Ethical Leadership

AND THE CHALLENGES OF MORAL TRANSFORMATION

EDITOR | DR. GORDON E. DAMES

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PREFACE

This collection of essays makes a substantial contribution to knowledge, in particular to the subject area. The topic is the emerging area of ethical leadership in a variety of contexts. In recent years, this area of ethical leadership has only been dealt with in fragmentary ways in specific societies. This volume is one of the very few which has attempted to bring coherence and analysis to this issue. Work of this kind has been carried out in relation to Northern Ireland, for example, but not to the extent that has been attempted here.

The collection clearly demonstrates considerable originality both in the subject area and the variety of methodologies used.

It is original in that in recent years only limited research from such a wide variety of perspectives was done on the dynamics of ethical leadership in the development of new societies. The authors have both theoretical and practical expertise in their areas of research. They have used that expertise in a sustained and convincing manner.

There is originality in terms of methodology. The authors' interests are primarily in ethics. They apply appropriate perspectives with which to engage with the subject in a full and fascinating manner.

Each author understands how his or her own investigation relates to the wider cultural, socio-economical, political, educational and ethical contexts of current societies.

The authors' critical insight and their interactions with a variety of concepts in scientific theory in relation to ethical leadership are cogently and coherently argued.

This is a very fine collection, and the individual authors and the editor are to be congratulated on this publication.

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Acknowledgements

The publication of this book concludes the work of the Ethical Leadership Project (ELP) from 2005 to 2008. The title, *Ethical Leadership and the Challenges of Moral Transformation,* represents the invaluable reflections of the authors and embodies a vision for the common good of, and the unique challenges facing, South Africans. This volume captures the rich and diverse, but also collective perspectives from a broad spectrum of leaders in South Africa. The book speaks to, from and beyond the broader South African context.

We wish to introduce the various authors in this book.[1] We do so, not merely as a formality, but in recognition of their coherent vision and collective commitment to a morally transformed society. Nico Koopman, a founder and board member of the ELP, is Professor in Ethics and Public Theology at the Theology Faculty of the Stellenbosch University. Rudi Buys is the Commissioner of the Western Cape Youth Commission. Clint Le Bruyns, an executive board member of the ELP, is a Senior Lecturer in Public Theology and Ethics at the Theology Faculty of the Stellenbosch University. Tamara Shefer is Professor and Director of Women's and Gender Studies at the University of the Western Cape. Willie Esterhuyse is Professor Emeritus at the Business School of the Stellenbosch University. Oliver Williams is Director of the Centre for Ethics and Religious Values in Business at the University of Notre Dame (USA), as well as a director of the United Nations Global Compact Foundation. In the 2007-2008 academic year Oliver Williams was a visiting Professor in a joint appointment by the Graduate Schools of Business of Stellenbosch University and the University of Cape Town. Janine Myburgh is the National and Provincial President of the Johannesburg and Cape Town Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, respectively. Gordon Dames is the Research Coordinator of the ELP at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. Sue Mcwatts is the Project Manager of the ELP at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology and Geraldine Kennedy is the Labour Coordinator at both the Provincial Development Council and COSATU in the Western Cape. Courtney Sampson, Deputy Chairperson of the Board of the ELP, is the Provincial Electoral Officer of the Independent Electoral Commission in the Western Cape. Colleen Howell is the Director of Institutional Research employed in the Rector's Office for Institutional Planning at the University of the Western Cape.

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1   For more information, refer to www.elp.org/board members/staff/conference/profiles.

INTRODUCTION

The publication of this book ushers in a new phase in the work of the Ethical Leadership Project (http://www.elp.org.za). More importantly the ELP's work speaks to morally challenging times as we are faced with tectonic global and local changes. These changes raise unprecedented ethical questions to leaders living and working in different contexts, cultures and with a diverse and pluralistic community of people. The achievements of the 20th century brought us face to face with multiple crises:

> … a golden age running from 1947 to 1973 gathered the forces that still shape our lives, but the consequences are no longer golden. … Ours is a first era of global crises because for the first time in history the golden age has created a single, increasingly integrated world economy [and socio-politics and culture]. This economy [and socio-politics and culture], which bears down on all of us in different ways, hops national frontiers with ease and generally ignores an international system that depended on territorial, sovereign, and independent nation-states for its stability.[2] Governance efforts themselves are pulled apart by these transnational economic forces on one level, while ethnic and regional secessionist conflicts pull from another direction. The problems we thought the golden age had solved thus reappear all over again. Yet now they surface with global reach: mass unemployment, severe cyclical slumps, the spreading distance between rich and poor in a confrontation of limousine plenty with homelessness, and limited state revenues for limitless expenditures. Thus does people's fear of breakdown heighten. The evening news is an enervating affair (Eric Hobsbawm in Rasmussen, 2005:2).

