The Emerging Servant Leadership and the False Narrative Among Air Force Chaplains

Lorrie Lane Dyer, Ph.D.
MLD and MBA Adjunct Instructor
Saint Mary-of-the Woods College, Indiana, USA

Abstract

Background: Air Force chaplains face the duality of serving as servant leader ministers and competitive Air Force officers. This research identified that limited research exists on balancing this dichotomy (Berry, 2015; Davis, 2011; Earnhardt, 2008; Reinke, 2004; Sampayo & Maranga, 2019). **Objectives:** Explore how Air Force chaplains balance the dichotomy of service (defined as servant leadership) and self (defined as self-first to receive promotion) in a hierarchical organizational culture. **Methods/Approach:** Action research (Coghlan & Brannick, 2014) was chosen for this study due to its collaborative approach and cyclical nature, which reveal new knowledge. The researcher analyzed data by implementing Saldaña's (2016) streamlined Codes-to-Theory. Reflection journal and session data were included in the data analysis. Air Force chaplains from different faith groups, ranks, and time in service uncovered shared challenges and applicable solutions. **Results:** Inquiry outcomes identified the False Narrative and the Great Divide. Outcomes analysis revealed an emerging servant leadership culture, the importance of character, and fulfilling duties in a pluralistic environment. **Implications:** Findings indicate the False Narrative, the Great Divide, character, and fulfilling duties in a pluralistic environment play a role in how Air Force chaplains carry out their duties to serve and care for Airmen and offer guidance to leadership, impacting the Air Force's local and global missions. **Conclusions:** Findings suggest intentional actions encouraging the emerging cultural change require acknowledging and dispelling the False Narrative, addressing the Great Divide, and providing leadership skills training that nurtures the emerging servant leadership culture while addressing identified concerns.

Keywords: leadership; Air Force chaplains; servant leadership; organizational culture; collaboration; global mission, False Narrative

Paper type: Research article

Introduction

Air Force chaplains are civilian ministers who were elected to join the Air Force and were selected for their faith element of a core value of service before self (Ali, 2009; Allen, 2016; Butler & Herman, 1999; Estocin, 2016; Harper, n.d; Rocca, 2013). The Air Force's second core value is service before self (U.S. Air Force, 2019). However, Air Force chaplains face challenges that civilian ministers and other Air Force officers do not face. They experience the tension between service (servant leadership) and self (getting promoted). "Getting Promoted" is a term commonly used by military members regarding earning rank, like advancement in corporate organizations. "Getting promoted" will be referred to throughout this "receiving promotion". Receiving a promotion in the Air Force requires individuals to stand out among their peers to receive a commander's recommendation for promotion (Smith, 2019). It can be highly competitive, even among chaplains. It is a common belief that to receive a promotion, one must put yourself before others, and there is pressure to go above and beyond and do more than your peers.

Chaplains are Air Force Officers and like other Air Force members, many adhere to a commonly held misperception it is necessary to put self before service to be competitive for promotion (The Secretary of the Air Force, 2015; Washington, 2019). Chaplains are often guided by their call as ministers and faith leaders. However, they must strive to balance their call as ministers and fulfill the Air Force's second core value (service before self, servant leadership) with the requirement to fulfill their duties as Air Force Officers in a hierarchical organizational culture (The Secretary of the Air Force, 2015; U.S. Air Force, 2019; Washington, 2019).

Chaplains are not exempt from the competitive promotion system all Air Force Officers face within each career field (Pawlyk, 2019). Although the Air Force's second core value is service before self, the Air Force's organizational culture is hierarchical. This hierarchical culture and organizational structure can and has sometimes created toxic leadership (Piellusch, 2017). Air Force chaplains are not excluded from this hierarchical organizational culture, including experiencing toxic leadership and creating toxic leadership. Just like every other position in the Air Force, there is a rank within the Air Force Chaplain Corps, and chaplains must meet the same standards as other Air Force Officers while adhering to the hierarchical nature of the Air Force.

The hierarchical culture and organizational structure of the Air Force is what is referred to as top-down leadership. It begins with the Commander in Chief, trickling down to each individual Airman. Like many large international organizations, the Air Force has many layers in its complex organizational structure, including the Chaplain Corps.

Within the Air Force, there are smaller hierarchical organizational cultures. For example, the Air Force Chaplain Corps exists within the Air Force's hierarchical organizational culture. In addition to the Air Force's hierarchical culture, the Air Force Chaplain Corps has its own organizational culture, and within the Chaplain Corps are chapels located at different installations globally. Each chapel has its own organizational culture influenced, created, and nurtured by its Wing Chaplain leader and base leadership. Each chapel culture exists within the Chaplain Corps culture which exists and functions within the larger Air Force hierarchical organizational culture. Air Force chaplains must navigate numerous complexities of the hierarchical organizational cultures as ministers, officers, and leaders.

Air Force chaplains face the practical problem of finding the equilibrium between service before self (servant leadership) and self before service (being competitive for promotion). The practical problem is exacerbated due to the pressure to receive a promotion or face the possibility of having to get out of the Air Force based on the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act, established in 1980, requiring officers to be discharged if they are not promoted on the second attempt (Rostker et al., 1993). This is often unofficially referred to as the *up-or-out* policy. Officers are pressured to make an impression on promotion boards, stand out above the crowds, or end their Air Force career (Rostker et al., 1993; Schirmer et al., 2006; Shane, 2018). The *up-or-out* concept means job security or lack of job security (Millsaps, 1983). The pressure chaplains feel from leadership to receive a promotion combined with personal obligations can impact a chaplain's ability to fulfil their roles as servant leaders and fulfil the Air Force's second core value. In 2020, the Air Force implemented new revisions to the promotion system, where majors compete against one another in smaller, more specialized communities. As of 2025, promotion from Major to Lieutenant Colonel has a total promotion rate of 50.4% in all categories (Hadley, 2024). Chaplains continue to have some of the highest promotion rates, with 28 out of 35 chaplains selected for promotion to Major (Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs, 2023).

A minister's core value is to put service before self, which in a promotion-based culture can present a unique problem (Ali, 2009; Allen, 2016; Butler & Herman, 1999; Estocin, 2016; Harper, n.d.; Rocca, 2013). The belief that receiving a promotion requires putting oneself before service to stand out above the crowd can lead to internal and external conflicts for ministers and servant leaders. The pressure is exacerbated if one has a leader who subscribes to the antiquated belief that one must be more competitive and do more, above and beyond their peers. The Air Force is serious about removing leaders who have a history of leadership concerns, such as The Air Force's second-highest ranking religious leader, Brigadier General James Daniel Brantingham (Lehrfeld, 2023). Brantingham was only in the position for a little over a year when higher leadership removed him due to loss of confidence in his abilities in January of 2022 (Lehrfeld, 2023).

