Global and Culturally Diverse Leaders and Leadership: New Dimensions and Challenges for Business, Education and Society

Edited by

2018

Jean Lau Chin
Adelphi University,
Garden City, NY, USA

Joseph E. Trimble
Western Washington University,
Bellingham, WA, USA

Joseph E. Garcia
Western Washington University,
Bellingham, WA, USA

9

Reinvigorating Conversations about Leadership: Application of Strategic Choice Theory to the Social Justice Organizational Leader

Caroline S. Clauss-Ehlers and
Lynn Pasquerella

Introduction

A review of the literature indicates a lack of scholarship that simultaneously examines leadership, social justice, cultural values, and ethics. The lack of research that jointly explores these concepts is startling given demographic changes in our increasingly global society. The following chapter seeks to encourage a national dialogue about what represents effective, inclusive leadership through the lens of strategic choice theory. The concept of the *social justice organizational leader* is introduced. This construct refers to a leader who identifies organizational cultural

values, relevant moral distress situations, and through such identification and understanding, bases leadership decision-making on principles of social justice and ethical practice. The notion of the social justice organizational leader focuses on equity as central to the leadership role. Real world examples provide case material that illustrate the social justice organizational leader in action. A model is presented that highlights process and outcome variables for the social justice organizational leader.

PRIMARY CHAPTER GOAL:

The chapter seeks to provide the reader with key concepts relevant to the introduction of the social justice organizational leadership style. Strategic choice theory provides a framework for this type of leadership style. Consideration of equity in decision-making is presented.

A literature review of journal articles from 2005 to 2015 using the key words "leadership," "social justice," "cultural values," and "ethics" in the general data base of a research university, identified a mere 15 publications (Fehr & Gelfand, 2012; Martin & Dagostino-Kalniz, 2015). The dearth of scholarship that considers these key components of leadership is striking (Feng-I, 2011). Demographic changes in our increasingly global society raise the question: What type of contemporary leadership is deemed effective, and what is the relationship between effective, culturally competent, and ethical leadership? Despite the critical importance of this query, the lack of literature in this area suggests a gap in knowledge and understanding. Indeed, social justice, ethics, and cultural values are at times omitted from our mainstream, national dialogue about what represents effective, inclusive leadership (Shoho, Merchant, & Lugg, 2005).

Ethical Leadership Characteristics: A Historical Overview

The notion of ethics and leadership has long-standing philosophical and historical foundations. From Plato's wise and virtuous philosopher king who places the interests of others above his own immediate self-interest (Plato & Lee, 1974), to Kant's categorical imperative that leaders treat all others always as ends in themselves and never as means to an end (Kant, 1785),

philosophers have weighed in on what constitutes good leadership. Yet, when addressing the question of whether good leadership necessarily comprises both effective and ethical leadership, political philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli comes to the fore.

Largely exempting leaders from the constraints of individual morality, Machiavelli insists that leadership can, at times, require moving past the confines of moral dictums applied to private lives to promote the general welfare using any means necessary. According to Machiavelli, leaders must act in accordance with the demands of a much broader scope of responsibility (Machiavelli, 1909–14). This does not mean, however, that there are no limits on their behavior. Indeed, though he is famous for his assertion that it is better to be feared as a leader than loved, Machiavelli urgently warned against a leader engaging in acts that would foster hatred, since this would foment rebellion (Pasquerella & Killilea, 2005).

While we are not seeking to defend Machiavelli's approach to leadership, his words do serve to remind us that ethical decision-making often requires more than simply choosing right over wrong. In almost all cases, it involves a more complex assessment of internal and external factors, including context, culture, and role responsibilities, along with a consideration of whether there are circumstances under which a leader's service to a given institutional mission is sufficiently valuable to override any given individual's rights.

Appeals to role responsibility as justifying otherwise unethical behavior rest on an argument from strong role differentiation, which holds that one's professional role carries duties that not only permit, but morally require one to act in ways that would otherwise be morally unacceptable. For instance, given the value ascribed overall to the system of justice, lawyers are considered justified in keeping their clients confidences and providing the most zealous advocacy, even when the client has confessed.

As this example illustrates, the ethical challenge created by an appeal to role responsibility follows from the fact that a morally good institution may mandate that its leaders and officers act in a manner that would otherwise be considered wrong. The success of an institutional excuse for the individual's behavior depends upon a justification that the institution is itself good. In turn, role obligations are justified by showing that they are essential. Finally, the act is justified by exhibiting that the role obligations require it. Nevertheless, the acceptance of strong role differentiation under certain circumstances does not imply that all institutional excuses are sufficient to justify otherwise unethical

behavior; nor does it eliminate the need to determine what constitutes unethical behavior in the first place (Pasquerella & Richman, 1996).

