

# The Journal of Values-Based Leadership

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THE JOURNAL OF  
**JVBL**  
VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

Volume XV | Issue II | Summer/Fall 2022

VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY

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# JOURNAL OF VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP\*

Summer/Fall 2022

Volume 15, Issue 2

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*The Journal of Values-Based Leadership (JVBL)* is sponsored by Bonnie ('70) and Peter ('65, '70) Raquet and the Raquet Family Foundation.

## JVBL Mission Statement

The mission of the *JVBL* is to promote ethical and moral leadership and behavior by serving as a forum for ideas and the sharing of “best practices.” It serves as a resource for business and institutional leaders, educators, and students concerned about values-based leadership. The *JVBL* defines values-based leadership to include topics involving ethics in leadership, moral considerations in business decision-making, stewardship of our natural environment, and spirituality as a source of motivation. The *JVBL* strives to publish articles that are intellectually rigorous yet of practical use to leaders, teachers, and entrepreneurs. In this way, the *JVBL* serves as a high quality, international journal focused on converging the practical, theoretical, and applicable ideas and experiences of scholars and practitioners. The *JVBL* provides leaders with a tool of ongoing self-critique and development, teachers with a resource of pedagogical support in instructing values-based leadership to their students, and entrepreneurs with examples of conscientious decision-making to be emulated within their own business environs.

## Submission Guidelines for the *JVBL*

The *JVBL* invites you to submit manuscripts for review and possible publication. The *JVBL* is dedicated to supporting people who seek to create more ethically- and socially-responsive organizations through leadership and education. The Journal publishes articles that provide knowledge that is intellectually well-developed and useful in practice. The *JVBL* is a peer-reviewed journal available in both electronic and print fora (fully digital with print-on-demand options). The readership includes business leaders, government representatives, academics, and students interested in the study and analysis of critical issues affecting the practice of values-based leadership. The *JVBL* is dedicated to publishing articles related to:

1. **Leading with integrity, credibility, and morality;**
2. **Creating ethical, values-based organizations;**
3. **Balancing the concerns of stakeholders, consumers, labor and management, and the environment; and**
4. **Teaching students how to understand their personal core values and how such values impact organizational performance.**

In addition to articles that bridge theory and practice, the *JVBL* is interested in book reviews, case studies, personal experience articles, and pedagogical papers. If you have a manuscript idea that addresses facets of principled or values-based leadership, but you are uncertain as to its propriety to the mission of the *JVBL*, please contact its editor. While manuscript length is not a major consideration in electronic publication, we encourage contributions of less than 20 pages of double-spaced narrative. As the *JVBL* is in electronic format, we especially encourage the submission of manuscripts which utilize visual text.

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Manuscripts will be acknowledged immediately upon receipt. All efforts will be made to complete the review process within 4-6 weeks.

By submitting a paper for review for possible publication in the *JVBL*, the author(s) acknowledge that the work has not been offered to any other publication and additionally warrant that the work is original and does not infringe upon another's copyright. If the submitted work is accepted for publication and copyright infringement and/or plagiarism is successfully alleged with respect to that particular work, the submitting author agrees to hold the *JVBL* harmless and indemnified against any resulting claims associated therewith and further commits to undertaking all appropriate corrective actions necessary to remedy this substantiated claim(s) of infringement/ plagiarism.

All submissions, including appendices, should be transmitted in either .docx or .doc formats directly through the "submit article" portal (preferred) on the journal's home page – <http://scholar.valpo.edu/jvbl/> – or alternatively as an email attachment to [jvbl@valpo.edu](mailto:jvbl@valpo.edu). The submitting author shall provide contact information and indicate whether there are co-authors to be listed (specifying which one will be the primary contact).

All material accepted for publication shall become the property of the *JVBL*.

## Review Process

*The JVBL* seeks work that is clearly written and relevant to the Journal's central theme, yet imbued with analytical and intellectual excellence. In this respect, the editorial review board shall consist of both leading scholars and respected high-level business leaders.

All manuscripts undergo a two-stage review process:

- 1) The editor and/or his or her representative will conduct a cursory review to determine if the manuscript is appropriate for inclusion in the *JVBL* by examining the relevance of the topic and its appeal to the Journal's target readership. The editor may: a) reject the manuscript outright, b) request submission of a revised manuscript which will then be subject to a comprehensive in-house review, or c) forward the manuscript for review pursuant to the provisions of the following paragraph.
- 2) The editor will submit the manuscript to two reviewers emanating from the field of the paper's topic, unless the submission is invited. Once reviews are returned, the editor may: a) accept the manuscript without modification; b) accept the document with specific changes noted; c) offer the author(s) the opportunity to revise and resubmit the manuscript in response to the reviewers' and editors' comments and notations; or d) reject the manuscript.

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*A comparison is made between how Italy's Benito Mussolini (Il Duce) controlled his nation's citizenry and its consequences and that of the rule and barbarity of Vladimir Putin today.*
18. **REPUBLICANS IN CONGRESS TODAY: AGAINST EVERYTHING AND FOR WHAT?**  
Ritch K. Eich — Thousand Oaks, California, USA  
*In April, 2022, the US House of Representatives passed a nonbinding, bipartisan resolution reaffirming its unequivocal support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an alliance founded on democratic principles. However, in a recent nonbinding vote, 63 House Republicans shamefully refused to support the alliance. And it's questionable they will back democracy when our nation calls for their support.*
21. **A CRISIS OF LEASERSHIP IN THE UNITED STATES**  
Elizabeth Gingerich — Valparaiso, Indiana, USA  
*In late June of 2022, the U.S. passed new gun control legislation. Is this too little too late, especially in the face of rising incidents of mass shootings? Where are our leaders?*
31. **DEMOCRACY: A VISION OF SOMETHING HIGHER**  
Joseph Hester — Claremont, North Carolina, USA  
*Given the insurrection attempt at our nation's Capitol on 1/6/21, many are again talking about the fragility of the democratic process and are skeptical about its future, including what is needed to strengthen its core.*
55. **IMPERATIVE OF COMPETENCE — VULCAN'S CRUCIBLE**  
Dean M. Schroeder — Valparaiso, Indiana, USA  
*An examination of stakeholder perspective upon the closure of their company. One such view was contemplated through "the five lenses through which to view ethics that he had been taught in b-school: fairness & justice, utilitarian, rights, community good, and virtue. Arguments could be made for the application of several of these perspectives in this situation." The lasting thought is whether an ethical imperative of competency is required to running a lasting business.*
60. **THE FRAYED EDGES OF MORALS AND VALUES: SEEKING BALANCE IN A WORLD OF VALUE DIVERSITY**  
Joseph P. Hester — Claremont, North Carolina, USA  
*Many values and ethical ideas have played a role in shaping American society and the world, yet, identifying and ranking these values in importance remains a burden for many Americans, especially since there is considerable disagreement about the criteria of such a ranking. But, this morning, March 1, 2022, let there be no mistake: democracy is under attack in Ukraine and many European nations have awakened to this crisis, listening and uniting, and clearly focusing on the meaning and importance of freedom, liberty, and justice—the core principles of democracy.*
64. **LEADING WITH PASSION – WHAT IT MEANS, WHY IT MATTERS**  
Comfort Okpala — Greensboro, North Carolina, USA  
Cam Caldwell — St. George, Utah, USA

*The ability to care, or to lead with passion, has increasingly been identified as a quality of today's leaders and has been cited as an essential condition precedent for successful organizations. Understanding the role of passion in building strong relationships has practical benefits for both leaders and followers. The focus of this paper is on identifying key elements of passion that contribute to effective leadership and to explain why leading with passion is so important in today's highly competitive business climate.*

## **Interviews and Commentary**

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 Shirin Karbalaeei Ali – Tehran, Iran  
*This study seeks to identify research gaps and provide an integrative and comprehensive review related to implicit leadership theory (ILTs) and implicit followership theory (IFTs) over the last five years. Using a qualitative systematic review and the content analysis method, the author analyzed, summarized, and categorized articles' recommendations to provide a comprehensive perspective of research gaps and directions for future studies.*
121. **CAN AN OLD THEORY HELP SOLVE A CONTEMPORARY LABOR CRISIS? APPLYING JCM TO THE CURRENT LABOR SHORTAGE**  
 Jeffrey Cohu – Nashville, Tennessee, USA  
*This article asserts that the answer to our current labor crisis may not be as challenging as it appears if management will apply an old theory (Job Characteristics Model) to our contemporary workforce challenges. The article illustrates the key dimensions of the model and provides specific leadership recommendations for applying the JCM model to our current employment environment. Finally, the article also asserts that a new employee-centric style of leadership that requires a shift in leadership values and mindset is necessary to address the labor shortage and that JCM is a useful tool to facilitate that transition.*
131. **SUBTLE LEADERSHIP: WHEN REFERENT POWER IS SUBTLY POWERFUL**  
 Luz E. Quiñones-González, PhD – UPR Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, USA  
*The following research presents the construct of "subtle leadership" in a conceptual discussion as a new way of perceiving and studying leaders of the twenty-first century. Its core objective points toward the conceptualization of "subtle leadership," sharing a basic definition to provoke discussion and emerging theoretical framework in order to better understand the current organizational reality. Some leadership styles such as servant leadership, shared leadership, and authentic leadership are discussed to compare and contrast them with "subtle leadership," emphasizing that leadership is viewed as a process and not only as styles or personal traits. Subtle leadership is primarily based on a high level of referent power and a holistic perspective of the personal and process factors essential for leading and influencing today's workplace. Considering the potential of "subtle leadership" for further discussion in the academic world, it aims to generate provoking theory building.*
148. **ETHICAL PLURALISM: THE DECISION-MAKING SYSTEM OF A COMPLEX WORLD**  
 Clinton Unger – Jolon, California, USA

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*Today's leaders are faced with many different ethical decisions that are further highlighted by social media and a rapid news cycle. It has been established that there is no universal ethical code, nor is there one unified global culture. Leaders must continually educate themselves and their employees in proper leadership techniques, education, decision-making, and cultural understanding. Pluralism is engrained in ethics, where there are different interpretations of the same information, different ways to analyze the situation, and different ethical frameworks. While pluralism can lead to different outputs and decisions across the same situation, it is not a blight on ethics but a way to understand the reason for varying outcomes and feedback.*

160. **THE MEDIATING INFLUENCE OF CONFIDENCE, AUTONOMY, AND IDENTIFICATION ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVANT LEADERSHIP AND HARMONIOUS PASSION**

Angelica Tabares – Tallahassee, Florida, USA

Lise Malherbe – Dallas, Texas, USA

Kevin J. Hurt – Columbus, Georgia, USA

*The current paper explores the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion. Harmonious passion refers to a strong desire to freely engage in an activity and is a result of an autonomous internalization of the activity into one's identity. While passion and leadership have been generally linked, the specific relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion is underdeveloped within the field of servant leadership research. Our paper presents a conceptual model and propositions linking servant leadership and harmonious passion through the mediating mechanisms of follower confidence, autonomy, and identification. Implications and future research are discussed.*

### **Case Studies**

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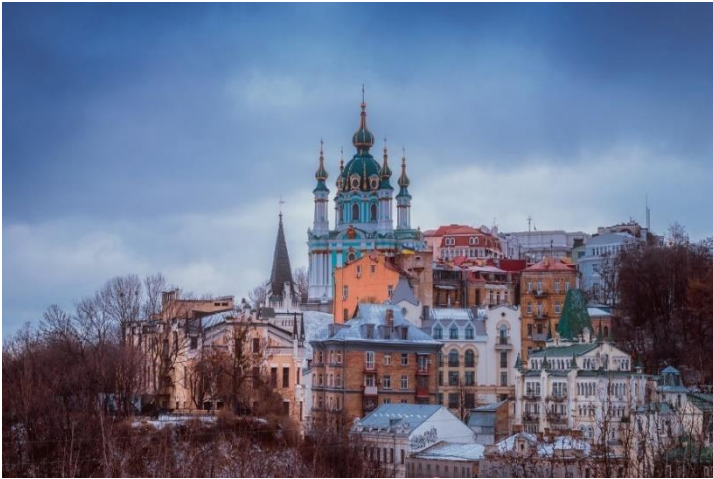
250. **LIBERATION**

*Author:* Emilio Iodice

*Reviewer:* Elizabeth Gingerich – Valparaiso, Indiana, USA

## Dedication

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## Dedication

*To our colleagues, friends, sisters, brothers, and family in Ukraine:*

*On behalf of the Editorial Board of our Journal, please accept the solidarity of our members, associates, authors, staff, and those who read our writings across the globe.*

**“We have to stand up to evil.”**

– Michael McFaul, former US Ambassador to the Russian Federation



*Courtesy, Wikimedia Commons*

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*You are not alone.*

*The aggression, suffering, and humiliation you face penetrate our hearts. Our thoughts and feelings are with you and those you love. We pray this period of agony ends soon, and you and your nation – with the support of the entire free world – will have the courage and strength to rise out of the ashes to a new day of freedom and liberty...together.*

*We are with you now and always.*



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*Long live Ukraine.*



*Benito Mussolini, "Il Duce," projected an aura of manhood, action, leadership, and intellectual prowess.*

## Careful Vladimir or you may end up like Il Duce.

– Emilio Iodice, Rome, Italy

For years he was hailed as the greatest leader of his time.

Gandhi called him a "Superman."

He was named the "Napoleon of the Twentieth Century."

Churchill, Roosevelt, and notable leaders from around the world praised his leadership. People from across the globe extolled him.

Women adored him. Journalists and writers fell under his hypnotic spell as did millions of his countrymen.



*Courtesy, Istituto Luce and Italian National Archives*



*Vladimir Putin, Courtesy, Cambridge University Press*

He was a master of the media and bent and twisted it to convey his message of greatness, pride, and nationalism. He transformed a rural, backward nation into a model of efficiency, economic growth, and self-esteem.

His doctrine of fascism was analyzed by economists, sociologists, and politicians as, perhaps, a new way of governing in complex times.

Fascist parties grew in civilized nations.

Suddenly, his fame evaporated as the world understood what was behind his façade.

It was violence, tyranny, the destruction of liberty and the suffering and bloodshed of war and mayhem.



*Courtesy, RAI News*

He wrestled tigers and leopards, went shirtless, rode horses, dove into the Tiber, played the violin, boasted about his sexual skills, and ran a police state.

Putin paints the same picture. He rejects signs of femininity or weakness.

An avid sportsman who loves hockey, plays the piano, rides horses without a shirt, practices martial arts, caresses tigers, and



*Courtesy, Istituto Luce and Italian National Archives*



*Courtesy, Orthodox Times*

The times and crises that created him are once again upon us. Democracies are weak and governments in free nations are divided and unable to deal with the threat of growing totalitarianism, prejudice, and intolerance.

An increasing number of Russian analysts are calling Putin's regime "fascist." Without a doubt, he is following in the footsteps of Italy's 20<sup>th</sup> century dictator.

leopards, swims in frigid waters, writes about development of Russia's natural resources, and the reunification of his nation with its past and imposed authoritarian rule on his people.

Mussolini rose to power in eighteen months following election to parliament. Putin became President nine months after becoming Premier.





*Courtesy, Istituto Luce and Italian National Archives*



*Courtesy, Tass and Radio Free Europe*

Both were young. Il Duce was 39, Vladimir 48. Mussolini set out to restore the Roman Empire. Putin dreams of recreating the Soviet Union.



*Courtesy, Tass and the New Yorker*

devastating for him and his people.

Mussolini signed the Lateran Treaty and made peace with the Vatican following 60 years of separation.

Putin helped create the Act of Canonical Communion which restored relations between the Russian Orthodox Church of Moscow and the Church in other parts of the world following an 80 schism.

Il Duce dragged his nation into useless wars. First in Ethiopia, then in Spain, and finally the Second World War. His alliance with Hitler was

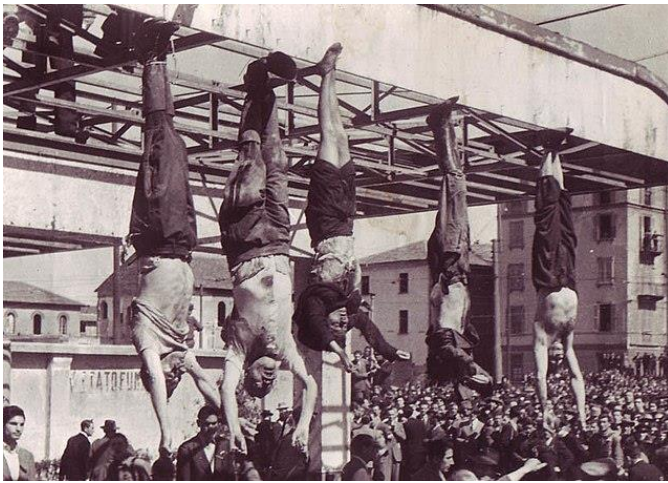
To extend his despotic rule and increase his empire, Putin launched attacks in Chechin, Georgia, and Ukraine.

Xi Jinping of China is his only friend.

A few years before the start of WWII, an old Socialist companion of Mussolini visited him. He warned Il Duce that he would end up like Cola di Rienzo, a 14<sup>th</sup> century leader who rose rapidly to power only to be executed and hung by his heels in the town square. Mussolini laughed and replied, "I do not wear rings like Cola," who was identified by the jewelry he wore.

Six years later, Il Duce was killed by his people and hung by his heels in a square in Milan.

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Courtesy, Istituto Luce, Italian National Archives and Wikipedia Commons

Vladimir Putin does not wear rings. Yet he will be identified by the hatred, suffering, and misery he aroused.

Careful Vladimir or you may end up like Il Duce.

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*Emilio Iodice is Director Emeritus of Loyola University Chicago's Rome Center, Professor of Leadership, and author of "The Return of Mussolini: The Rise of Modern-Day Tyranny." [iodicebooks.com](http://iodicebooks.com).*



## Republicans in Congress Today: Against Everything and For What?

*In a recent nonbinding vote, 63 House Republicans  
shamefully refused to support NATO*

— Ritch K. Eich, Thousand Oaks, CA, USA

Auto executive Lee Iacocca's blockbuster book, *Where Have All the Leaders Gone*, was published 15 years ago in 2007, but you could ask the exact same question today with regard to the Republican Party in Congress.

Are Ted Cruz, Josh Hawley, and Rand Paul the best the GOP can offer? Critical, brash and obstructionist, they seem to stand *against* everything, and stand *for* nothing at all.

And then there are the renegades prone to conspiracy theories who have ties to far-right groups or have said bizarre, outlandish things about Jewish space lasers and orgies or have made other insidious comments in Congress, led by Madison Cawthorn, Marjorie Taylor Greene, Matt Gaetz, and Lauren Boebert. These members of Congress represent the party's younger side and possibly its future in the post-Mitch McConnell era. What do these junior members stand for? Will they embrace true Democracy and bipartisanship or continue to claim – falsely and without evidence – that the 2020 election was stolen from Donald Trump?

It's questionable they will back democracy when our nation calls for their support. Earlier in April, the House of Representatives passed a nonbinding, bipartisan resolution reaffirming its unequivocal support for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as an alliance founded on democratic principles. It's shocking that this resolution passed 362 to 63, with all 63 of the "no" votes coming from Republicans, most of them major Trump supporters. Have these Republicans lost their minds? Wrecking or at least weakening NATO is among Russian President Vladimir Putin's major goals, and sadly, dozens of Republican members of Congress are playing right into his hands while Russia continues to brutally attack Ukraine, a sovereign nation.

The GOP seems to be becoming the party of people with fringe ideologies. The party once had clear, well-developed principles, but is no longer a functioning party. Republicans in Congress seem more loyal to one man and his angry white followers than the Constitution or all Americans. Taylor Greene has promoted baseless conspiracy theories, stalked school shooting victims on the street, and even suggested that school shootings and 9/11 were staged – not to mention her rambling Facebook post about the Jewish space laser conspiracy. Cawthorn falsely accused his own party of drug use and orgies. Texans may never forgive Cruz for running off to vacation in Cancun while his state was in the midst of

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a deadly deep freeze that killed 246 people when the power failed throughout much of the state.

There was a time when the Republican Party stood for important values and was led by respectable people with solid conservative beliefs. Conservatism meant fiscal responsibility, supporting the military, and promoting smaller government. Few of today's Republicans in Congress appear to practice any of these things, and in fact, they frequently denounce the military as "woke" and expand the government's reach into our personal lives with new "culture war" laws and restrictions. They would rather fight over culture than deal with important issues like Medicare and Social Security before both programs go broke.

Gerald Ford, Margaret Chase Smith, Nelson Rockefeller, Arlen Specter, John McCain, Chuck Hagel, Robert Dole, Richard Lugar, John Warner, Olympia Snowe, Robert Taft, Susan Collins, Everett Dirksen, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Edward Brook, Arthur Vandenberg, Jacob Javits, Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Clifford Case, Mac Mathias, Bob Michel, Liz Cheney, Mitt Romney, Lisa Murkowski, the late Orrin Hatch, and Governors Mike DeWine and Larry Hogan and others like Elliott Richardson are all GOP leaders, past and present, who distinguished themselves as honorable and bipartisan on more than one occasion and served their constituents, party and country with distinction. Peter Meijer, a principled, industrious, and thoughtful congressman who represents Gerald Ford's old Michigan district, is an up-and-coming conservative with strong bipartisan leanings who shows much promise.

Sen. Margaret Chase Smith, a Republican from Maine, issued her *Declaration of Conscience* in 1950, asking for bipartisan cooperation to protect national security as McCarthyism began to divide the nation and Congress. "It is high time that we stopped thinking politically as Republicans and Democrats about elections," she said, "and start thinking patriotically as Americans." Susan Collins, another Republican senator from Maine, Lisa Murkowski, and Mitt Romney were the only members of the party to vote to confirm a clearly qualified nominee, Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson, to the Supreme Court. Richard Lugar, the late GOP senator from Indiana, was known for solving the nation's problems through collaboration and bipartisanship. After he was voted out of office following six terms in the Senate, Lugar continued to call out the United States government for being dysfunctional because he wanted Congress to do better. Lugar founded the non-profit *Lugar Center* – a think tank that studies and promotes bipartisanship, better government, and global issues. Our democracy works best with vigorous competition between strong political parties.

It's hard to imagine what Marjorie Taylor Greene's or Rand Paul's legacy will be after they leave Congress. They likely won't be remembered for creating any ground-breaking legislation or for making America a better place. They won't be remembered for promoting true conservative ideals. They will be remembered for obstructionism and creating chaos. Unfortunately, our government should not be the place for either.

In the words of *Washington Post* journalist E.J. Dionne, commenting on the recent January 6<sup>th</sup> Committee hearings, "Architects of future hearings will no doubt learn from the media

pizazz of the past week. But all the production values in the world won't matter without two parties equally committed to a common quest for truth." Underscoring this observation, I would like to emphasize that:

**Our democracy works best with vigorous competition between strong political parties.**

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### About the Editor

#### Dr. Ritch K. Eich

Ritch K. Eich, former chief of public affairs for Blue Shield of California, has authored five books on leadership and is a retired Naval Reserve captain. Eich has served on Congressional committees for U.S. Senators Carl Levin of Michigan and Dan Coats of Indiana. He is the past chairman of the board of trustees at Los Robles Hospital and lives in Thousand Oaks, California. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Michigan. He can be reached at [ritcheich@gmail.com](mailto:ritcheich@gmail.com).

# A Crisis in Leadership in the United States

— ELIZABETH GINGERICH, JVBL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

On May 14, 2022, a mass shooting was reported, once again, in America. This time, 10 people were killed in what appeared to be a racially-motivated slaying at the Tops Friendly Market grocery store in Buffalo, New York.



The perpetrator, a New York teen, was armed with a military assault weapon, an AR-15. Less than two weeks later, on May 24, 2022, this time from within an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, 19 children and 2 adults were massacred, again by a teen

armed with an AR-15.



This repeated horror is uniquely American. Other countries have experienced gun violence and mass shootings and have responded with immediacy and efficacy. And many of the acting officials in those countries were up for reelection.

On May 25, 2022, the *New York Times* published the article, "Other Countries Had Mass Shootings. Then They Changed Their Gun Laws," describing how Canada, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Norway have all had a former culture of gun ownership, but managed to tighten gun

restrictions regardless, resulting in mass casualty statistics widely divergent than those of the U.S. The article further details how leaders in those governments moved quickly after a particular mass shooting, levied new laws, and greatly decreased the number of gun-related fatalities in their respective countries.<sup>1</sup>

Though such restrictions have always generated a certain level of controversy, most have been broadly embraced by each country's voting public. Even in Australia, where conservative-leaning politics had long favored gun ownership, citizens broadly accepted the buyback of guns. Some even surrendered their weapons without further prodding, in a galvanized demonstration of support for their country's more stringent gun laws. And after the change in legislation, the results were clear: when a nation tightens its gun control laws leading to fewer guns in private citizens' hands, there was less gun violence and fewer mass shootings in those impacted jurisdictions.

So why such a different narrative here in the US? Is this really all about the construct of rights granted under the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment? Or are we simply being steered by those in power accepting money from powerful lobbyists? A crisis of leadership occurs when power and greed take precedence over morality and community security. Our representatives are not protecting us; and many are sacrificing humanity for individual gain.

However, in the aftermath of the most recent mass shootings have been multiple incidents demonstrating real authenticity of purpose and messaging from certain members of the entertainment and sports world. On May 25, 2022, Golden State Warriors' head coach Steve Kerr broke from the usual discussion about basketball and commented on what had just happened in Uvalde. He said:

*I'm not going to talk about basketball. Nothing's happened with our team in the last six hours. We're going to start the same way tonight. Any basketball questions don't matter.*

*Since we left (practice), 14 [19] children were killed 400 miles from here, and a teacher [2]. In the last 10 days we've had elderly Black people killed in a supermarket in Buffalo. We've had Asian churchgoers killed in Southern California. Now we have children murdered at school.*

*When are we going to do something? I'm tired. I'm so tired of getting up here and offering condolences to the devastated families that are out there. I'm tired of the moments of silence. Enough.*

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/world/europe/gun-laws-australia-britain.html>: "After a British gunman killed 16 people in 1987, the country banned semiautomatic weapons like those he had used. It did the same with most handguns after a 1996 school shooting. It now has one of the lowest gun-related death rates in the developed world. In Australia, a 1996 massacre prompted mandatory gun buybacks that saw, according to some estimates, as many as one million firearms melted into slag. The rate of mass shootings plummeted from once every 18 months to, so far, only one in the 26 years since." And after a mass shooting in Canada in 1989, that country's government also tightened its gun laws as did Germany in 2002 and New Zealand in 2019 – only days after carnage was committed in several mosques.

*There are 50 senators right now who refuse to vote on HR8, which is a background check rule that the House passed a couple years ago. It's been sitting there for two years. There's a reason they won't vote on it: to hold onto power.*

*I ask you, Mitch McConnell, all of you senators who refuse to do anything about the violence, school shootings, supermarket shootings, I ask you: Are you going to put your own desire for power ahead of the lives of our children and our elderly and our churchgoers? Because that's what it looks like. That's what we do every week.*

*So I'm fed up. I've had enough. We're going to play the game tonight. But I want every person here, every person listening to this, to think about your own child or grandchild, mother or father, sister, brother. How would you feel if this happened to you today? We can't get numb to this. We can't sit here and just read about it and go, well, let's have a moment of silence. "Go, Dubs." "C'mon, Mavs, let's go."*

*That's what we're going to do. We're going to go play a basketball game.*

*Fifty senators in Washington are going to hold us hostage. Do you realize that 90 percent of Americans, regardless of political party, want background checks, universal background checks? Ninety percent of us. We are being held hostage by 50 senators in Washington who refuse to even put it to a vote, despite what we the American people want.*

*They won't vote on it because they want to hold onto their own power. It's pathetic.*

*I've had enough.*

A week later, Uvalde native and firm star Matthew McConaughy gave an impassioned 22-minute speech directly from the White House, describing the horror, carnage, and utter fear that the children experienced as well as the trauma for those who survived the ordeal and for those family members who will have lifelong grief. Yet, only a few days later, the National Rifle Association's (NRA's) convention in Dallas went on as scheduled. And then on June 13, 2022, rock star and Indiana native, John Mellencamp, described how attitudes about the Vietnam War in the 60s and early 70s changed dramatically when people actually saw the bodies of deceased teenagers on the war field. He believes that the visual carnage of that day in Uvalde needs to be shown to help stir those sitting on the sidelines; that we should see exactly what a military- style assault weapon does to the body of an 8-year-old.

How did we get here? Where is the leadership? Where is the humanity?

## **The Second Amendment**

Taking a purely historical, judicial, and legislative review of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment, it still tends to shock many that its text is so concise and that its meaning is derived from the events of that era. The framers crafted: *"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."*



The interpretation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution has fostered heated debate, especially within the last decade, as the number mass shootings<sup>2</sup> has greatly escalated. Certain phrases constituting the Amendment are particularly at issue: “well regulated,” “militia,” and the “right to bear arms” have found various meanings in both public discourse and in judicial opinion. Any interpretation cannot be disassociated, however, from the historical era during which it was written. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment was added in 1791, only 8 years after the conclusion of the American Revolutionary War which pitted Great Britain against the 13 colonies. At the time of its creation and adoption, the weapons of war included Flintlock pistols, muskets, and canons and the framers were leery of states not having sufficient military force to suppress rebellions within their borders. This was also a time that there was no federal government standing army.

Modern-day groups like the NRA – one of the strongest political lobbyists in the U.S. – have adopted a theory of “absolutism” in their interpretation of this Amendment. The NRA believes that citizens of the United States have an unfettered right to own any type of weapon, regardless of the technology used. An absolutist interpretation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment objects to any form of national gun registry and universal background checks.

### Rise in Gun Violence

Mass shootings in recent American history have predominantly been carried out by assailants using semi-automatic assault firearms. Assault rifles, manufactured by the United States in the hundreds of thousands each year with 5 million already in circulation, represent the most common weapon used by gunmen who are intent on harming as many people as possible in the shortest amount of time. These weapons have the ability to discharge 45 rounds per minute and magazines can be easily swapped out whereas the pistols and muskets of the late 1700s could only discharge one round at a time and have been described as not being particularly accurate.

The following statistics demonstrate the rise in mass shootings<sup>3</sup>:

- Approximately 1.9 million people have been killed using firearms in the U.S. between

1968 and 2020. Over 17,000 shooting fatalities in U.S. occurred within the first five months of 2022 alone.

<sup>2</sup> According to the U.S. Department of Justice, a “mass shooting” refers to where four or more people are killed indiscriminately, not including the perpetrator.

<sup>3</sup> Pew Research, Gun Violence Archives, and Giffords Law Center.

- The U.S. gun-related murder rate is 25 times higher than 22 other developed nations. Although it has half the population of the other 22 nations combined, the U.S. was marked with 82% of all gun deaths – with the victims predominantly being women and youth.
- Since 2020, gun violence has been costing U.S. taxpayers approximately \$34.8 million each day with the total annual bill for taxpayers, survivors, families, employers, and communities calculated at \$280 billion.

Between 1988 and 1997, 125 were killed in 18 mass shootings. The next decade, 1998 to 2007, 171 were killed in 21 mass shootings. From 2008 to 2017, 437 were killed in 50 mass shootings. After a lull in mass shootings at the start of the pandemic in 2020, the number of incidents soared by late spring. By June, 2020, there had been more mass shootings than in any of the prior six years. By the end of 2020, there had been almost 50% more shootings than in any year from 2014 to 2019. However, in 2021, the number of mass shootings in the country was over 20% higher than in 2020, including a mass shooting at Oxford High School near Detroit, Michigan, on November 30, 2021. Four students were killed and seven people were injured.<sup>4</sup>

- According to *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD) data, the U.S. is ranked 4th out of 34 developed nations for the highest incidence rate of homicides committed with a firearm (Mexico, Turkey, and Estonia are ranked ahead of the U.S. in incidence of homicides with many of the firearms used manufactured in the United States).
- U.S. males aged 15–24 are 70 times more likely to be killed with a gun than their counterparts in the eight largest industrialized nations in the world (United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, Italy, and Russia).
- Every day, 315 people (46 children and teens) in America are shot in murders, assaults, suicides and suicide attempts, unintentional shootings, and police intervention.



On March 22, 2021, a mass shooting occurred at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado. 10 people were killed, including a local on-duty police officer.

<sup>4</sup> Authorities arrested and charged a 15-year-old sophomore on 24 separate charges, including murder and terrorism. The suspect's parents were separately charged with involuntary manslaughter for failing to secure the handgun used in the shooting.

## Legislative History

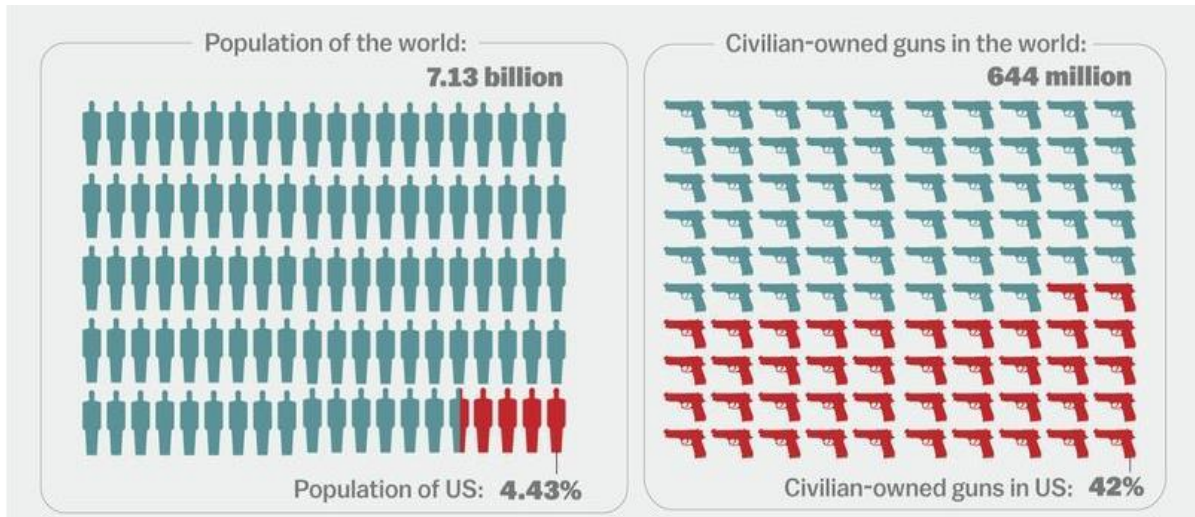
Legislation at the federal, state, and local levels has attempted to address gun violence through a variety of methods, including restricting firearms purchases by youth and other “at-risk” populations, establishing waiting periods for firearm purchases, implementing gun buyback programs, creating new law enforcement and policing strategies, increasing the penalties on gun law violators, and offering education programs for community outreach. Despite widespread concern about the impact of gun violence on public health, Congress voted in 2017 to prohibit the *Centers for Disease Control* (CDC) from conducting research on gun violence prevention. Other measures introduced – including longer waiting periods before gun purchasing and closing the gun show loopholes – have failed to pass. But by December, 2020, Congress approved \$25 million in federal funding to study gun safety with the funds split evenly between the National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

On November 8, 2017, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-CA), with the backing of two dozen other colleagues from the U.S. Senate, introduced the *Assault Weapons Ban of 2017*, a bill to ban the sale, transfer, manufacture, and importation of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. That bill would have exempted current owners, the military and police officers, and owners of weapons used for home defense, hunting, and recreation. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, passage of the bill would cause a 6.7% decrease in annual gun deaths. Senator Feinstein had previously supported an assault weapon ban in 1994 which was passed into law but expired in 2004 without being renewed. A new bill, the *Assault Weapons Ban of 2021*, was introduced by Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., and Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., in the hope to address the shortcomings of its predecessor. The proposed law prohibits the sale, manufacture, transfer, and importation of 205 “military-style assault weapons” by name, and additionally bans magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. That bill failed to attract the requisite number of votes.

## Judicial Interpretation

The language of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment has created considerable debate regarding its intended scope. The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the right to “bear arms” belongs to individuals, while also holding that such right is neither unlimited nor does it prohibit all regulation by federal, state, and local authorities of firearms or similar devices. Some believe that the Amendment creates an individual right for U.S. citizens and therefore restricts legislative bodies from prohibiting firearm possession. Many Constitutional scholars believe that the prefatory language, “a well-regulated Militia,” underlines the Framers’ intention to only restrict Congress from legislatively restricting an individual state’s right to self-defense. This is known as the *collective rights theory*.

In 1939, the U.S. Supreme Court considered this matter in *United States vs. Miller* (307 U.S. 174). The Court adopted the *collective rights theory* in this case, determining that Congress could regulate firearms that had moved in interstate commerce when the



evidence did not suggest such weapons had any “reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia.” The Court further explained that the Framers composed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment in an effort to ensure the effectiveness of a national military. This position was revisited in 2008 when the Court struck down a Washington D.C. handgun ban in *District of Columbia v. Heller*. In a 5-4 decision, the Court ruled that the law, which had stood for over 32 years before this challenge, was unconstitutional, but stated that certain firearms could still be restricted if such weaponry could not be used for law-abiding purposes.

This position was strengthened by the Court’s 2010 decision in *McDonald vs. City of Chicago*. In *McDonald*, the plaintiff challenged the constitutionality of the City of Chicago’s handgun ban, which prohibited handgun possession by most private citizens. In a 5-4



decision, the Court held that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment applies to the states through the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment’s *Equal Protection Clause*.

And in late June of 2022, the Supreme Court struck down a long-standing New York state law which had required applicants for a license to carry a gun outside of their homes to have a “proper cause” to do so. The majority held that a simple desire for self-defense

constituted a sufficient reason.

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## Recent Mass Shootings: A Partial Chronicle

The families of those killed or injured in mass shootings have argued that another constitutional right should supersede other considerations, pointing out that the guarantees of *life, liberty, or property* under the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment constituted a dominant protection and were being violated. Whatever the legal argument, it is critical to always keep in mind the extent of tragedies this nation has suffered with respect to mass shooting incidents:

**February 14, 2018:** 17 killed at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The killer was a 19-year-old former student at the school, who returned armed with an AR-15.

**November 5, 2017:** Sutherland Springs, Texas, 1<sup>st</sup> Baptist Church. 25 shot and killed, plus an unborn child, during a church service.



**October 1, 2017:** Las Vegas, Nevada. 58 shot and killed during an outdoor country music festival by a single gunman who pelted a crowd of 22,000 concertgoers from the 32<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. 500 others were injured. Witnesses reported that the gunshots lasted from between 10 to 15 minutes long.



**June 12, 2016:** 49 killed and 50 injured inside the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida. Police shot and killed the lone gunman during an operation to free hostages held at the club.

**December 2, 2015:** 14 killed when a married couple opened fire on an employee gathering taking place at Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, California.



**June 17, 2015:** A 21-year-old gunman shot and killed 9 people during a Bible study session inside the historic *Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church*, in Charleston, South Carolina. The gunman was tried and convicted of hate crimes and is the first person scheduled to be executed for committing federal hate crimes.



**December 14, 2012:** 27 killed (including 20 1<sup>st</sup> graders) at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. The gunman took his own life after killing his mother.



**July, 2012:** 12 killed inside a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado.

*April, 2007:* 32 killed, the majority being students in class, by a fellow student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, in Blacksburg, Virginia.

*April 20, 1998:* 12 killed at Columbine High School, Colorado. The two students who commandeered the massacre took their own lives before capture.

### **A New Dawn or a Low Bar?**

On June 24, 2022, the US House of Representatives passed a bipartisan gun safety package by a vote of 234-193, one day after the bill cleared the Senate, 65-33. *The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act* was signed into law by President Biden on June 25, 2022. The Act introduces certain reforms designed to incentivize states to keep guns out of dangerous people's hands, enhances screening for gun purchasers under the age of 21, and suppresses illegal gun purchases and distribution. The Act additionally provides billions in funding for school safety measures and supplemental mental health resources. The last time any such legislation was passed was in 1994, when Congress enacted the now-expired 10-year ban on assault weapons. Even following the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, there has been an utter paucity of meaningful action.

And now, according to the *Wall Street Journal* and the *CDC*, the top cause of death for children 1-19, since 2020, is now guns - surpassing auto accident fatalities.

This cannot be allowed to occur in a democratic nation; this is not following the will of the people.

Until meaningful reform, those who remain silent have become the enablers of those who are making a profit off the shooting victim. But many children who grow up in these circumstances are beginning to effect change – by and for themselves. The survivors of Parkland formed “March for Our Lives,” and shortly after the Valentine’s Day, 2019 shootings, organized and traveled *en masse* to the Florida statehouse in Tallahassee with a message demanding change that translated into legislative action.

Logic and compassion must prevail in this debate. In the US, a person must be at least 21 to consume an alcoholic beverage, but not to purchase an assault rifle designed to kill as many human beings as possible – whether they be on Main Street, or the corridors of a movie theater, or the aisles of a supermarket, or the halls of a school.

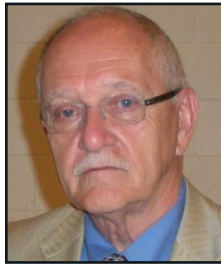
At least when school exercises were tied to a potential nuclear war and we were taught to hide under our desks, that threat was limited in historical time and under circumstances of the height of the Cold War. Subsequently, we transitioned back to a more common exercise – the tornado drill – but now that has changed to be prepared in case of an active shooter. Many will ignore and continue to dismiss any mass tragedy that does not directly impact themselves or their loved ones. Let’s help move our leaders to undertake more comprehensive action to prevent this repetitive, deadly pattern from continuing to create an endless pool of victims.

– Elizabeth Gingerich

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# Democracy: *A Vision of Something Higher*

— JOSEPH P. HESTER, CLAREMONT, NC, USA



*Having a vision of something “higher” is important as vision lies on the vertical periphery of achievement and discovery.*

Guided by Jefferson’s words — “We hold these truths to be self-evident...” — the development of a moral democracy in America was undertaken amidst war and colonial disagreement. This was just the beginning as America’s founders embodied democracy within a constitution which included procedures for making future adjustments (laws) as needed. Early on, historians called this the “great experiment.” Many thought it was destined to fail, and it almost did as civil war and failed reconstruction projects engulfed the nation. Given the insurrection attempt at our nation’s Capitol on 1/6/21, many are

again talking about the fragility of the democratic process and are skeptical about its future, including what is needed to strengthen its core.

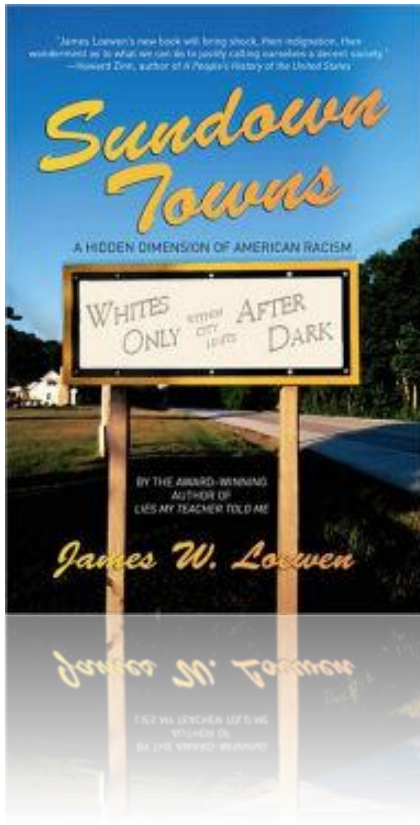
**“In that land the great experiment was to be made, by civilized man, of the attempt to construct society upon a new basis; and it was there, for the first time, that theories hitherto unknown, or deemed impracticable, were to exhibit a spectacle for which the world had not been prepared by the history of the past. — 1835 translation of Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America” by Henry Reeve and adapted by John Spencer. One should note “great experiment” wasn’t used by Tocqueville at all; he simply wrote “devaient essayer” – “should attempt (to build...)”. “Modern translations usually stick to the French original such as by A. Goldhammer: “Here civilized men would attempt to build society on new foundations ...” <https://history.stackexchange.com/questions/30440/tocqueville-and-the-phrase-the-great-experiment#:~:text=The%20line%20%22The%20great%20experiment%22%20has%20become%20famous,american%20versions%20do%20not%20have%20it%20as%20well>**

## Threats to Democracy

The years between 1863 and 1877 saw tremendous gains for Black Americans, including the ratification of the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> Amendments. But the period was also turbulent — shaped by political violence aimed at reestablishing white authority. In the years following, Reconstruction in the South reestablished many of the provisions of what was



called “Black Codes” aimed at limiting the labor and activities of Blacks. These were also called “Jim Crow laws” and remained firmly in place for almost a century. They were finally abolished with the passage of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*. Consequently, during much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Black Codes became ingrained in the Southern mindset reinforcing prejudice and distrust among Southern whites against people of color. For example, “sunset towns,” “gray towns,” or “sundowner towns” was a form of racial segregation which excluded non-whites from being on city streets after sundown via a combination of discriminatory local laws, intimidation or violence. The term came from signs posted that “colored people” had to leave town by sundown. The practice was not restricted to the southern states, as at least until the early 1960s, northern states could be nearly as



inhospitable to Black travelers as states like Alabama or Georgia. Much has changed and progress has been made, but the events of 1/6/21 and now attempts at voter suppression have exposed left-over prejudices that some politicians – state and national – are leveraging to achieve positions of status and power. Even with the passage of June 19<sup>th</sup> as a national holiday celebrating the end of slavery, some states are trying to prohibit teaching about slavery and this day in their public schools while introducing *Critical Race Theory*<sup>4</sup> as a means of adjusting past history.

So, the 20<sup>th</sup> century reaped the whirlwind of failed attempts at Southern Reconstruction and the 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen the re-emergence of white nationalism and attempts to politically marginalize people of color through voter suppression as well as controlling what is taught about racial history in the public schools. According to New York University School of Law’s Brennan Center for Justice, as of March 24, 2021, lawmakers in 47 states have introduced more than 360 bills in 2021 with provisions that restrict voting access. As of June 21, 2021, states have already enacted more than 20 such laws that will make it harder for Americans

to vote.<sup>2</sup> Undeniably, the freedom to vote lies at the core of the American democratic process. If this freedom is repressed, so is democracy.

Racism has been a systemic problem in America for many years. We can *theorize* about racism and slavery in America, including their origins, but we cannot deny the fact that slavery existed and has had lasting effects on both Blacks and whites. Among these effects have been prejudice, discrimination, and antagonism against people of color. Hidden among these attitudes and activities is elevating the “white male” as a superior species. This is a congruent value of white nationalism, further devaluing the status and humanity of women and people of color politically, economically, and morally. The *Voting Rights Act* of the 1920s and the *Civil Rights Acts* of the 1960s did much to loosen the legal chains binding people of color and women to positions of inferiority, but no legal document

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has been strong enough to remove bias and prejudice from the hearts and minds of many Americans — male or female. And, by the way, none of this can be covered up by a re-writing of American history. It is what it is and to this we must face up.

Many can be blamed for this state of affairs, including our schools, churches, business, and political leaders. Sadly, in our text books, much of our history has been politicized, glossed over, or just omitted. This seems to be a never-ending effort on the part of some. Today, with the Internet, the proliferation of the print media, and conscientious teachers, students can re-discover America's missteps and course corrections making the study of history both interesting and important for democracy's continuance. Fortunately, as a democratic republic, we have lasted for over 200 years. In itself, this has been miraculous, but the road has been rocky and there have been many bad actors. Surely America has witnessed its share of failed leadership. Consequently, keeping the democratic vision alive as a moral ideal and articulating it in law and practice, and especially accentuating its moral principles, is the responsibility of every generation. It's always easy to walk on the sunny side of the street, but in 2021 we are being called upon to work for democracy in the cracks, crevices, and moral fractures that produced the events of 1/6/21.

### **An Unchanging Mindset**

No doubt we tend to view the world from our own furrowed ruts, seeing what we want to see and hearing what we wish to hear. Many "white" people don't want to hear about the killings of young Black males, discrimination against Hispanics and Asian Americans, and they're tired of listening to the plight of women workers with their lower-than-average wages. A major part of this equation is the attitudes of many white Evangelical Christians who remain unwavering in their belief that "a woman's place is in the home," and "women should obey their husbands." Many also think that America should be a "white" Christian nation and/or was established as such. This attitude lies at the heart of the MAGA movement and is not only revealed in their words, but in their continuous portrayal of "Jesus" as like them, a "white male." Also, there are many in the churches that have helped spread the *false teaching* that Ham, Noah's son, was cursed by Noah to have black skin, and that teaching has been used to justify both slavery and racism toward black people all over the world. Being reared in the South, as a youth, I heard this story many times over. No doubt, the negative value of women and people of color in Judeo-Christian-Islamic faiths has its roots in Biblical teachings.

Overall, it's difficult for those who have little knowledge of history to admit that certain segments of the American populous have been personally, publicly, and economically marginalized. This is partially to blame for the fascination with our former President, neglecting his inconsistencies, womanizing, amoral behaviors, and leading his supporters to vow not to cooperate with the opposing party in an investigation of the events of 1/6/21. Even in June of 2021, when the Coca-Cola Company criticized attempts at voter suppression in Georgia, Surry County officials in North Carolina made an effort to pass a bill that would remove Coke machines from their county buildings. Such petty behaviors demonstrate how prejudice and discrimination have again become a vocal part of American politics.

Our nation seems to be languishing in the aftermath of the 2020 Presidential election as our values have become polarized and ideological, being the filters through which we “see” the world. To break the stalemate of partisan politics (in Congress and in the minds of many Americans), it’s important we loosen the chains binding our thinking and promote a vision of something morally higher. This will mean engaging with friend and foe alike, and with moral authenticity, in ideas and procedures that will potentially enhance our collective democratic vision. Why some American politicians are incapable of this is puzzling. As Charles Taylor has written,<sup>3</sup>

*Briefly, we can say that authenticity involves creation and construction as well as discovery, originality, and frequently opposition to the rules of society and even potentially to what we recognize as morality. But it is also true, as we saw, that it requires openness to horizons of significance (for otherwise the creation loses the background that can save it from insignificance) and a self-definition in dialogue.*

Many of us, entrapped in a static 19<sup>th</sup> century mindset, hardly notice the roots of prejudice and discrimination lying deeply within our *habits* and illuminating our thinking and daily conversations. This is a mindset that has grown stale, boring, and burdensome, deflecting change and the possibility of positive conversations

**“In the *Enquiry*, Hume states that ‘All inferences from experience, therefore, are effects of custom, *not of reasoning*’ (Enquiry, p.28) and describes the beliefs produced by habit as nothing more than ‘...a species of natural instincts, which no reasoning or process of the thought and understanding is able, either to produce, or to prevent” (Enquiry, p.30) “Hume’s Habit”:**  
<https://philosophermit.wordpress.com/2017/07/12/humes-habit/>

with others about ethics, values, and the foundations of democracy. Not all Evangelicals are to blame, but there is a dearth of self-examination in our society. It is our inability to reconsider our common values and unleash our inner moral capacities that lock us to the past. This “surface fog” goes much deeper than we realize and tends to separate us from

others, even ourselves. Peering through this fog in self-reflection is a difficulty many choose to avoid.

**“While most Americans agree that the country needs to do more to achieve racial equality, some tactics for achieving this goal are seen as more effective than others.” — Pew Research Center**  
<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2016/06/27/4-achieving-racial-equality/>

Consequently, as we squint at reality and view our own decision-making as *practicality based on common sense*, we have reduced “reason” to “being reasonable,” which is another way of defining “rationalization.” So, from a rational

point of view, we are caught in an untenable web of attempting to make our decision-making logical when, in fact, it is illogical, based on instinct and habit, prejudice and sentiment. And it appears, when Evangelical Christians joined with this irrational chorus on 1/6/21, they reduced the so-called “Christian ethic of love” to one of detestation and violence.

This goes down much easier, especially when our values are aligned with a group[s] of like-minded individuals. It has given credence to white privilege as both a social and political value – an undisclosed standard of moral and political evaluation – becoming a *habit of*

*expectation* shielding much of what we “see” or “don’t see,” “hear” or “don’t hear”; or perhaps what we wish to see and hear. Many have been seduced by this mindset making any attempt to correct the long history of racial, gender, and ethnic discrimination difficult and almost impossible. This will take a change of life that is transformational, transcending the words we use and the lifestyles we enjoy. This is democracy’s greatest challenge.

## Difficult Lessons

Hopefully, some of us learned something from the political events of 2020-2021, such as:

1. We can’t take democracy for granted. Democracy is a collective moral value that must be tilled and weeded during every season of life.
2. Our values are fragile and their strength lies in being open to shared opinions and a willingness to reassess our most cherished beliefs.
3. Many Americans believe that “rights” – however defined – are whatever they think important and are guaranteed by the Constitution. But there is a difference between “human rights,” “Constitutional rights,” and “civil liberties.” These differences should be discussed, and not only in the halls of congress, but in our schools.
4. Many Americans are frustrated—they are frustrated by the pandemic that rules life as

**“The current gridlock in the American federal government is caused by the equal political strength of two competing visions of democracy. The first vision, call it Type A democracy, is based on the ideal of a free self-governing individual who voluntarily contracts with other self-governing individuals to form a self-governing political association. This first vision takes individual freedom and political equality as its main ideals. The second vision of democracy, call it Type B democracy, takes economic and social equality within a nation as its main ideals. It is what emerges when the members of a pre-existing nation overcome a pre-existing hierarchical authoritarian patriarchal order and install a democratic government.”**

— Richard B. Parker, “Two Visions of Democracy.”

<https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007%2F978-3-319-02312-06>

we once knew it and they are frustrated by life’s circumstances in general. That is, they realize that the so-called “American dream” may be out of reach for them and they are helpless to do much about it. So, they criticize those who have achieved “something” in their lives, diminish the value of people of color, berate the educated, and somehow have been convinced that “might makes right.” But this can have a reverberating

effect as many who are high achievers and economically successful have grown weary of this theme. Consequently, they are apt to view those who constantly complain as lazy, low achievers, and just wanting more government handouts, which they deem as a form of socialism and contrary to both capitalism and democracy. The negative effects are obvious.

Recent political events have forced us to reconsider who we are and why we are as a democratic nation. Although there is no easy way to figure this all out, we can’t just walk away from our moral obligations to others, either our fellow humans or those yet to be born. To sacrifice the “moral ideal” of democracy would not only be a disservice to those

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who have worked and fought to protect it; it would destroy their humanity and our humanity as well. Of course, we can only assume that those who struck a blow at American democracy on January 6, 2021 have some basic understanding of democracy as a moral ideal, although their moral VISION requires a great deal of pruning. This will necessitate openness to the ideas of others and engaging those with differing political visions through civil and dialogic involvement. I am hopeful, but don't expect this to happen anytime soon. The quest for political power and influence are great "separators" in our nation.

In all of this new found *tribalism*, we have learned there are many *different visions* of so-called American values, even the American dream. As uncomfortable as this may be, from a democratic point of view, these must be given due consideration. Carl Zimmer<sup>4</sup> insightfully noted, "Our moral orchestra and that of others uses the same instruments to create its theoretical views but so very often we and others are reading different sheet music." Reading the "sheet music" of others with compassion and understanding is a first step in this process. It was Plato who reminded us, "If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools."<sup>5</sup> This we have experienced, perhaps all too often in both local and national politics.

In January 2021, the weak underbelly of American democracy was exposed. The insurrection in our nation's Capitol set within the context of a failed election, as well as a lackluster response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the Black Lives Matter Movement has caused many with grievances — sensing a crack in the magnitude of democratic prowess — to jump in to secure their piece of the American pie. Who can blame them? But what is it they seek? This has yet to be determined and flushed out. Are we, as Heather MacDonald suggests, "creating a nation of narrowed minds, primed for grievance, and ... putting our competitive edge at risk"?<sup>6</sup> Although MacDonald's query seems politically charged, requiring further discussion, her thesis draws our attention.

### **A Vision of Something Higher**

Obviously, built into the American psyche and value-set is trying to "move up" the capitalistic ladder of success. American capitalism, itself a source of innovation and democratic progress, challenges us to "reach for the top," but socially and politically many lag behind —blindsided by slavery past, poverty present, poor educational opportunities, and empty promises. So disillusioned, they cry out for equity. Calling out for help, many are not asking for handouts, only an equal playing field, and an opportunity to be successful. Yet, we cannot deny that government welfare and democratic socialism, as much as it is needed, has created many who would rather live off the success of others than work for it themselves.

So, let's not get overly optimistic, low wages, a mediocre educational system, tax breaks and off-shore tax shelters for the wealthy, and low expectations for the poor have created a way of thinking which has adjusted itself to an economic system defined by the so-called Bell- Shaped Curve — a few at the top, an equal number at the bottom, and the majority somewhere in the middle struggling to stay there, especially the lower part of this so-called "middle."