Little research explores this real-life quandary Air Force chaplains face. Additionally, few studies exist on servant leadership in a military setting (Berry, 2015; Davis, 2011; Earnhardt, 2008; Reinke, 2004; Sampayo & Maranga, 2019). Earnhardt's (2008) study discovered that based on Patterson's (2003) constructs of servant leadership: love, humility, altruism, vision, trust, empowerment, and service, servant leadership can and does work in a military setting. However, it does not address how military members or chaplains, in particular, balance service (servant leadership) and self (promotion). A gap was identified in how servant leaders balance servant leadership with career advancement, although one study examined how different leadership styles assisted women in promotions (Vinkenburge et al., 2011).

An examination of 270 studies published between 1998 and 2018 revealed significantly more quantitative empirical research on servant leadership than qualitative manuscripts, with just 28 qualitative studies, eight mixed methods, and 158 quantitative (Eva et al., 2019). None of the studies examined how Air Force chaplains

balance service (servant leadership) and self (promotion). This revealed a significant gap needed for qualitative servant leadership studies informed by theory (Dyer, 2021).

Only one study focused specifically on leadership among Air Force chaplains (Costin, 2009). However, it focused primarily on Wing Chaplains, not chaplains of all ranks and positions. Additionally, although the Wing Chaplain Leadership Model (WCLM) used in the study identified servant leadership as the fifth most important factor to Wing Chaplains, it did not adequately address how chaplains balance servant leadership and career progressions (i.e. promotion) (Costin, 2009). However, it did reveal that Ministry Practice was the lowest-ranking factor identified by Wing Chaplains, leaving room to explore why Ministry Practice ranked so low, particularly with Wing Chaplains ranking servant leadership as the 5th most important factor (Costin, 2009).

One study suggested that servant leadership may not work in military cultures because it is impractical and unrealistic in such a setting (Bowie, 2000). Military hierarchical organizational cultures are prime candidates to create toxic leadership (Piellusch, 2017). Servant leadership could abate toxic leadership concerns in military settings (Wong & Davey, 2007). However, further research on defining servant leadership within a culture is also needed (Mittal & Dorman, 2012).

Methodology

Action Research

Action Research was identified as the best form of research for this study because it "focuses on the relations and interaction between action and knowledge" (Eikeland, 2007, p. 346). Additionally, action research is cyclical in nature, pulling participants in and inviting them to share and work together to identify and solve problems while developing new shared knowledge (McFraland & Stansell, 1993). It was coupled with Heron's (1996) co-operative inquiry due to its suitability to involve all members in deciding what questions should be explored and how they would explore the selected questions, as well as allowing them to explore their shared experience of coping with and balancing service (servant leadership) and self (career progression/promotion).

This research study sought to identify how Air Force chaplains navigate these complexities while balancing service and self. Three research questions guided this study:
1. How do Air Force chaplains define servant leadership in a military setting?
2. How do they manage the dichotomy, and how do they create equilibrium between service to others and service for self?
3. Might servant leadership help them do that?

Theoretical Framework

When a minister decides to join the Air Force as a chaplain, they bring years of ministerial experience as servant leaders. Guided by the minister's servant leadership inclination and the Air Force's requirement in its second Core Value (service before self), servant leadership was the ideal theoretical framework for this study (Earnhardt, 2008; Patterson, 2003).

Seven active-duty Air Force chaplains participated in this four-month study. The monthly meetings were conducted via Zoom and lasted one and a half to two hours

each. The first monthly meeting (Cycle 1) began with the three prepared researcher questions. These questions laid the foundation for the research and initiated meaningful conversations that lead to matters of greater concern for chaplains. At the end of the first meeting the chaplains developed a new question based on what they identified and agreed upon as most pressing for them as Air Force chaplains. They discussed what action would be appropriate for them to take to explore and find answers to the question they agreed upon. When the chaplains came back together for the second monthly meeting (Cycle 2) the chaplains started off by sharing what they learned by taking the agreed upon actions from the Cycle 1 meeting. They shared their reflections and significant insights gained from implementing the agreed upon action. From these shared insights and discussions, the chaplains uncovered more concerns. After much discussion the chaplains once again identified the most pressing issue and determined what action they would take for the next month. This process took place once more when they came together for Cycle 3. Participants were of different ranks, positions, and lengths of time in the Air Force as a chaplain and were from various religious faith groups, ethnic backgrounds, and ranks.

Between meetings, participants experimented with new behaviors to see how and if these new behaviors helped them manage the practical problems and dichotomy they faced each day as ministers, Air Force chaplains, and Officers. Each participant maintained reflection journals. These journals included thoughts and reflections on what was discussed during meetings, what came to mind because of discussions, and notations regarding the outcomes as they implemented agreed-upon actions. Reflexivity was implemented throughout the study to help participants sort through their thoughts and ideas, enabling them to determine what they found helpful and what did not work to help them better understand their beliefs of service and self in the context of being an Air Force chaplain.

Ethical concerns were identified and addressed, and solutions were ascertained. For example, confidentiality was an identified concern. Confidentiality was not a foreign concept to the participants; it is required of Air Force chaplains. Therefore, each participant was amicable in maintaining confidentiality throughout the study and expressed verbal consent. Ethical concerns were identified regarding dealing with potentially emotional or sensitive subjects. Although all participants were experienced in providing counseling, each participant was given contact information for mental health services for active-duty members, as well as seven free mental health resources, a 1-800 option to access mental health care professionals who cater to military members and families 24 hours a day, seven days a week (Military One Source, 2019).

Analysis
Each Zoom session was recorded, transcribed, and verified for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). The data was categorized, analyzed, and sorted by sentiment, themes, and attributes (Neuman, 2011). Themes were identified using Saldaña's (2016) Codes-to-Theory Model for qualitative inquiry, leading to the identification of shared group responses, connections, and comparisons among themes from the collected study data.

Data was analyzed inductively to better understand solutions to the duplicity participants experienced with the Air Force promotion system and servant leadership.

Group session data underwent the analysis process three times to ensure accuracy. Additional steps of triangulation (Flick, 2018), member checking, and rechecking to reduce discrepancies (including reduced reactivity, research, and participant biases) were implemented to ensure the fidelity and trustworthiness of the data (Padgett, 2017). A confidential space was provided for participants to share their notes freely and discuss the ups and downs they experienced in the study. Nonjudgmental support was provided in the Peer Debriefing and Support group (PDS) to help preserve the honesty and integrity of the research throughout the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Field notes provided additional data and insights, undergoing a process similar to that of group data, which was transcribed, coded, and verified for accuracy (Creswell, 2013). Triangulation (Flick, 2018) and rechecking (Padgett, 2017) were also implemented. Field notes included notes on body language and demeanors from the initial individual interviews, the group work sessions, and notes from the researchers' reflections and thoughts on biases, which were identified and examined through reflexivity. Bracketing also helped ensure fidelity and trust. All data was synthesized, revealing new knowledge and solutions determined by participants, including their experiences with the dichotomy of service (servant leadership) and self (Air Force promotions) (Saldaña, 2016).

Cycle 1

Participants were asked the three research questions:

1. How do Air Force chaplains define servant leadership in a military setting?
2. How do they manage the dichotomy, and how do they create equilibrium between service to others and service for self?
3. Might servant leadership help them do that.

Participants initially discussed their thoughts on the three research questions. However, it was question two that guided them to uncover a specific question they wanted to explore further. Based on this question, they discussed and identified what course of action they would take over the next thirty days in an attempt to answer this question.

