Taking the Lead – Interdisciplinary Approaches from Science and Practice – Personnel Development as a Task of Leaders
Specialist Conference on 23rd November 2016, Güstrow

Dr. Marion Rauchert, FHöVPR M-V
Prof. Dr. Nils Schulenburg, University of Applied Sciences for Economics and Management gGmbH, Essen
Sebastian Schütt, State Police Service M-V
Dr. Birgit Gabler, Ministry of Social Affairs, Integration and Gender Equality M-V
Norbert Jochens, FHöVPR M-V
Taking the Lead – Personnel Development as a Task of Leaders

Introduction to the conference

After a successful start in 2015, today on 23rd November 2016, the second event of the specialist conference series “Taking the lead – interdisciplinary approaches from science and practice” at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice M-V takes place. Whereas in the first conference the “Requirements for leaders in change” was considered from different perspectives, this time the focus is on “Personnel development as a task of leaders”.

The importance of the employees for the performance of an organization and for the competitiveness of a company is beyond question. The qualification, performance, motivation and engagement of the employees has a direct impact on the results of their work, the work atmosphere, and, not least, the image of the organization. As well, job satisfaction and identification with the job and the company are thus positively influenced.

Against this background is the primary task of leaders to support the successful professional development of their employees.

What is personnel development about?

In the understanding of work and organizational psychology, personnel development can generally be described as follows (Blickle, 2011, p. 274):

"Under personnel development … all targeted measures of an organization are to be understood, which are aimed at systematically ensuring the qualification of the personnel, that is to say employees and leaders at all levels of the hierarchy, for its current and future tasks. This includes, in particular, keeping the qualification of the personnel up to date, converting theoretical knowledge of the employees into applied skills, and developing methodological and social competencies further (Steinert, 2003)."

In order to promote/support employees and leaders in this sense, the first question that arises concerns the success-critical factors. What is it that is dependent on whether the desired competence development can be achieved?

In a simplified scheme, success-critical influencing factors for personnel development can be described in three dimensions “ability” (performance, learning ability), “desirability” (performance motivation, willingness to advance) and “allowability” (development options, organizational and private framework conditions).

In all three dimensions there is a framework of action for both the employees themselves and the leaders. From the perspective of leadership acting, the important consideration of “ability” is to establish an optimal “fit” between the employee and the working activity. Of importance in this respect is that employees are assigned tasks that meet their abilities, that allow them space for creativity and that also allows decision-making. Consequently, a major challenge for lead-

Dr. Marion Rauchert
ers is to create working environments that enable the employee to profitably use his or her potentials and to progress (“allowability”).

Essentially decisive in this respect - apart from the “ability” - is the “desirability” of the employees. For many employees, professional development opportunities and perspectives are important motivation factors which can already be decisive for an application and which have an effect on the performance motivation, the engagement and the identification with the organisation.

Leaders decisively co-determine this level of “desirability” by enabling their employees, for example, to influence work contents and to agree on common targets. Also the delegation of responsibility and the confidence placed in them have a motivating effect. Furthermore, it has proven to be conducive when leaders give their employees feedback on the work performed and appreciation for good work.

This leadership action is all the more important as leaders cannot act from a position of “omnipotence”. Monopolies on knowledge and hierarchies have become less important, today work objectives will only be reached through the “desirability” of employees. This tendency will continue to intensify with the further entrance of Generation Y into the working world.

How do employees experience the support and promotion of their professional development by their leaders?

Employee surveys and studies on leadership conducive to promotion often allows the conclusion (Korek & Rigotti, 2012, p. 209 ff.), that employees wish for more assistance in their professional development from their leaders. This is also the conclusion of the career study of the German Police University of Münster and Dortmund Technical University carried out in 2012. Among other career-related factors, the career-related support by superiors was asked for. Of concern to this, the following findings had to be assessed on a five-tier scale (1 – does not apply at all; 5 – applies fully).

My immediate superior:
- assigns me work tasks, which assist me in furthering my professional development.
- encourages me to apply for promotional measures concerning career development.
- gives me leadership responsibility.
- supports and advises me in achieving my career objectives.
- introduces me to other leaders (e.g. at service meetings).
- offers me concrete plans and perspectives (e.g. concerning target agreements).
- gives me feedbacks, that help me to further develop.

Participating in the survey were 7,789 police officers from Berlin, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Lower-Saxony, Rhineland-Palatinate and the German Federal Police.

The “career-related support by superiors”, as a whole, was seen more critically
than other areas, wherein the evaluation was just below average (mean value: 2.74). Overall, women reported less career-related support by superiors than men (DHPol-career study, 2012). Given that superiors are considered to be the most important promoters of career development for their employees a corresponding need for action can be derived from the study. The core aim is to find effective approaches how leaders can be better sensitized and qualified for their role as personnel developers.

Regarding the question of which design approaches and measures concerning personnel development have proven to be effective, the findings of practical experiences and scientific studies summarized hereinafter, give a first basis of orientation. It has been proved to be conducive – in the sense of personnel development – when leaders

- know the potential of their employees
- agree on appropriate performance targets
- use daily work experience for learning processes (place of work – place of learning)
- delegate tasks conducive to development and decision-making powers
- give constructive and honest feedback
- systematically promote, create attention, inform about promotion prospects and network with other development supporters.

For the successful implementation of these design approaches it is of elemental importance that leaders develop a self-understanding that personnel development of their employees belongs to their most important tasks. Making a contribution for it is the objective of this conference. At this year’s event the issue “Personnel development as task of leaders” is taken up and considered from different perspectives.

Prof. Dr. Nils Schulenburg will consider the question of what should be paid attention to regarding the intergenerational cooperation and the development of the “Generation Y” group in leadership. Sebastian Schütt presents findings of his Master’s thesis in which promising design approaches to promote prospective leaders in the state police service, who had previously participated in the potential analyses, are considered. The presentation of Dr. Birgit Gabler focuses on initial findings from the mentoring program for women in leadership functions in the M-V state administration. Two “tandems”, a female and male mentor as well as their mentees will report about which experiences they gathered during the mentoring process.

The presentation of Norbert Jochens will provide an insight into innovative and effective communicative control options in the relationship between employee and leaders.

The moderator of the conference is Christiane Schilf, Head of the Institute for Further Training and Administration Modernization at the university of applied sciences.
In a final round of talks the speakers and Angela Hoppe (Specialist Department of Mentoring for M-V) will answer the questions from the audience. I am convinced that we will once again be able to exchange our views concerning the theory and practice of current leadership issues.

A constant discourse concerning the current issues of leadership work will be supportive for all of us. This is why we are already looking forward to inviting all interested persons to our third conference of the series “Taking the lead – interdisciplinary approaches from science and practice” in November 2017, hosted in Güstrow.

References


About the authoress

Rauchert, Marion, graduate psychologist, Dr. jur., Director of the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice for the state of M-V. Teaching and research focuses: personnel selection and personnel development; organizational development and change management; empirical police research.
Leadership and Development of Generation Y

Generally speaking, Generation Y is comprised of everyone born between 1980 and 2000. Special characteristics and features are ascribed to it which (allegedly only partially) distinguishes it from those of other generations. Due to these generational differences, Generation Y has especially moved into the focus of science and practice in recent years. The present article will identify the particularities of Generation Y and then deal with the question of how these attributes can be taken into account in leading and developing Generation Y.

Does Generation Y really exist?

Critics blame researchers for not clearly distinguishing between age, trend and generational effects (cf. Biermann (2013), p. 107 f.); because surveys wherein the (relatively young) Generation Y as well as the (relatively old) Generation X were questioned were not ceteris-paribus considerations. To find out exactly what is responsible for an effect each cause should be considered whence isolated. This, however, is hardly possible in generational research because young members of Generation X and young members of Generation Y cannot be asked and observed at the same time. The reasons for differences between X and Y can thus be generational causes as well as the age of the persons considered. The effect of current trends, too, cannot be clearly excluded such that there are quite serious methodological criticisms of generational research.

But although this criticism is not unjustified: for many practitioners such as leaders or personnel managers the question of whether a Generation Y really exists is hardly a subject for debate. Day by day managers experience new challenges when dealing and working with certain age groups. The causes which lie behind these challenges and how they can be detected methodologically is of secondary importance to them. We share this assessment and together with these practitioners we assume that there is no doubt that Generation Y exists.

