

The Corruptibility Index

Corruptibility presents in many forms.

We always associate corruption with high end behaviours leading to extortion and fraud.

However, at a lower level, behaviours consistent with corruption of process and thought can be associated with bullying and a lack of empathy for those engaged in a poor or dangerous system of work.

In a human world built upon the central tenet on hierarchal status, corruptibility becomes synonymous with the more toxic aspects of alpha behaviour.

In order to optimise the workings of a system, the ability to identify factors predicting the onset of such behaviour will lead inevitably to the ability to address corruptibility-induced characteristics, not just in leaders, but in those who aspire to leadership in any form.

The starting point for this discussion is the quote from John Steinbeck:

"Power does not corrupt. Fear corrupts. Perhaps the fear of loss of power."

From there, the conversation turned to immaturity with respect to leadership competencies and emotional intelligence, and since that comment was my own, it is contingent upon me to try to validate (retrospectively) my colloquialism.

First let me explain that this comes along at the same time as I was considering flow limitations with respect to hospital admissions and operating theatres, and so my discussions with Kate Anderson, who is an after-hours hospital coordinator as well as an operating theatre nurse, form a backdrop to my frames of reference, as well as my whiteboard mind-map.

I decided to tackle the corruption problem in a rather obscure way, using mathematics as a way of identifying factors and the relationships they have with each other.

The following equation is my end result:

$$CI = \mu \frac{NC \times LA}{EQ} \left[\frac{PP}{AP} \times \frac{BL}{AC} \right]$$

.....where:

CI = corruptibility index

Mu = a mathematical constant reflective of desired alpha status

NG = potential net gain, in terms of material and immaterial wealth

LA = Loss Aversion, or the degree to which loss of NG will affect the individual's sense of self

EQ = emotional intelligence

PP = Perceived Power

AP = Actual Power

BL = Degree to which the individual can shift the blame

AC = Accountability the individual is willing to bear

In arriving at this formula, the following arguments were made:

Corruptibility is inversely proportional to the emotional intelligence of the individual.

The higher the emotional intelligence, the less the need for outcomes which outperform the market.

Corruptibility is proportional to the fear of loss of power.

Fear of loss of power can only occur when an individual's perception of their power (their desired power status) exceeds that power which is actually afforded to them as a consequence of their incumbent position, given that the sphere of influence is on average limited to people within one to two degrees of separation of the incumbent position.

Fear is proportional to the ratio of perceived (desired) power over actual power.

A power imbalance, and therefore fear of its loss, can only occur when the desire for influence exceeds significantly that which is formally attributed.

Fear is proportional to blame, and inversely proportional to accountability

The extent to which the individual is prepared to shift the blame, and the proportion to which they are willing to be accountable to their actions reflect the fear of being found wanting of their desired status. Such attributes contribute to the degree to which the individual is prepared to confusate or emotionalise proceedings so as to deflect enquiry away from themselves.

Fear is proportional to net gain.

The more an individual has to gain from an outcome, the more cognitive bias is afforded to the desired solution. In terms of game theory, this becomes an exercise in cooperation vs self interest.

Current methodology seems to defer to an innate desire to squeeze an extra 10% out of any productive system. Whilst this is inferred as 'efficiency', it may only seem a positive net gain when someone else pays the cost.

Game theory mathematically models the human behaviour in terms of utility outcomes for each player in this instance.

	C	D
C	4,4	0,6
D	6,0	2,2

C = Cooperate

D = Defect (make a decision to privilege one's own self interest at the other's expense)

(Ref Scott E Page, University of Michigan)

Fear is proportional to Loss Aversion

The greater the fear of losing, the more toxic the behaviours employed to ensure unequivocal victory.

Collating the components:

In order to be quantifiable, a measure must be able to be performed which places on a metric a scale of corruptibility.

This I call the Corruptibility Index.

The **Corruptibility Index (CI)** formula is an expression of all these proportionalities, fixed together by a **constant** reflective of the desired alpha status, the desire to serve as well as lead, and the innate desire to resist the temptation to outperform the market to ones own glory, which I call mu.

Discussion:

The outcome of delivering an equation for corruptibility, even in a very raw form, as mine is, is that it establishes some metrics for benevolent leadership.

If net gain and loss aversion are high, corruptibility is high, particularly in the presence of elevated notions of power and the tendency to want to shift the blame.

However, if EQ, and a realistic notion of sphere of influence and accountability are present, then decisions made will be more empathic and respectful with less corruption of cognitive decision making.

In turn, whilst such factors may seem too conciliatory to effect good organisational outcomes, I would argue that Game Theory predicts the efficacy of the ultimate outcome: that cooperation and collaboration delivers by far the superior utility payoff to all, and that the desire to maximise the individual payoff to one group at the expense of the other leads ultimately to a double defection with a lowered utility payoff, and therefore a less productive outcome overall.

"The ability of mankind to compensate for error is only overridden by her ability to overcompensate for error"

(Smith, 2016)

And as such, we tend to find ourselves in boom-bust cycles or forever fluctuating wildly around a mean rather than trending towards an equilibrium where we perform **to** the market (rather than trying to outperform it), and get there by making incremental, affirmative, collaborative changes instead of grand gestures which embody the sequestration of 'stopping thinking too soon'.

The idea of servant leadership is certainly one that has been around for a long time, as it is captured in the ancient text of the Tao Te Ching.

In modern terms, however, the tough and subtle work of mature leadership will lead to enduring benefits which will be reflected through collaboratively constructed leaner culture change, with heart.

Conclusion:

"The primary difficulty in mathematics is not doing the sums, but working out what should be in the equation."

Pete Smith
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Appendix:

White Board Drawing:

