A Pragmatic Analysis of Emergent Leaders in Leaderless Group Discussion

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ABSTRACT

Group discussion has played significant roles in establishing students' collaborative skills, especially leadership. This issue is interesting to discuss since the process of establishing the skills tends to happen when the students are involved in leaderless group discussion. Previous studies suggested that leaderless group discussion has been dominated by the emergence of male students as the leader so that the engagement developed. In fact, leaderless group discussion is essential to develop students' leadership attitude. Thus, leadership attitude should not be dependent on only one gender. To extend this issue in EFL context, especially in Indonesia, this research aims to elaborate the emergence of leadership attitude by higher education students during leaderless group discussion. Two recordings of online synchronous leaderless group discussion were collected as the data. To analyze the data, we used Speech Acts of Request and Big Five Theory of leadership attitude. This research found that female students emerged as the leader and the male students acted to be the supporting group members. The female students lead the group discussion by performing feminine leadership attitudes such as extraversion, intelligence and authoritarianism. These attitudes were manifested through the speech acts of request such as conventionally indirect (query) and direct act of request (suggestory). These findings denied the stigma that only the male gender with authoritarianism is more likely to emerge during leaderless group discussion, as for females were able to emerge by relying on not just authoritarianism but also extraversion and intelligence behind that.

Keywords: speech acts of request, leadership attitudes, leaderless group discussion, feminine leadership, observational study

1. INTRODUCTION

In higher education context, group discussion has played an important role to extend the students' understanding about certain topics. Stanulis (2012) found that there were ten benefits of getting students to participate in classroom discussions. Those benefits were in order to make the students feel interested in the topic, engaged with the other students, experienced feedback from their peers and the lecturers, and to self regulate themselves during the arguing process. Herstentein and Platt (2017) agreed upon this issue, by which

the participation of group discussion could also develop a more interactive dialogue among and between students. Moreover, it gives students the opportunity to practice using the language of the discipline.

In a group discussion a leader role was needed, as in focus group discussion the leader role was vivid whether it was an assigned individual or a volunteer. Meanwhile, as for leaderless group discussion, the question arises on who emerges as a leader? and from what gender it be? (Ensari. et. al., 2011). In Judge (2002) there was a connection between personality and leadership, and as for Schmitt et. al., (2008) verified that women show four out of five characteristics from The Big Five personality traits that predicted leadership emergence. To this extent, women have potential personality traits to emerge in leadership roles in comparison to men. Furthermore, in the development of gender diversity in leadership issues, women have been found to not only involve but also contribute as a leaders. Thus, extending research to highlight the women's role in particular aspects was not a new phenomenon.

Leadership issues and practices in EFL context, tend to rely on the great man theory (Carlyle, 1911). This old theory endorsed that a leader was supposed to be a father figure, which in this case, a man. Ibarra (1995) found that to assign women in leadership positions is not just to bring advantage on to the women's behalf but, to ensure the best decision for all, faithfully based on an individual's potential. In practical context, Liu (2006) found that female students had minimum involvement in classroom group discussion because they had high anxiety. However, in a decade, there is a development of female students' performance in group or peer discussion. Fong (2018) found that more female students were braver to share their thoughts. As for high achieving female students, they were also capable to re-explain the discussion material as well as their teachers.

In Indonesia,current issues found that there have been a lot of attempts to advocate women in a higher position (Andajani et. al., 2016). However, there are some factors that affect the under development of female students as a leader. For instance, the cultural values that support women to do domestic works as well as to perform well in public domains (Andajani et. al., 2016; Riantoputra et. al., (2013). Meanwhile, many previous studies have proven that women have potential leadership traits such as high commitment (Susanti, 2008), critical thinking and problem solving skills. These findings can lead into potential and thus it can be concluded that the amount of research about feminine leadership in group

discussion was still in limited numbers (Tamah, 2008). Whereas, the phenomenon of female students as the leader in group discussion needs to be exposed.

