges afterwards that “these definitions are hardly final or unambiguous” (ibid.).

This lack of clarity in the nature of “values” underlies two weaknesses in Selznick’s position. The first is his failure to overcome sufficiently the positivistic neglect of the value premises of decisions and actions. The second concerns two different interpretations of his theory, one of which has developed into the modern school of neo-institutionalism, which hardly gives credit anymore to its founding inspiration.

- 1) Although Selznick took into account the underlying presence of values in organizational behavior, he nevertheless refrained from subjecting “values” to further *a priori* analysis. Thus, even though he incorporated into his theory those dimensions of reality that are not immediately observable and yet affect the achievement of organizational equilibrium, Selznick likewise relied on observations to discover evolving values in particular experiences. Thus, he also fell into the intellectual trap of empiricism. He wrote: “Let us grant the premise that there is an ultimately irreducible non-rational (responsive) element in valuation, inaccessible to specific appraisal. This cannot justify the judgement in a particular case that the anticipated irreducible element has actually been reached” (p. 81). Ultimately, Selznick was unable to elaborate adequately on the values that underlie leadership decisions and the internal processes whereby a leader and his subordinates become identified with institutional values.

- 2) The lack of clarity as to where “values” originate has given rise to two divergent views, which could actually be complementary, had the author explained more precisely the relationships between the concepts in his theory. On the one hand, when Selznick argued that the leader educates his followers in values, he seemed to imply that these values had necessarily to be desirable for aiming at the individual’s growth and development, and that the leader had to have discovered these values from his own personal experience. This is the reading of Selznick’s ideas that has had an impact on the management literature on value-laden leadership, corporate culture of excellence, etc. On the other hand, Selznick implied that organizations incorporate values from the wider community or society (cf. Selznick, 1957: 19 and 20). This second interpretation is reflected in the writings of neo-institutionalism, which argues that the more isomorphic a firm’s values are with societal values, the more successful and enduring the firm will be, *regardless* of whether these values approximate human needs or aspirations (3).

In the next section, we will turn to another theory which builds on the institutional perspective of organizations using a motivational framework. We will highlight the way its proponent has improved on Selznick’s weak points in explaining the nature of institutions, values and leadership.

(3) For instance, Meyer and Rowan (1977) described institutionalization as involving the processes by which social processes, obligations or actualities come to take on a *rulelike* status in social thought and action. They conceived the institution as independent of the actors’ own views or actions. The neo-institutionalists argue that it is society which builds in the rules from the reciprocal typifications of habitualized actions. In this regard, DiMaggio and Powell (1991: 15) have noted that whether a concrete organization elicits affective commitment is irrelevant in these macro-level abstractions that typify neo-institutionalism. Not surprisingly, it is currently being questioned within the neo-institutional school whether Selznick’s ideas can still rightly be considered as its founding inspirations (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott, 1987). The lack of theoretical and empirical continuities in the old and new institutionalism has itself become the subject of Selznick’s (1996) apprehensions.

II. Pérez López's Anthropological Model of Leadership

Unlike Selznick, Pérez López's (1993) primary intention was not to construct a theory of leadership (4). But, like Selznick, he deduced the essence of the leadership function from a broader understanding of organizations as institutions. Pérez López defined an anthropological model of the organization as the paradigm which underlies the conception of any kind of human organization as an institution that coordinates the actions of its members or organizes their skills in order to satisfy human needs –material, cognitive, and affective. When an organization is conceived by the people who run it as an institution and therefore as an instrument to satisfy all three types of needs, it will be run in such a way as to give meaning to all the human activities it coordinates. It will be concerned not only with what is done and how, but also with why it is done (cf. pp. 115-118).

Central to Pérez López's paradigm is the concept of "transcendent motives", defined as the wish to make positive learning for other people one of the outcomes of a given interaction. The presence of transcendent motives in organizational actors explains why these actors define the organization's objectives in terms of satisfying people's real needs. It also explains why those responsible for achieving the organization's objectives would actually do so, following the letter as well as the spirit of these objectives (cf. pp. 55-58).

What are institutional values for Pérez López? Values are defined basically as ways of appraising or assessing (valuing) realities. Organizational values will include what the managers understand as to what are the real needs when making decisions, and the priority they give to these needs as decision criteria. In other words, values in action are manifested in the way people are treated and by virtue of what criteria they are treated that way. Hence, the values an organization says it has are not really important. The important thing is how the organization puts into practice the values to which it publicly subscribes, or on what criteria its managers make organizational decisions. It is the organization's actual behavior which leads employees to identify with or become alienated from it (cf. pp. 114-115).

