

A diverse team of four people (three men and one woman) are smiling and stacking their hands in a huddle. The background is a blurred office setting. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Strongly committed teams
-
Applying a theory from philosophy
to my latest LeSS flip

Tom Jans



Make Philosophy Sexy Again

Commitment in the Scrum guide

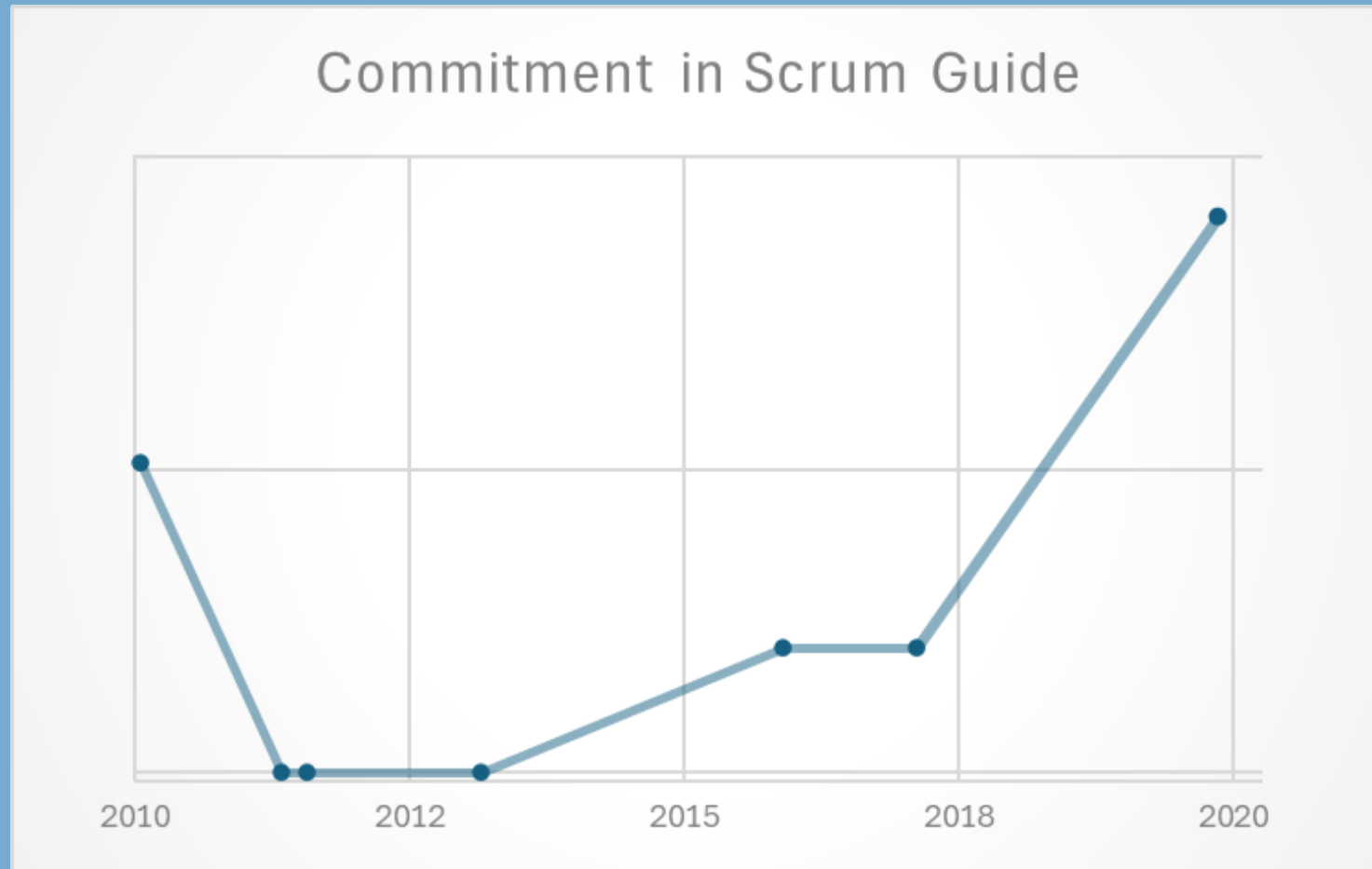
The Roles

The Scrum Team

The Scrum Team consists of the ScrumMaster, the Product Owner, and the Team (of developers). Scrum team members are called "pigs". Everyone else is a "chicken." Chickens cannot tell "pigs" how to do their work. Chickens and pigs come from the following story:

"A chicken and a pig are together when the chicken says, 'Let's start a restaurant!' The pig thinks it over and says, 'What would we call this restaurant?' The chicken says, 'Ham n' Eggs!' The pig says, 'No thanks, you'd only be involved but for me it would be a real commitment!'"

Commitment in the Scrum guide



Commitment in the Scrum guide

V5 Jul 2016

Scrum Values

When the values of commitment, courage, focus, openness and respect are embodied and lived by the Scrum Team, the Scrum pillars of transparency, inspection, and adaptation come to life

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What does commitment really mean?