Why is Generation Y different?

In order to answer this question we have to raise another question first: What generally influences the personality of human beings? Two factors can be emphasized here: first, the human genes; and second, imprinting through the environment (cf. Roth (2014), pp. 30 ff.). The strength of the influence from one factor to the other on the overall personality remains controversial. Consequently, generational researchers have the task of finding out what the uniform factors are that imprint people belonging to a generation. Prenatal and early childhood imprinting through the respective parents cannot systematically be responsible for personal characteristics of a whole generation because they vary from family to family. Therefore, generational researchers refer to formative events such as the transition from an industrial to an information-based society (cf. Pendergast (2010), p. 6 f.) along with the widespread use of computers and digital communication. Such events and their consequences are parts of the world in which a generation grows up and lives; therefore, they have strong imprinting effects. (cf. Hurrelmann/Albrecht (2014), p. 15).
Neuroscience shows us that the human brain is not only responsible for information processing, but above all for sensemaking. The brain develops over the course of its development, with regards to experiences gained and experiences gathered, a self (mental) model of reality; thus, a unique and shortened depiction of reality. Human beings act in accordance with the assumptions and beliefs of their mental model in order to be able to orientate themselves in a complex world. Thus, imprinting events are experiences that have an influence on the mental models of whole generations. Although the individual influence of imprinting events on mental models of different human beings vary, they are the guiding principles that give a generation (however more or less strongly pronounced) common characteristics. The causes for generational changes are therefore imprinting events such as the digitalization of our world which has especially left noticeable marks on Generation Y.

What makes Generation Y so special?

The following (see: Figure 1) shows the most important imprinting events of Generation Y and connects it with the typical characteristics of this Generation. Simple cause-effect-relationships between events and characteristics of a whole generation are not easy to make such that the listed events must be regarded as supportive for the development of specific characteristics but do not guarantee them.

The first typical characteristic of Generation Y is its high informationalization. It shows a particular behaviour concerning information acquisition and processing which, inter alia, is a result of the widespread use of the Internet and the high availability of computers and mobile devices. A second typical characteristic is a strong performance driven orientation which is caused by a significantly higher prosperity (on average and in comparison to previous generations) as well as an increasingly more competitive society, such as the European unification. Thirdly, Generation Y possesses a particularly high educational level because it had significantly more time for training and study in comparison to its previous generations. Fourthly, a community orienta-
tion is characteristic for Generation Y: Increasing complexity of life as a whole through tendencies of liberalization and internationalization has strengthened social communities to provide orientation and security. Fifthly, Generation Y has a high degree of flexibility. It has grown up in a world of various social, political and economic changes by which the adaption to new framework conditions was facilitated. Sixthly, a small power distance, i.e. the rejection of hierarchies to an end in itself, is a typical characteristic of Generation Y. It does not accept an unequal distribution of power since there is no natural reason for it. The seventh characteristic is a strong self-confidence. Within Generation Y there are significantly more single and planned children than in previous generations, such that they were first courted by their parents and later additionally by the economy in changed labor and product markets. A high orientation towards freedom is the eighth characteristic. In particular the European liberalization with less borders and the accompanying increase in prosperity at the same time enabled it better than ever to live out and satisfy the need for freedom. Ninthly, Generation Y is characterized by strong skepticism: It scrutinizes anything and anybody, which has ultimately led to the term Generation Why. This is primarily due to the high level of education, because Generation Y has learned to look at everything from as many different perspectives as possible. Tenthly, a high globality is typical. The reason for this is the increasing globalization from which cosmopolitanism and tolerance have arisen.

**Uniqueness of human beings**

Of course, these typical characteristics may only be understood as approaches; otherwise a view of human beings, who also have their own individual features and characteristics, would not be possible. When we start from a rising prosperity during the growth of Generation Y this, of course, is only an average value which does not take the variance of developing prosperity into account, such that there are, of course, individuals with less prosperity or even poverty (not an insignificant number in fact). In such a way the other imprinting events and the characteristics resulting from them also have to be looked at, thus leading to a distribution of characteristics of Generation Y. Taking a rough normal distribution as a basis we assume that only a few members of Generation Y show all mentioned features (we also assume that a few of its members do not have any of the characteristic features). A large part of the Yer generation is characterized by only five or six of the abovementioned features. Which ones these are differs from person to person and can only be found out by individual contact with them. Therefore, it is important for us to stress, that - before considering an entire generation - the uniqueness of each human being should always be appreciated.

**Perception and reality when examining Generation Y**

Generation Y, thus, is different than its previous generation. However, for many members of other generations - that is, Generation X, Baby Boomers and economic prodigies, - it is difficult to perceive them fairly; i.e. to attribute to them characteristics that they really have and not to attribute false characteristics to them due to self-prejudices and perception errors. Here is an example taken from reality: Two young men of Generation Y are sitting at a table in a café holding their
cell phones in the hand. They are most likely surfing the Internet or writing messages (perhaps even to one another although they are sitting next to each other). If a non-Yer is observing the scene it probably attracts his attention because in other generations a deeply rooted norm says: *If you sit together at a table you should talk and not play with your smartphone.* Whenever such conflicts of norms and values appear (the values or norms of a generation conflict with those of another one), the so called *contrast effect* comes into effect. A scene is especially striking because it contrasts with specific values and norms (cf. Dobelli (2011), pp. 41 ff.). Obviously, a thing is still far from being strongly pronounced just because it attracts the attention of one observer. Nevertheless, it is a typically human characteristic to derive final judgments based on our perception and not based on facts or probabilities. On the basis of the scene described above and one that occurs quite often in everyday life many non-Yer conclude that Generation Y prefers communicating digitally rather than in analog. There is, however, no reliable empirical evidence; indeed, it can even be assumed that Generation Y fosters face-to-face conversation more frequently than digital communication. Perhaps Generation Y communicates much more often and over many digital forms than the previous generations such that relative and absolute expression of a characteristic is easily mixed up. To the problem of the different distribution of personal traits within Generation Y the problem of distorted perception is to be added when examining and typifying it. In particular, the leadership and development of Generation Y is therefore mindful, in order not to erroneously attribute to a person personality characteristic, which he or she does not show at all.

**Tools for leading and developing Generation Y**

Since the beginning of research into leadership the question has arisen of how leadership success can best be achieved (it is relatively indisputable that leadership success influences employee productivity and satisfaction). Afterwards, we want to follow a behavior-oriented situational point of view. The behavior-oriented perspective makes sense because an important component of good leadership behavior for us is that characteristics of Generation Y are explicitly taken into consideration by the leadership or suitable tools are used according to these characteristics. A supplement about a situational component is necessary, because in the interplay between the leadership, employees and leadership situation (task, objective, framework conditions etc.) the respectively appropriate tool must be selected by the leadership to systematically demonstrate good leadership behavior. Leadership will then be successful, if the leadership consistently considers the situational use of these tools in their behavior.

**Leadership in consideration of a strong performance orientation**

We do not share a widely held view that Generation Y is not willing to work. According to our best estimates there are neither sufficient, practical nor empirical evidences for this belief. But rather quite the contrary: We are convinced that Generation Y is strongly performance-oriented and usually also willing to work (and motivated to do so). Rather, the reason that Generation Y switches relatively often between companies (often used as evidence of low motivation) is that there are insufficient possibilities for performance development available
In a second step the (usually defined) organizational goals need to be broken down into divisional goals and departmental goals. The leadership usually takes on this task in coordination with their own superior. Afterwards, the leadership and the employee together check whether employee motives and the developed divisional and departmental goals match. This task is a demanding one because there is usually no simple relationship between employee motives (e.g. status or acceptance) and departmental goals (e.g. cost reduction by 10% until the end of the year). Because pursuing savings goals, indeed can harmonize with the motive for acceptance (e.g. acceptance through the superior when identifying savings potentials) and conflict with the motive for status at the same time (because, if necessary, the company car needs to be saved). Therefore, the comparison of employee motives and divisional and departmental goals is not an exact science, but rather has to be made on a qualitative level of plausibility and with the leadership and employee together. However, it is important, that the leadership has a precise picture of their employee’s personality in order to be able to add a second perspective when assessing which goals meet their own motives and which do not. Determining an employee’s motives, thus, is a means to an end for the leadership to get a differentiated picture of his employee and to add their own gut feeling by means of an optimally scientifically sound tool (such as the Reiss Profile).