Global and local paradigm and demographic shifts permeate familiar, new and challenging ethical and moral questions simultaneously. The socio-economic, political and cultural praxes of the global/local community are universal as well as particular, and they call for both new-normative identity and character formation, which can enlighten and translate morally questionable praxes into good, just and right praxes – fitting for human and environmental habitats of dignity, equality, equity and freedom.

Max Weber (1965) argued that nobody accepts responsibility for morality in a typical pluralistic, modern society. He hinted at the differentiation of modern society through different subsystems. Each system aspires to specific needs, for example, justice, a sound economy, medical services, education and welfare. A moral vacuum develops which

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2   Rasmussen (2005:2) explains this point in a footnote, stating that: "Hobsbawm is not arguing that the nation-state system actually provided this stability but that this system was expected to do so. His book in fact documents the powerfully disintegrative forces of nationalism in this century, forces channelled as much by nation-states as checked by them".

makes the quest for individual values and attitudes futile. Weber calls for an ethics of responsibility which requires that people take responsibility for a more moral society by calculating concretely and thoroughly the consequences of their actions. Rasmussen (2005:5) calls, in this regard, for cumulative human responsibility:

> If the great new fact of our time is that cumulative human activity has the power to affect all life in fundamental and unprecedented ways, then *what might and ought to be* is precisely what needs to be taken into account. This means the ascendancy of ethics for our era, as an utterly practical affair. How *ought* we to live, and what ought we *do* in view of a fundamentally changed human relationship to earth, a relationship we only partially comprehend?

> Differently said, the radical increase in cumulative human power over this century means a new account of responsibility. It requires moralities and ways of life that extend responsibility to include everything that has life and is necessary to life. Sustainable ways of life, and living into them, await us as necessities that must come to pass.

The socio-political and socio-economic dynamics of the apartheid dispensation cultivated a socio-political moral vacuum and the changing milieu during the transition phase (after fifteen years) of the new democratic South Africa brought about a new and unfamiliar culture that could be characterised as a cultural moral vacuum. This is especially so in the light of power shifts from traditional institutions (the church, schools, government, etc.) to the emergence of new public and democratically-based services. These moral vacuums could be responsible for recurring immoral socio-political and economic practices – violent crime; rape of children and women; corruption in the public and private sectors; and severe patterns of alcohol and drug dependency and abuse.

New and old moral challenges will multiply in the following decades. South Africa experiences socio-economic and political opportunities and challenges that are growing exponentially. The imminent local and global economic crisis exacerbates the increasing reality of factors which threaten the very social and moral fabric of society. The political rhetoric (during the Mbeki administration) about the causes and treatment for the HIV/AIDS pandemic, crime, xenophobia, corruption and unemployment is only one example of the challenges that counter moral transformation and socio-economic development. South Africa's faith-based and non-governmental organisations, education, labour, the business and political sectors, for example, are facing difficult, and at times pathological, ethical challenges. The widening gap between a minority black upper and middle class and a majority black working class, as well as the tendency of leaders in organisations to commit corruption, leaves the new founded ideal of a just and humane society wanting.

The impact of globalisation and its effects on the moral fibre of society should be addressed from the inherent, traditional South African philosophy of *ubuntu*. *Ubuntu* was initially and predominantly practised by the working and poor people of our rural communities. *Ubuntu, umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu,* means 'a person is a person through other persons, or I am because you are' – observing certain human virtues in people living together (*ubuntu ebabantwini ekuhlaleni*) (Mkosana, 2007:3). We need to foster these communitarian human virtues in people living together to guide and build our society in order to manage the numerous post-modern ethical challenges. What South Africa needs is a regenerated *ubuntu* vision and value-based contextual approaches to develop resilient and responsible leadership and communities. To achieve this, South Africa will need, according to Lämsä and Pucetaite (2006:4), to initiate quality ethical education programmes and research in education, religion, politics, labour and business, human capital resource management and corporate social responsibility. Rasmussen (2005:345) elaborates on this by calling for the welfare and sustainability of inclusive life communities:

> Within this expanding moral universe, the broadest moral guideline is one suggested by James Gustafson. Human beings, given their power and place in earth's present reality and their nature as self-conscious moral creatures, may inevitably be the measu*re*rs of all things. But the measure itself is that we "relate to all things in a manner appropriate to their relations to God." The "good" all things are is more than their good for us, and our own interests are relative to larger wholes than those of immediate human welfare. Human interests are thus relativized in the interest of the more inclusive life communities of which we are part and upon which we utterly depend. Human beings thereby share with other participants in the Community of Life the need to make those sacrifices required for the welfare and sustainability of this community as a whole. This requires, to recall the previous point, a moral and emotional nervous system that opens out beyond a strict anthropocentric circumference. It requires rubbing away the moral callousness of prominent traditions and ways of living, together with deeply inscribed habits, particularly in the ranks of the powerful and privileged.