- **Latin roots:** *com-mittere* = “to bring together, to entrust, to unite.”

commitment noun

com·mit·ment kə-ˈmit-mənt

[Synonyms of commitment >](#)

1 a : an agreement or pledge to do something in the future

| a *commitment* to improve conditions at the prison

especially : an engagement to assume a financial obligation at a future date

b : something pledged

| the *commitment* of troops to the war

c : the state or an instance of being obligated or emotionally **impelled**

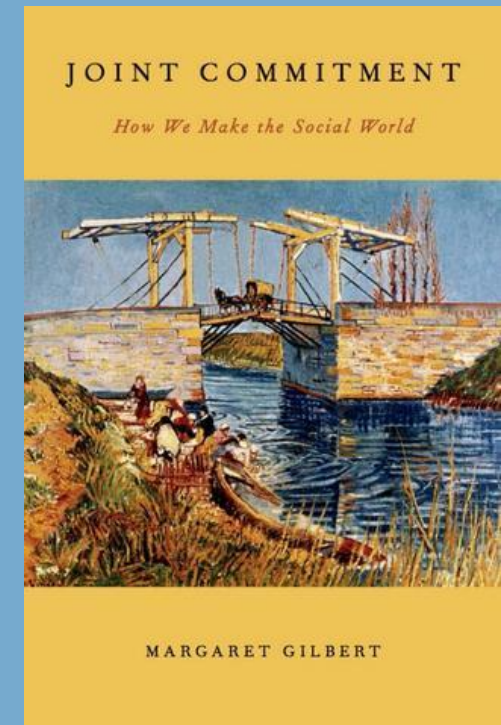
| a *commitment* to a cause

Margaret Gilbert

- British philosopher (born 1942)
- University of California



- Social ontology
- Analytic philosophy
- Joint commitment



Commitment



- *“A person P is committed to performing act A , if and only if P has sufficient reason to do A ”*
- The state of commitment TO something
- Starts and ends with a decision, an act of the will
- “A rational ought”

Strong or robust commitment

- How likely is it that I will undo my decision?

A real decision

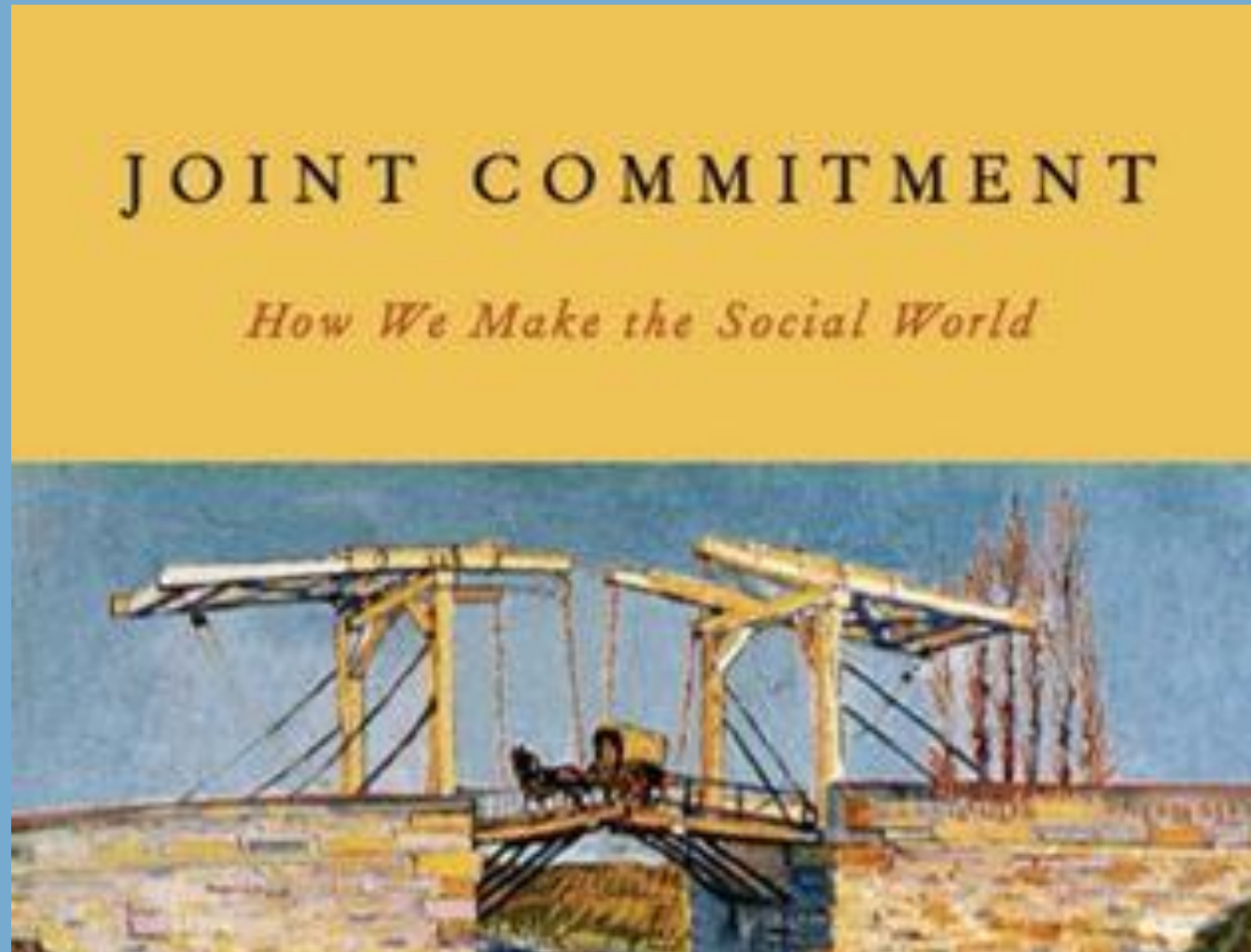
A strong “yes” leads to a strong commitment