Firmly entrenched in our way of thinking, the Bell Shaped Curve has become a habit of expectation and not only in society but in our schools as well. I've often wondered whether the Bell-Shaped Curve is a statistical snap-shot of society or of a classroom of students (perhaps a large segment taking the SAT or ACT tests), or a *hidden prescription* justifying group decision-making and perhaps encouraging group complacency. Surely, the Bell-Shaped Curve has been used by social scientists and educators in a *justificatory* fashion as well as a *descriptive* device.<sup>7</sup>

**"The vision of leadership permeates the workplace and is manifested in the actions, beliefs, values, and goals of your organization's leaders. This vision attracts and affects every employee who is engaged in living this set of actions, beliefs, values, and goals. They want to share your vision."**

**—Susan Heathfield, The Balance Careers.**

<https://www.thebalancecareers.com/leadership-vision-1918616>

Today, we are presented with a difficult and volatile situation. With the rise of gun violence, especially against people of color, economic inflation, and the high rates of joblessness and low wages among less skilled people, current events are pushing us in some uncomfortable directions. The road to

the future is unclear and not all agree on its direction. Following the death of George Floyd and the resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement, new voices are being heard and various solutions offered, but many believe some are extreme and over the top. Also, there is some evidence that nefarious groups have attached themselves to this movement with other than democratic or moral intentions.<sup>8</sup> Add to this mixture the economic problems caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and a former President who keeps stirring the political pot, the years 2021-22 just may become a tipping point for American democracy. Certainly, we live in a time when dialogic civility is sorely needed.

This brings us back to the importance of vision as mentioned above. John Graham comments,

*A vision is a mental picture of the result you want to achieve — a picture so clear and strong it will help make that result real. A vision is not a vague wish or dream or hope. It's a picture of the real results of real efforts. It comes from the future and informs and energizes the present. Visioning is the most powerful tool I've witnessed in over twenty years of helping organizations and individuals get the results they want.*<sup>9</sup>

Graham gives the following reasons why visions are so powerful:

1. A vision inspires action. A powerful vision pulls in ideas, people and other resources. It creates the energy and will to make change happen. It inspires individuals and organizations to commit, to persist and to give their best.
2. A vision is a practical guide for creating plans, setting goals and objectives, making decisions, and coordinating and evaluating the work on any project, large or small.
3. A vision helps keep organizations and groups focused and together, especially with complex projects and in stressful times.

## Democracy's Roadmap

### *The American Dream*

Being able to create and communicate a moral vision for a *democratic republic* is important as our vision defines the reasons for our existence and delineates a pathway for strengthening our democratic culture. As Graham says, a vision inspires action, guides the development of goals and objectives, and helps us focus together in stressful times. Lewis Carroll's advice is duly noted, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there."<sup>10</sup>

And, it's fair to ask, "Has the American dream disappeared?"

This is a question many are asking, but to ask it is to assume a singular mindset; namely, that there is only one

James Truslow Adams went on to say that the American Dream is, "not a dream of motor cars and high wages merely, but a dream of a social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the fortuitous circumstances of their birth or position."

The American historian also stressed that, despite the growth of the country, the explosion of the rich and successful, and how such families established a sort of social order where those coming from a position of wealth tended to succeed and have greater opportunities, that the belief was that, regardless of this, anyone could find success and happiness. He noted that the American Dream is and has been "... much more than that. It has been a dream of being able to grow to fullest development as man and woman, unhampered by the barriers which had slowly been erected in the older civilizations, unrepressed by social orders which had developed for the benefit of classes rather than for the simple human being of any and every class."

<https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/american-dream/>

**"We face other grave illnesses in this nation as well – deep, bitter divides in our nation that have been building up for decades and have only now risen to an emotional boiling point that we saw erupt in our nation's Capitol yesterday.**

**Violence and taking over the Capitol Building are wrong and are dangerous for our nation. Such actions destabilize the nation and rip apart trust between citizens and those who govern. More than that, such actions are not in alignment with the way of Jesus."**

**—A Pastoral letter in response to the events at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021 by Rev. Matthew Best**

definable "American dream." In his 1931 book, "Epic of America,"<sup>11</sup> James Truslow Adams noted how the American dream had changed over time and how it was difficult for European aristocracy to understand its value or why it drew so many immigrants to the states. Obviously, we are a diverse people, a nation of immigrants, most with a strong work ethic emphasizing unity and democratic values and others, either purposefully or unwittingly, seeking to

destroy or limit democracy by their continuous probing at democracy's weaknesses.

And although we are a nation built on diversity, we should not seek to dramatize our differences – there is a great deal of broad agreement among us about what is right and wrong, good and evil, even about the purposes of democracy. All is not perfect in America and it will never be, but we should avoid becoming "A what about this or a what about that nation" as an excuse to avoid difficult solutions to our problems. Nit-picking the past is not a productive road to improvement. This being said, the search for one's dreams is not a recipe for dominance over others or violence, even if such is demanded by serious

idealists or political demagogues. Rather, it is to admit that life is imperfect and that progress and achievement require diligence and openness to the dreams of others.

Having a vision of something “higher” is important as vision lies on the vertical periphery of achievement and discovery providing a roadmap for the future. Democracy’s pathway lies in the dreams of America’s founders and in the Constitution which they wrote. It also lives in the dreams and hopes of many today. We are a nation of laws and our Constitution provides our laws stability and equity, making living within ethnic and cultural diversity possible. Being grounded in a shared morality supports this vision requiring clarification and adjustments by every generation of Americans.

But we do not live in a perfect world; this we acknowledge. We have settled our differences internally and externally through rational adjustments to our Constitution and by violence, war, and mayhem. Among our leaders, some have lied, manipulated others, and clung to unconstitutional ideologies. There are many who have had the wherewithal to manipulate our financial system to their advantage and the disadvantage of others. This may be a major cause of unrest that goes unmentioned. Consequently, there are hate groups, many frustrated economically, roaming through society seeking to destroy the very values making their lives possible; values that give them the freedom to speak, join in groups, and even hate if that is their mantra. Also, many remain suspicious of a system of government and free enterprise which has trapped them in a seemingly no-win economic situation. This encapsulates the incongruent social environment of our time. Hence, understanding the risky nature of democracy and the delicate balance of the capitalism which it embraces – doubt and change and disintegrating corrosion from within and without – renders our dreams and our way of life a precarious adventure itself seeking political stability and moral balance.

**“As Kant knew, what we do with ourselves *after* we find ourselves is the real work. After we find ourselves, there’s a whole lot of sawing and hammering and sanding and shellacking to be done. As a matter of fact, we’ve got to saw, hammer, sand, and shellac ourselves every darn day. Perfection isn’t the goal. A life well-lived is the goal.”**

— Rev. David Breeden, PhD.

<https://www.questformeaning.org/quest-article/thecrookedtimberofourselves/#:~:text=Kant%20said%2C%20%E2%80%9COut%20of%20the%20crooked%20timber%20of%20hammering%20and%20sanding%20and%20shellacking%20to%20be%20done>

Democracy and capitalism have worked in tandem building America, but this has been an uneasy marriage requiring delicate and sensitive political maneuvering called “checks and balances.” Stability (homeostasis<sup>12</sup>) has been made possible by agreed upon Constitutional requirements as well as economic adjustments. These have prevented criminal activities by large corporations and have leveled the playing field for many others, but this has also required sensitive lawmakers who understand that wealth typically concentrates at the top but also that a strong and balanced economy is required to support the democratic vision. Nonetheless, much is left to be done.

With the January 6, 2021 attack on our nation’s Capitol the dubious nature of democracy and its relationship with capitalism came into full view. Ironically, many who are economically marginalized continue to support an administration that has given tax breaks to the top 1%-2%, tax breaks that they, the middle class, will have to pay for in years to



come. So, all are not happy or content with either political party in America and we should be so forewarned, as the 1970 Pogo cartoon said, “We have met the enemy and he is us.”<sup>13</sup>

Without a doubt we can be our own worst enemy as the freedoms we struggle against are the same freedoms and laws that support our struggle, even our rebellious actions. This sounds paradoxical, and it is—life doesn’t always move in a logical fashion as the avenues of decision-making are fraught with hills, curves, and unmarked directions making

**“America’s current state of polarization and civic dysfunction is the byproduct of our failure to invest in civic education for many decades. We’ve forgotten how to listen to each other, how to reasonably disagree on issues, and why these civic virtues matter – because in both universities and schools we have neglected these priorities.”**

**— Paul Carrese, the director of The School of Civic & Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University.**  
<https://ethics.harvard.edu/Educating-American-Democracy-Roadmap>.

dialogical civility a crucial modus operandi in a democratic society. Maybe Immanuel Kant was correct when he concluded, “Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made.” Surely, making democracy work is a

continuous task about which we should continually pursue. Scot Horton,<sup>14</sup> referencing Isaiah Berlin,<sup>15</sup> writes in *Harper’s Magazine*:

*“The key notion of the thesis is actually better reflected in the prior sentence: Kant believes that humans need a master; that the species itself benefits from this model. To balance this, he points to the need for political institutions to check the assertion of excessive powers by those in authority. (Only five years later, James Madison makes the same essential points in Federalist No. 51. “If men were angels,” he writes, “no government would be necessary.”) But Berlin is right about the importance of the image of crooked wood – it shows us that Kant may be an idealist in a sense but he is very skeptical about the perfectibility of individual humans.”*

Through conflict and suffering, social and political cohesion have taken place in our society and will again occur. Yet, for some there are no facts and there is no logic that will “make straight” the truth of what took place on January 6, 2021 in our nation’s Capitol. Consequently, taking democracy for granted is a mistake; much is demanded of us.

Maybe we have set our vision and hopes too high; maybe we are being impractical? Could be that our vision of a moral humanity is naive and unrealistic. Perhaps we have not listened carefully to those who differ with us? The mere existence of positive, ethical values and intentions to live under one Constitution make listening and co-operation possible. Prioritizing our values and commitments is an essential task. Maybe all we can do is preserve an uneasy equilibrium that is constantly threatened and in constant need of repair. There are no pat or easy answers; dialogue is the crucible through which democracy’s success must pass.

## **Wilding in America**

Charles Derber<sup>16</sup> may have been correct in assuming that “the wilding” of America has become normalized. Derber feels that in its degraded form, wilding encourages

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unrestrained and sociopathic *self-interest*, and, according to Charles Taylor,<sup>17</sup> if our values are *self-referential only* they become personally reductive, subjective, ethically unhinged, and undemocratic. This kind of ethic is potentially narcissistic and generally *individualistic* and *rights* oriented nearly always focusing on personal freedoms such as the “freedom to join,” “to express views,” or “to protest.” It seldom focuses on the conditions of society as a whole revealing a pathological crisis among members of the “me” generation.

This being said, self-focused behaviors are what fuels progress and innovation in a capitalistic society. These naturally emerge within a democratic culture and stem from ideas such as equality and nondiscrimination, fair-treatment, personal responsibility, and freedom of speech. We can’t condemn those who seek opportunity and have gained economic prowess. Pursuing what we believe is our “rights” is a part of this equation and, in itself, is not to be condemned or criticized. Yet, we are encouraged to pursue our dreams within the context of local and national laws and with civility and moral sensitivity. Democracy is a socio-political concept wrapped in free enterprise (capitalism) and to pursue it individually (only) will not simply promote isolated views and autocratic solutions to problems, but impede communication across political differences, thus destroying its very nature. As Taylor notes, “... its dialogical setting ... binds us to others.”<sup>18</sup>

Moral decency must also return, and not only to our elected officials, but to all of us. This will be a reconciling journey of healing one’s own troubled soul and reaching out and beyond self to families, friends, work associates, and into the community to uplift others, mending past mistakes, and seeking the best kind of life to live, of what it’s good to be not just what we want to do. We are thus challenged to acknowledge and respect differences of opinion and debate these rationally as well as civilly. But, to be over-bearing in our response to others will be a mistake, for as Isaiah Berlin<sup>19</sup> has said, “To force people into the neat uniforms demanded by dogmatically believed-in schemes is almost always the road to inhumanity. We can only do what we can; but that we must do, against difficulties.” Certainly, our differences present us with a moral tightrope on which we must carefully walk as we seek moral balance and stability.

Simply put, democracy is a moral concept definitive of ethical behaviors. Kurt Baier<sup>20</sup> supports this principle saying that from a moral view we should treat everyone as ....*equally important centers of craving, impulses, desires, needs, aims, and aspirations; as people with ends of their own, all of*

**In the face of the unknown we need to resist the comforting temptation to retreat behind the walls with our own tribe and instead invite others into community who may see or behave differently. This includes a place for rebels, artists, dreamers, amateurs, elders, youth and indigenous wisdom - those with no official standing or clear path to leadership and so remain voiceless but who may actually hold the missing key to the puzzle we are seeking to solve. —Michael Jones**

<https://www.management-issues.com/opinion/7179/from-leadership-to-communityship/>

*which are entitled, prima facie<sup>21</sup> to be attained.* Following this principle, Baier argues, should *make it possible* for others either to consent or dissent to our wishes, which is crucial to the democratic process. Baier’s view about the *universal nature* of equality and human rights confirms the essence of our humanity as moral. Thus, the principles lying

behind such values as fairness and justice—and the importance of human dignity, integrity, nurture, and care — form the core of morality and the essence of democracy.

## Democracy's Myths

Yet, meaning is lost if our discussions remain abstract and are divorced from present day realities. In light of the events surrounding the Presidential election of 2020 and the certification of its results, re-establishing the Presidency as an office of respect, responsibility, and authenticity remains a difficult task. Building trust back into politics is something both major parties need to pursue. But, as we know, life is not lived in the black and white. Indeed, today, as before in our history, American values have been polarized and ethics compressed, casting a shadow on democracy's ethical foundations. Seemingly,

**“Learning to live together in peace and harmony is a dynamic, holistic and lifelong process through which mutual respect, understanding, caring and sharing, compassion, social responsibility, solidarity, acceptance and tolerance of diversity among individuals and groups (ethnic, social, cultural, religious, national and regional) are internalized and practiced together to solve problems and to work towards a just and free, peaceful and democratic society. This process begins with the development of inner peace in the minds and hearts of individuals engaged in the search for truth, knowledge and understanding of each other's cultures, and the appreciation of shared common values to achieve a better future. Learning to live together in peace and harmony requires that quality of relationships at all levels is committed to peace, human rights, democracy and social justice in an ecologically sustainable environment.”**

— **“Learning to Live Together in Peace and Harmony,” UNESCO-APNIEVE. Bangkok: UNESCO PROAP (1998).**

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001143/114357eo.pdf>

without rudder or anchor we live in the afterglow of Jefferson transformational words,

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”<sup>22</sup>*

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these words would soon be tempered by capitalistic greed and institutionalized slavery resulting in a civil war pushing our racial prejudices

even deeper into the fiber of our values. But even a civil war could not wipe clean the prejudices held in the minds of many Americans against people of color. Their unethical treatment and the assumption of “white” privilege and “white supremacy” have, from the beginning, been negative anchors weighing down the moral foundations of American democracy. Today, the assumption of white privilege must not only disappear, but be replaced — not by any kind of ethnic privilege as a means of correcting past mistakes — with an emphasis on equality and fair-treatment. The playing field must be leveled.

Truly, the nation we so fondly call “America” was in part a creation of the influence of myth and fact, reason and hope, and fear and anxiety. As these cultural forces were overlapping and bumping into one another, the ideal of American democracy was taking shape. Maybe democracy was always a ruse to confuse the unsuspecting; an unrealistic goal held aloft, but knowingly unattainable. So, listen carefully to what Thomas Jefferson famously said, “If a nation expects to be *ignorant and free*, in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.”<sup>23</sup> In this he echoed the bad experiences the ancient Athenians had

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made with their democratic experiment. Perhaps Jefferson's vision was that democracy, to survive, will have to be maintained by system of universal education. Just what "educated"<sup>24</sup> means in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, maybe even before, has yet to be determined, for as we know, many who attacked democracy's principles in January 2021 were supposedly highly educated men and women. We continue to wonder and, with diligence and forbearance, are challenged to cultivate the educative ground from which democracy grows. Education remains the gateway to democratic improvement and economic opportunity, a gateway that must remain open and fluid, adjusting itself to situations and problems as they arise, seeking truth, and available to all.

Finally, as our early national history became more remote, an ever-widening gap of knowledge and information was left to be filled in by old stories, ideologies, and myths designed to augment our most treasured ideals and manipulate our beliefs and actions. Various told, these stories color how we view the world and interpret present day issues. Covertly they fuel our moral and immoral judgments with hyperbolic intentions. We hear them from parents and grandparents, friends and work associates, ministers, teachers, and politicians. We especially hear them in news commentaries and the unaware are often blindsided by half-truths and misappropriated or politically adjusted "facts." What is left unspoken or just glossed over in amiable ignorance or prejudiced by undisclosed beliefs is sometimes puzzling and ever so often doesn't mesh with the contextual realities in which it [they] originated. Remembering these stories, we more often than not ignore their exaggerations and accept them as fact when they coalesce with our beliefs revealing their subjective nature. Knowledge, facts, and our ethical dispositions are socially and non-judiciously created on the backs of the stories we have heard and those that we pass along to the younger generation.<sup>25</sup> Again, this reinforces the need for universal and quality educational opportunities for all Americans. It may also mean the wholesale re-education of the present teachers in our schools as well as over-hauling teacher education in our colleges and universities.

As we are aware, our myths, which contain veiled assumptions<sup>26</sup> about our genealogical past, including our values and beliefs, cannot be dispelled by facts alone. We have trouble thinking about them rationally because they comprise a great deal of our mental makeup; when thinking *ABOUT* them, we are thinking *WITH* them. They lie quietly within operating in the background of our ideas and beliefs as a hidden moral grammar, axiomatic and logically secure, accentuating the importance of dialogical communication across our differences.<sup>27</sup>

So, on Memorial Day each year, when celebrating warriors past, and with emotional force – flags flying, Bibles waving, bands playing, children marching, and with a loud and numbing rhetoric – our myths are convincingly acknowledged – *clichés or ordinary life* – helping us gain our bearings in a world of confusing ethical messages. They are active, perhaps covertly shaping our personal and collective identities and compressing our values' orientation – including what is meant by "ethical democracy" – in an agreeable unawareness. The irony is palpable.

## The Lost Art of Communityship

Writing in the Washington Post on January 25, 2021, Brian Klass said,

*“Today, with the rise of social media, one can be alone but feel part of a group – and some of those groups are glued together by unhinged beliefs. Bowling alone has been replaced by tweeting together – a cardboard cutout for real social interaction, but one that has a seductive allure to millions of people. Many of the fanatics who stormed the Capitol were neither poor nor social misfits, but rather had found a digital community to augment or replace their offline one.”<sup>28</sup>*

The seductive allure of “belonging” to something greater than ourselves and of “making a difference” in a world that has perhaps treated us indifferently, and to reinvigorate our self-image in order to lift us *from what* David Riesman called “The Lonely Crowd”<sup>29</sup> is a powerful psychological and communal force. Riesman theorized that our lives are in large part shaped by “peer groups” of persons whom we resemble in age, social class, or otherwise, and we adjust our values to conform to those of our group. This is an ongoing process making our values unthinkingly habitual and often unstable and irrational. Unfortunately, we are not as free as we believe we are.

Dr. Wendy James says,

*“As humans, we have instinctual responses that are exacerbated by group influences. What we might not do as individuals we may do as part of a group. People may lose control of their usual inhibitions, as*

**Albert Einstein said it with these words: “A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”**

<https://www.purposefairy.com/73654/importance-of-human-connection/>

*their mentality becomes that of the group. You have never heard of a peaceful riot. Riots are by definition violent in nature .... If the group behavior is violent, the larger the group the more magnified the violence. A mob mentality phenomenon has occurred throughout human history, whether witch burning, religious zealotry, political protests or reaction to perceived racial micro aggressions.”<sup>30</sup>*

These social and political forces pull on our sentiments — feelings of alienation, the need for self-identity, the desire to make a difference, and the allure of belonging. Of course, there are inequities in our system of government as egos and ideologies often clash and compromises are negotiated. Somehow, we must figure out why the more destructive of these forces lures some and not others; what is it that makes some want to scream at the world that they have been mistreated by the “system” and not others; why do some – rich or poor – work diligently at their vocation and reach pinnacles of achievement; and what is it that is able to shore up democracy, and not for the wealthy and influential only, but for all of us?

## Value Connections

We may not like the fact, but our value-connections shape us and have shaped us for millions of years. They are a part of our evolutionary history and personal genealogy lying quietly behind much of what we think and say. Scientist Matthew Lieberman says,

*“Across many studies of mammals, from the smallest rodents all the way to us humans, the data suggests that we are profoundly shaped by our social environment and that we suffer greatly when our social bonds are threatened or severed. Being socially connected is our brain’s lifelong passion...It’s been baked into our operating system for tens of millions of years.”<sup>31</sup>*

Lieberman is talking about “communityship” about which Henry Mintzberg said involves a, “... people’s sense of belonging to and caring for something larger than themselves.”<sup>32</sup> Without a doubt, “communityship” hints at “ethical authentic leadership,”<sup>33</sup> at democracy – a vision of something higher.

A difficulty with talking about all of this is that we now realize there are two general forms of “communityship” operative in our nation: one that is thought of as ethical, democratic and grounded in common need and moral considerations, and another that is generally “me-focused” and doesn’t require us to measure the injudiciousness of our actions against anything other than what gives us personal pleasure. This is the self-indulgence of the egocentric masquerading as a lofty moral principle.<sup>34</sup>

Peering deeper; the same forces that mold the ethical are similar to those molding the unethical. All of these – individualism and collectivism, authoritarianism, and communitarianism – are *sources of the self*<sup>35</sup> bringing significance to our lives, albeit variously, and drawing us together in communities of significance. This underscores the necessity for values clarification and, most importantly, values evaluation, as we continue to build our democratic future. Clearly, America today stands at a crossroads and the choice is ours to make: Are we or are we not committed to the collectivity that is us, to democratic principles and their moral foundation? Even if the majority is so committed, differences abound among us and there are many paths open for discussion. To this we need to give our attention. It was Aristotle who sounded the warning:

*“That which is common to the greatest number, has the least care bestowed upon it. Everyone thinks chiefly of his own, hardly at all of the common interest; and only when he is himself concerned as an individual. For besides other considerations, everybody is more inclined to neglect the duty which he expects another to fulfill.”<sup>36</sup>*

Mitch Album put it this way, “The way you get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning.”<sup>37</sup> This we know, people whose values are restricted to the immediate, with little knowledge of the past, and who maintain a shallow outlook of the future have limited cognitive and moral growth. They live their lives on the periphery of community and give little thought to issues that have moral meaning and purpose. Most of the time it’s about them and what they want; especially what they claim are their Constitutional rights, revealing their inherent narcissism. When

they scream and yell that their rights have been violated, one can only wonder if their words bear the impress of rational thinking grounded in congruent knowledge.

### **Becoming Morally Conscious**

We should give serious thought to what we value in ourselves and what we value in others as we are faced with an enormous task of articulating a concept of democracy grounded in the moral soil of human relationships. We are indeed, seekers of community in a divided world.<sup>38</sup> The reference to “moral” is not accidental as it is definitive of a democratic culture designating a particular kind of *conscious content* – socially prescriptive and cognitively descriptive – telling us how we ought to treat one another.

Although variously conceived, ethical and moral rules of behavior have historically brought stability and meaning to collective living. Through parenting, nurture, and continual interaction with others we learn the importance of living morally. We can symbolize this aptitude as our “moral consciousness.”<sup>39</sup> It’s a social disposition identifying human interrelatedness and collective responsibility. This is learned and developed by communal awareness – in families, churches, schools, in political debates, and by working with others. Thus, being moral is both natural and developmental but also reflective of cultural diversity. It may be so firmly enculturated as to be thought of as self-evident. Yet, its activation is not a given; someone must step up and provide the moral leadership required.

And so we ask, “How will a good person know when she or he is hurting or humiliating her or his neighbor?” and “How will companies, including scientific, technical, and governmental organizations, know when they are violating rather than promoting essential human values?” Notwithstanding the events of 1/6/21, we can also inquire into the role of religion – Christian or otherwise – in directing our moral consciousness.<sup>40</sup> What does the religious have to say about the immigrants pouring into our nation, many who are children, seeking relief from oppression and a safe place to live and work? What did we hear from pulpits in the aftermath of the events of 1/6/21? With the pervasiveness of churches in America, notwithstanding their decreased membership and attendance, we wish to hear more from the pulpit than pious platitudes, such as “thoughts and prayers” set in the tomes of religious dogma.

Obviously, to be moral – to adhere to and live by moral principles – reveals an uneven history. We have built moral principles into law and constitution, into faith and church polity, and into our businesses. These efforts are indicators that being moral or ethical *may not be a natural disposition*, but one that is prized and to which we must give our attention. These moral pathways reveal our perception of the importance of living ethically and our commitment to principles of moral behavior. This I understand – psychologically valuing my own freedom and the justice it requires me to extend to others also necessitates that I become aware of all the various ways in which other human beings with whom I interact can be hurt. From a moral perspective, we tasked with creating environments that respect the welfare, dignity, and self-worth of those in our care.

Like all human experience, our moral awareness is not a fixed target, but most certainly changes as our understanding of our physical world and our relationships change. We are daily confronted with understanding those around us – their familial connections, religious affiliations, political views, and deepest values. We most assuredly can assert: *relationships reveal our character* enabling friendship and love, communication, trade, and the making of treaties, and constitutions. Even if this commonality has grown unevenly in different people and cultures it represents our moral consciousness or “moral compass.” Understandably, “life is a web of relationships” defining our moral obligations. Relationship-building is a powerful but fragile phenomenon, constantly changing and easily lost.

This perception entails empathy, generosity, fairness, and reciprocity. All of these, including their polar opposites, figure into our relationship-value-equation. They ground our moral consciousness within a human ferment, always bubbling up within the agitation and commotion around us. Positive moral values set in the context of relationships – religious, political dialogue, community decision-making, etc. – comprise the enabling foundation of a growing democratic republic. Identifying the moral is a challenge, but I have discovered that we give birth to our essential moral selves in our service to one another. In America this moral consciousness includes the right to life, liberty, and the individual pursuit of a happy and fulfilling life. And although we may point our moral compass toward these goals, our compass doesn’t always reveal the hills, swamps, and rough terrain that lie in our path. As what is thought of as “moral” has become more and more politicized, courage will be needed to keep our compass pointed in a positive moral direction, to uplift the horizon of our moral awareness.

### **Conclusion: Democracy’s Edge**

Artist Paul Cézanne remarked, “The landscape thinks itself me and I am its consciousness.”<sup>41</sup> If the “landscape” is symbolized as “the human landscape” then our consciousness will be a moral consciousness of *unconcealment*. Surely this is a vision of something “higher” lying on the vertical periphery of democracy and its moral postulates. We all have known people who look at the world from the nicely furrowed grooves of their own beliefs and maybe some don’t care about others; or perhaps are so dialogically limited that they are unable to listen and grasp meaning outside the province of their own values-set. Many times, we hear, but “don’t hear,” and that’s the folly of our times. Consequently, for some, commitment to a personal ideology is easier than a commitment to the moral welfare of others. Relationships can be messy and difficult, whereas an ideology, like belief, is abstract and conceptual; it doesn’t argue with us.

Sadly, as we assert individual values only and stake out a path to personal freedoms, rather than the democratic collective we are, we unknowingly sacrifice our independence and are gathering with like-minded individuals, often in volatile groups, who are also asserting their individuality and personal values. In doing this, we are fooling no one but ourselves; that is, our joining these groups and conformity to peer pressure negates our individuality, but this is something that lies outside the ability of some to understand. We



honestly believe that there is power in numbers and truth is to be counted and weighed rather than understood and reasoned.

Our sense of what it means to be alive emerges partly from our awareness of our own life and partly from our intuitive ability to recognize others as living beings defining the parameters of our moral sentiments. This sense does not spring from logical deduction or from some moral theory. From infancy onward we use mental shortcuts to discern the lives of others. These are intuitions that are developed and shrouded in words becoming a part of our knowledge, always adjusting to new experiences and developing fresh understandings.

This being said, democracy feeds on positive, moral relationships, relationships that provide cohesion to our families, work, religious experiences, and political ideals. Henry Mintzberg says, “‘communityship’ involves a people’s sense of belonging to and caring for something larger than themselves.”<sup>42</sup> Without a doubt, “communityship” hints at “ethical authentic leadership” as Timothy Snyder remarks,

*“America will not survive the big lie just because a liar is separated from power. It will need a thoughtful repluralization of media and a commitment to facts as a public good. The racism structured into every aspect of the coup attempt is a call to heed our own history. Serious attention to the past helps us to see risks but also suggests future possibility. We cannot be a democratic republic if we tell lies about race, big or small. Democracy is neither about minimizing the vote nor ignoring it, neither a matter of gaming nor of breaking a system, but of accepting the equality of others, heeding their voices and counting their votes.”<sup>43</sup>*

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## Endnotes

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## Supplemental References

**Henry Reeve**, adapted by John Spencer (1835), made the first translation of Tocqueville’s “Democracy in America.” The line “The great experiment” has become famous for being used by Tocqueville for describing the birth of modern democracy in America. It is supposed to be in the last paragraph of the first chapter of his book “Democracy in America.” However, French versions do not have this line and modern American versions do not have it as well. Tocqueville wrote,

*“C'est là que les hommes civilisés devaient essayer de bâtir la société sur des fondements nouveaux, et qu'appliquant pour la première fois des théories jusqu'alors inconnues ou réputées inapplicables, ils allaient donner au monde un spectacle auquel l'histoire du passé ne l'avait pas préparé.”* Henry Reeve translated it this way:

*“In that land the great experiment was to be made, by civilized man, of the attempt to construct society upon a new basis; and it was there, for the first time, that theories hitherto unknown, or deemed impracticable, were to exhibit a spectacle for which the world had not been prepared by the history of the past.”*

**James W. Loewen** (17 July 2018). Sundown towns: A hidden dimension of American racism. *The Washington Post Book World*. *He comments*:

In this groundbreaking work, sociologist James W. Loewen, author of the classic bestseller *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, brings to light decades of hidden racial exclusion in America. In a provocative, sweeping analysis of American residential patterns, Loewen uncovers the thousands of “sundown towns” — almost exclusively white towns where it was an unspoken rule that blacks weren't welcome — that cropped up throughout the twentieth century, most of them located outside of the South.

Written with Loewen’s trademark honesty and thoroughness, *Sundown Towns* won the Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award, received starred reviews in *Publishers*

*Weekly* and *Booklist*, and launched a nationwide online effort to track down and catalog sundown towns across America.

In a new preface, Loewen puts this history in the context of current controversies around white supremacy and the Black Lives Matter movement. He revisits sundown towns and finds the number way down, but with notable exceptions in exclusive all-white suburbs such as Kenilworth, Illinois, which as of 2010 had not a single black household. And, although many former sundown towns are now integrated, they often face “second-generation sundown town issues,” such as in Ferguson, Missouri, a former sundown town that is now majority black, but with a majority-white police force.

**Hume’s Habit** (<https://philosophermit.wordpress.com/2017/07/12/humes-habit/>). David Hume labeled his fleeting sensations the “empirical self” compressing what many call “human essences” – mind, feelings, beliefs, values, etc. – and encapsulating, among other things, talk about ethics and morals within the language of scientific verification. Hume’s idea of “causation” follows from this; “causation” is unperceived, thus non-empirical. Rather, it is an inference or assumption—a habit of the empirical self. The philosophical pages from Britannica (<http://philosophypages.com/hy/4t.htm>) explain:

“Our beliefs in matters of fact, then, arise from sentiment or feeling rather than from reason. For Hume, imagination and belief differ only in the degree of conviction with which their objects are anticipated. Although this positive answer may seem disappointing, Hume maintained that custom or habit is the great guide of life and the foundation of all-natural science.”

**Pew Research Center.** The Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping the world. It conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, media content analysis, and other empirical social science research. The Pew Research Center does not take policy positions. Available at <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2016/06/27/4-achieving-racial-equality/>.

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**Heathfield, Susan** is a management and organization development consultant, and co-owner of TechSmith Corporation. Heathfield comments, “The leadership vision was powerful because the senior managers and leaders believed in the vision and mission. Not just a statement hanging on a wall, the leadership vision was even more powerful because people lived the leadership vision every single day at work. When leaders share a powerful vision and organize and staff the workplace to accomplish it, a powerful dynamic drives employee performance.” Available at <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/leadership-vision-1918616>.

**Adams, James Truslow** was an American writer and historian. He was a freelance author who helped to popularize the latest scholarship about American history and his three-volume history of New England is well regarded by scholars. He popularized the phrase “American Dream” in his 1931 book *The Epic of America*. Available at <https://corporatefinanceinstitute.com/resources/knowledge/other/american-dream/>.

**Best, Matthew** serves as pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church, New Kingstown. He is also the chair of Emmaus Village, a soon-to-be non-profit that is dedicated to building a village of tiny homes to help end homelessness in eastern Cumberland County. Rev. Best is the chair-elect of the Policy Council of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPA) – the advocacy ministry of the ELCA in Pennsylvania. His pastoral letter is a response to the events at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021.

**Breeden, David** PhD. is Senior Minister at First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, a historically Humanist congregation. Find out more at [www.wayofoneness.com;text=Kant%20said%20%E2%80%9COut%20of%20the%20crooked%20timber%20of.hammering%20and%20sanding%20and%20shellacking%20to%20be%20done](http://www.wayofoneness.com;text=Kant%20said%20%E2%80%9COut%20of%20the%20crooked%20timber%20of.hammering%20and%20sanding%20and%20shellacking%20to%20be%20done)

**Carrese, Paul** is the director of the School of Civic & Economic Thought and Leadership at Arizona State University. For nearly two decades he was a professor of political science at the United States Air Force Academy. He is author of the book “The Cloaking of Power: Montesquieu, Blackstone, and the Rise of Judicial Activism” and co-editor of three other books. His most recent book is “Democracy in Moderation: Montesquieu, Tocqueville, and Sustainable Liberalism.”

**Jones, Michael** says, “At the core of our existence is a common pool of energy, a deep well of creative capacity which we access whenever we share a sense of belonging to and caring for something larger than ourselves. To generate this common pool of creative capacity involves turning from a linear and closely-controlled leadership environment to a more integrative and holistic worldview. As Henry Mintzberg argued, we need to shift our focus from leadership to what he termed ‘communityship’ in order to build greater organizational creativity for the future. This is an excellent website detailing principles of communityship. Available at <https://www.management-issues.com/opinion/7179/from-leadership-to-community-ship/>

**UNESCO-APNIEVE:** “Learning to Live Together in Peace and Harmony” UNESCO-APNIEVE. Bangkok: UNESCO PROAP, 1998). Available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001143/114357eo.pdf>. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

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Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations aimed at promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, the sciences, and culture. It has 193 member states and 11 associate members, as well as partners in the nongovernmental, intergovernmental, and private sector. Headquartered at the World Heritage Centre in Paris, France, UNESCO has 53 regional field offices and 199 national Commissions That Facilitate Its Global Mandate.

**Einstein, Albert.** “The Value and Importance of Human Connections” is an excellent summary of Einstein’s thoughts about the significance of human beings. Available at <https://www.purposefairy.com/73654/importance-of-human-connection/>

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## About the Author

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## The Ethical Imperative of Competence — *Vulcan's Crucible*

— Dean M. Schroeder, Valparaiso, Indiana USA

The molten liquid gushed from the cupola's taphole and ran down the spout. As the white-hot liquid iron flowed into the transfer ladle, a group of spectators – mostly wives and children of the workers – looked on in rapt reverence from a safe distance. The guests were invited to see first-hand the work their husbands and fathers did for a living. Unfortunately, this was not a celebration, but a wake. Vulcan's Crucible Ironworks, the once proud foundry that at its peak provided a good living to almost 450 families, was closing down. Today was the last day workers would crowd into the plant for its 7am shift; the last day sand would be rammed hard into molds; the last day the cupola would be fired up; and the last day the iron would be melted and poured to make castings. And next Friday would be the last paycheck the workers would receive.

As the cupola operator plugged the taphole with a ball of fireclay, the transfer man activated the hoist and began to push the transfer ladle carrying a ton of the liquid iron along the overhead monorail to the pouring floor. The pouring crews had just finished filling molds with the previous batch of iron and were moving their smaller ladles along the bridge cranes to receive more of the 2700-degree metal.

The young plant general manager (PM) looked on with bittersweet thoughts as he watched the crew working with great skill and efficiency in their well-choreographed dance with the dangerous liquid. There was a natural fluidity and rhythm to everyone's collective actions as they coordinated wordlessly through the intense din of production. This hadn't been the case when he first arrived at Vulcan five months earlier. Having been given the responsibility of turning around the failing foundry, he was just beginning the process of understanding its cash flows and costs when he wandered out into the plant during his first afternoon. The scene he observed was one of complete chaos – something out of Dante's Inferno. The general foreman was yelling orders at the top of his lungs; the melt shop foreman and the pouring foreman were screaming at each other in an intense argument; and the pouring crew was signaling the melt shop for more iron by throwing chunks of molding sand across the plant. Suddenly the side of a large mold burst. Five hundred pounds of molten iron ran across the floor and hit a gas hose. Flames shot twenty feet into the air, and the chaos multiplied.

The next morning, the PM showed up in the plant wearing jeans, steel-toed boots, a work shirt, and safety glasses. He spent the next several days observing, studying workflows

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and procedures, and talking with a lot of people – managers and supervisors, but mostly front-line workers. He asked questions and listened. It quickly became apparent that the primary problem was managers who were not equipped to be managers. They did not know how to lead others, they played favorites, and they were not knowledgeable about all aspects of their jobs. By the end of the first week, he had a plan, and began its execution. He fired the general foreman, one of his henchmen, and another foreman, and made arrangements to transfer the second shift foreman to the first shift. Then he pulled the employees together. He told them what was happening, explained the personnel changes, and announced the immediate rationalization of the pay structure to eliminate many discrepancies caused by past favoritism. (Most workers received modest pay increases, and no pay rates were decreased.) The PM continued by pledging to treat everyone honestly and fairly, shared his turnaround plan, and asked for their ideas and help.

The PM was surprised by the support he received. Once the workforce saw that he was serious about being fair and listening, they began sharing ideas to solve problems – many of which the PM didn't even know existed. Within ten weeks productivity had more than doubled, quality was up, scrap castings were reduced by over eighty percent, and the factory floor was clean and well organized. Production was smooth and efficient, and the tension on the floor that he had witnessed the first day was gone.

But despite the radical turnaround on the plant floor, Vulcan's overall performance numbers were not responding as well as they should. With the shop running well, the PM delved into some of the key performance drivers in greater detail. Poor record keeping made this task difficult, but eventually he discovered a number of ethical breaches on the part of the VP for Sales who was draining cash from the company. The VP (a minority owner in the company) was coming in the middle of the night and picking up casting, taking them to a machine shop he owned. No paperwork was being filed so there were no records of the transactions, and the castings could not be invoiced. Low scrap yields led to the PM having every incoming scrap iron (the foundry's primary raw material) delivery weighed; only to discover every shipment was being shorted by 10 and 20%. The scrap iron supplier was a relative of the VP of Sales. Sales "commissions" of more than twice the industry norm were being paid to an agent connected to one of Vulcan's largest customers. It turned out that the extra "commission" was being used for kickbacks to one of the customer's key managers in order to secure the work. In addition, certain Vulcan managers were receiving expensive "gifts" from suppliers. Pricing comparisons showed that these suppliers were not competitive in their pricing. By the time the PM discovered and corrected these problems, the company's cash flow was so bad that its bank called its loan and Vulcan was forced to declare bankruptcy.

The PM was surprised when he began discovering what he considered blatant unethical behavior. The perpetrators just didn't seem the type of people to be so dishonest. When he confronted them about their actions, an interesting pattern emerged. In the beginning, these people worked hard and honestly to make the company a success. It seems that the unethical behavior began largely out of desperation once the company began to be in serious trouble. As the company continued to decline, wages were frozen and performance

bonuses disappeared. Then their behavior became more like vultures feeding on the dying carcass of Vulcan in an effort to get their fair share while they could.

The PM speculated about what caused the demise of Vulcan. The nefarious actions on the part of some managers certainly contributed to the demise of the company, particularly near the end. But just as certain, it was not the primary cause. Over the period of several decades poor management decisions put Vulcan in a difficult financial situation. Decisions to delay modernization, cut back on maintenance, move into the wrong markets, promote people based on favoritism (personal loyalty or friendship) rather than professional skills, and all the many shortcuts and daily decisions that cumulatively led to the company's decline.

The PM's attention was brought back to the present by a sudden whoosh as the melt-shop foreman pulling the support for the cupola bottom and the last of the white-hot coke, scrap, and slag dropped onto the floor under the large melting unit. The pouring crews were filling the last mold and upended their ladles to spill the last remnants of iron out. A quiet applause broke out from the visitors as the PM walked over for a brief talk with them. He thanked them for coming and hoped that they enjoyed watching their husbands' and fathers' work. He praised the terrific job the men had done, particularly over the last five months. Then he apologized for the company having to shut down and invited the guests to visit the company canteen for refreshments while they waited for their husbands and fathers to finish, cleaning up, and punching out for the last time.

As the group began to thin, a young woman stepped forward and held out her hand. She carried her one-year-old daughter with her left arm, partially supported by her very pregnant belly. The PM recognized her as Dawn, the wife of his melt-shop lead-man. "I want to thank you for inviting us to watch the guys work, and for everything you have done for Dan. This was special. Now I know why he comes home so dirty and sweaty. He really works hard, doesn't he?" She smiled with great pride as I assured her that he did a great job and was a highly valued employee and friend. As she set down her daughter and led her off to the employee canteen, several other wives and children stepped forward, shook the PM's hand, thanked him, and exchanged a few kind words.

As the last of the guests drifted off, the PM was almost in tears. The wives of the workers who he was laying off were thanking him! Yet they were the ones who were going to experience the biggest hardship from the plant closing. Few well-paying jobs were left in the community, and most of the workforce would end up having to accept significantly lower wages in order to support their families. Certainly, the owners of the company would pay a price financially, but they had other business interests and would not be concerned about where the money for their next meal was coming from, or if they would be able to meet their car payment or next month's rent. The PM himself wouldn't suffer much. He had a good education, a solid work record, and had already been approached about taking on new projects. His managers and professional staff would need to find new jobs, but their skills were in demand and several of them already had good employment lined up.

It wasn't fair! It wasn't just! That thought stuck a cord with the PM. Fairness and justice was one the five ethical frames he had studied in school. While some of the actions by the

VP and several other managers were clearly unethical, their nefarious acts contributed little to the failure of Vulcan, and then only at the end. Was there an ethical element to the ongoing bad decisions made by management over decades? While most people would consider the managers who made those decisions to be moral people trying to do a good job, did they suffer some form of ethical breach in their competency? The PM thought about the five lenses through which to view ethics that he had been taught in b-school: fairness & justice, utilitarian, rights, community good, and virtue. Arguments could be made for the application of several of these perspectives in this situation. Surely a virtuous leader needed to be competent. Is there an ethical imperative of competence?

Just then one of the blowers on the cupola was shut off and the PM was pulled out of his musings. He looked at the steam silently rising from the field of cooling molds on the pouring floor. The familiar smells of a foundry assaulted his nose, some mixture of burnt sand, machine oil, cooling metal. He was going to miss this. It was always his favorite time, when the day's work was done, and its tangible output was solidifying in the molds. His time at Vulcan's Crucible was coming to a bittersweet end. Now that the struggle was over, he suddenly realized he was going to miss it, but most of all, he was going to miss the people. Thinking of that, he had better join the group in the canteen and say his goodbyes. Then he had several calls to make to various employers in the area on behalf of his people.

As he turned and headed off to meet the crew and their families, a thought hit him with the force of a hammer. If there is an ethical imperative of competency, did he suffer an ethical breach? After all, the foundry closed on his watch. If he had been more competent could Vulcan have been saved?

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## About the Author

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**Dean M. Schroeder** is an award-winning author, consultant, speaker, and scholar. His work focuses on creating high-performing organizations and improving people's work lives through the application of better management. He is the author of *The Idea-Driven Organization: Unlocking the Power in Bottom-up Ideas* (2014). His best-selling book, *Ideas Are Free: How the Idea Revolution is Liberating People and Transforming Organizations* (2004), co-authored with Alan Robinson, has been translated into nine different languages, was voted the Reader's Choice by *Fast Company* magazine, and selected as one of the 30 best business books of the year by *Soundview Executive Books*. His next book, *Practical Innovation in Government: How Front-line Leaders are Transforming Public Sector Organizations*, will be released in the summer of 2022.

Dr. Schroeder has worked with many types of companies and organizations in North America, Europe, and Asia. Dr. Schroeder was the Herbert and Agnes Schulz Professor of Management at Valparaiso University's College of Business and has taught at the University of Massachusetts, St. Petersburg Technical University in Russia, and at ALBA in

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# **The Frayed Edges of Morals and Values**

## *Seeking Balance in a World of Value Diversity*

— JOSEPH P. HESTER, CLAREMONT, NC, USA

Many values and ethical ideas have played a role in shaping American society and the world, yet, identifying and ranking these values in importance remains a burden for many Americans, especially since there is considerable disagreement about the criteria of such a ranking. But, this morning, March 1, 2022, let there be no mistake: democracy is under attack in Ukraine and many European nations have awakened to this crisis, listening and uniting, and clearly focusing on the meaning and importance of freedom, liberty, and justice — the core principles of democracy. Significantly, democracy's moral features are being accentuated as nations around the world are calling for a stop to Russia aggression.

Recognizably, many Americans are mentally exhausted and wish not to hear about Europe's problems as during the past seven years democracy's moral core has been continually bombarded from within and without. Discussions abound, lines have been drawn and sides taken. But, the former President's failed coup in 2021 and now his words that only he could have stopped Russia's aggression in Ukraine sound ridiculously silly and awkwardly narcissistic — history has proven to be much more complicated than this.

As we watch the unfolding of the attack on Ukraine, we who have lived through wars past are reminded of democracy's vulnerability as it is a non-aggressive and value-based governing philosophy dependent on the will of the people not the military nor a dictator or a dictator-wannabe. To be sure, we have employed the military to defend democracy and may have to do so in the future due to men like Putin and would be autocrats like Donald Trump, but the salient feature of democracy is that it is supported by the will of the people supported by the right to vote. This is the basic expression of democratic freedom. Since December 7, 1941, at least, we understand that not all people or nations share our democratic principles, and that isolationism is no longer a viable option when democracy is under attack, here or anywhere else in the world.

Philosophically, the picture is more complex than many believe it to be. Ideologically —from a political, cultural, or even religious point of view — the nation we so fondly call "America" was in part a creation of the influence of Christian Europe and the development of scientific reasoning occurring during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Generally speaking, there has always been an uneasy balance between science and religion, but as these two cultural forces were bumping into each other, the development of American democracy was taking shape. Over time, but not without turmoil and modifications, American democracy proved worthy of our efforts in building an exceptional nation and has spread, although unevenly, throughout the world.

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In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the great German thinker Immanuel Kant had no idea that the freedom and liberty, which he idealized, would soon take root in a new world, nor did he realize that ethics and morality, due to the scientific movement and his own sterile logic, would morph into a secular modification — called pragmatism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and utilitarianism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century — losing its bearings in human sentiment and the moral conscience. Dictated more by practical, commercial, and political concerns than human needs and value, the transformation of ethics and its variants, seemingly practical and innocuous, loosened ethics from its historical roots and ethics has never fully recovered.

In a sense, the Enlightenment had done its job but there was a cost as ethics and morality would eventually lose their moorings in human sentiment and the human conscience, and be defined more by rabid individualism, narcissism, and the actions of power brokers. The “will to power” seems to be its defining characteristic describing what Nietzsche may have believed to be the main driving force in human life and what Bertrand Russell called the fundamental concept in social science.” We see this today, and we don’t have to look far, in remarks by our former President and by two right-wing senators who seem obsessed with the Hitlerian philosophy of white supremacy. The will to power is also a driving force behind Putin’s aggressive behaviors. With no universally agreed upon foundation for ethics and the rise individualism — a me-first attitude that pollutes and demeans democratic principles — in our time, democracy seems to have lost its connection to the “moral conscience” and we to each other becoming just another negotiable commodity in our secularized and commercialized world.

And so, in America, as the public square fades into the void of the past, many remain insulated within their personal spheres of social media ambivalent about their nation’s future, about democracy’s future here or in Eastern Europe, and reluctant to converse with others about ethical norms and the issues such norms unearth. As political life in America became volatile in 2021, many, not wanting to offend or being questioned, have kept their opinions quietly within acquiescing to the popular notion that ethics and truth are personally relative and privately their own. Democracy cannot and will not survive on the frayed edges of this attitude.

Given this state of affairs, some are giving little attention to the war in Ukraine or express their opinions openly. This may be due to their loyalty to our past President, their lack of interest in world affairs, or generally, their lack of knowledge. Definitely, for some, their ethic has been narrowed to self and family, work and community. This is a situation of self-centering, believing that “we” are the center of our own universe becoming tools of our own tools, independent and self-reliant. The situation in Ukraine should dispel this notion as democracy falters on this idea disabling moral courage.

Thus, for some, morality and ethics have become a thin veneer, merely a patina of sentiments and opinions without salience or substance, something to discuss when the occasion arises, but not something to go to war over. On Facebook and in newspapers, “thoughts and prayers” are being offered for Ukraine and its people; all the while many, following Trump’s lead and ignorant of history, believe Putin has a natural right to Ukraine.

True, the land called Ukraine has been fought over for centuries, but no one, except the people living there today have a right to determine its future.

The experiences we have and share with each other are how we reveal ourselves and give meaning to our lives. *Sharing authenticates our lives and those with whom we share.* From a moral point of view, relationships are the way we think; they connect life to life and are the foundation ethics, of all value. Within our families and in our work, when important relationships break down, it is normal to feel that something vital is missing in our lives. There is emptiness. Therefore, each day we must act as if other people matter. Personal meaning is achieved in relationship with others — through dialogue, cooperation, acts of kindness, and benevolent service. Likewise, national meaning is achieved in the same way understanding that we are a human “community” dependent and supportive of one another. This is something authoritarians don’t comprehend; better, don’t wish to acknowledge.

We may have been born with a different skin color and speak a different language than the majority in our social group, working environment, or community; we may differ with the Ukrainians and Russians as we live far away from their turmoil and anxieties, but inside we are all like, and *I say this unapologetically* recognizing humanity’s intrinsic worth. The Declaration of independence famously reads: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed, by their Creator, with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.” These are words to live by and die for. They require no philosophical defense, but the ruthless and unprincipled dictators who seek only their own power and who have created a mental image of the world they desire means that we must support and physically defend, if need be, the application of these words across the world.

I write in support of the Ukrainian people and of democracy, to support the ethical life, a life that does not disparage others. It is a life lived unselfishly, avoids narcissistic behavior, and possesses a servant’s heart. Herein rests the real meaning of our common moral consciousness, our spirituality — we extend and enlarge our lives through the love we give to each other.

Many times, I have thought of family and friends who were lost in wars since 1941. Those who came home never complained, at least outwardly, that their sacrifices were in vain. They fought for a purpose, a cause, and defined it as a “moral cause” — a defense of democracy. Our struggle against despotism, home and abroad, especially with the threat of nuclear war, is an existential crisis, a moral fight for democracy. Putin in Europe and men like Donald Trump have made sure we can’t avoid this struggle. And this we must realize: our struggle is more than one of democrats vs. republicans or a struggle against a neurotic personality or a struggle of one nation against another; it is, as Edgar S. Brightman wrote in 1951, “*a struggle in the minds of men [and women] about ultimate values.*”

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## Leading with Passion – What It Means, Why It Matters

### Introduction

In their assessment of the problems facing so many organizations today, Gallup’s Jim Clifton and Jim Harter unequivocally declared that “It’s the manager” who has failed in her/his obligation to engage and empower employees and to demonstrate the authentic leadership essential in establishing meaningful relationships (Clifton & Harter, 2019). The old saying, “I don’t care how much you know until I know how much you care” is clearly as true today as it has been for more than a century (Schwantes, 2022).

This ability to care, or to lead with passion, has increasingly been identified as a quality of today’s leaders and has been cited as an essential condition precedent for successful organizations (Duckworth, 2018; Love, 2012; Collins, 2001). Understanding the role of passion in building strong relationships has practical benefits for both leaders and followers. The focus of this paper is on identifying key elements of passion that contribute to effective leadership and to explain why leading with passion is so important in today’s highly competitive business climate.

We begin by identifying eight elements or qualities that are critical to leading with passion and cite the wisdom of well-regarded leadership scholars in explaining why each of those facets of leadership passion is vital for leaders today. We incorporate these insights to present a definition of leading with passion, clarify the importance of passion as a component of effective leadership, and note why leading with passion matters if leaders are to optimize their ability to create deeply committed organizations. We then offer five guiding principles to assist today’s leaders and managers for becoming caring and

compassionate leaders and conclude the paper with a challenge to those who wish to lead effectively to honor the duties that leadership demands.

## Understanding Leading with Passion

As scholars have begun to recognize the importance of passion as an attribute of great leadership, they have identified eight elements that make up a leader's ability to influence, serve, and inspire others (Gallos & Bolman, 2021). The following is a brief summary of each of those elements and how they serve as the foundation of leading with passion.

### *Moral Responsibility*

Moral responsibility drives leaders when they recognize that they have a profoundly important purpose to achieve that demands their best efforts (Collins, 2001). Passion in leadership is most effective when leaders honor obligations to those with whom and for whom they labor (Hernandez, 2008). The commitment to valued goals and virtuous principles demonstrates the leader's integrity and personal worthiness to lead (Dantley, 2004). As Deborah Rhode (2006) has explained, leadership is an ethical relationship rather than a title and those who lead do so most effectively when they inspire – rather than simply directing or compelling – those whom they lead. Leaders who compromise ethical standards, disregard duties owed to others, and pursue questionable short-term policies find that they ultimately lose their ability to lead, harm their own reputations, and fail to earn others' long-term respect and followership (Ciulla, 2021).

### *Recognition of Opportunity*

As leaders come to recognize their potential to lead and serve, they are also able to identify their inherent capabilities in making a contribution to the world (DePree, 2004). This recognition is achieved as a result of the leader's awareness of her/his identity (Burke & Stets, 2009) and an appreciation of the benefits of serving others (Greenleaf, 2002). The recognition of opportunity fulfilled in giving of oneself through service enables individuals to fulfill their moral identities (Sun, 2018). Driven by a desire to transcend past achievements and become the best possible version of themselves, such leaders view their identities and their roles as the opportunity to not only achieve themselves but to unlock the greatness that lies within others (Covey, 2004). Fulfilling that opportunity drives them to a higher level of personal effort (Maslow, 1994).

### *Commitment to Excellence*

Jim Collins (2001, p. 1), author of the landmark book, *Good to Great*, confirmed by extensive empirical research that truly effective leaders recognize that "Good is the enemy of great." Collins (2001) found that those who lead with passion understand that the commitment to excellence is the key to achieving organizations that grow and thrive in the highly competitive global environment. The passion for excellence was confirmed nearly four decades ago as the critical leadership difference that enabled those who lead to influence others and earn their highest commitment (Peters & Austin, 1985). This ability to recognize that dedication and hard work make great achievements possible has repeatedly been confirmed by the research of Angela Duckworth (2018).

### ***Bias for Action***

The bias for action is at the heart of passionate leadership – enabling organizations to make the transition from being “busy” to producing meaningful results (Bruch & Ghoshal, 2004). Heike Bruch and Sumantra Ghoshal (2004) explain that this bias to act enables leaders to not only exercise their own willpower through a combination of energy and focus, but to unlock those same qualities in others. Evolving from the writings of David Hume, action theory emphasizes the importance of combining a belief that a goal is achievable with a compelling desire to achieve that goal (Radcliffe, 2018). The strength of the desire to achieve a goal is the underlying basis for individual passion and the willingness to invest the personal time, energy, and resources to accomplish a valued result (DeShon & Gillespie, 2005).

### ***Valuing Others***

Passionate leadership begins with valuing others and being deeply committed to their growth and wholeness (Burns, 2010; Kouzes & Posner, 2017). Gallos and Bolman (2021, p. 295) explain that passion is a “deep emotional investment rooted in love.” That valuing or caring about others and their welfare has long been identified as the essence of love, and great leaders love those whom they serve (Autry, 1992; Hoyle, 2001; Anderson, Caldwell, & Barfuss, 2019). Much has been written about the importance of genuinely loving others as the heart of leadership (Kouzes & Posner, 2003; Fromm, 2006; Caldwell & Anderson, 2019). This valuing of others has often been called a “covenantal duty” and a sacred responsibility of leadership (Greenleaf, 2002; Pava, 2003; DePree, 2004; Covey, 2004).