While Pérez López explicitly defines his assumptions regarding institutional values, he argues at the same time that values are important only insofar as they are instrumental to the development of the organizational members' evaluative capacities. The growth of evaluative capacity is necessary if an institution's values are to be truly accepted by its members. Pérez López defines a person's evaluative capacity as his ability to discover the value of reality by means of the abstract data he possesses, and to direct his personal action so that it is consistent with the abstract evaluations he has made. A key conclusion of Pérez López's analysis of human behavior is that what is specifically human in a person is the ability to behave in accordance with what he knows abstractly, so that he may learn to appreciate the object of his knowledge affectively (that is, feel its value). This ability transcends the capacity that humans share with the animals, which can also feel but operate exclusively on the basis of what they feel (p. 180). Pérez López holds that human beings are able to adapt their behavior to what they know abstractly, even if what they feel tends to push them in a different direction (p. 163).

A decision maker who develops his evaluative capacity has a greater number of variables to take into account because he has a greater grasp of reality on three different levels: the world of perceptual realities, the world of personal realities, and his own inner world. The growth of evaluative knowledge depends not only on the goals the organization

(4) Indeed, if there is really a theory that can be attributed to Pérez-López, it is his model of personal action (1991).

gives him but also on the quality of his motivation. This means that he must also be capable of being driven by transcendent motives. In the anthropological framework, developing people's evaluative capacity is the prime function of leadership (p. 118). Pérez López argues that it is the prime function of a manager as a leader to help his subordinates find the real value of what they are doing, anticipate and evaluate the effects of their actions on other people, and refine their motives, removing obstacles so that they learn to act from transcendent motives.

Pérez López therefore distinguishes between three different dimensions of the manager's work on the basis of his motivational functions (pp. 129-135):

a) A manager's *leadership* talent is recognized in his concern to get people to act from transcendent motives in order to increase the organization's unity. Leadership has to do with developing in one's subordinates a sense of responsibility, a sense of duty, or other similar motives.

b) A manager's *executive* talent is his ability to attain significant results in the organizational dimension of attractiveness. It manifests itself in the ability to discover subordinates' talents and skills, to understand their strengths and weaknesses, to communicate difficult objectives, and to design tasks that stimulate the energy flowing from people's internal motivations.

c) A manager's *strategic* talent is what achieves results on the level of organizational effectiveness by motivating employees extrinsically. A strategist is adept at discovering in the environment opportunities which will enable the organization to obtain a higher income from the product or service it generates in its operations.

According to Pérez López, the strategic and executive talents entail cognitive abilities that may be innate in the manager or that may be developed through educational processes. The leadership dimension is the only one whose existence and development depend on the manager himself. In the anthropological model, leaders are not born (p. 134). They become leaders through their personal effort to act from transcendent motives and to sacrifice their own selfishness when no one can force them to do so.

III. Selznick and Pérez López: Complementary Perspectives

Pérez López complements Selznick's insights because he dwells more deeply into the core of organizational actions, precisely on the level of the internal states and processes of individual persons. His concept of "transcendent motives" gives more precision to what Selznick intuited as the intrinsic value of the organization to its members as opposed to its value as a technical tool or as a mere tool for personal satisfaction. The presence of transcendent motives in Selznick's institutional leader would explain the conversion of a simple conception of needs into the concrete actions of defining missions, embodying purpose, and building that purpose into the social structure of the enterprise, all in a process of institutionalization.

Selznick tended to situate leadership in the informal system. He saw the institution as an organism that adapted and responded to social needs and pressures. Hence, the kind of leadership it required had to go beyond formal coordination to include directing and managing the internal social pressures which can sustain or undermine the formal system.

However, he was unable to determine precisely where the relevance of institutional leadership lies within the broad sphere of non-formal, institutional experience.

Pérez López argues that leadership by its very nature and process can function only in the realm of the informal organization. Leadership works through spontaneous systems because what it seeks to improve is the organizational members' evaluative knowledge, which no amount of formal activities or incentives can do directly (p. 138). This type of learning depends on the organizational members' internal attitudes towards assimilating experiences, so the organization can only facilitate or hinder it. Moreover, since the growth of evaluative capacity requires that a person be driven by transcendent motives and nobody can force another person to act from transcendent motives, leadership can function only outside the formal system. The leader must take human freedom into account and expect his subordinate to act from transcendent motives because he wants to. Obviously, external results may show, for instance, that the employees give customers good service. However, they could do it for motives other than transcendent ones, such as fear or expectation of monetary reward. Hence, the efficacy of leadership depends on the subordinate's free decision to serve other people, moved by the value that his action will have for them.