In Cycle 2, participants came together again restating the question they focused on in the actions they took throughout the month since they last met. This question and their findings were once again tied to the second research question. Each participant shared and discussed their findings. In this conversation they determined their findings warranted further exploration and agreed upon a plan of action to take during the next month.

In Cycle 3, participants restated the question they focused on in the actions they took throughout the month since they last met. This question and their findings were connected to both research questions 2 and 3. Cycle 3 concluded identifying numerous insights, as well as the need for further research.

Results

The study aimed to understand better how Air Force chaplains balance the dichotomy of service and self. Organic discussions took place, guided by practical problems faced daily as Air Force chaplains and Officers. Driven by the initial questions presented in

this study, discussions diverged and took their unique paths. These discussions moved past surface-level inquiries to reveal deeper concerns, identifying pivotal insights into their lived experiences, struggles, and solutions as they attempted to balance service and self as Air Force chaplains. Table 1 highlights the significant findings from this action research and how the participants in this study defined each major finding.

Table 1
Major Results

Name of Result	False Narrative	The Great Divide: Two Major Definitions of an Air Force Chaplain	Emerging Servant Leadership Leadership Matters	Character	Pluralism
Result Defined by Participants	A False Narrative Exists and perpetuates the belief that Air Force Chaplains cannot take care of Airmen and get promoted.	The Air Force Instruction Manual's definition or Chaplains who feel they are called to share their religion with others	Leaders mentor and model desired behaviors and influence their followers	Character makes a difference	If you can't exist in a pluralistic environment, being a chaplain is not for you.

Note: Major findings from the study.
Source: Author's illustration, 2024, adapted from *Air Force chaplains balancing the scales: The dichotomy between service before self and self before service,* by Dyer, 2021, p. 104. (Publication No. 28775633) ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global. Copyright 2021 by Dyer.

In Cycle, 1, the research questions, particularly the second question, led participants to explore whether receiving a promotion depends upon balancing service to Airmen and self-serving. Varying opinions emerged. Participants agreed that this required further investigation and exploration and decided to consult colleagues regarding this issue (Dyer, 2021).

In Cycle 2, participants' discussions continued to evolve from research question 2. Participants stated that many chaplains shared the belief that they had to choose between service and self to receiving a promotion, which they identified as the False Narrative. The group discussed the False Narrative and decided to continue this discussion in greater detail with their colleagues (Dyer, 2021).

In Cycle 3, participants reported that in their conversations with colleagues, they discovered that the False Narrative was real and was perpetuated by leadership. Participants identified two definitions of an being an Air Force chaplain:

1. Chaplains guided by the Air Force Instruction 52-101 (AFI52-101).
2. Chaplains guided by their religion.

Participants called this The Great Divide.

In addition to the two primary outcomes three additional outcomes revealed themselves as an Emergent Servant Leadership, the implication of the role of Individual Characteristics (on how a chaplain carried out his role), and the significance of Pluralism (being able to perform one's duties in a pluralistic environment). Five pivotal insights also emerged: servant leadership implementation, the necessity of time for reflection and discussions with their peers, the importance and role of a chaplain's experience, and being a minister versus an organizational leader, and that servant leadership was not identified as helping chaplains find a balance between service and self. It was revealed that each inquiry outcome is entwined, affecting one another, creating an Air Force Chaplain Corps Holon.

Figure 1
Air Force Chaplain Inquiry Outcomes Holon
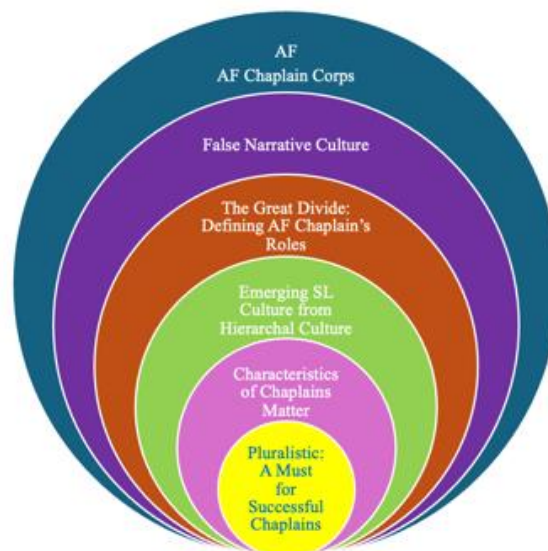
Source: Author's illustration, 2024, adapted from *Air Force chaplains balancing the scales: The dichotomy between service before self and self before service,* by Dyer, 2021, p. 97. (Publication No. 28775633) ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global. Copyright 2021 by Dyer.

Discussion

The study sought to answer three questions:

1. How do Air Force chaplains define servant leadership in a military setting?
2. How do they manage the dichotomy, and how do they create equilibrium between service before self and self before service?
3. Might servant leadership help them do that?

The study did not answer how Air Force chaplains define servant leadership in a military setting. Servant leadership was not identified to help Air Force chaplains manage the dichotomy of service and self or how to create an equilibrium between

service and self. However, it did reveal an emerging servant leadership culture. Participants also emphasized the importance of taking time for reflection and engaging in discussions with their peers. It was revealed that experience help chaplains navigate the challenges unique to them as they served as Air Force chaplains and experience comes from serving time in the Air Force as a chaplain and understanding the difference with being a minister versus an organizational leader. These pivotal insights were identified as contributing to a chaplain's ability to provide care and guidance to Airmen and leadership as they strive to accomplish local and global missions.

Chaplains uncovered what they collectively named the False Narrative. The False Narrative is pressure from leadership to receive a promotion, also referred to in this study as having to choose serving self over serving Airmen. The False Narrative most likely appeared out of necessity when receiving a promotion was highly competitive and being relieved of duty from the Air Force for not receiving a promotion on the second try was common. Times have changed now. At the time of the study, this was particularly true with a 90% promotion rate for chaplains from Captain to Major (Losey, 2020) who stayed in the Air Force, did not have documented reprimand, obtained their Professional Military Education and passed their physical fitness tests, would receive a promotion beyond captain (Dyer, 2021, p. 79). A point emphasized by chaplains. A promotion to captain is automatically earned for a chaplain. Receiving a promotion beyond captain is traditionally considered very competitive among chaplains. However, chaplains stated that if one did what they were supposed to and stayed out of trouble, they would receive a promotion.

Although it was determined that the False Narrative was now untrue, chaplains consulted peers, discovering that this myth was still alive and perpetuated by leadership. Junior chaplains, with less experience in a military setting, especially felt the impact of the False Narrative with pressure from leadership to go the extra mile to be competitive with their peers so they would stand out during promotion boards. The False Narrative suggests that chaplain leadership, individuals in positions of higher rank and authority, such as Wing Chaplains, perpetuate the antiquated belief that the only way chaplains can receive a promotion is to put self before service, leading to unnecessary tension between service and self. They also agreed that breaking the False Narrative culture was problematic for chaplains who were not in leadership positions because they needed more influence to make such a cultural shift (Dyer, 2021). Although each Airmen can lead in certain circumstances, chaplains in this study were referring to leadership positions such as Wing Chaplains who model leadership behaviors and have the power to make decisions for the chapel and the Airmen they lead

Failure to purge this false ideology not only hinders the emerging servant leadership culture but leads to the belief and pressure to choose self-interest over serving airmen, which impacts their ability to provide the care, and services Airmen need to perform their duties effectively. Failure of Airmen to perform their duties impacts the local mission, which impacts the global mission of the Air Force.