### ***Constant Perseverance***

The ability to persevere and to maintain a constant effort is motivated by the fierce resolve to accomplish worthy goals (Duckworth, 2018). A leader’s unrelenting drive sets an example for others and reflects the leader’s personal dedication to excel (Collins, 2001). Perseverance reflects the sustained focus on achieving a challenging outcome, often recognizing that there are no “instant pudding” solutions to accomplishing long-term priorities (Duckworth, Peterson, Matthews, & Kelly, 2007). Perseverance is the unwillingness to be satisfied with what has previously been accomplished. The hard work, tough-mindedness, and effort required in perseverance has been recognized as more important than intellect to achieve success (van Gelderen, 2012).

### ***Visionary Perspective***

Passion is based upon a visionary perspective that is the combination of faith in oneself, the ability to understand what is required to make the effort accomplish what needs to be done, the perspective to see the path required to ultimately achieve success, and clarity about the value of achieving a worthy result (Panton, Paul, & Wiggers, 2014). The capacity to envision a future success motivates the self to make the sacrifices required to turn the vision into reality (De Cremer & van Knippenberg, 2004). Passion’s perspective about how to achieve sought-after outcomes requires a clear vision of the steps that sustain performance and translate a strategic plan into a final outcome and successful

implementation requires the alignment of values, principles, and united effort (Pfeffer, 1998).

### *Optimistic Enthusiasm*

Leading with passion employs optimistic enthusiasm to motivate the inner fire that benefit others—coupled with the belief that desired outcomes will ultimately be achieved. The sustainability of effort motivated by enthusiasm is a critical factor in enduring the disappointments, hard work, and delays that inevitably occur while striving to accomplish a complex task (Shrivastava, 2010). Lee Bolman and Terry Deal (2007) explained that passionate leadership requires this optimistic enthusiasm despite the challenges that face virtually every organization and that challenge the hearts of team members. Such leadership affirms “something new and better really is out there” and can be achieved by united effort (Bolman & Deal, 2006, p. 3).

**Figure 1: Eight Elements of Leading with Passion**



*Figure 1* identifies how each of these elements contributes to leading with passion. Each of the elements serve to reinforce each other as a leader carries out the task of guiding others in the pursuit of organization goals. Despite the pitfalls of unexpected barriers and temporary failure, leading with passion elevates the ability of a leader and those with whom (s)he works to maintain the effort, energy, and endurance to persist and to overcome the obstacles required to achieve a valued goal. Leading with passion empowers a leader to enable others to cast off fear, doubt, and limiting beliefs and replace those feelings with optimism, hope, increased commitment, and greater energy (Murphy, 2010).

Table 1, provided here, identifies how the respective elements of leading with passion contribute to the effectiveness of employees and the organizations in which they labor.

**Table 1: Elements of Passion and Why They Matter**

Passion Element	Organizational Benefit	Comment
<b>Moral Responsibility</b>	Provides the standards for accomplishing the purpose of the organization and the values that guide those who participate.	Establishes a personal example of the standards that guide the organization and clarifies the importance of the outcome.
<b>Recognition of Opportunity</b>	Identifies the higher-level benefit that can be achieved and the contribution to others that can result.	Enables others to also understand the purpose and value of the desired outcome and how they can contribute.
<b>Commitment to Excellence</b>	Recognizes the need to be world class in order to add value that benefit the world.	Holds the organization accountable to being excellent and enables it to sustain itself and compete.
<b>Bias for Action</b>	Focuses on doing what needs to be done to convert good ideas and intentions into results that make a difference.	Understands the importance of the key factors that are absolutely necessary to achieve desired outcomes that determine success.
<b>Valuing Others</b>	Treats participants as valued owners and partners and thereby earns their followership, trust, and commitment.	Touches lives and enables others to become the best versions of themselves by communicating to others their worth.
<b>Constant Perseverance</b>	Follows through with unyielding determination, despite obstacles that must be faced and overcome.	Demonstrates the fierce resolve and dedication that sustain effort necessary to ultimately succeed.
<b>Visionary Perspective</b>	Understands the context of what is required and the steps ultimately necessary to achieve a goal.	Perceives the importance of the key factors required that distinguish great achievements.
<b>Optimistic Enthusiasm</b>	Encourages the hearts of others and builds morale and dedication even when disappointments may occur.	Maintains a positive perspective that overcomes discouragement and sustains those with whom (s)he labors.

Leading with passion matters because it enables organizations and their members to more fully discover the potential greatness that they can achieve (Maslow, 1994). The research of Gallup conducted in more than 160 different countries affirmed that the failure of leaders to build relationships that demonstrated leaders' commitment to employees and the priorities of their organizations eroded employee engagement and their trust of those leaders (Clifton & Harter, 2019).

Today's employees expect far more from their leaders and from their jobs than simply a day's pay for a day's work. Specifically, Clifton and Harter, (2019, p. 11) articulate those expectations.

- *Employees want more than a paycheck. They want their job to fulfill a meaningful purpose.*
- *Employees want more than job satisfaction. They seek their own personal and professional development.*

- *Employees do not want their supervisor to be their “boss.” They want a coach who helps them to grow and improve.*
- *Employees do not want an annual review as a means of feedback. They want ongoing conversations that demonstrate a supervisor’s commitment to their performance.*
- *Employees do not want to learn only about their weaknesses and mistakes. They want their employer to focus on helping them enhance their strengths.*
- *Employees are not interested solely in the job. They want their employers to help them achieve a better life.*

Those leaders who lead with passions respond to these expectations and help their organizations to unlock their potential.

### Definition of Leading with Passion

Gallos and Bolman (2021, p. 295) defined passion as a “deep emotional investment that is rooted in love.” Other researchers defined passion as “an intense and powerful feeling of commitment, compelling desire, and enthusiasm directed toward a purpose, institution, person, or objective” (Caldwell & Anderson, 2022, p. 20). Commitment in leading with passion is associated with each of the eight elements cited above.

Angela Duckworth (2018), author of *GRIT: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*, explained the importance of purpose, intent, and perseverance in leading with passion, coupled with actions that demonstrate those factors. Clearly, leading with passion is far more than an intense feeling. Murphy (2010, p. 36) stated that “leading with passion is about courageously casting off fear, doubt, and limiting beliefs and giving people a sense of hope, optimism, and accomplishment. . . passion is a heartfelt energy that flow through us, not from us.” Peter Northouse (2021 p. 223) concluded that those who lead are authentic leaders who combine actions with feelings. By their personal examples, those who lead with passion ignite the energy and commitment of those whom they lead and serve (Collins, 2001).

Integrating the elements of leading with passion with the insights of leadership scholars, we define leading with passion as “*the integration of the intense desire to accomplish a worthy goal with actions that demonstrate a personal commitment to honoring duties owed to self and to others in the pursuit of excellence.*”

### Guiding Principles

We have identified five guiding principles to guide today’s leaders and managers in their quest to become effectiveness within their organizations. These principles are applicable to leaders in diverse organizations, whether in business, higher education, non-profit, governmental agencies, or healthcare.

1. **Passion demands total personal commitment.** Those who lead must be prepared to personally dedicate themselves to achieving a desired outcome. The evidence from the research is that the failure of leaders to be fully invested undermines the

- commitment and effort of others and diminishes an organization's performance (Clifton & Harter, 2019).
2. **Passion requires constant adaptation.** The learning process for success requires the capacity to learn from experiences and make the changes necessary to improve performance (Duckworth, 2018). Knowing how to examine why less than ideal results have been achieved and being willing to persist in improving are essential to effectively adapt.
  3. **Passion focuses on success.** Being positive means viewing each experience as positively as possible – including identifying what is learned even when outcomes are sub-optimal. Celebrating each small success and emphasizing results that represent improvement build morale and generate enthusiasm about future success (Chester, 2015).
  4. **Passion engages others as valued partners.** Passionate leaders understand the importance of integrated efforts in achieving success and treat those with whom they work as valued owners and partners (Block, 2013). Such leaders view their obligation to those with whom they work to be a covenantal responsibility which reflect the leader's debt owed to stakeholders (DePree, 2004).
  5. **Passion motivates leaders to be stewards.** In the pursuit of worthy goals, the most effective passionate leaders honor the duties of the ethical steward (Caldwell, Hayes & Long, 2010; Hernandez, 2012). Such leaders are committed to optimizing long-term outcomes that benefit all stakeholders and produce results that are often innovative and surprising (Contrafatto, 2014; Dominguez-Escrig, *et al.*, 2019).

Each of these five principles strengthens the ability of leaders to not only demonstrate their own passion for accomplishing a valuable outcome but to inspire others with whom they work to increase their efforts to follow their example (Collins, 2001).

### The Challenge

The great benefit of leading with passion is that it enables individuals to match their commitment to achieving an outcome with their ability to care about others who contribute to success. Leading with passion leads those who lead to be able to enhance their self-control and focus as they demonstrate their dedication to accomplishing their goal. The unfortunate reality of most organizations is that those who manage have failed to be effective as leaders (Clifton & Harter, 2019; Schwantes, 2022).

By recognizing the need to not only be committed to excellence but to be genuinely caring and committed to virtuous principles (Cameron, 2011), those who lead are able to honor the responsibilities of leadership, achieve worthy goals, and measurably improve organizations and the colleagues whom they lead. In their exhaustive study of organizations in more than 160 countries worldwide, Gallup Research has confirmed the importance of effective leadership as the difference maker in successful organizations. Leaders who lead with high commitment to employees' growth, who pursue the best interests of customers, and who engage employees as full partners create organization cultures that unlock organization potential and create long-term value (Clifton & Harter, 2019).

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We challenge leaders to reassess their styles, behaviors, characteristics, as well as their levels of engagement and interactions within their organizations and make a thoughtful decision to lead with passion. We encourage leaders to adopt the elements of leading with passion by adopting the guiding principles suggested herein as they seek to motivate, inspire and develop a clearer vision for their organizations and honor their responsibilities to society and to the employees whom they both lead and serve.

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Dr. Okpala is currently serving on the Editorial Advisory Board for the Journal of Negro Education and The Journal of Research Initiative. She serves as the Co-Director on the Education Team for CASL. Dr. Okpala has received numerous leadership awards and commendations for her work in leadership, teaching, and community engagement. She received the 2020-2021 University of North Carolina Board of Governor's Award for Teaching Excellence. Dr. Okpala enjoys reading and singing. She can be reached at [cookpala@ncat.edu](mailto:cookpala@ncat.edu).

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## Ohio's Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur:

*A Continuing Catalyst for Positive Change* — by Elizabeth Gingerich



Official House Photographer (above) - Office of Congresswoman Marcy

*U.S. Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi, honors Kaptur on Capitol Hill marking her milestone as the longest-serving woman in House history (right). Courtesy, [house.gov/media-center/press-releases/](https://house.gov/media-center/press-releases/)*

Marcia Carolyn Kaptur, a Toledo, Ohio native, serves as the U.S. representative for Ohio's 9th Congressional District. First elected to office in 1983, Kaptur is the longest-serving woman in the history of the U.S. House of Representatives.<sup>5</sup>



She is a member of the Democratic Party and is pursuing reelection in the Fall of 2022.

Congresswoman Kaptur's parents were both of Polish descent. Her family operated a small grocery and her mother was served on the original organizing committee of a trade union at the Champion Spark Plug factory in Toledo. Kaptur was the first person in her family to attend college, receiving her undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1968 and subsequently a Master of Urban Planning from the University of Michigan in 1974. Kaptur pursued doctoral studies in urban planning development finance at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1981. During this time, Kaptur served as a domestic policy advisor during President Jimmy Carter's administration.



<sup>5</sup> See <https://kaptur.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/congresswoman-kaptur-becomes-longest-serving-woman-us-house-history>

Ohio's 9<sup>th</sup> district has been subject to multiple attempts at redistricting to include more rural conservative voters. Known as the "Snake on the Lake," the district has, for the past

Year	Democratic	Votes	%	Republican	Votes	%
1982	Marcy Kaptur	95,162	58%	Ed Weber	64,459	39%
1984	Marcy Kaptur	117,985	55%	Frank Venner	93,210	43%
1986	Marcy Kaptur	105,646	78%	Mike Shufeldt	30,643	22%
1988	Marcy Kaptur	157,557	81%	Al Hawkins	36,183	19%
1990	Marcy Kaptur	117,681	78%	Jerry Lammers	33,791	22%
1992	Marcy Kaptur	178,879	74%	Ken Brown	53,011	22%
1994	Marcy Kaptur	118,120	75%	Randy Whitman	38,665	25%
1996	Marcy Kaptur	170,617	77%	Randy Whitman	46,040	21%
1998	Marcy Kaptur	130,793	81%	Ed Emery	30,312	19%
2000	Marcy Kaptur	168,547	75%	Dwight Bryan	49,446	22%
2002	Marcy Kaptur	132,236	74%	Ed Emery	46,481	26%
2004	Marcy Kaptur	205,149	68%	Larry Kaczala	95,983	32%
2006	Marcy Kaptur	153,880	74%	Bradley Leavitt	55,119	26%
2008	Marcy Kaptur	222,054	74%	Bradley Leavitt	76,512	26%
2010	Marcy Kaptur	121,819	59%	Rich Iott	83,423	41%
2012	Marcy Kaptur	217,771	73%	Samuel "Joe the Plumber" Wurzelbacher	68,668	23%
2014	Marcy Kaptur	108,870	68%	Richard May	51,704	32%
2016	Marcy Kaptur	193,966	69%	Donald Philip Larson	88,427	31%
2018	Marcy Kaptur	152,682	68%	Steve Kraus	73,183	32%
2020	Marcy Kaptur	190,328	63%	Rob Weber	111,385	37%

*Table showing percentage of vote between Kaptur and Republican contenders from 1982-2020. Courtesy, "Election Results." Federal Election Commission*

decade, encompassed a 140-mile stretch of Lake Erie coastline, from Toledo to Cleveland. As districts are typically redrawn every 10 years based on the results of the U.S. Census, Ohio's 9<sup>th</sup> has been recently subject to revision. Under current Ohio law, the state's legislature is primarily responsible for drawing the state's congressional districts – under the advice of a bipartisan legislative task force. However, a skewed map was passed in 2011. Using partisan indices to demarcate the districts, a map was designed that would allow Democrats to win 4 districts while ensuring Republican wins in the state's remaining 12 districts. Ohioans, who had voted as Democrats in past elections, were concentrated into 4 irregularly-shaped, minimally-contiguous districts, which had the effect of reducing the party's political power throughout the entire state.<sup>6</sup> These "gerrymandering" efforts included the 9<sup>th</sup> District which is comprised of portions of five counties, but none in their entirety, and fragments of Cleveland and Toledo, effectively splitting the Democratic vote in the remaining districts to intentionally dilute their votes.

Indisputably, partisan gerrymandering deprives voters of the opportunity to cast a meaningful ballot – a substantial burden on the constitutional right to vote – and violates voters' 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment right to equal protection and treatment under the law. Arguably, this partisan gerrymandering has been intentionally used in the 9<sup>th</sup> District to deprive communities of color, and Black communities in particular, of political power. And then on September 16, 2021, with a 5-2 vote along strictly partisan lines, Ohio's Redistricting Commission enacted maps that were intended to further guarantee a Republican veto-proof supermajority in Ohio's General Assembly for the next 4 years. One complaint before the Supreme Court of Ohio asserts that this extreme partisan gerrymandering flouts the clear commands of Article XI of the Ohio Constitution that "[n]o general assembly district plan shall be drawn primarily to favor or disfavor a political party" and that the number of

<sup>6</sup> See Thomas-Lundborg, Alora (2018). Why Ohio's Congressional Map Is Unconstitutional.

seats held by a party in the Ohio General Assembly “shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio.”<sup>7</sup>

A constitutional amendment to end partisan gerrymandering was put forth in response to the manipulation of the last decade and since the Ohio’s Supreme Court previously found it lacked the constitutional power since Article XI did not explicitly require political neutrality. Subsequently, on November 3, 2015, Ohio voters, by a 71.5% to 28.5% majority, amended Ohio’s Constitution by adding a mandate that districts not be drawn “to favor or disfavor a political party” and that the distribution of seats “shall correspond closely to the statewide preferences of the voters of Ohio.”<sup>8</sup> The constitutional amendment established the state’s bipartisan *Ohio Redistricting Commission*, charging that entity with redistricting in accordance with the objectives of increasing transparency, ending partisan gerrymandering, and bestowing upon that Court jurisdiction to hear claims that the Commission failed to follow constitutional standards.



*The World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. Courtesy, Rdsmith4 - Own work, CC BY-SA 2.5, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=28113>*

Recently, after a 4-3 decision by the Ohio Supreme Court which struck down the latest proposed congressional map, candidates, including Kaptur, are now left in limbo as they wait for the lines to be redrawn yet again. One of the dissenters objecting to the striking down the latest redrawn map was associate justice of the Ohio Supreme Court, Pat DeWine, the son of Mike DeWine, Ohio’s Governor.<sup>9</sup>

Congresswoman Kaptur’s tenure in the House to date has been highlighted by a series of notable accomplishments. For decades, she has advocated for veterans’ issues, and was pivotal in the creation of the World War II Memorial in Washington,

D.C. Additionally, she has championed those faced with eviction and homelessness and those whose mortgages might be subject to unscrupulous financing schemes. For example, in 2008 when Congress passed the *Emergency Economic Stabilization Act* (EESA),<sup>10</sup> designed to deal with the subprime mortgage crisis by authorizing the Treasury Department to purchase up to \$700 billion of unsecure assets and restore liquidity in financial markets, Kaptur was one of a very few who opposed its enactment, labeling it a U.S. bank bailout.<sup>11</sup> Along this vein, Kaptur introduced a bill in 2011 to restore the *Glass-*

<sup>7</sup> Original complaint before the Ohio Supreme Court available at <https://www.acluohio.org/sites/default/files/fielddocuments/leagueofwomenvotersofohio-v-ohioredistrictingcommissioncomplaint2021-0923.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Tebben, Susan (14 January 2022). Ohio Supreme Court rejects congressional map days after Statehouse maps struck down. Available at <https://ohiocapitaljournal.com/2022/01/14/ohio-supreme-court-rejects-congressional-map-days-after-statehouse-e-maps-struck-down/>

<sup>10</sup> 12 USC 52.

<sup>11</sup> Several of Kaptur’s positions were featured in Michael Moore’s 2009 documentary, *Capitalism: A Love Story*.

*Steagall Act*<sup>12</sup> which would reestablish separation between commercial banking and securities investments originally provided in 1933.

Kaptur is a representative who does not vote blindly with the tide. During the Clinton years, she helped to led opposition to the ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement<sup>13</sup> and opposed permanent normal trade relations for China as well as fast track authority in global trading activities for the president.

Congresswoman Kaptur currently serves on multiple House committees, including Appropriations, Agriculture, and Veterans' Affairs. She also chairs the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and co-chairs the Congressional Ukraine Caucus, Auto Caucus, and the Great Lakes Task Force. With many of her constituents emanating from Lake Erie coastal areas and from urban centers, the issues of water quality, clean energy provision, and regional clean-up programs are paramount. In this regard, Kaptur has backed the *American Clean Energy and Security Act* after adding an amendment that authorized the creation of power marketing authorities in regions like the Great Lakes. Her commitment to foster greater economic growth and cleaner energy sources in her district led to the announcement that the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation could administer up to \$3.5 billion to stimulate economic development through creation of green energy sources.<sup>14</sup>



*US President Joe Biden announcing information concerning the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur addressing members of Congress on Great Lakes Day in Washington, D.C. Courtesy, Wikimedia*

<sup>12</sup> 12 USC 227, also known as the *Banking Act of 1933*.

<sup>13</sup> See <https://kaptur.house.gov/issues/trade>

<sup>14</sup> See <https://en-academic.com/dic.nsf/enwiki/399599>

Kaptur is continuing to fight in Congress to ensure that the *Great Lakes Restoration Initiative* (GLRI) is fully funded through her role as Great Lakes Task Force Co-Chair as well as from her seat on the Appropriations Committee.<sup>15</sup>

– Elizabeth Gingerich, JVBL Editor-in-Chief

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The following is an interview conducted by the JVBL with the Congresswoman on May 13, 2022.

### *Interview*

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**May 13, 2022**

Q: Good afternoon, Congresswoman. Greetings from Valparaiso University. And by the way, our newly-installed president, Jose Padilla, is a native of Toledo, and a former constituent of the 9<sup>th</sup> District. By way of introduction, I teach undergraduate business law at the university – with an emphasis on environmental impact – and international trade and governance at the MBA level. I am also editor-in-chief of the *JVBL*, having worked with former Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) on the inaugural issue.



*Sept. 23, 1923: The SS Greater Detroit, a steamship for the Detroit and Cleveland Navigation Company, being launched from the American Shipbuilding Company Shipyards in Lorain, Ohio*



*The Shipyards today. Courtesy, Rona Proudfoot, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunset\\_at\\_the\\_Lorain\\_lighthouse\\_-\\_Flickr\\_-\\_ronnie44052.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sunset_at_the_Lorain_lighthouse_-_Flickr_-_ronnie44052.jpg)*

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<sup>15</sup> See <https://kaptur.house.gov/issues/great-lakes-restoration>



**A: I actually worked with Senator Lugar on ethanol development.**

Q: Excellent!



*The Black River at its mouth at Lake Erie in Lorain, Ohio (above). Shale cliffs along the Black River in the Lorain County Metroparks' Black River Reservation in Elyria (right). Courtesy, Tim Kiser (w>User:Malepheasant), CC BY-SA 2.5.*

Let's just jump right in. Back in February of this year, you hosted President Biden when he delivered remarks in Lorain at "The



Shipyards," announcing a \$1 billion program to clean up and restore the Great Lakes as part of the bipartisan infrastructure law. The key objectives cited for this investment included strengthening the region's economy, providing clean drinking water, cleaning up coastal communities, and creating good-paying jobs. Two questions here:

How does the creation of good-paying jobs and growing the economy square with combatting the ravages of climate change and how exactly will the lakes be cleaned up?

**A: Climate change provides us with the opportunity to create new products and to improve the way that we make and grow things because what America makes and grows makes and grows America, right? So, what you had were hundreds of thousands of people who were brought to Lorain for the steel industry and you also have a thriving agricultural industry in Lorain County by including the greenhouse industry. But in the last century, steel-making generated a lot of effluents that went into the Black River which empties into the Great Lakes, into Lake Erie, creating a lot of waste problems like slag. So, before people started becoming environmentally-conscious which really did not happen until the last quarter of the twentieth century, these slag heaps just lined the banks. I mean it looked like a snowstorm with all of this black gook so what happened is that the Black River became completely contaminated. All the fish and plants were dead – that place along with a lot of places in industrial America, harmed the environment. As so, as we move forward in Lorain and other places like Lorain, what we see happening is the result of federal action and money. The river is being cleaned up, the slag heaps are being removed, you see the natural plants coming back along the banks – it's really quite something to see. I'm glad I've lived as long as I have because I can see what was and**

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*what is today. It is still not finished and it still remains an area of concern. But the trout have come back in the river and they will be declared safe to eat which is astounding compared to having a dead river. In addition to that, if you come to Lorain, and I am sure like other places in America, you will see the riverfront being completely rebuilt. You will see new condominiums going up where no one would have lived before. You see old transmission towers that have been taken down now and the river opening up. The freshwater river is a major asset in that community and there is still a lot of work to be done. The local communities are working on it very, very hard and more and more fish are safe to eat. You see people coming back to the river – they have a FireFish celebration every year that is simply beautiful. We could not control the invasive species that came in with ballast water all along the Great Lakes and Lorain is impacted by that with its water system just like every other Great Lakes' water system. We haven't completely solved the problem of algal blooms because of the nonpoint source runoff but you can see the beginning of real recovery there. And I think it's a great model for other places.*

Q: We are actually experiencing the same thing with the Calumet River flowing through Gary/East Chicago and into the Great Lakes – Lake Michigan here. In fact, my first communique when the *Journal of Values-Based Leadership* was launched was with Senator Lugar – this was back in 2007. I had emailed him saying that it had been reported that US Steel was dumping 400,000 gallons of ammonia-laced water directly into Lake Michigan and we hadn't had the requisite commentary period in terms of regulatory procedural law. He wrote back and said that the Southern tip of Lake Michigan was our (Indiana's) own Yosemite Park and it had to be protected.

**A: Did he really?**

Q: Yes. And he wrote the letter of introduction for our journal back in 2007-2008. So, in terms of this metamorphosis that we are all seeing with clean-ups and renovation, climate change is causing many of us to reconsider where we live. New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of Texas and California are currently facing debilitating fires and drought and now parts of



60-millimeter mortars recovered from Lake Erie.  
Courtesy, USACE

Colorado are under a similar threat. Coastlines are receding and catastrophic weather events abound. In fact, there is a recent report entitled “Best Places to Live in the U.S. if You're Concerned About Climate Change” which includes Toledo and Cleveland as top picks. This is amazing because I remember back when the Black River was known as the “River of Fish Tumors.” And with the billion-dollar injection of capital now in the restoration of the Great Lakes, they are removing some of these historical deposits? Are you physically seeing anything being done right now or is this a plan in waiting?

**A: The additional billion dollars means that each community will have to decide with the help of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative which is administered out of Chicago for the region. And they are pretty good about coming**

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*around and looking at what needs to be done. They have lists of which waste dumps need to be cleaned up. One of the areas I am interested in – and frankly we have not made much progress as a country – is the use of dredged material. We have so much – when you are talking about Indiana’s harbors like in Gary, and then go East to Toledo, Lorain, Cleveland – if you go all across just that area of Ohio on Lake Erie, this material would fill up the Cleveland Brown Stadium every year, 400 feet high. That’s how much dredged material comes out and then what they have done – and I’m sure they have done this in Indiana though I don’t know for sure – but they just take and put it in a big confined disposal facility (CDF) and it costs a lot of money. And I keep looking at this and think scientifically. We started this 4 years ago so I have no progress to report because the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) Office in Vicksburg examined this material and said, “Yours is pretty safe.” And I said, “Can you get us beyond that point? Can we get to where we can reuse this or just don’t put it in a CDF where it be there for a thousand years?” Let’s think about how we can use it for bank restoration and so forth. I don’t think our science on soil separation is very advanced. I think it is very poor.*

Q: Do you look to institutions of higher learning to help this process?

*A: They would sure help. The dredging project is quite expensive; on Lake Erie, it is the biggest expense and I don’t have on me right now the statistics for Lake Michigan but if you look at how much money we put into dredging every year, and it’s all of these washed particles that come off the land. There has to be a way. I could not get the cooperation of our ports, but really, I think there is tremendous potential there to reuse those water-washed materials but where it is contaminated, we’ll separate and put it elsewhere for now. But it seems like soil science is a very primitive science right now. And I just think that we could do so much better on this earth material.*

Q: You mentioned working with the EPA in Chicago – are you referring to Region 5? They worked years ago with the citizens of East Chicago, especially with regard to the Superfund site that was established there and with the lead and mercury that was found in the local water system. It took a while, but they began assisting the residents and that’s back when they had actual scientists involved. And then we had 4 years of the Trump administration and these folks were replaced by political hacks, by cronies, who were put into their place with no science background. Do you see a transition back to folks who do have a scientific background, in Region 5 in Chicago?

*A: Yes, I think we are making great progress but some of the people were put into civil service positions so I honestly don’t know how effective they are at this point regionally. But they are very important to us because we have so many sites on the Great Lakes that are still areas of concern and we have to clean those up. So, we have a major job and that’s just what the EPA is willing to do. If you come to Lake Erie, for example, there is a defense base there that has been there for years and if you look at the*



A mounted Sidewinder missile. Courtesy, U.S. Air Force

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*unexploded ordnance (UXO)<sup>16</sup> in Lake Erie that goes all the way out in a plume, they sort of decided that even though they bought the 50 mm shells, that they were just going to let it be and not try to get them out. And then I asked the Department of Defense for a map of the whole Great Lakes to look at the unexploded ordnance and the contamination along the Great Lakes and ... oh, my goodness ... oh, my goodness ... it's enormous. So, the billion dollars in the GLRI (Great Lakes Restoration Initiative) will help but many of those responsible for some of the pollution that is there aren't very willing to help us remediate.*

Q: There was a civil lawsuit regarding the East Chicago site against those who dumped the lead and mercury originally in the Gary-East Chicago-Whiting area and it ended in a consent decree, a settlement. And those monies are helping. So, I hope that there is potential legal action against those polluters and their successors in interest – the businesses that basically laid waste to these areas.

*A: We have a place called the Toussaint River in Ohio which I represented. All of the marinas had to shut down because of the unexploded ordnance in the river and no element of our government – even though our government was responsible for all these shells. People in Port Clinton pick them up when they wash in with the waves and use them as doorstops – 5 mm shells. Our government would not take responsibility; the Navy wouldn't go in and said that they were not in charge of that kind of ordnance. The Army would not go in. Basically, we had to close down the river to business because of all the unexploded ordnance and nobody is responsible.*

Q: You know that when President Biden made his remarks this past February, he stated that we were going to look harder at “Made in America” and “Made by American Workers” and see much more of this economic growth coming from our steel industries. But it has been the steel industry that laid waste to a lot of these areas. And the 25 primary waste areas that were cordoned off and basically identified as contaminated in 1987 – four years after you originally took office – were pretty much polluted by the waste and discharge of the steel industries. So, going forward, how are we going to regulate and grow this economy on the back of our steel industries, keep the pollutants down, and restore coastal communities?

*A: I would answer with 3 words: “high science” and “engineering.” We are working with the Department of Energy now, for example, on partnerships with industry to modernize their manufacturing. One example is a company called Cleveland-Cliffs in the City of Cleveland. It has now placed a billion-dollar facility in Toledo which is my home and on property that*

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<sup>16</sup> *GreatLakesNow* reported in 2021 that one Formerly Used Defense Site (FUDS) on western Lake Erie “is home to a project which focuses on locating and mapping old military munitions – including some that could still be live. The results of the study will be used in planning future remediation of UXO sites which could pose a hazard to the public not just on Lake Erie, but at FUDS everywhere UXO are found in marine environments.” With respect to the FUDS program created by Congress in the mid-1980s, “the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was tasked with its execution. The program covers a wide range of remediation projects including demolition of buildings, cleaning up hazardous, radioactive and toxic waste, and removing munitions and explosives which pose a hazard to people. USACE has identified in excess of 15,000 properties which had been used by the military across the U.S. and territories, including the Lake Erie site in Port Clinton. Accessed from <https://www.greatlakesnow.org/2021/01/unexploded-ordnance-lake-erie-shoreline-site-munitions-study/>

*we, for 30 years, have cleaned up – way back to when Sherrod Brown (Sen. OH-D) visited that particular company. It is really amazing to see this.*



*Soo\_Locks-Sault-Ste\_Marie.png, Courtesy, Army Corps of Engineers*

*Toledo cost about a billion dollars and they take the taconite<sup>17</sup> from Duluth, from the iron range, and they heat it in order to produce the ingot that goes into steel-making. So, a lot of that effluent is all now contained – it's not thrown into the river, it's not stacked outside the building – it is just very interesting to watch. And that is modern technology at work. And by the way, some of the money that we were able to get for the billion dollars for the clean-up efforts are complemented by money that we got from the Army Corps of Engineers to build new locks up in Mackinaw at the "Soo"<sup>18</sup> so that we have redundancy in transport since sea-borne transport is the most economical and most environmentally clean – other than they brought in all of these invasive species that we are finding every day.*

Q: Cleveland-Cliffs is here now as well. It acquired ArcelorMittal, one of the largest steel makers in the world. They took a controlling share in 2020. The factory is located in Porter County, Indiana, so this is in our backyard. The question is whether Cleveland-Cliffs is going to mimic what it is doing in Ohio? Time will tell? But Cleveland-Cliffs appears to be a leader in this area.

A: *Yes, they are. I am very proud of them. The way this facility went up, for the most part, there were very few industrial accidents ... it's like being in a nuclear power plant. It is very, very clean and very, very organized – the work ethic, the way the people perform – it's like you are at a space launch. The facility in*



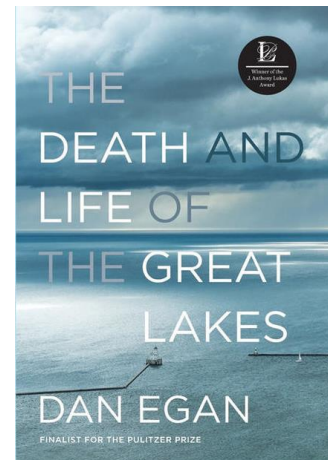
*Inter-Great Lake transportation routes through the locks. Courtesy, Alexrk2 - Own work, CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7083864>*

Q: Like Zebra mussels and Asian carp?

<sup>17</sup> An iron-bearing sedimentary rock, in which the iron minerals are interlayered with quartz or carbonate.

<sup>18</sup>The Soo Locks (sometimes spelled "Sault Locks" but pronounced "soo") are a set of parallel locks, operated and maintained by the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District. They enable ships to travel between Lake Superior and the lower Great Lakes. The locks share a name with two adjacent cities Sault Ste. Marie, in Ontario and in Michigan.

**A:** *And Quagga mussels. As for the Asian carp – we have the money to build the Joliet Barrier but the book by Dan Egan from Milwaukee – *The Death and the Life of the Great Lakes* – that is such a great book, however, I am left with this feeling that even though people are catching big salmon now in Lake Erie and they have been fishing a lot this year that the loss of plankton because of the invasive species is like cancer in the lake. And I really don't know where it is headed. I do not know what nature will do in the years to come. I think this is serious. And in Lake Michigan, what happened in Illinois this year, they had to open the locks to send everything out into Lake Michigan. These actions are happening which are not usual.*



**Q:** And the Great Lakes represent 20% of the world's freshwater resources?

**A:** *Yes.*

**Q:** Let me ask you about EVs and REs – electric vehicles and renewable energy. Ohio has long been the mainstay of the automobile manufacturing process. And now there is the transition to electrification. I have been mapping new solar sites, windmill sites, and hydro sites throughout the country. It makes sense for solar to be in the Southwest; it makes sense for wind to be in the Plains states; it makes sense for hydro to be in the Northeast and Southern-Southeastern states – especially with climate change bringing in additional precipitation to those regions. It no longer makes sense to have hydro at the Hoover Dam or in Oroville in California. And it has been the first time in 50 years that Oroville has been shut down as that state has been in a 7-year drought. What do you see happening in terms of solar, wind, and hydro as well as EV battery<sup>19</sup> making in your district as well as throughout the greater state?

**A:** *First of all, solar has already taken off. We have companies like First Solar that started way back in the 1970s and 80s. Growing out of the glass industry – which is one of our loadstar industries. But for solar use, a technology that even the Department of Energy didn't know about. And it makes me want to say to you being a Hoosier and I a Buckeye that educated Americans are extraordinary. They are still inventing in ways that even with some of the top scientists in our country don't know about. And so when First Solar was founded, originally, they used a cadmium telluride technology, not a cadmium sulphide. The Department of Energy was not responsible for this. We did bring in some photovoltaic research going way back but what happened in Ohio was that they could not get the venture capital to bring up their company. And so they had to go to some place out West to get venture capital. And so this company is actually headquartered out there*

<sup>19</sup>Already a powerhouse in the automotive supply chain, Ohio has a unique opportunity to capture EV supply chain manufacturing investment and establish the state as a hub for the EV and battery industries. The recent GM and LG Chem announcement of the Ultium Cells battery factory has opened up new possibilities for Ohio.

*– I think it's Tempe, Arizona. First Solar has advanced over the years and has a major manufacturing plant in Ohio – it's the largest solar plant in the country. And now they have increased the size of their panels from a TV-screen to 2-3 times that much. And they continue to advance. Unfortunately, Ohio as a state, is against renewables. And so one of the projects I am working on is legislation to create what I call a "Great Lakes Authority" which will be a mechanism where if you have a bunch of dunderheads that hinder state government, they cannot hold progress behind in the parts of the state that are making progress. If we had this Great Lakes Authority back when First Solar was first founded, that would have been a source of financing. At least there would be economic development people here who would have seen a future – would have understood a little bit more about science and about renewable energy. But I think that one of the problems we face in the Midwest and in the Great Lakes States – other than certain schools and Valparaiso University might be one of them as is the University of Michigan, etc. – we don't easily connect to venture capital and to innovation. It is much harder I think in our region just based on my experience. And so I saw solar struggle at the beginning. And now the Department of Energy has discovered it. And now it is like – what did these people do out here? And it is even a discovery for them but I just know how hard the road has been.*

Q: You have had an added problem with the likes of Larry Householder<sup>20</sup> and basically "dark money" going to a previous nuclear bailout as well as a fossil-fuel fundamental prop-up with \$60 million dollars in play.<sup>21</sup>

**A: *I am glad you mentioned that.***

Q: And he is going to trial, I believe, in January of 2023?

**A: *After the elections!***

Q: Yes – and I believe that he was arrested in July of 2020 so this is a long time coming.

**A: *And did you see where the federal judge in Southern Ohio has entered the first judgment against First Energy – the perpetrator – for wire fraud, racketeering, and bribery of 230 million dollars. It is the largest fine in Ohio's history for a public crime ruled by a federal judge. Now, would you believe that people in Ohio don't know that?***

Q: How do you communicate this? There is a newsletter called *The Grist* – I refer to them as the *New York Times* of clean energy news. They recently reported that Ohio has the worse energy policy because of the whole First Energy incident.

**A: *I need that article.***

Q: I will send it to you.

**A: *That is the reason I proposed this legislation for the Great Lakes Authority – we must get out from under them – we must. There must be a way to do this.***

<sup>20</sup> Larry Lee Householder is an American politician and a member of the Republican Party who was a state representative for Ohio and a two-time Speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives.

<sup>21</sup> A recent report from *Gabel Associates*, an energy consulting firm, suggests the law will cost Ohioans \$2 billion in excess utility bills and \$7 billion in health care costs stemming from pollution over nine years.

Q: Well, you mentioned venture capital – Indiana is a red state and it has been for a long time. It did go for Obama in 2008. But our governor has done something substantial – perhaps because now Republicans are seeing that you can make money with clean energy. And with the venture capital, they have gone beyond the United States. The State of Indiana has now partnered with Doral Renewables of Israel. They broke ground last fall for Mammoth Solar – which is being installed just South of us. And it will cover 2 counties – Pulaski and Starke, over 13,000 acres. Over 1.1 million solar panels will go up. This will be the largest solar installation in North America and the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest array in the world... going up in sunny Indiana! So, you can tell that money was to be had here. And then we have the 8<sup>th</sup> largest onshore windfarm in the world – and that is closer to West Lafayette, Indiana. It is called the Fowler Wind farm and one of its chief owners has been BP – trying to rebrand itself since the Gulf of Mexico disaster. Focusing on *Beyond Petroleum*, it adopted the Helios Greek flower – donned in colors of orange, yellow, and green that you see on the gas stations.

**A: *Which county is this in?***

Q: This is primarily in Benton County, Indiana. When you travel South on I-65 you can't miss it. Indiana is also big agriculture and big steel. And what is happening with the farmers with respect to Mammoth Solar and already with Fowler – is that farmers are being paid, I believe, approximately one thousand dollars per acre annually to lease their lands. And they will be making money. And I know with your recent redistricting in Ohio – your maps seem to be changing every week – do you expect more rural voters?

**A: *Could we have cross-border projects?***

Q: Actually, there is one in Ashley, Indiana, very close to the Ohio border. Last fall, I conducted an interview with Bob Powell, CEO of San Francisco-based Brightmark – it is in the current issue of the JVBL. The company put up a 263-million-dollar facility in Ashley. They take plastics from all over the world and convert that into energy. And once again, the farming communities have come together to embrace this project because they are going to be making money. So, wind, solar, and plastics leads are moneymakers for the rural sector and again, with your redistricting – under Bob Latta and Jim Jordan I believe – you have got more MAGA-Trump voters. If you can bring in these cleaner projects ...

**A: *They are innovators. Farmers are innovators.***

Q: And that's what you said – innovation is critical. And that's where you came up with the *Competes Act* which is now, I believe, in conference to synthesize both the House and the Senate versions?<sup>22</sup> I believe that it is still in conference now? What is happening there?

**A: *I think it is just now working out some of the provisions – I am on one of those committees – but the House and the Senate bills differ. I assume that it will pass the House first and then the Senate has provisions that are different.***

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<sup>22</sup> The *America Creating Opportunities for Manufacturing Pre-Eminence in Technology and Economic Strength* (COMPETES) Act 2022 H.R. 4521 as well as the Senate's *U.S. Innovation and Competition of 2021* (USICA). The synthesis document, the "Bipartisan Innovation Act" (BIA), has advanced into a formal conference.



Q: And then there is the Lorain/Lordstown shipping project?<sup>23</sup>

A: *Well, I hope that the Navy can find the Great Lakes – that is my line there. Our enlistment levels are significant and they ought to pay some attention. I just had that conversation with the head of Space Force this morning. I sort of stepped into a tank by asking him where their physical assets were located and he said...out West, in Los Angeles, in Texas...and he kept going on. And I said that there was an area that he did not mention – he did not mention the Great Lakes. So, I am just putting in a plug for the Great Lakes.*

Q: Well, this has been a pleasure. Thank you.

A: *I thank you so much for making your acquaintance. You have given us all ideas. I have taken some notes. We worked with farmers years ago when I was representing rural counties and then they took them all away from me because we won traditionally Republican counties. But we were able to raise with our farmers sterile hogs and now we live in a world where China owns our hog production and bacon is through the roof in price. Our families who survived all this are really astounding. But we were able to develop sterile hogs and we were able to harvest their hearts and put them in people and it has been working ever since. I would like to work with farmers and identify ways in which we can help humanity but make money for them too with what they have been facing. By the way, the last thing that I will say that I think is very important to cure Lake Erie's sickness, what we have to deal with is this non-point source runoff and pollution...into the St. Marys River, into the St. Joseph River, into the Maumee River and ultimately into Lake Erie. But half of the land that is in the Maumee Basin that comes into Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan and Western Ontario, is absentee-owned. You know they are all down in Florida collecting their checks. How do we take care of the land? How do we re-plumb the most piled area of the United States? We need a separate bill on that.*

Q: Eminent domain. When it comes to something this critical. It may be justified by finding public use and giving reasonable compensation as per the 5<sup>th</sup> Amendment. They have used it for projects much less in importance.

A: *Well, this is a big one. I guess we need the names of the landowners of those properties. But it is pretty hard to heal Lake Erie when we have so many people who don't really tend the land. They don't tend the land. The other thing I wanted to mention to you are the legumes and manure ... I don't think I have a single project in my region ... I'll find out as we are going out there. We have actually put in methane collectors to provide an energy source on the farm – if you know of any of those, let me know. Because that is technology I want to bring to our region.*

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<sup>23</sup> The project has the backing of the AFLCIO and seems to be moving forward after transportation concerns through the St. Lawrence Seaway are figured out. Invariably, Kaptur's efforts are a major reason for these historic investments as well as for securing American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) monies in the past.

# A Breath of Fresh Air in Congress

— Dr. Ritch K. Eich, Thousand Oaks, CA, USA



Rep. Peter Meijer, R-MI. Courtesy, US Gov't

Isaac Newton once wrote, “*If I have seen farther, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.*” I recently enjoyed conducting an interview with the Republican freshman U.S. Representative from Michigan’s 3rd Congressional District, Peter Meijer, when this famous leadership quotation came to mind.

In Meijer’s personal life and in his public service, the congressman indeed stands on the shoulders of giants. His great-grandfather, Hendrik Meijer, a Dutch immigrant, established the grocery store Meijer in Greenville, Michigan in 1934, borrowing \$388 to stock the place. Together with Peter’s grandfather and father, the Meijer family went on to build the leviathan Meijer grocery-department store retailer with more than 255 supercenters across the Midwest.

In Congress, Peter Meijer is clearly cognizant of Republican icons like Gerald Ford (whose former congressional district he now represents), Dick Lugar, Olympia Snowe, John Warner, Nancy Kassebaum, Arthur Vandenberg, John McCain, and others who came before him and were larger than life.

*Full disclosure:* I first met the Congressman’s grandfather, Fred, and his grandmother, Lena, at my wife Joan’s high school reunion in Greenville, Michigan, many years ago. Joan’s parents knew the Meijer family. My father-in-law called him Freddy (I, of course, never did). Greenville High School reunions are a very big deal, with much of the community attending the annual alumni dinner, and the Meijers always attended, without any fanfare. Fred Meijer served on the board of directors at Butterworth Hospital when I was an executive there. He was one of the most down-to-earth, kind, and beloved men I’d ever met. He never came to board meetings unprepared and made time to visit the patient care units to thank the staff and distribute his trademark *Purple Cow* coupons. The coupons were redeemable for a free ice cream cone at any Meijer store. I don’t believe Fred was ever without them.

In the case of Peter Meijer, the apple didn’t fall very far from the family tree! As Hank Meijer informs us in his written introduction to the 1995 book, *Fred Meijer: In His Own Words*, Peter Meijer’s grandparents were hardly your typical business people. Critical of the war in Vietnam, Fred was a dedicated member of the Urban League who pushed for

hiring African Americans in West Michigan. And, he assisted in bringing integrated housing to the city of Grand Rapids. Early advocates for the environment, Fred and Lena Meijer would later spur and frequently fund many major civic projects ranging from walking and biking trails to parks, from gardens to hospitals, and from universities and museums to the arts. Lena Meijer, a cashier in the first Meijer supermarket, and Fred, maintained the thrifty mindset of those who grew up in the Great Depression and made sure that those less fortunate would benefit from their success. In business or at home, theirs was a genuine, loving, and full partnership. Fred and Lena Meijer passed away in 2011 and 2022, respectively.

In the House, 34-year-old conservative Peter Meijer is a breath of fresh air. While I have never met him in person (our interview was by phone), he appears to be studious, humble, candid, thoughtful, serious, and articulate. The Congressman seems proud to serve his constituents and doesn't take them for granted. Meijer personifies a host of Midwestern values, including a strong penchant for bipartisanship. Not only did he join the *Bipartisan Congressional Caucus* soon after being sworn in, he is also involved with the political group *With Honor*, an organization dedicated to helping elect "principled, next generation veterans" – Republicans, Democrats, and Independents – to Congress.

During our interview, he impressed me with his command of several major issues facing the United States, especially in foreign affairs and national defense. The combination of his army service and NGO experience in Iraq and Afghanistan have prepared Meijer well for his membership on the U.S. House of Representatives' *Committee on Homeland Security*, the *Committee on Foreign Affairs*, and the *Committee on Science, Space & Technology*.

At first blush, readers might be tempted to think Meijer is having second thoughts about voting to certify the 2021 presidential election, or being among only 10 House Republicans to vote to impeach former President Trump, or voting to hold Steve Bannon in contempt of Congress for refusing the subpoena to testify before the January 6th Committee. But if Meijer has proven anything in his first year in Congress, it is that he is unafraid to speak his mind, is not risk averse, and has the courage of his convictions despite death threats, distasteful tweets, and other manifestations of voter wrath.

Like his trailblazing grandparents, Peter Meijer believes in following the rules, knows the importance of honesty, champions the underdog, and, perhaps most importantly, believes in the dignity of each person, regardless of whether they agree. Meijer knows our country has much bigger problems that need solutions and he worries more about solving those problems than keeping his seat in the House.

## ***A CONVERSATION WITH REP. PETER MEIJER OF MICHIGAN***

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The following is a transcript of my conversation with Rep. Meijer on January 18, 2022, slightly edited for publication.

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**DR. EICH:** The Republican Party seems a far cry from what it used to be. Many would say it's been torn asunder by former President Trump's big lie about the 2020 presidential election being "rigged." How do you see today's Republican Party, both nationwide and in Michigan? Do you see any chance of a new Republican Party arising?

**REP. MEIJER:** *That future is uncertain. I think it depends on the actions of those in the party right now. I give them credit for bringing energy that was lacking (in the 2010s). It was momentum from back in the 80s and 90s and not adapting to the way the country*



Rep. Peter Meijer Visits with Constituents



Meijer Greeting New Citizens at Naturalization



Rep. Meijer speaks to reporters with his wife, Gabriella, at his side in Grand Rapids, November 2020. Photo published in the Holland (MI) Sentinel on March 5, 2021, Courtesy, Cody Scanlan



Rep. Meijer in his D.C. Office

*had changed. They had energy and enthusiasm and it could be rocket fuel. You could harness it and get the right nozzle and it could take you to the stars or it could blow up on the launchpad.*

*I think that is one of the challenges here. Without that sense of direction, you have seen a splintering and uncertainty, and I think the country needs a conservative movement that is*

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*focused on governing, that is focused on results-based approaches. I think that's lacking in our political system across the board, which to me is something essential to the long-term strength and prosperity of our nation.*

**DR. EICH:** The Vice President said on “Face the Nation” that her two most serious concerns about our national security are (1) climate change and (2) the threat to democracy. How do you respond to that? What are your two top concerns for our national security?

**REP. MEIJER:** *I agree climate change is a serious concern, but it might be that the most important, pressing foreign policy challenges all stem from the post-Cold War uncertainty about leadership from the West. As you know, we pivoted from the defense-related posture from the Cold War to economic ties, economic alliances, economic growth surpassing defense alliances and defense-related investment, which I think in many ways is positive – focusing us to tie the world together. It had negative impacts in the United States, especially in places that had a concentration of manufacturing and extractive industries.*

*But you also can't miss, looking over the long arc, all the threats that are facing us right up close. Afghanistan is very personal to me as I worked there for a couple of years on the humanitarian side of the House. The fact that we have completely turned our back on a country where the U.S. development assistance and investment comprised a majority of their non-illicit GDP, and then we just kind of pulled that rug out from under them. It baffles me that the Biden Administration doesn't appreciate the reason why we had to go into Afghanistan in the first place: because of a security vacuum and a state collapse that then gave room for violent transnational jihadists taking root so while they're trying to avoid bad headlines and focus on domestic priorities, the transnational jihadist group is gathering strength and challenging the Taliban for governance (ISIS-K).*

*I have long been a proponent that we can't get trapped, we need to make sure we never repeat the mistakes that led up to 9/11. We must respond strongly so that that never happens again. At the same time, we are dealing with the threat of China and their economic and military might challenge us for global supremacy. We have fewer strong states that could nevertheless be strongly destabilizing (like with Russia) and too, rogue states like North Korea and others – all of which are significant threats which we cannot take our eyes off.*

*My longstanding frustration and critique of U.S. foreign policy is that we look at the world as a series of problems to solve and then when we think something has been solved or we no longer have to worry about it, we just forget about it until it becomes a problem again, rather than looking at the world as a series of challenges that we have to manage, that we have to keep our eye on, that we need to make sure they don't get to a point where it becomes a problem – that you mitigate rather than having to react.*

**DR. EICH:** It appears China and Russia have agreed to work together militarily as allies. We see them conducting military exercises together, for example. Are we prepared for this?

**REP. MEIJER:** *That's always been the stance that underpins our defense posture for the post-Cold War period and then the ability to fight a two-front war or be able to respond, not just be looking through a soda straw but to have that flexibility and capacity. I don't know what happens if Russia says, "We are going to invade Ukraine," and China says, "Great, we will make a play for Taiwan in 48 hours." The fact that they don't know what the response will be, but maybe are expecting the United States to just send some angry letters, I think is tremendously destabilizing.*

*And, the secondary part of my critique of U.S. foreign policy on the U.S. defense side is that we say basically that we are going to do nothing or we are going to respond with military force. That leaves a whole continuum of options, many of which fall in the asymmetric realm, that could prevent us from having to get to the point where force is on the table. I think we should speak softly and carry a big stick, and I think that we shouldn't be overextending ourselves, in getting to the position where we got ourselves into Iraq and Afghanistan where we find ourselves in the middle of another country's civil war.*

*But that doesn't mean we can just say we have two oceans on either coast and we can wall ourselves off from the world. But if your approach is (like we essentially were with Syria) that we are going to do nothing or fire some cruise missiles ... whew! Where is the strategy? You have tactics but they aren't building toward anything. Our failure to have a longtime view gives us that vulnerability.*

*Getting back to your original question. It worries me. We tried to take congressional action toward the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline and the Democrats in the Senate, just mere hours after they were lambasting filibustering as a relative of segregationists and Jim Crow, were employing the filibuster to stop sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.<sup>24</sup>*

*We have a good set of packages around decreasing economic dependence on China and increasing our basic and applied research so we are making the investments today we should have been making a decade or two ago. Sometimes even when we are saying the right things, we are not practicing what we were preaching or not aligning our investments with our rhetoric. That's something I think Congress is acutely aware of, but the reality is absent significant executive political will, nothing is going to happen.*

**DR. EICH:** Should service members who refuse to get vaccinated be discharged?

**REP. MEIJER:** *As someone who served in the military, I got poked with a whole bunch of needles and some were still rather experimental like anthrax or small-pox vaccinations. I understand why we got them, but they had far less of an impact on unit readiness than COVID-19 has had. So, when you have naval vessels or army units that are not in*

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<sup>24</sup> *Editor's Note:* A vote taken on GOP Senator Ted Cruz's bill on January 13, 2022 (prior to Russia's invasion of Ukraine) that would sanction entities involved with the fossil fuel pipeline running from Russia to Germany was defeated 55-44. Ahead of the vote, Senate Foreign Relations Chair Bob Menendez (D-NJ) urged members to vote against it, lobbying for his own bill that would have imposed sanctions only if Russian President Vladimir Putin decided to invade Ukraine, arguing that any pre-hostility sanctions might trigger Putin into a premature war. Russia formally commenced its hostilities against Ukraine on February 24, 2020.

*deployable status because of a pandemic, that is interfering with readiness, that is significant. That's where I come down on the military vaccination component.*

**DR. EICH:** How concerned are you about extremism in the military?

**REP. MEIJER:** *I think it kind of comes in waves of sensationalism around that subject, so it is really hard to get a clear vision. I have always struggled to find a study that I didn't dig into and not come away with many questions; what they ultimately do is problematic in terms of their methodology. So, for a very long time any ties to neo-Nazi groups or organizations that expressly intend to violently overthrow the government or that advocate racial superiority, there was a red line that could be cause for discharge, including when I was in the military. Where is that line drawn as it relates to the First Amendment? This is a hard line to draw, but I think we need to be very thoughtful about it so that you are not going into the same trap that the media sometimes does. Social media has not been helpful in drawing clear lines nor have elected officials.*

**DR. EICH:** As a member of the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus in Congress, what has this caucus done to make things better with regard to reducing polarization in Congress or is this just impossible? Do you feel you are making progress with that group?

**REP. MEIJER:** *The Problem Solvers Caucus has an equal number of Republicans and Democrats, and we take the Noah's Ark approach, two-by-two, pair it up. I think it has been a very effective group for getting to 80% of the issues that the public wants addressed, ones that Congress hasn't taken a leading role in because of intractable partisanship. It has been a wonderful vehicle to introduce good pieces of legislation that are not partisan and to find a co-sponsor on the other side of the aisle that will help push some of those efforts forward. It's by no means a panacea but is definitely a step in the right direction.*

**DR. EICH:** Columnist David Brooks has written that he thought the events of January 6 were "so horrific and so disgusting" that people would see the Trump period as terrible and the former president would "fade away." According to Brooks, now, "If anything, he is stronger in the Republican Party." What is your strategy to win reelection?

**REP. MEIJER:** *Do the job, do the job well, and demonstrate to the constituents and voters that I have earned the privilege of being reelected and that in their eyes I should continue to hold this office.*

**DR. EICH:** Given your military and civilian service in Iraq and Afghanistan, what leadership qualities best translate into elected public office?

**REP. MEIJER:** *The lessons I took away, especially from my grandfather but also my grandmother and the way they viewed the world and our place in the community, is that everyone is worthy of respect, everyone has value and should be listened to. It included treating people with dignity and respect no matter their background.*

*These values underpin any strong community and living them costs you nothing but makes all the difference between starting off a relationship or interaction from a point of skepticism or starting off from looking for where there may be strong bonds that can be built upon.*

*And I think our politics could use more people starting from the point of saying, “Where do we agree and where can we build from here,” rather than focusing on the few areas of disagreement and defining each other based on how we are different rather than what unites us.*

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### ***Commentary***

Too often it seems to me that when we’re asked what kind of leaders we need today, there is a tendency to ignore the past. I believe that is a major failing.

I am not now, nor have I ever been, a particularly political person, certainly not a card-carrying member of a political party. While some view consistency as boring, I have always voted for the person I believed would do the best possible job. In coming to a conclusion, I consistently sought evidence of a tradition of bedrock values and leadership success. In retrospect, sometimes I’ve been right, sometimes wrong.