Ethics, in its most general sense, is the study of correct conduct – of which acts are right and which acts are wrong. Right actions are those that are done in accordance with correct moral principles. Wrong acts are those that are in violation of these principles. Thus, the primary challenge for moral theorists is to justify which principles are the correct ones to guide our actions. Traditionally, ethical principles are thought of as falling into two broad categories: deontological principles and consequentialist principles. The difference between the two types of theories can be understood by examining how they respond to the question, "Are there certain acts that are right or wrong regardless of the consequences, or is the rightness and wrongness of acts solely dependent upon the consequences?"

Deontologists emphasize acting out of a sense of duty to certain moral rules, believing that the rightness or wrongness of acts can be determined without considering the consequences of following the principles deemed correct. In other words, certain acts are right or wrong, regardless of the consequences. Thus, Immanuel Kant, the most notable of deontologists, contended that acts are good if and only if they are done out of a sense of duty to his Categorical Imperative: "One should act only in accordance with those maxims through one can will them to become a universal law of nature" (Kant, 1993, p. 30).

Consequentialists, on the other hand, assess the moral permissibility of actions based on whether or not they will produce the greatest good or least amount of bad for everyone involved. Consequentialists Jeremy Bentham (1996) and John Stuart Mill (1901) propose a theory of utility according to which no actions that are good or bad, in and of themselves. Instead, the rightness and wrongness of acts is determined solely by their consequences – interpreting goodness as pleasure or happiness and badness as displeasure or unhappiness, respectively.

Though deontologists and consequentialists are sometimes at odds regarding the correct course of action, this is not necessarily the case. Considerations of utility might lead to the same course of action as considerations of duty or justice. In fact, on a practical level, most of the time decision-makers appeal to both types of theories when ethical dilemmas arise. In fact, ethical dilemmas by their very nature are such that no matter what action one takes, some ethical principle will be violated.

The first step toward resolving a dilemma is to identify the various issues that need to be addressed before a decision can be made about the right thing to do. In applying principles such as respect for persons, autonomy, beneficence, justice and fairness in resolving dilemmas, leaders have an ethical base from which to function. Still, despite these historical guideposts, the literature lacks empirical data concerning what constitutes ethical leadership (Robicheau, 2011). At a time when the complexities of ethical leadership regarding day-to-day decision-making are more visible than ever, given the advent of social media, the dearth of research in this area is particularly noticeable.

This is not to suggest that there is no scholarship on ethical leadership. Management theory, for instance, contains an examination of notions of justice and fairness in organizations, which includes three "dimensions": distributive justice, procedural justice, and interactional justice (Rhodes, 2012, p. 1312). *Distributive justice* refers to the extent to which organizational members perceive that resources are allocated in an equitable (or nonequitable) fashion. *Procedural justice* refers to the extent to which organizational members feel that the procedures used to allocate resources are equitable. Finally, *interactional justice refers* to the extent to which organizational members feel they are being treated fairly in their interactions with others (Cropanzano & Stein, 2009; Deutsch, 1985; Thibaut & Walker, 1975).

However, what much of the managerial research indicates is that when leaders in pursuit of the common good enact justice, it is done to promote productivity rather than equity and fairness. Hence, the goal of such efforts is better outcomes rather than justice per se. Says Rhodes (2012):

> The managerialist logic of leadership justice is laid bare — beneath the veneer of claims that justice is undertaken for others, it is evident that justice is really valued because it makes people work harder in pursuing non-justice-related organizational imperatives. As a corollary, leaders should pursue justice not as a goal in its own right but as a means through which to achieve 'effectiveness' (Cho & Danseraau, 2010). In other words, justice is subordinated to managerial power and organizational success through a rational and instrumental formulation where justice is the means, and organizational effectiveness is the end that is truly valued. (Rhodes, 2012, pp. 1313–1314)

The result of this approach appears to be that justice is manipulated – what is viewed as the greater good – in reality is about the effective outcomes desired by those running the organization. Hence, "justice is used as a means to enhance organizational self-interest" (Rhodes, 2012, p. 1315).

STRATEGIC CHOICE THEORY

How does the approach taken by a social justice leader differ from justice as a utility? One answer can be found through an examination of strategic choice theory. Child's (1972) concept of *strategic choice* refers to the notion of choice in the context of organizational operation, performance standards, and organizational structure, where the latter is defined as "the formal allocation of work roles and the administrative mechanisms to control and integrate work activities including those which cross formal organizational boundaries" (p. 2). Strategic choice is presented in the context of Child's contention that organizational change research is needed in response to the simplistic manner in which many models discuss associations between organizational structure and contextual factors. In their simplicity, these models also fail to consider "the agency of choice by whoever have the power to direct the organization" (p. 2). Says Child (1972):

> At the present time, some of the most influential models of organization explicate little more than positively established associations between dimensions of organizational structure and 'contextual' (i.e. situational) factors such as environment, technology, or scale of operation. These models proceed to the simplest theoretical solution, which is that the contextual factors determine structural variables because of certain, primarily economic, constraints the former are supposed to impose. (p. 2)

Nearly 50 years later, Child's (1972) analysis is equally applicable, especially in relation to the concept of strategic choice as an alternative to promoting justice exclusively as a means. Implied in Child's (1972) analysis is that organizational members carry unequal weight in their determination of organizational features and operation. The term "decision-makers" refers to the "power-holding group on the basis that it is normally possible within work organizations to identify inequalities of power which are reflected on a differential access to decision-making on structural design" (p. 13). The agency embedded in the concept of

strategic choice supports the notion that organizational outcomes can result not merely in organizational responses to system needs associated with the environment, technology, and organizational size, but from individual choices.

Including strategic choice in organizational theory acknowledges the "operation of an essentially political process in which constraints and opportunities are functions of the power exercised by decision-makers in the light of ideological values" (Child, 1972, p. 16). And while Child did not engage in a consideration of the social justice organizational leader, our contention is that strategic choice theory provides the theoretical underpinnings for a proposed model of such a leader.

Leading with Social Justice: Key Concepts

A central tenet of strategic choice as it relates to the social justice organizational leader is that leaders play a key role in their organizations by exercising agency and influencing their organizations through a political process. This is quite different from merely responding or reacting to structural demands. By having agency and engaging in conversations about choice, the social justice organizational leader is encouraged to make decisions that consider the greater good and not just those that promote organizational performance.

Our definition and differentiation of the social justice organizational leader is presented in the following section. First, we examine the status of the literature on strategic and social justice leadership. A first glimpse indicates that, decades after Child's (1972) publication, the literature continues to lack consideration of strategic leadership, ethics, power, and politics (Glanz, 2010). Glanz (2010) seeks to fill this gap by viewing strategic leadership through the lens of *social justice* and *caring*, especially in relation to the role of school principals, where much of the strategic leadership research is focused. Even more specifically, current research is focused on high stakes leadership, or leadership within an accountability environment (e.g., testing, achievement). Here we see an issue raised by Child (1972) when context is not considered – a recognition that the high stakes environment itself coerces the leader in a manner that upends the capacity to lead.

Glanz (2010) presents an ethical framework for strategic school leadership that promotes student success in a caring and fair environment. Through strategic planning, data-driven decision-making, and mediating the political environment, the principal engages in activities to transform schools (e.g., "leading for social justice," "building relationships") that promote high achievement for all students. In the framework's second phrase, four stages move the model into action. These include *articulation* (i.e., the principal discusses strategies with others); *building*, in which the principal encourages support; engaging in *creative ways* to have a dialogue with others about the strategic plan; and taking steps to *define outcomes* and strategies to accomplish them.

The role of social justice and multicultural education in educational leadership has also been explored in efforts to identify alternatives to mainstream education (Santamaría, 2014). Through her study of educational leaders in K-12 schools and institutions of higher education, Santamaría (2014) examined ways in which leaders accessed aspects of their identities in efforts to be responsive to issues of social justice and educational equity. Nine leadership characteristics were identified.

These characteristics include: being willing to have *critical conversations* with others, and in particular, conversations about difficult topics; considering perspectives through a *critical race theory lens* that acknowledges white hegemony; using *group consensus* to build support, often through personal talks and in meetings; being aware of *stereotype threat* and its impact; engaging in *academic discourse*, or the importance of contributing to research about underserved groups; *honoring constituents* by being inclusive of all the voices of the community, including those often unheard; *leading by example* and, in so doing, bringing issues associated with race, gender, social class, and ethnicity to the forefront of the conversation; *building trust with the mainstream*, meaning that educational leaders sought to gain the trust of those not necessarily committed to issues of equity in education; and *servant leadership*, the sense that there was a call to lead. Santamaría (2014) concludes that her study "reveals some of the implicit strategies leaders of color use in their applied work toward social justice and educational equity to address diversity in different learning environments, as well as strategies they use to navigate dual and multiple cultures" (p. 378).

Likewise, Goldman and Kirsch's analysis of women, leadership, and social change (2005/2006) details the experiences of

two women with little political power, making connections to contemporary issues. Their study shows how Mercy Otis Warren and Dr. Mary Bennett Ritter ushered in social change, despite being viewed as "powerless," by implementing four identified strategies: subversion; moral righteousness; networking; and systematic research. The authors conclude by making connections between the strategies used by the two historical figures and contemporary leadership questions for women. For instance, Goldman and Kirsch (2005/2006) talk about the importance of networking for women and how this is a tool for career enhancement. Similarly, they demonstrate how systematic research can be a powerful tool for demonstrating institutionalized inequity.

HAVING THE CONVERSATION: DIFFERENTIATION OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER

In contrast to environmental determinism, that holds the leader will respond to environmental pressures in decision-making, strategic choice theory assumes that leaders are free to make choices and engage in proaction rather than simply re-action (Ng & Sears, 2012). In relation to the choice to champion diversity as a means of promoting social justice for the communities and organizations they serve, Ng and Sears (2012) examine three factors as possible influences on leaders' strategic choices to promote diversity: CEO leadership style, whether transformational or transactional; values; and age at the time when diversity practices are implemented. In keeping with strategic choice theory, Ng and Sears (2012) found that CEO leadership style plays a critical role in the implementation of diversity practices. These results emerged outside of institutional and environmental factors — thus further supporting the important role of the CEO in determining diversity outcomes within the organization.

The framework for the social justice organizational leader builds on findings by the Ng and Sears (2012), Santamaría (2014), and Goldman and Kirsch (2005/2006) studies. This level of justice is not about outcomes or performance only, but rather about making intentional decisions with regard to the best course of action to take for the larger collective. Says Rhodes (2012):

> The implication for leadership is that justice is not about ensuring that people report that they are treated fairly, but is about engaging in and taking responsibility for the heated ethical dilemmas entailed in trying to be just. This

justice is not a state of being that can be achieved in the cold comfort of self-righteousness, but is a motivating force that calls into question and troubles the practice of leadership in all its dimensions. (p. 1325)

Our contention is that leaders often lack the disposition and willingness necessary to develop a language and interpersonal skill set to have difficult conversations about topics that include race, ethnicity, and gender, among other reference group identities. If they are not experienced in naming and describing phenomena related to reference group identities, leaders may avoid the conversation rather than engage in it. Because having values as central to one's work is increasingly viewed as strong leadership, the mentoring pipeline needs to include training focused on how to engage in what the leader may perceive as difficult conversations (Clauss-Ehlers & Pasquerella, 2014).

DISCUSSION OF EACH PHASE OF THE MODEL

In our view, there are three tiers, each with multiple interlocking levels to the model of the Social Justice Organizational Leader. Fig. 1 illustrates the three tiers and the relationships among them.

Tier 1 consists of two levels. The first is *Understanding Cultural Expectations of Leadership*. Just as leaders bring their own cultural background and values to the organization, so too does the organization have its own culture and way of being. To engage in strategic choice, it is critical that leaders understand organizational pressures and identify what the culture expects from its leader. This is not to say that the leader has to go along with what the culture says it expects the leader to do. Quite the opposite. By understanding what those expectations are, the leader can exercise strategic choice more clearly.

The notion of cultural expectations for leaders has profound implications for social justice efforts. If, for example, there was a consistent cultural expectation that the leader would undervalue a group in the organization, and the leader went along with this pressure, the group would consistently be undervalued. This expectation would then become a part of the culture. Through an understanding of expectation and outcome, the social justice organizational leader can initiate the challenging conversation about how this marginalization became a reality for the organization.
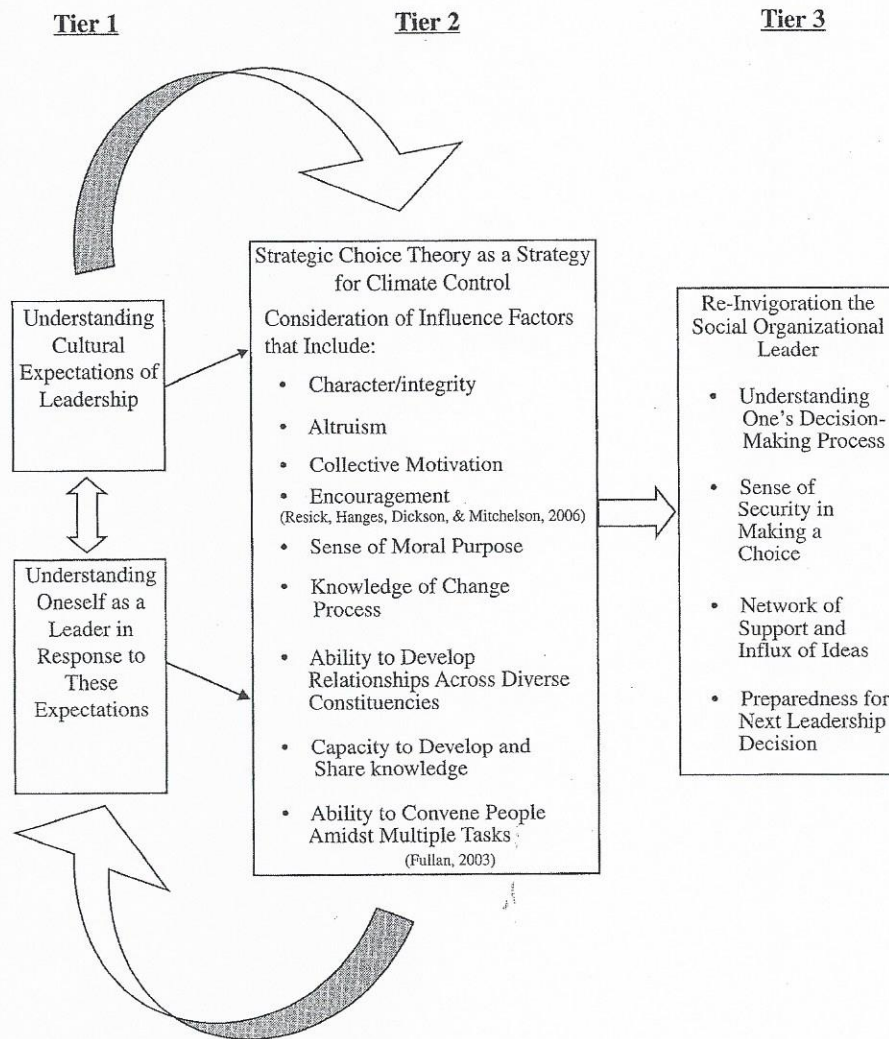
Tier 1   **Tier 2**   **Tier 3**