Senior chaplains shared that it was only through lived experience that they learned how to balance service and self. One senior chaplain used the image of a three-legged stool and how each leg must be balanced to keep the stool level to illustrate the challenge of balancing service and self.

> Participant 3 stated, "We all have to try to balance and in keeping that stool (in) a very, very even, so you're not tilting on one side or the other and it, it's a juggling act and I think personally for me, when I first came in, the stool wasn't ever even. It took me a few years to figure out how to put it all together."

Dispelling the False Narrative requires organizational change, which participants said would only be possible if leadership took the initiative to break the cycle of passing on the belief that chaplains can only receive a promotion if they put self before service. Participants stated that it was irrelevant to leaders if chaplains can care for Airmen; they (leaders) were looking for chaplains who pursue organizational growth and leadership. They shared that there was no need to be competitive (put self before service) or behave aggressively to receive a promotion (Dyer, 2021). Chaplains determined they could care for Airmen and receive a promotion.

With the discovery of the servant leadership culture emerging from the traditionally hierarchical organizational culture, servant leadership culture could be a steppingstone to help dispel the harmful and useless False Narrative if intentional action is taken by leadership to support the emerging servant leadership culture.

This may be a challenge as servant leadership was not identified as a preferred leadership of chaplains. However, the study concluded and aligns with previous research on leadership, which states that leadership matters. As demonstrated in the findings from the study, particularly among junior chaplains, leaders impact followers positively and negatively, and they impact morale, work performance, and organizational culture (Green et al., 2015; Saleen et al., 2020; Schaubroeck et al., 2001; Yukl, 2013). Leadership's impact on junior chaplains was a theme throughout the study, aligning with Coston's (2009) findings that Wing Chaplains needed adequate training, and leadership was also a concern.

Research has suggested that servant leadership may be too impractical and unrealistic to work in military settings (Piellusch, 2017). Other research indicates that servant leadership in military settings could mitigate toxic leadership (Wong & Davey, 2007) and that it does work (Earnhardt, 2008). As the servant leadership culture emerges within the Chaplain Corps, it must be kept in mind that servant leadership must be defined based on culture (Mittal & Dorman, 2012).

Air Force leadership encourages servant leadership, which is often the nature of ministers (who become chaplains) and aligns with the Air Force's second core value, *service before self* (U.S. Air Force, 2019; Greenleaf, 2002). According to Chief Master Sergeant Tyrone Davis (2011), leaders are called to serve, and those who serve do so by implementing servant leadership. Air Force Chief of Staff General David Goldfein emphasized the importance of servant leadership to Air Force Academy Cadets in his presentation at the National Character and Leadership Symposium on February 25, 2019, stating that his time at the Air Force Academy helped him develop an understanding of what it means to be a servant leader and the value of servant leadership (Bowden, 2019). Colonel Charles Barkhurst (2021) emphasized the role of servant leadership in the Air Force and its impact on the mission, "Servant leaders give before they receive. If you take care of your Airmen, they will take care of the mission" (para. 4). Colonel Clark is another Air Force servant leader demonstrating how through

servant leadership all Airmen can fulfill the Air Forces second core value of *service before self* (Fischer, 2020).

Although there are numerous examples of Air Force leadership implementing servant leadership, leadership on all levels, especially top Air Force leadership (Pentagon, Major Command leadership, etc.…), the Chaplain Corps, and chapels at installations globally, must be on board with implementing servant leadership. Servant leadership requires "the servant-lead is servant first" (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 27). This study revealed that not all chaplains are servant leaders, which may indicate that not all Air Force leaders are inclined to be servant leaders either and that when you are in the Air Force as a minister, chaplain the Air Force's concern is with one's leadership potential, not if you are a good chaplain. Servant leadership was identified as the fifth important factor among Wing Chaplains (Costin, 2009), laying the foundation for the Chaplain Corps to nurture the emerging servant leadership culture. The Air Force Core Values (U.S. Air Force, 2019) align with van Dierendonck's (2010) Conceptual Model of Servant Leadership, as indicated in the *Air Force Core Values Aligned with A Conceptual Model of Servant Leadership* (Figure 2).

Figure 2
Air Force Core Values Aligned with a Conceptual Model of Servant Leadership
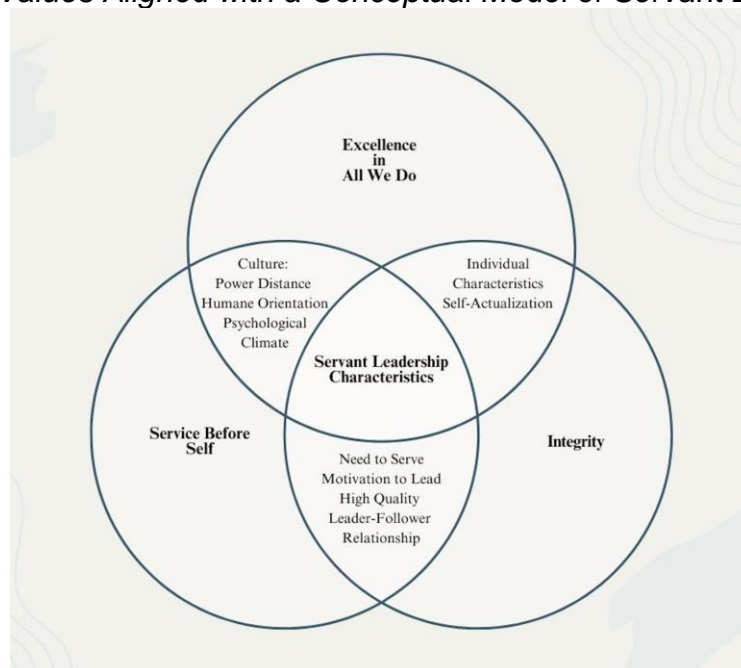
Note. Air Force Core Values aligned with the findings from *A Conceptual Model of Servant Leadership* by Dirk van Dierendonck, Servant Leadership: A Review and Synthesis, 2010, p. 1233.*Source:* Author's illustration, 2024.

Numerous benefits have been associated with servant leadership, such as committed employees, high-quality relationships, team effectiveness (Carter & Baghurst, 2013;1, 2020), and professional success (Blanchard & Broadwell, 2018). Nurturing the development and growth of servant leaders could also lead to high performance among chaplains (Clear et al., 2014; Carter & Baghurst, 2013; van Dierendonck, 2010). As servant leadership is implemented, the Air Force Chaplain Corps can expect to see chaplains (employees) that experience an awaking, are developing, and are engaged (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010), as well as benefiting those chaplains

serve such as Airmen, their families, and leadership, all while aligning with the chaplain's mission.

