**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ETHICS AND STATE LEADERSHIP**

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***Ethics, also called moral philosophy, is a discipline concerned with what is morally good and bad and morally right and wrong. The term is also applied to any system or theory of moral values or principles. Ethical leadership means that individuals behave according to a set of principles and values that are recognized by the majority as a sound basis for the common good. These include integrity, respect, trust, fairness, transparency, and honesty.***

***Integrity is a crucial determinant of trust and a crucial concept for an understanding of governance. Policiess regarding ethics and state leadership should be aimed at preventing corruption and fostering high standards of behaviour, which will help to reinforce the credibility and legitimacy of those involved in state decision making and safeguarding the public interest.***

***This paper will analyze the importance of personal ethics in leadership and how ethics produce effective leaders. The importance of understanding ethics, integrity and motivation to act as a role model and developing a plan of action for a state leadership will be analyzed and the importance of good leadership***

***Keywords: leadership, integrity, ethics, moral norms, codes of conduct***

***“The supreme quality for leadership is unquestionable integrity. Without it, no real success is possible.” – Dwight Eisenhower***

**1. Introduction**

History is filled with wisdom and case studies on the morality of leaders and leadership. History and philosophy provide perspective on the subject and reveal certain patterns of leadership behavior and themes about leadership and morality that have existed over time. They remind us that some of the basic issues concerning the nature of leadership are inextricably tied to the human condition.(Ciulla, 2018)

**1.1. Understanding the words *ethics* and *moral***

To fully understand the ethical leadership first we must define the words *ethics* and *moral*. Some people like to make a distinction between these two concepts, arguing that ethics is about social values and morality is about personal values. As a practical matter, courses on moral philosophy cover the same material as courses on ethics. There is a long history of using these terms as synonyms of each other, regardless of their roots in different languages. In *De Fato*, Cicero substituted the Latin word *morale* for Aristotle’s use of the Greek word *ethikos.*We see the two terms defining each other in the *Oxford English Dictionary.* The word *moral* is defined as “of or pertaining to the distinction between right and wrong, or good and evil in relation to the actions, volitions, or character of human beings; ethical,” and “concerned with virtue and vice or rules of conduct, ethical praise or blame, habits of life, custom and manners” (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 1991, p. 1114). Similarly, *ethics* is defined as “of or pertaining to morality” and “the science of morals, the moral principles by which a person is guided” (*Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 1991, p. 534).

The study of ethics and the history of ideas help us understand two overarching and overlapping questions that drive most leadership research. They are: What is leadership? And what is good leadership? One is about what leadership *is,* or a descriptive question. The other is about what leadership *ought to be,* or a normative question. These two questions are sometimes confused in the literature. Progress in leadership studies rests on the ability of scholars in the field to integrate the answers to these questions.

Gardner in his working paper “The Moral Aspect of Leadership,” later published in his book *On Leadership* (Gardner, 1987), offers a series of eloquent and inspiring exhortations on the importance of caring, responsive leaders and empowering leaders who serve the common good. He does not tell us anything we do not already know, but he says it beautifully: “We should hope that our leaders will keep alive values that are not so easy to embed in laws—our caring for others, about honor and integrity, about tolerance and mutual respect, and about human fulfillment within a framework of values” (Gardner, 1990, p. 77).

The moral triumphs and failures of leaders carry a greater weight and volume than those of nonleaders (Ciulla, 2003b). The study of ethics is about human relationships. It is about what we should do and what we should be like as human beings, as members of a group or society, and in the different roles that we play in life. It is about right and wrong and good and evil. Leadership is a particular type of human relationship. Some hallmarks of this relationship are power and/or influence, vision, obligation, and responsibility. (Ciulla, 2018)

“People often say that leaders should be held to “a higher moral standard,” but does that make sense? If true, would it then be acceptable for everyone else to live by lower moral standards? The curious thing about morality is that if you set the moral standards for leaders too high, requiring something close to moral perfection,then few people will be qualified to be leaders or will want to be leaders. For example, how many of us could live up to the standard of having never lied, said anunkind word, or reneged on a promise? Ironically, when we set moral standards forleaders too high, we become even more dissatisfied with our leaders because few areable to live up to our expectations.We set moral standards for leaders too low, however,when we reduce them to nothing more than following the law or, worse,simply not being as unethical as their predecessors.” (Ciulla, 2005)