Understanding
Cultural
Expectations of
Leadership

Understanding
Oneself as a
Leader in
Response to
These
Expectations

Strategic Choice Theory as a Strategy
for Climate Control

Consideration of Influence Factors
that Include:

- Character/integrity

- Altruism

- Collective Motivation

- Encouragement
(Resick, Hanges, Dickson, & Mitchelson, 2006)

- Sense of Moral Purpose

- Knowledge of Change
Process

- Ability to Develop
Relationships Across Diverse
Constituencies

- Capacity to Develop and
Share knowledge

- Ability to Convene People
Amidst Multiple Tasks
(Fullan, 2003)

Re-Invigoration the
Social Organizational
Leader

- Understanding
One's Decision-
Making Process

- Sense of
Security in
Making a
Choice

- Network of
Support and
Influx of Ideas

- Preparedness for
Next Leadership
Decision

Fig. 1. Social Justice Organizational Leader: A Three-Tiered Model.

The second level in Tier 1 is *Understanding Yourself as a Leader in Response to these Expectations*. In keeping with strategic choice theory, this second level refers to understanding oneself in response to cultural expectations. Self-reflection is important because it encourages the social justice organizational leader to take a step back from organizational dynamics, rather than get pulled into them. Part of this reflection is for the leader to consider the values s/he communicates (e.g., espoused theories) and the values that s/he acts upon (e.g., theories-in-use; Senge, 1990). Is what is communicated consistent with what is acted upon? Is what is acted upon consistent with what the leader communicates to him/herself as reflecting his/her values?

Fig. 1 depicts a double arrow between both levels of Tier 1. This arrow indicates the ongoing dynamic relationship between

understanding cultural expectations of leadership and understanding oneself as a leader in response to them. The arrows that extend out from each Tier 1 level join together as they reach *Tier 2 Strategic Choice Theory as a Strategy for Climate Change*. As cultural expectations for leadership and one's understanding of them develop, they give rise to this second tier where strategic choice becomes a mechanism for climate change. In the aforementioned example, for instance, by identifying the organizational expectation that devalues a group, while also understanding that one does not support that expectation, the leader can begin to consider strategic ways to promote change.

In their study of cross-cultural ethical leadership, Resick, Hanges, Dickson, and Mitchelson (2006) examined data from the Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) project to determine what aspects of ethical leadership were important across various cultures (e.g., character/integrity; altruism; collective motivation; and encouragement). What the GLOBE data refers to as Culture Clusters included societies in the following 10 categories: Anglo, Confucian Asian, Eastern European, Germanic European, Latin American, Latin European, Middle Eastern, Nordic European, Southeast Asian, and Sub-Saharan African. Interestingly, Resick et al. (2006) found that the four aspects of ethical leadership — often equated with Western societies — were universally supported as important for ethical leadership.

Despite uniform support, however, there were differences among cultures in terms of the degree to which each aspect was endorsed. What the authors define as a variform universal refers to circumstances in which "a principle is viewed similarly around the world, however cultural subtleties lead to differences in the enactment of that principle across cultures" (Resick et al., 2006, p. 354). These four categories are included as factors that help influence strategic choice for climate change as illustrated in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 shows that the four variform aspects of ethical leadership in Tier 2 are followed by five specific skills Fullan (2003) identified in the literature: "a deep sense of moral purpose, knowledge of the change process, capacity to develop relationships across diverse individuals and groups, skills in fostering knowledge creation and sharing, and the ability to engage with others in coherence making amidst multiple innovations" (Fullan, 2003, p. 35).

Fig. 1 depicts a dotted arrow that goes from Tier 2, through the two levels of Tier 1, and back to Tier 2. This arrow illustrates how strategic choice factors for the social justice organizational

leader play out given an understanding of self as leader and cultural expectations of the leader. The arrows that circle around Tiers 1 and 2 create a feedback loop effect.

Tier 3, Re-invigorating the Social Justice Organizational Leader, is the model's last component. Tier 3 refers to what happens to the social justice organizational leader after the decision is made. Fig. 1 depicts a double arrow pointing from Tier 2 to Tier 3. This arrow illustrates how the impact of the feedback loop created during Tier 1 and Tier 2 influences the experience of Tier 3, where the leader is encouraged to reflect upon his/her decision in order to understand the factors that went into the decision-making process. This is in contrast to research that found many leaders, while making decisions they felt good about, did not understand the processes by which their decisions were made (Klinker & Hackmann, 2004). The social justice organizational leader is reinvigorated in Tier 3 because s/he takes time to reflect upon the processes by which decisions were made.