Understanding the emerging servant leadership in the context of the Great Divide is essential and begins with understanding the two roles identified in the Great Divide. This is significant because each definition and understanding of the roles of an Air Force chaplain impacts how they carry out their duties and responsibilities. The first definition is each chaplain's understanding of their role as an Air Force chaplain, which is related to the individual's calling to minister in their religion and according to their religion. The second definition is based solely on the Air Force Chaplain's Corps AFI52-101. AFI52-101 clearly defines the roles and expectations of an Air Force Chaplain (The Secretary of the Air Force, 2021).

> **Chaplains.** In accordance with 10 USC, § 8067 (h), chaplains provide religious worship and rites, religious accommodation, pastoral care, unit engagement, counseling, and spiritual care. Chaplains will not perform duties incompatible with their endorsing organizations or professional role and will remain in a noncombatant status. (T-0). Chaplains will not serve in any military capacity other than those specific duties contained in the 52XX Specialty Description found in the Air Force Officer Classification Directory, which is available at https://www.afpc.af.mil/Classification. (T-1). (p. 7).

AFI52-101 leaves room for chaplains to carry out their duties as servant leaders without compromising their religious beliefs or those of the Airmen they serve. The definition a chaplain defines as an individual does not offer a clear path toward servant leadership in a military setting because it is according to their religion, which may prevent them from serving Airmen whose beliefs and practices do not align with theirs. Servant leadership requires one to serve all, as does AFI52-101, regardless of the chaplains or the Airmen they are serving religious beliefs.

Chaplains concluded that some ministers may not be suited to be Air Force chaplains because they cannot set aside their civilian minister role to embrace what it means to be an Air Force chaplain. This conversation opened the door to explore what was important to them. They agreed that what was important was what chaplains value and their understanding of their role as an Air Force chaplain. However, they wanted to explore this to uncover a more profound understanding of the role of an Air Force chaplain through reflective journaling (Dyer, 2021).

The profound significance of the Great Divide revealed the impact of each chaplain's understanding of what an Air Force chaplain meant and its influence on how they carried out their responsibilities as a chaplain. Chaplains had different opinions regarding their roles and understanding of what being an Air Force chaplain meant. Still, they agreed that each chaplain's character, personality, values, upbringing, culture, faith, integrity, honesty, motivation, and personality also influenced how they carried out their duties (Dyer, 2021, p. 81). Participants also agreed that according to AFI52-101, chaplains should be persons of faith. However, they expressed that the reality was different.

Some pivotal insights identified in this study that align with servant leadership revealed that chaplains need to openly and honestly discuss their daily challenges and

experiences with other chaplains. Chaplains said that to ensure they do not lose sight of what is important, they needed time for reflection, conversations, and opportunities to reconnect with why they joined the Air Force, to reconnect with their beliefs and values, and how their responses impacted their ability to be effective chaplains. Participants emphasized the importance of connecting with other Air Force chaplains by participating in peer discussions about their daily lived experiences. These insights were identified as impacting their ability to provide service to Airmen, impacting the global mission of the Air Force, which ties back to falling victim to the False Narrative.

The participants identified the necessity of being able to perform one's duty in a pluralistic environment and that it requires chaplains to step outside their beliefs to provide care for all Airmen. This may be necessary, for example, as one chaplain shared when the chaplain provided counseling for an individual who defined marriage differently. A chaplain described operating in a pluralistic environment as an ability like turning off a switch to be pluralistic and provide practical care instead of spiritual care (Dyer, 2021, p. 95). A chaplain must be able to function in a pluralistic environment to fulfill their role and mission as Air Force chaplains to serve all Airmen.

Chaplains who could not reconcile tensions between faith and job were determined, by the participants in the study, as not a good fit to serve as an Air Force chaplain (Dyer, 2021). Chaplains emphasized that finding this balance did not mean compromising one's religion (Dyer, 2021). Although one chaplain called this method "turning off a switch," van Dierendonck & Nuijten's (2011) servant leadership's interpersonal acceptance, implementing emotional healing (Barbuto & Wheeler; Liden et al., 2008; Green et al., 2015; Spears, 2010), forming relationships (Ehrhart, 2004), and through responsible morality (Sendjaya et al., 2008) are other methods to assist chaplains in doing this. Some chaplains viewed being able to function in a pluralistic environment as part of being an Air Force chaplain; none of the chaplains in the study said they struggled to perform duties in a pluralistic environment.

Being able to fulfill one's responsibilities to provide care to all Airmen in a pluralist setting is tied to each chaplain's characteristics and how they define the role of an Air Force chaplain. Characteristics that influence how chaplains carry out their roles are accountability, beliefs, cultures, faith, honesty, integrity, motivation, personality, upbringing, and values (Dyer, 2021, pp. 92-93). Character was also tied to whether a chaplain got caught up in the competition for promotion. Chaplains shared:

> Participant 4 stated, "In the rush to get promoted, I have seen many chaplains, reserve, guard, and active duty, sacrifice their principles."

> Participant 7 stated, "I think the uniqueness is that we're called to shepherd people and take care of them and holistically help them grow into better, stronger, faster people. And yet, we destroy people on our staff so we can get promoted."

During the discussion about standards of behavior and characteristics, participants in the study concluded that chaplains should adhere to high standards of behavior and exhibit characteristics such as accountability, beliefs, cultures, faith, honesty, integrity, motivation, personality, and upbringing. Based on their experience as chaplains and witnessing other chaplains sacrifice their principles to receive a promotion, chaplains'

character was determined to play an essential role in how they carried out their duties. Participants stated that characteristics and values influenced how they carried out their roles as Air Force chaplains.

Participants stated that officership was defined as fulfilling the expectations of Air Force chaplains and that civilian ministers and Air Force chaplains (officers) have different goals and roles (Dyer, 2021). Additionally, they revealed that if a chaplain had good officership, whether a chaplain fulfilled their ministerial obligations and represented God was irrelevant to them receiving a promotion. Good officership played a more critical role in promotion (Dyer, 2021).

As illustrated in *Table 2*, several resources exist to help chaplains overcome the False Narrative, eliminate the Great Divide, encourage a servant leadership culture, identify and nurture character strengths and help eliminate character weaknesses, and identify individuals that may not be suited to serve as a chaplain in a pluralistic environment early on. Friedman's (2014) Total Leadership program aligns with servant leadership and requires one to take time to look inward and reflect on their behaviors, beliefs, and core values (Green et al., 2015; Greenleaf, 2002; Liden et al., 2008). Implementing Friedman's (2014) Total Leadership program offers an opportunity to meet the need for chaplains to balance their lives. Not only can it support the emergence of servant leadership and culture, but when accompanied by nurturing the *Nine Dimensions of Servant Leadership* (Liden et al., 2008) by addressing the whole person through proven methods that seek to teach individuals how to achieve four-way wins (Friedman, 2014), it can assist chaplains in reconnecting to core values and beliefs (Friedman, 2014). By implementing these programs, chaplains can embrace their ministerial roots while reflecting on why they became Air Force chaplains. They can also implement servant leadership, contributing to the emerging servant leadership culture and fulfilling their commitment to service before self, finding balance as ministers, Air Force chaplains, and Officers.