In order to stimulate leadership traits, leaderless group discussion was proposed by Ensari, et.al (2017). This is because leaderless group discussion has been frequently used to evaluate leadership potential that emerge in such a diverse group. This research aims to observe the possibility of female students to emerge as a leader in leaderless group discussions. To observe the discourse, the researcher used a linguistic theory, namely act of request following Nugroho (2020), as part of Pragmatic analysis. Another study that used a similar theory was Widiastuti (2020). It concluded that speech acts can be found during discussion activities. From these it was concluded that it is possible to use a pragmatic approach for the data analysis.

The purpose of this study is mainly to observe which type of leadership appears in leaderless group discussion and the process of leadership growth during leaderless group discussion. Since the representation of feminine leadership in Indonesia was found to be limited, the findings of this research shed a light on the extent of building the awareness of feminine leadership in the context of higher education. Andajani, et.al (2016) found that the limited awareness of female leadership in Indonesia was due to the traditional values that have been upheld by the society. The values that regard females as predestined to solely raise a child. In this belief, never are females predestined to be a leader. Thus, this typical consideration affected the teaching and learning behavior as performed by Indonesian students. For instance, the existing stereotype that the classroom leader should be male students, that male students should always be able to be a leader (Constantinou, el.al, 2009), and that female students are more acceptable to have a lower education level than male students (Prantiasih, 2016). The reverse effect was also found in male students who commanded or directed female students as the leader because they felt that being a leader was a domestic job (Eckel, et.al, 2021). Thus, the male students chose to fully be dependent on the female leader in their group. To counter this shade, the Indonesian government has aimed to raise women rights in advance, through written policy in Government Regulation No.39 of 1999 on Human Rights. That stated, females had the right to be voted, voted and appointed in terms of work, position and profession.

However, female leadership is counted as a second chance by every element in this society, especially in the education setting. Male actors tend to be the candidates of a leader prior to the female actors. Thus, this research aimed to describe the extent of male and female

students who appeared as the leader in classroom discussions. This is because classroom discussion is the platform that can effectively portray the negotiation of each group member in the decision making process. Thus, hearing from both male and female students' voices and the case that they appeared as the leader is necessary. As for the formulation of the problem, which type of leadership appears in leaderless group discussion under the lens of the students' speech acts? and how does the type of leadership appear in the leaderless group discussion?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Leadership Personality Traits

In order to be a leader, someone should have a growth mindset (Sweat, 2020). The mindset itself consists of passion for learning, growth and self-improvement that make people able to overcome challenges and difficulty through endurance and the infestation of effort (Bernecker & Job, 2019). It means that a leader should perform themselves as more prepared to share efforts, and to be enduring in various situations. To have a description about growth mindset, Sweat (2020) findings found 5 subcategories that can set the parameter. This mindset consists of 5 subcategories involving women holding themself back when facing barriers that emerge on their own heads, work-life integration that need to be balanced and set the priority between personal life and work, pursuing growth as in personal growth, personal principle as in being authentic individual and stereotype issue that still exist and need to be contend. Having this growth mindset could determine the output that endeavor in a given situation as in believe that individual attributes are fixed and concerned about the level of ability (Bernecker & Job, 2019).

2.2. Leadership Personality Traits of Female and Male

The discussion about leadership is inseparable from categorizing and characterizing it into feminine and masculine leadership. To clarify the terminology, feminine leadership is not always performed by females, and so is the masculine leadership. It could be carried out in reverse (Judge, 2002).

The personality of feminine leadership offers more advantages compared to masculine one. The theory that has been massively used as the parameter of emergent leader is Big Five personality theory (Murakami, 1997). Big Five theory highlights 5 characteristics traits including: openness to experience as being an innovative

individual, extraversion that rely on social skills, neuroticism as in individual tensions and sensitivity, agreeableness in cooperativeness and conscientiousness as in responsibility. With earlier research from Ensari et. al. (2011) found that men have a distinct advantage to emerge as a leader with authorianism, creativity, extraversion, intelligence and masculinity as the predictors. In contrast, Schmitt et. al. (2008) shows that women as a leader perform better across 4 out of 5 characteristics which are extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Meaning that women have a lot of potential/capability to offer, especially in case of dealing with the issue about emotional intelligence.