(cf. Sheahan (2010), p. 9). It is, however, the task of leadership to design framework conditions in such a way that a strong performance orientation also has an effect on performance, such that it may be developed in the best way possible. For this purpose we want to exemplarily deal with the two tools of target agreement and not demotivate.

When concerning the goal-oriented leadership of Generation Y (see: Figure 2) its motives need to be determined first. There are several possibilities in practice; despite all the methodological complexities, it will exemplarily be referred to as the Reiss-Profile (cf. Reiss (2010)). It is important that the determination of employees’ motives is not a one-time process, but that this step is to be repeated regularly, because motives may change over time.

![Figure 2: Goal-oriented leadership (as compiled by the author)](image-url)
The comparison between motives and goals means that a classification of motivation goals and mandatory goals must take place. How are the two different categories being dealt with? Motivation goals have – hence the name – a motivating effect because their attractiveness to the employee is particularly high. A high attractiveness arises from the perfect fit to the motives of the employee. Motivation goals are accompanied by intrinsic motivation – the way to achieving them is motivating. It is different with mandatory goals; i.e. the goals, which are less attractive due to a missing or low fit to employee motivations. Regarding the mandatory goals the leadership has to do two things: Firstly, it has to explain to the employee in an understandable way (and to take the time necessary) why achieving these goals is useful or necessary for the department, the division or the company. A leadership can support the achievement of the goals, secondly, by means of extrinsic motivational measures, hence by holding out the prospect of reward for achieving the mandatory goals. The reward – praise and appreciation or financial contribution towards realized savings – again this depends on the development of the motive of an employee: An individual who is monetarily-oriented cannot be motivated as well through appreciation than a status-oriented individual. Therefore, it is also important from a motivational point of view to know the motivational structure of the employees, as this is the only way of using suitable extrinsic motivators. And what of this applies to Generation Y? Yer(s), for example, may respond positively to all motivators, which address its strong community orientation or its overt orientation towards freedom; e.g., social rewards such as common events or extra free time.

If employee motivation due to performance orientation exists in principle, the main concern for the leadership is to avoid factors of demotivation. And here too knowledge of employee motivation is useful because it particularly demotivates what turns out to be an obstacle for their own motivation. And if motives are individually developed, so are demotivating factors. However, typical characteristics of Generation Y may provide important information on what its members probably demotivate:

1. High informationalization: Generation Yer(s) are used to being faced with a great deal of information. Thus it must be the contribution of the leadership that helps improve the handling of information in order to avoid information overload. But under no circumstances can a poor flow of information result from this; because, in particular, poor communication and a poor flow of information have a demotivating effect on Generation Y.

2. Strong performance orientation: When setting goals the strong performance orientation of Generation Y is beneficial: they want to provide performance. However, this also results in the danger of demotivation, namely when goals and tasks are too easy or monotonous. Above all, easy and similar tasks have a demotivating effect. Jobs, enlargement, enrichment and rotation can remedy this.

3. High level of education: The members of Generation Y are well educated. This results in the need to assign them varied and challenging tasks in order to not demotivate them.
4. **Strong community orientation:** Measures that prohibit social contacts also have a demotivating effect. Single offices tend to be less attractive. Social exchange with colleagues during working hours should be enhanced (e.g. through coffee kitchens or social rooms).

5. **High degree of flexibility:** Rigid processes in companies contradict the desire of Generation Y for flexible work. Statements like “it has always been done this way” have a demotivating effect. It must be made clear that the members of Generation Y are not working for a rigid, bureaucratic system, but to which great whole they contribute. If they do not notice and experience this, motivation decreases.

6. **Low power distance:** Especially leadership to the pattern of order and obedience has a demotivating effect due to the low power distance. Authoritarian leadership has a hard time with Generation Y - the more participative leadership is, the less it has a demotivating effect. If there is the need to lead by authoritarian rule, explanations for the reason of said procedure have to be made.

7. **Strong self-confidence:** The strong self-confidence of Generation Y extends to the over estimation of one’s own abilities. If a situation then comes up in which the leadership does not see a certain post or development perspective for his employee, demotivation arises: The strong self-confidence will affect understanding. This is why any limitations of perspectives, whether right or wrong, have a demotivating effect. Therefore, it is important to demonstrate alternative development opportunities and to give exact reasons why certain posts or developments are not possible.

8. **High orientation towards freedom:** An unbalanced work-life-balance has a demotivating effect. Leadership should pay attention such that goal achievement of the employee is influenced, but not, however, how, where and when the goal is worked on. It should also be accepted that private goals in Generation Y play an important role and that time for this must be provided.

9. **Strong skepticism:** Similar to “it has always been done this way” the statement “that’s the way it is” is demotivating because the members of Generation Y are per se critical and skeptical towards all absolutistic statements. That’s why decisions by the leadership must be explained carefully, especially when they contradict the expectations of Generation Y.

10. **High globality:** Generation Y tends to strongly appreciate diversity. Decisions or strategies that lead to less diversity could demotivate. Also the limitation of careers to national posts can – providing the company context stipulates it – be demotivating.

The overall idea is that Generation Y is not innately demotivated – but quite the contrary. Strong performance orientation is a characteristic feature of Yer(s). Nevertheless, it is possible and quite common in practice that the members of Generation Y are unmotivated or seemingly difficult to motivate. This is not due to the fact that they lack motivation per se. But rather, it is poor leadership that
is incapable of keeping away demotivating factors or explaining reasons for their existence in a comprehensible manner. More often than not the prejudices of the unmotivated Generation Y arise when the leadership does not belong to it. This is when the leadership knows very little about Generation Y’s characteristic features and often takes their own preferences and characteristics as a basis. The result is the ostensible connection between members of Generation Y and the assumed lack of motivation.

**Use of further leadership and development tools**

In recent decades economic research has created a suitable tool for each leadership challenge. The problem, then, is finding one’s way with the diversity of tools. Regarding leadership and the development of Generation Y the following approach for the identification and use of appropriate tools can be helpful:

1. Determining actual characteristics of a member of Generation Y by means of employee appraisals.
2. Identifying characteristics decisive for present leadership and development challenges.
3. Using a tool directly coordinated to these challenges.

An overview of such tools – based on the 10 typical characteristics – suitable for leading Generation Y is provided in Figure 3. It differentiates such tools relating to employee and leadership roles (dark grey), tools relating to leadership behavior (light grey) and tools relating to leadership (black). A concrete derivation and description of all tools which examine Generation Y as leaders can be found in Schulenberg (2016).
Leadership and development as active processes

Leadership and development of Generation Y are in our opinion active processes which must be forwarded by a responsible leadership. Of course, this point of view does not exclude that an employee of Generation Y, during his leadership and development phase, would take a responsible part. In fact, the development of a Generation Yer can be better promoted the stronger their own development (supervised and controlled) is integrated. In this way self-reflection and self-responsibility are strengthened. But in the end employee leadership and personnel development are leadership tasks which can only be delegated proportionately. The leadership bears the final responsibility for leadership and development work.

References

Biermann, Torsten; Weckmüller, Heiko. „Generation Y - Viel Lärm um fast nichts“. Weckmüller, Heiko (Hg.) Exzellenz im Personalmanagement – Neue Ergebnisse der Personalforschung für Unternehmen nutzbar machen, Freiburg et al.: Haufe Verlag 2013, pp. 105-112.


Hurrelmann, Klaus; Albrecht, Erik. „Die heimlichen Revolutionäre - Wie die Generation Y unsere Welt verändert“. Weinheim et al.: Beltz, 2014.


About the author

Schulenburg, Nils, Dr. rer. Pol., Professor of Personnel and Organizational Development at the FOM University of Applied Sciences in Bremen and independent management consultant, trainer, coach and book author. His main areas of research and consulting are leadership development and change management. He has studied in Leverkusen, Essen and Bremen as well as in the Netherlands and Spain.
Promotion of Prospective Leaders – Design Approaches for a Promising Development Process

“It is not a luxury to promote talented persons. It is luxury, namely an unpardonable one, not to.”