For example, an elected official may be law abiding and, unlike his or her predecessor,live by “strong family values.” The official may also have little concern for thedisadvantaged. Not caring about the poor and the sick is not against the law, but issuch a leader ethical?So where does this leave us? On the one hand, it is admirable to aspire to highmoral standards, but on the other hand, if the standards are unreachable, thenpeople give up trying to reach them (Ciulla,1994, pp. 167–183). If the standards are too high, we may become more disillusioned with our leaders for failing to reachthem.We might also end up with a shortage of competent people who are willing to take on leadership positions because we expect too much from them ethically.

History is littered with leaders who did not think they were subject to the same moral standards of honesty, propriety, and so forth, as the rest of society. One explanation for this is so obvious that it has become a cliché—power corrupts. The first most obvious characteristic of the relationship between power and virtue is that leaders usually have more power or a different kind of power and influence than followers. The power can come from a leader’s position, expertise, personality or charisma. Leaders influence others with persuasion, personal or political network, coercion or rewards. Power has the potential for all sorts of ethical difficulties that stem from what one uses it for to how it is exercised. The more power the leaders have, the greater their responsibility for what they do and do not do. Consider, for example, Plato’s ‘Ring of Gyges.’ When given a ring, a shepherd named Gyges becomes invisible . The story literally and figuratively raises the transparency question: would you be moral if you had the power to be invisible? Plato’s ‘Ring of Gyges is telling a story of how a just man if given a ring which makes him invisible starts to act unjustly with no fear of reprisal. Would you be moral if no one was watching? Leadership is slightly like having the ring of Gyges. No one can deny, that even the most just man would behave unjustly if he had this ring.

**1.2. Towards a Definition for Integrity**

Integrity is paramount in leadership. Discussion paper from the Smith School of Business Centre for Social Impact written by Katheryn Christie and Kehoe Fellow found out that “with the many senior leadership executives who have been in the media for scandal and illegal activity, a consistent theme in their downfall has been their lack of integrity and their inability to lead according to a moral set of values. The definition of integrity has been hotly contested for years in theory and practice. As researchers and practitioners work to bridge the gap between Merriam-Webster and what occurs in practice, the definition of integrity has begun to take shape.” (Christie & Fellow, Smith School of Business Centre for Social Impact)

Merriam-Webster defines integrity as: “a firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values”. Integrity is much more than a value. Values, as a essential components of successful leadership are defined by Merriam-Webster as “a person’s principles or standards of behavior and one’s judgments of what is important in life”. (Choi & Wang, 2007).

With this knowledge, we can then look at integrity as the piece of the puzzle that gives meaning to one’s values. It is one thing to have a strong set of core values as a leader, but it is another thing to have strong moral values, share them, and act consistently according to them on a daily basis. The latter, then, is the true embodiment of integrity.

Laws, codes of conduct and ethical standards, as well as informal norms and values are three major ways in which followers assess the integrity of their leader. Ethical behavior is a reflection process and a communal exercise that concerns the moral behavior of an individual based on an established and expressed standard of individual values (Bishop, 2013). The effectiveness of ethical leadership has been extensively investigated. However, compared to the outcomes of ethical leadership, we still lack enough knowledge about the mechanisms underlying ethical leadership and its outcomes.( Zhang, Zhou and Mao, 2018)

“Integrity” has become a concept with more prominence in research on government and governance, as well as in actual policy making at all levels. In this contribution for the journal Public Integrity, whose name illustrates the importance of the topic, a number of basic questions about integrity are addressed. The main question concerns the meaning of the intriguing concept, what is “integrity?”

Everybody desires it, but what exactly is being longed for and talked about? A review of the literature (Huberts, 2014) led to at least eight different views that will be summarized in the next sections, with additional reflection on the underlying basics of an integrity “approach” and on its relationship with concepts/views with “ethics” or “corruption” or “good governance” in the center.