Table 2
Results & Recommendations

Results	Desired Outcome	Recommendations	Supporting Literature
False Narrative	Leadership aligns actions with the true state of chaplain promotions	Evaluate current Chaplain Corps culture and set goals to dispel False Narrative myth; Implement Total Leadership and Five Dysfunctions of a Team	Culture Audit by OCAI (OCAI, 2019) Total Leadership (Friedman, 2014) Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Lencioni, 2005)
The Great Divide: Two major definitions & understandings of Air Force	Unified understanding of the role and definition of the Air Force chaplain	Regular conversations on understanding the role definition of the Air Force chaplain	DAFI52-101(The Secretary of the Air Force, 2019) DAFI 52-201 (2021)

chaplain: Minister following your religion or AFI defined			
Emerging Servant Leadership Culture: Leadership Influences Followers	Align leadership behaviors with values and beliefs; model desired behaviors; rebuild trust among leaders and followers	Implement Total Leadership program and Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team. Encourage Servant Leadership, growth & development Complete Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: MLQ II 360 Leader's Report with Authentic Leadership Styles & Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: Group Report: MLQ II 360	Greenleaf (2002) MindGarden (2019) Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team (Lencioni, 2005) Total Leadership (Friedman, 2014)
Characteristics Matter	Identify weaknesses and strengths	Character testing DISC Profile: Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: Group Report: MLQ II 360 Suite; Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire: MLQ II 360 Leader's Report with Authentic Leadership Styles	www.discprofile.com www.mindgarden.com
Pluralism	Chaplains who can reconcile tensions between faith and job remain; chaplains who are not a good fit leave or let go.	Total Leadership (Friedman, 2014)	Total Leadership (Friedman, 2014)

Source: Author's illustration, 2024, adapted from *Air Force chaplains balancing the scales: The dichotomy between service before self and self before service,* by Dyer, 2021, p. 127. (Publication No. 28775633) ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global. Copyright 2021 by Dyer.

Air Force chaplain leaders are in a position to impact followers. By being self-aware of their leadership style and limitations, chaplain leaders can develop skills to become

servant leaders because self-awareness increases leadership effectiveness (Clarr et al., 2014). Best servant leadership practices may also address the chaplains' concerns in this study.

Right identity- Seeing oneself as a servant
Right motivation- Serving God by serving others
Right method- Relating to others in a positive manner
Right impact- Inspiring others to serve a higher purpose
Right character- Maintaining integrity and authenticity (Wong & Davey, 2007, pp. 7-8).

Being an Air Force chaplain is riddled with complexities and seeming contradictions. Chaplains believe they must adhere to higher standards of behavior. They have a strong sense of responsibility towards those they serve and to the larger purpose of the Chaplain Corps' mission and their greater mission as ministers, which is in line with servant leadership. While there is room to grow and expand our understanding of these roles, chaplains continue to serve selflessly, and civilian ministers continue to answer the call to become Air Force chaplains. Those who answer the call to fill the role of an Air Force chaplain respond to the calling with a servant leader's heart, a commitment to serving Airmen, and a desire to balance service and self.

Limitations

Several limitations were identified in this study, and attempts were made to mitigate those limitations. These limitations include potential researcher biases, sample size of the study, the availability of the chaplains, and time. Researcher biases included observations, personal opinions, and thoughts that had formed from working with Air Force chaplains for over fifteen years. At one point, the researcher had worked with each of the participants.

Another possible limitation was that sessions were conducted via Zoom as participants were stationed at different bases across the United States. Meeting via Zoom could have been a limitation because it took more work to observe and take field notes on body language. An in-person study may have provided more data. Not getting to meet face-to-face or being able to observe where participants sat, to whom they sat next, and who they interacted with before and after the meetings could have been a limitation because these observations could have provided additional insights.

Due to the chaplain participants being in various time zones and holding various positions, there were times when a chaplain was unavailable to meet with the group as planned due to military commitments. To reduce this impact on the study, they would contact the researcher to go over what took place during the meeting, what was agreed upon during the meeting, and what the agreed-upon task was to implement during the month. At this time, they shared their thoughts, opinions, and experiences in one-on-one personal conversations. This helped chaplains fully engage in the study, providing significant insights as they carried out the agreed-upon tasks, maintained reflection journals, and participated in conversations about what they experienced as chaplains and when they carried out the agreed-upon tasks.

A reflection journal maintained throughout the study lessened researcher biases. Bracketing was implemented to identify and reduce observer biases and mitigate

threats to validity. This was coupled with intentionally avoiding only collecting and interpreting data supporting the researchers' existing beliefs (Roulston & Shelton, 2015). Reflexivity was critical because the researcher had worked with each participant at different times throughout their careers. A benefit of their previous interactions was that trust was already established, creating a safe space for honest discussions.

Seven individuals from different faith backgrounds, ranks, time in service, cultures, and genders participated in the study. However, a more extensive group study could have produced or substantiated the insights identified. Sample size could be a limitation except for the range of ranks, positions, time in service, and faith group backgrounds of the participants in the study. Purposeful sampling was implemented to select those most likely to provide insights that revealed the most significant and relevant data on the topic of the study (Abrams, 2010; Yin, 2011).

Time was a limitation. Although the total research study was limited to four months, participants uncovered substantial findings and insights during this action research study. A more extended study could reveal even more significant findings.

Conclusion

In this study servant leadership was not identified as a favored form of leadership among chaplains. This contradicts an earlier study that said servant leadership implementation was the fifth most important factor in Wing Chaplain leadership (Welch, R. as cited in Coston, 2009). Further study could clarify how leadership says servant leadership implementation is the fifth most important factor to Wing Chaplain leadership. Still, junior chaplains say leadership perpetuates the False Narrative, pushing chaplains to be more competitive to receive a promotion. Can servant leadership help them navigate the complexities of the Air Force promotion culture?

In an environment that no longer supports the existence of false narratives, there is room to explore why this belief continues to be perpetuated and how to eliminate it. Further research is needed on leaders' roles in perpetuating the False Narrative and the impact of continuing to implement it. How does this impact the emerging servant leadership culture? How do Air Force chaplains define servant leadership in a military setting? Can servant leadership address issues such as the False Narrative? Although the Air Force is taking leadership seriously and removing leaders who are falling short, they may unknowingly contribute to the False Narrative by allowing these former leaders to continue to serve in the Air Force. What is the impact of allowing chaplain leadership that is removed from a leadership position but allowed to continue to serve in the Air Force, such as former deputy chief of chaplains Brig. Gen. James Brantingham, have on the emerging servant leadership culture, the False Narrative, and trust in leadership from Junior chaplains (Novelly, 2023)? Does the False Narrative exist across all military chaplaincies? Does the False Narrative exist in other hierarchical organizations? If so, does it have the same impact on employees?