Competing commitments?

What exactly am I committing to?

What will be difficulties I'll have to overcome?

Joint Commitment



Joint Commitment



- *“A and B constitute a plural subject
if and only if
they are jointly committed to do something as a body.”*
- A commitment TO something WITH someone

Joint Commitment: An experiment



Joint Commitment



- *“A and B constitute a plural subject if and only if they are jointly committed to do something as a body.”*
- A commitment TO something WITH someone
- Starts and ends when “readiness to commit” has become common knowledge between the people who jointly commit

Joint Commitment: Demand-rights



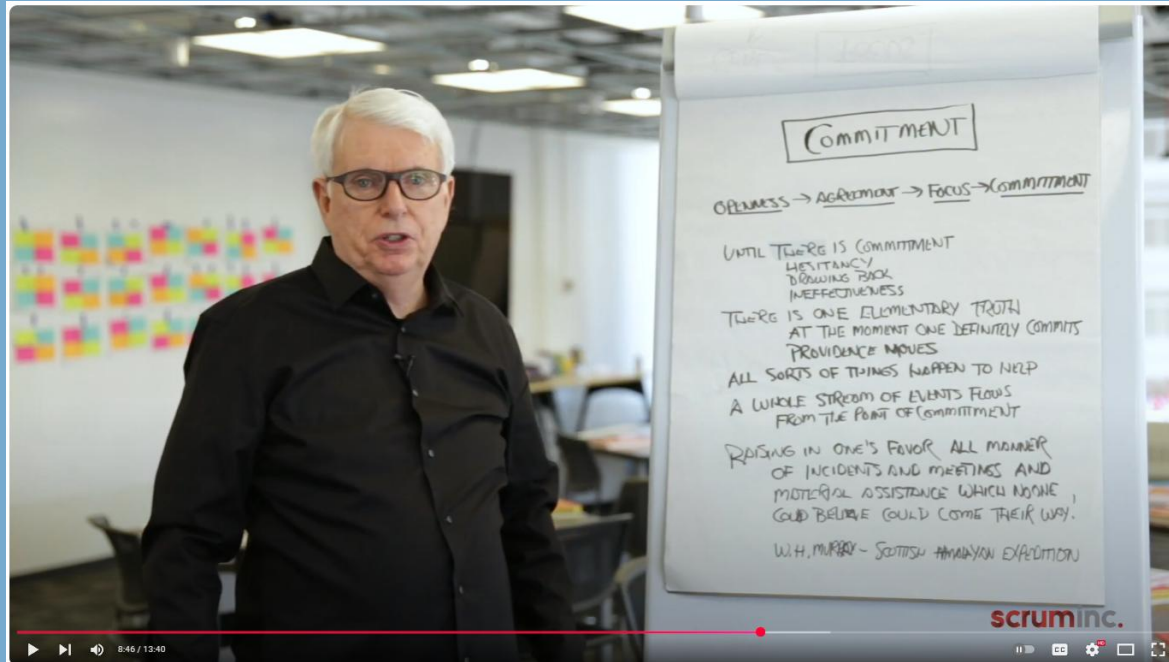
Joint Commitment creates mutual obligations

You have the right to demand that I act according to our commitment

Because of the joint commitment alone

Specific action even without explicit promise

“Commitment is the linchpin of Scrum”



Joint commitment in a Scrum team

- “To do something as a body” == “the team is doing something”
- Requires joint commitment
- The expression of readiness of team members
- When this becomes common knowledge, “the team” is born

Joint commitment in a Scrum team

- The team jointly commits to a goal
- Team members will take action to achieve that goal
- They will take actions that they did not explicitly commit to
 - Communicate and share knowledge
 - Help and motivate each other
 - Solve unforeseen problems together
 - Do things outside their personal best interest

Nice theory but where's the evidence?