As we previously indicated integrity is a crucial concept for an understanding of governance. Not as an alternative for many challenging “ethics theories and approaches” in the field but to be embedded in existent “approaches” and theory development. This presupposes that moral values and norms are important to describe and explain the behavior of governance actors. That topic should be a challenging one for future research that presupposes an “empirical turn” in the research that already focuses on ethics and integrity

The most morally attractive definitions of leadership hail from the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and Rost’s (1991) in his chapter on ethics he states, “The leadership process is ethical if the people in the relationship (the leaders and followers) *freely* agree that the intended changes fairly reflect their mutual purposes” (p. 161). For Rost, consensus is an important part of what makes leadership ethical and what makes leadership *leadership.*

The morally attractive definitions also speak to a distinction frequently made between leadership and headship. Holding a formal leadership position or position of power does not necessarily mean that a person exercises leadership. Furthermore, you do not have to hold a formal position to exercise leadership. People in leadership positions may wield force or authority using only their position and the resources and power that come with it. Some scholars would argue that bullies and tyrants are not leaders, which takes us to what prof. Ciulla have called “the Hitler problem” (Ciulla, 1995). The Hitler problem is based on how you answer the question, “Was Hitler a leader?” According to the morally unattractive definitions that we have in the literature, he was a leader, perhaps even a great leader, albeit an immoral one. Heifetz (1994) argued that, under the “great man” and trait theories of leadership, you can put Hitler, Lincoln, and Gandhi in the same category because the underlying idea of the theory is that leadership is influence over history. However, under the morally attractive or normative theories, Hitler was not a leader at all. He was a bully or tyrant or simply the head of Germany.(Ciulla, 2018)

History defines successful leaders largely in terms of their ability to bring about change for better or worse. As a result, great leaders in history include everyone from Gandhi to Hitler. Machiavelli was disgusted by Cesare Borgia the man, but impressed by Borgia as the resolute, ferocious, and cunning prince (Prezzolini, 1928, p. 11).Whereas leaders usually bring about change or are successful at doing something, the ethical questions waiting in the wings are the ones found in the various definitions mentioned earlier.What were the leader’s intentions? How did the leader go about bringing change? And was the change itself good? In my own work, I have argued that a good leader is an ethical and an effective leader (Ciulla, 1995).Whereas this may seem like stating the obvious, the problem we face is that we do not always find ethics and effectiveness in the same leader.

Prof. Ciulla in her paper “Ethics and Leadership ethics” argues that, whereas we admire self-sacrifice, morality sometimes calls upon leaders to do things that are against their self-interest. This is less about altruism than it is about the nature of both morality and leadership.We want leaders to put the interests of followers first, but most leaders do not pay a price for doing that on a daily basis, nor do most circumstances require them to calculate their interests in relation to the interests of their followers. The practice of leadership is to guide and look after the goals, missions, and aspirations of groups, organizations, countries, or causes. (Ciulla, 2018)

A qualitative study was made via in-depth interviews with 121 local political leaders from 65 local authorities in the UK to see how ethical leadership practices can restore public trust in political leaders. The study founud that being a moral person, an ethical political leader sets good examples of behaviour, sets the tone at the top and challenges those who do not behave ethically, as well as encourages, supports and rewards those who perform and conduct themselves well. As a result, the level of public trust in political leaders is likely to increase gradually. The study also took a triple-pillar approach to ethical leadership, examining ethical leadership practices in the context of code of conduct, being a moral person and being a moral leader. The terms ethics and morality are used interchangeably because morality can refer to personal, social and religious values, code of conduct or social mores (or norms) from a society, or a standard (goodness and rightness) that is believed, accepted and applied by an individual. In the study they used qualitative analysis to explain processes by which different elements (code of conduct, moral person and moral leader) of ethical leadership have an effect on public trust. Codes of ethics appears to be insufficient to achieve changes without other social processes. The study establishes how moral person dimension has an influence on moral leader dimension of ethical leadership.(Mozumder, 2021)

Public leadership studies (e.g., Downe et al., 2013; Mozumder, 2018) have begun to find a connection between value-based leadership practices and codes of conduct and their effect on followers’ behaviors and cognitions. Regulatory (codified) framework establishes how a government and its society function and enforces the behaviors and actions individuals are expected to follow, while ethics suggest what individuals ought to follow. Ethical leadership comes from within individual’s moral sense. The study also found that ethical leadership is not just about complying with the codes (and rules), personal moral framework is also important to act as a role model, by setting an example and a tone at the top. The findings of the study demonstrate the explanatory power of moral leadership, explaining how ethical leaders may combine personal moral framework and formal regulatory processes with social learning processes. (Mozumder, 2021)