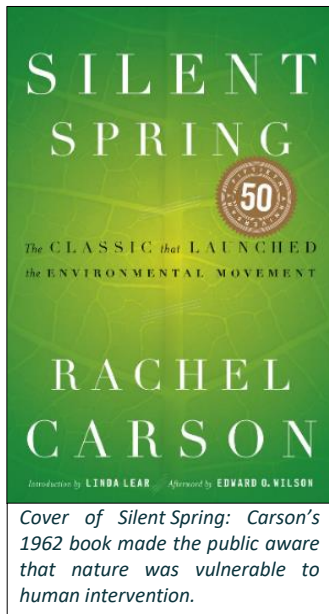
In an attempt to assess Congressman Peter Meijer’s potential for continued enlightened leadership in a party deeply wanting at present, I found it fruitful to reexamine several leaders, most from the past. Here are capsules of some of the numerous contributions of seven men and women from different fields of endeavor who exemplify values-driven leadership. In each instance, their mastery of the subject matter, their genuine desire to listen to and understand the other side’s point of view, and their sheer determination to do what they believe to be right distinguishes them.

*“Do the job, do the job well, and demonstrate to the constituents and voters that I have earned the privilege of being reelected.”*  
— Rep. Peter Meijer

- ***Franklin Delano Roosevelt:*** As Jon Meachem reported in *The Soul of America*, economist Rexford Tugwell, an original “Brain Trust” member, believed “it was part of his conception of his role” that Roosevelt “should never show exhaustion, boredom, or irritation.” We have witnessed too many instances where business, political, media and sports leaders have lost their cool in public, hindering their ability to secure support and sully their reputations in the process. FDR’s inner discipline to avoid such traps was underpinned by his stalwart faith. FDR was the architect of the New Deal that lifted Americans from



the misery of the Great Depression, putting the nation and its people back on the path to prosperity. He tried to keep America out of World War II while supporting our allies in Europe, but ultimately after the attack on Pearl Harbor, FDR brought the United States into the war, which turned the tide for the allies.



Cover of *Silent Spring*: Carson's 1962 book made the public aware that nature was vulnerable to human intervention.

- **Rachel Carson:** Sarah E. Boslaugh's narrative of Rachel Carson's life and her highly powerful book, *Silent Spring*, is revealing. Carson was a groundbreaker in so many ways. Her love of nature at an early age paved the way to her unearthing the environmental movement at home and abroad. At Pennsylvania College for Women (now Chatham University), her goal was to be a writer. Fortunately for us, she instead majored in biology. Unheard of in 1929 for a woman, she won a scholarship to Johns Hopkins for graduate study. She became a celebrated marine biologist, environmentalist, and author. And she served as editor-in-chief for the *U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service*. Her greatest leadership accomplishment, to paraphrase *The Salt Lake Tribune* reporter Tom Wharton, was awakening our need for people from all walks of life to come to terms with nature. Rachel Carson was a true social revolutionary.



New Orleans, LA, circa 1941. "Higgins Boats" hard hat. Courtesy, National WW II Museum and the author.

- **Andrew Jackson Higgins:** The World War II genius "problem solver," master boatbuilder, industrialist, and entrepreneur was a former lumberman, a rough-hewn, innovative, hard-drinking perfectionist whose credo was "never accept no." A Nebraska-raised Irishman with enormous loquacity, charisma, and bluster, Higgins was a high school dropout shunned by New Orleans society elite as an outsider. He was no sycophant which likely increased the jealousy and resistance of the Navy's engineers in the Bureau of Ships as he lacked the pedigree of eastern seaboard shipyard magnates.

Initially, the Navy tried its best to ignore Higgins but after test designs failed, it finally agreed to test Higgins' boat which succeeded.



*"Higgins Boat": Generally made from plywood, over 20,000 of these amphibious landing crafts were built by Higgins Industries in New Orleans in the early 1940s. Designed with a bow ramp, about 36 troops could disembark quickly to hit the beach when the ramp was lowered. Featured above: USS Darke (APA-159)'s LCVP 18, possibly with army troops as reinforcements at Okinawa, circa 9 to 14 April 1945. US Navy, courtesy Wikimedia.*

**Katherine Johnson:** Among her many inspiring leadership qualities, two of the brilliant NASA mathematician's skills were her passion for math coupled with her fearlessness in the face of stultifying discrimination against African Americans. Known as a "human computer," this brilliant woman's uncanny ability to calculate and analyze flight trajectories and launch windows with little technological assistance helped send astronauts to the moon and bring them back safely. The former teacher, spouse, mother, friend, and colleague stood tall by asserting herself with numbers that didn't lie. Her trailblazing eventually led to the grudging acceptance of African American women in the U.S. space race.

The Navy finally relented, awarding him the contract. Historian Douglas Brinkley wrote in the May/June 2000 issue of *American Heritage* that "by September 1943, 12,964 of the U.S. Navy's 14,072 vessels had been designed by Higgins Industries" (more than 90% of our Navy then was Higgins-built). General Dwight D. Eisenhower spent an enormous amount of time hammering out details for the Normandy landing including ensuring Allied forces had enough reliable landing craft, essential to minimizing loss of life and a successful invasion. The GIs called them "Higgins Boats." Notably, Brinkley also reported that Higgins Industries employed some 20,000 workers at its zenith in integrated workplaces. Together, Blacks, Whites, men, women, seniors, disabled veterans, and young people produced 700 boats a month.



*Katherine Johnson working an adding machine and a celestial training device to help calculate space navigation at NASA's Langley Research Center in 1962. Courtesy, NASA. (Astronaut John Glenn famously asked that she double check the math of the new electronic computations before he flew Friendship 7 in 1962).*

- **James A. Baker III:** The former Secretary of State, Secretary of the Treasury, White House Chief of Staff, and manager of presidential campaigns has received myriad plaudits for his long-distinguished leadership in service of four U.S. presidents (Ford, Nixon, Bush '41, and Bush '43) and our country. Among numerous leadership attributes, four qualities in particular stand out for me. All are adroitly addressed in *The Man Who Ran Washington: The Life and Times of James A. Baker III*, the 2020 bestseller by Peter Baker and Susan Glasser. First is Baker's constant pursuit of compromise. Second is his steadfast desire to



President Gerald R. Ford and James A. Baker III discuss the 1976 presidential campaign that Baker managed for Ford. Baker's service as Under Secretary for Commerce in the Ford Administration was the first of four presidents Baker served. (Courtesy of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library).

restore American credibility abroad often through restraint, especially in the use of military power. Third, the former Marine and Houston blueblood lawyer was a skilled strategist who could be bold but sought results that were doable and realistic. And, fourth, Baker took great lengths to ensure there were no interagency fights back home when he was engaged in diplomacy abroad. If there is one word in particular that best describes Baker, it must be his "influence."

- **Christine Lagarde:** In addition to her amazing success in top jobs in government, the private sector and international organizations, Lagarde has been a beacon for the advancement of women. In a 2013 interview with the editor-in-chief of the *Harvard Business Review*, we learn that in practically every leadership role she has held, she's been a change agent, challenging the rigidity of corporate cultures, implementing

stronger accountability measures, eschewing micromanagement, and bringing people together to "spark new ideas." The energetic French politician and former head of the International Monetary Fund is now the first female president of the European Central Bank. In a commencement address to graduates of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as reported in the Summer 2012 *Harvard Kennedy School Magazine*, she gave a prescient warning: "Borders, barriers, walls have come down" allowing a high degree of interconnection, she said, but, "there are many more walls that are being built or that people try to build. Physical walls, political walls, mental walls. Reconciling these interconnections and their benefits together with

governments with a view of making it better ... will be a real challenge in the years to come.”

- **José Ramón Andrés Puerta:** When one sees the words “hunger” and “disaster” in the same sentence, invariably the name “José Andrés” surfaces. The Spanish-born celebrity chef, restaurateur, philanthropist, humanitarian, emergency preparedness teacher, and visionary leader has few equals. In the aftermath of the devastating 2010 Haitian earthquake, he founded the nonprofit World Central Kitchen to quickly mobilize means of providing healthy food to people affected by disasters. At the time, he had been engaged in charitable work for more than a decade. In the extensive March 26, 2020 *TIME* article by Sean Gregory, he acknowledges that while the government often responds slowly and unevenly, “Andres’ rapidly expanding charity... is as prepared as anyone for the moment(s) of unprecedented global crisis.” The National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. recently honored Andres by placing his portrait in its permanent collection.

Each of the seven previously profiled leaders has brought great value to society. Collectively, their leadership attributes include the following common 10 threads:

- Faith
- Honesty
- Sagacity
- Conviction
- Gumption
- Mettle
- Ebullience
- Passion
- Knowledge
- Drive

Let us hope that other political hopefuls can follow the fine example set by these seven leaders as well as Rep. Peter Meijer and elevate our nation even further in the political, environmental, scientific, financial, and social realms.

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## About the Interviewer

### Dr. Ritch K. Eich

Ritch K. Eich, Ph.D. (Michigan), former hospital executive at St. Joseph Mercy Health System (Ann Arbor), at IU Medical Center (Indianapolis), chief of public affairs at Blue Shield of CA (San Francisco) and captain, U.S. Naval Reserve (ret), is the author of five books, the most recent is *Leading with GRIT, GRACE & GRATITUDE: Timeless Lessons for Life*. Eich has served on more than a dozen boards of directors and trustees of both for-profit and non-profit organizations across the country. He also served on Congressional committees for the U.S. Senators, Carl Levin and Dan Coats.

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## Implicit Theories of Leadership and Followership:

### *A Qualitative Exploration of Research Gaps and Directions for Future Research*

#### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to identify research gaps and provide an integrative and comprehensive review related to implicit leadership theory (ILTs) and implicit followership theory (IFTs) in the last five years.

**Design/Methodology/Approach:** Using a qualitative systematic review and the content analysis method, we analyzed, summarized, and categorized articles' recommendations to provide a comprehensive perspective of research gaps and directions for future studies.

**Findings:** Through analyzing 45 articles published in 2016-2021, we clarified the distinction between empirical and theoretical articles. In addition, the results of ILTs and IFTs research gaps were reported in four main categories, namely antecedents, consequences, measurement development, and the content and structure of ILTs and IFTs. Finally, we offered suggestions and directions for future research based on the research gaps identified.

**Originality/Value:** The growing interest in ILTs and IFTs as two of the most absorbing topics in leadership literature has led to the accumulation and dispersal of knowledge. This, in turn, prevents scholars from gaining a holistic and clear approach to theory development and related research gaps. To address the lack of coherence and clarity about ILTs and IFTs research gaps, we provide an integrative and comprehensive review of related research breaks in order to create a framework for future studies.

#### **Introduction**

In understanding the concept of a leader, substantial efforts have been employed, yet how people perceive leaders and distinguish them from non-leaders has gained extensive popularity over the last several decades. According to recognition-based categorization, people hold a mental model or specific schema by which they perceive leaders (Lord et al., 1984). Schemas are cognitive structures, categories, or prototypes that facilitate information processing through coding, storage, and retrieval from long-term memory



(Bartlett, 1932), providing a basis for implicit leadership theories (ILTs). Cognitive structures or prototypes are shaped by socialization processes and by the individual experiences of leaders in organizations which have enabled people to rate leaders' behaviours (Yip & Walker, 2021). In fact, ILTs represent a structural category that includes a set of common traits and behaviours (Lord et al., 2019). Previous studies have attempted to identify these specific traits of leaders (Jiang et al., 2019; Lord et al., 1984; Sharifirad et al., 2017; Vogel & Werkmeister, 2020).

Implicit leadership theory, emphasizing the leader-centric perspective has been criticized by many researchers (Kong et al., 2017) mainly because scholars concentrate on the recognition of leaders and ignore the role of followers. Such criticisms caused the follower-centric perspective to come to the attention of researchers (Alipour et al., 2017; Foti et al., 2017; Goswami et al., 2019; Sy, 2010; Yip, 2013). In this regard, many scholars argue that since leadership occurs in a dyad between leader and follower, focusing solely on leadership stymies the complete understanding of the leadership process (Baker, 2007; Junker & Van Dick, 2014).

The follower-centric perspective examines behaviours and characteristics of followers from the perspective of leaders (Chu & Zhang, 2020). That is, leaders utilize similar cognitive structures and information processing to identify followers and more fully explain their role in developing leadership (Junker et al., 2016; Tram-Quon, 2013). In this cognitive structure known as implicit followership theory (IFT), special behaviours and characteristics lead to the search for a matched schema, and when created, leaders perceive and classify a person as a follower (Grill et al., 2017; Scott et al., 2018).

ILT and IFT have made valuable contributions to the leadership literature which have expanded our understanding of leadership and followership processes in organizational settings (Epitropaki et al., 2013). For example, the emergence of leadership, according to Scott et al. (2018), highly depends on the cognitive structures which facilitate contributors' behavior and strengthen dyadic relationships such as trust and leader-member exchange among them (Petruş, 2018). Additionally, ILT and IFT can create bias in peoples' perceptions of leaders. Between 40 to 60 percent of bias in the rating of leaders and followers has been reported (Petruş, 2018) which, in turn, may have a powerful influence on followers' satisfaction, performance, and well-being (Martinko et al., 2017). Most importantly, ILT and IFT, through the sense-making process, enable people to understand and respond properly to leaders' and followers' behaviors (Riggs & Porter, 2017). This significant interference of implicit theories into leadership processes shows that after thirty years of attempts, interest in this field of research still remains strong (Epitropaki et al., 2013).

Despite extensive research on ILTs and IFTs, significant research gaps still remain which are evident throughout the literature – hindering researchers from developing a holistic and practical perspective on these theories. For example, the lack of a causal relationship between ILTs /IFTs and other variables is yet to gain meaningful attention (Yang et al., 2020). On the other hand, discovering implicit instead of explicit measurements to rate leaders (Derler & Weibler, 2014), utilizing longitudinal instead of cross-sectional studies which cause many rating problems (Magsaysay & Hechanova, 2017), and the role of

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context within which leadership occurs (Rehbock et al., 2019; Schyns et al., 2018; Shen, 2018; Zigan et al., 2019) deserve more consideration. In addition, there is no consensus on ILT dimensions, and depending on the context, ILTs factors may not be similar and/or equally important (Tavares et al., 2018).

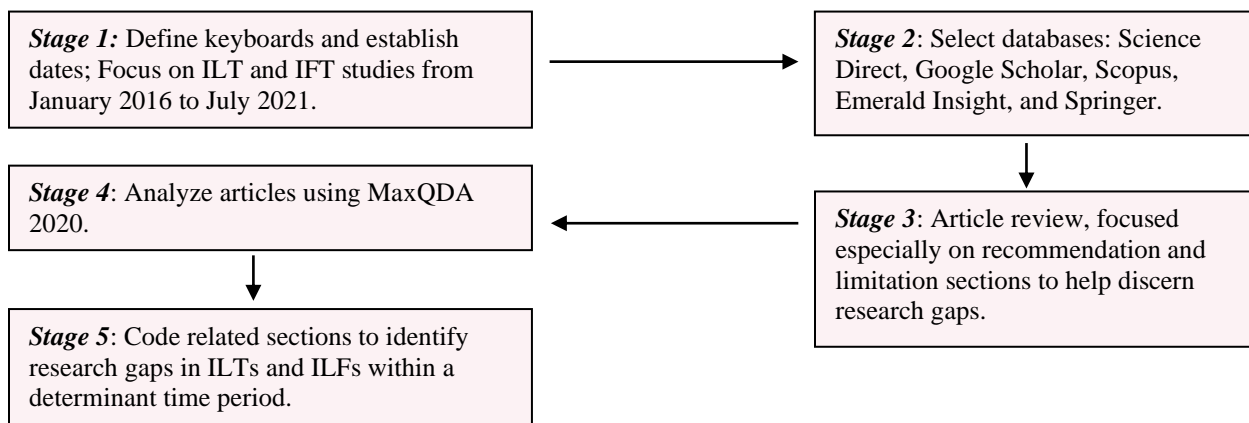
Lord et al. (2019) attempted to classify research gaps in order to provide a more thorough perspective in this regard, however, their work did not include all recent findings. In another study, Foti et al. (2017) offered future direction and an overview of the research which solely included the dynamic viewpoints of ILTs and IFTs, ignoring other aspects of the theories. Therefore, there is a lack of coherence and clarity related to research gaps as well as a comprehensive framework for future research direction which consists of all aspects of ILTs and IFTs. Furthermore, the current article provides a holistic demonstration of experimental and conceptual differentiation of ILT and IFT studies proliferated in the literature. To fulfill these purposes, a qualitative systematic review has been applied to provide a comprehensive viewpoint and coherent data in order to integrate and identify research deficits in the same study.

After an extensive search, 45 articles published within the last 5 years were extracted (see Appendix).

## Methodology

The main purpose of the current article is to pinpoint research paucities related to ILTs and IFTs, and to integrate them in the same study to provide a more comprehensive overview for future investigation. In order to synthesize existing findings within the literature, a method of review has been applied which uses a systematic process to identify and understand shortfalls within the existing literature (Armstrong et al., 2011). Through a qualitative and systematic method, data from qualitative sources (video, text, and audio) were collected (Kassarjian, 1977) and concepts, ideas, and experiences were objectively analyzed (Bhandari, 2020). The stages of content analysis are shown in *Figure 1*:

**Figure 1: The Stages of Content Analysis**

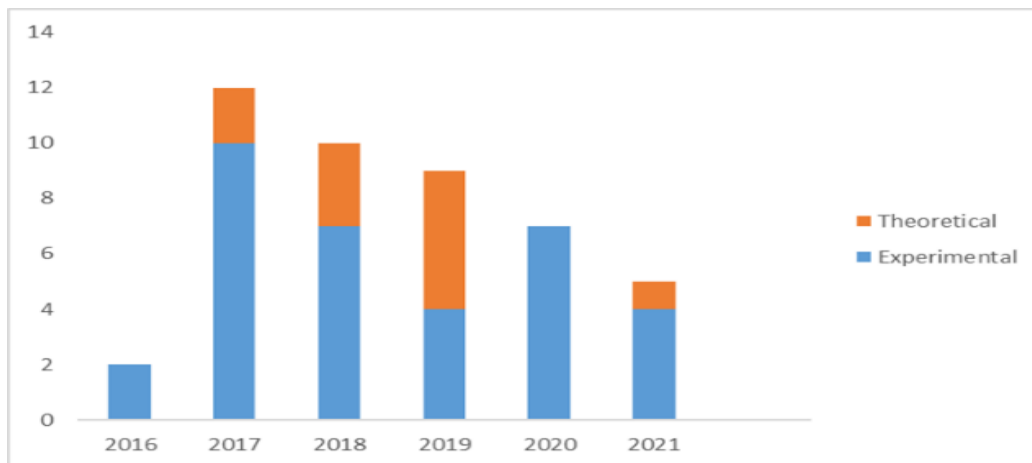


As Stage 1 denotes, keywords based on which search was conducted were provided, including implicit leadership theory, implicit followership theory, ILT, and IFT. Then, articles published from January 2016 to December 2020 were collected, and relevant articles published within the first six months of 2021 were subsequently added. This scope was determined to understanding whether the latest research gaps become fulfilled over time. In the second stage, five databases – including Science Direct, Google Scholar, Scopus, Emerald Insight, and Springer – were selected and searched relevant to the topic. In Stage 3, a thorough review of articles led to 45 selections in which ILTs and IFTs were highlighted (see *Appendix*). This required a consideration of abstracts, methods, and result sections, and more closely, the study of limitations and recommendations sections was conducted in order to discover deficits. These sections were analyzed, coded, and categorized, using the content analysis method via MaxQDA 2020 software (Stage 4). Finally, after analyzing and coding data, research gaps were identified in four main categories and one principal block (Stage 5). They are more fully discussed below.

## Results

This article examined research gaps of implicit leadership and followership theories. We accurately reviewed related articles which led to 45 article selections. The frequencies of articles by year and type (empirical vs theoretical works) are illustrated in *Figure 2*, showing 45 selected articles concerning ILTs and IFTs that were published from 2016-2021, with 34 empirical and 11 theoretical papers. Considering the chart more closely, it is understood that the number of publications dramatically increased since 2016 (with two empirical studies), and peaked in 2017 with 12 research studies including two theoretical and 10 empirical.

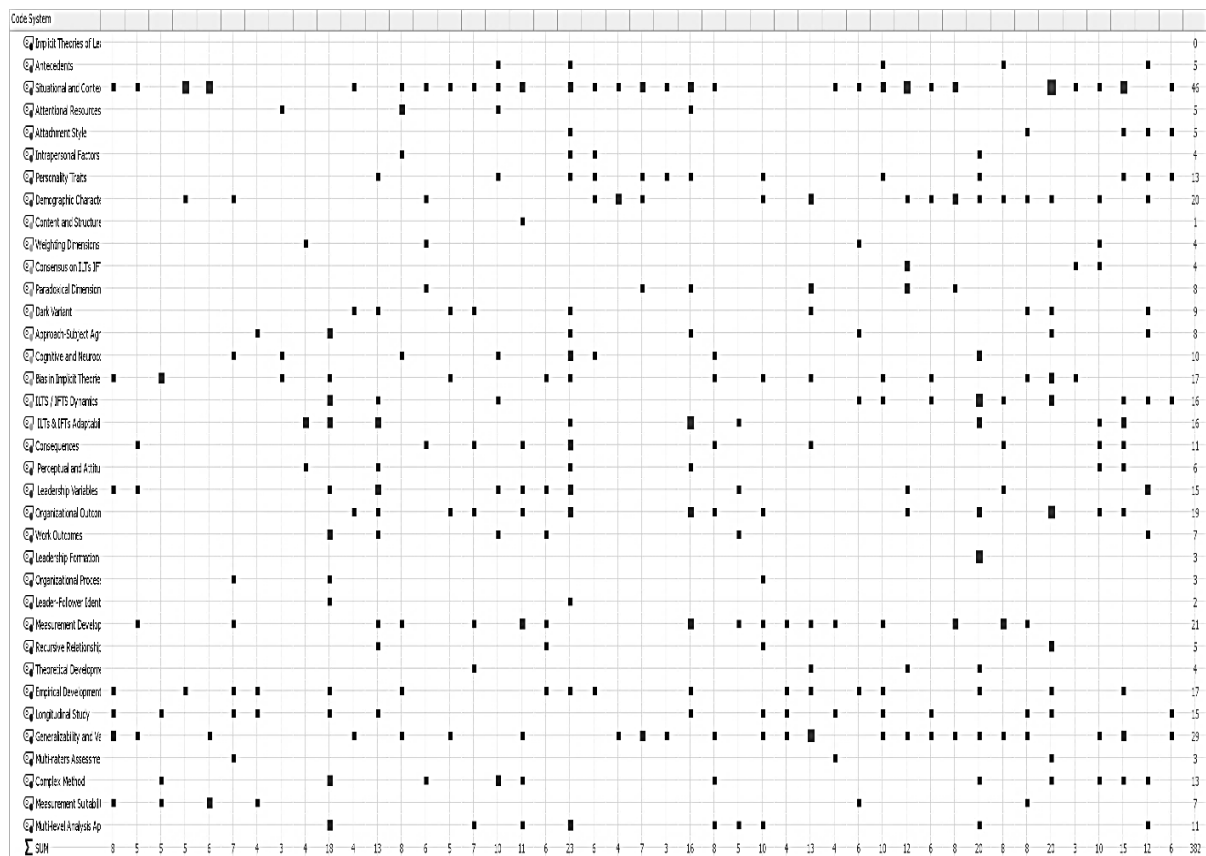
**Figure 2: The Number of ILT and IFT Articles Published from 2016- 2021**



After this year, the number of publications began to decrease in number until 2020 with just seven empirical papers. In the first half of 2021, five articles had been published. For understanding research gaps of ILTs and IFTs, we considered the *limitations and suggestions for future research sections* of papers. Since those sections are considered as

qualitative data or texts, we applied the Content Analysis Method for analysis and summary, using MaxQDA 2020 software. The Content Analysis Method consists of two main steps for identifying research gaps: open coding (which consists of two stages itself) and axial coding (Saldana, 2009). In the open coding stage, first fundamental concepts from semantic units (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) are extracted followed by initial codes from semantic units. As a result, 35 initial codes with 382 frequencies were identified. According to the Content Analysis Method, code frequencies do not represent the importance of code. Still, scientific contents and the Shannon formula, which are illustrated as square in the MaxQDA Matrix, value the codes based on frequencies (see Figure 3).

**Figure 3: MaxQDA Matrix, the Frequencies of Initial Codes**



According to the code frequencies generated by the Shannon formula, the initial code of “Situational and Contextual Factors” with 46 frequencies is the most important and the initial code of “Content and Structure” with only one frequency has less utility. The validation of qualitative sampling refers to the difference of extracted codes between documents which should be 20 or less; if so, the qualitative sampling would be information-based and fulfill the target because this represents that documents are relevant and congruent (Neuman, 2014). In this research, Lord’s et al. study (2019) with 23 frequencies of initial codes and Densten and Borrowman’s study (2017) with three

codes have respectively displayed the maximum and minimum initial codes, and the difference between them show that all documents are predominantly relevant and congruent.

The second stage of open coding is creating the more abstract category. In fact, when some initial codes are semantically related, they are placed in the same category (Charmaz, 2006). This stage could have two different methods: a) creating a new category and incorporating some related initial codes within it and b) setting a more abstract initial code as a category and placing related initial codes within. *Table 1* illustrates this classification.

**Table 1: The Classification of Initial Codes and Categories**

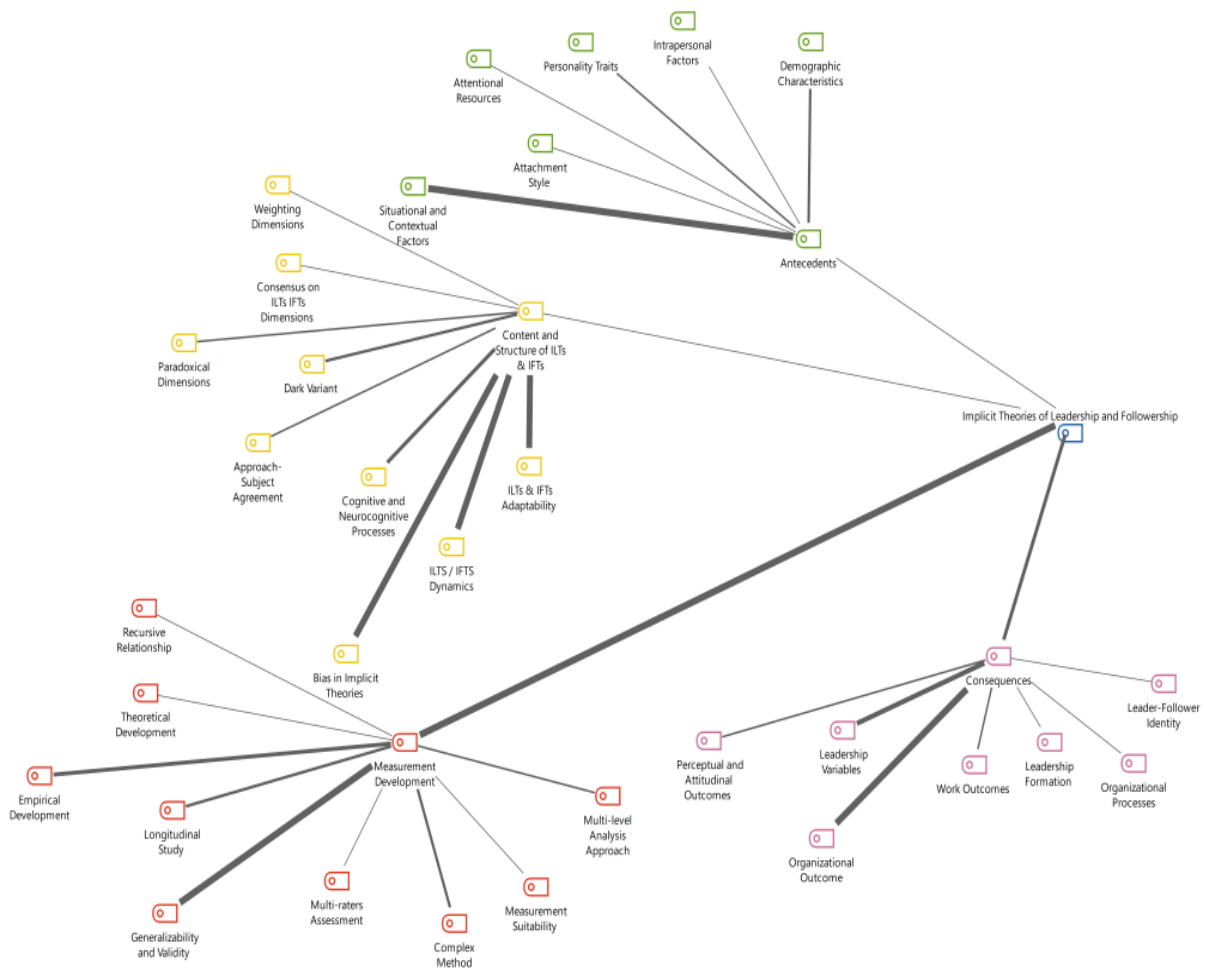
Axial Codes	Open Codes (categories)	Initial Codes
Implicit Theories of ILT and IFT	Antecedents	Situational and Contextual Factors Attentional Resources Attachment Style Intrapersonal Factors Personality Traits Demographic Characteristics
	Consequences	Perceptual and Attitudinal Outcomes Leadership Variables Organizational Outcome Work Outcomes Leadership Formation Organizational Processes Leader-Follower Identity
	Content and Structure of ILT and IFT	Bias in Implicit Theories Weighting ILT Dimensions Paradoxical Dimensions ILT and IFT Dynamics Consensus on ILT and IFT Dimensions Dark Variant Cognitive and Neurocognitive Processes ILTs and IFTs Adaptability Approach-Subject Accordance
	Measurement Development	Recursive Relationship Theoretical Development Empirical Development Longitudinal Study Generalizability and Validity Multi-raters Assessment Complex Method Measurement Suitability Multi-level Analysis Approach

In the next step, after extensive consideration of contents, scholars extract a more abstract code which is an axial code to create a block (Creswel, 2018). In our work, the axial code “Implicit Leadership and Followership Theories” is created which includes four categories and their associated initial codes. *Figure 4* shows the axial code with sub-codes, resulting in a conceptual block (*see Figure 4*).

## Discussion and Recommendation for Future Research

Similar to other research, our study has many strengths and limitations. The first strength was the study of ILT and IFT simultaneously and in integrated study, as some researchers had pointed to the need for this method (Braun et al., 2017; Foti et al., 2017; Stegmann et al., 2020) and considered it in “complex methods” code. Another strength was that using both Persian and English articles reduced, to some extent, language bias. Using MaxQDA allowed us to carefully summarize, synthesize, and code the contents of articles to find out the points that should be considered more extensively in ILTs and IFTs.

**Figure 4: The Conceptual Block of ILTs and IFTs**



This research is not without limitations. Firstly, because the scope of implicit theories is very broad, many concepts such as prototypes, stereotypes, or perceptions relevant to the field could not have been included except those in which implicit theories are key to the research. Furthermore, the lack of time prevented the search of additional databases which might hold other related articles. We suggest that future researchers explore these

fields in addition to more databases to gain a thorough perspective of ILT and IFT coverage shortfalls. Finally, the author was not able to offer an overview of ILTs and IFTs anticipants and outcomes discovered to date. Researchers could take this into consideration as a potential avenue for future investigation. The following are some suggestions for such endeavors.

According to *Figure 4*, one of the research gaps is “measurement development” (Kong et al., 2017) which requires identifying a different range of variables as moderators or mediators. Additionally, given the nature of ILTs and IFTs, they may be interjected into people’s role-playing efforts within an organization as a moderating influence (e.g., job satisfaction).

Another interesting area for “measurement development” is to integrate instrumental variables into regression models of ILTs and IFTs. These variables lead to identifying the hidden correlation and accurately measuring it against other variables. Some potential instrumental variables include physical characteristics (e.g., age), stable individual differences (e.g., personality), and geographical distance (Antonakis et al., 2010). These types of variables have already been applied in other forms of leadership (Vries, 2012). Future researchers could identify related instrumental variables and, if possible, enter ILTs and IFTs as instrumental variables in organizational models.

Although in recent years the number of experimental studies in implicit theories has increased (*Figure 2*), the impact of many antecedents such as situational (e.g., organizational climate Petruş, 2018), leadership formation (Scott et al., 2018), contextual factors (e.g., culture and socio-political processes, Da’as & Zibenberg, 2019), as well as the implications of ILTs and IFTs that have not been completely clarified (e.g., organizational behaviors, Lord et al., 2019). We collected “anticipants” and “consequences” as two separate categories with their own sob codes (*Table 2*) which need more empirical investigation (i.e., empirical development code).

ILT and IFT measurements suffer from many problems such as using explicit measurement instead of implicit (Martinko et al., 2017) considered as “measurement suitability,” and validity (Petruş, 2018) as “generalizability and validity” gaps in this paper. To identify precise measurement problems, we recommend that all measurements of ILTs and IFTs be gathered in one study and be considered critically with respect to the seven steps introduced by Churchill (1979) in order to develop and validate the scale. Additionally, some studies lacked generalizability due to a limited sample size (Jiang et al., 2019). In order to reach broader applicability, future research should determine an adequate sample size using suitable software such as Sample Power or G power.

The “consensus on ILT/IFT dimensions” code (Chu & Zhang, 2020) in multiple cultures (Offermann & Coats, 2018) is also an interesting area of the research. Thus, future work could surface worldwide on social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to extract shared traits from all over the world. Some software such as MaxQDA applied in this study would be able to fulfill this purpose.

The “recursive relationship” code represents the need for recursive and non-recursive models of ILTs and IFTs. Despite research accomplished regarding the unidirectional,

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reciprocal relationship between ILT and IFT variables (e.g., reciprocal relationship between IFTs and culture) could provide a better perspective in this field (Braun et al., 2017). Future research should pay more attention to mutual effects.

The “longitudinal study” is useful in determining a research gap (Foti et al., 2017; Goswami et al., 2019) since measuring behaviors of leaders and followers can flourish over time (Yip & Walker, 2021). Utilizing experience sampling methodology (ESM) allows researchers for longitudinal study in which they sample experience immediately and in the natural environment, over a period of time, avoiding common method and memory bias (Beal, 2015). While some leadership studies have applied this method (Barnes et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2012; Sun et al., 2019), it would be fruitful to apply it in ILTs and IFTs.

## Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim of finding research deficiencies and avenues for future research in ILTs and IFTs. Results illustrated that four main categories still remained for further investigation: antecedents, consequences, measurement development, and content and structure of ILTs and IFTs – together with 31 sub-codes. Future research should consider these four research areas to better understand the role of ILTs and IFTs in organizations and the relationship between followers and leaders.

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### Appendix: Selected Articles from 2016 to 2021

Authors	Journal	Article Name
Trichas, Schyns, Lord, and Hall (2017)	<i>The Leadership Quarterly</i>	Facing leaders: Facial expression and leadership perception
Martinko, Randolph-Seng, Shen, Brees, Mahoney, and Kessler (2017)	<i>Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies</i>	An Examination of the Influence of Implicit Theories, Attribution Styles, and Performance Cues on Questionnaire Measures of Leadership
Riggs and Porter (2017)	<i>The Leadership Quarterly</i>	Are there advantages to seeing leadership the same? A test of the mediating effects of LMX on the relationship between ILT congruence and employees' development and leadership perception
Frost (2016)	<i>Applied Business</i>	Development of Implicit Leadership Theories Prior to Training or Employment
Petrus, (2018)	<i>Psihologia Resurselor Umane</i>	Construct Validity of the Ideal Implicit Leadership Theories and Implicit Followership Theories
Goswami, Park, and Beehr (2019)	<i>Business and Psychology</i>	Does the Congruence Between Leaders' Followership Theories and Their Perceptions of Actual Followers Matter?
Densten and Borrowman (2017)	<i>PLoS ONE</i>	Does the implicit models of leadership influence the scanning of other-race faces in adults?

<b>Schyns, Kiefer, and Foti, (2020)</b>	<i>Vocational Behavior</i>	Does thinking of myself as leader make me want to lead? The role of congruence in self-theories and implicit leadership theories in motivation to lead
<b>Foti, Hansbrough, Epitropaki, and Coyle (2017)</b>	<i>The Leadership Quarterly</i>	Dynamic viewpoints on implicit leadership and followership theories: Approaches, findings and future directions
<b>Gao and Wu (2019)</b>	<i>Social Behaviors and Personality</i>	Effect of leaders' implicit followership theory on subordinates' career success
<b>Stegmann, Braun, Junker, and Dick (2020)</b>	<i>The Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i>	Getting older and living up to implicit followership theories: Implications for employee psychological health and job attitudes
<b>Knoll, Schyns, and Petersen (2017)</b>	<i>Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies</i>	How the Influence of Unethical Leaders on Followers is Affected by Their Implicit Followership Theories
<b>Leung and Sy (2018)</b>	<i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>	I Am as Incompetent as the Prototypical Group Member: An Investigation of Naturally Occurring Golem Effects in Work Groups
<b>Yang, Shi, Zhang, Song, and Xu (2020)</b>	<i>Leadership and Organization Development Journal</i>	Implicit followership theories from the perspective of followers
<b>Kong, Xu, Zhou, and Yuan (2017)</b>	<i>Journal of Management and Organization</i>	Implicit followership theory to employee creativity: The roles of leader-member exchange, self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation
<b>Sharifirad and Hajhoseiny, (2018)</b>	<i>Iranian Journal of Management Studies</i>	Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs) and Change Behaviors: The Mediating Role of LMX
<b>Lord, Epitropaki, Foti, and Hansbrough (2019)</b>	<i>Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior</i>	Implicit Leadership Theories, Implicit Followership Theories, and Dynamic Processing of Leadership Information
<b>Offermann and Coats (2018)</b>	<i>The Leadership Quarterly</i>	Implicit theories of leadership: Stability and change over two decades
<b>Rehbock, Verdorfer, and Knipfer (2019)</b>	<i>Studies in Higher Education</i>	Rate My Professor: Implicit Leadership Theories in Academia
<b>Schyns, Schilling, and Coyle (2018)</b>	<i>International Journal of Sport Psychology</i>	In the eye of the public: Examining the content of implicit leadership theories about football managers across two contexts
<b>Alipour, Mohammed, and Martinez (2017)</b>	<i>The Leadership Quarterly</i>	Incorporating temporality into implicit leadership and followership theories: Exploring inconsistencies between time-based expectations and actual behaviors
<b>Khorakian, and Sharifirad (2019)</b>	<i>Psychological Reports</i>	Integrating Implicit Leadership Theories, Leader-Member, Exchange Self-Efficacy, and Attachment Theory to Predict Job Performance
<b>Biermeier-Hanson and Coyle (2019)</b>	<i>The Journal of Psychology</i>	Interdisciplinary and Applied Investigating Leader Role Congruity and Counterproductive Work Behavior
<b>Powell and Butterfield (2017)</b>	<i>Gender in Management: An International Journal</i>	Linking leader anti-prototypes and prototypes to gender stereotypes
<b>Tavares, Sobral, Goldszmidt, and Araújo (2018)</b>	<i>Frontiers in Psychology</i>	Opening the Implicit Leadership Theories' Black Box: An Experimental Approach with Conjoint Analysis
<b>Shen (2018)</b>	<i>Journal of Leadership and</i>	Personal and Situational Antecedents of Workers'

	<i>Organizational Studies</i>	Implicit Leadership Theories: A Within-Person, Between-Jobs Design
<b>Jiang, Xu, Houghton, and Manz (2019)</b>	<i>The Journal of Leadership</i>	Shades of grey in implicit effective leadership: Searching for clarity in the midst of paradox
<b>Grill, Pousette, Nielsen, Grytnes, and Torner (2017)</b>	<i>Empirical Research in Vocational Education and Training</i>	Supervisors and teachers' influence on expectations on empowering leadership among students in vocational education and training
<b>Junker, Stegmann, Braun, and Dick (2016)</b>	<i>Leadership and Organization Development Journal</i>	The ideal and the counter-ideal follower advancing implicit followership theories
<b>Scott, Jiang, Wildman, and Griffith (2018)</b>	<i>Human Resource Management Review</i>	The impact of implicit collective leadership theories on the emergence and effectiveness of leadership networks in teams
<b>Guo (2018)</b>	<i>Psychology</i>	The Review of the Implicit Followership Theories (IFTs)
<b>Thompson, Glasø, and Matthiesen (2018)</b>	<i>The Psychologist-Manager Journal</i>	The way I see you: Implicit followership theories explored through the lens of attachment
<b>Braun, Stegmann, Bark, Junker, and Dick (2017)</b>	<i>The Journal of Applied Social Psychology</i>	Think manager—think male, think follower—think female: Gender bias in implicit followership theories
<b>Chu and Zhang (2020)</b>	<i>Current Psychology</i>	What are postgraduates like in the eyes of their supervisors? The content, structure, and measurement of supervisors' implicit followership theories
<b>Sharifirad (2021)</b>	<i>Iranian Journal of Management Studies</i>	Who is an Ideal Organizational Leader in Iran? Examining the Content, Structure, and Consequences of Iranian Implicit Leadership Theories (IILTS)
<b>Walker, Reichard, Riggio, and Hansbrough (2020)</b>	<i>Research gate</i>	Who might support a tyrant? An exploration of links between adolescent family conflict and endorsement of tyrannical implicit leadership theories
<b>Sharifirad, Mortazavi, Rahim Nia, and Farahi (2017)</b>	<i>Human Resource Management in the Oil Industry</i>	Disclosure of the Context of Implicit Theories of Leadership from the Perspectives of the Employees of the National Iranian Oil Distribution Company of Kerman Region and Its Validation
<b>Hopton and Han (2020)</b>	<i>Industrial and Commercial Training</i>	Mommy and Me: Raising Implicit Followership Theories
<b>Zigan, H'eliot, and Le Grys (2019)</b>	<i>Journal of Business Ethics</i>	Analyzing Leadership Attributes in Faith-Based Organizations: Idealism Versus Reality
<b>Da'as and Zibenberg (2019)</b>	<i>Educational Review</i>	Conflict, control and culture: Implications for implicit followership and leadership theories
<b>Da'as, Ganon Shilon, Schechter, and Qadach (2021)</b>	<i>International Journal of Educational Management</i>	Implicit leadership theory: Principals' sense-making and cognitive complexity
<b>Veestraeten, Johnson, Leroy, Sy, and Sels (2021)</b>	<i>Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies</i>	Exploring the Bounds of Pygmalion Effects: Congruence of Implicit Followership Theories Drives and Binds Leader Performance Expectations and Follower Work Engagement
<b>Yip and Walker (2021)</b>	<i>International Journal of Human Resource Management</i>	Leaders mentoring others: the effects of implicit followership theory on leader integrity and mentoring
<b>Wang, Wu, Liu, and Wan</b>	<i>Social Behavior and</i>	Leaders' positive and implicit followership theory



(2021)	<i>Personality</i>	and team creativity in a university scientific research team
Vogel and Werkmeister (2020)	<i>Public Administration Research and Theory</i>	What is Public about Public? Leadership Exploring Implicit Public Leadership Theories

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### About the Author

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Shirin Karbalaei Ali holds a master's degree in human resource management from the University of Allameh, Tabatabaei, Tehran. Her dissertation for her master's degree centered on human resource office performance and investigated the impact of the involvement of line managers in human resource management processes. Her interests currently focus on the psychological aspect of organizational leadership, including analysis of implicit theories and empowerment in addition to team building.

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# Can an Old Theory Help Solve a Contemporary Labor Crisis?

## *Applying JCM to the Current Labor Shortage*



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### **Abstract**

*This article asserts that the answer to our current labor crisis may not be as challenging as it appears if management will apply an old theory (Job Characteristics Model) to our contemporary workforce challenges. The article illustrates the key dimensions of the model and provides specific leadership recommendations for applying the JCM model to our current employment environment. Finally, the article also asserts that a new employee-centric style of leadership that requires a shift in leadership values and mindset is necessary to address the labor shortage and that JCM is a useful tool to facilitate that transition.*

### **Introduction**

Labor shortages dominate our current news cycle. Headlines discussing “The Great Resignation” and defining economic terms such as “labor force participation rate” and “quit rates” have become the norm. Anecdotally, daily signs appearing in the windows of small businesses remind us that the shortage of labor is disrupting normal basic services such as dry cleaning or dining out. Suddenly, getting morning coffee through the local drive-through window is no longer a certainty.

The actual labor numbers are telling the same story. In November 2021, 4.5 million American workers quit their jobs, the highest “quit rate” ever recorded (BLS, 2021). In addition to the high resignation rate, over 10 million jobs are projected to remain unfilled in the first quarter of 2022 (BLS, 2021). The problem is more acute within traditionally lower paying industries, such as accommodations and food services. However, even the knowledge economy is experiencing this phenomenon. Industries with higher emotional labor, such as education and healthcare, are also experiencing above average quit rates (BLS, 2021). The labor force participation rate reached a low in 2020 near the beginning of the pandemic, and although it has increased, it remains below pre-pandemic levels (BLS, 2021). Many labor experts suggest that a tight labor market will continue for several years (Rockeman & Smith, 2022).

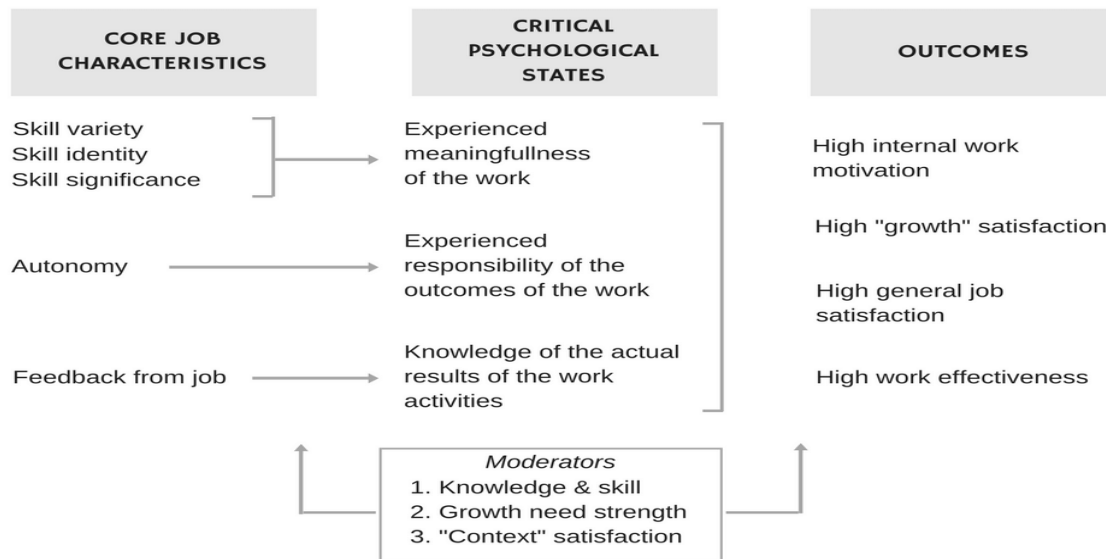
Much of the discussion in the media focuses on the causes of the labor shortage. Pandemic related issues – health concerns, lack of childcare options, and government cash aid – have all been identified as drivers of the current labor shortage (Leonhardt, 2021). Increased entrepreneurship and a growing “gig” economy are also considered factors that lead to labor shortages (Zaman et al., 2020). Others point to shifting values about work, particularly among Gen-Z, as a trend driving the current labor market conditions (Leonhardt, 2021).

Regardless of the cause, the problem is real and unlikely to subside in the near term. This article asserts that a motivational and work design theory, the Job Characteristics Model (JCM), may provide insights to remediate the current labor challenges. Furthermore, this article asserts that values-based leadership will be critical to solving this labor crisis and that JCM is an excellent tool for implementing a human capital centric approach to leadership in these difficult times. Managing human capital in our current labor market will require business leaders who possess the moral vision and insight to view workers as assets to be developed, and invested in, rather than an expendable commodity to consume and discard (Laker, 2021; MacArthur, 2020; Merrick, 2021). Applying JCM is a good place to start as organizations reconsider their employee value propositions.

### JCM Review

The job characteristics model (JCM) was first proposed by Hackman and Oldham (1975) and has been taught in business schools for decades. It is an old theory of motivation and job design. The theoretical model assumes that all jobs possess a built-in level of intrinsic motivation based on the underlying characteristics of the work design, as illustrated in *Figure 1*.

**Figure 1: The Job Characteristics Model**



*Source:* (Hackman & Oldham, 1980)

Jobs with higher levels of meaningfulness and responsibility for, and knowledge of the outcomes, are intrinsically more motivating for the worker. These three critical psychological states are enhanced and fostered by the core job characteristics of skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. Jobs with higher levels of these core characteristics achieve critical psychological states which, in turn, lead to desired job outcomes of higher levels of internal work motivation, growth satisfaction, job satisfaction, and work effectiveness. The effectiveness of the relationship between the core job characteristics and the desired outcomes is moderated by the individual's need for growth, knowledge and skill, and other contextual satisfactions, such as pay, comfort level with coworkers and supervisors, and other factors.

The five core job characteristics are assumed to be the tools which leaders can use to optimize job design for better performance outcomes. Skill variety is the degree to which a job requires the use of many different skills and abilities. Task identity is the extent to which the job incumbent completes a whole or identifiable piece of work. The characteristic of task significance is the extent to which the job impacts the lives of others. Autonomy is the degree of independence and freedom allowed in conducting the job, and feedback is the extent to which the individual performing the job receives clear communication regarding performance. According to JCM, each of these five characteristics can be adjusted to improve the intrinsic motivation of work.

The empirical research support for JCM has remained strong, as numerous studies have provided validating support for the theory while expanding the nuanced moderating factors that affect the relationship between core job characteristics and desired outcomes (Aan, 2018; Barrick et al., 2013). Applications of JCM-based job redesign have been found to improve intrinsic motivation in numerous industries including retail, professional sales, health care, education, and service industries (Barrick et al., 2013; Judge, et al., 2000; Khakpour et al., 2018; Michailidis & Dracou, 2011; Simonet & Castille, 2020).

Human resource and organizational development professionals have long known that JCM can be used to identify jobs with low intrinsic motivation by calculating the motivating potential scores (MPS) of a job using the formula shown in *Figure 2*. Those jobs identified with low MPS scores are the areas in which turnover, job satisfaction, organizational citizenship behaviors, and performance, will be problematic within the organization.

**Figure 2: Motivational Potential Score (MPS)**

$$\text{MPS} = \frac{\text{Skill Variety} + \text{Task Identity} + \text{Task Significance}}{3} \times \text{Autonomy} \times \text{Feedback}$$

*Source:* Market Business News (2022)

As the MPS model demonstrates, the average score of the three dimensions of skill variety, task identity, and task significance multiplied by the degree of autonomy and level of feedback provided within a job is used to determine a quantitative measure of the level of motivation inherent within the job design or MPS. Historically, many companies have

used this calculation to identify jobs which are more likely to have turnover and performance issues. Using the MPS formula, lower-scoring jobs can be potentially redesigned to increase intrinsic motivation.

JCM is a particularly significant tool for small business owners who often experience greater impact from both higher and lower levels of employee engagement. Two disengaged employees within a company workforce of five thousand is a much lower business threat than two disengaged employees in a small business with seven employees. Small businesses typically struggle to compete in categories of extrinsic motivators such as wages and benefits. However, by using JCM to enhance the employee value proposition through increased skill variety, task identify, task significance, autonomy, and feedback these small businesses can level the playing field.

### **JCM Illustration**

Consider the following scenario. A young man comes home from college for the summer and needs a job, so he decides to work in a small furniture factory. The business specializes in manufacturing low-cost wood furniture products such as roll-top desks and gun cabinets that are sold mostly to large retailers such as Walmart and Sears. The young man has prior experience in woodworking and, therefore, is assigned to work in the mill, producing parts for the assembly line that constructs the standard products. The summer is the busy season for the company, so the second shift, to which the young man is assigned, often works substantial overtime. The work is physically taxing and tedious, often requiring the young man to cut boards for 10-12 hours per day, 5 to 6 days per week, at a fast pace with very few breaks. The job pays minimum wage, and the poorly ventilated factory floor is typically over 100 degrees throughout the summer months.

While the job is tedious and repetitive, it is also dangerous. About once a week an employee gets sleepy or distracted and inadvertently does something unsafe, often leading to a serious accident. Inattentiveness on this job can cost a worker a finger or a hand or worse. As a result, the company experiences both high turnover and workers' compensation costs. The safety threat is so real that at times the young man comes to work an hour early to choose one of the few safe jobs in the rotation of millwork so that he can daydream to help pass the boredom while simultaneously staying safe. At the end of the summer, the young man is highly motivated to go back to college and thankful to be leaving the factory job. Unfortunately, approximately 70 other employees will continue to do this job with few other employment options in sight.

Now consider another scenario. The same young man comes home for another summer break and again needs a job. The owner of the furniture factory offers him his old job back, but the prospect of another summer in the hot furniture factory doing tedious millwork does not sound attractive. But this time the offer is different. The owner, who is an engineer and product designer, needs the young man to build prototypes of new products for potential expansion and for pitching to large retailers for new contracts. The fundamentals of the work in this new job are essentially the same: the young man spends the summer doing both mill and assembly work in the same hot facility, again for minimum wage, with some hard, tedious tasks such as ripping boards down to size on an industrial

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table saw as well as some new, even more tedious tasks, such as sanding, clamping, and gluing on the assembly side, tasks that the young man did not have to perform in his previous role.

However, the job design in the second scenario is completely different. First, building prototypes requires a high level of skill variety. Rather than performing the same repetitive task for hours on end, the young man must compute the specific raw material needed and prepare all the required parts before completing the millwork. Skill identity, which had previously been very low, was now essentially 100% as every task was performed to complete the whole process from raw material preparation to finished project. Task significance was also high, as all employees realized that the new prototypes might mean new business opportunities and increased sales for the company. The job was also performed with a high level of autonomy as the tasks required independent and flexible working conditions. Finally, the feedback loop was quick. Each week, all the employees in the plant saw the new designs and the work completed to build out the products and buyers from the potential retail customers arrived and commented on the prototypes. Despite performing many of the same tasks as the previous summer, the young man found that he really enjoyed his work as he was highly motivated and had a sense of pride in his role.

In the preceding illustration, the young man is the author, and the story is real. The author is now a middle-aged man with decades of experience in executive leadership, management consulting, and the teaching of management and leadership at the university level. Yet the principles from this long-ago work experience persist in shaping the author's core leadership values. What the experience inadvertently taught the author is that the attractiveness of a job is not merely a function of the specific job tasks, but rather the holistic design of the job. JCM similarly applies significantly to our current labor scenario. The question for most organizations in our current labor crisis is this: "Do organizational leaders have the managerial skill and will to creatively redesign traditional jobs, workflows, and organizations to produce a more attractive employee value proposition?"

### **Contemporary Applications**

To answer the first part of the above question, we must consider the application of JCM. Managers should be knowledgeable in the principles of JCM. Although the principles of JCM are taught in nearly every organizational behavior (OB) or leadership course in business schools around the world, some theoretical concepts are quickly forgotten and discarded. Organizations that are successful in improving the intrinsic motivation of their job designs often do not share the success stories as they are often considered sources of competitive advantage. In addition, successful applications of JCM within high-performing organizations is often thrown under the umbrella of strong organizational culture without deeper consideration of the elements of JCM which may be facilitating such a culture. The following are recommendations of specific leadership practices that are consistent with the application of JCM.

- **Mission, Values, and Culture Matter**

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Every industry, including those most impacted by recent labor challenges, has exceptions to the trends. Companies such as Chick-Fil-A and Costco appear to defy their industry labor trends in regard to organizational commitment and turnover rates (Cain, 2018; Danziger, 2019). What are these companies doing differently? They are focused on mission and values which, in turn, create meaningfulness in work. Meaningfulness in work improves company culture and increases job satisfaction. However, meaningfulness in work is, in JCM terms, a function of the most critical yet often underestimated element of task significance. High performing work cultures do not occur without a workforce first experiencing high task significance. Leaders need to overemphasize the importance of individual job tasks. Great organizations link individual job performance to the mission of the organization; mediocre organizations do not. This is purely a leadership function. In great organizations, all jobs are mission critical. If an organization has unimportant jobs, they should be eliminated. Otherwise, the task significance of every job must be clearly articulated. Employees need to have a reason to work that is larger than a paycheck. They need to understand that their efforts and performance have significance to others.

- **Increase Job Flexibility**

Increased job flexibility is likely the most obvious application of JCM to our current labor crisis. Job flexibility equals autonomy. The pandemic demonstrated that a great deal of work can be done remotely. That reality will not go away. The current numbers of the unemployed are disproportionately full of single parents experiencing “care insecurity” (Heggeness, 2020). Certainly, the pandemic and related school closings and quarantine policies have exacerbated this situation. A new study by Microsoft (2022) finds that workers, particularly Generation Z, are re-prioritizing work-life balance over every other career goal and that workplace flexibility and remote work options are now a core expectation. The 8-to-5 model of workplace scheduling is quickly becoming obsolete. Not all jobs can be remote or flexibly scheduled, and a completely remote workforce is probably not beneficial for most organizations. However, increased autonomy through flexibility in the work schedule is a major piece of demonstrating to employees that they are valued, and that work-life balance is not hollow rhetoric.