Previous discussion of feminine leadership remained to be set in workplaces. Presented below are the empirical findings on the characteristics of feminine leadership in workplaces. As Carli (2014) suggested, women embrace leadership style that would be relevant with how complicated modern organization is, which would lead to effectiveness. In terms of relational approach, women as suggested by Matthew et. al. (2013) is more likely to engage with the other members in comparison to their opposite gender. In the study, it was found that women are more likely to use their own interpersonal interaction style by putting other people's needs first and empathize, rather than men that are generally more self-focused about this issue. This is in line with another research from McGuiness et. al. (2017). The study confirms the previous suggestion by conducting data with women having a higher point percentage on company social responsibility compared to men. Biologically women interpersonal style was most likely caused by low testosterone levels that they had, that related to anti-social and egocentric behavior (Bos et. al. 2010). Thus, it can be concluded that women perform better when it comes to solving a problem, especially that involving other people's needs and being responsible about it.

Hogue & Lord's (2007) define and divide barriers in general into two separate parts, which are intrapersonal and interpersonal obstacles. Intrapersonal obstacles consist of Perceived incongruities between female stereotypes and leadership roles, women are held to stricter performance standards, women's agentic leadership behaviors may provoke backlash and Female leaders are perceived as lacking status and power. Meanwhile as for interpersonal obstacles are; women are held to stricter performance standards, women's agentic leadership behaviors may provoke

backlash and female leaders are perceived as lacking status and power, challenges with developing a leadership identity, women must find acceptable leadership styles to avoid backlash, women may not recognize the negative effects of gender bias and women may devalue their own leadership.

As summarized by Gipson et. al. (2017) women leadership style is way more open and more democratic compared to their opposite gender. Furthermore, when it comes to performance, researchers (e.g., Eagly & Carli, 2003) insist that women are more likely to have advantages apropos to leadership subjects. Through the whole discussion, this study believes that feminine leadership is more advanced in their approach and can ensure steadiness in a workplace.

2.3. Leaderless Group Discussion

In leaderless group discussion (LGD) that involve a group of individuals to solve a problem have been commonly used to investigate an individual with leadership potential (Ensari et. al. 2011). Alternatively, having a LGD would help the researcher to observe an individual that emerges to occasion and to be more vocal in order to take a grip as the group informal leader especially as a female representation in a mixed gender group. LGD rating associated with supervisor ratings, can also forecast an individual leadership potential (Riggio, Mayes, & Schleicher, 2003).

In a matter of rating an individual performance or leadership potential, the Big Five personality traits emerge to the surface. The Big Five theory as Sackett. et. al. (2008) highlights, involve 5 characteristics traits including: openness to experience, extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness. These traditional personality traits appear to predict individual leader emergence (Ensari et. al. 2011). Hence combining LGD as the subject matter of the observation and personality traits would be the appropriate approach to study an individual's leadership potential.

Although LGD originated from a career development context, there have been previous adoptions of this activity for pedagogical purposes. Hobson, et.al (2014), Leeming (2014), and Choi & Schnurr (2014) applied leaderless group discussion to higher education students. The results showed that although the activity

had a potential benefit to shape leadership personality, yet there were some considerations and conditions to be applied. Hobson, et.al (2014) found that by experiencing leaderless group discussion, all of the students performed an improvement of teamwork regardless demographic issues. Thus, in other words, by having leaderless group discussion, a positive impact was achieved. It was that leaderless group discussion could improve leadership personality for all higher education students. In contrast, Choi & Schnurr (2014) found that leaderless group discussion did not have a similar positive impact. Instead of improving leadership personality and teamwork of the students, leaderless group discussion created a negative competition among the students. Once a leader emerges, the other students tend to rebut their arguments. The debates did not come to an end. Thus, the implementation of leaderless group discussion still has debatable results. However, we tried to perceive that leaderless group discussion could stimulate the students to be brave in communicating their thoughts. However, in the Indonesia context, Tamah (2008) found that leaderless group discussion made the students remain silent. Although this study was conducted in secondary school, due to limited study in Indonesia about leaderless group discussion, we used this reference to depict Indonesian students' leadership personality.

3.   RESEARCH METHOD

This research was conducted by implicating qualitative methodology in order to explore an individual performance interaction during leaderless group discussion class. This research uses observational study as Kumaravadivelu (1993) defined, as how the learner interacts in the classroom through teaching and learning process. As in this research observational study was conducted to find out how well a female higher education student performs as a leader in the matter of leaderless group discussion.