The key findings of the study are that ethical leadership matters in politics and ethical leadership practices such as being truthful, keeping promises, caring for others and engaging with public can help restore some of the lost trust. Political leaders can influence the behaviour of their colleagues and citizens through role modelling (setting good examples), particularly by encouraging those who are new to politics to emulate good behaviour. Public evaluation of the characteristics of political leaders such as honesty, truthfulness, keeping promises, fairness and concern for others is likely to affect public trust. Trust is a key component of political capital (Kjaer, 2013). Trust erodes when our words and actions do not accord. It significantly affects trust when politicians promise the public something in order to get themselves elected, and it then becomes obvious that they can’t or won’t do what they said they would.

Political philosophers and scientists have elaborated their thoughts about the relationship between ethics and politics. Walzer in his book “Political action: The problem of dirty hands” says that, both *dirty hands* and *moral dilemma* challenge the idea that moral values are absolute. “The question is whether we require extremely moralized politics, tending to utopianism, or extremely politicised morality, tending to drop authentic morality altogether. We need to find a balance by determining the core components of an ethical standard; understanding this could help us minimise the tensions between morality and politics.( Walzer, 1973)

In a democracy, ethical political leadership can be conceptualised as a sociopolitical process where the leaders are duly elected, guided by principles, motivated by public values and trust, and act within the socio-legal framework to impact the lives of citizens. Public values (or public interests) and trust are two key components of ethical political leadership. Trust is defined as the ‘‘psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another’’ (Rousseau et al., 1998, p. 395). Trust in political leaders refers to the level of confidence citizens have in their elected representatives to act appropriately and honestly in the public interest rather than from self-interest (Citrin & Stoker, 2018). Trust in political leaders is vital for the effective functioning of a democratic government (Beerbohm, 2015).

In Elderman Trust Barometer Report in 2022, titled “The Cycle of distrust” it is shown that, recently there have been a number of high-profile perceived unethical leadership behaviour and practices. These have affected the public’s trust in political leaders and government globally. Trust in political leaders and government is at a low level although trust in government is considered as an indispensable for the effective functioning of democracy. The decline of public trust in political leaders is well documented. The study has also found evidence in support of the decline.

As a state leader, one can significantly impact the assessment of their integrity in various ways. By knowing your values and what is expected of you, by showing your values, and by leading through your values, as a state leader you can espouse and enact integrity that will lead to greater State and build lasting trust.

**CONCLUSION**

Aristotle (1984) said that happiness is the end to which we aim in life. The Greek word that Aristotle uses for happiness is *eudaimonea.* It means happiness, not in terms of pleasure or contentment, but as flourishing. A happy life is one where we flourish as human beings, both in terms of our material and personal development and our moral development. The concept of *eudaimonea* gives us two umbrella questions that can be used to assess the overall ethics and effectiveness of leadership.

The more we explore how ethics and morality are inextricably intertwined, the better we will understand state leadership. The philosophic study of ethics provides a critical perspective from which we can examine the assumptions behind state leadership.

Trust erodes when our words and actions do not accord. It significantly affects trust when politicians promise the public something in order to get themselves elected, and it then becomes obvious that they can’t or won’t do what they said they would. When we consider all the definitions and studies conducted by a numerous researches on this field, we conclude that ethical state leadership entails the ability of leaders to sustain fundamental notions of morality such as care and respect for persons, justice, and honesty.

John C. Maxwell said that*“A leader is one who knows the way, shows the way and goes the way”* State Leaders should be driven by the so called moral compass. The dictionary defines moral compass as the person’s ability to judge what is right and wrong and act accordingly. Also we can define it as a set of values that guides our decision-making, affects our actions, and defines us as a person.

In essence, a moral compass is just as its name suggests. All human beings are born with a moral compass. We all have that innate sense of what is right and wrong. It points us in the right direction. Maybe some of us, or some of our state leaders have different definitions of right and wrong, but our moral compass should defiantly provides an objective standard and help them see what is right and wrong.

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