Given that leaders must make decisions about complex issues every day, this level of self-reflection is important. Retrospective analysis may result in preemptive decision-making by providing a sense of competence at knowing when to move forward with a decision and, if not able to identify influencing decisional processes, to reach out to others for help in doing so. Thus, understanding one's process in determining outcomes can offer a sense of security in the face of future decisions.

The identified strategy of reaching out to others introduces the concept of networks as a Tier 3 factor. Beyond providing support and an influx of new ideas, networks can help build consensus in decision-making across constituencies (Santamaría, 2014). They can also help the social justice organizational leader engage in critical conversations across the network (Santamaría, 2014). Finally, understanding the decision-making process and having a network to provide support or engage in it can create a sense of preparedness for the next leadership decision.

REAL LIFE EXAMPLES OF THE SOCIAL JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONAL LEADER

At times, organizational and institutional cultures have a profound impact on the psychological well-being of those working within them. Whether due to political, structural, or institutional norms, what these cultures often have in common is that they foster moral distress (Pasquerella & Clauss-Ehlers, 2014). The

phenomenon of moral distress was first described by philosopher Jameton (1984) to refer to instances where individuals who face a moral dilemma believe they know the correct course of action but are coerced into doing otherwise as a result of institutional or organizational constraints. Moral distress differs from distress involved when confronting a moral dilemma in that the latter, unlike the former, involves not knowing the right action to take. Social justice organizational leadership can help prevent instances of moral distress through the transformation of a culture.

For instance, a new administrator at a small liberal arts college found herself enmeshed in a culture that professed a commitment to equity and consistently rejected a system that would, in their view, create a hierarchy through merit pay. Since they regarded all faculty as equally valuable, merit pay was considered unnecessary and unjust. Nevertheless, members of the faculty routinely went to the administrator's predecessor requesting that special deals be made regarding teaching loads, research funding, retirement packages, and retention bonuses for those who had secured outside job offers and wanted them to be matched. The new administrator inherited a culture in which backroom deals were the norm. Those who were the beneficiaries lauded the previous administrator for his faculty advocacy, though it was a small subset who actually benefitted.

Recognizing that this approach to allocating resources undermines the very principles of justice the faculty espoused, the incoming administrator pointed to existing committee structures and policies, along with procedures for altering systems through the governance structure. However, she refused to engage in individual deal making. Instead, she sought movement toward consensus by setting up individual and group meetings to discuss how allowing for negotiations for salary and workload on a case-by-case basis disadvantaged those who were unlikely to advocate for themselves over others, potentially resulting in a disparately negative impact on women and those from underrepresented groups.

The new administrator invited pretenured faculty to sessions where their voices could be heard without fear of being judged by senior colleagues who would be voting on their tenure and promotion cases. Further, she identified faculty leaders who offered testimony focused on the fact that loyalty to an institution by not seeking outside job offers should not serve as a disadvantage. In the absence of a formal merit system, no amount of exceptional work was compensated through increased pay, but

taking time away from work to get a position at another institution was almost always rewarded in this way.

Senior male faculty, the largest beneficiaries of the previous system, complained the most about attempts to change the culture, and threats of a vote of no confidence were floated on faculty listservs. In the end, the administrator's willingness to lead by example and include all voices in the discussion resulted in a faculty working group who took up the charge of examining whether a system of merit would better serve their proclaimed dedication to equity. Employing faculty leadership in shaping this conversation helped to build trust, erode suspicion, and erase the perception of top-down decision-making.

However, the process took time and was not without its challenges. Faculty who had the most invested in the culture of deal making, and who were often the loudest voices, accused colleagues who supported the administrator's position of being mere pawns of the administration. To effect change, it was necessary to empower those whose voices had been silenced to join the narrative around hidden biases implicit in the previous system.

Institutions containing more fixed hierarchies than traditional academic settings can generate even greater levels of moral distress. In fact, the concept of moral distress was initially identified in the context of nursing practice, where today, as many as 80 percent of nurses admit experiencing this phenomenon (Epstein & Hamric, 2009). Cases can range from situations where nurses witness the effects of health administrator mandates such as physicians seeing more patients for shorter periods of time, leading to more frequent re-hospitalization, to cases where nurses believe that prolonged treatment for terminally-ill patients is futile to the point of being more harmful than death. The most obvious cases are those in which nurses are given direct orders that contravene their values.

Consider, for instance, the case of a 40-year-old patient being treated for cancer of the palate who was brought to the emergency room, suffering from delirium. The patient, who was subsequently admitted to the Intensive Care Unit for treatment of an overdose, had an extensive history of alcohol and drug abuse. He reported cluster headaches and made very specific requests about the type of medication he wanted, along with the method of delivery —two injections, fifteen minutes apart, one in each buttock. The covering physician was not only concerned about what he identified as drug-seeking behavior, but also about the effects of the requested medication on the patient's already precarious

respiratory status. As a result, the doctor ordered a nurse on the floor to administer a placebo. She adamantly refused, at which point the physician became belligerent.