The Great Divide needs further exploration due to the significance of how a chaplain understands and defines their role as an Air Force chaplain impacts how they carry out their mission and serve Airmen. Air Force chaplains are hired for their faith backgrounds but are required to serve all Airmen regardless of the Airmen's faith background. Additionally, chaplains offer leadership guidance. It is necessary to

explore the influence of how a chaplain defines and understands what it means to be an Air Force chaplain on the guidance they offer leadership.

This study shows that there may be differences between civilian ministers and Air Force chaplains. Further research on these differences may provide insights to assist civilian ministers entering the world of being an Air Force chaplain. The differences between civilian ministers and Air Force chaplains may also contribute to a more expanded definition and understanding of the Great Divide.

The findings from this study, particularly the findings on the need for chaplains to spend time reflecting on what they are experiencing and why they became a chaplain in the first place, may be a need that exists with all chaplains or ministers, both military and civilian. The need to pause and reflect may also be beneficial for individuals in similar caregiving roles, such as counselors, clinicians, or psychologists. Additionally, experience or learning by doing may also a finding that is transferable and not limited to individuals in ministry roles.

References

Abrams, L. S. (2010). Sampling 'hard to reach' populations in qualitative research: The case of incarcerated youth. *Qualitative Social Work, 9*(4), 536–550. https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325010367821

Air Force Personnel Center Public Affairs. (2023, July 12). Air Force releases latest field grade officer promotions. *Air Force's Personnel Center*. https://www.afpc.af.mil/News/Article/3455752/air-force-releases-latest-field-grade-officer-promotions/

Ali, A. J. (2009). Islamic perspectives on leadership: A model. *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management, 2*(2), 160–180. https://doi.org/10.1108/17538390910965167

Allen, J. (2016, January 7). What's on Pope Francis' plate for the first part of 2016? *Crux Now*. https://cruxnow.com/church/2016/01/whats-on-pope-francis-plate-for-the-first-part-of-2016/

Barbuto, J. E., & Wheeler, D. W. (2006). Scale development and construct clarification of servant leadership. *Group & Organization Management, 31*(3), 300–326. https://doi.org/10.1177/1059601106287091

Barkhurst, C. (2021, September 17). Now more than ever, we need servant leaders. *Wright-Patterson AFB*. https://www.wpafb.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2777203/now-more-than-ever-we-need-servant-leaders/

Berry, T. B. (2015, June). Servant-leadership as an institutionalized model in Air Force education. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 4*(2), 123–129. http://dx.doi.org/10.15640/jehd.v4n2a14

Blanchard, K., & Broadwell, R. (2018). *Servant leadership in action: How you can achieve great relationships and results.* Berrett-Koehler, Inc., A BK Business Book.

Bowden, R. (2019, February 25). Global power, lethality, and servant leadership: Air Force chief of staff addresses Airmen, cadets at Air Force Academy. *United States Air Force Academy.* https://www.usafa.edu/global-power-lethality-and-servant-leadership-air-force-chief-of-staff-addresses-airmen-cadets-at-air-force-academy/

Bowie, N. E. (2000). A Kantian theory of leadership. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal, 21*(4), 185–193. https://doi.org/10.1108/01437730010335427

Butler, D. M., & Herman, R. D. (1999). Effective ministerial leadership. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership, 9*(3), 229–239. https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.9302

Carter, D., & Baghurst, T. (2013). The influence of servant leadership on restaurant employee engagement. *Journal of Business Ethics, 124*(3), 453–464. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-013-1882-0

Coghlan, D., & Brannick, T. (2014). *Doing action research in your own organization* (4th ed.). SAGE.

Costin, D. (2009). *A leadership competency model for U.S. Air Force Wing Chaplains.* Defense Technical Information Center. https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA540058.pdf

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches.* SAGE.

Davis, T. (2011, June 27). Good leaders practice servant leadership. *Air Force News.* http://www.af.mil/News/Commentaries/Display/Article/141438/good-leaders-practice-servant-leadership/

DISC Profile. (2019). *DISC Profile.* www.discprofile.com

Dyer, L. L. (2021). *Air Force chaplains balancing the scales: The dichotomy between service before self and self before service* (Publication No. 28775633) [Doctoral dissertation, The Chicago School of Professional Psychology]. ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global.

Earnhardt, M. P. (2008). Testing a servant leadership theory among United States military members. *Emerging Leadership Journeys, 1*(2), 14-24. https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/elj/vol1iss2/ELJ_V1Is2_Earnhardt.pdf

Ehrhart, M. G. (2004). Leadership and procedural justice climate as antecedents of unit-level organizational citizenship behavior. *Personnel Psychology, 57*(1), 61-94. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1744-6570.2004.tb02484.x[1]

Eikeland, O. (2007). From epistemology to gnoseology-understanding claims of action research. *Management Research News, 30*(5), 344–358. https://doi.org/10.1108/01409170710746346

Estocin, A. (2017, May 17). What makes an Orthodox Christian leader? *Orthodox Christian Network*. http://myocn.net/what-makes-an-orthodox-christian-leader/

Eva, N., Robin, M., Sendjaya, S., van Dierendonck, D., & Liden, R. C. (2019). Servant leadership: A systematic review and call for future research. *The Leadership Quarterly, 30*(1), 111-132. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2018.07.004

Fischer, R. (2020, June 11). Colonel practices excellence through servant leadership. *Air Force Materiel Command*. https://www.afmc.af.mil/News/Article-Display/Article/2217135/colonel-practices-excellence-through-servant-leadership/

Flick, U. (2018). Triangulation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (5th ed., pp. 444–462). Sage Publications.

Friedman, S. D. (2014). *Total leadership: Be a better leader, have a richer life*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Green, M. T., Rodriguez, R. A., Wheeler, C. A., & Baggerly-Hinojosa, B. (2015, August). Servant leadership: A quantitative review of instruments and related results. *Servant Leadership: Theory and Practice, 2*(2), 76-96. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/995c/0f757f00d3f299708687f8a586d0ed79a3b5.pdf

Greenleaf, R. K. (2002). *Servant leadership: A journey into the nature of legitimate power & greatness* (25th Anniversary Edition). Paulist Press.

Hadley, G. (2024, June 3). Airmen faced less competition for promotion to Lieutenant Colonel in 2024. *Air & Space Forces Magazine*. https://www.airandspaceforces.com/airmen-promotion-lieutenant-colonel-2024/

Harper, D. (n.d.). Minister. *Online Etymology Dictionary*. https://www.etymonline.com/word/minister#etymonline_v_16202

Heron, J. (1996). *Co-operative inquiry: Research into the human condition*. Sage.

Lehrfeld, J. (2023, February 6). Air Force's number two chaplain removed for "leadership shortfalls." *Air Force Times*. https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2023/02/06/air-forces-number-two-chaplain-removed-for-leadership-shortfalls

Lencioni, P. (2005). *Overcoming the five dysfunctions of a team: A field guide for leaders, managers, and facilitators*. Jossey-Bass.

Liden, R. C., Wayne, S. J., Zhao, H., & Henderson, D. (2008). Servant leadership: Development of a multidimensional measure and multi-level assessment. *The Leadership Quarterly, 19*(2), 161–177. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2008.01.006

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Sage Publications.