Neither does workplace flexibility mean lack of accountability; it actually allows workers to take more responsibility for the outcomes of their work, which can simultaneously increase individual motivation and organizational performance. High performers are already motivated to do good work; workplace flexibility gives them the tools to perform at even higher levels. Daniel Pink (2009) in his best-selling book *Drive*, says that future of work will not be focused on ridged schedules but rather on ROWEs (Results Only Work Environments). Applying JCM through increased flexibility would support this shift in workplace culture and lead to higher levels of employee engagement. Pink (2009) adds that “Autonomy...is different from independence.... It means acting with choice – which means we can be both autonomous and happily interdependent with others” (88). Increasing flexibility in how work is done will increase employee motivation.

- **Expand Job Scope and Depth**

According to JCM theory, most employees desire increased job responsibilities. A recent study of manufacturing organizations found that issues other than pay accounted for dramatically lower turnover rates among a small set of outlier employers (McCleod & Iyer, 2021). Those issues included higher autonomy, flexibility, knowledge of work outcomes, and encouragement and incentives to develop and learn new work skills, all elements of JCM. Jobs can be enlarged both vertically and horizontally. Horizontal enlargement involves expanded skill variety, which increases both the value of the employee in the labor market and the flexibility of the organization due to creating a more versatile workforce. Vertical enlargement includes expanding the responsibility of employees, which increases task identity, task significance, and autonomy. Both forms of job enrichment are consistent with JCM and optimize the organization's "bench strength" and overall human capital inventory.

- **Increase Organizational Transparency**

Applying JCM, all jobs can attain an improved motivating potential score by increasing feedback. However, feedback is more than merely commenting on individual job performance; it is also a function of a deeper commitment to organizational transparency. Employees want to know how they are performing, but they also want to know how the organization is performing. Gen Z employees in particular want to know what their future in the organization will look like. Organizations need to increase their transparency concerning both business strategy and career development opportunities. Transparency encompasses both the feedback and the task identity elements of JCM. Jobs that cannot be enhanced in terms of skill variety, flexibility, or autonomy can always be redesigned to provide increased feedback and task identity if leaders and organizations commit to practicing greater transparency.

The second element of this question requires self-analysis by organizational leaders to determine whether they have the will to redesign jobs to be more intrinsically motivating. This is a question of values. Do leaders truly value their employees? Leadership style and practice are personal choices that reflect personal values. Leaders who adhere to Kant's categorical imperative avoid treating people as means to an end and understand that JCM theory assumes intrinsic human value (Kant et al., 2019). Using JCM as tool to enhance employees' work experience is not only good business practice, but it is also the right thing to do. Fortunately, JCM has been found to strengthen leadership effectiveness and enhance proactive organizational change, meaning there is no negative trade-off in choosing an employee-centric policy. Specifically, JCM has been found to support both transformational and transactional leadership styles and is associated with higher ethical leadership (Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006; Piccolo et al., 2010). Leaders who choose to reconsider the nature and design of their job offerings will reap the benefit of better employee performance as they strengthen their employment value proposition in the current labor market.

JCM is a tangible, validated tool which can help values-based leaders execute and live out their values regarding the management of human capital. There is an adage that the difference between a strong leader and a weak leader is found in the concept of "soil versus dirt." Strong leaders view people as soil to be nourished, enriched, respected, and



valued, while weak leaders see people as dirt to be exploited, depleted, and discarded. We need leaders who view current and prospective employees as “soil” to be developed. Employees will notice the difference and make their employment decisions accordingly.

## Conclusion

The application of JCM will not solve every challenge of our current labor crisis; there remain major macroeconomic and socioeconomic trends that will continue to make it difficult to find and retain good employees at all levels of an organization. However, the application of JCM to job design can certainly mitigate the staffing challenges at the organizational level by improving the employee value proposition. Leaders should identify improved job design practices that support the desired outcomes of increased meaningfulness of work and responsibility for, and knowledge of, the outcomes of individual work. Finally, leaders must develop the moral will to make the jobs within their organizations more attractive to both current and prospective employees. If organizational leaders can accomplish these two goals, the current labor crisis may be less challenging than anticipated. Maybe part of the solution lies in applying an old theory.

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### **Abstract**

*The following research presents the construct of “subtle leadership” in a conceptual discussion as a new way of perceiving and studying leaders of the twenty-first century. Its core objective points toward the conceptualization of “subtle leadership,” sharing a basic definition to provoke discussion and emerging theoretical framework in order to better understand the current organizational reality. Some leadership styles such as servant leadership, shared leadership, and authentic leadership are discussed to compare and contrast them with “subtle leadership,” emphasizing that leadership is viewed as a process and not only as styles or personal traits. Subtle leadership is primarily based on a high level of referent power and a holistic perspective of the personal and process factors essential for leading and influencing today’s workplace. Considering the potential of “subtle leadership” for further discussion in the academic world, it aims to generate provoking theory building.*

## **Subtle Leadership: When Referent Power is Subtly Powerful**

### **Introduction**

Leadership is a never-ending discussion topic within the broad field of Organizational Behavior. On the subject, Warren Bennis (1959, p. 259, quoted in Betts & Santoro, 2007, p. 2) states that probably more has been written and less known about leadership than any other topic in the behavioral sciences. This makes the subject fertile soil for applying new interpretations and perspectives that attempt to make sense and serve as a valuable tool in the modern workplace. Yukl (2013) defines leadership as the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, as well as the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives. Influence is the essence of leadership, and helping others to understand and agree on what needs to be done requires a contextualized source of power beyond traditional ways.

According to Sandberg and Alvesson (2020), it is frequently argued that a key task for scholars is to develop theories that advance universal knowledge of social reality (i.e., Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017; Swedberg, 2014, cited in Sandberg & Alvesson, 2020). In

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conformity therewith, the well-known phrase “There is nothing more practical than a good theory” ostensibly applies and concomitantly inspires the search for an explanation of the “subtle leadership” construct. First coined by the author in 2007, it currently enjoys revived relevance – especially in the new workplace reality. Mainstream studies typically define leadership in terms of “influence” (positive) and distinguish this from “power” (negative). In so doing, they fail to appreciate that the former may be one aspect of the latter (Collinson, 2009). “Subtle leadership” is presented as a contribution to further discussion on Leadership theory, as a new paradigm to understand with fresh perspective what subtle leadership based on referent power is about, and with the aim to build a provoking theory.

The core purposes of a better understanding of leadership – and its subtle aspect in today’s organizational context – is to provide a theoretical contribution to the study of leadership that leads to practical application for the achievement of two relevant outcomes: first, improved organizational performance (Gordon & Yukl, 2004, p. 360) and second, reaching it by providing a good dose of employee satisfaction (Fuller, Patterson, Hester, & Stringer, 1996; Lowe, Kroech, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996 quoted in Bono & Judge, 2004, p. 902). This combination of high performance and high employee satisfaction makes organizations effective, agile, and competitive. It is right there where leadership is essentially assessed and proved as effective or ineffective. A leader’s power of influence might make the difference in employee satisfaction and organizational performance. Organizations and their leaders count on different powers to reach their goals in the workplace – the referent power included – which is determinant for the successful impact of a subtle leader on those around him/her. Subtle leadership departs from the common perceptions of leadership where followers are “crippled” by powerlessness; leaders are inevitably successful in “seducing” followers; or leadership induces “massive learned helplessness” transforming many into mere “cheerful robots” (Smircich & Morgan, 1982; Calas & Smircich, 1991; Gemmill & Oakley, 1992 in Collinson, 2009). The discussion of subtle leadership provides a venue for further understanding and contextualization of the powerful and subtle influence of people over others. Despite history demonstrating that power and influence have been used for either good or evil, in the context of this discussion, by no means is subtle leadership associated with a hidden agenda to lure or harm others for personal advantage. Its core attributes are conceived far from any form of negative connotation. Subtle leadership is presented in this work as a positive influence of an informal leader on other peers, subordinates, or superiors, based primarily on referent power with the aim of collective benefit.

### **Formal and Informal Power Sources**

Power is defined as the absolute capacity of an individual agent to influence the behavior or attitudes of one or more designated target persons at a given point in time. It has also been defined in more relative than absolute terms to the extent to which the agent has greater influence over the target than the target has over the agent (Yukl, 2013). Scandura (2019) adds that power is the potential of one person or group to influence another person or group, and points out that often power is best executed when it is accomplished in a subtle manner. French and Raven’s (1959) traditional taxonomy of power, specifically,

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“the source or basis for potential influence over another person or event” (Yukl, 2013), includes five types of power: expert, referent, legitimate, reward, and coercive power. These types of power are also classified in two main categories: position (or formal) power and personal (or informal) power.

Within the context of organizational leadership, and based on French and Raven’s (1959) taxonomy of sources of power (further explained in Yukl (2013)), legitimate power is the power stemming from formal authority over work activities. While it is most related to a downward flow of authority, Yukl (2013) recalls that it also depends on the agreement of an organization’s members to comply with direction from leaders in return for the benefits of membership. This point might provide a connection and explanation based on Psychological Contract Theory, which, as defined by Rosseau (1989) and quoted in Quiñones-González (2016), emphasizes “an individual belief, shaped by the organization, regarding terms of an exchange agreement between individuals and their organization.” On this matter, Rousseau (1995) adds that the individual voluntarily assents to make and accept certain promises as he or she understands them. Reward power is the perception by the target person that an agent controls important resources and rewards desired by the target person, and that the authority relationship is an important determinant of this power (Yukl, 2013). As posed by Yukl (2013), a leader’s coercive power over subordinates is based on authority over punishment, but there has been a general decline in its use by all types of leaders. Because mutual dependencies exist in today’s world of work, a lateral relation and the commitment with strategic organizational goals provide no space for this counterproductive source of power. These three sources of power – legitimate, reward, and coercive – refer mainly to organizational “position,” or formal powers (Bass, 1960; Rahim, 1998; Yukl & Falbe, 1991 quoted in Yukl, 2013; Kovach, 2020) that are granted to a leader or manager by his/her hierarchical, formal authority. However, power is manifested in other ways beyond formal authority. Those sources are identified as “personal power” or informal power, derived from attributes of the agent and the agent-target relationship (Yukl, 2013). This power is also referred to, by some researchers, as non-mediated power (Akhtar, Khan, Rao-Nicholson, & Zhang, 2019).

### **Referent Power: A Personal Power Source**

Personal power comprises expert power and referent power. These two bases of power are categorized as informal power because they exist without any recognized formal authority. This essentially refers to a situation where either an individual can demonstrate referent or expert power without having any official authority or where employees can align under such individual’s authority in an organizational hierarchy (Kovach, 2020). Based on dependency of expertise, expert power is present when, as posited by Yulk (2013), task-relevant knowledge and skill constitute the most fortuitous way to perform a task or solve an important problem – all providing potential influence over subordinates, peers, and superiors. It is important to recall that this source of power exists outside the formal authority of a person, in other words, the leader does not necessarily have legitimate power and probably is not a manager.

Scandura (2019) defines referent power as the ability to influence based upon another's identification with the individual and the follower's desire to emulate them; invariably, it is based on respect and admiration. As defined by Yukl (2013), referent power is derived from the desire of others to please an agent toward whom they have strong feelings of affection, admiration, and loyalty. He stated that the strongest form of referent power involves the influence process called "personal identification" and that strong referent power will tend to increase the agent's influence over the target person even without any explicit effort by the agent to invoke this power (French & Raven, 1959).

Subtle leadership does not need any explicit effort to invoke this power, making the referent power subtly powerful. and one of the strongest attributes of modern leaders. However, due to the lack of legitimate power, subtle leader's referent power depends on the extent of the target person's loyalty and friendship toward the leader as shaped by his/her persona, life experiences, the respect received and given to others, and the emerging circumstances in internal and external environments within which the organization operates. It also requires emotional intelligence – a greater awareness of the emotional dynamics of leadership processes – in order to be effective leaders (Goleman, 2002 in Collinson, 2009). A meta-analysis on social power bases (Carson, Carson, & Roe, 1993 cited in Scandura, 2019), found that legitimate power exerts little influence on either job satisfaction or performance. Additionally, with regard to personal power bases, it reveals that referent power most strongly influences satisfaction. New research (i.e., Akhtar et al., 2019) relates referent power to effective global collaborative partnerships along with emergent big data analytics; In this way, referent power is defined as a power of a business partner over other collaborating partners based on a high level of identification, admiration, and respect, all of which help to build an enduring innovative relationship (Putranam et al., 2006; Terpend & Ashenbaum, 2012 cited in Akhtar et al., 2019).

### **What is "Subtle Leadership"?**

The construct of "subtle leadership" suggests that subtle leaders do not have the facade of other types of leaders traditionally associated with legitimate power. The construct may contain the notion of passive, indirect, or even silent leadership, accompanied by a high level of referent power. Such referent power – defined by French and Raven (1959) in Hersey & Blanchard (1979) – is based on personal traits; a leader high in referent power is liked and admired, and others wish to be identified with him or her. Personality traits are defined as enduring characteristics describing an individual's behavior (Uhl-Bien, Schermerhorn, & Osborn, 2014). Those characteristics might be direct and easily observable or might be subtle and less perceptible. Still, subtle leadership encompasses much more than just personality traits, since the referent power, as stated by Kovach (2020), is based on respect and admiration an individual has earned from others over time. Subtle leadership combines traits with what a person already possesses as a result of his or her accumulated life experiences. Such traits span a broad spectrum of environments, cultures, and people as well as holistic development in terms of moral principles, integrity, and a spirit of service – without need of public reward, acknowledgement, or a dedicated following, and with no legitimate power granted by formal position within the organization.

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### **Subtle Leadership and Subtle Acts of Leadership**

A concept related to subtle leadership found in Leadership literature refers to “subtle acts of leadership” – coined by Norwegian writer, Tom Karp. According to his research findings (2015), “acts of leadership emerge as a result of processes of social interaction in organisations. These acts of leadership were rare and subtle, and seldom came as a result of planned interventions, motivational techniques, transformational behaviour or other means articulated by popular leadership theories.” Furthermore, Karp and Helgø (2009) state that “leaders emerge in the interaction between people as the act of recognising and being recognised, as well as the act of gaining the necessary trust, credibility, and respect to perform as a leader.” Thus, the persona of a subtle leader must interact with others in order for the action of leadership to be accomplished.

Karp (2013) affirms that leadership is a social process where one assumes leadership by taking and earning a right to lead. He also argues that the dynamics of processes leading to unstable or uncertain situations in organizations create a need for leadership and provide the context for leadership. Furthermore, the assumption of leadership is regarded as a function of a time-limited right to lead granted to those newly-formed leaders by others who have chosen to follow (Karp, 2013). This interdependence and subtle common agreement between leaders and followers are a part of the argument supporting the concept of “subtle leadership” as well. “Subtle leadership” and “subtle acts of leadership” might be connected in several ways; both terms converge in the belief that they transcend traditional theoretical foundations that explain leadership – especially in the modern workplace marked by pandemics and other global events as well as by the expectations of younger generations just entering the labor market. As stated by Karp (2013), “acts of leadership” are far more rare, subtle, and fragile than frequently suggested by popular theories and concepts. This is exactly the rationale supporting the exploration, further understanding, and conceptualization of “subtle leadership” as an attempt to provide new ways beyond formal authority to deal with new internal and external environmental forces that currently affect organizations.

### **Servant Leadership and Subtle Leadership: Comparisons and Contrasts**

In order to differentiate subtle leadership from other leadership styles in the literature, servant leadership, shared leadership, and authentic leadership are briefly described and compared and contrasted with the construct of subtle leadership. As previously mentioned, the subtle leader has no need to be publicly rewarded or acknowledged. Rather, subtle leadership can be perceived as a normal state of servanthood. The concept of servant leadership appeared in leadership theory in 1977, led by Robert K. Greenleaf (Riverstone, 2004). Servant leaders transcend individual self-interest, serving others by helping them grow both professionally and personally (Greenleaf, 1977; Lussier & Achua, 2007). Cunningham (2002 in Rivestone, 2004) states that leadership success is judged by whether the one served grows as a person; as servant leadership rejects dependence and independence as possibilities for the workplace, interdependence is instead chosen. Laub (1999, p. 83 quoted in Humphreys, 2005) defines servant leadership as an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-



interest of the leader...and the sharing of power and status for the common good of everyone, the total organization, and those served by the organization. Servant leadership differs from most other leadership approaches for its focus on personal integrity and the formation of strong, long-term relationships with employees (Bambale, 2014).

There is a principle of service for a better welfare for the subtle leader's peers, group, organization, and society as a whole. There is a genuine desire of the subtle leader to help others grow, to share knowledge and experience, to facilitate the learning that allows the construction of new knowledge. The subtle leader does not feel threatened by the followers. On the contrary, he/she provides all the necessary support and tools for the followers and peers to develop their potential to the maximum and to celebrate when they reach a higher level of knowledge and performance than the leader. In that sense, the subtle leaders can be viewed as a leader in a natural state of servanthood.

Although servant leadership possesses some similar attributes of subtle leadership – e.g., interdependency and the genuine desire to transcend individual self-interest – subtle leaders are not necessarily created through legitimate power nor are they given a formal position in organizational hierarchy. They might not have direct or identified followers, as they are not in search for followers, not in the modern world of work of collaboration and lateral relations. Instead, they emerge (*see*, Griffin, 2003). Their peers acknowledge and accept them, listen to their reliable advice, and trust in their accumulated life experiences and display of ethical behavior. As mentioned, their power of influence is earned over time. Those elements add value to the new workplace context of agile structure, diversity awareness, teamwork, self-managed teams, virtual teams, and emphasis of collaboration over internal competition. Regarding the point that subtle leaders are not necessarily looking for followers, Giddens' structuration theory (1984, 1987 cited in Collinson, 2009) argues that human beings are knowledgeable social agents who, acting within historically specific (unacknowledged) conditions and (unintended) consequences, always retain a capacity to "make a difference." No matter how asymmetrical, power relations are always two-way, contingent, and to some degree, interdependent. Moreover, the claim that subtle leaders are not necessarily looking for followers in an intentional way is supported by Maslow's (1971 in Wong, 2016) concept of self-transcendence; this represents the most holistic level of higher consciousness – relating to oneself, significant others, human beings in general, nature, and the cosmos. Transcendence might add clarification to this argument. Hence, the mentioned elements – i.e., interdependence, the capacity to make a difference (with or without direct followers), and self-transcendence as a motivational step beyond self-actualization (Koltko-Rivera, 2006) – might explain the relevance and subtle power of the subtle leader.

### **Shared Leadership: A Comparison with Subtle Leadership**

Acknowledgement of subtle leadership and its positive influence might help organizations to overcome the challenges of current competitive forces, including the willingness to share leadership according to the new demands. Theorists (i.e., Bedeian & Hunt, 2006; Collinson, 2005; Gronn, 2002; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007 cited in DeRue & Ashford, 2010) conceptualized leadership as a broader, mutual-influence process,

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independent of any formal role or hierarchical structure and diffused among the members of any given social system. Shared leadership entails the serial emergence of both official and unofficial leaders as part of a simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process (Yukl, 2013). According to DeRue and Ashford (2010), all leadership is shared leadership. It is simply a matter of degree –sometimes it is fully shared while at other times it is not shared at all. At its most extreme, shared leadership is just what it sounds like: all the social actors in an organization or group are involved in the process of leading one another toward productive ends. Shared leadership rests on the notion that nearly every human is capable of sharing the burden and responsibility of leading, at least to some extent, in nearly all types of organizational circumstances (Pearce & Conger, 2003). This contrasts with the traditional paradigm of top-down leadership literature (Yukl, 2013). It is proposed as a rejection of heroic or hierarchical structures in favor of “leaders who can design a culture in which leadership is distributed as an emergent and benevolent way – so the community can engage in robust dialogue, in an evidence-informed and experience grounded manner” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2008, p. 232).

Shared leadership can be associated with subtle leadership in its basic definition of “the serial emergence of both official and unofficial leaders as part of a simultaneous, ongoing, mutual influence process,” especially regarding the “unofficial” leaders, comparable with those using referent power and not legitimate power. Furthermore, they are similar in the influence that the person may have with others. Nevertheless, the subtleness is not present in the official position due to its contradictory connotation. Once again, subtle leadership does not depend on the position that a person maintains. It does not necessarily refer to the joinder of official co-leaders nor is it the product of mergers, co-funding, or the sharing of jobs as referred to in O’Toole, Galbraith, and Lawler (2002). It is manifested by the personalities, experiences, principles, and a general sense of solidarity with its coworkers and the organization as a whole. It dwells in the persona and emerges at the right moment, either sought by their peers who consider them leaders or by a continuous way of subtly and positively influencing people and environment with their presence and reference power. Subtle leaders’ voices – even without legitimate power – are heard, respected, and followed. People trust and believe in them.

### **Authentic Leadership and Subtle Leadership: Similarities and Differences**

The idea of “being true to one’s word when dealing with others” has manifested itself as behavioral integrity, the perceived alignment between an actor’s words and actions (Simons, 2002). People tend to look up to those who possess moral authority and guide with their example. In other words, they respect authentic leaders – those who understand others, possess social skills and empathy, and in essence, walk the talk. This highlights the relevance of the development and application of emotional intelligence in the modern world of work. According to Newcombe and Ashkanasy (2002 in Grandey, 2008), the congruence of leaders’ expressions with their message and the followers’ affect is also an important contingency; if they are incongruent, the expressions may seem manipulative. Being authentic leaders helps people believe in them and follow them. Similar qualities are presented in authentic leadership. This style of leading has been demonstrated to drive affective organizational commitment, performance, and structured citizenship

behaviors through both trust in and identification with the leader (Walumbwa et al., 2008, 2010, 2011).

Walumbwa et al. (2008) identified and validated four components to describe authentic leadership: self-awareness, balanced processing, relational transparency, and internalized moral perspective. Self-awareness refers to demonstrating behaviors that indicate that leaders are aware of personal needs, preferences, motivations, and wants. Balanced processing refers to leader behavior that shows the leaders are attempting to analyze relevant data before coming to a decision and that leaders are not afraid to solicit opposing views from followers. Relational transparency refers to presenting the leaders' authentic selves, their true feelings, and their thoughts to followers. Lastly, internalized moral perspective refers to self-regulation that is guided by internal moral standards and values, and results in behaviors and decisions consistent with these internalized values.

Authentic leadership can be traced alongside subtle leadership because both involve integral formation in terms of moral principles and integrity and a spirit of service. However, authentic leadership seems to be a desirable personal trait associated with formal organizational leaders who use their power in a transparent way for the well-being of their employees. This does not coincide with subtle leaders, whose influence does not necessarily depend on the position they occupy, but who are respected and trusted by others for being themselves and for being the genuine emerging leaders as a result of their sincere interaction with others. This consistency between words and actions is supported by Rousseau's (1995) perspective on psychological contract, where she states that people who make and keep their commitments can anticipate and plan because their actions are more readily specified and predictable both to others as well as to themselves. It is a matter of trust – a trust that people have toward subtle leaders who are not looking for followers and who do not possess the authority or legitimate power of formal leaders, yet have the ability to subtly and positively influence others around them.

### **The Consideration of Values in the Discussion of Subtle Leadership**

Subtle leadership is characterized by qualities developed by the person as a product of his or her experiences and interactions; it encompasses both emotions-strong positive and negative feelings directed toward someone or something as well as values-broad preferences concerning appropriate courses of action or outcomes as defined by Uhl-Bien, Schermerhorn, & Osborn (2014). This point is supported by the new paradigm of postmodernist leadership (Russell & Kuhnert, 1992b; Fisher & Torbert, 1991 cited in Kuhnert, 2001, p. 189-202) which includes the study of emotions and personal values that leaders hold and pursue, rather than focusing on skills and task performance. Those traits and values are embedded in the persona as a product of interactions, decisions, and experiences. In other words, they are developed with life experiences, not just inherited.

According to Dean (2008), values-based leadership can be defined as leading by example, that is, doing the right thing for the right reasons and not compromising core principles. It encompasses styles that have a moral, authentic, and ethical dimension (Copeland, 2014). Values-based leaders create followers by enabling them to see clearly, and to achieve effectively, that which they hold dear (O'Toole, 2008). The subtle leader who is not

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looking for followers, is acclaimed for his/her referent power and genuine interest in others as well as for acts based on values, integrity, and ethical principles. Hence, it is worthwhile to recognize values as an element that helps to form and guide the character and actions of any leader – especially the subtle leader whose indirect yet powerful influence over others is evident.

### **An Asset for Paradigm Reconfiguration**

As organizational environments shift quickly from stability to volatility, and from predictability to unpredictability, there are always new ways to analyze and study leadership. Companies converge in a diverse workforce (*see*, Arsenault, 2004) with three or four generations working together to address global crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic (*see*, Chong & Duan, 2022; Țiclău, Hintea, & Trofin, 2021); knowledge organizations (*see*, Currie & Spyridonidis, 2019); and continuous global competition (*see*, Ahmad & Saidalavi, 2019; Maranga, Kennedy, Madison, & Denise, 2017). On generational diversity in the workplace, Arsenault (2004) argues that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, generations are working together more than ever before, thanks to the demise of the bureaucratic organization in favor of a horizontal style, new technology, globalization, and a more information-friendly atmosphere.

Regarding adapting to global crises, Chong and Duan (2022) state that organizational structures are not only defined by a hierarchical allocation of authorities and responsibilities, they can further be described as organizational processes for controlling and coordinating the facilitation of tasks. They emphasize that organizations need to redesign their organizational structures to adapt to uncertain business environments for survival, as in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the topic of knowledge organizations, Currie and Spyridonidis (2019) explain how changing configurations of shared leadership support diffusion and adaptation of innovation, arguing that while managers remain important actors for the mandate and resourcing of innovation, over time, powerful professionals – specifically doctors (and nurses) – come to the fore, to engage their peers and influence resource allocation. Likewise, Bartlett and Ghoshal (1995) state that unlike capital, knowledge is most valuable when those on the front lines control and use it. Lastly, concerning the global challenging competition, Ahmad and Saidalavi (2019) state that globalization demands new leadership competencies in order to interact effectively with followers from different cultural backgrounds. Further, they highlight that global leaders need to master various aspects of knowledge, such as cognitive, emotional, social, and cultural intelligence.

Many global challenges and technological advancements increase business competition. Only the most enlightened businesses anticipate that those transformations will successfully remain. Global societies evolve at a fast pace, thus, theoretical explanations and interpretations in the field of Organizational Behavior add understanding to leadership issues. Leading in a specific moment or influencing others in a subtle but positive way might be a desirable quality for modern leaders to pursue in today's diverse and changing workplace. Thomas (2002) affirms that departures in structure from a traditional organizational hierarchy to a project or self-managed team orientation require shifts in the

style of organizational leadership from positional power to personal power. Additionally, referent power, as an aspect of personal power, becomes particularly important as organizational leadership is increasingly about collaboration and influence rather than command and control. Furthermore, Manz and Sims (1995 in Thomas, 2002) state that work can be accomplished just as well – actually much better– if workplaces were to jettison the old concept of “boss.” Society has reached a stage where there is no longer a need for hierarchical figureheads who have absolute control over those within a work system. Here is the fundamental relevance of a deeper understanding and exploration of a leader able to influence others in a subtle yet powerful way in the realm of today’s tumultuous world of work. That new reality forces practitioners and scholars alike to find new ways and paradigms to understand and explain suitable approaches that contribute to a more agile and adaptive style of management. This can be achieved through a direct or indirect, formal or subtle, type of leadership. As found in recent studies on the global context of business collaboration (Akhtar et al., 2019), collaborative partners who rely on unmediated sources of organizational powers – such as referent power – positively influence relationship innovations.

Internal and external changes provoke organizational reactions and decision-making to adapt and survive in this turbulent business world. In the context of organizations and organizational formal structure, power is not inherited. Authority is not perpetual. On this matter, Brooks and Dunn (2010) point out that many executives forget that an organization’s stakeholders change over time – as does the power they wield. Internal and external factors may cause a shift of power and authority among organizational leaders. This thought is related to Rowley’s (1997 in Brooks & Dunn, 2010) suggestion that a set of stakeholders might be considered as a “dynamic network” which evokes union, collaboration, strength, and power in the hands of other stakeholders beyond top management. Employees and informal leaders could be a powerful component of that dynamic network, equipped with a subtle power to influence others.

This work does not pretend to merely add a new leadership style. It goes beyond categorizations by presenting a new paradigm of studying and practicing leadership in the new world of work. Old position powers are not necessarily compatible with the expectations of the new workforce and with the many new challenges that drive business and organizations to adapt to unimaginable changes such as COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences to Human Resource Management, globalization, and even a new war of Russia in Ukraine in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, with all the social, economic, and geopolitical implications it brings to business and global leadership. Nevertheless, universal values in action, such as trust, respect, authenticity, and spirit of service provide a fertile soil to identify, admire, and follow those with a high level of earned referent power, regardless of their lack of legitimate power.

Today, organizations must adopt new agile structures and leadership approaches in order to survive and compete with a holistic vision and concrete sustainability goals that take into account all the internal and external stakeholders, including the subtle leaders. Those leaders manifesting their commitment in their daily work and in an authentic manner, are not in search to use, prove, or even explain what other authors (i.e., Bennis, 1989) termed

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as “subtlety” of a traditional leader or manager’ actions because it is not something that needs to be manipulated or purposely sought. In the context of this work, subtle leadership does not refer to Bennis’s (1989) combination of subtlety and complexity. As mentioned, the referent power of subtle leaders transcends organizational hierarchy and they do not necessarily hold a managerial position. Accordingly, such a leader does not purposely focus on the use of subtlety as a tool to fulfil his/her role as an “effective leader.” Conversely, he/she has referent power which is powerfully subtle to solve problems, encourage, and positively influence peers as new situations arise, especially in the challenging, turbulent, and diverse global scenario in which the only constant is change. A subtle leader is effective as long as his/her referent power is recognized by others and applied in circumstances of the new world of work where subtle influence are welcome and respected for the collective well-being of the organization, communication is open and transparent, diversity in the workplace is accepted, and organizational design and structure are adapted to agilely respond to new realities. In those instances, traditional sources of power like legitimate and coercive, or managerial styles like autocratic, no longer fit in modern organizations. On the contrary, they might be the cause of most of the problems that hinder business in achieving success.

### **The Subtle Leader: Persona, Experiences, and Followership in Action**

As posited in this discussion, subtle leadership dwells in the persona, but is accompanied by circumstances that provoke the referent power to be positively and subtly activated. Those circumstances cause leaders to emerge and grow outside the legitimate power with a commitment to listen, to solve problems, and to positively impact others in the pursuit of organizational goals, without abandoning employees’ or peers’ individual needs to feel valued and appreciated. In other words, influence is wielded by interacting with others, focusing on a greater collective goal. As a role model, the subtle leader leads, convinces, and helps peers, subordinates, and superiors in decision-making – without intentionally looking for followers.

A subtle influence that a person may have over another person or group is not projected only by his or her personality, but also through the sum total of his or her experiences, moral principles, integrity, and a sense of solidarity with those surrounding them while concomitantly being nurtured by them. It is an interdependent relationship of sharing and growing and does not depend necessarily on a managerial position or legitimate power. Subtle leadership is unobtrusively gaining ground in organizations and – regardless of the presence or absence of direct followers – is having an impact on people inside and outside the organizational formal structure. No matter where in the hierarchical level subtle leaders are positioned, they have the power to positively influence others’ behavior in an indirect, passive, or even silent way. It is consonous with studies directed to the growing interest in followership which argue that followers are a precondition for high-performing organizations, and view “effective followership” as particularly important in the contemporary context of greater team-working, “empowered” knowledge workers and distributed leadership (Shamir et al., 2007; Chaleff, 2003; Kelley, 2004; Raelin, 2003, quoted in Collinson, 2009). That perspective emphasizes an understanding of the complex interactions between leaders and followers (Collinson, 2009). Subtle leaders are not

necessarily managers or supervisors. They could be followers with a remarkable dose of referent power that enables them to emerge as informal leaders. Although referent power is sometimes associated with charismatic leaders (i.e., McShane & Von Glinow, 2000 in Soleman, 2017), that is not the case in the conceptual development of subtle leadership since the idea of subtleness is not compatible with charismatic leaders. These leaders who, as described by Rupert et al. (2000 in Soleman, 2017), often provide an exciting future vision for subordinates who can give more meaning to their work and feel a heightened sense of enthusiasm. This definition evokes a vivid, loquacious, or even narcissist person, while subtleness evokes calmness and an almost imperceptible, yet meaningful influence.

The concept of subtle leadership represents an opportunity for further research. A basic definition is presented here as “a process of influencing peers, subordinates, and superiors counting mainly on referent power. In times of change, crisis, pandemic, global turbulence and competition, and convergence of diverse generations in the workplace, each one with different expectations, it is there when referent power is subtly powerful to positively impact decision making with emotional intelligence, integrity, and authenticity, but with no need of legitimate power or intentional searching for followers.” This new approach converges with the post-modern paradigm of leadership theory and with other scientific approaches including the “social exchange” theory, which defines leadership as a group process, and “behavioral finance,” which depicts people as normal and irrational, imperfect or faultless human beings. Beyond this truth of acknowledging human imperfection, there is a principle of service and desire for improving the welfare of the subtle leader’s peers, group, organization, and society as a whole. This is a point that deserves further discussion and understanding in the study of Leadership with the potential for the development of a new paradigm of leadership for the modern workplace.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Leadership theory has evolved through different approaches that have emerged as an attempt to understand and explain leaders’ and followers’ behavior, as the world and workplace have also evolved and adapted to new realities. This work introduces the construct of “subtle leadership” as a contribution to further discussion on Leadership theory. It is a new paradigm to understand what subtle leadership based on referent power is all about, with the aim of constructing a provoking theory.

A summary of leadership perspectives such as servant leadership, shared leadership, and authentic leadership were discussed in order to compare and contrast them with subtle leadership. Power and source of power were discussed with an emphasis on referent power as the main source presented in subtle leaders, according to the conceptual discussion of this work. “Subtle leadership” is a new construct introduced by the author of this research paper. It is much more than just a combination of contemporary and inspirational leadership styles. Subtle leadership has a more holistic meaning and refers to the indirect, but powerful and positive influence that people may have on others regardless of their position within an organization. Emphasis was given to referent power as the most relevant component of a subtle leader.

This work shows that Leadership theory continues transforming itself as global changes call out for new paradigms of studying and understanding human behavior in organizations. Change management is defined by Moran and Brightman (2001) as “the process of continually renewing an organization’s direction, structure, and capabilities to serve the ever-changing needs of external and internal customers.” There is a fundamental re-alignment of power occurring in this digital age where old expectations of governments and business leaders no longer apply (Dalmau & Tideman, 2018). As explained by Karp and Helgø (2008), it is necessary to evolve from change management to change leadership by paying attention to how people form identities in organizations.

A new way of leading a whole new generation of workforce is suggested through the discussion of “subtle leadership.” Thus, research must continue the pursuit the development of the construct. After all, leadership is much more than managing people; it is about influencing people in a positive way that contributes to a collective success obtained from flexibility, adaptation, and effective management of change.

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## **Ethical Pluralism: The Decision-Making System of a Complex World**



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### **Abstract**

*Today's leaders are faced with many different ethical decisions that are further highlighted by social media and a rapid news cycle. It has been established that there is no universal ethical code, nor is there one unified global culture. Leaders must continually educate themselves and their employees in proper leadership techniques, education, decision-making, and cultural understanding. Pluralism is engrained in ethics, where there are different interpretations of the same information, different ways to analyze the situation, and different ethical frameworks. While pluralism can lead to different outputs and decisions across the same situation, it is not a blight on ethics but a way to understand the reason for varying outcomes and feedback.*

### **Introduction**

Deeply affecting world economics, globalization is in many ways beneficial because it allows people from developing nations to sell their goods worldwide through markets like eBay, Amazon, or Alibaba. This opportunity allows them to acquire outside income and spurs development within whole communities. As developing nations cannot compete on the same scale as the superpowers, there will be missed opportunities. Opportunities and ethical views vary by personal background and all know what they view as ethical. Comparing these different ethical backgrounds is where we see many different pluralistic views of the same problem. Ethical pluralism is a way of life, has many different applications, and is suitable for leaders, governments, businesses, and cultures.

### **Pluralism Definition and Views**

“Pluralism is about having multiple frames of analysis” (Wight, 2015). Multiple frames of analysis come from having different views and perspectives. This concept leads to ethical decision-making. Different opinions, using various frameworks for decision making, and achieving different outputs are different types of pluralism. “Ethical decisions should be guided by multiple standards” (Arnold et al., 2010) and reinforces the pluralistic point of view to confirm and vet that things are ethical. When individuals can compare these

different opinions and confirm whether or not decisions comport among various peoples, ethical progress is invariably made. Through these tricky decisions and conversations, people can discover and reconcile their differences.

Wight (2015) expounded that horizontal pluralism provides more than one approach to a given set of problems in a singular ethical framework, where vertical pluralism uses more than one ethical framework to solve the problem. For example, the Golden Rule constitutes one ethical framework, and following the teachings of Confucius another. Several different frameworks combine opposing beliefs, often resulting in an ethical predicament. Complexities reinforce the pluralistic nature of decision-making when culture, religion, background, and social status are all involved. As people have different viewpoints, all these varieties lead to the complex inputs and outputs of decision-making.

Paradoxes and pluralistic have different meanings: a pluralistic decision may involve a paradox or be an inherent part of complex decision-making (Drumwright et al., 2015; Morrison & Lumby, 2009; Sotirova, 2018; Wight, 2015; Wilson, 2014). Moral goodness or ethical decisions are made by individual assessors and are pluralistic by nature (Chiu & Hackett, 2017; Wilson, 2014). Having pluralistic decisions is an inherent part of a complex environment. Such multi-faceted systems require creative solutions that meet the most significant needs but are not necessarily the most ethical from a holistic perspective (Murphy et al., 2017). Martineau et al. (2017) stated, “The more complex the system, the greater the variety must be in order to reach control of it.” Everyone cannot be pleased with the most straightforward decisions, as we are all individuals and have different likes and dislikes. Even if an employer released people early with pay, some would grumble because there was still work to be done, while others might not want to go home, and still others might complain about the company’s fiscal loss – or a combination of all scenarios. We are all individualistic by nature, and using complex systems is a fact of the world in which we live. These complex systems, mixed with ethical decision-making, are the lifeblood of leaders.

### **Ethical Leadership**

Part of leadership is developing ethical decision-making across the workforce. Leaders should be held ethically accountable in their admission by the organization (Gabriele, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wilson, 2004). Miller (2013) described leaders as constantly having to evaluate the benefit of their actions to others versus finding an answer to predict where short-term solutions and finger-pointing may cloud judgment. Fehr et al. (2105) also supported this and stated that the overall ethical shift has transitioned from a universal ethical view to an individual ethical leadership style. Weighing the different viewpoints and identifying an individual preference or bias is the challenge of ethical leadership development. Developing leaders and their decision-making prowess is an inherent and implied role of senior leaders. Instilling good ethical decision-making is a pivotal point for any leadership development program.

## Leaders

Leaders carry different positions and are aligned with different perspectives; their backgrounds often direct them to embrace a particular bias (Morrison & Lumby, 2009). According to Morrison and Lumby, more often than not, organizational members and leaders' advisors tend to adopt their own leaders' stances. Stance adoption reinforces that more is caught than taught, as explained by Johnson (2018). If leaders have that effect on their followers for other acts, this can most certainly be true for shaping ethical behaviors. Senior leaders who can demonstrate the desired ethical tendencies and educate the workforce when not faced with an ethical dilemma pave the way for future development across their respective organizations. Having a vision without demonstrating an ethical foundation will take an organization only so far. For example, company events can be an optimal occasion for senior leaders to demonstrate their moral attributions. A senior leader who cheats at a game to gain a personal advantage reinforces that violating expected rules of conduct might be acceptable when money, position, status, or even physical freedoms are at stake. Opponents will dismiss this situation as an ungrounded example, arguing general irrelevance or simply having a good time. It could be said that some cheating is allowed, or at least that there are grey areas within which one can operate. The issue with this type of justification is that it cannot be understood how followers, who view this behavior, will interpret it and whether or not they will draw the same ethical lines for what is deemed right or wrong. Ethical practices are not singular examples but a continuous process ingrained in daily activities – from reporting actual hours worked to accurately filing yearly tax returns.

Ethical leadership is a practice that should be taught continually and not just to meet a learning objective or a yearly mandate (Wilson, 2014). There should be a shift from a regular required training or education program to one where ethical training is in the forefront. Every aspect of business and organizational operations and practices must be imbued with ethical parameters.

Additionally, there should be some reinforcement and challenging discussions about issues that affect employees and peers. Understanding different opinions and the ethical dilemmas they face in a genuine and authentic atmosphere accomplish what Wilson (2014) concluded as a necessary development process. That is when there is conflict, there is an opportunity for others to discover their differences and talk about how they view the world. Through these ethical discussions, there can be opportunities to understand others' viewpoints. When someone defends or explains their point of view, they reflect and develop a deeper understanding of why they believe or feel that something is ethical or not ethical. Regardless of their stance, there should be continual effort to develop oneself and learn through self-analysis and feedback. Those who do not conduct an ethical self-assessment allow themselves to become blinded to outside viewpoints. Confiding in those with similar views reinforces and confirms their bias about how the world operates. Too much of the same perspective is like informational incest, and results in a loss of creativity and stifled output. It takes others, reflecting on their viewpoints, analyzing what others see in us, and vocalizing what is seen in others, that create authentic development.

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Leaders should keep themselves and their organizations above reproach about character, ethical, and integrity issues and away from conflict-of-interest situations where money and funding are concerned (Gabriele, 2012). There are many situations where money is quickly an influencer when ethics are called into question. While there may not be an actual influence, the outside perception of influence can be as damaging. Regardless of the reason, ethics should always be a constant developmental tool for leaders and be incorporated into decision-making.

### **Decision-Making**

Incorporating ethics into everyday practices such as decision-making is difficult but not impossible. Most leaders already have some form of framework or process for how they make decisions. Fehr et al. (2015) claimed that leaders base their decisions on ethical or moral frameworks. However, cultural pluralism exists when there are differences of opinions, lifestyles, or desires. An example used was Chick-fil-A and how taking a public stance against same-sex marriage as consistent with one ethical principle, but others view it as violating fairness and employee welfare resulting in loss of customer patronage and opposition mobilization. Governments have an incredibly challenging job in defining ethical and unethical actions as some decisions affect individual choice. Machiavelli encouraged evil actions and excused the intrinsic immorality of political actions justifying the means by the morality of their effects. The focus needs to remain with the general good as human nature and variety will nearly always have infinite possibilities.

Murphy et al. (2017) highlighted that the nonlinear dynamics of leadership lead to various outcomes and that being creative is part of being a leader. Chiu and Hackett (2017) claimed that some do not even see the pluralistic nature of a decision but only see the individual's viewpoint charged with the decision. They additionally concluded that the organization's responsibility is to instill the desired ethics and education to define correct or incorrect behaviors for their employees. Opponents say that individual businesses cannot effectively teach diversity and cultural background as they cannot be all-knowing. The solution is for expanded business education, supported by external reinforcement and discovery, to discern and understand various views. Those who oppose decision-making freedom and creativity advocate for a specific framework while limiting ethical discussions, forcing the process to follow a prescribed personnel route, and restricting additional influence. A specific framework may increase the system's speed and efficiency and limit the understanding of outside impacts. For example, a grocery store that decides to use only reusable bags to save the environment through a company's internal framework may yield that switching to reusable bags saves costs and saves landfill space. However, not consulting outside entities delimits the knowledge available to finalize a policy or practice. For example, the CDC may interject that customers' reusable bags help contribute to the spread of the coronavirus. An economist may determine that several jobs are lost, and supply chain management is disrupted by no longer purchasing disposable bags. An environmental engineer may determine that reusable bags may take more carbon and energy than traditional bags. Not consulting outside entities and using a strict, prescribed framework leads to decision-making myopia, overlooking exterior perspectives. One



historical area for lacking a holistic understanding is decision-making that affect whole societies. These are difficult because there are many different views and consultants to both identify and understand unforeseen circumstances.

Washington and Henfield (2019) discussed how social justice advocacy and the counseling profession could represent and tease out a person's personal feelings to help with recovery when ethical standards have turned awry and fall into an ethical grey area. When governments make decisions based on a bias, they do not take all the variables into account or make incorrect assumptions, leading to population exclusion or corruption. In the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, ignoring or disregarding peoples' experiences and hardships based on their position in society has only given fuel to government abandonment adding to neglect. Such inaction further fuels the participant's desire, motivation, and perseverance to continue to protest and long for a representative voice and ethical treatment (Washington & Henfield, 2019). This exclusion has become the war cry for those excluded, abused, omitted, and those who observe or know someone affected by these acts or continued processes of inaction and inertia. Johnson (2018) described the ethical shadows and how leaders can fall into these shadows through miscommunication or exclusion.

An example is the BLM movement. Opponents of the BLM movement state that participants are just thugs, villains, Marxists, or undereducated. This recalcitrance and inability to gauge the reasons for the movement has turned BLM into a brand and a mantra. Not addressing the issue of inclusion only gives BLM more power. Social media voices are nearly equal and uncensored. Policymakers need to address the exclusion and weigh the cost to the rest of society to ensure no group is excluded or discriminated against. It is a very different time to be in government or politics.

### **Government Ethics**

Governmental leaders have to weigh the benefits for a whole society while appeasing those who voted them into office. Leading is not a task for the weary. There is a struggle between managing leaders to providing executive leadership (Murphy et al., 2017). This struggle manifests itself where it may be easier to manage the daily operations versus where the need for government and other public administrators. This complex environment can be teased out in nearly every corner where full-time administrators commonly run the institution rather than guide the institution's output. A variety of political systems compounds this complexity. Eendenich and Trapp (2020) explained that an ethical system must be integrated into the organizational climate and be self-motivating. Kasiński (2018) expressed concern for a governmental system that was naturally pluralistic due to party affiliation or group-based decision-making. Self-governing usually leads to corruption and creates momentum for one particular group or interest. Tailoring legislation, execution, or judicial decisions to a particular group or interest is dangerous and may have dire consequences.

This democratic idea that everyone is created equal is not universally true. This only works in societies and representative governments when everyone has the same access to voting and political representation greater than once every four years. Moore (1996)

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expressed that democracy is inherently individualistic as people vote for their interests and those in the majority bear the fruits of majority rule. Leaders should make a genuine effort to understand the impact and repercussions of their decisions and legislations. Conversely, those who are not continually active in politics providing feedback might not help them understand upcoming decisions and how they will be impacted. However, because someone is not involved does not mean that they should be excluded or judged. Those in power should still represent all in their district and still be good stewards of the Constitution.

Contrary to the inclusion perspective, where all are considered, are discussions about how the current systems do not placate all. Trying to envision or establish an all-inclusive beneficial system is not always possible; it is fallacy of misplaced concreteness to blame the system and not the individuals making the decisions. Leaders are elected or appointed to represent everyone in their districts, towns, states, or regions. Those who cannot perform up to this standard jeopardize the entire system. Those who perform unethically and pursue democratic ventures undermine the system and demonstrate a clash of plural values (Nick, 2019). Simultaneously, a representative government and a corrupt one cannot exist. There will always be a conflict of interest, a lack of priorities, personal agendas, or trying to please too many opposing views.

Kasiński (2018) stated that the way to effect meaningful societal reform is to reestablish its citizens' strengths, recognizing the formal government, and combining the natural rights of individual citizens. Obviously, exercising one's rights will affect others, sometimes positively and other times negatively. For example, person A's right to drive a motor vehicle at 30 mph may impact someone else's right to drive at 25 mph, as that is where they feel comfortable. Now person A has to divert course, move around, or adjust their speed. Many other variables can come into play, but neither decision is morally incorrect or exact, assuming both are within the prescribed speed limit. There is the possibility of infringing on others as one has to change course and speed as the faster driver approaches the other from the rear. These are decisions that exist in a pluralistic society.

Nick (2019) explained that the need to perform unethical acts to remain democratic and protect the system is no longer required, contrary to Machiavelli's point of view. When ethical people start to perform unethically, there needs to be an analysis of the system to determine where corruption originates. Miller (2013) included several parables to describe how people mislead others based on morality or civility to gain personal position or benefit others based on the leader; regardless, these parables reduce the transmission of unethical values and immorality. Motivating possibilities might include the attainment of power, money, or status resulting from a lack of oversight or capability mismatch. No one is perfect and blameless all the time, but there should be a general effort to do what is right for most people and perform to a standard that should not bring shame, dishonor, or ill repute to the organization. Challengers state that since no one is perfect, there should be a broader viewpoint and tolerance band for those that do not perform ethically. Misunderstanding, a momentary lapse, peer pressure, or human nature can lead to unethical decisions. While this may be true for momentary decisions, leaders are held to a higher standard for the dictates of their office. No one is perfect, but some universal

truths, for example, dehumanizing others and corruption, should not be tolerated in American society.

Nick (2019) also stated that those with “dirty hands” or unethical practices do not represent a democratic government and society; rather, they are rife with corruption or self-gain. Leaders who commit unethical and premeditated acts to get elected foreshadow how their official performance will be. We all have to perform as ethically as we can. Miller (2013) also described how those corporate leaders and ordinary civilians share responsibility for the common good. We all hold a common position and can provide oversight where ethics are concerned. Opponents state that when everyone is responsible, no one is. This is true, to a point. Everyone has the responsibility to state whether something viewed is unethical in their own eyes for the betterment of all. Those who observe unethical acts and do nothing are just as guilty by omission. For example, those who witness a murder and do not report the crime can be charged for not reporting or stopping the crime itself. Simply saying nothing is an option, but the unethical acts continue. It takes stepping up and stating that something is not correct to make the actor engage in self-analysis and have the opportunity to alter their actions. The same is especially true for businesses with production or sales goals.

### **Business Ethics**

Business leaders set the standard for their companies and the ethical principles that the organization holds. There are different ethical levels to which businesses aspire and ultimately choose to adopt, yet none are equal. Drumwright et al. (2015) concluded that business ethics are not taught universally, and that new practitioners are not adequately equipped to handle all ethical challenges. Unequal education should not be confused with cultural pluralism as a practice but does explain how some arrive at different conclusions. Not understanding the ethical impacts due to ignorance is different from understanding the impacts due to poor choices. This ethical uncertainty trickles through all levels of organizations. The most common or lowest level of ethics has been referred to as ethical functioning (Moore, 1996). Looking at and examining this lowest level is the best way to take an organization’s ethical temperature. One could inquire about the character of the senior managers, but enforcing the company’s culture and how all the employees are operating is different. Wells Fargo and its account scandal is an excellent example of how the best intentions can backfire when devoid of ethical parameters established by the company. The institutionalization of an ethical atmosphere within a company is a genuinely collaborative effort for all across an organization.

Moore (1996) explained that collaborative leadership helps drive and reinforce the concerns that are not experienced equally. Disability discrimination is one example. If it were not for disabled people speaking up and being heard about how they do not have equal access to some buildings without wheelchair ramps, the issue would not have been elevated to become law. The right to decide not to put in a wheelchair ramp is different from someone who did not think people would need one. This example boils down to individual decisions, but the leader’s personal qualities and characteristics can carry just as much weight for good or bad. Sotirova (2018) concluded that the leader’s personal

qualities could be rearranged and changed over time to become more or less ethically based on the decisional understanding and the feedback received. These good or bad qualities are derived and honed through constant interactions, discussions from peer interactions, leadership development programs, and other methods of self-discovery. All people are affected by the world around them, and those who strive for continuous improvement usually find it.

Internalizing negativity and looking for ways to get ahead by any means necessary is contrary to self-improvement. Bypassing a system to get ahead is ethical self-sabotage. Opponents believe that sufficient systems have protections or safeguards in place to prevent unethical usurpations. This pluralistic view is possible, but there are many possible outcomes that no system can function if it restricts every possible wrongdoing. Most leaders generally strive for good through these pluralistic decisions and environments.

One aspect of a thriving, ethical environment is the generation and analysis of feedback. Kasiński (2018) concluded that an effective feedback system usually produces desired results for a pluralistic system. Moore (1996) has a similar saying that feedback refines the leaders' perspectives and reduces future unnecessary pluralism. Feedback is a gift and a way to influence critical decisions (Badaracco, 2013). Understanding the effects of decisions, their impact, and the nature of the established systems allow comprehension and competence improvement. Working with outside entities, feedback can be tailored to help define and guide organizational goals and understand whether an ethical conflict exists. Many companies do this for environmental reasons to understand if they are truly carbon zero or negative. Not every company can honestly say this, but it is something that some companies strive to achieve. Regardless, the feedback is the check to see if the system is working. There is an added level of complexity in pluralism, but that does not mean that it is any less ethical. Some would argue that by having more input and insight, organizations have a possibility to create more ethical structures. Increased organizational aperture is beneficial, but the opposite can be true if too many people in positions of influence spoil the process and sway people towards pursuing self-interest. The most influential person does not mean that he or she is the most correct or ethical. These types of situations can generate tension, and that can be too much for some individuals.

Recognizing tensions and the variety of possible outcomes from those decisions can be overwhelming (Cunha et al., 2019). Knowing that decisions impact others is part of the situation, but eventually managers need to manage and leaders need to lead. Too much analysis can backfire especially when the business must meet required outputs. Whether it be a specific product, service output, or a governing facility, there is still a requirement for action and the avoidance of inaction. Staying in the analysis phase for too long does not produce an output. Making decisions with pluralistic outcomes is part of leadership and understanding the possible impacts inherent to the position. VanderPal and Ko (2014) defended that business ethics are common practice and maintained that ethics and moral conscience are something one practices instead of what one has. Ethics as an ordinary action reinforces ethical pluralism as it is not an inherent and constant influencer. Viewing ethics as actions and not as a personal attribute provides an excuse and a reason

for why there may be a lapse of judgment. These personal ethical codes are also tied to individual beliefs and views that accompany their culture.

### **Culture and Ethics**

Everyone has a culture, whether they claim one or not. This culture has some inherent attributes and gives us all a sense of individuality that affects how we integrate into society. Yang et al. (2017) divided ethical choices into either a group choice, how the decision affects the group as a whole, an individual choice, or how it will affect the individual. Wight (2015) contended that nearly every decision starts with how it will affect others and then eventually focuses on how it will affect oneself. The example used is the Golden Rule and treating others as how one desires to be treated. Morrison and Lumby (2009) reminded us that leaders are individuals to a point; they fall in a broader context of social, political, and cultural context and norms. They may fall in line with those contexts entirely or stay committed to their personal beliefs of what is acceptable or what they simply believe is necessary. The difference between what is acceptable and what needs to be done is where the most significant changes are observed. Leaders who step out believe there is an injustice or that something warrants investigation can cause wide-sweeping changes for the better – equal voting, for example. However, leaders who venture outside of established parameters and take advantage or who look for personal gain can cause some of the most extraordinary turmoil – Enron, for example. While neither example is flawless and holistic, they illustrate how individuals are able to control a portion of how they are observed and hence, perform within their perceived ethical boundaries. All of these ethical boundaries shape our daily interactions as well as our discourse.

Conversations should emanate from those from different backgrounds to understand cross-cultural understanding, deepen authentic leadership, and broaden leadership development through interdisciplinary means (Wilson, 2014). VanderPal and Ko (2014) offered that understanding other cultures and educational processes provides opportunities to understand different other viewpoints and the impact of our decisions. Understanding other perspectives and how different cultures view and understand the world around them lead to how some arrive at varied conclusions for the same ethically-based challenge. Being aware through training and education allows greater ethical awareness and refinement. Additionally, cross-cultural theory and human resources management training may lead to understanding others and the possible impact, therefore creating ethical precision, reducing the possible number of outputs (Cunha et al., 2019). Decreasing outputs shows that there can be a broader solution, but education is invariably the key to this process. Self-development is available through conversation, organizational plans, execution practices, and formal education.

Not all leaders have the benefit of formal education and must rely upon experience. Experience should not be discounted because it has worked, but just because it has worked once does not mean that it will always work. Even a broken clock is right twice a day. Plus, those who only focus on their past and what they have done do not look forward to the future and eventually stagnate or if you don't know where you're going, any road will take you there. Leaders who have continuously sought improvement and refined

themselves over time have learned from their experiences, including their mistakes, and improved others.