3 Years: make excuse to break joint commitment.



Michael Tomasello

Nice theory but where's the evidence?

Three-Year-Olds' Understanding of the Consequences of Joint Commitments

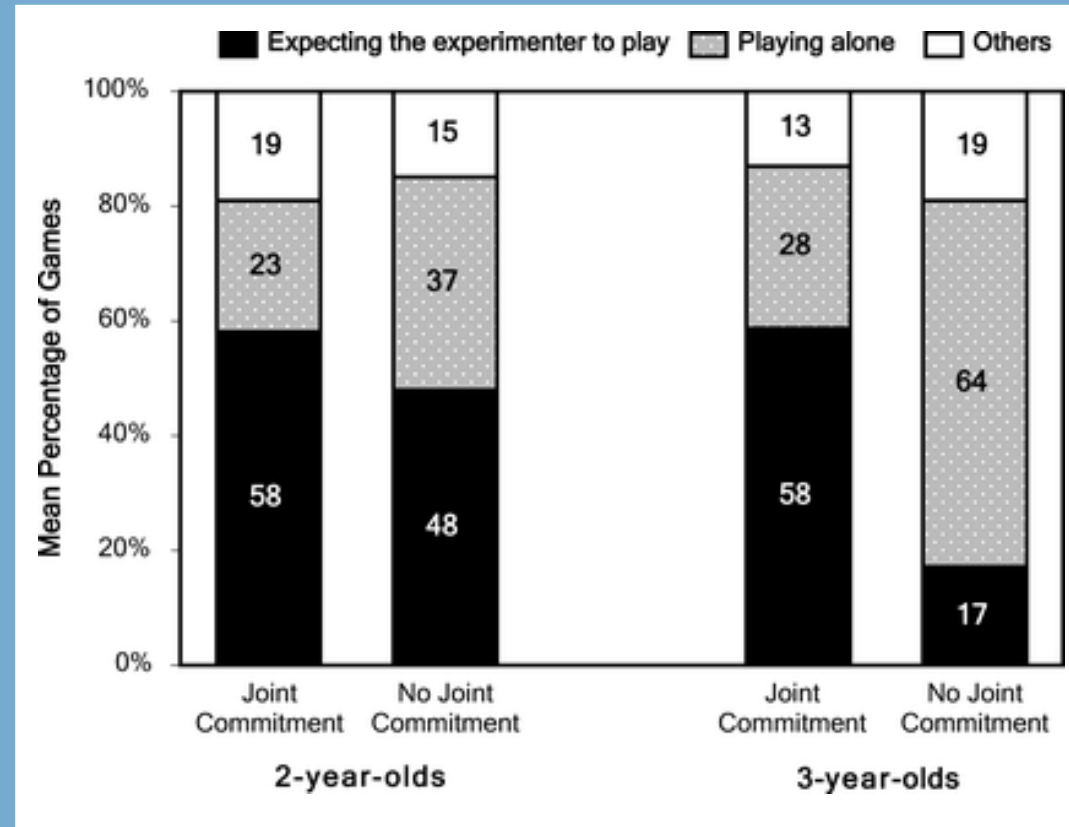
Maria Gräfenhain , Malinda Carpenter, Michael Tomasello

Published: September 4, 2013 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0073039>

Article	Authors	Metrics	Comments	Media Coverage
⌵				
Abstract	Abstract			
Introduction	Here we investigate the extent of children's understanding of the joint commitments inherent in joint activities. Three-year-old children either made a joint commitment to assemble a puzzle with a puppet partner, or else the child and puppet each assembled their own puzzle. Afterwards, children who had made the joint commitment were more likely to stop and wait for their partner on their way to fetch something, more likely to spontaneously help their partner when needed, and more likely to take over their partner's role when necessary. There was no clear difference in children's tendency to tattle on their partner's cheating behavior or their tendency to distribute rewards equally at the end. It thus appears that by 3 years of age making a joint commitment to act together with others is beginning to engender in children a "we"-intentionality which holds across at least most of the process of the joint activity until the shared goal is achieved, and which withstands at least some of the perturbations to the joint activity children experience.			
Study 1				
Study 2				
Analyses across Studies				
General Discussion				
Supporting Information				
Acknowledgments				
Author Contributions				
References				

Michael Tomasello

Nice theory but where's the evidence?



Michael Tomasello

Joint Commitment - is it worth the effort?