Alfred Herrhausen (1930 – 1989)

Promotion of potential prospective leaders opens the way for future orientation and the success of an organization. Only when it ensures that sufficient good leaders are also available in the future will it be able to maintain its performance capacity and guarantee the adaption to change processes. Today’s leaders are responsible for this task. They have to exercise their role as personnel developer and prepare young female and male employees for future leadership roles. This is not an easy task. A promotion of potential prospective leaders is preceded by first making known and analyzing the potential of employees. Only after this can the “right” persons be selected and their goal-oriented potential be promoted. In order to have a sufficient number of well-qualified prospective leaders in their own ranks it is necessary that a systematic career path and career planning for future leaders is established. Candidates who have potential for demanding tasks must be recognized, accompanied and promoted.

That these findings were taken up by the state police service, shows a project order for the “Development and testing of relevant procedures and tools for personnel development in the M-V state police service” which was assigned by the police division of the Ministry of the Interior for Mecklenburg-Vorpommern at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice in Güstrow (FHöVPR) in January 2010. The aim of the order, in particular, was to promote prospective leaders and to qualify them for the senior command service.

As the basis for future personnel development tools and measures the FHöVPR designed a procedure for potential analyses. It should, to a certain extent, be the starting point for the future process of promoting prospective leaders. By means of the potential analyses, competencies, strengths and development errors, which together make up the potential of the participant, should be gathered. The concept envisaged that this potential will, afterwards, be compared with the requirements for prospective leaders in order to individually determine their necessary development needs.

During the years 2013 and 2014 the analyses procedure was tested in several pilot courses and the potential of the individual participant was ascertained. During personal feedback talks, on the one hand, the results were represented and
discussed with the participants and, on the other hand, certain measures were recommended which were regarded as being conducive to the individual development. The respective superiors received feedback, both on the results of their employees and the recommended promotion measures. From then on it was the task of these superiors to support and implement concrete steps and to task the potential leaders to accelerate their own development.

In my Master’s thesis “The potential analyses – starting point for a goal- oriented promotion of prospective leaders in the state police service of Mecklenburg Vorpommern!” I analyzed how the personal development of participants taking part in the potential analyses was designed. I have discussed whether and how many measures were implemented, under which official framework conditions this took place and to what extent the development process was supervised, documented and evaluated.

1. How do participants of the potential analyses assess their individual development, how did they change?

The results of my survey showed that the participants - on average – recognized a positive development within themselves. This statement equally applies in the areas of required cognitive skills, knowledge, social competence and personal competence. The area of promotion motivation varied widely – an indication that promotion efforts leading to success are very different. It became apparent that those who did not want a leadership position from the beginning did not gain promotion motivation during the promotion process. As a consequence this means that the funding process should be differentiated in the promotion process from the outset concerning different promotional goals. It is important to mention that during the potential analyses a distinction is made between career motivation for a professional career and a leadership career. However, the prerequisite for this is that before a career perspective is defined, the potential analysis and the promotion objective is defined.

2. How was the development process of the participants designed?

The survey results show, that recommendations of the potential analyses were taken up and a large number of measures were agreed upon – even more than recommended. Also the implementation of the measures can be assessed positively. During the period of promotion, lasting one and a half years on average, which was started with half of all the measures agreed upon, three quarters of them have already been completed.

3. How do the participants assess the success of the measures taken?

Which measures were conducive? Which measures were missed?

The measures completed were assessed entirely positively. In their assessments the participants emphasized measures to increase the fields of assignment and training measures which contributed particularly well to achieve the promotional goals.
With regards to desired personnel development steps the respondents, first and foremost, mentioned accompanying measures in the form of mentoring and coaching.

4. How do the participants assess the effect of official framework conditions on their individual development? Which aspects were conducive? Which aspects were inhibiting?

On average the official framework conditions are all assessed positively rather than negatively. Appreciation by the superior as well as colleagues and the confidence of the superior are best assessed. It is gratifying that this is already mentioned positively in the second place because confidence is considered to be particularly promising as a factor for personnel development. The factors concerning support are assessed less positively. Both social support by superiors and colleagues, support for the reconciliation of family and work life and, most of all, career-related support belong to this category. It has already been assessed in the framework of the DHPOL career study that the last-mentioned factor needs to be improved, but that it is the second lowest of all factors within the framework of this survey. Consequently, improving this influencing factor continues to be of great importance. Reconciliation of family and work life - placed lowest in the ranking in the current discussion - is not new either, has not lost any of its contemporary relevance. Therefore, the design of framework conditions for the promotion of candidates, first and foremost, must start at the latter points. The positive findings obtained concerning confidence and appreciations have to be preserved in promotion practice.

![Figure: Assessment of the framework conditions concerning promotion (scale 1 = very good; 5 = very bad)]
5. **Could newly acquired competencies and skills be preserved? How was this achieved? What did the transfer of learning impede?**

The findings gained with regards to the documentation and evaluation of individual personnel development measures, as well as the entire promotion process show, that this is the greatest need for optimization concerning all examined aspects. Two thirds of all respondents stated, that their employee appraisals, in which the professional perspective and further proceedings were discussed, were not recorded in writing. The integration of the contents of the discussion into the development process in the form of a promotional plan is only rarely used so far. Furthermore, individual personnel development measures were hardly analysed. Almost two thirds of the survey participants stated, that no single personnel development measure was analysed. Such an evaluation would have been indispensable to guarantee the transfer of promotional measures and, if necessary, to revise promotional goals and to adjust ensuing measures accordingly.

From the discussion of the results, I derived recommendations that are suitable in contributing to the improvement of the promotional practice of prospective leaders. The concept of the promotional process, the potential analyses, the promotional process as well as the documentation and evaluation of the promotion have turned out to be essential areas.

I. **Concept of promotional processes**

The survey results have revealed that the issue of the promotion of prospective leaders is not suited to be considered as part in an overall concept to personnel development. It was recognized that a distinction needs to be made between vertical and horizontal personnel development, in order to qualify leaders, on the one hand, and other skilled employees, on the other hand. For each target group a specific concept should be designed meeting the respective requirements. This is the way to meet the differences of the candidates regarding their requirements, framework conditions and promising measures. Furthermore, the publication of individual concepts would be a signal for target groups having been so far little addressed. In a concept the following questions should be answered:

- Which target group should be reached with the concept?
- How are potential skilled employees and leaders recognized?
- How are they informed about the professional perspective?
- How and on which criteria are persons selected for a promotion?
- How is the potential assessed?
- How is the promotion designed with regards to content and time?
- How is the promotion process documented?
- How is the completion of the promotion made?
- How is the overall process evaluated?

The employee appraisal should, in any case, be the initial phase of a promotion process. In the conversation employee and superior should jointly agree upon
a professional perspective for the employee. Only when a consensus has been achieved can the corresponding measures based on this be chosen and implemented. The first step following the conversation is to take part in the potential analyses.

II. The potential analyses

As described above, a perspective for the professional future of the participant should be agreed upon before beginning the potential analyses. Only when this is established will a participation in the potential analyses be useful. Career motivation can then be analyzed in a goal-oriented manner. Furthermore, it will be ensured that participants with the same career goals find themselves in the individual potential analyses process. In doing so, a mixture of candidates who are not comparable in this point is excluded. The result of the potential analyses – in addition to the assessment of the strengths and development areas – should not only contain recommendations on personal development but also a statement whether the agreed way seems to be appropriate or whether the professional perspective should be reviewed. In particular, this can include the statement whether someone is suitable for a leadership function or not. The results of the potential analysis should be documented as a whole in order to include them in the promotional process.

The potential analysis is thus not the starting point, but basis for personnel development activities. Therefore, it is important to regard it as such. The potential analysis must not be misused as a test selection procedure on a trial basis. Candidates who have already undergone a promotional process are not first target group in the selection for the potential analysis. It should rather be used to detect undiscovered potentials in order to initiate a promotional process.

III. The promotional process

For different target groups measures are determinable which are more suitable than other ones, in order to achieve the promotional goal. Therefore, the selection of the measures to be taken – in addition to the strengths and development areas of an employee on which the selection of personnel development measures usually orientates – should comply with the relevant defined promotional goal in order to achieve the best possible success. It has particularly become clear, that development processes of employees striving for leadership careers should be accompanied during the entire promotional period. Promising models to achieve this goal are mentoring and coaching. That’s why approaches should be found for how a system to integrate mentors and coaches can be established, who is suitable as mentor or coach and which tasks can be taken on by these persons. Furthermore, it is indispensable, that employees get an idea of the future activities which they strive for. This is especially difficult in view of a leadership career; as such functions cannot be tested in advance. Therefore, it is important to provide employees an insight into leadership work. On the one hand, this can take place by means of informative events; such as, seminars, lectures or workshops while on duty; and on the other hand, in the framework of the main activity of the employee. Here, the assignment to a post with proximity to leaders as well as their integration into the micro-political network is conceivable.
Besides the implementation of promotional measures it is of additional importance to organize framework conditions in such a way, that they have a positive influence on the development process. The results of my thesis have shown that efforts to promote a specific target group have had a positive effect.