Drumwright et al. (2015) discovered “embracing the tenets of liberal learning that include critical thinking, multiple framing, practical reasoning, and reflection, educators can meaningfully improve current approaches to ethics education in business schools.” Education and cultural understanding are ways to improve society and create holistic business approaches. Education does not have to be formal but can also come through exploration and learning about other cultures. Sotirova (2018) stressed that cross-cultural understanding is required to understand social learning theories and produce ethical leadership. For example, in a Chinese study, Yang et al. (2017) discovered that the group decision was not the most ethical, but it was the most moderate, or in other words, achieves the best results for the most people. This study was impactful because it describes how collectivist cultures group decision-making in selecting the choice that will achieve the most common good but may still harm many. A western view of this study may find it unethical, but it does the most good for the collective society. It is also interesting that there are additional research possibilities to see what the most ethical decision would have yielded had there been additional choices and decisions.

VanderPal and Ko (2014) concluded that conflict resolution and the conversations around those decisions end in issue resolution or provocation. Moving towards respect and tolerance through education and understanding, leads toward a genuine appreciation of others and different cultures, thereby understanding the possible outcomes of ethical pluralism. Critics of ethical pluralism state that there should not be a variety of outputs. Cultural context and desired outcomes do not make this possible. While others cannot always be considered, subsequent decisions should make an effort to not continually deprive or discount one specific group as that would lead to discrimination or exclusion. Always considering others could lead to indecision. Involving too many other people who may not have the same good-natured spirit, could derail or sidetrack the overall inclusion and consideration outcome.

## **Conclusion**

Ethical pluralism is a way of life, has many different applications, and is suitable for leaders, governments, businesses, and cultures. Through education, leaders can mentally sharpen and improve their workforces to understand other cultures and make sound business decisions that will bring pride and positive reinforcement to their organizations. Pluralism and the feedback that it receives make it possible for leaders to grow and develop even more through the decision-making cycle. Leaders should continually reinforce ethical practices in their processes and organizations, and consider that different outcomes are also just as ethical.

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## The Mediating Influence of Confidence, Autonomy, and Identification on the Relationship Between Servant Leadership and Harmonious Passion

### Abstract

*The current paper explores the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion. Harmonious passion refers to a strong desire to freely engage in an activity and is a result of an autonomous internalization of the activity into one's identity. While passion and leadership have been generally linked, the specific relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion is underdeveloped within the field of servant leadership research. Our paper presents a conceptual model and propositions linking servant leadership and harmonious passion through the mediating mechanisms of follower confidence, autonomy, and identification. Implications and future research are discussed.*

### Introduction

The concept of passion at work has gained recent attention in the spheres of organizational behavior and management literature (Vallerand et al., 2003; Zigarami et al., 2018; Vallerand & Houliort, 2003). Work passion can best be described as an attitude and climate within an organization that displays a sense of enthusiasm and in carrying out duties thus encouraging people to work more effectively and more productively (Noviantoro, 2018). Within the work domain, scholars have discovered that the concept of work passion is positively associated with constructive employee outcomes that include, but are not limited to, performance (Kim et al., 2015), job satisfaction (Fernet et al., 2014;

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Noviantoro et al., 2018), and life satisfaction (Lafreneire et al., 2012). Passion is viewed as an enabling condition for perseverance toward long-term goal accomplishment (Duckworth et al., 2007). Thus, passion should be a serious concern for organizational leaders given that leadership involves influencing employees to willingly engage and move toward organizational goals (Laub, 2004). A style of leadership that has yielded positive benefits in this area and that has gained much attention in the literature is that of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 2008). Servant leaders demonstrate high ethical standards and possess the moral integrity to embrace an other-centric perspective that values and prioritizes subordinate growth and development (Caldwell & Anderson, 2021; Jaramillo et al., 2015). Servant leadership values are reflected in the following leader characteristics: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to growth, and community building (Spears, 2004). Once servant leaders establish the vision and direction of the organization, their primary focus shifts towards assuring that their subordinates highest priority needs are being met (Blanchard, 2001; Hunter, 2004; Page & Wong, 2000). This focus shift stems from a leader's humility and strong resolve for employee development, which is consistent with the characteristics of good to great leaders (Collins, 2001).

To establish our frame of thought, we refer to Hesse's (1956) novel, *The Journey to the East*, which serves as the foundation for Greenleaf's interpretation of a servant-leader. The character of Leo in the novel is of particular interest to Greenleaf because Leo first identifies as a humble servant when he is actually the noble leader of the entire League. Hesse's character Leo serves as inspiration to Greenleaf's servant leader and demonstrates the impact of such leadership among followers; yet there is another covert aspect represented by Leo: the impact of his leadership on followers' harmonious passion for their work.

Harmonious passion refers to an individual's free will to participate in an activity because of the pleasure provided by the activity (Vallerand et al., 2003). With this type of passion, the activity is deeply internalized into one's identity, however, it does not occupy disproportionate space in one's identity causing conflict in the individual's life (Vallerand et al., 2003). According to Deci and Ryan (2000), people freely engage in activities in hopes of satisfying basic psychological needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Not only does Leo serve his followers first, but by preserving the League members' identities, emphasizing autonomy, and strengthening their confidence, he also sustains follower's harmonious passion through his leadership.

In addition to organizational goals, *Journey to the East* emphasizes personal goals as imperative for League membership, i.e., organizational members must also hold personal aspirations to fulfill. However, Leo simply wishes to perform his servant-like duties to the group, keeping them on the track of self-discovery. By doing so, Leo enables the group to find their own way to these personal goals. As a servant-leader, Leo gives each League member autonomy, or their own sense of personal initiative to master their craft and seek higher knowledge simultaneously. Similarly, Leo provides each member with confidence to carry on during the long journey. He does so by ensuring that each member regularly

executes their personal responsibilities to the group, which in turn enables the achievement of group goals.

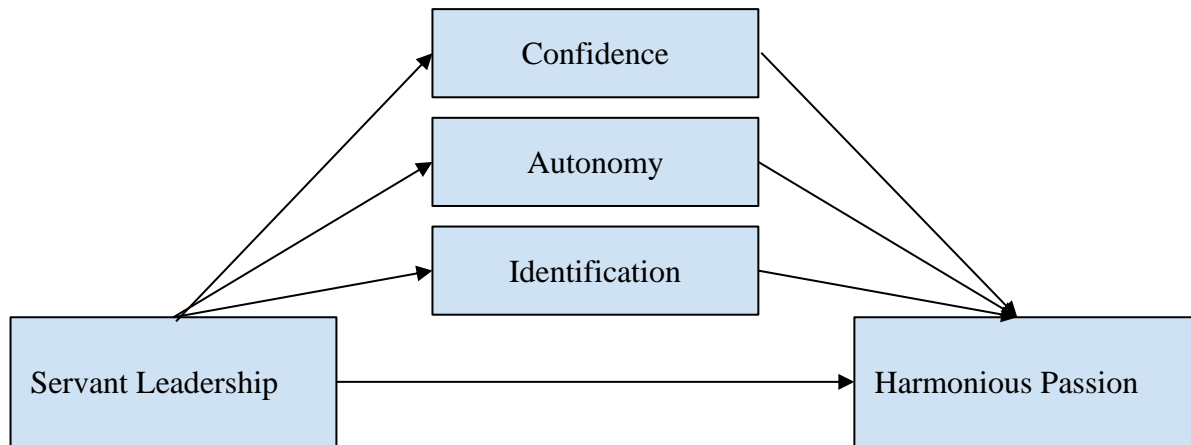
The leader-follower dynamic displayed between Leo and his followers in this fictional story is not uncommon within today's organizations. Today's leaders are consistently challenged with influencing, motivating, and inducing followers to move toward organizational goals (Laub, 2004). Leaders that are more concerned about others than themselves, such as servant leaders, are humble, and their humility stimulates strong relationships with followers who are encouraged to become fully engaged with, and passionate about, their work (Duckworth et al., 2007; Owens & Hekman, 2012). Servant leadership differs from conventional leadership theories in that the leader primarily focuses on individual follower needs so that followers reach their goals and highest levels of organizational achievement (Greenleaf, 2008; Laub, 2004; Liden et al., 2008).

While the concept of servant leadership has only recently gained popularity, the concept of work passion has been prevalent as early as biblical times, most commonly associated with the Passion of Christ and the crucifixion of Jesus (Brown, 1997). Philosophers such as Hegel (1770-1831) argue that passion is necessary for individuals seeking high levels of achievement (Vallerand et al., 2003). Deci and Ryan (2000) contend that autonomy, competence (follower confidence) and relatedness (follower identification) are necessary as it "pertains to those nutrients that must be procured by a living entity to maintain its growth, integrity, and health" (p.326). Baumeister and Leary (1995) also agree that relatedness is a key aspect of psychological well-being. When these characteristics are absent, motivation, performance, and well-being decrease showing the overall importance of these characteristics to psychological well-being (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Vallerand et al. (2003) endorse this argument in their model for passion that links passion to confidence, autonomy, and identification.

While the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion may seem intuitive, an assessment of the current servant leadership literature fails to reveal such a connection. As such, our understanding about the manner in which servant leadership is related to follower passion is limited. The aim of the present article is to develop a conceptual model (see *Figure 1*) and theoretical argument linking servant leadership and harmonious passion through the mediating mechanisms of confidence, autonomy, and identification.

In the sections to follow, we establish a model to link servant leadership to followers' harmonious passion for work. Following the introduction of our model, which guides our paper, we summarize the relationship between servant leadership and confidence, autonomy, and identification individually. We conclude the summary of literature with the overarching relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion, offering suggestions for future research.

***Figure 1: The relationship of servant leadership and harmonious passion: Mediating influence of confidence, autonomy, and identification***



## Theory and Proposition Development

### *Servant Leadership*

Servant leadership is a widely discussed and researched topic that seems to have bit of contention around its definition. Several servant leadership scholars agree that Greenleaf never provided a clear definition of servant leadership (Baykal, 2020; Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Rather, Greenleaf outlined aspects and characteristics that distinguish servant leadership from other leadership styles (Hurt, Huning, & Thomson, 2017). The lack of a universally agreed upon definition has created a divide among researchers with some arguing that research on servant leadership is primarily based on anecdotal, rather than scientific and testable data (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). While servant leadership has a fair number of critics, servant leadership has continued to gain momentum among academia and practitioners alike, and empirical evidence has continued to mount (*see* Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, & Wu, 2016; Peterson, Galvin, & Lange, 2012). Today, servant leadership is considered a viable leadership theory (Parris & Peachey, 2013). While servant leadership still lacks a *universally* agreed upon definition, servant leadership does have a good working definition and for the purpose of this paper, we refer to Laub's (1999) definition of servant leadership as follows:

*Servant leadership is an understanding and practice of leadership that places the good of those led over the self-interest of the leader... Servant leadership promotes the valuing and development of people, the building of community, the practice of authenticity, the providing of leadership for the good of those led, and the sharing of power and status for the common good of each individual, the total organization and those served by the organization (p.81).*

This definition focuses on the six main areas of servant leadership and helps to frame the characteristics of a person to associate as a servant leader. These six areas include developing and placing worth in people, forming a community, showing authenticity, being a leader, and sharing power (Laub, 2004). Servant leadership is more than a specific type of leadership; it is also a mindset on how to lead (Laub, 2004). De Pree (2004) asserts that a leader must have the conviction to become a servant and think of his- or her-self as

a steward in terms of relationships. To De Pree, the art of leadership lies in liberating people to do what is required of them and then concentrating leader efforts towards serving employees. Servant leaders place a high value on building relationships, listening to employees' ideas, and promoting a culture of trust and appreciation for others (De Pree, 2004). Both Laub (1999) and De Pree (2004) regard community building as essential in leadership. In fact, De Pree asserts that building community in the organization is part of a leader's calling to help the organization and people within it reach their fullest potential. In the process of being served, employees learn to serve, which contributes to the organization becoming most effective while reaching its potential (De Pree, 2004).

Servant leadership is both inspirational and moral, promoting subordinate's intellectual and skill development, as well as enhancing their moral reasoning (Graham, 1991). Given the moral dimension of servant leadership, it stands to reason that servant leaders have a high degree of moral integrity, which Hardy and Carlo (2011) define as the degree to which being a moral person is important to an individual's identity. A moral person is concerned about justice, caring, openness, generosity, and simply doing those things that are consistent with their perception of what is good (Bock, 2013; Caldwell & Anderson, 2021). Good to a servant leader involves service over self, acts of caring for others and fulfilling all obligations that assist people in becoming healthier, wiser, and more autonomous (Caldwell & Anderson, 2021; Greenleaf, 2008). Thus, living consistently with one's moral identity serves as a key source of moral motivation (Hardy & Carlo, 2011) and strengthens an individuals' desire to engage in prosocial and ethical behaviors (Hertz & Krettenauer, 2016).

Servant leadership has been characterized as putting the followers before the leader similar to the relationship between a parent and child (Laub, 2004; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). This is also recognized as a humbleness and selflessness in a leader (Blanchard, 2001; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). Servant leadership is not dependent on a title or position for respect, but rather "delivering on what was promised and serving others with humility" (Cincala, 2018, p. 6). A good servant leader is measured based on the value they have added to his/her follower (Cincala, 2018). Servant leadership focuses on the growth of its followers rather than solely organization goals (Bass, 2000; Greenleaf, 2008; van Dierendonck, 2011). This is not to say organizational goals are insignificant or unaccomplished, but servant leaders emphasize individual goals above organizational goals (Keith, 2012; Stone et al., 2004). This shift of focus and energy is one of the distinguishing qualities of servant leaders.

Rivkin et al. (2014) state the need and importance of servant leadership by presenting the positive effect of servant leadership on employee's psychological wellbeing through the benefit of "job attitudes, fairness perceptions, and, not least, job performance" (p.55). These factors help contribute to the collective nature of servant leadership, where the follower works to better the group through individual servanthip. This keeps an individual's identity unique rather than grouping them and losing individual identity (Bass, 2000). This achieves group goals, yet the servant leader's focus is on individuals (Hoch et al., 2018). A servant leader continuously works to cultivate servant leadership characteristics in their followers, a process which leads to followers becoming servants or

servant leaders. This is one of the distinguishing factors of servant leadership when compared to other leadership styles (Liden et al., 2008; Rivkin et al., 2014).

### ***Servant Leadership and Passion***

The dualistic model of passion, proposed by Vallerand et al (2003), defines passion “as a strong inclination toward an activity that people like, that they find important, and in which they invest time and energy” (p. 756). This suggests that for an activity to be considered a passion to an individual, it must be significant in their lives and practiced by the individual regularly. Passion stems from an intrinsic sense of purpose, which leads to a conviction that one’s work is meaningful and beneficial to others (Lee & Duckworth, 2018). Additionally, passion is considered an important factor necessary for individuals to accomplish long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007). Without passion to sustain one at work, one is likely to give up (Vallerand & Houliort, 2019). Along the same vein as Deci and Ryan's (1985) self-determination theory, the representation of these passionate activities is typically interrelated to a person's identity. Past research asserts that values and regulations concerning important activities can be internalized either in an autonomous or a controlled manner (Deci et al., 1994) making for two possible types of passion: harmonious and obsessive (Vallerand et al., 2003). Vallerand et al. (2019) contend that the difference between the two types comes down to control; that is, in the case of obsessive passion the activity controls the person whereas in harmonious passion, the person controls the activity.

Harmonious passion refers to a strong desire to freely engage in an activity and is a result of an autonomous internalization of the activity into one’s identity. That is, the individual voluntarily accepts the activity as important without any influence from constraints or external contingencies (Vallerand et al., 2003). The two primary characteristics associated with harmonious passion include an autonomous integration of the passionate activity into one’s identity and personal enjoyment derived from engaging in the activity (Vallerand & Miquelon, 2007). As previously noted, the activity remains under the individual’s control despite it occupying a significant space in an individual’s life. For example, employees with harmonious passion highly value their work and willingly engage in their work without generating conflicts with other important life domains (Fernet et al., 2014; Vallerand et al., 2003). Thus, individuals with prevailing harmonious passion tend to be more open and less defensive to outcomes of performing such activities (Lafreniere et al., 2012).

Conversely, obsessive passion results from controlled internalization originating from intrapersonal and/or interpersonal pressures and contingencies such as self-esteem, social acceptance, or high performance (Vallerand et al., 2003). While obsessively passionate individuals still have love for their activity, individuals come to develop ego-invested self-structures toward their activity (Deci & Ryan, 2000). When an activity represents such a dominant role in one’s identity, it is not easily put aside, leaving one in an odd position of feeling obligated to engage in an activity that they otherwise enjoy (Rousseau & Vallerand, 2008). The result of this obligated, and often uncontrollable, urge is a decision to partake in an activity even at the expense of other aspects of the individual’s life (Lafreniere et al., 2012). To illustrate, suppose a student with an obsessive passion for basketball has an important exam scheduled the next day. If a group of friends

calls and propositions a basketball scrimmage that evening, the obsessively passionate student will likely partake in the scrimmage instead of studying for the exam (Philippe et al., 2010). Previous research finds that obsessive passion, where individuals rely on work as a source of self-esteem, is often correlated to outcomes such as workaholism (Fernet et al., 2014; Spence & Robbins, 1992; Vallerand et al., 2003). Obsessive passion has been linked to higher levels of apprehension, negative emotions (e.g., guilt), interpersonal conflict, and lower levels of subjective well-being (Philippe et al., 2010; Seguin-Levesque et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2003; Rousseau & Vallerand, 2008). Finally, with its relationship to negative affect, obsessive passion may potentially undermine physical and mental health (Forest et al., 2011; St-Louis et al., 2014).

While the outcomes associated with obsessive passion are largely negative, many scholars agree that harmonious passion for work is mainly an adaptive construct that leads to favorable outcomes such as improved productivity, reduced burnout, and higher job satisfaction (Fernet et al., 2014; Lafreniere et al., 2012; Noviantoro, 2018). Harmonious passion has also been associated with positive mood states, higher quality interpersonal relationships, greater creativity, task persistence, and enhanced life satisfaction (Liu et al., 2011; Philippe et al., 2010; Southwick et al., 2019). While similar to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, harmonious passion is considered a superior motivational predictor of outcomes due to its two primary characteristics of autonomous internalization and personal enjoyment (Liu et al., 2011). For harmonious passion to be sustained, individuals must understand the *why* behind superior- and subordinate- goals while also assuring that those goals are aligned. Additionally, individuals must believe in their ability to accomplish those goals if they commit to them (Southwick et al., 2019). De Pree (2004) contends that good leaders, those that act as stewards of the organization, focus on explaining the why's in organizational life. Leaders play an important role in establishing the organizational culture and values that it espouses and can therefore create the right environment not only to sustain, but also to cultivate harmonious passion (Lee & Duckworth, 2018; Schein, 2010).

Some of the foundational aspects of the outcomes associated with harmonious passion draw from the fulfillment of basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and a sense of relatedness with others (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Vallerand et al., 2003). These psychological needs and a general sense of well-being are influenced by an individual's perception that his or her needs are being met (Coggins & Bocarnea, 2015; Formosa et al., 2022). Servant leaders, as influencers to employees' voluntary engagement in workplace activities (Laub, 2004), positively impact employee perceptions by focusing on their employee's highest priority needs and promoting the values of trust, appreciation of others, and empowerment (Greenleaf, 2008; Laub, 2004; Russell, 2001). Thus, servant leaders function as an important linkage to employee psychological needs and positive workplace outcomes.

In the workplace, where external controls such as deadlines, stringent schedules, and mandatory tasks are inevitable, employees' perceptions of autonomy can influence their passion for the job. Results from Lafreniere et al. (2014) show that organizations with low levels of autonomy foster controlled internalization forcing employees to comply and deal

with external contingencies that are not necessarily in line with their goals and values. This suggests that leaders who encourage opportunities for employees to make choices, participate in decision-making, and have some control over how tasks are accomplished foster harmonious passion and hinder obsessive passion. Thus, servant leaders, who prioritize the needs, goals, and aspirations of their followers, should foster a working environment conducive to harmonious passion among employees.

As an extension to the Vallerand et al. (2003) passion model, Noviantoro (2018) considers work passion as the desire and enthusiasm of an individual to carry out quality work to achieve maximum productivity. Servant leaders encourage personal development and provide optimal working conditions so that employees can perform their duties well and achieve high levels of productivity (Carter & Baghurst, 2013). Servant leaders should therefore foster harmonious passion, as they are known to provide organizational support and clarify goals toward followers (Thao & Kang, 2018).

Self-identity is another essential component in determining passion for activity. Drawing from various theories on self-identification, we can infer that self-identity is strongly influenced by follower's social environment (Bandura, 1997; Tajfel, 1974; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Deci and Ryan (2000) argue that humans' active tendency to connect with others can either result in introjection or integration of culture. Thus, individuals' type of passion, whether harmonious or obsessive, is dependent on how one internalizes or identifies with a certain activity or behavior (Vallerand et al., 2003). Servant leaders should be able to foster the needs of relatedness and autonomy simultaneously so that followers can internalize cultures and values in a manner that supports harmonious passion.

In terms of their influence on culture, servant leaders seek to encourage their ethical and caring behaviors among their followers. Liden et al. (2014) find that in this leadership process, followers adopt servant-like behaviors enabling a "servant culture" (p. 1435) where everyone supports each other in areas ranging from technical advice to emotional support. Furthermore, servant leaders display more love and acceptance toward their followers enabling them to feel more included and part of the in-group of the organization (Chen et al., 2015). Rather than focusing on changing their followers, servant leaders accept their followers regardless of their beliefs, goals and interests. Not only do servant leaders foster an inclusive culture centered on servant-like behaviors, but they also allow followers autonomy in their decisions. When leaders nurture self-efficacy, freedom in decision-making, and community involvement, employees become more committed to organizational values (Walumbwa et al., 2010) and are more likely to share in their leader's concern for the organizational community (Liden et al., 2014). Thus, follower identity is preserved, and harmonious passion should prosper under the support of servant leadership. Therefore, we put forth the following proposition:

***Proposition 1: There is a direct positive relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion.***

### ***The Mediating Influence of Confidence***

The concept of confidence is grounded in social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1995), which refers to confidence, or self-efficacy, as one's belief in his/her abilities to successfully



organize and execute the course of action required to achieve desired outcomes given a particular situation. Some of the main predictors of Bandura's (1995) self-efficacy include enactive mastery (i.e., previous experience containing the tools required to manage ever-changing circumstances), vicarious experience (i.e., observation of other individuals similar to themselves successfully performing a particular task), and verbal persuasion (from those who possess the capabilities) (1997). Similarly, Spreitzer (1995) suggests that employees gain confidence in their abilities to perform workplace tasks when leaders empower or give opportunities to become proficient in their skills and masters of their behaviors. Lu et al. (2020) further assert that empowered employees firmly believe in their capabilities and understand work meanings. As it pertains to passion, employees who experience success at work develop higher levels of self-efficacy, which facilitates the development of harmonious passion (Lex et al., 2019). Given that leaders are essential constituents to followers' understanding of the workplace environment and cognition of work-related activities (Chen & Beliese, 2002), leaders should also serve as key determinants of followers' competence, and subsequent harmonious passion, in such activities.

Greenleaf's (2008) servant leadership concept has a follower empowerment component through leaders' understanding of followers' current abilities, pressing needs, and potential growth. Servant leaders can best enhance followers' self-efficacy because they clarify the required knowledge to resolve issues effectively and they remain attentive to their follower's personal development (Walumbwa et al., 2010). With a full understanding of each individual's traits and capabilities, servant leaders can assist followers in expanding knowledge, learning new skills, enhancing task-effectiveness, and achieving their greatest potential (Liden et al., 2008). By placing individualized attention on follower needs, servant leaders can create a nurturing organizational environment that best serves individual development. As a result, followers' proficiency and confidence in work-related activities are fostered.

Followers specifically under servant leadership should gain a heightened sense of confidence as they are not only provided tools required to perform their job successfully, but they are also provided high levels of organizational support (Hurt et al., 2017). Empathy and emotional healing are prominent qualities of the servant leader (Liden et al., 2008), implying that servant leaders have high responsiveness to individuals' emotional concerns. Characteristics such as these enable the servant leader to foster strong interpersonal relationships with their followers and are instrumental to inspiring trust and providing supportive resources (Liden et al., 2008; 2014). Consistent with this reasoning, Chen and Bliese (2002) find that the presence of servant leadership enhances follower confidence by providing sufficient socio-emotional support while minimizing psychological strain within the working environment. Given that servant leaders recognize followers' capabilities and ensure that followers' environmental and emotional needs are met, servant leaders should positively influence harmonious passion through follower confidence. As such, we put forth the following proposition:

***Proposition 2: Follower confidence positively mediates the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion***

### ***The Mediating Influence of Autonomy***

Factors considered important in the development of harmonious passion include an individual's sense of autonomy support, and an autonomous personality orientation (Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand et al., 2019). At work, Hardgrove (2019) suggested that a leader's position plays an important influential role in the development of employee autonomy. Greenleaf (2008) addressed the concept of autonomy related to servant leadership through the basic concept of follower growth. For a follower to gain autonomy he/she must grow and become his/her own person. Thus, autonomy cannot be achieved without growth. Other scholars similarly conclude that growth (Laub, 2004; Bass, 2000; Page & Wong, 2000) and autonomy are an important characteristic in servant leadership (van Dierendonck, 2011; Deci & Ryan, 2000). It has already been shown in one study that autonomous motivations increase when servant leadership is accepted in the workplace (Chen et al., 2013). This makes the study of servant leadership's effects on autonomy highly important due to it being tied into the basic concept of servant leadership: follower growth.

In a multipart study, Vansteenkiste et al. (2004) found that environments that cultivate autonomy within an individual lead to greater results in growth or learning outcomes. This study would support the claim that servant leadership enables follower autonomy due to the effect's autonomy has on individual growth and fulfilling potential. An autonomy-supportive environment along with intrinsic goals can help to provide the "most fertile ground for learning" (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004, p.258), providing further evidence of the codependence between growth and autonomy. Growth and learning are not synonymous. Saade (2015) describes learning as a short-term concept that does not contribute to the overall individual, while growth is a long-term concept and adds to the person as a whole. Learning comes first, followed by growth (Saade, 2015). Autonomy leads to learning about oneself and identity, which signifies growth, rather than just learning of skills or knowledge.

As Chen et al. (2013) state, there is research that already suggests servant leadership has a positive effect on autonomous motivation. Characteristics that are associated with servant leadership such as "mutual trust and empowering others" (Chen et al., 2013, p.423) help to foster higher levels of autonomy in followers. This follower autonomy along with intrinsic motivation helps each individual find a sense of meaning in their work and elevates an individual's eudemonic well-being (i.e., human potential) (Chen et al., 2013).

In the Cognitive Evaluation Theory presented by Deci et al. (1975), it was theorized that external rewards weaken the individual's sense of autonomy. This theory also suggests that the more followers find satisfaction in intrinsic rewards, the more likely they are to be autonomous and experience growth (Deci et al., 1975; Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). Servant leadership is one method that can create a positive work environment that encourages intrinsic rewards and "enables employees to develop higher goals, promoting the internalization of motivations, leading to more autonomous self-adjustments to work" (Chen et al., 2013, p.433). Through servant leadership, we contend that autonomy will be increased resulting in increased passion. As such, we put for the following proposition:

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*Proposition 3: Follower autonomy positively mediates the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion.*

### ***The Mediating Influence of Identification***

Prior research suggests that an individual's identification is grounded in personal perceptions and behaviors given one's social environment (Tajfel, 1974; Bandura, 1997; Deci & Ryan, 2000). Social identity theory (Tajfel, 1974) considers individuals' perceptions of and connections to group memberships as key determinants of thoughts and behaviors. Tajfel (1974) further recognizes three foundational processes under this theory: social categorization, social comparison, and social identification. Under social categorization, individuals consciously or subconsciously classify each other into various subgroups based on characteristics and available information as a way of making sense of the social environment (Ashforth & Meal, 1989). Individuals engage in social comparison when they use these subgroups to formulate perceptions of status and worth (Ashforth & Meal, 1989). Realizing that their self-worth is derived from their group membership, individuals commit to their group and relate to other group members in the process of social identification (Chen et al., 2015). More specifically, individuals often engage in behaviors that are consistent with other group members and that benefit their own membership. Leaders as prominent members of groups and administrators of group standards should help shape employees' self-identity making for desired outcomes in follower behavior.

Studies have found that an employee's self-identity mediates the relationship between servant leadership and service performance behaviors (Chen et al., 2015). Research has also documented that servant leaders achieve such positive outcomes by modifying follower identity in associating with group identification (Liden et al., 2008; 2014) and employee commitment (Walumbwa et al., 2010). One of the distinct goals of servant leadership is to foster servant leadership among followers. That is, followers are influenced to become servants themselves (Greenleaf, 2008). Liden et al. (2014) find that servant leaders achieve this by cultivating personal relationships and developing a serving climate that is based on the behavioral norms of placing priority on helping others. Drawing from Tajfel's (1974) processes of social identity theory, individuals should socially identify with the desired behaviors and expectations of a serving culture fostered by credible servant leaders.

Research further asserts that individual group members' attitudes and behaviors are not only influenced by that of other group members, but they are also influenced by the social bonds and relationships they have formed with their leaders (Liden et al., 2008). Servant leaders are recognized for investing in interpersonal relationships, thus, invoking trust and respect from their followers. Servant leaders are also known for their unconditional dedication to follower development enticing organizational commitment among (i.e., emotional attachment and identification) followers (Walumbwa et al., 2010). Given that followers generally admire their supportive leaders, they are more inclined to align their self-identity with that of their leader (Chen et al., 2015), as well as emulate their leader's behaviors (Liden et al., 2014). In line with reasoning from social identification (Tajfel,

1974), servant leaders should foster harmonious passion through follower identity. As such, we put for the following:

***Proposition 4: Follower self-identification positively mediates the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion.***

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The moral nature of leaders is considered essential for societal good as well as long-term organizational success (Lemoine et al., 2019). However, when leaders act immorally, people and organizations suffer. The financial scandals of the past (e.g., Enron, Tyco, Worldcom), largely attributed to unethical behaviors of organizational leaders (Hoch et al., 2019), serve as a reminder of the problems that can arise from leaders who are focused on advancing their own interests (Hurt & Heath, 2017). Unfortunately, ethical failures and irresponsible leader behaviors have continued to be so pervasive that public trust in our institution's leaders has continued to decline steadily (De Cremer et al., 2011). An estimated 63% of employees do not trust their leaders and this distrust spans practically all domains (e.g., business, government, media, and educational institutions) (Comaford, 2017; Kramer, 2011). Not surprisingly, there has been a growing concern about how to manage these failures to regain the public's trust and restore leader credibility (Araujo, 2009; De Cremer et al., 2011).

Servant leadership, with its focus on leader selflessness, has risen in prominence over the last decade in large part because it is considered a moral leadership style with the potential to restore trust and leader credibility through the prioritization of subordinate needs over leader self-interest (Graham, 1991; De Pree, 2004). Credibility, honesty, and service are considered core attributes of servant leadership (Farling et al., 1999) and its proponents believe that it can minimize, if not abolish, the unethical leadership failures of the past (Blanchard, 2001; Greenleaf, 2008; Van Dierendonck, 2011). Since servant leaders' identities are morally grounded, their desire to live in a manner consistent with their values serves as a moral motivation to continue doing that which is good (Hardy & Cardo, 2011; Sun, 2018).

If organizations are to succeed, they will need credible and trustworthy leadership (Collins, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2011); but they will also need subordinates who are engaged and committed at work. While a leader can command subordinate compliance, commitment is a volitional choice. Yet, servant leaders may be perfectly suited to influence employee commitment by inspiring harmonious passion within their subordinates.

Scholars agree that the concept of work passion, particularly harmonious passion, positively contributes to desired organizational outcomes including, high-performing employees (Kim et al., 2015); employee job-satisfaction (Fernet et al., 2014); decreased burnout (Noviantoro et al., 2018), greater life satisfaction among employees (Lafreneire et al., 2012); and even increased employee commitment (Forest et al., 2011). While there is an abundance of research examining passion's role in employee outcomes, there is little research investigating how leaders influence passion in leader-follower relations. Furthermore, little is known about the mediating mechanisms that enhance the leader-

follower passion relationship. Organizational leaders should prioritize employees' passion for work given that leaders influence employees to willingly engage and move toward organizational goals (Laub, 2004).

Passion comes from intrinsic interest and from a sense of purpose, i.e., from a conviction that one's work matters and helps others (Lee & Duckworth, 2018). People in the workforce, particularly those of generation X and Z, want meaningfulness in their work (Clifton & Harter, 2019). Without meaning, they are less likely to be passionate about their work. Servant leaders, by engaging everyone, empowering their subordinates, and maintaining frequent communication may be perfectly suited to foster harmonious passion by helping their subordinates find their purpose within the organization (De Pree, 2004; Laub, 2004). Servant leaders are passionate about their subordinates, which is reflected in their drive to help subordinates become aware of what they can achieve. By embracing high ethical standards and acting in the best interest of their employees (Jaramillo et al., 2015), servant leaders provide subordinates with an understanding that they (i.e., subordinates) and the work they do, matter.

As this conceptual review shows, there is evidence that Greenleaf's (2008) concept of servant leadership can directly and indirectly (i.e., through confidence, autonomy, and identification) affect employee's harmonious passion for work. This makes for significant implications for organizational leaders today.

As business entities continue to grow and levels of competition continue to increase, firms look to quality leadership approaches to bring out the best in employees and yield successful organizational outcomes. Employees, as significant constituents to organizational success, require more individualized and supportive leadership in order to effectively develop and grow. Furthermore, employees vary in their beliefs, capabilities, and needs. Thus, they should respond more enthusiastically to the supportive managers who are able to provide personalized guidance. Beneficial employee outcomes should continue to follow as employees grow through servant leadership and maintain harmonious passion. The relationships presented in the paper can help managers to make effective business decisions by investing in their employees.

Our model allows leaders to see the benefits of servant leadership towards their employees and how the individual mediators (i.e., confidence, autonomy, and identification) connect to form harmonious passion within their followers. This addition to servant leadership research allows leaders to recognize the importance of these mediators in their relationships with employees. If servant leaders can recognize that there may be a decrease in follower passion, this relationship model allows the servant leader to look at the specific areas of confidence, autonomy, and identification as possible areas to focus on to help increase follower passion.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

The purpose of this conceptual review was to address the gap in the literature as it relates to servant leadership and follower passion. The propositions presented in this paper are based on logical arguments and rational connections based off of existing literature;

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however, our arguments remain conceptual and would therefore need to be empirically validated.

Although we limited our conceptual model to one leadership style, i.e., servant leadership, other leadership styles (e.g., charismatic and transformational) may have similar outcomes. Future studies may want to consider whether confidence, autonomy, and identification have the same effects on the leader-follower passion relationship. This would lead to comparative literature between servant leadership and other leadership styles. Similarly, because there is not a commonly accepted servant leadership definition, we must assume our conclusions are solely related to Laub's accepted definition and description of servant leadership. As Laub (2004) states "leadership must be understandable, usable, researchable, and comprehensive while possessing the ability to discriminate" (p.4) and without these clear standards, studies will continue to be argued and ignored due to the lack of clarity of the basic concepts associated with servant leadership. In the future, we hope to see a commonly shared view of servant leadership that will allow for more in-depth research and allow for more comparative studies to be done.

Although our model considers the three mediators individually relating to servant leadership, it is possible that there are interaction effects among the mediators. For example, autonomy and identification seem to be positively related. When individual autonomy is increased, individual identity also seems to increase (Vansteenkiste et al., 2004). Future researchers may want to consider the extent to which other interaction effects among the mediators in our model may influence the servant leadership-harmonious passion relationship.

While we present a generalized model, researchers may also want to consider whether specific contexts alter these relationships. Environments such as the sports industry or the military have special contextual factors that affect how leadership styles are perceived. For example, in the military identification and autonomy may be taken away due to the strict dress codes and appropriate behavior accepted. These rules or regulations may impact the relationship between servant leadership and harmonious passion. Further studies should be done in specific contexts to see how results change based on environmental factors.

Lastly, there is concern for the stability and consistency of servant leadership's impact on certain outcomes over time (Thao & Kang, 2018). Whether impactful changes are fully under the leader's control or determined by external factors, variability in such outcomes over time is probable. Consistency in empirical findings is significant being that results influence how scholars classify the effectiveness of certain leadership styles. Thus, future studies should include a longitudinal design to measure consistency and gain reliability in results.

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and various regional conferences. He has been recognized as an Outstanding Reviewer by the Academy of Management OB division and is a recipient of the Graduate Faculty of the Year award at CSU. Prior to Academics, he worked for 15 years with two Fortune 500 companies in the fields of banking and manufacturing. Finally, he served 6 years in the United States Marine Corps, 4th Marine Division, where he was nationally recognized for his leadership.

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# The Leadership of Abraham Lincoln: *Why It Matters Today*

*An Historical and Contemporary Portrait of Wisdom, Courage,  
Compassion and Determination<sup>25</sup>*

— Emilio Iodice, Rome, Italy, USA



*A Digital Portrait of Abraham Lincoln by Artist Ray Downing  
<https://pixels.com/featured/abraham-lincoln-portrait-ray-downing.html>. Courtesy, Wikimedia Commons*

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*I am a patient man – always willing to forgive on the Christian terms of repentance; and also, to give ample time for repentance. Still, I must save this government if possible.*

– July 17, 1862, letter to Reverdy Johnson, U.S. Senator and attorney, and to U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom (defended Lincoln assassination conspirator, Mary Surratt).

*Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass, will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation.*

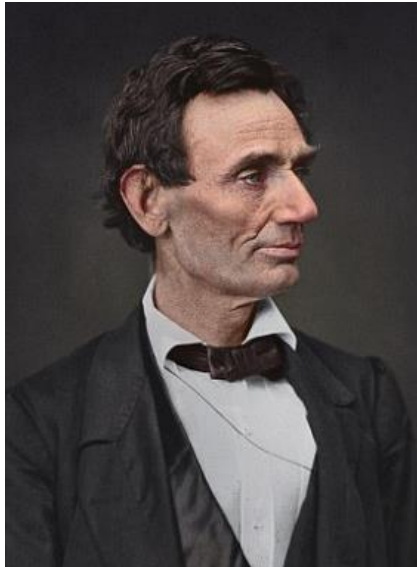
– Abraham Lincoln, December 1, 1862, Message to Congress.

*It is impossible to imagine anything which better becomes a ruler than mercy.*

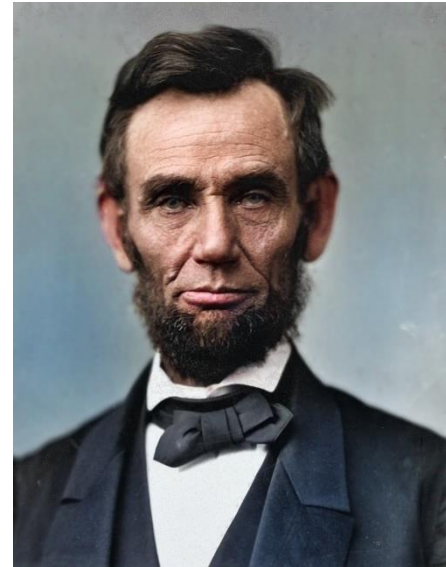
– Lucio Anneo Seneca (Seneca), Latin poet and philosopher.

## Leadership Secrets

- Compassion combined with courage are essential for leadership;
- Perseverance and passion in all endeavors;
- Truth and integrity are the best policies;
- Include stories in messages;
- Communicate with care;
- Encourage creativity;
- Empower others with confidence;
- Help subordinates believe ideas are theirs;
- Trust people;
- Search for the best leaders;
- Project a vision of the future; and
- Seek high ideals and decide and act.



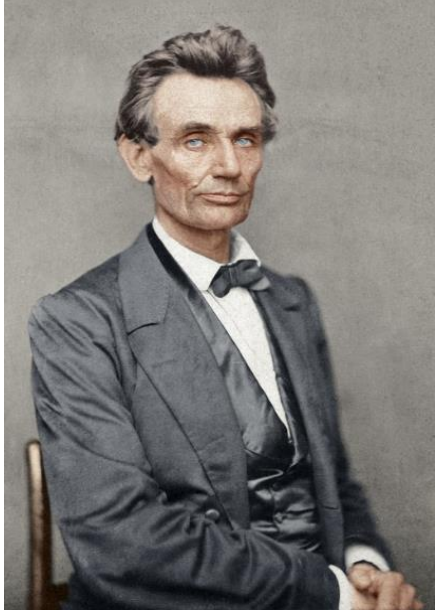
Courtesy, Marina Amaral/Library of Congress/Cover Images



Courtesy, Library of Congress and Wikipedia Commons



## Abraham Lincoln



*Courtesy, Santos Gutiérrez, Pinterest and Library of Congress*

He was born in Kentucky, on February 12, 1809, and died in Washington, DC on April 15, 1865. Lincoln was born in poverty and grew up in the American frontier. He was, to a large extent, self-educated. He became a lawyer and moved to Illinois, where he was a state legislator. Lincoln was elected to the US House of Representatives and served one term. He was elected President in 1860 and campaigned to end slavery. He presided over the Civil War and carried the North to victory. Shortly after the defeat of the South, Lincoln was shot by a Confederate sympathizer while attending a play at Ford's Theater, in the nation's Capitol. He was the first American President assassinated in office.

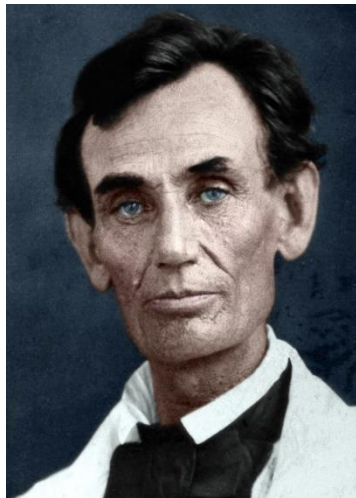
It was sweltering. The capital was blanketed with sun. The sour smell of the Potomac filled the air. It was Independence Day. Few were celebrating.

He entered the building from a side door. There were rumors of assassination. Guards surrounded

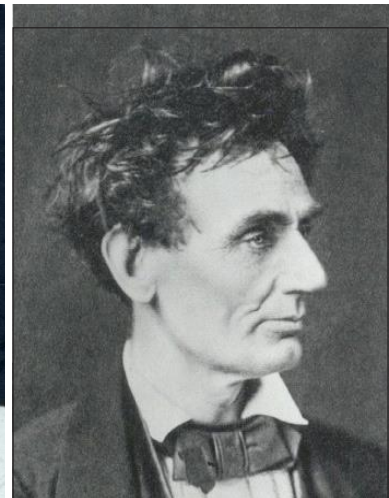
him. He went up the marble staircase towards the opening of the great chamber.

He glanced at paintings of Washington, Franklin, and scenes of the Revolution.

At the entrance, he reflected on his words and thoughts. The nation faced one of the worst financial crises in its history. Thousands of institutions and businesses had failed. Foreign investors were reducing holdings of U.S. stocks and securities. His predecessor had left him with a staggering deficit. Interest on official loans was climbing. There was doubt as to the



*Abraham Lincoln, Republican candidate for the presidency, 1860. Courtesy, Library of Congress*



*Abraham Lincoln Research Site, Courtesy, Library of Congress*

ability of the government to fund its obligations. American and European banks were facing insolvency. Public debt was mounting on both sides of the Atlantic. Conflicts were absorbing badly needed funds for projects to put people back to work.

Unemployment was growing. Protests were happening in various parts of the country. He had been sworn in only a few months earlier, yet it seemed like the office

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weighed on him like a decade of toil and trouble. His hair was turning grey. Lines were deepening in his forehead.



*Lincoln at his desk, Courtesy, Ray Downing at <https://pixels.com/featured/abraham-lincoln-portrait-ray-downing.html>*

Suddenly, the doors of the chamber opened. A man to his right called out his title. Hundreds of people rose. A few extended a hand as he walked down the aisle. Many felt he was not up to the task before him. Many believed the nation was at the brink of collapse and that he would not be able to guide it through. Many thought that this attorney from Illinois, with a thin political career, was inexperienced and incompetent, and lacked the knowledge and culture to deal with the challenges of the nation.

The government of the United States of America was before him. Its leaders looked to him for wisdom, solutions and a way out of the most severe problems America ever faced. He saw the place where his predecessors had spoken. Some asked for powers to wage war.

Others pleaded for resources and sacrifices to meet emergencies. He would be the first to ask for both.

His speech was prepared and ready for delivery. The chamber was quiet and somber as the tall man in black, with disheveled hair mounted the steps, opened his notes and looked at them. His eyes were dark and deep. He quietly and respectfully began.

He pronounced each word with care. His voice carried into the balconies and echoed off the walls of the chamber like the sound of conscience.

Abraham Lincoln was about to address a joint session of the Congress. It was July 4, 1861. He was going to ask for funds and soldiers to deal with the greatest crisis in American history. A rebellion was engulfing the nation. States had seceded from the Union. Brother would fight brother in a war that would tear apart the fabric of the nation he loved.

He told them our forefathers had transformed bullets into ballots. The people had the right to vote. They were free to choose.

Might did not make right. They had no reason to use the gun. The South would fight to preserve keeping men and women in bondage. Slavery went against the grain of America. Our nation was founded on human freedom and liberty, said Lincoln. It was united by the

spirit that “all men are created equal.” The Union must be saved. He asked the country to sacrifice for it with their lives and sacred fortunes.

He would lead the way.

Lincoln’s vision was to keep the states as one, end slavery and uphold the ideals of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He would guide the country with persistence, dedication, and devotion, even if it cost him all he had.

His successors would face similar challenges but none as frightening, complex, or traumatic as the American Civil War. It happened when few resources were available. The country was still expanding and settling in the West and was least prepared to deal with a major emergency.

Lincoln had not spent decades priming for this role. He was not a Washington insider. He was not skilled in the ways of the capital and the meanderings of national politics. He did not have a reputation. He was unknown.

Some called him “a prairie lawyer.” He did not have a broad education. He was a self-made man. He had not traveled across the globe. He was not a warrior. Some would say he was not an orator or charismatic. He did not have a valet, tailor, or barber. He rode his own horse or a simple carriage. He neither smoked, nor drank.

He grew up in a land of hunters yet supported the rights of animals. He said women should vote. Many laughed and scoffed at his ideas.

As a politician, he had more failures than successes. He was elected with a minority of the popular vote. Others thought they were more worthy than him to assume the highest office of the land. He would take some of them into his cabinet. At first, they would dislike him, but at the end consider him a man of extraordinary courage and compassion and a remarkable inhabitant of the White House.

### **Leadership Traits**

Lincoln brought qualities of leadership that would bring him and the people of the United States through a bitter, agonizing storm. He would restore peace and save the republic.

#### ***Perseverance***

Nearly three years before his Independence Day speech before the Congress, he gave an address in Springfield, Illinois that would change the life of “the prairie lawyer.” He accepted the nomination of the newly-formed Republican Party to run for US Senator against Stephen A. Douglas. It was June 16, 1858. Lincoln said, “A house divided against itself cannot stand.” Slavery was cutting America into pieces. The nation argued for decades over the issue. It could do so no longer, claimed Lincoln. Either it became all free or all slaves. The principle of equality was clear. It was the heart of the Declaration of Independence. It was the essence of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The American Revolution was fought over it. He would fight for it. He lost the election in Illinois but not the struggle to abolish slavery. He persevered in his beliefs. Two years later he was elected President of the United States.

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Executive Mansion  
Washington, Nov. 21, 1864

*Dear Madam,*

*I have been shown in the files of the War Department a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle.*

*I feel how weak and fruitless must be any word of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so overwhelming. But I cannot refrain from tendering you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save.*

*I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.*

*Yours, very sincerely and respectfully,*

**A. Lincoln**

Lincoln would tender his own sacrifice “on the altar of freedom,” one hundred and forty-one days later. Until then, he continued to save lives. He went to the battlefields and felt the fear that hung in the air. He saw the amputated legs, the faces torn apart from grape shot, mangled hands and bodies and boys broken by the convulsions of war. He had compassion for young men who deserted or were afraid to fight. As President, he gave more pardons than any Chief Executive of the United States before him and after him.

He wanted to grant clemency in the case of the Sioux but could not. He studied each and pardoned eighty seven percent of those convicted and allowed the execution of those who committed the most violent crimes. He did so reluctantly. He realized that if he tendered pardons to all, he could cause greater bloodshed. White settlers would take matters in their own hands and kill more Native Americans. This solution would come as close to justice as anything that could be found in times of war. Lincoln took the most courageous and compassionate route. It was the hallmark of his leadership. He was not afraid to do what was right. He was ready to die for his country.

### ***Courage and Character***

Real leaders are always prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice. Lincoln never asked of others what he was not prepared to do himself. He set the example, he set the tone. As the war advanced, Lincoln showed himself to those who he sent to bleed and die for the Union. He was with the troops in hospitals, on the battlefields and in the line of fire. His actions followed his words. His courage and integrity were two sides of the same coin. Lincoln meant what he said and followed through with example, no matter what the risk.



*Courtesy, Time Magazine*



*Lincoln with General McClellan. Courtesy, Library of Congress*

In July 1864, he and Mary Todd Lincoln visited Fort Stevens, in Maryland, not far from the nation's Capitol. Soldiers were wounded in a hospital on the compound. He spoke to them. He took their hands in his. He asked about them, their families and their lives. He wanted to know their feelings. Abraham Lincoln comforted those who were suffering to realize his vision to preserve the Union. He equated his life with theirs.

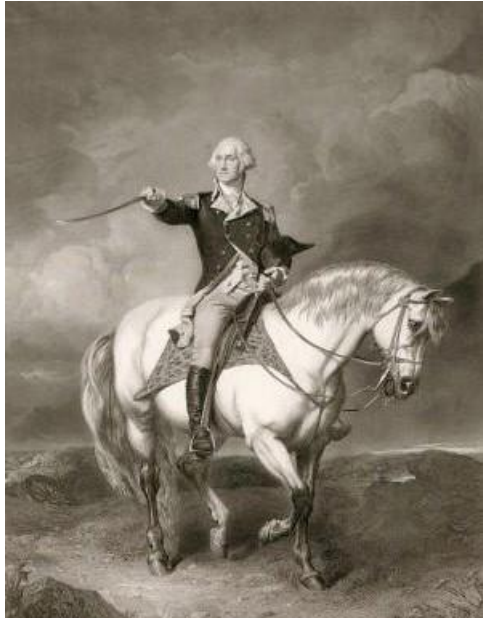
Confederate forces attacked Fort Stevens. Some believed that the rebels knew Lincoln was there. They wanted to kill him. Lincoln stood on the battlements with his troops. The men in grey opened fire. Bullets flew in and around him. A soldier was hit. Lincoln went to him. Troops surrounded the President and took him to cover. He was more concerned with the condition of the wounded than his own. The Confederates were driven off. They were less than fifty miles from the White House. The incident reinforced Lincoln's determination. He pressed General Grant to reinforce the Army of the Potomac to protect the nation's Capitol.

Persistence, determination, bravery, compassion, and setting the example were key elements of Abraham Lincoln's method of leading. He knew that each generation faced challenges that seemed overwhelming. Yet with the proper values and taking risks leaders could overcome the greatest difficulties. He was guided by the past to help him deal with the present and future. America's heritage was grounded in the principles of the

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Revolution and the words of our forefathers in the sacred documents of our Republic. American history was his compass.

### *Set the Example*



*George Washington on the Potomac*

Nearly eighty-eight years earlier, another American faced death, just like Lincoln did at Fort Stevens. General George Washington was in New York City. It was 1776. His army of farmers and tradesman was no match for the superpower of the world. The British had thousands of crack troops that landed in Manhattan and overran the American installations. Washington's soldiers were terrified. They dropped their weapons and fled. He demanded that they take their positions and fight.

They ignored him.

In frustration, the General watched as his army raced across the battlefield while British troops marched towards him. He stood his ground as all others fled for cover. His white horse, Old Nelson, could feel his master's courage. He took out his sword. British bullets sailed over and around him.

The red coats tried to kill the commander of the rebel forces. Washington did not budge. He was in the line of fire.

The enemy finally stopped. They rose and cheered the General for his courage. His aides ran and brought him away as the red coats saluted the man on the white horse who had exhibited heroism that they had never seen before. Washington's steadfastness led the way. His persistence and bravery would lead to success. Five years later he would take New York from the British.

It was this kind of courage that gave Lincoln consolation during his darkest times. His predecessors faced moments where they had to choose to set the example. They knew that the people, the world and history itself would be watching.

In 1781, as Washington was attacking Manhattan, another figure in the American Revolution was in the South, embarking on a campaign, as well. He was one of Washington's ablest generals, and his protégé. He had valiantly fought in Canada and New York. Now he led a force of 1,200 troops. He attacked the city of Richmond and told the Governor of Virginia that his soldiers would spare the capital of the state if they were allowed to take tobacco without resistance. The soldiers were in red. Their leader wore a red coat. Not long before, he had been a hero in the army of George Washington. His name was Benedict Arnold.

Governor Thomas Jefferson was confronted with a bitter choice. He could lose his city and surrender to a traitor. Jefferson chose to fight. He was nearly captured, as Richmond burned.

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Washington sent a Frenchman, the Marquis de Lafayette, to stop the British advance in Virginia. Jefferson refused to give in, and Washington refused to give up even in the face of betrayal and disappointment.

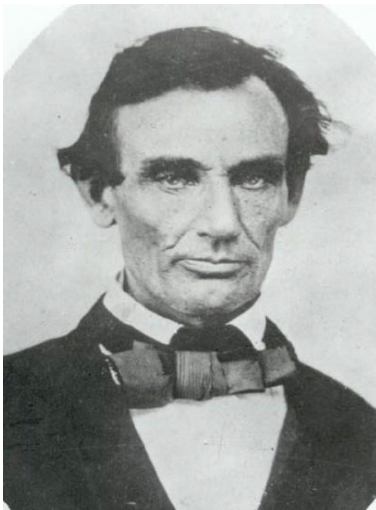
### ***Stay Close to the People***

Like Washington, Lincoln engaged those under him. He was with the troops and with his subordinates. He was always present and there for them to see, hear, and talk with. He did not isolate himself. He did not create a palace guard. He did not develop a sense of his own importance. The Lincoln White House was open to one and all. He was especially close to his team. Lincoln made it a point to drop in to see his Cabinet officers, his staff, and met with visitors from all walks of life. He spoke with business leaders who proposed new technology and better medications to heal wounded troops. He studied new ideas, concepts, and weapons for the war effort.

### ***Keep Priorities in Perspective***

Lincoln kept his priorities in perspective. The first was to win the war. This was paramount. His secondary objective was to handle the day-to-day affairs of government. He needed his cabinet, filled with men who were his political opponents, to support his initiatives. Lincoln engaged them personally. He often made them feel that ideas and initiatives he wanted to advance were theirs. He would visit their offices and homes. They would get to know each other. Each was different and Lincoln discovered a way to deal with each. With Secretary of State William H. Seward, he would meet at night, and they would tell stories and enjoy each other's company. Gradually he created a bond with Seward who had been one of his chief rivals for the Republican nomination. Their friendship grew and became the envy of members of the Cabinet. Salmon P. Chase was one of them.

Secretary of Treasury Chase was a man of ambition. Behind the scenes, he was maneuvering himself to challenge Lincoln for the Republican Presidential nomination of 1864. Lincoln knew it. In the process, Chase tried to discredit Seward, who was a potential candidate as well.



### ***Deal with Problems Directly***

Following a major Confederate victory, Chase took advantage of a distraught Congress to accuse Seward of wrongdoing and Lincoln of not consulting with the Cabinet on major decisions. He wanted Seward dismissed and Lincoln to reorganize the leadership. Chase assembled members of the Senate to meet with the President and hear their accusations. Lincoln told them he would consider what they felt and would meet with them the following night. Seward tendered his resignation in protest. Lincoln did not act on it. The following evening, the members of the Senate joined the President in a room filled with his Cabinet officers, except for Seward. It was a surprise.



The Senators did not expect the Cabinet to be present. Lincoln had no intention of reorganizing his government or taking orders from the Congress. He realized Chase was behind the affairs in question. He wanted to get the issues out in the open and settled. He caught all off guard. They were assembled in one room. Lincoln insisted that matters be resolved that evening. He presided over the meeting. Chase was in a corner. If he supported the accusations of the Senators, it would be clear that he was the origin of the allegations and had personal motives.

He was forced to agree that Lincoln consulted frequently with the Cabinet and that his team was in agreement on key policies. He admitted that Seward acted competently and properly in the execution of his duties. Chase was discredited. He gave Lincoln his resignation. It would not be the last time that Chase would tender it.

Lincoln needed Seward and Chase in the Cabinet. Eventually, he accepted Chase's request to resign and appointed him to the Supreme Court. Lincoln showed that open and frank discussion among feuding subordinates would expose the truth.