The case was brought to the ethics committee of a community hospital by the nursing supervisor. In exercising social justice organizational leadership, the supervisor raised not only the issue of giving placebos but also the moral distress experienced by the nurse who was ordered to do something she believed was unethical. The supervisor had worked to train her staff to identify moral dilemmas as they arose, to determine the source of their moral distress, and to inventory the institutional barriers that might prevent someone from coming forward when distress occurred. This process resulted in policies and practices that shaped a culture in which people were expected to do the right thing and did not feel at risk in voicing their concerns regarding questionable behavior. This particular leader also understood that for the transformed culture to be maintained there needed to be support from both staff and supervisors, requiring ongoing assessment, conversation, and education.

At the center of many, if not all instances of moral distress, is the question of the extent to which a leader is willing to countenance individual injustice for the sake of long-term organizational reform. Social justice organizational leadership is key in undertaking successful reform, but implementing this type of leadership is not always straightforward, especially when there is a risk of violence. For example, a director of a community-based learning for a state's flagship university established a partnership with the Department of Corrections to place interns within a variety of facilities, ranging from juvenile detention to men's maximum security. Placement in the maximum security facility was restricted to working with prisoners seeking parole. However, on her way to a supervised meeting, one of the students in the program witnessed a shackled prisoner, face down on the floor, being kicked in the head by two correctional officers.

The student made a frantic call to the director wanting to know whether she should report the alleged abuse. In weighing the considerations, the director was mindful of an incident that had taken place a few months earlier when a correctional officer had "blown the whistle" on two of his colleagues. As the officer entered the prison's intake center, he saw his fellow officers kidney punching an accused child molester. The officer who reported the event had the windows blown out of his house and

received death threats, causing him to leave his job under medical disability. The community-based learning director also knew that if this case were reported, both the student and the program would have been at risk.

The issue came down to whether the director should seek to protect this inmate's rights regardless of the consequences, or allow for a consideration of long-term consequences that might lead to lasting reform of an organizational culture that desperately needed reform. There was an understanding that to achieve the long-term reform necessary to eradicate this type of behavior, there must be buy-in from the correctional officers. While reporting the event in an attempt to uphold the inmate's rights may seem the correct course of action initially, it could ultimately lead to even greater injustice than the alternative.

At the level of the individual decision maker, the director must decide how much evil and injustice should be countenanced to accomplish lasting good. Then she must determine how to resolve conflicts between personal values and the dominant organizational culture (Pasquerella & Richman, 1996). In spite of a personal commitment to principles of justice and fairness, consistent with a course of action that would ultimately protect the rights of the individual inmate, the community-based learning director might not allow herself to do here what she would do in another context (Johns, 2006). The intricacies contained within this assessment highlight the critical importance of having a network of support and engaging in a comprehensive assessment of the decision-making process.

Conclusion: Theoretical Contributions and New Directions for Research and Theoretical Development

This chapter has undertaken an examination of the concept of effective leadership through the lens of strategic choice theory, which foregrounds the agency of leaders in shaping, as opposed to merely reacting to, institutional and organizational cultures. In the process, the concept of a *social justice organizational leader*, who makes leadership decisions focused on the promotion of social justice and ethical practice, was introduced. A model of social justice leadership, including key concepts related to it, was

developed and applied to ethical dilemmas in three organizational settings. Each scenario contained a common element of moral distress, where the actor believed that s/he knew what was ethically correct but felt coerced into doing otherwise. These case studies illustrate the extent to which internal and external forces can influence cultures and create barriers to reform. Nevertheless, they also demonstrate how a commitment to social justice organizational leadership, with its emphasis on consensus, inclusion, and team building, is capable of transforming cultures in support of the notion of justice as fairness. This approach to leadership serves the needs of all members of an organization, in contrast with leaders who promote justice solely as utility.

Leaders across the country, including those who are enacting social justice organizational leadership, have been challenged recently around issues of race, class, gender, and heteronormativity. Much of the discourse involves attacks on leaders who, in virtue of their position, are viewed as part of a monolithic administrative structure incapable of fostering social justice. Moving forward, it will be important to address the impact of contemporary perceptions of leadership and calls for accountability in an emerging culture of protest and nonnegotiable demands. One specific component of this research should take into account the ways in which the advent of social media has resulted in an additional powerful external source influencing organizational and institutional cultures. Such work would contribute enormously to closing the continued gap on research related to the characteristics of good leadership as inextricably linked to effective, inclusive and ethical leaders.

Discussion Questions

1. The chapter presents a historical overview of ethical leadership characteristics. What model(s) of ethical decision-making resonate with your approach?
2. What are the three dimensions of justice presented in the chapter?
3. Having critical conversations was one of nine leadership characteristics identified in research conducted by Santamaría (2014). What critical conversations support the role of the social justice organizational leader in your organization? How can these conversations reinvigorate discussion about leadership?