IV. Documentation and evaluation in the promotional process

Based on the aforementioned reasons, specific measures concerning documentation as well as evaluating promotional processes need to be taken into consideration. On the one hand, development successes can be preserved, and on the other hand, current and future promotional procedures can be organized as goal-oriented and, thus, the entire process to promote (prospective) leaders can be completed. It has already been presented, that an entire documentation of the promotional process has a positive influence on the evaluation of individual procedural steps. However, the survey results have also shown that there is a discrepancy between the agreed upon and actually completed measures. Indeed, more measures are agreed upon with those whose promotion is defined in a plan than with other employees. But the actual number of steps for implementation completed is barely any higher than in cases of oral documentation. The implementation rate is correspondingly lower. This contradiction cannot be resolved by means of survey results. However, it shows that documentation alone is not sufficient. With such instruments it has to be dealt with in a responsible manner. Again it is important, that the superior conscientiously performs his role as personnel developer.

Conclusion

The potential analysis has proved to be a modern personnel diagnostic tool. Both participants and superiors accept the results, because they are taken into account when planning the following development. The actual promotion, which should take place immediately after the planning, very much depends on the personal commitment of the respective superior. This was not the case with all those who have participated in the potential analysis. Regarding the issue “The potential analyses – starting point for a targeted promotion of prospective leaders in the M-V state police service” it became clear, that a decisive step needs to be already completed in the run-up to the potential analysis. In the framework of an employee appraisal, a professional perspective needs to be found and agreed upon for the person. Only when this goal is completed should the participant take part in the potential analysis. In doing so, career motivation, on the one hand, can be analyzed in a targeted manner. On the other hand, the participant can be given a feedback to what extent it is necessary to revise the professional goal. This would be an additional function of the potential analysis, which could complete the previous goals, the assessments of strengths and development errors, as well as the recommendation of beneficial measures.

Design approaches for the optimization of promotional processes, first and foremost, have become apparent concerning the documentation of development processes. It has turned out, that instruments are necessary that support the
evaluation of individual promotional measures as well as the entire development process. They contribute to making sure that superiors keep the overview during the promotion and provide orientation for the employee. Based on the records both parties can recognize which development steps have taken place, which success these ones have brought and which measures have to be taken after that.

It must be agreed upon in what way superiors perform an advisory role for the participant striving for promotion. It has become clear, that there is a lack of accompanying advice regarding development processes up to now. That’s why it appears appropriate to establish mentoring and coaching as instruments framing development. In doing so, superiors could concentrate on their role as supervisors and coordinators while the candidate can seek advice from another leader.

How a promotional process should be brought to a conclusion, needs to be defined in a concept. Also the question has to be answered how work is to be continued with those, who do not or only partially achieve the development goal. A concept must give the answer how the efforts to promote made during the current position, or concerning a new perspective can be preserved. At the same time it is important to not only ensure the promotional activities themselves but also that framework conditions are designed conducive to development. The results of this thesis show, that the M-V state police service has made progress in this area but still has potential for development.

On the path of personnel development taken a step-by-step success in the topic area of promoting prospective leaders was achieved. The challenge now is to continue. Further goals both regarding the promotion of prospective leaders and other target groups need to be defined and efforts need to be made to achieve them. Because:

“Personnel development fails when using one instrument [potential analysis], but it is successful when using a structure effective in everyday life in which leaders perform their role as personnel developer on-site!”

(Dr. Christian Barthel, lecturer at the German Police University)

About the author

Schütt, Sebastian, Master of Arts “Öffentliche Verwaltung – Polizeimanagement” (Master of Arts „Public Administration – Police Management“) at the German Police University, Polizeirat (superintendent), head of the CID unit Rostock. Within the framework of his Master’s thesis he examined the situation of young prospective leaders in the state police service Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Additionally, Mr. Schütt leads a programme to promote potential leaders in the police inspectorate of Rostock.
One area of focus of the state government in the last years, according to point number 17 of the coalition agreement for the 2011 – 2016 legislative period, was to significantly increase the percentage of women in leadership positions in the state administration. In order to reach this goal various instruments were developed. The ministries and the state chancellery committed, within the scope of target agreements, to primarily fill a specific number of vacant or plannable vacant posts with women – taking into account Article 33 (2). In order to attract more women who were willing to take on leadership positions and to sensitize superiors and heads of departments on this issue, accompanying measures were developed. Some examples of these measures are: advanced training for women in leadership positions and for their superiors, specialist conferences and networking events. The assignment according to point number 285 of the 2016 – 2021 coalition agreement also remains in force in the new legislature. The instruments developed in order to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions were laid down in the Law to reform the Act on Equal Treatment which came into effect on 30th June 2016.

An accompanying measure to implement the target agreement is the modular advanced training course to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions in the state government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. The concept was developed by the Institute for Advanced Training and Administrative Modernization at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice. The pilot process started on 15th September 2014 with twelve participants of the salary grades A 14 / A 15 or comparable paid employees from the highest state authority, the state parliament administration, the state audit authority and the state police service. The concept recommended offering a one-year mentoring program parallel to the modules of the advanced training series.

Mentoring is a personnel development instrument in which an experienced person, in principle belonging to a higher functional level (mentor, female or male), supports the career development of another person (mentee) through advice, promotion and the opening of formal and informal contacts. The aim of mentoring is to create a relationship of trust between mentor and mentee. This relationship sees itself on equal terms and is characterized by independence and voluntariness.

Within the scope of the pilot project only four tandems were formed which were supported by the direction of the department. It also became apparent that the implementation of mentoring has to be accompanied and requires an appropriate framework in which the processes, the duration, the matching, the aim and so on are set. The Institution for Advanced Training and Modernization of Admi-
Administration prepared an appropriate concept for the implementation of mentoring whilst accompanying the advanced training series to increase the percentage of women in the state government. The conference of the heads of the General Departments approved the “Draft of a concept for the introduction of mentoring in the state government of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern” on 15th October 2015 and entrusted the Central Office for Women and Equality and the Institution for Advanced Training and Modernization of Administration with the implementation. From then on mentoring was a mandatory component in the second implementation of the advanced training series to increase the percentage of women in leadership positions. Mentees are women who participate in the second advanced training series. Also women of the first course had the possibility to participate in the mentoring program. In total, 16 tandems started their work.

As criteria for tandem formation, the concept provided that in principle the mentees would select their female or male mentor themselves. They should receive support – if required – from the personnel department of their ministry. Mentees and mentors were not allowed to stand in hierarchical relation to one another and inter- or multi-agency tandem forming was recommended. The tandem forming started in November 2015 and before beginning both parties were to reach a written agreement. It became clear then, that the matching process had to be closely accompanied and that the mentors partially lacked information concerning their role. In order to form inter-agency tandems the mentees often did not have the necessary insights into other departments.

The launch event took place – temporally offset to the advanced training series – at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice on 22nd January 2016. As a result the participants also agreed to a joint completion at the beginning of 2017. It was important for the mentors to have the possibility after three months to share their initial experiences. Furthermore, they wished greater transparency with regards to their mentoring activity in their institutions as well as an offer for personal further development. The sharing of experiences took place in April 2016. Coaching as an individual counseling technique was presented. Within the framework of the program the mentors could have two sessions after an initial discussion. Afterwards five female mentors made use of the offer and assessed it as being very beneficial towards their personal development.

The mentees reflected their previous – mostly positive – experiences in the mentoring program in October 2016. In retrospect, the self-targeting within the framework of the program as a precondition for a successful tandem relationship was particularly highlighted, such that in the future more time will be allotted for this in the program.