### ***Learning to Relax***



*Ford's Theatre, Washington, D.C., The Box of Abraham Lincoln, on the night of April 12, 1865, Courtesy, Library of Congress Collection Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, Springfield, Illinois*

Lincoln enjoyed the theatre. He enjoyed plays and spectacles. They let him escape and relax and recharge his batteries. One of his favorite places was a small playhouse in the nation's Capitol, not far from the White House. It was called Ford's Theatre.



*General Ulysses S. Grant, Courtesy, The Economist and Library of Congress*

### ***Presence and Symbolism***

His presence as leader was particularly important. He knew the prestige of the position he held and used it symbolically and administratively to advance his agenda and that of the nation. Personal engagement was the key.

One of the most memorable occasions happened close to the end of the War. It was early April, in 1865. General Grant was advancing on Richmond. The North had won a string of victories. On the eve of the fall of the Confederate capital, Lincoln decided to secretly visit

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the city. He took his son, Tad, with him. They crossed hills and valleys and rivers to get there. It was not an easy ride. The President was advised not to go. His Secretary of War, Gideon Wells, was worried that he was putting himself in harm's way.



General William Tecumseh Sherman, Courtesy, Library of Congress Collection and Colorized History.com



Courtesy, Time Magazine

Lincoln was venturing into the bosom of the Confederacy. The President knew the risks. He also knew he needed to show strength, mercy, and healing so that the process of reconciliation could occur. He knew what was ahead. He was



General Robert E. Lee Surrendering to General Grant at Appomattox Court House in Richmond Virginia, April 9, 1865, Courtesy History.com, 2012

determined to stop the bloodshed. There were those who sought revenge on the South for the agony they forced upon the country. Lincoln needed to contain them. After victory, his objective was “to bind up the nation’s wounds.”

Few realized that Lincoln’s preoccupation with reintegration of the country began as soon as he took office. It was constantly on his mind and affected his

daily decisions. Parts of states reclaimed by the North in battle had to be governed. He worked to prevent Border States from joining the Confederacy. He promised amnesty, gradual liberalization and black voting rights. His actions polarized his party and supporters. He had to be conscious of each act, each word and each measure as it rippled across the political climate. Even so, he steadfastly held by his principles of carrying the nation to reconciliation.

General Sherman asked Lincoln what to do with the leaders of the Confederacy. There were calls to arrest them and try them for treason. Lincoln encouraged Sherman to allow them to escape. He saw no purpose in retribution. It would only drag out the process of uniting the country.

On April 2, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederacy, and his leaders departed Richmond as General Robert E. Lee, head of the rebel forces, abandoned the city. The next day, the people of Richmond woke to find their city occupied by Union troops.



*"The Harvest of Death" by Timothy O'Sullivan. Courtesy, Library of Congress Collection, Colorized by HistoryColor.com*

Lincoln had been in the field for nearly two weeks. He met with his soldiers and the Confederate prisoners. Now, he wanted to reach the capital of the enemy and bring the conflict to an end. He realized that only his presence could achieve this. His personal involvement was essential. Two days after the fall of Richmond, Abraham Lincoln entered the city. The smell of smoke and the sites of burning buildings were

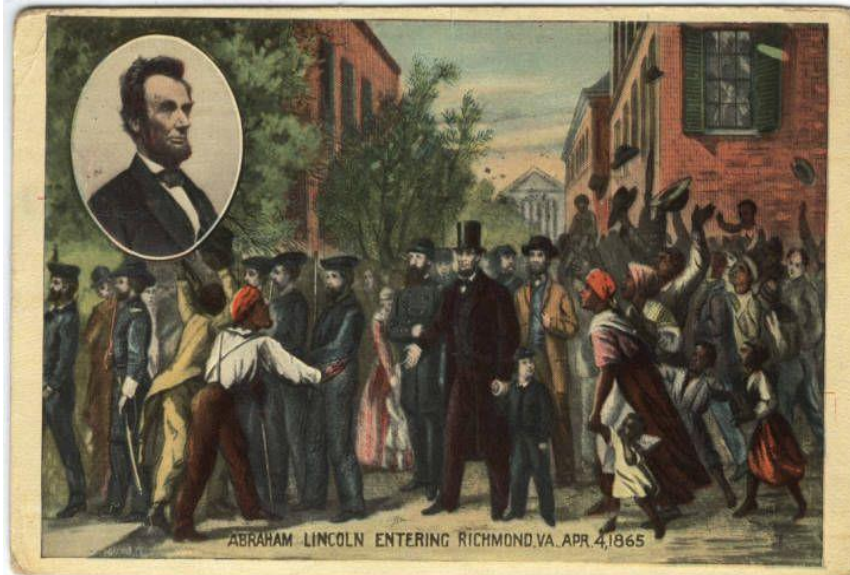
everywhere. The rebels set fire to tobacco warehouses and structures across the capital. They scorched the earth as the Union forces advanced. Lincoln saw adolescent boys pressed into service to the South. Their muskets were larger than their bodies. They were boys forced to be men. The smell of death hung in the air.

Bodies of fallen soldiers were everywhere. Lincoln did not enter Richmond as a conquering hero. He came into the city quietly. There was no fanfare. There was sadness and drama.

Lincoln crossed a river to reach the Confederate capital. As he reached the bank, Admiral David Dixon Porter recalled the following in his memoirs:

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*There was a small house on this landing, and behind it were some twelve negroes digging with spades. The leader of them was an old man, sixty years of age. He raised himself to an upright position as we landed and put his hands up to his eyes. Then he dropped his spade and sprang forward. "Bress de Lord," he said. "Dere is de great Messiah! I knowed him as soon as I seed him. He's bin in me hear fo' long yeahs, an' he's cum at las' to free his chillun from deir bondage! Glory, Hallelujah!" And he fell upon his knees before the President and kissed his feet. The others followed his example, and in a minute, Mr. Lincoln was surrounded by these people, who had*



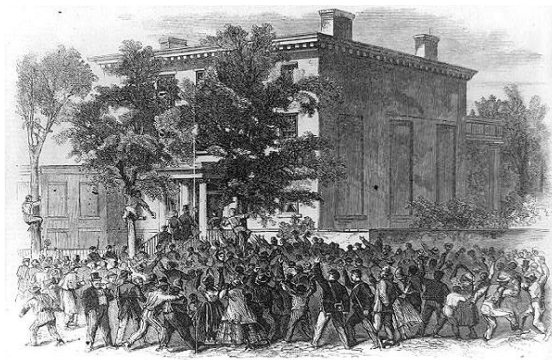
Color Drawing of Lincoln in Richmond on April 4, 1865. Courtesy, Library of Congress Collection

*treasured up the recollection of him caught from a photograph and had looked up to him for four years as the one who was to lead them out of captivity.*

*It was a touching sight - that aged negro kneeling at the feet of the tall, gaunt-looking man who seemed in himself to be bearing all the grief of the nation, and*

*whose sad face seemed to say, 'I suffer for you all, but will do all I can to help you.'*

*Mr. Lincoln looked down on the poor creatures at his feet; he was much embarrassed at his position. 'Don't kneel to me,' he said. 'That is not right. You must kneel to God only and thank him for the liberty you will hereafter enjoy. I am but God's humble instrument; but you may rest assured that as long as I live no one shall put a shackle on your limbs, and you shall have all the rights which God has given to every other free citizen of this Republic.'*

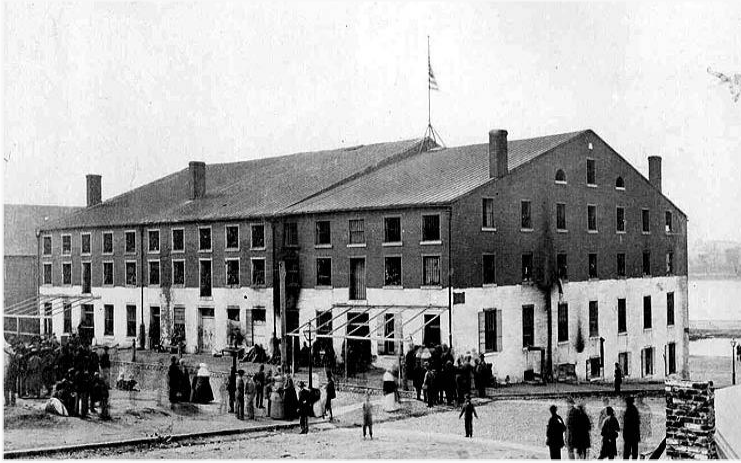


*His face was lit up with a divine look as he uttered these words. Though not a handsome man, and ungainly in his person, yet in his enthusiasm he seemed the personification of manly beauty, and that sad face of his looked down in kindness upon these ignorant blacks with a grace that could not be excelled. He really seemed of another world.*

Pandemonium engulfed the city. People surrounded Lincoln as he advanced through Richmond. A girl of seventeen walked towards him. The crowd let her slowly reach the President. She was lovely. She held a bouquet of roses. She presented it with a few words of gratitude. He held her hand as she spoke. He thanked her as she disappeared into the throng. The President continued his march through Richmond with that bouquet in his hand. He tipped his hat to enemy and friend. Lincoln was conveying a message through his presence, lack of fear, and the symbolism of the supreme commander of the North showing compassion to his enemies.

He reached the heart of the Confederacy, the headquarters of Jefferson Davis. The building was still warm with the ghosts of its former inhabitants. Servants were available to

assist the new owners. Lincoln was courteous. He greeted all. He did not advance as the victor, but as the pacifier.



*Libby Prison, Richmond, Virginia, shortly after its capture by Union Troops.  
Courtesy, Library of Congress Collection*

He was tired. All he asked for was a glass of water as he sat in the chair of the man who wished him dead. The symbolism of the moment rested with him. He realized that history would recall that minute. Headlines would circle the globe that the President of the United States had entered the soul of his adversaries. The

war would soon be over.

### ***Be Merciful to Your Enemies***

Lincoln needed to do one more thing as he departed Richmond. He visited a hateful place. Libby Prison was a chamber of horrors. Union soldiers had been incarcerated there. It had been jammed with three thousand captives from the North. Few were left alive. Now, it held nine hundred Confederate prisoners of war. Many rose as Lincoln entered and walked along the long line of cells. Some hissed. He looked at the place. The smell of filth and death hung in the air. He told his officers to go easy on these men. Soon, they would be free.

Libby was a symbol of the hatred of the conflict inflicted on innocent boys. Tens of thousands were deprived of their youth and health to fight slavery. Countless finished their days in places like Libby. Lincoln did not want it torn down. He wanted it to be a “monument” of man’s inhumanity to man. He wanted no one to forget the torture, the starvation, the illness, and mayhem caused by the war and carried out in places like that building.

The President returned to Richmond the next day. A group of the most prominent people in the town met with him. They were anxious. They were afraid of vengeance. They wanted to

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know what was ahead. Lincoln said the government would be generous and forgiving. In exchange, Virginians needed to be loyal to the nation and “not to love Virginia less but to love the republic more.” Lincoln’s message would resonate through the South and the North.

### ***Learn to Communicate Effectively***

He communicated in every form he could. After meeting with commanders or members of his staff or members of Congress, Lincoln would leave them a letter outlining what they discussed. He avoided ambiguity. He stressed clarity and transparency.

Communication was not a simple task for Abraham Lincoln. His physical presence could be an obstacle. He was the first to admit that he was not an attractive figure. His height, lack of good looks, and apparent introversion were not advantages. He overcame them. He knew he would not be charismatic but could be effective. He could assure that his words had meaning and depth.

He took his lessons from historical figures. He read famous speeches and studied techniques. He listened carefully to those who spoke. Eloquence did not come easily. Lincoln learned to craft a message, used stories and examples to make a point, studied his audience, and encouraged a dialogue with questions and answers. He viewed his audience as friends and constructed his message like an arrow to reach into their souls. His words were weighed with care. He wrote his own speeches and spent hours, days preparing, writing, and rewriting. Lincoln knew his limitations as a public speaker and sought to improve his delivery, his manners, and ways to make his case.

### ***Project a Vision of the Future***

On March 4, 1865, Lincoln would need all his talent to deal with the enormous problems facing the nation, looming on the horizon. He was to deliver his *Second Inaugural Address*. General Robert E. Lee’s army would surrender, five weeks later. Victory was in the air as were the great questions facing the nation in the aftermath of the war.

Lincoln had great executive power that would evaporate once the guns were silenced. What powers would the President need to reconstruct the South? How would the North deal with the vanquished? What would be the terms of peace? Would the South be treated as a colony or a subjugated territory or an integral part of America? How would war crimes be treated? Millions of former slaves were now searching for a future. Would land of plantation owners be divided and given to these new free people? What about their rights to compensation for centuries of labor, and their rights as workers in a free society?

As Lincoln prepared his address, these questions circled his thoughts and those of his audience. The people of the North had endured years of suffering and sacrifice.

They bled. They sent their sons and daughters into a conflagration. They paid with pain and treasure to keep the Union intact. Many expected the South to be punished for starting the war. They knew the complexity of the days and years ahead of them. They wanted to hear from their leader answers to the great concerns of the day.

Lincoln boldly redefined the agenda and contemporary thinking about the aftermath of the war. He avoided the questions. He would not deal with them at that moment. He had much more on his mind and had much more to communicate. He expected that, on the wave of his words, he would have years before him to knit together solutions to the countless dilemmas confronting the United States of America at the end of the most painful period in its brief history.

All of Lincoln's qualities were poured into his words. He spoke with integrity, passion, and brevity. His perseverance, care, courage, and vision of the future, based on the principles of the past, were part of his Second Inaugural Address. His ideas were for his audience and posterity.

A year and a half earlier, Lincoln had issued his *Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction*. It was the first thread in the new fabric Lincoln was weaving to deal with the problems of the Civil War. He would grant amnesty and return the right to vote to those who lived in areas newly occupied by the North, in order to return them to the family of the Union. It isolated slavery, and slave owners and it welcomed back into the fold those who pledged fidelity to the United States. Lincoln was especially concerned with the plight of former slaves. He wanted the states to care for them and grant them the rights of all citizens with these words:

*And I do further proclaim, declare, and make known that any provision which may be adopted by such state government in relation to the freed people of such state, which shall recognize and declare their permanent freedom, provide for their education, and which may yet be consistent as a temporary arrangement with their present condition as a laboring, landless, and homeless class, will not be objected to by the National Executive (Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, December 8, 1862).*

Among the first granted amnesty was a person who lived in the Lincoln White House. She was the sister of the President's wife. The President lived with the criticism that he housed a rebel in the Executive Mansion. She had married an officer who fought and died for the South. Lincoln knew that there would be many families like his that would need to find forgiveness.

### ***Raise Minds to Think at a Higher Level***

His Second Inaugural Address would now carry the nation forward to healing, compromise, and the bringing together of a people divided by acrimony. On the day he gave his speech, Lincoln looked old and weary. The lines of age and emotion were chiseled in his face. He was solemn and sad. It would not be a talk filled with solutions. He would not outline the plan for the future. His worry was the nation's heart and soul. He wanted to raise the consciousness of the country. Some sought retribution against the South for having caused the conflict. Some sought revenge for the bloodshed and pain imposed on the nation. Lincoln's speech would be puzzling. He wanted the country to forgive so that "this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away."

Abraham Lincoln's speech would sound more like a sermon:

*On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it – all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war – seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.*

*One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the Southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war, while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it. Neither party expected for the war, the magnitude, or the duration, which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not that we be not judged. The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences! For it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American Slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South, this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a Living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope – fervently do we pray –that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."*

*With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations" (From the Second Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln, March 5, 1865).*

Lincoln was at his intellectual peak. His creative capacities were at their height. He had exhibited the utmost qualities of leadership. They were becoming evident to the citizens



who heard those enigmatic words on that dark day in March. Thirty- eight days later, he would fall to an assassin's bullet.

## Lincoln's Achievements

- ***Preserved the Union:*** Lincoln's greatest achievement was saving the Union and preserving the values that kept the nation together. The price was high, including the one he personally paid to attain his goal. He viewed the safeguarding of the Union as his key political objective and all else as a means for achieving it.
- ***Emancipation Proclamation:*** Ending slavery was Lincoln's objective along with the preservation of the Union. The Civil War freed four million African Americans and changed the social nature of the United States.
- ***Homestead Act of 1862:*** Lincoln campaigned on a platform to grant public lands to farmers. On May 20, 1862, he signed into law the Homestead Act. It allowed settlers to have 160 acres of land to till and start a settlement and build a community. Lincoln's act literally opened the west and created towns and villages from territories that led to the establishment of new states to be part of the Union.
- ***Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862:*** Lincoln knew well the value of education. With the Morrill Act, the federal government created "land grant colleges" by selling federal lands to support agricultural and mechanical arts colleges. These later became the embryo of the great state university systems.
- ***Avoiding Foreign Intervention in the War:*** Lincoln managed to keep European nations out of the war, especially in active support of the South. It was a delicate and intricate exercise in diplomacy that went on throughout the period of the War and its aftermath.
- ***Redefinition of the Presidency:*** The American Presidency was redefined by Abraham Lincoln. The assumption of new presidential powers left a permanent legacy on the institution of the office of the Chief Executive.
- ***Establishment of the Republican Party:*** The newly-formed Republican Party was led by Lincoln. Its initial principles and values were defined under his presidency and were carried forward for decades.

## The Meaning in His Own Words

*As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.*

— August 1, 1858, on Democracy

This is the "Golden Rule." We should not do to others that we would not want done to us. We need to put ourselves in their place and realize the implications of what we do.

*Understanding the spirit of our institutions to aim at the elevation of men, I am opposed to whatever tends to degrade them.*

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- May 17, 1859, Letter to Theodore Canisius, Consul of the US

Leaders need to work to raise the attitude and vision of those who follow to seek higher principles and higher goals.

*...I do not mean to say that this government is charged with the duty of redressing or preventing all the wrongs in the world; but I do think that it is charged with the duty of preventing and redressing all wrongs which are wrongs to itself.*

- September 17, 1859, Speech at Cincinnati, Ohio

Responsibility cannot be avoided. It must be confronted and dealt with.

*This is essentially a People's contest. On the side of the Union, it is a struggle for maintaining in the world, that form, and substance of government, whose leading object is, to elevate the condition of men – to lift artificial weights from all shoulders – to clear the paths of laudable pursuit for all – to afford all, an unfettered start, and a fair chance, in the race of life.*

- July 4, 1861, Message to Congress

The plight of slavery, the plight of injustice is a universal and uniform problem where each is responsible to address. No individual can push the blame on others.

*May our children and our children's children to a thousand generations, continue to enjoy the benefits conferred upon us by a united country, and have cause yet to rejoice under those glorious institutions bequeathed us by Washington and his compeers.*

- October 4, 1862, Speech at Frederick, Maryland

The benefits we strive for are ones that should move from one generation to the next. We need to think in terms of posterity for our actions.

*The restoration of the Rebel States to the Union must rest upon the principle of civil and political equality of both races; and it must be sealed by general amnesty.*

- January 1864, Letter to James S. Wadsworth, Philanthropist and Union General

We need to understand compassion and forgiveness as a tool to achieve a higher goal.

*While we must, by all available means, prevent the overthrow of the government, we should avoid planting and cultivating too many thorns in the bosom of society.*

- March 18, 1864, Letter to Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War in the Cabinet of President Lincoln

Conflict results in resentment and can lead to permanent scars. Before a leader embarks on a mission that requires violence, the consequences must be carefully understood.

*In this great struggle, this form of Government and every form of human right is endangered if our enemies succeed. There is more involved in this contest than is realized by everyone.*

- August 18, 1864, Speech to the 164th Ohio Regiment

At times, the larger picture is not clear to all. A leader needs to bring focus to a situation so that all understand the implications of one outcome or another.

*It is not merely for today, but for all time to come that we should perpetuate for our children's children this great and free government, which we have enjoyed all our lives.*

- August 22, 1864, Speech to the One Hundred Sixty-sixth Ohio Regiment

Leaders need to explain that what is being done is for the future, and not just for today. This gives relevance to the sacrifices of the moment.

*Nowhere in the world is presented a government of so much liberty and equality. To the humblest and poorest amongst us are held out the highest privileges and positions. The present moment finds me at the White House, yet there is as good a chance for your children as there was for my father's.*

- August 31, 1864, Speech to 148th Ohio Regiment

The sense of opportunity, openness and fairness should be understood by all and transmitted as part of the culture, not only of the nation, but also of the institution. Abraham Lincoln was an example of the American Dream.

*Thoughtful men must feel that the fate of civilization upon this continent is involved in the issue of our contest.*

- December 27, 1864, Letter to John Maclean, President of Princeton University. (Maclean offered a Doctor of Laws to Lincoln. After the war began, seventy students from Princeton joined the armies of the North and the South and perished in the conflict).

Commitment to a just cause demands risks, sacrifices and choices.

*When it comes to this, I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretense of loving liberty – to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.*

- From the August 24, 1855, Letter to Joshua Speed

Freedom must be based on action and sincerity, and it must be promoted from the top down.

*That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles – right and wrong – throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity and the other the divine right of kings.*

- October 15, 1858, Debate at Alton, Illinois

Power is not inherited. Neither is leadership. It is granted and earned with respect, hard work, integrity and perseverance. It is the difference between right and wrong.

*What I did, I did after very full deliberation, and under a heavy and solemn sense of responsibility. I can only trust in God that I have made no mistake.*

- September 24, 1862, Reply to Serenade in Honor of [Preliminary] Emancipation Proclamation

It is not easy to do the right thing, but it is necessary. Doing the right thing demands serious reflection and then action.

*When the conduct of men is designed to be influenced, persuasion, kind, unassuming persuasion, should ever be adopted. It is an old and a true maxim, that a “drop of honey catches more flies than a gallon of gall.”*

– February 22, 1842, Temperance Address

It is better to convince others to our cause and vision than to coerce them and force them to accept it. Cooperation needs to be won and not assumed.

*Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man’s nature – opposition to it is in his love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely, as slavery extension brings them, shocks, and throes, and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise – repeal all compromises repeal the declaration of independence – repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature. It still will be the abundance of man’s heart that slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth will continue to speak.*

– October 16, 1854, Speech at Peoria

There are certain values that are immutable about human beings. Some have been codified but most are innate and part and parcel of humanity’s search for justice. Leaders must respect and accept them.

*The Autocrat of all the Russias will resign his crown and proclaim his subjects’ free republicans sooner than will our American masters voluntarily give up their slaves.*

– August 15, 1855, Letter to George Robertson

Some wrongs will never right themselves. It is up to those who know what the right thing to do to is to fight injustice. No one will voluntarily give up a privilege.

*I believe this Government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved – I do not expect the house to fall – but I do expect it will cease to be divided.*

– June 16, 1858, House Divided Speech

Problems need to be resolved fully and not partially, even if difficult measures must be used.

*I don’t believe in a law to prevent a man from getting rich; it would do more harm than good. So, while we do not propose any war upon capital, we do wish to allow the humblest man an equal chance to get rich with everybody else.*

– March 6, 1860, Speech at New Haven, Connecticut

Equality of opportunity should be a guiding light for leaders who strive to develop the talents of all those that depend on them, no matter what their status.

*The lady – bearer of this – says she has two sons who want to work. Set them at it, if possible. Wanting to work is so rare a merit, that it should be encouraged.*

– October 17, 1861, Letter to Colonel George Ramsay, Superintendent of the

Washington Arsenal

Hard work, persistence is a virtue that should be promoted and used as an example.

## Leadership Lessons

- ***Personal Presence is Essential:*** Move out from the office environment to deal directly with stakeholders and make friends and influence people.
- ***Collect Information:*** If you can do it in person, it is better. If not, send experts or trusted followers to get the facts.
- ***Be Brave and Show No Fear:*** You cannot ask others to sacrifice, if you do not take the lead. You have to be with the troops.
- ***Compassion and Courage Go Together:*** Lincoln stressed compassion, wherever possible. It not only was the right thing to do, but it also went a long way to promote peace and harmony.
- ***Integrity and Honesty are Essential:*** Unethical behavior is immediately detected. Lincoln emphasized the truth and a sense of honor and respect for all.
- ***Take Responsibility:*** He was the first to take blame and give credit to others.
- ***Revenge Sparks Fear, not Respect:*** Lincoln never acted out of vengeance. His tasks were higher and more important than to dwell on reprisals or retribution. He urged all to follow his example, especially in dealing with the South.
- ***Expect to be Criticized:*** Leaders will be reproached. Lincoln suffered enormous criticism. He dealt with lies before they became “biblical,” but often did not waste energy on critics.
- ***Perseverance and Decisiveness Go Hand in Hand:*** Lincoln pursued his goals with energy and determination. He was decisive and took responsibility for his actions.
- ***Convince vs. Order:*** Lincoln took time to convince others of his ideas. He often made them feel that they were their own.
- ***Encourage Creativity:*** Innovation and new ideas were critical to Lincoln and the war effort. They were important to help achieve his primary objectives. He created an atmosphere that emphasized new ideas.
- ***Communication is an Art and Science:*** Lincoln crafted his words carefully. He perfected the medium and message. He knew how to give a speech and to make the words meaningful for his audience and history.

## Why Lincoln Matters Today: Life Lessons

- ***Persistence:*** Lincoln never gave up. In the face of failure and depression, he continued to persevere. The same pertains to each of us in our daily lives. It is

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perseverance that succeeds.

- **Work Hard:** He never stopped working, whether it was in the prairie, the law office or the White House; he stayed focused on his work. He knew how to relax, yet his priority was to achieve the task at hand. There are no meaningful short-cuts to attaining our goals. There is no greater satisfaction than achievement based on our own toil. Hard work pays off.
- **Stay Informed:** Lincoln was a voracious reader. He absorbed information, stored it and used it. Truth only comes from examination. If we are to discover reality, we



Courtesy Christopher Leary, Pinterest, Library of Congress and National Park Service

must search for it by reading and accumulating information. This then helps us make rational decisions. Those who make the best decisions are those chosen to lead.

- **Live by Example:** He knew others looked to him as a model for leadership and wisdom. He lived each day with this thought in mind. If we do the same, we will discipline ourselves and be conscious of our actions and deeds. This will help us achieve “emotional intelligence,” which is a key to success.

- **Nice People Finish First:** Lincoln was compassionate, but not weak. He could be tough and decisive. Yet, he treated people with respect and dignity, no matter what their walk of life. Being sincerely courteous and liking people is a virtue worth cultivating. It helps “win

friends and influence people.”

- **Honesty is the Best Policy:** Lincoln was called “Honest Abe.” He lived up to this. Honesty helps us be transparent and gain the respect and, most of all, the trust of others. It is difficult to attain trust and trust can be lost with one lie.
- **Stand Up for Principle:** People knew what Abraham Lincoln stood for. He was willing to take risks for his values. Do people know what we stand for? Are we willing to risk upholding them? If our principles are based on honesty, fairness, and justice for all, they will become obvious in our daily words and deeds. With time, they will be part and parcel of our makeup. All will know what we stand for and who we are.

*I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves, who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of captivity. But one hundred years later, we must face the tragic fact that the Negro is still not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination.*

*We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.*

*It is not possible to be in favor of justice for some people and not be in favor of justice for all people.*

*Let no man pull you low enough to hate him.*

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*

*We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now.*

*The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.*

*Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle.*

*Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into friend."*

*There comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but he must take it because conscience tells him it is right.*



*Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivering his I Have a Dream Speech at the Civil Rights March on Washington, D.C. 08/28/1963ARC Identifier 542069 / Local Identifier 306-SSM-4D (107)16*

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## About the Author



**Emilio Iodice** – *Educator, Diplomat, Senior Executive, Best-Selling Author, Presidential Historian*

Emilio Iodice was the son of immigrants. Iodice received his BS from Fordham University, his MBA from the City University of New York, and was named to *Beta Gamma Sigma* the honorary society of top business graduates. He conducted doctoral work at George Washington University in Washington, DC.

Iodice spent over four decades as a senior executive and as an educator and as a university administrator including being a key



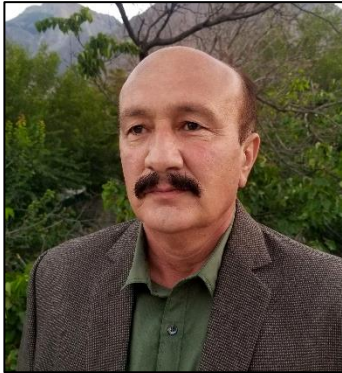
official for several Administrations, and reaching the top ranks of the civil service and the US diplomatic corps.

He was among the most decorated officers in history with a Gold Medal for Heroism, a Gold Medal and Silver Medal, nominations for the Bronze Medal, and commendations and citations. He was Minister in key missions abroad and was named to the list of future Ambassadors. He was knighted by the King of Italy and received Medals of Honor from Spain and Italy. At age 33, he was named by the President to the Senior Executive Service as the youngest career public official to reach this distinction.

Before joining Loyola University Chicago, as its Director and Vice President of the University, he was Vice President of Lucent Technologies in charge of global operations. He taught at Trinity College and, after nearly a decade at Loyola, was awarded the title of Director Emeritus and Professor of Leadership.

Among his best-selling books are: *A Kid from Philadelphia*, *Mario Lanza: The Voice of the Poets*; *Profiles in Leadership from Caesar to Modern Times*; *Sisters*; *Future Shock 2.0*, *The Dragon Brief 2020*, and *Reflections, Stories of Love, Leadership, Courage and Passion*. In 2017, his book: *When Courage was the Essence of Leadership, Lessons from History* was published and in 2019, the new edition was launched. Three new bestselling books were published in 2020 and 2021: *The Commander in Chief*; *The Return of Mussolini, the Rise of Modern-Day Tyranny*; and *Liberation*, which reached the number one bestselling status after one week and became a USA TODAY bestseller. Royalties from the sale of his books go to support charitable causes.

Iodice was recently named a Senator of the Royal Family of Italy. He is Director of the Scientific Committee of the Italy USA Foundation, a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Values- Based Leadership*, and sits on the Board of Trustees of several educational institutions. He resides in Rome, Italy. He can be reached at [efiodice@yahoo.com](mailto:efiodice@yahoo.com).



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## The State of Value Education in Early Childhood:

### *The Challenges and Opportunities for Pakistan*

#### **Abstract**

*Values are the scaffolding of a society within which members exercise their socio-economic roles. They are the fundamental principles, conceptions, and standards which guide the behaviors and actions to be judged as desirable. Therefore, values education is a conscious effort to enable the children to learn and understand commonly-recognized values in order to practice them as a representative member of the community. In developing countries, technological advancements and economic competition are forcing a revision of traditional values and the processes of their formation. Therefore, values education is becoming more important than ever before. In these contexts, like Pakistan, apart from teachers, there are multiple factors such as parents, the broader society, and academic resources, that are all playing significant parts in the value formation of young children. The role of the teacher in this process, therefore, cannot be seen in isolation; rather, there are multiple factors and conditions that collectively impact values education. Therefore, this paper is intended to take a wider stance to reflect on the multiple factors influencing the overall state of values education and the challenges that are in play for values orientation of young children in the early childhood context of Gilgit-Baltistan Pakistan.*

#### **Introduction**

Schools have traditionally been the centers for values formation where young children are provided the opportunities to communicate, experience, and negotiate values that societies have deemed worthwhile. In developing the context, the state regulates

education through curricular and co-curricular intervention and tries to convey and transmit its own identified values to the next generation. Therefore, schools are playing the foundational role for teaching the importance of history, the transfer of traditional ideals, and general values formation (Unal, 2016). Schools are turning into cultural settings where the values formation process of students is not only influenced by educational instruction, but also by the entire school environment. The pictures, quotations, and mottos portrayed on the school walls are all efforts of influencing the values formation process of children and a conscious intervention of transmitting specific values. Technological advancements and economic competition are forcing values revisions. To survive in the competitive environment, entrepreneurship, competitiveness, and individualism are gradually replacing traditional values to become the core values of educational instruction (Unal, 2016). Preschoolers learn values from their school context environment, from their fellow students, and from their teachers. These children learn values consciously and unconsciously from their schools and particularly from the responses of their teachers (Johansson, 2018b). Within the academic setting, young children learn from school rules, events, prohibitions, role models, and social relationships (Johansson et al., 2014). Hence, the school environment represents a powerful tool to influence young minds – beginning at the preschool level.

### Values Identified

Values have been considered as the “determiners of how people will live in harmony and peace without hurting one another and become virtuous individuals within the community” (Khathi, Govender, & Ajani, 2021, p.404). These fundamental principles and conceptions have been categorized by Turkkahraman (2013) into individual, societal, national, and global values. According to Turkkahraman, “*individual values* are answers to the questions like which values make me great or inspire me ... whereas *societal values* are criteria shared by most of a society in an ideal sense, all of which led them to the better society. Societal values regulate and organize daily life. Such values as honesty, sedulity, helpfulness, and modesty are some of these societal values. From a sociological perspective, ideally, real values are only unique to one society.” The third category has been identified as the *national values* of a nation. According to Turkkahraman, “National values are values that are necessary for a nation’s unity and existence... National values function as keeping us together at home while keeping us different from the rest in the world. Societal values and national values do not contradict, just the opposite, they are built on each other. In that sense, no societal value can exist against the constitutional system which is defined by national values.” The final category is comprised of *global values* which are shared by all societies. “Global values are not relative like societal ones but are universal although this very saying depends on societal choices. For example, one can either stay in the global arena or rest in the societal sphere. The main problem is how a traditional society surrounded by traditional values can move beyond the limitations posed by the society itself” (p. 635).

### Values Education at the Preschool Level

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Values education is a conscious effort to encourage children to learn and understand the values so that they practice them as desirable members of society (Johansson, 2018b). The main purpose of values education is to promote inculcating values that are instrumental for young children to live confident and happy lives in their respective communities. The promotion of values can be embraced by young children as a code of life for functioning as individuals and members of society (Ulavere & Veisson, 2015). Turkkahraman (2013) believes that “the purpose of values education is to create values and raise individuals who convert their values to behaviors. Values cannot be gained by telling or describing. They should be experienced directly, internalized, and should be given with the feelings related to them” (p. 636). This description of values education refers to the importance of consistent self-awareness by the learners and demonstration of harmonious interaction in the classroom and out on the playground (Lovat & Hawkes, 2013). The preschool context is a limited world for young children where they spend several hours of their school day interacting with their peers and teachers; in this setting, both conscious and unconscious values processing occurs. In this regard, Tofteland, (2018) emphasized the importance of the daily routine of a child such as meal time, cleaning time, and playing time; these are identified as the most significant opportunities to learn democratic values. In this kind of real-world experience, children share a meaningful social context whereby values transfer are always in progress; students continually experience, express, and negotiate their values in their preschool environment. Similarly, they live in a microcosm of the world in which they learn curricular directives and teacher-initiated rules and regulations.

### **Role of Teachers in Values Education at the Preschool Level**

The literature on values education regularly emphasizes the critical role of the teacher for values formation of children within the academic context. Radha (2016) mentioned that “Teachers are role-models for the students. Their actions convey more than their words. Students learn values from what the teachers are rather than from what they say. Teacher makes a maximum impact on the personality of a student in the formative years. Students absorb virtues and vices knowingly and unknowingly from these role models. Teachers demonstrate the appropriate behaviors of their students by their actions” (p. 56). Teachers play a critical role to help the children to reflect on their values and valuation processes and acquire the needed and desirable values for their societies. Another important function of the teacher is to ensure a line of communication between families and schools for uniform values orientation for the young children in a preschool setting. Young children bring certain values to the school acquired from their families. Sometimes young children get confused when there is a variance between family and school values. Teachers face challenges to accommodate or synchronize the two sets of values. For example, a school may try to teach students to be helpful to everyone whereas parents might instruct that being helpful to a stranger may harm their children (Gui et al., 2020).

The personal and professional competencies of the teachers are fundamental for leading this complex endeavor of developing values education of young children in their academic settings. Teachers must be aware of their own values that might affect the values formation process of the children. Secondly, educational institutions have a variety of

competing values such as those espoused by principals, administrators, and system authorities, against the backdrop of family values which collectively influence the development of the children (Gokce, 2021). Teachers are the custodians of the learning environment of the classrooms and often knowingly or unknowingly interject their own perspectives which impact values formation in their students. Teachers must synthesize and maneuver these competing values for the benefit of protecting children from any deleterious consequences. Therefore, it is important for instructor educational programs to review and develop courses to train teachers to identify incongruities and assist with streamlining values.

### **Role of Parents and Society for Values Education at the Preschool Level**

Apart from teachers, there are multiple factors such as parents, the broader society, and available resources within the school that are playing a significant part in the values formation of its students. Schools and the community cannot work separately. They are part of a single social process, cultural pattern, and political and legal system. Their role in values formation, orientation, and cultural transmission are indispensable and irreplaceable. Parents need support from the school and the school needs support from the parents to instill values (Frydkova, 2013). Therefore, “The moral development of students is under the responsibility of schools, teachers, parents, and society. Every party should cooperate in developing students’ morality no matter at home, in school or in the community” (Gui et al., 2020, p.58). The collective role and effective collaboration between parent, community, and school in values acquisition can help construct the character and personality of a young child (Saputri & Marzuki, 2022). Paramount is the ownership of value education by the parents and the broader community who co-create and organize programs that will make a valuable contribution to the community (Azahari, 2019).

Families are key components as young children learn from their parents and other family members a plethora of beliefs deemed “right” and “wrong” even before coming to school for the first time. Therefore, families represent the fundamental sources of transmitting values in young children (Saputri & Marzuki, 2021). However, a substantial proportion of parents from disadvantaged classes tends to be less involved in the academic process. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2012) reports that, “Disadvantaged parents tend to be less involved in their children’s schooling, for multiple economic and social reasons. Policies need to ensure that disadvantaged schools prioritize their links with parents and communities and improve their communication strategies to align school and parental efforts” (p. 12).

Apart from the collective role of teachers, parents, and society at large, the learning environment within the school plays a vital role. Ulavere and Veisson (2015) argue that: “In the context of teaching values, the design of the learning environment in preschool institutions is important... Similarly, the attitudes and values transmitted by the behavior of teachers and parents are also important” (p. 110). In addition, the availability of resources is another dominant factor that influences the school operations which impact values education. Dangara (2016) argues that in developing regions, the scarcity of resources is a

persistent problem. Therefore, the judicious use of the available resources is extremely important to avoid waste. “This is because when a given level of resources is efficiently utilized, more services are provided through the balanced usage and adequate maintenance of the available facilities” (p.30).

In a nutshell, the role of the teacher in the values formation of young children cannot be seen in isolation from home and larger community environments. Successful values education is influenced by the local community and larger government in developing programs, allocating resources, and generating political will (Saputri & Marzuki, 2021). Therefore, this paper has intended to take a wider stance to reflect on the multiple factors influencing the overall state of values education and the challenges that values orientation of young children face in the early childhood context of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan.

### **The State of Early Childhood Education (ECE) in Pakistan**

Pakistan has promised the international community to fulfill its commitment about early childhood education by signing the *Jomtien Declaration for Education* which states that learning begins at birth. The *National Education Policy of 2009* and the recently finalized education sector plans have paid significant attention to early childhood education. However, the most critical gap remains the budget for ECE to address the fundamental right of children to education and care.

The recently developed *National Curriculum of Pakistan* endeavors to build a nation with exemplary attitudes and behaviors, capable of dealing with the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (p. 5). The aim of education pronounced in this *Single National Curriculum* document is to educate Pakistani people to be:

- *Seekers of truth and knowledge who can apply it for the progress of society.*
- *Creative, constructive, communicative, and reflective individuals.*
- *Disciplined, productive, moderate, and enlightened citizens.*
- *Citizens capable of effectively participating in the highly competitive global, knowledge-based economy, and the information age;*
- *Citizens committed to create a just and civil society that respects diversity of views, beliefs, and faiths* (p. 14).

Within the frame of these broader aims, the document pronounces specific values related to objectives for early childhood education which aims to:

- *Provide for the holistic development of the child, which includes physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and moral development.*
- *Nurture tolerance and respect for diversity.*
- *Nurture in children a sense of identity and pride in being a Pakistani citizen.*
- *Create in children a sense of citizenship in community, country, and the world.*
- *Foster a sense of independence, self-reliance, and a positive self-image.*
- *Equip the child with life-long learning skills.*
- *Develop values, morals, ethics, and civic sense.*
- *Sharpen aesthetic sense of children.*

- *Develop teamwork and a sharing attitude* (pp. 14-15).

International commitments, national education policies, and curriculum-based documents are increasingly focused on early childhood education. More importantly, the aims highlighted in these policies and documents are heavily loaded with references to values. These commitments and documents are in line with Johansson (2018a) who argues that “it is crucial for policymakers to reflect on what values children should learn and strive for as citizens of society and what kind of society these values can create. Values based on diversity, democracy, and community cannot be taken for granted; they must always be defended” (p.50). In developing countries like Pakistan, the documents and policies seem attractive in terms of commitments and promises, but the problem starts at the implementation stage. Imparting values education at the early childhood level requires the active collaboration of multiple social institutions; therefore, it cannot be considered the sole responsibility of the schools. “Many factors (such as family, school, religion, and media) play roles in forming the individual’s mental and moral world. Unless these social institutions constitute a synergic blend, the values that are given at schools will be inadequate for the values education. In this sense, it is essential for these kinds of social institutions to collaborate for the target within the framework of a blended model” (Turkkahraman, 2013, p. 637). Therefore, the resources and capacities of multiple social institutions to meaningfully collaborate for implementing a values-based educational model remains a challenging task.

### **The Challenges of Values-Focused Education During Early Childhood in Pakistan**

Values-based education is vital at the early childhood level because “the most crucial years in the formation of permanent values are the childhood years when children’s minds are pure. It is very difficult to change the values that are gained in these years” (Turkkahraman, 2013, p. 637). Therefore, the access of a child to early childhood education, the capacity of teachers to lead values-focus educational endeavors, the availability of resources for childhood education, parental involvement, and home-school relationships are all necessary to fashion a successful developmental program in this area.

#### ***Access to Early Childhood Education***

Like other developing countries, Pakistan is attempting to cope with the challenge of providing childhood education to its eligible citizens. ASER Pakistan (2017) reports that “61% (rural) and 42% (urban) children between ages 3-5 are out of school in Pakistan. This highlights an urgent need to address this problem and work towards an alliance which models and incorporates necessary Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all.” Therefore, a comprehensive and multidimensional awareness campaign must be launched to improve accessibility to partake in early childhood education programs. In this regard, Ahmad (2011) emphasized that: “All possible modes and means – such as workshops, conferences, symposia, forums and the mass media – should be utilized for raising awareness about the issues that need to be promoted” (p. 90). He further suggests that the “parliamentarians or members of legislatures are key to the implementation of early

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childhood care and development of a plan of action, the success of which will require that they promote raising awareness, adopt necessary legislation, facilitate and appropriate the financial resources needed for this purpose, and monitor their effective utilization” (p.91). Partnerships with non-government organizations, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations can significantly improve opportunities to partake in early childhood education. In addition, early childhood education can be made mandatory throughout the country. Under the prevailing circumstances, if a nationwide, values-focused educational intervention is provided to young children without exception, the educational sector would be able to reach out to only 39% of rural and 58% of urban children because, according to the ASER report, “61% (rural) and 42% (urban) children between ages 3-5 are out of the school.” Therefore, improving access is critical in the country to reach out to the maximum number of children with a values-based curriculum.

### ***Lack of Resources***

Lack of resources is integrally linked to the access issue of young children to early childhood education. “Pakistan spends 2.4% GDP on education. At the national level, 89% of education expenditures is comprised of current expenses such as teachers’ salaries, while only 11% is comprised of development expenditures which is not sufficient to raise the quality of education” (Yousafzai, 2019, p.2). “The ECE budget is insignificant and the allocation of capital to the ECE to reform the education sector is too small to come across the requirements of 8 million children of all age groups” (Arshad & Zamir, 2018, p.139). The country, especially with respect to the public sector schools, is suffering from the shortage of material resources to effectively operate early childhood education (Khan, 2018). The public sector’s early childhood centers need physical resources which must be met through additional budgetary allocations from federal and provincial governments. The basic physical resources such as classrooms, educational resources, and materials, drinking water, pick-up and drop-off service, audio/visual aids, playgrounds, and bathrooms are imperative for a quality, early childhood education (Ahmad, Anjum, & Rehman, 2015). Apart from increasing funding, it is important to make newly-allocated funds non-lapsable and non-transferable so that it becomes mandatory for the authorities to spend the allocated budget on the provision of early childhood educational services. In addition, non-government and community-based organizations are playing a significant role in providing quality early childhood education throughout the country. Therefore, partnerships could be developed between these organizations and public sector education departments to improve accessibility and quality of early childhood education in the country (Ahmad, 2011). This scarcity of resources is yet another setback for initiating planned values education at this age level.

### ***Teacher Training***

Imparting values education at an early age involves multifaceted and complex processes which demand adequate professional competencies for the teachers. According to Zachrisen (2018), these teachers must have the traits of self-reflection about their beliefs, values, and an interpretation of diversity and equality in their pedagogical work. These teachers are continuously involved in weighing and balancing different options and different individual needs in a preschool context. Therefore, in these changing



circumstances, the teachers need a set of tools that are in line with the holistic nature of values education (Puroila & Haho, 2017).

The *National Curriculum Document of Pakistan* (2009) explicitly emphasizes that primary schools maintain mandatory, early childhood education centers. It also proposed to enlarge additional budgetary resources to train teachers for at least two years. However, the shortage of trained teachers in early childhood education has been a historical problem which is still persistent to this date due to limited, government investment. Therefore, the least qualified and most poorly-trained teachers are directed to early childhood education (Hunzai, 2009). Also, 50% of teachers in the department lack professional qualifications. *The National Education Census* (2005) claimed that out of the 1.35 million teachers, only 3,860 were employed in pre-school education.

The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training in Islamabad (2017) carried out a study to explore the status of early childhood education in Pakistan and claimed that the “specialized training of teachers as recommended in the policy could not be provided to the ECE teachers in the provinces and regions. While exploring reasons for not providing specialized training to the teachers, it was found that in the provinces and regions, a single teacher policy in primary school was the main hurdle, because a single teacher could not be spared for training. Other reasons include the lack of financial resources and the distance of the school from the training institution” (p. IX). The public sector teachers in the country at the preschool level do not have a mechanism of an ongoing organized and focused training program. The teachers in the private sector, however, receive occasional, but limited training opportunities (Wasi et al., 2018). Above all, “none of the public universities in Pakistan offer degrees, graduate courses, teacher training programs and world-class research in education for ECE teachers” (Khan, 2018, p. 315). Therefore, Ahmad (2011) proposes that “special provision should be made for the training (both pre-service and in-service) of ECE teachers. All teacher training colleges/institutions in the country should initiate ECE teacher training programs. Similarly, research on various aspects of ECE may be conducted and, based on the research findings, curricula, training, and assessment and evaluation program should be strengthened” (p. 92).

### ***Parental Involvement***

“Parents have the most time in educating their children in the family environment, so parents have the main role for the success of imparting values education to their children. Therefore, parents are the party most responsible for the process of instilling values in their children. Children, as successors to parents, must have good-bad and right-wrong values and be able to apply good values in their environment (Azahari, 2019, p. 108). Surely, parents and other family members represent a critical component of education, and the values-based orientation process of a child is almost incomplete without their active involvement. Most of the time, children live with their parents and tend to perceive their parents as social role models, imitating their behaviors and actions. This is how the values orientation of children takes place at their homes with their parents. Therefore, Frydkova (2013) argues that: “Formation of value awareness of a child in its first years is determined mainly by family life and role models, parents predominantly. Later, education is influenced by the school life of a child: environment, interaction between peers, and

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cooperation between family and school. Family becomes part of a school community and both the child's success at school and the shaping of values consciousness are formed by cooperation between school and family, as well as by the family's participation in the educational process" (p. 2311).

Pakistan as a developing country has its own socio-economic challenges. The public sector, which maintains the largest schooling system in the country, offers free education; therefore, it is the priority of the parents and children from lower and low-to-middle income classes of the population to partake of this benefit. Most of the parents from these socio-economic groups are struggling with poverty; maintaining their livelihood is their biggest worry before being concerned with the education of their children. Thus, they are the least motivated to be involved in the education of their children (Cameron et al., 2015). A study conducted in Pakistan by Ahmad, Ronka, and Perala-Littunen (2021) reported that: "Teachers believed that susceptible socioeconomic circumstances and adherence to local customs hindered many parents from participating in their children's education. In line with this, teachers frequently held negative perceptions regarding children's parents, and these perceptions have the potential to adversely affect parent-teacher communication and children's learning" (p. 1).

The second challenge is the educational level of the parents throughout the country. Most of the parents from lower and low-to-middle classes are uneducated or have a low level of education. Hence, their perception about the importance of school and the education process of their children is not encouraging. Most of the time, these parents believe that by enrolling their children in school, the ongoing task of educating their children is the sole responsibility of the schools. And because of their low level of education, they are unable to make a meaningful contribution to the education of their children (Perriel, 2015). Secondly, like other societies around the world, these lower and low-to-middle class individuals share a common geographic area and form a community. Hence, minimal interest and motivation towards the education of their children creates a local culture throughout these communities; a neighborhood is developed which pays less attention to the education of children and is characterized by a low level of parental collaboration with schools.

The perception and attitude of the teachers towards the parental community is another problem in developing countries like Pakistan. Due to the lack of professional development, teachers consider parents a burden and disregard them as meaningfully involved in the education of their children. In this regard, Malik et al. (2021), studied the views and perspectives of selected parents in the Pakistani context, reporting that "the participants of the study have complained about the reluctant behavior of teachers in public schools. Mostly, ECE teachers show less concern with the child's performance in schools. Participants reported to be uninformed about the daily performance of their children by the school" (p. 793).

## **Conclusion**

The transition from traditional to the modern market economy has created chaos and turmoil in many developing countries. The traditional social orders were rapidly

overshadowed by a preference for economic ascension. “Education has become a business today. This has changed the outlook for students as well as the parents and it has further resulted in the deterioration of respect for teachers and all those who are part and parcel of the education system. The (growing) political, social, and scientific attention to the moral aspects of teaching also concerns teacher education. In today’s era of competition and survival, we observe laxity in values. Industrialization has led to the emergence of affluence lifestyles and has raised the standard of living for many people. It has made men and women rich in a materialistic sense but eroded the ethical fiber of society” (Gul, 2017, p. 1).

In many developing societies, the role of meaningful values-based education is attracting more critical review, not only for its social cohesion and national integration but also for cultivating a peaceful, tolerant, and contributing world society irrespective of physical boundaries. “Value shapes our relationships, our behaviors, our choices, and our sense of who we are. The more positive our values, the most positive our actions” (Indrani, 2012, p.2). The current era demands that a more aggressively planned values-based education be started at an early childhood age. “Values education must be done from an early age as the most fundamental phase in human life. Early age is the phase of golden age from which human life must be utilized as optimally as possible because it will never be repeated throughout the span of human life” (Fauzi & Novikasari, 2019, p. 289)

Research has proven that planned values education intervention has yielded significant results in these developing contexts. For example, in the Turkish context, Dereli-İman (2014) surmised that the “social skills, psycho-social development and social problem-solving skill levels of the children who participated in the Values Education Program (experimental group) were significantly higher than the children who did not participate in the education program (control group)” (p.266). Therefore, despite the many challenges, early childhood education in Pakistan needs a comprehensively planned, values-focused educational program to better equip younger generations to successfully meet the emerging challenges of the modern market economy and develop into contributing and beneficial citizens not only of the country, but of the world at large.

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JOURNAL OF VALUES-BASED LEADERSHIP

CASE STUDY

## Resolving Conflicts Through Soft Leadership— *An Academic Case Study*

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose is to present a case study on soft leadership to resolve conflict effectively. It adopts the 11 Cs of Professor M.S. Rao, the father of “soft leadership” — character, charisma, conscience, conviction, courage, communication, compassion, commitment, consistency, consideration, and contribution. It draws a blueprint to resolve conflicts amicably. It emphasizes that leaders have to act according to the situation, with more emphasis on soft leadership, for resolving conflicts to achieve a win-win outcome. It describes how to redress grievance in a private Indian educational institution through soft leadership. It offers practical ideas and innovative tools and techniques to resolve conflicts. It points out that conflicts cannot be eliminated in organizations, but can only be minimized if leaders and stakeholders adopt a proactive attitude. Understanding this philosophy and exploring soft leadership to resolve conflicts helps organizations enhance their productivity and performance.*

### **Introduction**

*The good leaders do the best thing in the prevailing situation whereas the great leaders do the right thing in any situation — irrespective of the effects and outcomes.* Professor Ken worked in a private educational institution in India as a Professor teaching MBA students. He received a letter of appointment for the post of Professor in an X educational institution from the Secretary of an educational society consisting of seven educational institutions. After joining, the Professor was instructed to impart soft-skills training to the students of the seven educational institutions since the Professor earned his doctoral degree in the area of soft skills. The Professor did not appreciate the role’s ambiguity. Hence, he asked the educational institution about the same. The Principal of the X institution informed the Professor in the presence of the Secretary that he had to offer soft-skills training as an additional responsibility, and not at the cost of his management subjects.

Since the Professor was passionate about sharing his knowledge with the students, he agreed to impart soft-skills training to the students of all educational institutions. He encountered organizational politics as he had to report to multiple Principals and the Head of the Departments (HODs) of each institution to coordinate and organize soft-skills training to students. It was indeed a tough task, pleasing the egos of intellectuals of various educational institutions. If he had worked only for X educational institution, he would have confined sharing his knowledge to the students effectively and avoided politics. Somehow, he managed to work there for 3 years successfully despite organizational politics. At the end of the third year, the X educational institution transferred the Professor to another educational institution Y which lacked an adequate intake of students and was inferior in infrastructure and image. He reported to the Principal of Y

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educational institution as per the instructions of the Secretary of the Educational Society. He realized that there was a scarcity of Professors with Ph.D. qualifications in the Y institution. However, the Professor was dejected as he was not consulted before the transfer. He requested the Secretary of the Educational Society to transfer him back to the X institution. But there was no positive response from the Secretary.

The Professor requested two days' leave to attend the anniversary of his father-in-law's passing. He sent an e-mail to the Principal, requesting about two days of leave. It was reported that an inspection team by the All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) would visit the institution at any time to check whether everything was proper. The date of the AICTE inspection team visiting the educational institution was not known as it was a sudden inspection to check the irregularities in private educational institutions in India. The Professor addressed over an e-mail to the Principal about proceeding on two days' leave to a far distant place to attend the anniversary.

The Professor received a response by way of a message on his cell phone about the AICTE inspection team visiting the Y educational institution. But he was helpless as he had already boarded the bus to travel to another location. The very next day, he received a telephone call that he must report to the Y institution as the inspection team had already visited the premises. He informed telephonically about his inability to report to the institution as he was in another city to attend the family event.

The Professor returned after two days of leave to the Y institution and resumed performing his roles and responsibilities. He came to know that the AICTE inspection team had visited the institution during his leave. After a month, the report came from the AICTE inspection team about the cancellation of the MBA course due to the shortage of Professors with Ph.D. qualifications. The institution also lacked a favorable reputation and had low student enrollment in previous years. During the last academic year, the institution only registered seven students instead of the usual intake of 60. The institution did not have adequate faculty and the administrators of the institution inflated faculty numbers artificially to show to the AICTE inspection team. In this way, several private educational institutions in India have manipulated their figures sent to the regulating bodies. The institution did have adequate infrastructure to provide the courses. The institution did not maintain its academic records properly and many complaints were filed against the institution in court. It did not pay salaries to departing employees and terminated several employees arbitrarily, subjecting them to debasing humiliation. The Secretary of the Educational Society had both political power and economic resources. He had the power to influence many local politicians and offer bribes to officials. As a result, most employees were scared of the Secretary and refused to file cases against him in a court of law or to the university to which the educational institution was affiliated.

The Y institution applied to the affiliated university to reconsider the cancellation of the MBA course by informing that the Professor was available and was back from leave. The university did not consider their request and canceled the course for an academic year.

In the meanwhile, the institution stopped paying a salary to the Professor. He repeatedly requested payment. Finally, the Professor was terminated from services on administrative

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grounds with a one-month notice. Professor served for a month as per their notice. On the final working day, he was not given a relieving order and service certificate by the institution. His salary for more than three months was not paid. He requested the Principal and the Secretary while in service to rectify this failure to compensate for services rendered. The Principal supported the Secretary. Finally, the Professor had to leave the college without receiving the relieving order and service certificate and his salary for more than three months.