Autocratic

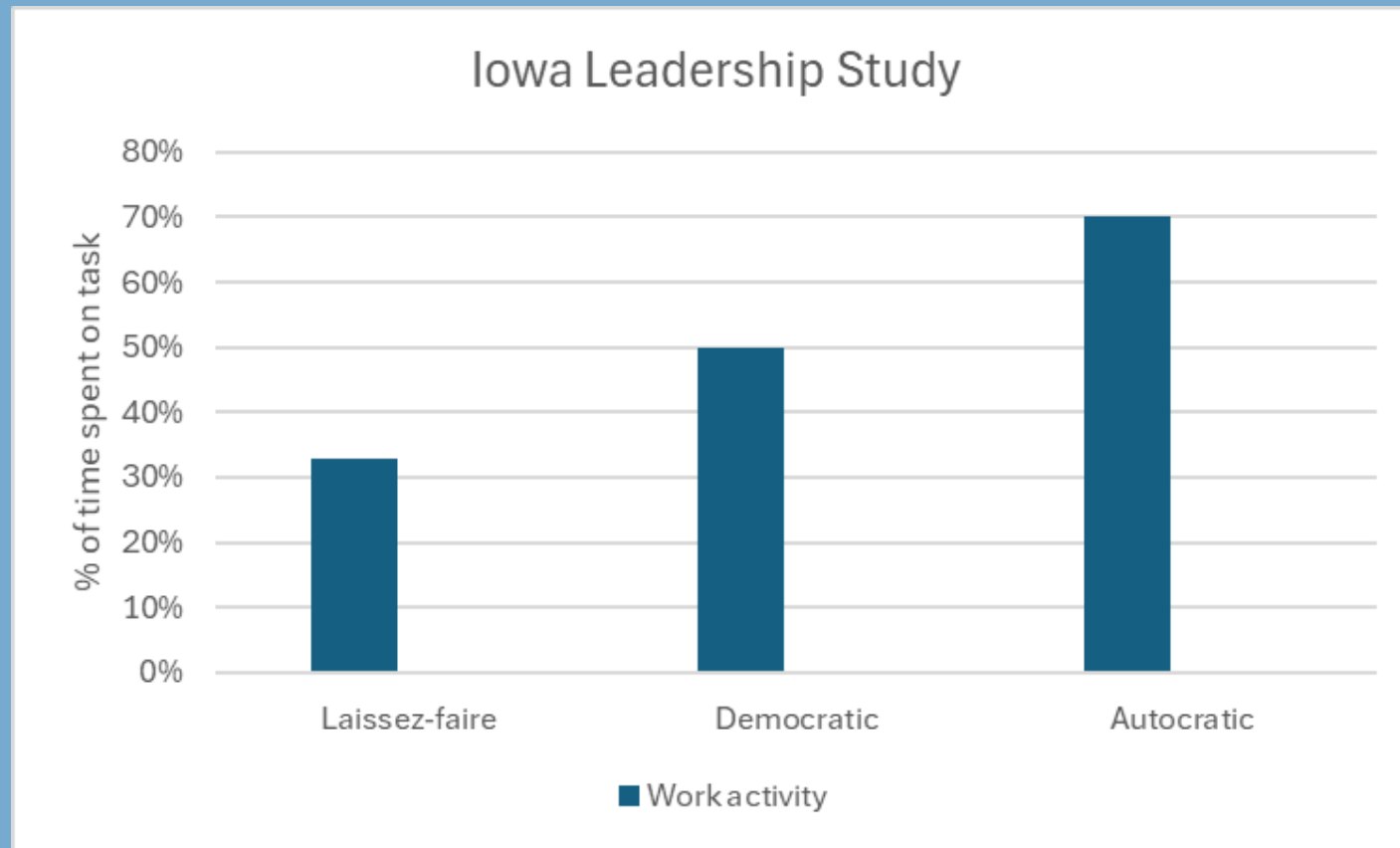


Democratic



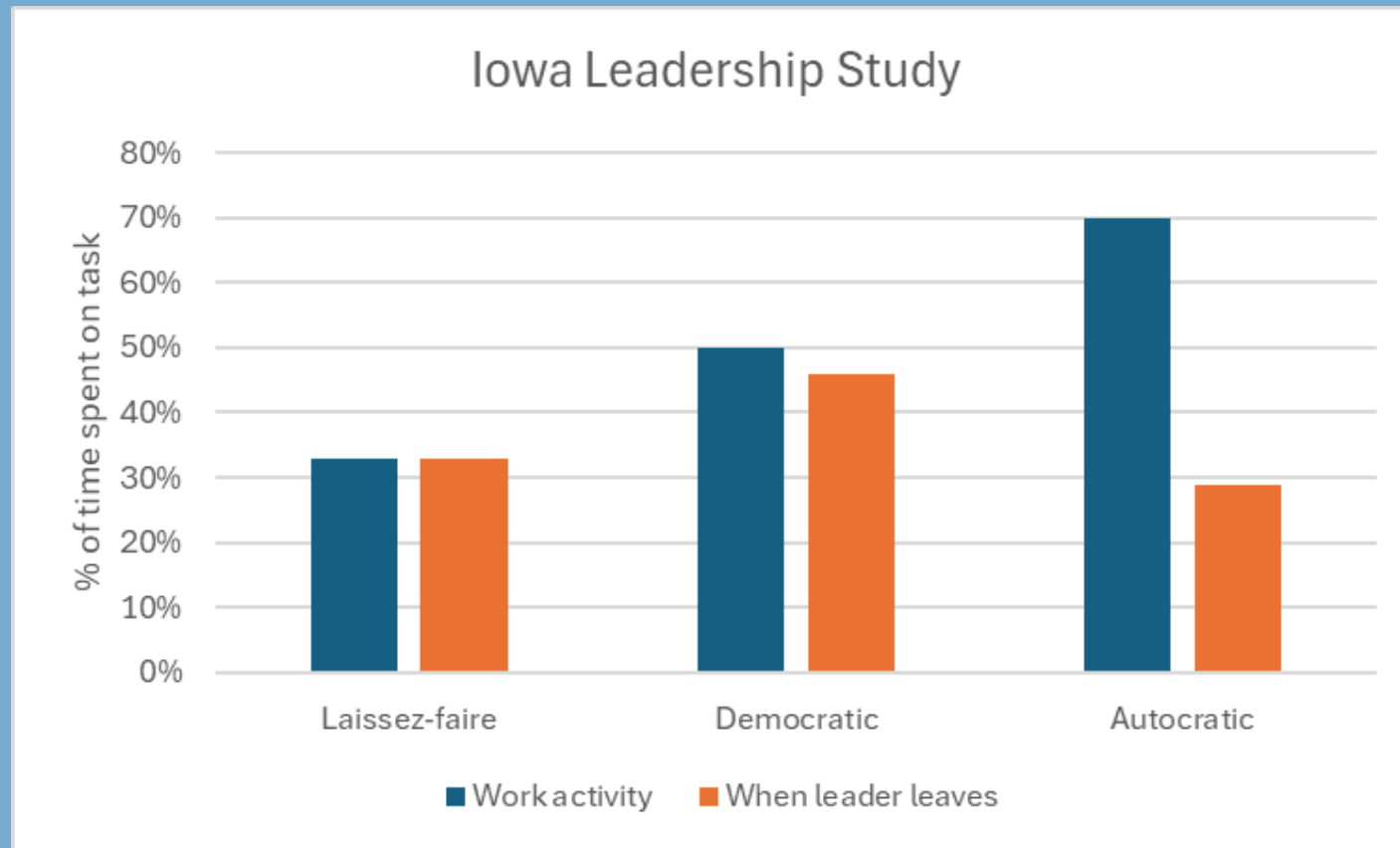
Kurt Lewin

Joint Commitment - is it worth the effort?



Kurt Lewin

Joint Commitment - is it worth the effort?



Kurt Lewin



There is nothing so practical as a
good theory.