In this research, the data of the study were derived from online classroom observation in the English language education department. The researcher observed the emerging leaders of two online leaderless group discussions. These two leaderless group discussions were implemented in different classes. The researchers previously observed the other classes that used group discussion activities, yet most of them tend to be group discussions with appointed leaders. There were two other classes that used leaderless group discussions

activity. However, they raised objections to be observed. The participants of each class were six students. The number of female students was six, as many as the male students. Thus, this study considered balanced gender representation in the leaderless group discussion. It means that which gender that appeared as a leader did not have imbalance representation that would make the data biased. This observation research was conducted through online classes by using Zoom as a synchronous online learning platform. With the consent of the lecturer and the students, the researcher recorded the classroom group discussion for both English educational linguistics and extensive listening class. The recording was then transcribed into written data. Below is the timeline of the observation.

Table 3.1: Research timeline

Students	Subjects	Date	Location	Frequency of classroom observation	Duration
6th semester students	Educational linguistics	4 April 2022	Yogyakarta	1	25 minutes
2nd semester students	Extensive listening	8 April 2022	Yogyakarta	1	25 minutes

The research instrument of this study was developed by referring to Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1984) and Ensari. et. al. (2011), in order to analyze the speech act of request (table 2) from the participant and to understand the individual differences from their personality traits that determine their leadership potential.

Table 3.2: Observation Instruments adopted from Ensari et. al. (2011)

Individual Difference	Description	Symbol
Extraversion	Sociable, outgoing, talkative (verbal	EV

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	participation and verbal aptitude), makes jokes, active, energetic, overt social adjustment, extravert, optimistic, friendliness, person who asks questions, gives opinion, gives information, asks for suggestions, asks for opinion, initiate interaction, social communication, interaction oriented	
Emotional stability	Emotional stability, freedom from hypersensitivity, stability, emotional maturity	ES
Antagonism	Disagrees, seems unfriendly, aggressive	AN
Agreeableness	Cooperative, agreeable, thoughtful, considerate	AG
Intelligence	Intelligence, numerical aptitude, average grade in college, scholastic achievement, apprehensive, analytical thinking, cognitive complexity	IN
Openness to experience	Imaginative, innovative, experimenting, open to experience, creative	OE
Leadership experience/ potential	Supervisory aptitude, motivation to lead, past leadership performance, visibility among associates, future success as a leader, leadership experience, initiative, decision making qualities, group goal commitment, individual goal for the group, supervisory knowledge	LE
	Self-esteem, self-efficacy	

Self-esteem/efficacy		SE
Neuroticism	Neuroticism, shows tension, sensitive, tense	NE
Masculinity	Masculinity, masculine role	MA
Femininity	Femininity, feminine, feminine gender role	FE
Conscientiousness	Conscientious	CO
Authoritarianism	Authoritarian, dominance	AU
Social Skills	Friendliness, Gives information, Gives opinions, Gives suggestions, Other directedness, Sensitive, Socio-relevant communication, listening (marked for possible exclusion in my notes), physical relations, nurturance, sociability, group-identification	SS
Creativity	Imagination, Experimenting, Innovation, Innovative Ideas	CC

Table 3.3 Observation instrument Speech Acts of Request

Directness Level	Strategy Type	Symbol

Direct	Mood derivable: the verb of the utterance grammatically determines the illocutionary meaning as a request (imperative).	MD
	Explicit performatives: the illocutionary meaning of the utterance is explicitly stated.	EP
	Hedged performatives: the stated illocutionary meaning is modified by hedging expressions.	HP
	Obligation statements: the illocutionary act is directly stated from the semantic meaning of the utterance.	OS
	Want statements: the utterance expresses desire of the speaker.	WS
	Suggestory formulae: the utterance literally contains a suggestion to do.	SF
Conventionally indirect	Query preparatory: the utterance carries reference to a preparatory condition (e.g. ability, willingness, or possibility to perform the act) as conventionalized in any particular language.	QP
	Strong hint: the utterance holds partial reference to object required to implement the act	SH
Non-conventionally indirect	Mild hint: no reference is produced to the request proper (or any of its elements) but interpretation is possible from the context.	MH

The researcher uses thematic analysis in the process in order to identify, analyze and report the pattern. Thematic analysis approach is an effective method in qualitative research (Ary, Jacobs & Sorensen, 2010), as it serves its purpose to identify patterns in a study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Hence, using thematic analysis would be an appropriate approach toward this research.