The experiences have been included into the mentoring concept. From now on the matching process is closely accompanied. For the female participants of the third advanced training series, which starts in February 2017, an information event in November 2016 came first, at which they worked out their aims concerning mentoring and laid down criteria for the selection of mentors, both female and male. In the interim a pool of mentors consisting of 24 leaders from the state
government, eleven men and 13 women, was established. In August 2016 an information event to the mentoring program for this group of people took place. The mentees of the third advanced training series have exclusively selected their mentors out of the pool, such that it turned out to be a great advantage to have the pool available. In the future it ought to be extended, especially beyond the place of employment in Schwerin. It was confirmed that mentee and mentors must have no hierarchical connection with one another. The inter-agency tandem forming was regarded as very beneficial because this was the only way to communicate freely and on equal terms with one another. The signing of a written agreement was not considered as being absolutely essential.

Typical examples of the work of the tandems as of November 2016 are the following: the assessments of Jana Sommerfeld, Head of the Department of Road Planning, Road Construction and Environmental Protection in Rostock (mentee) and her mentor Dr. Heiko Will, First Director of the State Office for Health and Social Affairs; and Antje Finnern, Head of the CID Inspectorate Anklam (mentee) and her female mentor, Ines Reimers, Senior Government Official in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture.

Jana Sommerfeld: “I have a mentor with many years of leadership experience; there is a trusting relationship between us. This is important. For me it is a benefit that I consciously take time in everyday stressful situations. Mentoring is a component in my further development, and I have already learnt to delegate and to transfer responsibility to the employees.”

Dr. Heiko Will: “It is a system of mutual giving and taking. As mentor I myself greatly benefit as my own ideas are reflected and very different leadership settings (head of authorities – female head of a department) clash. I am convinced that it will lead to better cooperation beyond the actual period.”

Antje Finnern: “I feel strengthened. Although I have not really looked for a ‘door opener’ I have opened me new doors through the consciousness of my potentials. It helped me, that my female mentor has given me important feedback to my behaviour in difficult and problematic situations, which again helped me to reorientate myself. Moreover, she has given me recommendations for staff work and the ability to sharpen my awareness concerning subtleties in certain areas. I am more confident but also more relaxed in dealing with myself.”

Ines Reimers: “I was sure to be able to learn a lot myself. It very soon became apparent that we form a good tandem, and that a mutual fruitful relationship on equal terms between us has arisen, which will continue beyond the duration of the mentoring program.”

Meanwhile the mentoring program was evaluated and the results were presented at the final event on 20\textsuperscript{th} January 2017 at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice. At the same time, the mentoring for the female participants of the third stage of the advanced training series started on this day.
Finally, it should be noted that experiences with an important instrument for personnel development for further deployment in the state administration exists. A mentoring pool consisting of committed leaders of the state government, who are looking forward to provide their inter-agency experiences, has been established. Within the framework of tandem forming a cross-generational and inter-agency networking has taken place, which can lead to new impulses in the organisations. Last but not least, the mentoring program makes a contribution to the Occupational Health Management. The work in a tandem provides mentee and mentor, whether female or male, the opportunity of reflection and exchange regarding their own leadership competence and leadership behaviour. Instruments like collegial consulting, which are presented in the framework of the program and the coaching offer for mentors contribute to personal development as well as leadership competence.

About the authoress

Gabler, Birgit, graduate teacher, head of the control centre for women and gender equality in the Ministry of Social Affairs, Integration and Gender Equality of the state M-V.

Antje Finnern, Head of the CID Inspectorate Anklam (mentee)
Ines Reimers, Senior Government Official in the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture (mentor, left side)

Jana Sommerfeld, Head of the Department of Road Planning, Road Construction and Environmental Protection in Rostock (mentee), Dr. Heiko Will, First Director of the State Office for Health and Social Affairs (mentor)
1. Critical preliminary considerations regarding control paradigms

„The difficulty lies not so much in developing new ideas as in escaping from old ones.” (John Maynard Keynes)

For the sake of clarity the explanations below - sometimes quite abstract and theoretical – of the following anonymized facts from leadership practice appear at the beginning. Throughout the article the author will regularly refer to these initial facts when appropriate.

The leader of a CID inspectorate (KPI-L) deployed an investigation team about 2 years ago which would deal with the investigation of insurance fraud in a considerable way, with a great number of persons involved. The prosecution (StA) asks the KPI-L periodically when the case could be referred for decision and taken to court.

Against this background the KPI-L decides to conduct a targeted objectives discussion with the leader of the investigation team (EG-L). In this conversation the KPI-L sets with the EG-L a specific deadline concerning the completion of the investigative work and the handover of the entire process to the StA. After the targeted objectives discussion with the EG-L the KPI-L has a “good feeling” that the EG-L will professionally support the proposed deadline.

The following day the KPI-L enters his office, opens his email account and finds a message from the EG-L, in which he announces that he wants to resign his position as leader of the investigative team “for personal reasons with immediate effect”.

The KPI-L is extremely confused about this and summons the EG-L to a conversation.

In the following conversation the EG-L informs - upon request of the KPI-L - that he was not able to realize the agreed upon deadline, he had hardly slept at night and in all this he also had to care about his health. Furthermore, the EG-L – on further enquiries of the KPI-L - states that it would have been, to an extent, important to him during the targeted objectives discussion to be treated as an “expert” of this investigative proceeding. (…)

The facts mentioned above describes a conflict which could have been avoided, but now has to be dealt with. It shall be discussed in the following section.

Altmann und Berndt¹ still started from the fundamental conviction, that the leader would have a “technique” in order to “control” the employee. On the basis of

contemporary leadership scientific discourses², this thinking is rather to be described as *order fantasy* or even *order ideology*. The police as an organization (in a sociological sense) surely are structural-functional dependent on maintaining a certain “facade of rationality” in order to be able to socially communicate the product of “security” and in an ideal case to generate it. Nonetheless, the *control optimism* held by Altmann and Berndt in concrete leadership acting involves the danger of long-term failure due to *notorious overestimation*.

The author wants - in the framework of this article, the above approach described in outlines, which in his opinion rather inheres to the character of an unrealistic, *scientized ideology* - to provide an alternative offer to make an attempt not only to describe and explain the possibilities and limits of *controlling leadership acting* on the basis of two established, currently diverse discussed theories, but to show specific alternatives for action.

Quite clearly and strikingly the leaders - with regard to the question of a possible *control success* - could be told: “Yes, statistically you run a tight ship but, relatively speaking, you are also confronted with many individual cases that go off course.” These cases affect personnel resources within an organisation and, consequently, also develop a high economic relevance in the public sector (so called *costs of conflict³*)

2. Initial facts: non-transparency and unpredictability

The leadership, which is trained in management science and has practical experience as well with regards to the initial facts (see 1) will have already noticed that the problem is quite possibly a *lack of authentic participation practice* by the leader. The EG-L could have experienced a possible professional participation in the framework of the target agreement discussion only as being pretended (in the sense of a constructivist pretended fiction), i.e. on the leader’s part as not being truthful. For this reason the EG-L apparently does not feel sufficiently “picked up” or involved in his expertise.

First of all, the question promising knowledge gain arises:

**By which *psychological* and *sociological mechanism* can the failure of the attempt to control (as described in the initial facts) be described and explained procedurally?**

---


³ cf.: Jochens 2016a: ibidem, p. 41
The figure above (Figure 1), schematically illustrates the described control problem within the facts from practice: The leader (KPI-L), in principle, has an interest in impacting on the behavior of the employee (EG-L) in a controlling manner to the effect that a binding deadline for the completion of the investigations and the ensuing handover of the proceedings to the prosecution takes place. The communicative control impulses during the target agreement discussion, for example, could have been - in the meaning of a when/then rule - as follows: “When June is finished the final version of the investigation report must be written so that it can be handed over to the StA.” However, at the same time the employee pursues behavioral goals: The employee, for example, wants to reduce experienced strain or implement their own quality standards.

The KPI-L does not know at that moment what is really going on in the mind of the EG-L; i.e. he/she does not have any access to possible perception processes or processes of the employee’s thinking and knowledge processing. From the leader’s point of view this, naturally, is the **situational non-transparency** in conversation techniques. The following figure (Figure 2) serves as an illustrative description of this problem concerning non-transparency.
The leadership in the course of communication processes of an employee appraisal is dependent on their own observations which could exclusively refer to possible external behavioral characteristics or verbal statements of the employee. The observation process regularly takes place in two operations: First, a perceived environmental aspect is to **distinguish** and afterwards to **describe**. In this context, it is important to state, that the observing leader cannot establish an immediate access to the environment. It always requires the conveyance of the relevant “leadership environment” through perceptual processes and observation operations. With regards to the observation process, it should further be noted that observation operations (differentiations and descriptions) can only ever follow observational procedures (differentiations and descriptions of the past) that have already taken place. Consequently, established environmental models are - in the course of observational processes – constantly of a **highly subjective nature**. Everything what the leader observes is also always the product of his or her previous leadership experience.