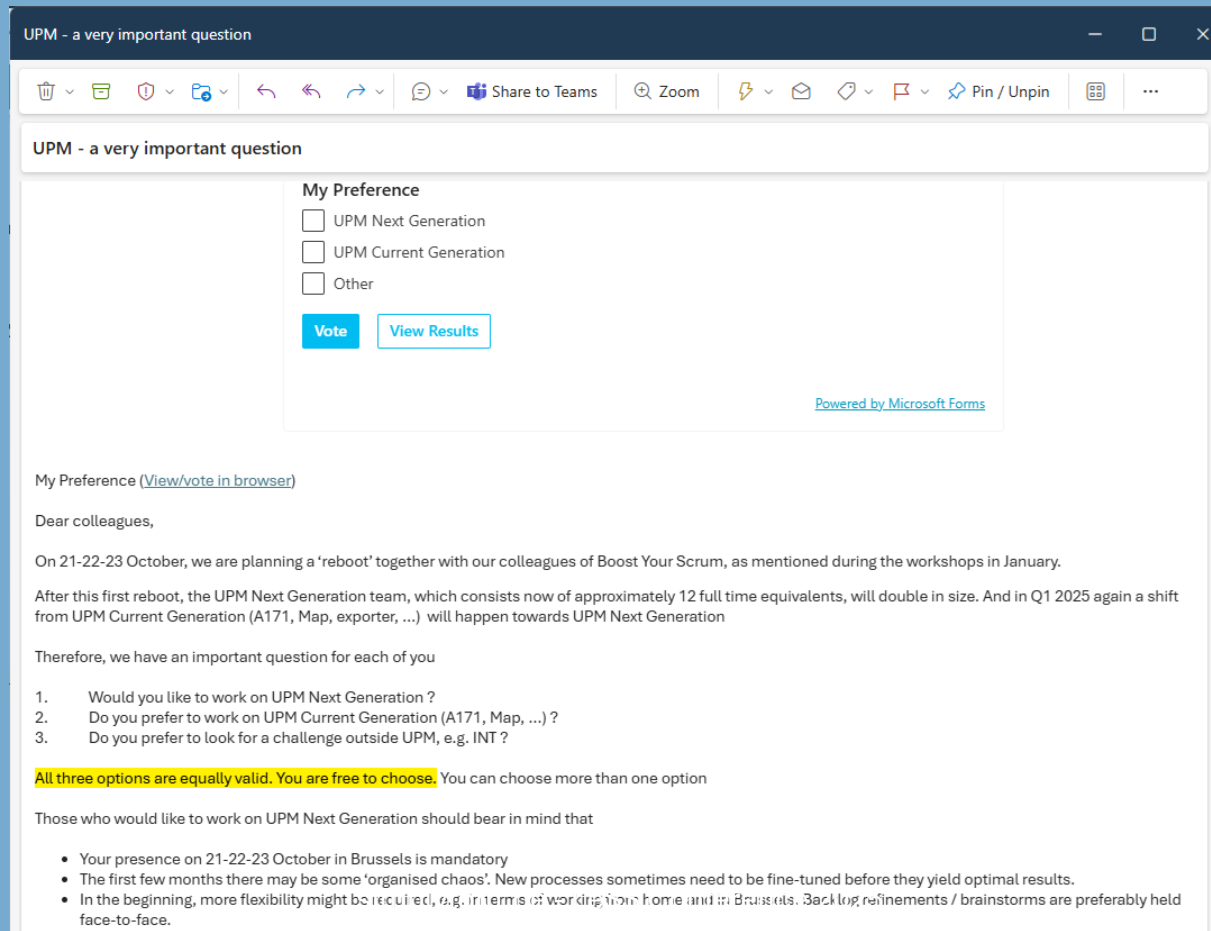
— *Kurt Lewin* —

Strong joint commitment

- Real commitment requires a real choice
- Strong commitment requires a strong Yes
- Make explicit
 - WHAT we are committing to
 - With WHOM we are committing
- Renew joint commitment when any of these change
- Demand action in accordance with commitment
- Reinforce by acting in a way that can only be explained by the joint commitment

Application in my latest LeSS flip

- Making it a real decision



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Forms poll interface. At the top, the title 'UPM - a very important question' is displayed. Below the title, there is a section for 'My Preference' with three radio button options: 'UPM Next Generation', 'UPM Current Generation', and 'Other'. Below these options are two buttons: 'Vote' and 'View Results'. A link 'Powered by Microsoft Forms' is visible at the bottom right of the form area. Below the form area, there is a section titled 'My Preference (View/vote in browser)' followed by a message to 'Dear colleagues,'. The message continues with information about a 'reboot' on October 21-23, the expansion of the UPM Next Generation team, and a shift in the UPM Current Generation. It then asks for a preference and lists three options. A highlighted yellow box states: 'All three options are equally valid. You are free to choose. You can choose more than one option'. The message concludes with a note for those choosing UPM Next Generation and a list of requirements and expectations.

UPM - a very important question

UPM - a very important question

My Preference

☐ UPM Next Generation

☐ UPM Current Generation

☐ Other

[Vote](#) [View Results](#)

[Powered by Microsoft Forms](#)

My Preference ([View/vote in browser](#))

Dear colleagues,

On 21-22-23 October, we are planning a 'reboot' together with our colleagues of Boost Your Scrum, as mentioned during the workshops in January.

After this first reboot, the UPM Next Generation team, which consists now of approximately 12 full time equivalents, will double in size. And in Q1 2025 again a shift from UPM Current Generation (A171, Map, exporter, ...) will happen towards UPM Next Generation

Therefore, we have an important question for each of you

1. Would you like to work on UPM Next Generation ?
2. Do you prefer to work on UPM Current Generation (A171, Map, ...) ?
3. Do you prefer to look for a challenge outside UPM, e.g. INT ?

All three options are equally valid. You are free to choose. You can choose more than one option

Those who would like to work on UPM Next Generation should bear in mind that

- Your presence on 21-22-23 October in Brussels is mandatory
- The first few months there may be some 'organised chaos'. New processes sometimes need to be fine-tuned before they yield optimal results.
- In the beginning, more flexibility might be required, e.g. in terms of working from home and in Brussels. Backlog refinements / brainstorm are preferably held face-to-face.

Application in my latest LeSS flip

- An explicit yes from everyone when forming teams

Do we have teams?