Thematic analysis consist of four phases :
- Phase 1 : I familiarize myself with the data by watching the observation video as the main source of the data and proceed to re-watch the observation video four times

during the transcription process and before analyzing the video. organizing the data transcription, and re-reading the transcript to make sure that the transcript is correct.

- Phase 2 : After analyzing the observation video I make the initial code by following Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1984) and Ensari et. al. (2011) requirement.
- Phase 3 : After following the requirements I reviewed and decided the themes along with my supervisor.
- Phase 4 : At the end of the thematic analysis phases I interpret and represent the final result of the data that the researcher would provide in a written report.

The researcher conducted this study by using a classroom observational approach. This procedure allows the researcher to gather data from the participants by observing the learner behavior throughout leaderless group discussion. To ensure the credibility of this research, the researcher relies on triangulation as Ary, Jacob & Sorensen (2010) suggested. The triangulation involved credible sources as in journals and articles. Moreover, this research was reviewed by the supervisor, to maintain the objectivity and credibility of the outcome from this research.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
4.1. Results

After analyzing 78 clausal expressions in two leaderless group discussions, this research found that feminine leadership personality traits that mainly appeared after conducting the observation is extraversion that pertains to social skill followed by intelligence and authoritarianism. As for the speech act of request surprisingly, conventionally indirect (query) dominates the statistic followed by direct act of request (suggestory).

Table 4.1. The Overall observation (female & male students)

Speech Acts of Request		Leaderless Group Discussion		
Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Extraversion	Authoritarianism	Intelligence

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13	29	70	3	17

From the table above, it can be seen that the most frequent speech acts of request that were used by female students who appeared as a leader are conventionally indirect. As for male were balanced between direct and conventionally indirect. The examples of each speech acts of requests are displayed in the following encryptions with their analysis.

Table 4.2. The observation of male student's speech acts

Speech Acts of Request			Leaderless Group Discussion				
Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect	Extraversion	Authoritarianism	Intelligence	Masculinity	Femininity
4	4	-	23	-	2	-	-

Table 4.3. The observation of female students' speech acts

Speech Acts of Request			Leaderless Group Discussion				
Direct	Conventionally Indirect	Non-Conventionally Indirect	Extraversion	Authoritarianism	Intelligence	Masculinity	Femininity
9	25	-	47	3	15	-	-

The female students during leaderless group discussion tend to massively perform extraversion. The students used direct speech acts of request by suggesting something. However, the most performed speech acts of request were conventionally indirect. We found

that two female students used conventionally indirect requests to give a sign that they were willing to be the leader. The sign was accepted by the other students, both male and female ones. Although the female student aimed to be the leader, yet they did not show to dominate the discussion. They performed authoritarianism solely to guide and to let the other members participate in the discussion.

Pragmatic analysis : Direct speech acts

Encryption 2

Sasa (female) : So this one yeah? the E, how about you guys, any idea? How to describe it? I already got this one right so, near hill road and then to the east? That means east side, how about we use Bahasa and then we translate it.

Kanda (male) : Following from the hillroad and then from the hill road to the east after that the location is located near the public garden, is it too easy?

Analysis: In the data, Sasa acted as a person that gave information as the input by using suggestions. She also suggested the group a choice as a solution to solve the problem easier by using their native language first and then translate it to english later on.

Pragmatic analysis : Conventionally Indirect

Encryption 3

Sasa (female) : Supermarket is located between hill road and city road and then?

Kanda (male) : The A is not there?

Analysis: In the data, Sasa acted as a person that asked questions in order for the group to participate and perform the act in group discussion, without actually telling them to participate in the discussion.

Leadership personality traits: Extraversion

Encryption 4

Melati (female) : okay but you guys understand if we are asked to explain right?

Linda (female) : Heeh understand understand.