The Professor approached various forums for redress of his grievance. The Secretary was influenced by his money and political power and avoided paying the salary. Finally, the highest regulating body in India – AICTE – instructed the institution to redress the grievance as there was an embedded system within the college website to constitute a Grievance Committee meeting. The institution conducted the Grievance Committee meeting with their employees and asked the Professor to attend the meeting. Since the Professor lacked any trust in this process, and was additionally receiving threats to his personal security, he did not attend the meeting. The Grievance Committee meeting concluded that the institution lost money due to the cancellation of their MBA course and that damages had to be paid by the Professor. The institution decided to initiate legal action against the Professor. Instead of paying the Professor for his work, the institution threatened to file a legal case to recover damages. Here are some questions to think about this case study:

1. Who was at fault for the cancellation of the MBA course?
2. Was there any miscommunication between the Professor, Principal, and Secretary?
3. Can the institution stop paying a salary to the Professor without giving any supporting reason?
4. Did the Grievance Committee meeting conducted by the institution have any legality and sanctity?
5. Why did the Y institution not conduct the Grievance Committee meeting before terminating the Professor's services?
6. Was it justified by the Secretary of the Educational Society to request that the Professor pay for damages due to the cancellation of their MBA course by the AICTE?
7. What is the role of AICTE and affiliated universities to resolve this grievance?
8. How can the Professor recover his salary?
9. What are the other weaknesses in this case study?
10. What is right and wrong?

Conflicts occur and problems arise in analyzing the issues presented, largely due to variables such as personality, ego, differences of opinions, cultural differences, perceptions, miscommunication, the paucity of information, ambiguity in roles and responsibilities, stress, and scarcity of resources. Usually, conflicts arise when there is a gap between expectations and reality.

## **A Blueprint to Resolve Conflicts Amicably**

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Don't avoid conflicts. Resolve them amicably and earnestly. If you postpone addressing conflicts, they become crises later which will be difficult to manage. Concurrently, ensure that conflicts don't become chronic. The following is a blueprint to help resolve such problems in a more judicious and comprehensive manner:

- Consult experts in the area of conflict when in doubt because nobody knows everything.
- Communicate clearly. Shannon L. Alder once remarked, "The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't being said. The art of reading between the lines is a lifelong quest of the wise." Ensure that all stakeholders are respected and treated with dignity and honor.
- Be a good listener. Avoid preconceived notions. Have an open mind to examine the conflicts to resolve them amicably.
- Maintain a positive body language. Observe the body language cues of others to identify their inner motives and intentions.
- Be cool and composed. Maintain a cheerful disposition throughout discussions.
- Keep the doors of negotiation open in the event the negotiators fail to reach an understanding.
- Focus on your strengths and overcome your weaknesses to do better in the negotiation.
- Find out the motives behind the conflict.
- Don't react. Act.
- Take breaks to recharge yourself and view the conflict with a new perspective.
- If the conflict is substantial, dissect it into smaller pieces and address them one by one. However, ensure that you don't lose sight of the big picture.
- Be flexible and at the same time restate your points clearly and assertively.
- Stick to the facts, not opinions.
- Observe the hidden reasons behind the conflicts to adequately address them.
- Attack the issue, not the individuals.
- Emphasize similarities, not differences.
- Empathize with others.
- Strive for a win-win result. Give concessions, if possible. Show a graceful exit to your opponent, if proven culpable.
- Close the issue and avoid boasting about your victory to avoid further complications.

### **Adopt Soft Leadership to Resolve Conflicts Amicably**

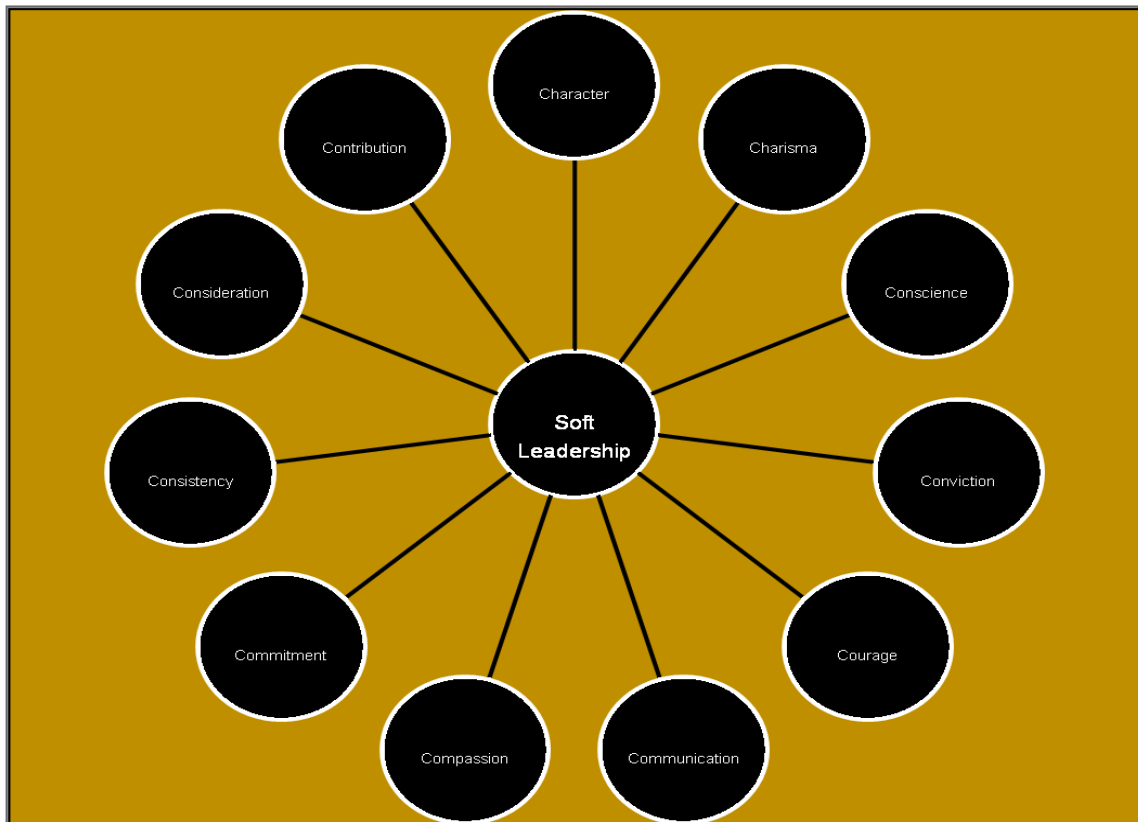
Leaders adopt various leadership styles and tools to resolve organizational conflicts. They can adopt a soft leadership style to achieve the desired outcomes without adversely affecting the relations. Soft leadership believes in applying pressure to get things done. It doesn't believe in using force and violence. It believes in cooperation and collaboration, not competition and compromise. It emphasizes persuasion, negotiation, discussion, and dialogue to resolve conflicts with people-orientation without compromising task-orientation. Soft leaders search for synergy and collaboration. They avoid aggressive

posture towards conflicts. They explore various options to make the outcome win-win through persuasion and negotiation.

### The 11 Cs of Soft Leadership

Leadership basically depends on three aspects – how one communicates with others; how one makes decisions; and how one undertakes action. Executing these activities effectively generates successful leaders. However, to evolve as a soft leader, one must communicate with an emphasis on soft skills: i.e., making decisions by blending one's head, heart, and emotions and taking action which ground realities and establish goals without compromising task-orientation. There are 11 Cs that constitute soft leadership. They are character, charisma, conscience, conviction, courage, communication, compassion, commitment, consistency, consideration, and contribution. It is highly challenging for people to cultivate these 11 characteristics. However, if people possess more than 6 traits, they get into the fold of soft leadership. *Figure 1* shows the connection of the 11 Cs that collectively constitute soft leadership.

**Figure 1: The Eleven Cs of Soft Leadership**



Soft leadership is a blend of courageous leadership, thought leadership, servant leadership, and inspirational leadership. It suggests more of a genteel, respectful approach and advocates a transformational rather than a transactional perspective. It focuses more on people rather than orients on tasks. It underscores partnership over the

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perpetuation of a traditional command-and-control approach. There is an immediate need for young adults to apply it to unlock their potential to contribute their best to organizations. It stresses soft over hard skills. It emphasizes personality, attitude, and behavior rather than technical competency or domain knowledge. Succinctly, soft leadership can be defined as the process of setting goals; influencing people through persuasion; building strong teams; negotiating them with a win-win attitude; respecting their failures; handholding them; motivating them constantly; aligning their energies and efforts; and recognizing and appreciating their contributions to accomplishing organizational objectives. Soft leadership is based on the right mindset, skillset, and toolset.

### Solution

*Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.*

— William James

The Y educational institution should have compensated the Professor as the latter served the institution as per the terms of the contract by conducting classes regularly and discharging his duties professionally. If there were any ill will, the Professor, Principal, and Secretary should have met to understand what really went wrong in order to adequately address the problems that arose. Unfortunately, that did not happen. The Y educational institution lacked teamwork. How can an employee be liable for the loss of an MBA course to the educational institution? When the Professor intimated in advance about proceeding on leave, the Principal and the Secretary should have made alternative arrangements to meet the requirements of the AICTE inspection team. The Principal of the institution should have shown the attendance records of the Professor for the last three years and should have persuaded the AICTE inspection team that he had proceeded on leave due to the anniversary of a late relative. Since the Professor returned after two days of leave and worked in the institution for two months thereafter, the Principal should have taken the Professor to the inspection team to show that the Professor was actually serving in the educational institution.

To conclude, the Principal must take the moral responsibility for her failure to persuade the AICTE inspection team. It was purely her inefficiency to handle administrative affairs. It was an attempt by the Principal and the Secretary to make the Professor into a scapegoat for the total mismanagement of the Principal. The Secretary was an autocratic leader with excessive ego and hubris who lacked any concern for rules and regulations. The Secretary of the Educational Society should be punished for causing financial hardships to the Professor by not paying his salary. The educational institution must be closed for its irregularities and unethical practices.

### Conclusion

Conflicts help individuals and organizations to iron out differences and reach a conclusion. Realization is the solution to resolve many conflicts in the world. People must sit together to resolve their conflicts. Ronald Reagan rightly remarked, "I've always believed that a lot

of the troubles in the world would disappear if we were talking to each other instead of about each other.” It is essential to build trust to create a conducive environment for resolving conflicts. Additionally, emphasize on *what* is right and wrong, not *who* is right and wrong to resolve conflicts amicably and effectively. To conclude, conflicts cannot be eliminated in organizations. They can only be minimized if leaders and stakeholders adopt a proactive attitude. Understanding this philosophy and exploring soft leadership to resolve conflicts which arise help organizations to enhance their productivity and performance.

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## About the Author



Professor M.S. Rao, Ph.D. is the Father of “Soft Leadership” and the Founder of MSR Leadership Consultants, India. He is an International Leadership Guru with forty years of experience and the author of fifty books including the award-winning *See the Light in You* URL: <https://www.amazon.com/See-Light-You-Spiritual-Mindfulness/dp/1949003132>. He is a C-Suite advisor and global keynote speaker. He brings a strategic eye and long-range vision given his multifaceted professional experience in military affairs, teaching, training, research, consultancy, and philosophy. He is passionate about serving and making a difference in the lives of others. He is a regular contributor to *Entrepreneur Magazine*. He trains a new generation of leaders through leadership education and publications. His vision is to mold one million students into global leaders by 2030. He has the vision to share his knowledge freely with one billion people globally. He advocates gender equality globally (#HeForShe). He was ranked #1 Thought Leader and Influencer in HR globally by Thinkers360 (see <https://www.thinkers360.com/top-50-global-thought-leaders-and-influencers-on-hr-sept-ember-2020/>). He invests his time in authoring books and blogging on the topics of executive education, learning, and leadership. Most of his work is available free of charge on his four blogs. He is a prolific author and a dynamic, energetic, and inspirational leadership speaker.

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## ***Ubuntu Leadership – An explication of an Afrocentric leadership style***

### **Abstract**

*The development of leadership theories has mostly followed a Western perspective, with non-Western theories often excluded from recorded chronologies of leadership examples. Ubuntu leadership, a style promoted following South Africa's first democratic election, is one such leadership theory. While Ubuntu has been an ethnographic philosophy and a long-established part of African cultures, its underlying philosophy gained prominence following eminent South African leaders' call to bring Ubuntu principles into the national reconstruction and development plan of post-apartheid South Africa. While Ubuntu leadership has since been extensively studied, it is still relatively unknown beyond Africa. This paper explains Ubuntu leadership by analysing the post-match speech of Siya Kolisi, the captain of the South African National Rugby team, following the team's victory at the World Cup Rugby Tournament in Japan in November 2019. Kolisi's speech has been heralded as remarkable worldwide, and upon closer investigation, reveals many elements of Ubuntu leadership. In this paper, the transcript of Siya Kolisi's speech is analysed to provide insights into the constituent elements of Ubuntu leadership to explicate this leadership style to unapprised audiences. Additionally, the analysis asks why this leadership style has not found acclaim beyond Africa and calls for further research to develop a taxonomy of Ubuntu leadership principles.*

### **Introduction**

Leadership theories have been in existence for millennia. While the “great man” theory is often cited as the first leadership theory, it is best described as a leadership philosophy as it originated from Christian religious beliefs and was not grounded in any particular postulation (Spocctor, 2016). Notwithstanding its lack of theoretical grounding, the great man philosophy later gave rise to the first leadership theory, “trait” theory (Halaychik, 2016). On examining the history of leadership theory development, it is apparent that one leadership theory often served as the bedrock for the next. For instance, trait theory served as the foundation for behavioural theory (Horner, 1997), while the shortcomings of behavioural theory then gave rise to the development of contingency theory, and so forth

(Ayman, Chemers, & Fiedler, 1995). The development of leadership theory, however, had a Western perspective, with some arguing that leadership theory often had an American, male-dominant focus (GuramatunhuCooper, 2017). It is however reassuring to note that efforts to address the flawed trajectory of leadership development are being made by scholars. In GuramatunhuCooper's (2017) work, the lack of an African perspective regarding political leadership was highlighted, while Cramer and Witcomb (2018) demonstrated how female leaders were excluded from the recording of a male dominant history (Cramer & Witcomb, 2018).

The literature also offers evidence of a resurgence of leadership theories that are not included in the dominant leadership literature. Scholars have, for instance, identified emotional leadership – following successful female leaders who have proudly acknowledged their proclivity for emotional leadership (Pullen & Vachhani, 2020). These lesser-known leadership theories are yet to receive the same level of scrutiny. While the dominant, mostly Western leadership theories are further popularised through media outlets, consultants, and practitioners, the same cannot be said of these lesser-known leadership theories. The result is that the unapprised are often at a loss to understand these lesser-known theories as they are often the preserve of specialist academics. Heightened interest in a lesser-known leadership style, therefore, is unsurprising when the media or social media highlights such leadership styles by scrutinising the acts or omissions of leaders or other luminaries. For example, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, Jacinda Ardern, has helped to elucidate the concept of empathetic leadership in politics, where expression of empathy is often considered an undesirable trait. Ardern was quoted in a social media blog: “It takes courage and strength to be empathetic and I am proudly an empathetic, compassionate leader and politician” (Pozzo, 2018). Soon after making this comment, Ardern gave an exemplary demonstration of her empathetic leadership style through the management of the aftermath of a terrorist attack on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The exposure of Ardern's leadership style through the media and social media platforms then gave rise to a renewed academic interest in empathetic leadership, thereby making this leadership style part of the leadership development discourse (Mustaqim, 2019; Pullen & Vachhani, 2020). So, too, have various media sources helped to underline leadership styles based on non-Western philosophies. For example, in November 2008, during a terrorist attack on a major hotel in Mumbai, India, the media noticed how none of the hotel's employees – although they would have known of escape routes in the hotel – fled the scene. All employees stayed for the duration of the terrorist siege, and various stories of courage and selfless service – where employees offered assistance to the hotel's guests at great risk to themselves – were recorded (Deshpande & Raina, 2011). The media exposé of the courageous acts of the hotel staff led to further research to help explain why they would have exposed themselves to the perilous conditions of a terrorist siege if they had ample opportunity to extricate themselves from the scene. Following this incident, scholars provided an explanation for the hotel staff's behaviour and concluded that their behaviour was the result of what they called Indo-European Leadership (IEL) (Cappelli, Singh, Singh, & Useem, 2015).

*Ubuntu*, an African leadership philosophy, has found acclaim in post-apartheid South Africa, yet it is not known – at least not to the same extent as Western leadership theories

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– outside of Africa. Similar to the examples mentioned earlier, recently South Africa too provided an exemplar of *Ubuntu* leadership on a most unlikely international platform: the winning of the Webb Ellis Cup at the 2019 Rugby World Cup in Yokohama, Japan.

### **Article Objectives**

The focus of media reports following South Africa's victory over England soon shifted from the game to the post-match speech of its captain, Siya Kolisi. Kolisi's post-match speech proved immensely popular and created a euphoric sense of unity among South African supporters. The elation created by his words was intriguing, and the speech was widely regarded as precedent-setting (Kennedy, 2019). In this paper, the interwoven messages of Kolisi's speech are reviewed by means of a basic content analysis in order to reveal some of the constituent elements of *Ubuntu* leadership for an apprised audience. It is hoped that by exploring *ubuntu* leadership principles through the analysis of a simple post-match rugby speech, this paper will stimulate further interest in *Ubuntu* leadership.

### **Kolisi as Leader**

Siya Kolisi is heralded as the first black person to lead South Africa's national rugby team to a Rugby World Cup victory. While this distinction may seem superfluous in a multicultural society, it is truly noteworthy in the South African context, as Kolisi rose to the highest position in a sport that, until the democratisation of South Africa, was a symbol of Afrikaner nationalism (Steenveld & Strelitz, 1998). Kolisi was born in one of the most impoverished provinces of South Africa (Chitiga-Mabugu, Ngepah, Nhemachena, Motala, Mathebula, & Mupela, 2014) and is credited for using sport as a platform for development. His leadership and philanthropy have been recognised, culminating in his receipt of the International Peace and Sport award for outstanding contribution to peace, dialogue, and social change through rugby (Peace and Sport, 2019).

### **Method**

The unedited post-match speech of Siya Kolisi following South Africa's victory over England was transcribed. While there are numerous versions of this speech available on the internet, the transcription of the recording posted by Pundit Arena, an Irish sports media house, was selected. As the speech is relatively short, the researcher was able to conduct manual coding by reading and re-reading the post-match speech to identify salient themes (Bryman, 2008).

### **The Importance of Kolisi's Address**

While the exchange of platitudes and acknowledgments by captains after such a game is typically the same (captains thank their teams, acknowledge their opponents' efforts, and so forth), Kolisi managed to elucidate some noteworthy points in his speech. He managed to acknowledge some of his country's political and socio-economic quandaries and attempted to overcome the divide between the country's diverse rugby support base. He used his platform to inspire the entire South African nation, and demonstrated cultural competency by acknowledging the host country, Japan, with a short Japanese phrase and the customary bowing of the head at the end of his speech. It could therefore be argued

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that his speech transcended the normal rhetoric offered by captains after such tournaments.

Although *Ubuntu* has been an ethnographic philosophy and a long-established part of African cultures, it has only recently been introduced to the broader South African society following the call by acclaimed South African leaders to bring *Ubuntu* principles into the national reconstruction and development plan of post-apartheid South Africa (Nkondo, 2007; Hailey, 2008). The philosophy of *Ubuntu* has since been studied in many sectors, including education (Makalela, 2019), business management (Karsten & Illa, 2005), politics (Nkondo, 2007), leadership (Setlhodi, 2019), and medicine (Stapleton, 2019). While it is difficult to succinctly define *Ubuntu*, as the concept lacks a single acknowledged definition (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho, 2013), the philosophy of *Ubuntu* represents an ethos that draws on crucial community values and ideals (Hailey, 2008). An analysis of Kolisi's speech reveal many of these community values and ideals.

### **Grounded in *Ubuntu* Philosophy**

Kolisi's entire speech is grounded in the core principles of *Ubuntu*. Idoniboye-Obu and Whetho (2013) identified the core principles of *Ubuntu* as communalism, interdependence, compassion, empathy, respect, dignity, equity, fairness, reciprocity, inclusivity, and a sense of shared destiny among peoples, as well as hospitality, responsiveness, and harmony (Idoniboye-Obu & Whetho, 2013). Kolisi's post-match presentation encompasses many of these core values. He started his speech by thanking the South African supporters, both those in South Africa and those who had travelled to watch the game in Japan. He acknowledged his coach and then went on to describe the unique context of the game's supporters. For instance, he thanked the people who gathered at their local taverns and *shebeens* (explained later in this paper) to watch the game. He thanked the people in the rural areas, and even the homeless who made the effort to watch the game at communal screening areas. He then thanked the Japanese people for hosting the games and ended his speech with a Japanese sentence and the customary bowing of the head.

Kolisi acknowledged that his team's victory had a more profound significance. He contextualised the game and victory for the uninformed so they could understand that the country (South Africa) had many problems, but that he hoped that the way in which the team worked together and embraced diversity could be an example to the rest of South Africa.

In contrast to a Western perspective dominated by individualism, collectivism is viewed more favourably in African societies (Eaton & Louw, 2000). Given Kolisi's ethnic background, collectivism as embodied in *Ubuntu* would be central to his response and that is why, in the author's opinion, he responded by displaying gratitude and thanking all supporters in South Africa. For many readers in countries with diverse populations, this may seem obvious, but South Africa continues to struggle with racial conflict and a disparate distribution of wealth (Gibson, 2015). While South Africa experienced a propitious transition to democracy, the country currently faces many challenges, including steady economic growth, stable and predictable political institutions, and a supportive

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political culture (Gyimah-Boadi, 2019). While the victory of the South African rugby team over England certainly cannot contribute directly to solving the quandaries of South Africa, the contribution of sport to nation building cannot be discarded and Kolisi used this international stage to demonstrate to the people, and perhaps more specifically to the leaders of South Africa, that working together to achieve a common goal could be achieved (Labuschagne, 2008).

### **Inclusivity**

Kolisi's speech is characterised by inclusive language. He thanked all the South Africans who supported the national rugby team during the tournament, noting that many had gathered at taverns and shebeens to watch the match: “[We] really appreciate all the support; people in the taverns, people in the shebeens ...” The distinction between a tavern and shebeen might not be obvious. While most readers would know a tavern as an inn or public house where alcohol is served under regulated conditions, a shebeen in the South African context is an unregulated drinking establishment, normally a house located in the poorer communities (Charman, Petersen, & Govender, 2014). By referencing both the supporters that frequent taverns as well as those who frequent shebeens, Kolisi bridged the divide between the affluent and marginalised supporters of the game.

A further example of the inclusive language used by Kolisi is demonstrated when he thanked homeless people, people living in rural areas, and people living on farms. In this regard he said:

*... people on farms and homeless people, there were screens there and people in rural areas, thank you so much. We appreciate all the support. We love you South Africa, and we can achieve anything if we work together as one.*

Fan parks (“there were screens there”) are now intrinsic to mega-sport events. These parks are public areas where mega-sport events are televised in such a way that they mimic the atmosphere in the sports arena (McGillivray & Frew, 2015). Of importance is Kolisi's acknowledgment that fan parks would provide even homeless people with the opportunity to watch the game. This reference to homeless people is important and demonstrates Kolisi's understanding of the socio-economic quandaries of South Africa. Despite the country's efforts to provide public housing to a section of the nation previously excluded from development under Apartheid, homelessness is still a major problem in South Africa (Killander, 2019). Kolisi's acknowledgement that even homeless people are part of the support base of the nation's national rugby team shows that he acknowledges the marginalised members of society's support of the game.

Kolisi further thanked people living in rural areas and those living on farms. Again, this distinction should be elucidated for the benefit of non-South African audiences. While people living in rural areas can be construed as those who live outside metropolitan areas, people living on farms, in the South African context, have a distinctly different meaning. The South African agriculture industry is labour-intensive, with most of the farm workers living in free or subsidised housing on the farmer's land. The industry is characterised by low wages, with farm workers and their families having limited access to education and opportunities for advancement. This sector, thus, lacks the skills to engage in the wider

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economy and is often faced with perpetual poverty (Visser & Ferrer, 2015). By explicitly mentioning farm workers in his speech, Kolisi's speech would resonate with an even wider audience and demonstrates his acknowledgement of the broad support base of the team.

### **Promoting Harmonious Relations**

It is well-known that South Africa's liberation occurred with very little conflict, and at the time the country was lauded by the rest of the world for its peaceful transition to democracy. Since then, however, the country has experienced many problems. For example, corruption and the blinding loyalty of leaders to the leading political party have been some of the major concerns identified recently (Hasan, 2019). In his speech, Kolisi appears to be very aware of South Africa's socio-political problems. In this regard, he noted the following:

*We have so many problems in our country but to have a team like this, you know, we come from different backgrounds, different races and we came together with one goal and we wanted to achieve it. I really hope we have done that for South Africa, to show that we can pull together if we want to achieve something* (Kennedy, 2019).

### **Respect and Cultural Competency**

Central to the philosophy of *Ubuntu* is respect (Hailey, 2008). Kolisi demonstrated respect at three levels: respect for individuals, for organisational structures, and for different cultures. In one of the earliest works on *Ubuntu* and leadership, Mangaliso (2001) noted a number of principles to consider in implementing *Ubuntu* leadership. Three of the principles noted by Mangaliso are relevant to Kolisi's speech (Mangaliso, 2001). First, treat others with dignity and respect; second, understand the cultural perspectives of different groups; and third, honour seniority. In Kolisi's speech, he held the team's entire support base, the South African society, in high regard. It was already noted how he thanked the different sub-groups of his support base. Kolisi also demonstrated respect for seniority by mentioning the team's coach on two occasions. When asked by the reporter how important it was to "lay a physical marker" early in the game, Kolisi gave the following response:

*That's why we have a 6-2 split to make sure we go out physically and then you ... ah ... that is what we wanted to do; you know our coach doesn't hide it and "ja," from the minute go we wanted to have a quick start because we know that is what they were chasing so that's why some guy's shoulders were off, early contact, so "ja," they were amazing to that they challenge us to the best.*

While the question of "laying a physical marker" referred to Kolisi's strategy on the field, he did not focus on his own volition, but quickly recognised the team coach as part of this strategy. On another occasion, when asked what the victory would mean in "a country where rugby is a religion," Kolisi responded: "[The] coach just came and told us the last game, we are not playing for us anymore we are playing for our people back home. And that is what we wanted to do today."

The two references to the coach are very significant when viewing Kolisi's speech through the lens of *Ubuntu* leadership. Such reference demonstrates his acknowledgment of the seniority of the coach within the organisational structure of the team. Respect for seniority, especially within leadership, is noted as an important requirement for successful implementation of *Ubuntu* leadership (Mangaliso, 2001).

A further example of the respect that Kolisi demonstrated during his speech is the cultural respect towards the host of the games. In this regard he stated:

*Thank you so much, and lastly, thank you so much to the people of Japan, the people that came from England as well; thank you so much for supporting the sport of rugby, thank you for bringing rugby here, we appreciate you all, "arigatou gozaimasu," thank you.*

By including the Japanese salutation, *arigatou gozaimasu*, and completing his speech with an *ojigi*, which is a gesture to bend the body to the guest (Yusri, Idrus, and Lestari, 2020), Kolisi demonstrated cultural competency, an important element of *Ubuntu* leadership.

### **Lack of *Ubuntu* Leadership in Organisational Leadership Discourse**

While the primary focus of this paper is to explain *Ubuntu* leadership by analysing a simple post-match rugby speech, the question can indeed be asked why this leadership theory has not found acclaim outside Africa, or indeed been part of the organisational leadership development discourse. One reason may be that much of the leadership development in Africa has concerned political leadership and there has been a paucity of empirical research on *Ubuntu* leadership within the context of organisational leadership (Fourie, Van der Merwe, & Van der Merwe, 2017). While most of the scholarly work on *Ubuntu* leadership has been conducted within the African context, a further challenge for *Ubuntu* leadership theory development is, in this author's view, the perception that this leadership style can only be practiced in an Afrocentric context. Indeed, most of the literature on *Ubuntu* leadership stems from an Afrocentric perspective. This author would like to challenge this view. Certainly, many of the constituent elements of *Ubuntu* leadership would be applicable to other cultures and settings as well?

It is encouraging to see that work on developing a taxonomy for *Ubuntu* leadership has indeed begun. Grobler and Singh developed a taxonomy for, what they called "Afrocentric leadership." The population for this study was drawn from South Africa, Namibia, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique and found that the African taxonomy of leadership behaviour, while similar to Western leadership taxonomies, contained additional categories that have a participatory, democratic, and communalistic focus (Grobler and Singh, 2018). It is, however, frustrating to see that no other studies have been conducted that either confirm or deny this finding. Similarly, no other study has been conducted in other populations. There is also limited knowledge on comparisons between *Ubuntu* leadership and other developed leadership styles (Pérezts, Russon, and Painter, 2020). Notwithstanding the lack of other studies, our current knowledge, based on Grobler's findings, indicate that the taxonomy of *Ubuntu* leadership demonstrates a shift from purely focusing on the actions of the leader of an organisation. It would, therefore, be interesting to see how *Ubuntu* leadership compares to some of the most prominent post-

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heroic era leadership styles like ethical leadership, authentic leadership, distributive leadership, and servant leadership (Clark and Harrison, 2017).

This paper argued that non-Western leadership theories are often excluded from chronologies of leadership theory development and that highlighting these leadership theories through other means, like media and social media, are often the first step in awakening interest in other audiences. Many authors have written about *Ubuntu* leadership, but perhaps now is the time to refocus on its further development and refinement in order to bring this leadership theory into the fold of general leadership discourse.

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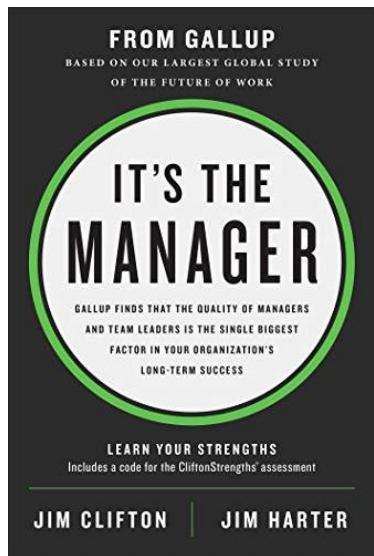
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## About the Author

Eugene Laloo (MEMDV, BEcon, NHD) is a South African expatriate who holds undergraduate qualifications in Environmental Health and Industrial Psychology from Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Stellenbosch University, respectively. As an occupational health and safety professional, Eugene has always had a keen interest in the impact of leadership on occupational health and safety outcomes and is currently studying the nexus between leadership and the psychosocial safety climate in workplaces. Eugene completed a Master's Degree at the Australian National University and is currently a PhD candidate in the School of Health and Society at the University of Wollongong, Australia.

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## *It's the Manager: Moving from Boss to Coach*

**Authors:** Jim Clifton & Jim Harter

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**Reviewer:** Cam Caldwell

### **Engaging Employees by Creating “Great Jobs”**

The Gallup Press publication, *It's the Manager*, represents an exhaustive study of employee engagement and identifies the limitations of managers as the fundamental reason why many organizations struggle to motivate and inspire their employees. The book provides empirical findings which are useful in understanding employee attitudes and claims to offer convincing solutions for resolving the problems of ineffective organization.

Clifton and Harter have written a clearly articulated book about the importance of leadership in behavioral economics that contains many useful insights – yet their book fails to hold accountable the Top Management Teams that are ultimately responsible for the strategic focus of organizations and the creation of organizational cultures (Schein & Schein, 2016). The focus of this review is on identifying both the brilliance of *It's the Manager* and the shortcomings of the book – despite its compelling presentation of important information.

Clifton and Harter's research acknowledges that there are 6 million U. S. businesses, although the book's findings primarily have significance for the top 18,000 U.S. companies of least 500 employees – or the companies that often have an international customer base and a multinational role. The major conclusion of the book is that the failure of organizations to engage employees is due to ineffective managers who are poorly trained and who do not understand what is required to help employees to have the “great job” that the authors suggest is the key to employee engagement.

### **Understanding the Job**

Fundamental to the findings of the authors is their premise that the key to effective employee involvement, motivation, and productivity is the employees' perception of the

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work for which they are hired. Differentiating the three types of jobs that are offered to employees, Clifton and Harter, (2019, p. 11) define them as follows:

**Lousy Jobs** – A “lousy job” is one in which you are underemployed, receive a very low wage, and work less than 30 hours when you want to work full time.

**Good Jobs** – Gallup defines a “good job: as working full time for an organization, with 30+ hours a week and a living-wage paycheck.”

**Great Jobs** – A “great job” has all the qualities of a good job but with one big differentiator: Employees are engaged in meaningful and fulfilling work and feel they are experiencing real individual growth and development in the workplace.

Clifton and Harter note that only 15% of the world’s workers self-describe as fully engaged at work – or feel that they have great jobs. The book documents the causes of common failures of managers to be effective leaders. Their findings include their fact that more employees are actually negatively engaged at work than those who are fully engaged partners contributing to their organizations’ success.

Explaining why first-line managers and supervisors must become effective leaders, the authors cite research evidence about leadership and what today’s employees seek from those who lead them. Clifton and Harter explain that today’s employees seek jobs with leaders who do the following:

- **Leaders communicate the purpose of an employee’s work.**  
Emphasizing an organization’s purpose gives meaning and importance to the work performed – a vital factor that motivates employee commitment. Employees seek to be involved in meaningful work where their contribution makes a difference.
- **Leaders view relationships with employees as long term.**  
Most employees seek a career rather than a temporary assignment. They prefer not to be treated as a short-term participant hired to complete a task but want to be a partner in an organization’s future.
- **Leaders seek employees’ professional development.**  
Employees place high priority on the commitment that leaders demonstrate in employee growth and development. Leaders who demonstrate a willingness to invest in their employees’ futures convey to employees that they are considered to be valued and important.
- **Leaders care about employees’ lives rather than just their jobs.**  
Employees want to be valued as participants in an exchange relationship who perform a job in exchange for a paycheck. They want leaders to acknowledge their significance as individuals who have life goals that complement their work.
- **Leaders emphasize employees’ successes rather than failures.**  
Leaders who help those with whom they work to develop their skills and to improve their talents take advantage of employee capabilities. Focusing on what employees do well, rather than their shortcomings, enables employees to optimize their ability to create organizational value.

- **Leaders coach employees rather than reviewing performance.**

Leaders who interact with and coach employees on a regular basis are far more likely to see those employees improve. Employees want ongoing conversations with their managers and constant communication that helps them to improve is far more important than an annual critique.

*It's the Manager* confirms long-established research of many scholars about leadership roles and job characteristics that motivate employee commitment and performance and sustain organizational culture (Turner & Lawrence, 1965; Hackman, Oldham, Jackson, & Purdy, 1975; Hackman & Oldham, 1982; Pfeffer, 1998; Covey, 2004; Burns, 2010; Herman & Chiu, 2014). Reporting the results of their extensive research, Clifton and Harter identify a broad range of factors that emphasize the future of the work world. The major sections of their research emphasize the need to evolve the role of managers to become resources who help their employees to develop their skills and focus on their strengths.

### **Disappointing Limitations**

Unfortunately, the authors of *It's the Manager* falls short in demonstrating the implications of some of their findings. For example, Clifton and Harter acknowledge that one in four full-time and one in every two part-time employees have a gig, or temporary job, that fails to meet what employees want in a “great job” (pp. 162-163). However, rather than addressing the significance of that important statistic, the authors simply write that “it’s unclear if gig work is beneficial for workers and organizations over the long term.” This minimizing of a vital requirement of “great jobs” reflects the weaknesses of this otherwise important book. Other notable shortcomings of the book include the following.

- **The focus on large organizations overlooks the importance of leaders and organizations in small and midsize companies.** As the authors note, large organizations represent only 18,000 of the more than 6 million companies in the U. S. The need for creating effective leaders and cultures exists in leader-follower relationships in organizations of all sizes and the principles of great jobs apply in small and midsize organizations as well.
- **The development of managers and leaders is not adequately explained.** Manager selection and development must be an ongoing priority for all organizations and requires far more than teaching managers the skills of coaching. The book fails to provide insights about how to effectively develop managers, despite the fact that it identifies that problem as critically important.
- **The challenges in establishing organization cultures that engage employees are minimized and understated.** Building a meaningful organization culture requires aligning manager attitudes, behaviors, and capabilities with the requirements associated with creating great jobs. Creating that culture requires building relationships and demands much more than “checking the boxes” of programs to institute.

- **The accountability of organizations' Top Management Team is not adequately emphasized.** The Top Management Team is ultimately accountable for the standards, values, and relationships required in creating great jobs and effective employee relationships. Clifton and Harter have failed to emphasize the importance of that accountability – probably the major shortcoming of their otherwise important book.

Great research does more than report the importance of information about employee attitudes and performance. To the degree that *It's the Manager* fails to address these four issues, the superb research that they have generated is incomplete in addressing the importance of organizational leaders – not only at the managerial level but including the role of the Top Management Team.

Clifton and Harter provide five helpful Appendixes about leadership concepts that add value to the book for scholars and practitioners. Unfortunately, those Appendixes come across as somewhat self-serving with regard to Gallup's consulting and marketing roles in the business world. For example, the first Appendix cites the characteristics of the 34 Clifton Strengths themes (Rath, 2007) which Gallup markets to organizations and individual leaders.

### **Conclusion**

Despite its limitations, *It's the Manager's* identification of the importance of the manager's role in engaging employees makes this book a valuable resource for thoughtful readers who are willing to carefully reflect on the research, findings, and insights provided. Leadership is a challenge for those who are asked to manage tasks and activities. The brilliance of recognizing the important role of managers in impacting employee engagement must be accompanied by the support of Top Management Teams if managers are to become leaders who engage employees

Understanding the importance of what employees expect from “great jobs” and recognizing the counter-productive effort to save money by hiring so many part-time, temporary, and contract employees are realities that Top Management Teams must fully understand and incorporate if they are to engage employees fully and take advantage of their potential. Leadership is ultimately a relationship and without effective leaders at all levels of an organization, employee engagement is unlikely to occur (Carasco-Saul, Kim, & Kim, 2015; Caldwell & Anderson, 2021).

The exhaustive research by Gallup provides abundant evidence of the importance of organizations understanding the role of managers, the importance of engagement and empowerment, and the need for managers to create caring relationships with employees. It is ultimately the responsibility of each company's Top Management Team to translate their goals, values, and policies into guidelines for its managers and that responsibility is not adequately addressed in *It's the Manager*.

Unlocking the potential of an organization's employees and establishing the proper role of managers as organizational leaders ultimately depends upon the Top Management Team. Top Management must establish a system of accountability, constantly train and monitor

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managers, and set a personal example in modeling the roles of leadership. Only by establishing standards of accountability and honoring duties owed to employees will organization leaders create the “great jobs” that will build long term organization success, enrich employees’ lives, and achieve the obligations of great leadership (DePree, 2004).

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## About the Reviewer

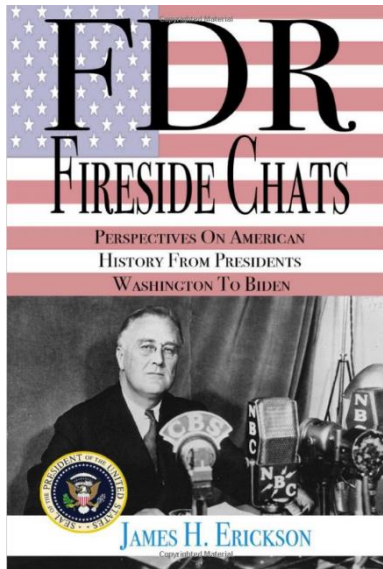
**Cam Caldwell** obtained a Ph.D. in Organization Behavior from Washington State University where he was a Thomas S. Foley Graduate Fellow. He has written more than one hundred scholarly papers about leadership-related topics. His book, *Moral Leadership: A Transformative Model for Tomorrow's Leaders*, was published by Business Expert Press in 2012 Leadership. He co-wrote *Touching Lives* which was published by Nova Science Publishers in 2020.

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Prior to earning his Ph.D., Dr. Caldwell was a municipal manager, human resource professional, and management consultant for more than twenty years.

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## Book Review



**Title:** *FDR Fireside Chats – Perspectives on American History from Presidents Washington to Biden*

**Author:** James H. Erickson, Emeritus Vice Chancellor of the University of California

**ASIN:** B09NGRHBF2

**Publisher:** Independently published (December 10, 2021)

**Pages:** 137

**ISBN-13:** 979-8782651480

**Best Sellers Rank:** #3,109,391 in Books

**Reviewer:** Elizabeth F. R. Gingerich

## History ... with a Twist

With the growing political and social polarization in the United States (and frankly throughout certain regions in the world), predominantly between members of the Democratic and the Republican parties, there appears to be little encouraging news of compromise and a return to much yearned-for civility – seemingly of yesteryear. The author of *FDR Fireside Chats, Perspectives on American History from Presidents Washington to Biden*, James H. Erickson, provides a unique approach in attempting to bridge the schism in American politics and within American communities. He examines salient historical events demarcating presidential administrations, from George Washington to Joe Biden, covering times of peace as well as eras marked by great turbulence and turmoil. As Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s (FDR’s) presidency began with early years of The Great Depression and ended with the concluding months of World War II, radio addresses were given on a semi-regular basis to the American public (a total of 31 addresses within a 4422-day presidential period). These “Fireside Chats” were FDR’s main tool to connect to the country’s citizenry to present the relevant issues of the day and attempt to explain the context and primary purposes of his policies. By examining the multiple banking crises and New Deal initiatives, FDR’s broadcasts were designed to help the country restore the strength and integrity of its workforce and economy. The author applies this FDR technique to what FDR might say to both previous and future presidents. Unlike the original “chats,” these exchanges involve discussion, engaging the addressee in a question-and-answer format and noting what might be their replies. These “chats” are premised upon imagined dialog with his peers.

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The author's approach to conveying history is to highlight the best of how our presidents have served, but largely downplay and even exempt much of the incompetence, debauchery, and inhumanity of many of these same men. Perhaps this approach was adopted to combat the misinformation and disinformation of our current time which has sadly comprised traditional tenets of human civility and mutual respect. Unlike the 24-news cycle of today, FDR's radio chats at that time in history had the advantage of not showing the person but rather relied upon the spoken word. There was no marketing or gimmickry. With the peer chats used in this book, the author attempts to amalgamate the best policies in presidential history and delineate lessons learned. By examining the collective wisdom of America's leaders and noting many of the multi-faceted traits of each elected leader, both past and present, we are given insight as to the best way forward

These individual vignettes not only reveal the history of the development of our nation, they show the personal prowess of each president. For example, the conversation with Harry Truman reveals that Truman was not just the person in charge at the time of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima to end WWII, but was an obstinate figure who refused to take any gifts as acknowledgment of his leadership position. These discussions also convey messages to corporate CEOs as well as to our youngest generation about possibilities and well-rationed behavior. Truman wanted to emphasize that the seat was sacred and not for sale, that absolute power corrupts absolutely, and that some acts should be avoided at all costs.

While it was Truman who dropped the atomic bombs that was the catalyst for ending World War II, it was Dwight Eisenhower who was appointed by FDR as Supreme Allied Commander during World War II. World peace and national security were always put above party politics under the Eisenhower administration. He revealed the depth and the extreme horror of Hitler's concentration camps. These ethereal conversations attempt to rise above party differences.

As pleasant as these conversations appear to be, there seems to be an intentional redaction of historical failures. The often-maligned Herbert Hoover, usually blamed for the Great Depression, is somewhat relieved of this burden by FDR who emphasizes that it was Truman who invited Hoover to serve as coordinator of the food supply drive to combat world famine, thereby providing a bridge between those two administrations.

The author – through FDR – extols the virtues of each presidential “servant.” For instance, he praises Calvin Coolidge as the silent, quiet, dignified type who fought for less government and more insurance accountability. And whereas Warren G. Harding had been traditionally tied to the Teapot Dome Scandal marked by taking bribes, he is partially exonerated as several of his cabinet members are marked as particularly blameworthy. Harding is praised for advancing women's right to vote as well as supporting the rights of Blacks. With John F. Kennedy (JFK), the emphasis was on the repercussions of his famous quote, “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country” as well as the importance of working with new programs to restore the economy. With Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ), the accolades concerned overcoming differences to deal with the advancement of civil rights and the importance of a tireless work ethic. Much less attention is given, however, to his strained relationships with Bobby Kennedy and Martin

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Luther King, Jr. (MLK). LBJ's involvement with the Vietnam War was missing from this dialogue and noticeably absent from the chat with Richard Nixon.

Other notable mentions include the following:

- Gerald Ford was praised for being a uniter but somewhat chastised for his absolute pardon of President Nixon.
- Carter was praised more for his post-presidency efforts concerning his work with Habitat for Humanity. The failed Iranian hostage rescue was noted.
- More pointed fault was directed to Ronald Reagan in terms of his handling of the Iran Contra Affair; he was lauded, however, with respect to his challenge of former Soviet politician Mikhail Gorbachev to tear down the Berlin Wall.
- George H. W. Bush was listed as UN ambassador - chief liaison to China and former CIA director.
- Woodrow Wilson was applauded for his intelligence and rightly admonished for his failure to tackle race relations (Wilson is given credit for his handling of WWII – this must have been a reference to WWI as he died in 1924 or should have been a statement credited to FDR).
- Bill Clinton was described as a pragmatic progressive. While chastised for womanizing, he was praised for his civil rights initiatives in the advancement of race relations.
- George W. Bush was commended for his handling of the events on September 11, 2001 as well as for his appointments of General Colin Powell and Dr. Condoleezza Rice, however, no mention is made for the underassessed events leading up to 9/11 nor the millions of people killed or displaced in Iraq after the perpetuation of false information leading to that invasion.
- Barack Obama's discussion seemed to praise FDR more than highlight his own achievements. Nothing was said during this chat referencing the passage of the Affordable Care Act which brought critical coverage to millions of American citizens and sustained orchestrated and repeated challenges from the GOP. Also, nothing is mentioned during the talk about his evolution in promoting rights of the LGBTQIA+ community and his support of the *Obergefell* (same-sex rights) case in 2015 (which now is under threat).
- With current President Joe Biden, it was simply too early to assess strengths and weaknesses. His personal tragedies and his appointment of Kamala Harris were noted, and he was praised for restoring America's international standing as well as his pandemic response.
- Jumping ahead to Andrew Jackson – while his poor record with the American Indian population was mentioned, the full-blown tragedy of the Trail of Tears was downplayed. The author incorrectly states that this president was not impeached. He was – just not convicted in the Senate ... by just one vote.

Where any praise could not be tolerated by this reviewer stemmed from the contrived discourse with Donald Trump. His tenacity in pursuing the highest office in the world was lauded, but was nothing more than sick braggadocio. His attraction to the American electorate was nothing more than an affinity with misogynists and white supremacists. He

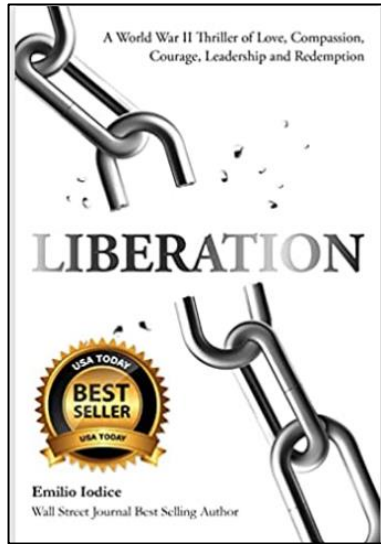
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used his position to produce tax cuts for the richest while subjecting the poor to further hardship. And any strength shown in the world was nothing more than one man's pursuit of financial gain – primarily in Russia. His advocacy of splitting families at the border will leave a legacy of heartlessness and cruelty throughout the world. And while he did push for a COVID vaccine, he put hundreds of thousands of lives in jeopardy with talk of taking bleach and other unconventional treatments and of ignoring simple preventative measures. And of course, there is the coup against America's democratic system... .

While usually an advocate of the "glass half-full" outlook, any positive references invoked during the particular discussion with Trump produced a sense of incredulity. During his tenure, two Supreme Court Justices were essentially stolen with the help of the GOP majority. We are now witnessing the consequences of this with reproductive rights being stripped from women; with gun rights being expanded at a time when mass shootings have reached a horrific crescendo; where affirmative action is predicted to die within the coming year; and where EPA powers in tackling climate change have been eviscerated. One wonders what might be happening in this country if there were more credentialed female leaders at the helm. Thankfully, some of the positive influences of former First Ladies Michelle Obama and Eleanor Roosevelt were highlighted in an extended discussion towards the end of the book, which focused on topics such as race relations, civil rights, the economy, and America's standing in the world.

For this writer, compliments are important and appropriate when warranted. Civility and respect are imperative, but a true test of moral leadership is typically guided by truth and accountability.

— Elizabeth Gingerich, JVBL Editor-in-Chief



## ***Liberation***

***Author:*** Emilio Iodice

***Publisher:*** Cranberry Press, San Antonio, Texas

***Pages:*** 781

***Publication Date:*** October 29, 2021

***ISBN-10:*** 1954759010

***ISBN-13:*** 978-1954759015

***Reviewer:*** Elizabeth Gingerich

*The Geneva Convention* – a collection of 4 international agreements and several protocols with the initial framework crafted in 1929 (and updated in 1949) – was originally crafted as a response to the atrocities of WWI – the “war to end all wars.” The final draft was negotiated in the aftermath of WWII and eventually ratified by 196 countries. This was to bring a degree of civility to the most uncivil of all situations – wartime – and addressed the treatment of both soldiers and civilians.<sup>26</sup> The underpinnings of the Convention came years before the rise of Fascism in Europe in the 1930s – Hitler in Germany and Mussolini in Italy. Some of the international legal standards established for the humanitarian treatment of civilian and prisoners in war include:

- The prohibition of parading prisoners of war;
- Keeping women and children safe from the fallout of a conflict or trapped in a war zone; and
- Preserving the basic rights of wartime prisoners (civilians and military personnel), including the provision of medical care to those captured.

<sup>26</sup> State Parties/Signatories: Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. International Humanitarian Law. *International Committee of the Red Cross*. Of course, the world is witnessing outright breaches of the Geneva Convention with the Russian invasion of Ukraine and is revisiting the extreme compromise of human rights and democracy in U.S.-operated Guantanamo and the former Abu Ghraib facility.

The outbreak of WWII was marked by the positioning of the Axis German and Italian troops in Europe and the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 by Japan, precipitating the entrance of the United States in the fight. Many students of history are only aware of the erection of Japanese internment camps in the American West during this time but few know of the existence of German and Italian POW camps in nearly every state in the U.S. – many in the South. Recently, National Public Radio (NPR) aired a program on one such former POW camp in Aliceville, Alabama, where witnesses to the transfer of POWs were interviewed, many stating that they had to climb to the tops of lumber piles for a glimpse



Officer's Club of the Douglas, Wyoming WWII POW Camp (above). The murals painted by the Italian POW artists are inside this building (right). Courtesy, Tom Leonard, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0>, via Wikimedia Commons

to see the occupants of trains unloading captured soldiers at the camp.<sup>27</sup> Several stated that many of the German POWs



German prisoners at the Eaton, Indiana POW camp in 1945. Courtesy, Delaware County (Indiana) Historical Society.

marched out in a synchronized, military-like format, and walked down the walkway dispassionately to their new barracks. Although several of the interviewees expressed a degree of pity for them – especially those recruited against their will – they were reminded that their sons and brothers were across the ocean, fighting for their country, and many were being killed or injured.<sup>28</sup>

Against this backdrop, author Emilio Iodice has penned his masterwork, the novel “Liberation.”

Although fictitious, the context of the

<sup>27</sup> See also Moseley, Brandon (14 May 2022). *1819 News*. Aliceville WWII Prisoner of War camp reenactment. Available at <https://1819news.com/news/item/aliceville-wwii-prisoner-of-war-camp-reenactment-is-this-weekend>

<sup>28</sup> See Roysdon, Keith (10 March 2022). German POW Camps in the U.S. Co-Existed with Their Towns in Sometimes Odd Ways. *The Daily Yonder*. Available at <https://dailyyonder.com/german-pow-camps-in-the-u-s-co-existed-with-their-towns-in-sometimes-odd-ways/2022/03/10/>

novel was inspired by actual events, primarily occurring during WWII in America and Italy. The author, currently living in Rome, invariably did his homework; he investigated the major events portrayed, and corroborated his accountings with witnesses and descendants of witnesses in striving for ultimate accuracy in reporting these events. As a boy growing up in an Italian section of the South Bronx, Iodice reportedly frequented family tables, listening to stories about World War II, immigrants, Italy, and the experiences and concerns of modern-day youth. Scenes began to evolve upon hearing these narratives and were added to the book – many imbued with incredible acts of sacrifice and bravery. With this commitment to accuracy, Iodice takes the reader to each scene to experience vicariously the plethora of emotions described and envision the immediate physical surroundings of the characters. The reader is guided through a multitude of fascinating and enthralling journeys. The chapters are furthered anchored in historical fact and complemented by selected photographs from that era.

“Liberation” is a recurrent theme throughout the book – liberation from German occupiers, liberation from Mussolini and his brand of authoritarianism, liberation from generations of racism, liberation from gender-oriented stereotypes, and liberation from regional biases. America, as a melting pot rooted in waves of immigrants, was on full display in this novel, with rich descriptions of the importance of familial relations and traditions rooted in the homeland – from food choice and preparation to courtship and marriage and ultimately to children and the passing of the torch to the next generation. Young love was shown in long-distance relationships, with the eternal hope presented of those enamored one day rejoining and moving forward with their lives together.

Nearly 800 pages in length, there is a crisscrossing of paths of many individuals and families who are all conjoined by commonalities of blood, origin, and shared childhood experiences. The course of their lives are inevitably intertwined.

With the Nazi occupation of Italy, there was little regard for life on display, especially during times of indiscriminate torture, the sequestering of Jewish families, the schism between both the Fascists and those native Italians indoctrinated under the dictates of Mussolini as well as those natives who could see through the veil of hate and join incoming Allied forces. The description of the terrain and weather conditions in play as well as the anxiety, trepidation, and human and inhumane reactions experienced by the characters are detailed throughout. The author even manages to insert a twinge of humor in his narration.

*Liberation* is marked by the recurrent themes of family and faith, particularly as demonstrated by the acts of incredible courage committed by members of the clergy. Sacrifice was also exemplified by ordinary townsfolk who engaged in perilous feats and acts of unpretentious courage. There were additionally the dichotomies between German concentration camps and American POW camps that even surprised the foreign inhabitants. Most notably, there is triumph of good over evil, kindness over brutality, and a reckoning of the races and geographic regions of the U.S. In fact, the “liberation” of certain KKK members is accentuated with a recurrent, Bible passage found in 22 Matthew 39 – *you shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

Several salient lessons for today that are imparted to the reader include the importance placed on a collective effort to maintain democracy and to defeat dictatorship. This is so critically important in an era of disinformation and misinformation and the rise of blind nationalism and populism throughout parts of the world.

This book prompts serious introspection and reflection. The struggles of war-time, Nazi-occupied Italy, depicted in such stunning detail, evokes the fear and desperation of the civilians as well as the resistance warriors – partisans, freedom fighters, Allied troops, and specially-trained American operatives. The struggles described and the outcomes explained of particular battles draw parallels with the current Russo-Ukrainian War and the plight of so many Ukrainian civilians-turned-refugees who have lost so much. This causes – at least this reader – to wonder about what real progress we have made in the world since WWII hostilities ended in 1945. Descriptions of partially blown-out roads and lines of the desperate, starving, wounded, mentally and physically battered, and hopeless human beings, moving past burned-out shells of tanks and transport vehicles and other indications of warfare readily connect to the current news footage of civilians leaving the ruins of what were, not terribly long ago, their homes, fields, occupations – and lives. The brutality and soullessness of Vladimir Putin are reminiscent of the brutality of the Nazi regime. Iodice’s accounting reminds us of what matters in life and in the face of adversity – and of the transitory nature of cruelty when confronted by authentic indicators of humanity.

A specific narrative of the Southern pastor and the KKK encounter also conveys the terror of the moment, again, begging a comparison to today’s state of race relations, the rapid emergence and dominance of America’s fringe right, and incidents of police intervention. What shone throughout the book were the strength and perseverance of redemption, the prevalence of compassion and empathy, the endurance of human relationships, and the fortitude of faith and family.

Although there are multiple human dramas taking place in various regions of both Italy and America, from the first page to the last, there is integration and an intertwining of the characters throughout. Even for the reader who is not necessarily a student of history, the character interplay is so rich, that the reader naturally gravitates to the human stories presented. And for those who thrive on drama, the reader will inadvertently – and necessarily – gain an important knowledge of a very dark period of global history from various perspectives. The one thing I could have added – but is normally not provided – is a family history tree, both in Italy and in America of the characters. I did make my own notes to ensure I was always following the right person and that figure’s impact on others in his or her zone of interaction and influence. One can only wonder if this novel will be chosen to convert into a limited series!

– Elizabeth F. R. Gingerich, *JVBL* Editor-in-Chief



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