Is leadership sufficient for correct decision-making? Selznick linked the role of leadership to critical experience. He differentiated between the critical decisions of institutional leadership and the routine decisions of administrative management functions. However, the analytical distinction he proposed between routine and critical decisions has become blurred as he saw all administrative levels making many kinds of critical decisions, and the top executive taking few critical decisions over a long period of time.

We have not found a similar distinction among managerial decisions in Pérez López. Instead, Pérez López affirmed that all management decisions are critical because they affect in some way the three dimensions of the organization: its effectiveness, its attractiveness, and its unity (p. 116). Therefore, the leadership dimension that oversees the organization's unity is not a sufficient condition to ensure that correct decisions are taken. The subordinates must also trust in the manager's strategic and executive ability to make the right decisions. In other words, the manager must be trustworthy (possess the right intentions) and professionally competent both as a strategist and as an executive, where competency means the ability to make the organization function above necessary minimum levels of effectiveness and attractiveness (p. 140).

The distinction made by Selznick between administrative management and institutional leadership in terms of kinds of decisions has also indicated that these two functions are done by different individuals in different levels of the organizational hierarchy. This differentiation has somehow lost analytical significance with Selznick's ending remark that the leader is an educator who does not shrink from indoctrination but also teaches men to think for themselves so that "policy will gain spontaneous and reasoned support" (Selznick, 1957: 150). It implies that all managers at all levels of the hierarchy could be performing a leadership function when they motivate their subordinates to work for organizational goals. It also connotes the idea that the leader-statesman is not necessarily removed from the functions of administrative management because policy cannot be embodied in a vacuum. Policy, according to Selznick (1957: 90), is "rooted in and adapted to the daily experience of living persons".

Perhaps the confusion in Selznick can be attributed to his lack of understanding of the distinct motivational influences of the one and the same managerial action. In the anthropological theory of Pérez López, a manager can perform both the executive and

leadership functions when he teaches his subordinates not only to learn the technical aspects of their tasks but also to learn to be good professionals. To be good professionals imply converting their technical knowledge into an instrument for serving others or helping to solve other people's problems.

We argue that Selznick did not tackle the concerns seeking explanations at the level of the internal processes underlying people's behavior because of his training in a particular school of sociology called functionalism. Having been a student of bureaucracy under Robert Merton at Colombia, Selznick is a functionalist (DiMaggio and Powell, 1991; Scott, 1992) whose intellectual interests lie in understanding the specific structures that constitute an organization in terms of the functions they perform in ensuring the survival of the system. Underlying his caution over the recalcitrance of organizations as tools of action, and his concern for the disturbances brought about by unanticipated consequences of action, is a conviction that any organizational activity finds meaning only in the function it serves in maintaining the system. Consequently, Selznick's leadership approach reflects a functionalist's orientation towards consequences rather than a concern to discover the ultimate causes of organizational phenomena.

We also consider that Pérez López was very much concerned with the consequences of organizational actions. However, he was able to conceptualize the linkages between consequences and causes, using his theory of personal action and motivation (Pérez López, 1991). He conceived a person's actions when interacting with other people as producing different results or consequences, each and every one of which can become a powerful source of motivation. This implies that an active agent can directly aim to achieve certain results; that is, achieving those results can become motives for human action.

IV. Conclusions

Compared with other leadership theories, Philip Selznick conceptualized a far larger view of organizations as institutions, and of the corresponding function of leadership in promoting and protecting institutional values. However, he was unable to provide deeper explanations of leadership actions due to his strictly sociological approach. In this regard, Selznick's institutional leadership theory is complemented by Pérez López's anthropological model of institutions and leadership. Using a theory of human motivation as the basic language, Pérez López explained how organizations are conceived and run as institutions, and how a manager performs his leadership function of appealing to the organizational members' transcendent motivation, thus maintaining and increasing the organization's unity.

The difference between Selznick and Pérez López, on the one hand, and mainstream leadership theories, on the other, lies in their epistemological assumptions about the human person, i.e., their implicit models of man. Their theoretical boundaries of time, space, and values express underlying hypotheses about what a leader is, how he acts, and where and how he develops. The difference between Pérez López and Selznick is less radical. Selznick already had the explicit assumption that a leader is a rational and free agent who views his followers as similarly rational and free. Pérez López provided rigorous analytical categories and logical relationships to propose some theoretical refinements to Selznick's conceptualizations of leadership as an executive function. The task that remains is to test the empirical validity of the anthropological model of leadership.

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