Analysis: In the data, Melati performs a two way conversation to ensure that her friends in the group understand the assignment as extraversion is about social skill and being sociable .

Leadership personality traits: Authoriatism

Encryption 5

Sasa (female) : <u>Let me translate it</u> later.

Kanda (male) : Between hill road and city road.

Analysis: In the data, Sasa asserts her dominance by taking over the assignment for the sake of this group outcome. Sasa later presented the group discussion by herself and translated it in the first place. This behavior shows that Sasa assert her dominance during the group discussion.

Leadership personality traits: Intelligence

Encryption 5

Linda (female) : <u>Grungy is dirty and then I change grunginess into dirt</u>.

Nisa (female) : Ahhh I see <u>but, is grunge alone</u>? Is it just a rock genre or there uhm any adjective of the word grunge?

Analysis: In the data, both Linda and Nisa gave their personal input to solve the problem about finding the actual meaning of the word. This conversation is also a sign of analytical thinking from both of them as they gave input and possible solutions for the situation they were facing. This part of the conversation makes this specific line categorized as a part of intelligence.

4.2. Discussion
4.2.1. The Communication Pattern of Leaderless Group Discussion

In the previous studies, it was found that communication patterns of leaderless group discussion in a classroom context tend to be different, depending on the stimulation (Hobson, et.al, 2014; Choi & Schnurr, 2014). Some group members tend to compete with each other, some others tend to upgrade their leadership skills. However, there was some group that did not start to speak or to discuss if only there was no clear role assigned in the group. To this extent, role assigning seemed to be the opposite of leaderless group discussion.

There was also an important note that we could highlight from the previous studies. It was that the results of leaderless group discussion for pedagogical purposes was not

influenced by demographic issues. Regardless of gender, age, and the place of living, all students tend to perform similarly with the others. Differently, the results of leaderless group discussion in professional settings, such as career development, tend to result that female workers did not have similar power to lead a group in comparison to male students (Ensari, et.al, 2011). In this study the findings were almost similar to Hobson, et.al (2014). The similarity between this research and Hobson, et.al (2014) was that leaderless group discussion stimulates student teamwork. However, the demographic issues that contributed to the stimulation of leadership in this research were not similar, as in this research female gender dominates statistics.

4.2.2. Female Students as the Leader

As found by Schmitt et. al. (2008), female leaders tend to perform better than male gender by outperforming 4 out of 5 characteristics. These characteristics include extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness and conscientiousness. Sackett et. al (2008) conclude these characteristics in The Big Five theory involving previous mentioned characteristics with the addition of openness to experience. These traditional personality traits appear to predict individual leader emergence (Ensari et. al. 2011). The findings of this research presented different findings with Ensari,et.al (2011). Female students who performed leadership personality traits more than the male students. The personality traits that female students performed were extraversion, intelligence and authoritarianism. While male students tend to perform as supporting members by performing leadership traits such as extraversion in social skills with a slight of intelligence. These personality traits were found through requests of speech acts. For female students, extraversion traits were manifested through the following request of speech acts conventionally indirect and direct. Meanwhile as for male students, the extraversion was expressed through direct and conventionally indirect. Although both female and male students performed some leadership personality traits, yet female students tend to surpass the frequency of performing the traits. In the data we found that, in terms of extraversion, female students were identified to perform twice as frequently than male students. Moreover, in terms of authoritarianism, female students performed three times more frequently than male students. The last was in terms of intelligence, female students performed seven times more frequently than male students.

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5. CONCLUSION

From the discussion, it can be concluded that female students emerged more as a leader in the leaderless group discussion. The male students did not perform passively, yet they acted as supporting group members. The female students who emerged as a leader represented feminine leadership personality traits such as extraversion that pertains to social skill followed by intelligence and authoritarianism. The traits were manifested through the speech act of request such as conventionally indirect (query) dominates the statistic followed by direct act of request (suggestory). Further research on the narratives of each gender can be more elaborated since the limitation of this research was we did not provide interview data. As an implication, these findings denied the stigma that only the male gender with authoritarianism is more likely to emerge during leaderless group discussion, as for females were able to emerge by relying on not just authoritarianism but also extraversion and intelligence behind that.

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