4. How can you engage in actions that support either your role or that of others as social justice organizational leaders?

Acknowledgment

References

Bentham, J. (1996). *The collected works of Jeremy Bentham: An introduction to the principles of morals and legislation*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Child, J. (1972). Organization structure, environment, and performance: The role of strategic choice. *Sociology*, 6(1), 1–22.

Cho, J., & Danseraau, F. (2010). Are transformational leaders fair? A multi-level study of transformational leadership, justice perceptions, and organizational citizenship behaviours. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21(3), 409–421.

Clauss-Ehlers, C. S., & Pasquerella, L. (2014). Understanding retirement from a developmental perspective: The case of Mount Holyoke College. In C. Van Ummersen, J. M., McLaughlin, & L. J. Duranleau (Eds.), *Faculty retirement: Best practices for navigating the transition* (pp. 42–51). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publications.

Cropanzano, R., & Stein, J. H. (2009). Organizational justice and behavioral ethics: Promises and prospects. *Business Ethics Quarterly*, 19(2), 193–233.

Deutsch, M. (1985). *Distributive justice: A social psychological perspective*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Epstein, E. G., & Hamric, A. B. (2009). Moral distress, moral residue, and the crescendo effect. *The Journal of Clinical Ethics*, 20(4), 330–342.

Fehr, R., & Gelfand, M. J. (2012). The forgiving organization: A multilevel model of forgiveness at work. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(4), 664–688.

Feng-I, F. (2011). A study on school leaders' ethical orientations in Taiwan. *Ethics and Behavior*, 21(4), 317–331.

Fullan, M. (2003). *Change forces with a vengeance*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Glanz, J. (2010). Justice and caring: Power, politics, and ethics in strategic leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 38(1), 66–86.

Goldman, M., & Kirsch, G. E. (2005/2006). Women, leadership, and social change: Past and present. *International Journal of the Diversity*, 5(6), 125–131.

Jameton, A. (1984). *Nursing practice: The ethical issues*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Johns, G. (2006). The essential impact of context on organizational behavior. *Academy of Management Review*, 31, 386–408.

Kant, I. (1785). *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals (Grundlegung zur metaphysik der sitten)*.

Kant, I. (1993). *Grounding for the metaphysics of morals*. Translated by J. W. Ellington (3rd ed). Cambridge, MA: Hackett Publishing.

Klinker, J. F., & Hackmann, D. G. (2004). An analysis of principals' ethical decision making using Rest's Four Component Model of Moral Behavior. *Journal of School Leadership*, 14, 434–455.

Machiavelli, N. (1909–14). *The prince*, translated by N.H. Thomson. Vol. XXXVI, Part 1. The Harvard Classics. New York, NY: P.F. Collier & Son, Bartleby.com, 2001.

Martin, R. J., & Dagostino-Kalniz, V. (2015). Living outside their heads: Assessing the efficacy of a multicultural course on the attitudes of graduate students in teacher education. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 22(2), 43–49.

Mill, J. S. (1901). *Utilitarianism*. London: Longmans, Green and Company.

Ng, E. S., & Sears, G. J. (2012). CEO leadership styles and the implementation of organizational diversity practices: Moderating effects of social values and age. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 105, 41–52.

Pasquerella, L., & Clauss-Ehlers, C. S. (2014). Giving voice to intuition in overcoming moral distress. In J. Liebowitz (Ed.), *Bursting the big data bubble: The case for intuition based decision making* (pp. 135–146). Florence, KY: Taylor & Francis Group.

Pasquerella, L., & Killilea, A. G. (2005). The ethics of lying in the public interest. *Public Integrity*, 7(3), 261–273.

Pasquerella, L., & Richman, R. (1996). Breaking down barriers: Administrative reform of the organizational culture within a women's prison. In L. Pasquerella, A. G. Killilea, & M. Vocino (Eds.), *Ethical dilemmas in public administration*. (pp. 61–73). Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger Press.

Plato & Lee, H. (1974). *The Republic*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Resick, C. J., Hanges, P. J., Dickson, M. W., & Mitchelson, J. K. (2006). A cross-cultural examination of the endorsement of ethical leadership. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 63, 345–359.

Rhodes, C. (2012). Ethics, alterity, and the rationality of leadership justice. *Human Relations*, 65(10), 1311–1331.

Robicheau, J. W. (2011). Ethical leadership: What is it really? *AASA Journal of Scholarship and Practice*, 8(1), 34–42.

Santamaría, L. J. (2014). Critical change for the greater good: Multicultural perceptions in educational leadership toward social justice and equity. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(3), 347–391.

Senge, P. (1990). *The fifth discipline*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

Shoho, A. R., Merchant, B. M., & Lugg, C. A. (2005). Social justice: Seeking a common language. In F. W. English (Ed.), *The Sage handbook of educational leadership: Advances in theory, research, and practice* (pp. 47–67). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thibaut, J., & Walker, L. (1975). *Procedural justice: A psychological analysis*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.