

Servant-Leadership and Social Capital
Symposium

Monday, 25 April 2016, 13.00-17.50 p.m.
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Now, more than ever, a leader's capacity to both direct an organisation and its people, while at the same time work in their service, is being recognized as a vital capacity for creating a sustainable organisation. Servant-leadership is a leadership principle embedded in a way of life, which has been recognized and expounded upon in all parts of the world throughout history, and across all cultures and communities. The recent economic crisis again reminds us of its importance as an antidote to the selfish and bonus-oriented behaviours we have witnessed and the economic/societal consequences we have seen.

The symposium *Servant-Leadership and Social Capital* is the 13th in an annual symposium series embedded in the Master course Cross-Cultural Management. The symposium is a meeting place for students and professionals to strengthen the link between theory and business practice. The workplace is changing rapidly under the pressures of globalization, new technologies, and the economic recession. Flexible (nomadic) working conditions hinder people in building trusted long-term working relations in which they can invest. At the same time many employees have a calling and aspire interesting and valuable work. In this changing organizational context, what are the relevant social networks for people in their working and private life? How are they served by their leaders to develop their social capital? Social capital is a living community where people engage in common interests that create norms of trust and reciprocity (McCallum & O'Connell, 2008). This symposium will highlight social capital networks in a cross-cultural and historical perspective. Worldwide one finds that interpersonal connections rooted in family, neighbourhood, friendship, or kinship for example in Africa (*Ubuntu*), the Arab world (*Wasta*), China (*Guanxi*) and Europe (*Noaberschap*) may act as an incentive in the diversity of business practices. At the same time beneficial connections/privileges of the one, may hinder equal opportunities and be detrimental for the other. For servant-leaders this implies trust building and fairness in matching social capital and organisational needs while serving people in their talent growth. These leaders serve their followers in the awareness of interdependence of (cross-cultural) social values. In the Workshops we will further explore the above issues.

We are delighted this symposium brings together cutting-edge thinkers and practitioners across disciplines, leveraging the global human needs to learn, serve and lead mutual beneficial relationships. Or like Prof. Charles Hampden-Turner argues in his latest book *Nine Visions of Capitalism* (2015): "What creates wealth are certain kinds of mutually beneficial relationships, not just relationships between diverse people but relationships between their diverse values" (p. xiv). This symposium will include case studies, keynote presentations, workshops and a plenary debate to shed light on the gentle art of serving and leading social capital across cultures, and how leaders can acknowledge social capital and build beneficial communities at work. In dialogue with the audience, we aim to explore leadership dilemmas that arise in different organizational contexts, responding to the social and intellectual engagement of their employees.

We look forward to meeting you at this special event.

On behalf of the organising team,

prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars & dr. Sylvia van de Bunt
Chairpersons of symposium and SERVUS co-directors

Programme

- 13.00 Registration-desk in gathering space, outside the Symposium Hall
- 13.15 Opening by **Prof. dr. Tom Elfring**, Head of Department Management & Organization FEWEB, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
- 13.30 Introduction - Contextualizing the symposium theme by **Prof. dr. Fons Trompenaars** and **dr. Sylvia van de Bunt**
- 14.00 *Dismantling Barriers with Wasta: The Social Capital Network of Arab Interpersonal Connections*, by **Prof. dr Nabil Sultan**, Dean of the College of Business Administration, A'Sharqiyah University, Ibra, Oman, and SERVUS Visiting Professor VU Amsterdam
- 14.25 Transfer to workshop rooms
- 14.30 Servant-Leadership and Social Capital will be highlighted from different perspectives by the following dedicated workshop leaders:
- WORKSHOP I: *Chinese traditional values and their implications for cross cultural management*, by **dr Jingshu Du**, Assistant Professor FEWEB
 - WORKSHOP II: *Ubuntu as an integral social value to Servant-Leadership and Beyond*, by **Stacey Links**, PhD student, Cross-Cultural Centre for Human Rights, University Utrecht
 - WORKSHOP III: *Building cross-generational social capital in a learning community*, by **A. (Karim) El-Khetabi MSc**, Director Giving Back Foundation, www.givingback.nl (in Dutch)
 - WORKSHOP IV: *Ubuntu, Buen Vivir and Happiness, cross cultural dialogue on rights and wellbeing*. **Dorine van Norren**, PhD University of Tilburg and Amsterdam, and Diplomat at Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 - WORKSHOP V: *Talent development of refugee students at VU; diversity and dilemmas*, by **Kees Smit**, Head of the VASVU (foundation year for international students)
 - WORKSHOP VI: *Building social capital through sustainable leadership*, by **Ivar Maas**, Education Coordinator of Green Office VU, www.greenofficevu.nl
- The Workshops include SL areas of cross-cultural research and organizational practice.
- 15.30 Refreshments in the gathering space, outside Symposium Hall
- 16.00 Book launch '*The Political Economy of Wasta: Use and Abuse of Social Capital Networking*', Springer, 2016. <http://www.springer.com/cn/book/9783319222004>. In presence of **A. (Karim) El-Khetabi MSc**, Director Giving Back Foundation, **Prof. dr.mr. J. W. (Jaap) Winter**, VU Chairman of the Executive Board, and online with **Dr. Mohamed Ramady**, Visiting Associate Professor Finance and Economics, King Fahd University, Saudi Arabia, and Editor of this Springer book.
- 16.30 Panel discussion with workshop leaders, delegates and MSc students: *Meeting of minds and hearts. How to nurture social capital across cultures?*
- 17.00 *Reflections* by **Fons Trompenaars** on future perspective for research and practitioners.
- 17.15 Closure, followed by drinks