Losey, S. (2020, February 6). Four hundred sixty-eight officers selected for major and colonel, 145 enlisted for supplemental promotion. *Air Force Times*. https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/your-air-force/2020/02/06/468-officers-selected-for-major-and-colonel-145-enlisted-for-supplemental-promotion/

McFarland, K. P., & Stansell, J. C. (1993). *Historical perspectives on teacher research*. In D. J. Flinders & G. E. Mills (Eds.), *Theory and concepts in qualitative research: Perspectives from the field* (pp. 113-127). Teachers College Press.

Military One Source. (2019). *Military One Source*. https://www.militaryonesource.mil/

Millsaps, J. W. (1983). Military retirement: Dream or dilemma for Air Force chaplains. *Defense Technical Information Center*. https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a128377.pdf

Mind Garden Inc. (2019). *Mind Garden*. https://www.mindgarden.com/

Mittal, R., & Dorfman, P. W. (2012). Servant leadership across cultures. *Journal of World Business, 47*(4), 555-570. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jwb.2012.01.009

Neuman, W. L. (2011). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). Pearson.

Novelly, T. (2023, February 9). Air Force's Deputy Chief of Chaplains fired. *Military.com*. https://www.military.com/daily-news/2023/02/09/air-forces-deputy-chief-of-chaplains-fired.html

OCAI online. (2019). Assess organizational culture quickly, easily and reliably. https://www.ocai-online.com/

Padgett, D. (2017). *Qualitative methods in social work research* (3rd ed.). SAGE.

Patterson, K. (2003). Servant leadership: A theoretical model. https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/sl_proceedings/2003/patterson_servant_leadership.pdf

Pawlyk, O. (2019, May 31). Air Force surveys officers on major changes to promotion process. *Military.com*. https://www.military.com/daily-news/2019/05/31/air-force-surveys-officers-major-changes-promotion-process.html

Piellusch, M. (2017, August 25). Toxic leadership or tough love: Does the U.S. military know the difference? *War Room*. https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/toxic-leadership-tough-love-u-s-military-know-difference/

Reinke, S. J. (2004). Service before self: Towards a theory of servant-leadership. *Global Virtue Ethics Review, 5*(3), 30-57. https://spaef.org/article/624/Service-Before-Self-Towards-a-Theory-of-Servant-Leadership

Rocca, F. X. (2013, June 6). Pope Francis calls careerism a "leprosy" on the priesthood. *Catholic News Service*. https://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2013/pope-francis-calls-careerism-a-leprosy-on-the-priesthood.cfm

Rostker, B. D., Thie, H. J., Lacy, J. L., Kawata, J. H., & Purnell, S. W. (1993). The Defense Officer Personnel Management Act of 1980: A retrospective assessment. *RAND Corporation*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/reports/R4246.html

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Sage.

Saleen, N., Brown, A., Smith, J., & Johnson, L. (2020). Practices to foster physician presence and connection with patients in clinical encounters. *Journal of Patient Experience, 7*(2), 123-130. https://doi.org/10.1177/1234567890123456

Sampayo, J., & Maranga, K. (2019). The servant-leader model: Air Force lawyers. *Journal of Management Policy and Practice, 20*(2), 93-99. https://doi.org/10.33423/jmpp.v20i2.2096

Schaubroeck, J., Lam, S. S. K., & Peng, A. C. (2011). Cognition-based and affect-based trust as mediators of leader behavior influences on team performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 96*(4), 863-871. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0022625

Schirmer, P., Thie, H. J., Harrell, M. C., & Tseng, M. S. (2006). Challenging time in DOPMA: Flexible and contemporary military officer management. *RAND Corporation*. https://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/MG451.html

The Secretary of the Air Force. (2015). *Air Force Materiel Command Supplement*. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/afmc/publication/afi36-2501_afmcsup/afi36-2501_afmcsup.pdf

The Secretary of the Air Force. (2019). *Air Force Instruction 52-101*. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_hc/publication/afi52-101/afi52-101.pdf

The Secretary of the Air Force. (2021). *Air Force Instruction*. https://static.e-publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_hc/publication/dafi52-201/dafi52-201.pdf

Sendjaya, S., Sarros, J. C., & Santora, J. C. (2008). Defining and measuring servant leadership behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management Studies, 45*(2), 402-424. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6486.2007.00761.x

Shane III, L. (2018, July 25). Congress is giving the officer promotion system a massive overhaul. *Military Times*. https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2018/07/25/how-officers-are-promoted-will-get-its-biggest-overhaul-in-decades-heres-what-that-means-for-the-military/

Smith, S. (2019, July 17). Military commissioned officer promotions. *The Balance Careers*. https://www.thebalancecareers.com/military-commissioned-officer-promotions-4055887

Spears, L. C. (2010). Character and servant leadership: Ten characteristics of effective, caring leaders. https://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jvl/vol1_iss1/Spears_Final.pdf

U.S. Air Force. (2019). Vision: It's our promise to protect. https://www.airforce.com/mission/vision

van Dierendonck, D. (2010). Servant leadership: A review and synthesis. *Journal of Management, 37*(4), 1228-1261. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206310380462

van Dierendonck, D., & Nuijten, I. (2011). The servant leadership survey: Development and validation of a multidimensional measure. *Journal of Business and Psychology, 26*(3), 249-267. https://dx.doi.org/10.1007%2Fs10869-010-9194-1

van Dierendonck, D., & Patterson, K. (2010). *Servant leadership: Developments in theory and research*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Vinkenburg, C. J., van Engen, M. L., Eagly, A. H., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. (2011). An exploration of stereotypical beliefs about leadership styles: Is transformational leadership a route to

women's promotion? *The Leadership Quarterly, 22*(1), 10-21.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.12.003

Washington. (2019). Department of the Air Force. https://static.e-

publishing.af.mil/production/1/af_a1/publication/afi36-2406/afi36-2406.pdf

Wong, P., & Davey, D. (2007). Best practices in servant leadership. http://www.drpaulwong.com/wp-

content/uploads/2013/09/wong-davey-2007-best-practices-in-servant-leadership.pdf

Yin, R. K. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish*. NY: The Guilford Press.

Yukl, G. (2013). *Leadership in organizations* (8th ed.). Pearson.

About the author

Dr. Lorrie Lane Dyer is a MLD and MBA adjunct instructor at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. Dr. Dyer earned her Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Leadership in 2022 from The Chicago School of Professional Psychology where she completed her scholarly research on how Air Force chaplains balance service and self. Her research was inspired by her work with Air Force chaplains as the Catholic Religious Education and Parish Coordinators for Altus Air Force Base Chapel for over 14 years. She earned her Master's in Leadership Development from Saint Mary-of-the Woods College in 2018.

Dr. Dyer has facilitated faith formation classes for the University of Dayton's VLCFF program and Catechetical Methodologies certification for the Archdiocese for the Military Services (AMS) since 2013. She serves as an AMS consultant for the National Community of Catechetical Leaders.

Dr. Dyer is a lifetime learner and enjoys helping students reach their academic and professional goals.

GLI classification: (89)

Paper type: Research article