The semantic value of this book lies in its creative relatedness for the welfare of whole communities in and through the collective actions and reflections of a diverse group of leaders, embodying the ethos of Nelson Mandela's call for an 'RDP of the soul'.[3] This book

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3   The concept: *"RDP of the Soul"* was formally introduced by President Nelson Mandela in Parliament on the 5th of February 1999 (http://www.info.gov.za/speeches/1999/99205_ openin99_10091.htm). It refers to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) of the South African government; this is an integrated, coherent socio-economic policy framework, which represents a vision for the fundamental transformation of South Africa (White Paper on Reconstruction and Development, 1994). Thabo Mbeki (2007) reviewed and analysed the challenges of the ANC's liberation in his commentary on *The RDP of the Soul* and developed a methodology for transformation through what he called *the reconstruction and development of 'the*

echoes different ethical theories, models and methodologies, and each chapter reflects the pluralistic character of ethics in South Africa. We do not present a systematisation of the different perspectives, insights, philosophies, cultural, religious and institutional traditions, or social contexts. This book looks in on, and looks out of, South Africans' habitats – illustrating the multicultural and pluralistic contexts of theoretical and reflective praxes. The authors, as reflective practitioners and academics, are representative not only in terms of gender and race, but also of our nation's rich and diverse cultures.

We are proud to introduce our first book publication, *Ethical Leadership and the Challenges of Moral Transformation.* The contributions in the book represent diverse, albeit coherent and rich reflections on the meaning and implications of ethical leadership and the challenges of moral transformation. The authors' frame of reference is based on the proceedings of eight ELP conferences from 2005 to 2008.

The various chapters in this book can be read independently of each other. The different contributions are constructed around the book's main theme and cohere into a vision of ethical leadership and the challenges of moral transformation. The reader could read the book from the beginning in order to gain an in-depth insight into the rich reflections and wisdom of contemporary ethicists, or they can choose to read the chapters in random order, according to their focus of interest. Each individual chapter has a unique significance which illuminates new meaning and a vision of ethical leadership and moral transformation. The chapters are divided into three sections.

The first section, *The habitats of ethical leadership,* functions as the primary and foundational framework of moral and social capital for the broader South African society. The meaning of ethical leadership and the challenges of moral transformation in and through families, the youth, religious traditions and gender roles are explored as they form the essential pillars and framework for a morally transformed society.

Nico Koopman reflects on and re-evaluates the indispensable role of families as crucial agents for the formation of ethical leadership by promoting values (constitutional values of the Bill of Rights) such as dignity, equality, justice, equity and freedom. Ethical (familial leadership) refers to the *vision* and ideals of a good society; the human family of public *virtue* and character in South Africa, which strives to embody these ideals and values; and the choices, decisions and *policies* that are based on this vision and virtue. Ethical leadership refers to the transformation of families and society through the process of moral

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nation's spirit'. He held that it is South Africans' spirit that drives political, economic and social processes (http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/policy/2007/discussion/rdp.html).

formation and moral education. Families (especially various family types) are crucial in the maintenance of the *ubuntu ethic* (social solidarity and social cohesion), as a primary resource for healthy family and community life. Religion plays an important role in sustaining, supporting, inspiring and strengthening families, so that families can fulfil their role as agents and spaces of moral transformation and ethical leadership in society.

Rudi Buys analyses the relationship between ethical leadership and youth development in South Africa. He grounds his views primarily in the context in which youths are living today and the specific literature that reflects on the youth development sector. His analysis considers pertinent questions raised by the youth being perceived as litmus tests or catalysts, vanguards or vandals. Key issues, challenges and indicators in the current context of youth development are outlined. Some recent developments are addressed that highlight the youth sector's response to ethical leadership. Suggestions are proposed to integrate ethical leadership in and through the youth. Buys calls for social cohesion; the decolonisation of young people's minds will transform them so that they will eradicate racial and gender-based injustice and "rekindle the essence of spirituality and hope". He argues for a cultural revolution among the youth generation; to build African pride and respect for the unique customs and traditions of our diverse communities: "A revolution of leadership that will do what Burns [1978] called the fundamental process and strategy of leadership, namely to make conscious what lies unconscious among us: a vanguard of ethical catalysts".