So it is conceivable that the KPI-L, to some extent, has consciously paid attention to non-verbal signs (facial expressions and gestures) of his counterpart in order to gain an impression of the situational psychological state of the EG-L and the relationship level existing between them. At the moment of perceiving a friendly
smile on the part of the EG-L, the KPI-L carries out the observation procedure exactly as described above: He or she distinguishes the environmental aspect of a “smile” from other potentially perceptible environmental stimuli (e.g. the tired eyes of his counterpart) and describes the previously distinguished environmental aspect as a “friendly” smile. This, in turn, leads the KPI-L to the assumption that the EG-L, in principle, has a positive attitude towards the forthcoming conversation and is able to provide the expected performance. It is relatively likely that a positively described differentiation (“friendly smile”) is followed by further observation with positive tendency concerning assessment. An observer (the leader) can – in a constructivist sense – always only build upon their own observation. In the course of processing numerous observations the KPI-L “builds” up his **subjective reality construct**.

It is important to mention that the described connection is mutual, i.e. during the conversation the employee also carries out a variety of observations concerning distinguishing and describing, which refer to the leader. Thus, the EG-L also constructs a highly subjective reality construct during the targeted objectives discussion. The EG-L, too, tries to influence the situation the way he or she likes.

The reality constructs built up by different observers can (sometimes) have content-related intersections, but they are never congruent. The KPI-L and the EG-L belong to the same organisation (the state police service). It must, therefore, be assumed that, especially with a view to police organizational goals and values and the procedure regarding the sequence of events that needs to be solved, there is a certain minimum consensus. However, with regard to the objective investigation procedure, and due to the strongly differentiated contextual insights it might be reasonably assumed that the reality constructs concerning this matter of the KPI-L and the EG-L differ considerably from each other. As **communication-psychologically highly relevant** and in most cases problematic is now the phenomenon that leadership and employees in concrete conversational situations regularly treat each other as if their reality constructs were identical, i.e. they mutually insinuate equal “objective” environmental perception and assessment, and accordingly behave to each other or communicate with each other exactly in this way. As well as an explanatory approach based on constructivist perspectives for the very different perception and assessment of the conversational situation between the KPI-L and the EG-L and an adequately appearing individual-psychological mechanism for describing and explaining the failure of the attempt to control (as described in the initial facts) on the procedural level of the leadership relationship in general and on the basis of interaction between the KPI-L and the EG-L in particular.

With regard to the described initial facts (cf. the initial facts under bullet point 1 and Figure 1) the **complexity of human behavior** is, however, in addition to the above-described explanatory approaches, of particularly high relevance.
The control optimism (see: 1st Critical preliminary considerations regarding control paradigm) – demonstrated in the sample facts – and observable in many leaders wrongly assumes, that human beings were trivial systems, i.e. in the form, that it is regularly believed in conversational situations that a communicative “input” (for example an official instruction in the sense of the previously described when/then rule) would be digested on predictable, linear ways following the causal mechanics of a machine and exactly produce the “output” the leader wanted to effect with the initial “input” (compliance with the respective official instruction).

Contrary to this view, human beings, here understood as psychic systems, are in no way trivial but complex systems. Complexity understood as a “degree of intricacy, interlinking and consequence of a decision field”4. Leading human beings does not mean to move hand over hand along simple causal chains, but to deal with dynamic, interlinked complex systems. The intrasystem processing mode following after a communicative input is not subjected to the access of the leader. It is not even observable from outside. Nor the output (concrete employee behavior) following a communicative impulse can be anticipated. In leadership practice it is observable, that official instructions on the part of the personnel are not followed “slavishly”, but instead many different forms of an intelligence to

---

4 Willke 2006: ibidem, p. 248
avoid the instruction develop so that on the part of the employee, a concerned compatibility to norms and rules of an organization is only made from the outside, in fact, however, in an unofficial context, official requirements are avoided. With regard to the initial facts (cf. bullet point 1) this means: The KPI-L, in principle, could not assume at all that the agreed upon deadline (when/then rule in the sense of “When June is finished please complete the investigations regarding the mass procedure K, so that the entire process can be handed over to the StA.”) is subjected to a predictable causal mechanism and, consequently, is implemented by the EG-L as initially intended. The erroneous assumption of the leader about the reaction of the EG-L (“output”), following this irritation, on the following day is finally based on thinking in linear causal chains, which is no longer in line with modern reality-based leadership, and which inadmissibly treats the employee in leadership relationships like a “trivial machine”.

3. Leadership relationship as a social system

The previous considerations (cf. bullet point 1 and 2) primarily dealt with the description and explanation of control-relevant causal relations – i.e. relevant psychological and sociological mechanisms – in leadership relationship. With regard to the question of designing or implementing intentions to control it appears to be promising in gaining knowledge to understand leadership relationship as social systems in the sense of sociological system theory:
The elements of a social system are not human beings but **communications**, i.e. leadership relationships are generated as social systems from correlated (connectable⁵) communications of the leader and the employee. Possible contents - based on perceptions and observation operations - within the respective psychic system (of the leader and the employee) can be included into the social system via the **structural coupling medium language**. Within the respective psychic system elements depending on the meaningful construct of sense are processed. It can be assumed that the sense constructs of two individuals differ considerably from each other. Therefore, fundamentally different elements or contents are processed within the psychic systems.

In the described initial facts (see 1st) this concretely reveals the fact, that the KPI-L finishes the target agreement discussion in good faith and that there is mutual agreement regarding the deadline. This assumption of the leader was accompanied by correspondingly positive emotions. Within the psychic system of the employee, obviously already at this time, completely different contents were processed, namely to the effect that the EG-L probably had doubts whether and to what extent this deadline could professionally be implemented by the investigation team and these considerations, in turn, were most likely accompanied by a relatively strong emotionalization (uncertainty, worry and fear). The main reason for the leader’s misconception – the KPI-L finally assumes at the end of the targeted objectives discussion that there is agreement about the importance and appropriateness of the deadline – is the fact that the employee, during the concrete conversational situation, first of all, refrains from communicating any problematic or critical ideas into the social system. Consequently, the ideas of the EG-L with regards to the structural coupling within the “leadership relationship” social system do not develop any relevance, and the established sense-construct communicatively strong marked from the leaders side remains unchanged or is not immediately put into question.

4. **Leader as intervener with the intention to control**

Within the initial facts (see 1st) the central interest of the leader (KPI-L) is to realize a binding deadline with the employee. In this respect the communicative intervention of the KPI-L is characterized by **concrete intentions to control**. The leader - in a system-theoretical sense – acts as intervener with the intention to control. The author assumes that for interventions by outside parties - whether a leader, a mediator or a therapist - three basic model assumptions have to be observed, and insofar as possible essentially influence the framework conditions of interventions.

---

⁵ Leader and employee form psychological systems on an alternative level of consideration and are linked with the level of the social system.
(1) System/environment difference:

The first assumption model comprises the observer-dependent differentiation of system and environment. An observer differentiates and describes (see bullet point 2) perceived environmental aspects to the effect that he or she perceives specific phenomena as belonging together or relating to each other, and other aspects, in turn, that he or she regards as being independent or isolated. If a third party would have been present during the target agreement discussion (cf. initial facts) he or she, for example, could have observed that the communications starting from the KPI-L and the EG-L side somehow refer to each other, and in this respect he or she would have regarded them as belonging to a specific topic (in the example: the investigation procedure). At this moment this observer designs the social system concerned, which exists in the communicative leadership relationship between the KPI-L and the EG-L.

(2) Operations of self-organization:

A social system continuously carries out operations of self-organization while it processes communications relating to the existing sense construct. Connectable communications refer to the intrasystem sense construct as control criteria, and, therefore, are of relevance for the self-organisation of the social system. The sense construct of the “leadership relationship” social system within the facts from the
practice described above lies in the actual reason of the conversation (target agreement / deadline). As long as both conversation partners sensibly concentrate on this conversation topic, their communications are mutually connectable, i.e. both parties feel able to respond to the statements of the other party.