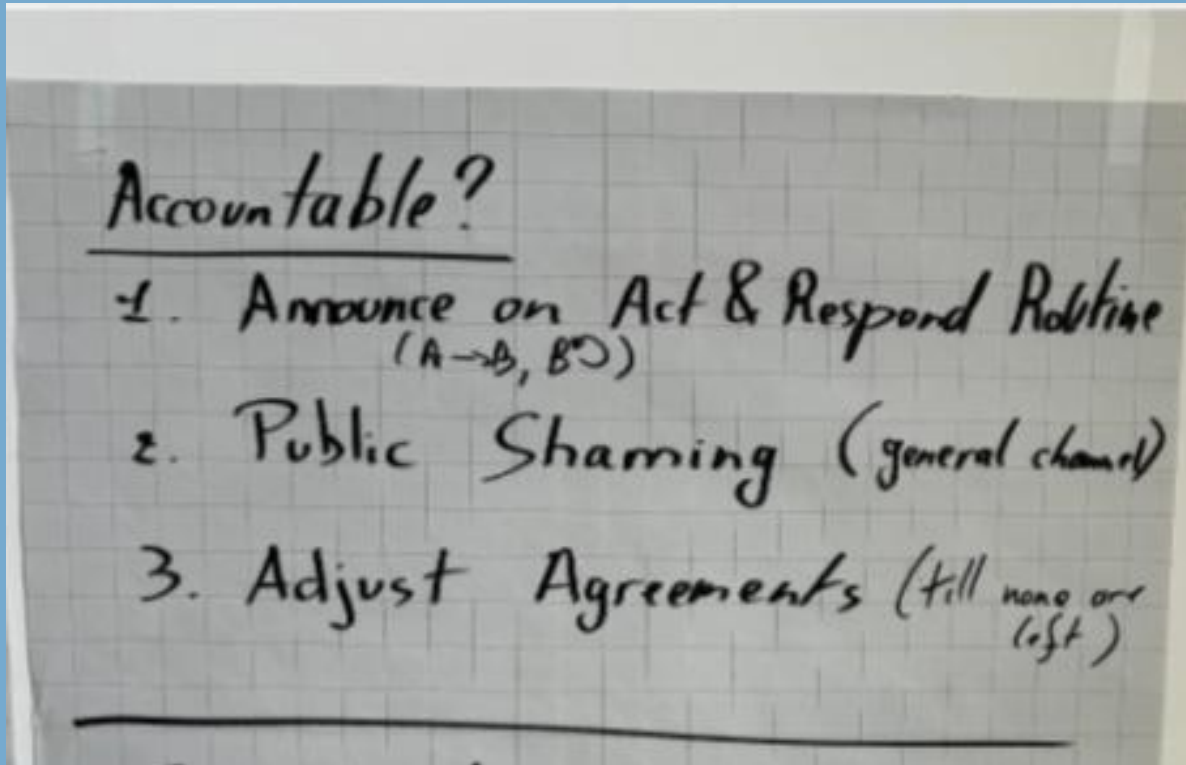
Say “No we don’t” if no

Say “Yes we do” if yes

UPM.NG Reboot

Application in my latest LeSS flip

- Team agreements also include demand-right



Team Agreements

Daily Scrum

1. **Time** : 9h15-9h30
2. **Tools** : Teams & Miro
3. **Check impediments**

Work Related Agreements

1. **Office Hours** : 9h00-16h00
2. **Day @ Office** : Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday
3. **Response time** : As soon as possible

Communication

1. **Teams** : conversation & Teams channel
2. **Delay response** : When coffee is finished
3. **Urgencies** : if possible, send msg to the group

Code Review

1. Ask for a Code Review/Merge request
2. Resolve tech debt

Bored

1. Learn new skills
2. Resolve tech debt
3. Taking new work when we not yet finish what we started

One of us is not keeping to the team agreements:

1. Speak in stand up
2. If needed, warn Duct Tape

Extra work:

1. if small: do it
2. redistribute planned work in team
3. ask help from other team
4. if larger: plan in next sprint
5. warning Duct Tape

One of us is not keeping to the team agreements:

1. Speak in stand up
2. If needed, warn Duct Tape

Application in my latest LeSS flip

- Sprint goals are explicitly announced

OUR SPRINT **25** GOALS



We, **Hakuna Matata**,

- > will continue on improving the process of modification as agreed in the refinement:
 - Move route validity next to period
 - Move the exclamation mark
 - Route validity filled in as soon calculated
 - Remove save +next : introduce popup (see figma)
 - Solve the split when multiple validities
 - Show at which location the error actually occurs
- > will identify the missing fields in the xml in collaboration with the Builders

Nothing new?

Use Volunteering

How to form new teams? Who will be in a community of practice? How are you going to answer these questions, and many more?

Use volunteers! True volunteering is a powerful way of engaging peoples' minds and hearts. It's underused, probably due to the feeling of loss of control by managers. But for people in teams it feels empowering.

Volunteering starts with education. First, provide enough education and discussion so people understand what they are volunteering for.

Here are some examples of volunteering:

- Initial-product volunteering
- Initial-teams volunteering
- Team-formation volunteering



<http://www.simplifytom.be>

[\[Download PNG\]](#) [\[Download PDF\]](#)



*"In science,
a result is interesting
when it defies our common sense;*

*in philosophy,
a result is interesting
when it explains our common sense."*

— Willard Van Orman Quine —

Gilbert and the Scrum guide(s)

People personally commit to achieving the goals of the Scrum Team.

V5 July 2016

The Scrum Team commits to achieving its goals and to supporting each other.

V6 Nov 2020

The Scrum team commits to its goals and to each other.

See you around!

- in the open space
- at the bar
- In Leuven next August for the Agile-Lean Europe UnConference
- simplytom.be
- simplificationofficers.com