This is different with non-connectable communications. The EG-L could tell the KPI-L about possible marital problems in epic breadth if he or she completely misunderstood the actual context of the conversation. This topic, in itself, would be contrary to the current sense construct of the social system and, consequently, not communicatively connectable. However, should the KPI-L spontaneously decide to communicatively get involved in this topic, the sense construct starts to alter in a communicative, self-organized manner at this moment.

(3) Irritation and trigger causality:

The third model assumption starts from the premise, that an intervener has no direct access to the intrasystem self-organisation. Thus, an outsider, in principle, cannot assume, that a specific communicative impulse is also operationally processed by the social system concerned, i.e. relevant to alter regarding the sense construct. The system to be intervened must, so to speak, “interest” itself from within itself for the placed communicative impulse. Therefore, it also applies to leaders, who combine specific control intentions with an intervention that “only trigger causality, but do not effect causality” must be taken into account. A communicative impulse is always then triggered when it produces irritation within the intervened social system, i.e. contrary to normal expectations and which therefore has the potential to produce uncertainty of expectations. A communicative impulse with exactly this goal often used by leaders is to emphasize possible legal obstacles or risks, which should cause uncertainty of expectations at the employee concerned.

5. The paradox of control and self-organisation

Within the framework of the above explanations concerning central model assumptions for intervention in social systems, first aspects to design controlling interventions from the leadership perspective have already been expressed. However, dealing with possibilities and limits of communicative control, in principle, leads to a paradoxical question:

How can (intrasystem) self-organisation (from outside) be organized or controlled?

After all, it is the autonomy (spontaneity and emergence) that make up self-organisation. In the initial facts (c.f. bullet point 1) the reaction of the EG-L after the target agreement discussion on the following day was highly irritating and

---

Luhrmann, Niklas: Organisation und Entscheidung. 3. edition, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2011, p. 401
unpredictable for the KPI-L. It is questionable, under what circumstances the KPI-L would have been able to anticipate such a reaction of the EG-L. Moreover, it seems uncertain, to what extent the KPI-L could have been able to influence the EG-L by means of already controlling intervention during the target agreement discussion to the effect that this one openly expresses possible doubts and emotions already at the moment of their development so that a comparison of mutual expectation (or sense constructs) could have been taken a priori.

On the other hand, we know from various scientific disciplines and lived leadership practice that small impulses often suffice to start big self-organized alterations within a system. Of concern here is the principle of wholeness: Ashby, for example, formulates “that there are complex systems that just do not allow the varying of only one factor at a time – they are so dynamic and interconnected that the alteration of one factor immediately acts as cause to evoke alterations to others, perhaps in a great many others”. In such cases possible alterations, however, do not regularly stand in a linear-causal relationship to the impulse (resp. to the intention). “Controlling”, in this sense, means not to control systems in full, but to influence.

How shall leaders deal with this control paradox?

A possible approach – and often observable with many leaders in practice – is to simply assume controllability in everyday leadership as being feasible. This, strictly speaking, is a constructivist pretended fiction which significantly reduces the complexity of the leadership situation, paradoxically, however, this can also contribute to real control success of leadership acting (in the sense of a self-fulfilling prophecy). Nevertheless, this coping strategy, essentially, is associated with the already described risk of notorious overconfidence or non-reflective control optimism (see corresponding explanations under bullet point 1) and might, thus, only work over a short period of time or be used because of a possible “leadership emergency”.

6. Sense constructs as a starting point for communicative control

However, the author takes the view, that it does not require a constructivist fiction as described above to cope with this paradox (cf. bullet point 5: considerations concerning control paradox) - control of self-organisation is basically possible. However, it is bound to complex processes, the single intervention can fail.

Control on the author’s side is understood as a specific intervention process, as a result from which a system develops from the previous state in a specific altered state, and this, first and foremost, through self-organisation.

---

A starting point for communicative control - from the leader's view - arises via a conscious influence on sense constructs through observation and communication⁹:

![Diagram showing the division of senses via observation and communication](source: Jochens 2016b: ibidem, p. 124)

The above figure shows how communicative control can procedurally be successful, i.e. which mechanisms of action have to interlock. Sense constructs suited as a starting point for communicative control as they fulfil two control-relevant main functions:

1. Sense constructs comprise distinctions and descriptions (in the sense of the constructivist system - theoretical assumptions about the observation process, see bullet point 2),
2. On the basis of sense constructs communication takes place.

The starting points are distinctions and descriptions of an observer, which flow in the sense construct of its psychic system by taking place repeatedly. This exemplary may be again a when/then rule – “X differs from Y in context K”. As a next step this distinction and description must be communicatively introduced

---

⁹ In his dissertation the author has developed an integrated model of controlling conflict intervention which consists of the components context control and irritation control (cf. Jochens 2016b: ibidem, pp. 133 ff). But within this article the author only presents a first approach for reasons for the rights to award doctorate.
in a social system and consequently repeatedly processed, i.e. diverse connected communications within the social system must take place, which relate to the when/then rule – “X is to distinguish from Y in context K”. If this specific distinction and observation through continuous communicative processing becomes a component of the sense construct of the social system, it does not take place in the medium term without influencing the psychic systems, which are structurally linked to the respective social system. The original when/then rule of an observer itself becomes a component of the sense construct of the social system and all psychic systems involved in the social system. Concerned here is the control effect and ex aequo social order develops in the long term.

7. Quintessence and outlook

“If we change our theory so our attitude changes, too.”

(Fritz B. Simon)

According to the author’s opinion the following conclusions can be drawn here:

(1) System theoretical model assumptions can gainfully be used and further developed in leadership relationships to describe, explain and design control intentions. Concrete analytical and operative procedural advantages derive from the proposed perspective here for the leader as intervener with control intentions.

(2) If the leadership relationship is understood as a social system, it is controllable and organizable via a targeted influence on existing sense constructs, because it is to start by observing psychic systems, at which communicative control of the sense-constructs can begin. However, control effects, in principle, can only be implemented on the basis of adequate model assumptions of the sense constructs of the system to be intervened. These must be developed and understood by the leadership.

(3) An increase of self-efficacy by leaders with regard to the influence of human behavior requires the development of procedural competence: In leadership relationships there is a need for a perpetually constructivist reflection of the observation process, an ongoing self-observation to develop adequate skills concerning the observation of others, a high degree of communicative creativity (e.g. in the form of the targeted use of paradoxical intervention), the ability to – here only to outline its main features – systematic analyses, and - in the fundamental approach to the control paradox described – a complexity-aware professionalism, i.e. a reasonable inner attitude as leader.

---

It is the aim of many different scientific disciplines, especially psychology and sociology, to formalize statements about interpersonal relations. In this context, science begins to search for a comprehensive context theory, certainly in the form of a “mathematics (...) as a genuine medium of theory formation”. The author is of the opinion, that the approach presented here has the potential for such a mathematics or context theory for leadership sciences in general and controlling intervention from leadership relationships in particular.

List of references


Altmann, Robert / Berndt, Günter: Grundriss der Führungslehre: Grundlagen kooperativer Führung. 3 edition, Schmidt-Römhild, 1992


Luhmann, Niklas: Organisation und Entscheidung. 3 edition, Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden 2011


About the author

Jochens, Norbert, M.A., jurist & social scientist, university lecturer at the University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice of the state M-V, teaching and research focuses: communicative organisation of human behavior, decision-making behavior in organisations and social conflict theory


Imprint:
Backstein special edition
Circulation 400

Editor:
University of Applied Sciences for Public Administration, Police and Administration of Justice of the state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Editing:
Institute for Further Training and Administration Modernisation

Translation:
Cornelia Brüggert
Michael Frederick Knip

Editorial office address:
Fachhochschule für öffentliche Verwaltung, Polizei und Rechtspflege
Institut für Fortbildung und Verwaltungsmodernisierung
Goldberger Straße 12 - 13
18273 Güstrow
Tel: 03843 283-511,
Fax: 03843 283-908
www fh-guestrow.de
fortbildungsinstitut@fh-guestrow.de

Printing house:
Landesamt für innere Verwaltung
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Zentrale Druckerei
Lübecker Str. 289
19059 Schwerin

V.i.S.d.P.:
Dr. Marion Rauchert