Clint Le Bruyns defines the role of religious traditions in ethical leadership as a crucial element for the realisation of a morally transforming society in and beyond South Africa. The world of the 21st century is in dire need of transformation for the realisation of 'the good society' that embodies human dignity and human rights, freedom and equality, justice and reconciliation, ecological care and peace. Ethical leadership challenges leaders in their personal and positional capacities to facilitate moral transformation on all levels of life. Religious communities are challenged to contribute to "the constructive task of healing the world and building a new society". Religious traditions are ideally positioned to facilitate "the deepening and nurturing of a moral vision of society". Religious communities are called "to be 'ministers of hope' at a time when 'a ministry of hope and the gift of deep healing' are sorely needed". Ethical leadership in religious traditions is capable of transforming institutions and society, and envisioning new possibilities for a more humane society through reciprocal expressions of the "common good life".

Tamara Shefer addresses one aspect in which ethical leadership intersects with gender power inequalities and how they are articulated through current heterosexual normative practices. She explores the practices of *heterosexuality* in contemporary South Africa as an

emerging dynamic within current research and literature. She maintains that the institution of heterosexuality has been idealised, romanticised and naturalised, while homosexuality remains, in many cultures, a marginalised, pathologised and stigmatised sexual orientation. Heterosexuality has been relatively untheorised and unstudied across most disciplines. She explores and critically evaluates key themes regarding contemporary heterosexual practices, namely power inequalities in heterosexual relationships; gendered roles and unequal power in the negotiation of heterosex; the endemic nature of coercive and violent practices in sexuality; and the developmental and social context of masculinity and femininity in understanding heterosexual power relations. "The current picture of heterosex emerging from research in South Africa, as it is globally, is one imbued with much negativity". The dangers associated with heterosex, including unwanted pregnancies, STIs and HIV/AIDS, challenge men and women to transform their sexual practices as the embodiment of ethical relational habits and values for the 'common good' of all South Africans. She concludes by alarming ethical leadership in the context of gender and (hetero) sexuality, especially in light of the HIV/AIDS pandemic to refrain from 'moral panic' and the reinstatement of "regulatory practices which ultimately reproduce and legitimise gender power inequalities between men and women".

The second section, *Corporate and institutional ethical leadership*, spells out the dynamics of ethical leadership and the challenges in moral transformation in and through the worlds of work, business and politics. The meaning of ethical leadership and the challenges of moral transformation in and through labour, business and politics are analysed as they provide the building blocks for a morally transformed society.

The issue of labour is addressed from a South African socio-economic perspective within a global macroeconomic world order. Sue Mcwatts and Geraldine Kennedy reflect on "the ethical rationale governing poverty and inequality in the world of work, and the brutality of compromised human dignity". They argue *for* the labour movement's insistence on 'capital with a human touch' and the 'humanisation of globalisation', the redistribution of wealth for all and the demand for ethical leadership among all role-players – to readdress the scourge of poverty and inequality in South Africa. The authors hold that the need for a 'moral identity' of the workplace and a 'moral basis of industry' historically initiated the rise of trade unionism in South Africa. The authors agree with "Marx's argument that the *social relations* of production are a fundamental determinant of any economy", and hold that it is a truism for South Africa: "Ethical leadership for the common good in all of life, with and for others, through just and fitting means, towards a morally transforming society is required in the world of work on the part of all role-players, including trade unionists,

workers, employers, government, etc.". Ethical leadership values should form the foundation of the world of work and should embrace individual, organisational and state priorities over against the traditional aims of profit and profit sharing.

The seventh chapter is a combination of four different, but related contributions that reflect on ethical leadership and the moral challenges in and through business leaders and their respective business practices.

Willie Esterhuyse's *Ethics in action* presents us with a basic theoretical framework on business ethics. He raises critical questions, namely: "Have we succeeded in restoring the 'soul' of the South African nation? Do we have, even in a relative way, a functioning national consensus on the core values needed to take South Africa into the future?" He contends that a shared collective morality is required to reduce crime, to support family and social structures, and to give citizens a sense of purpose and direction. Ethical decision making becomes a crucial methodology to empower leaders in doing the right and legitimate thing in a specific and challenging situation. The values and morals of ethical leadership are prerequisites in a diverse and divided society such as South Africa. Ethical leadership should therefore embody the principles of South Africa's Constitution which "is imbued with inspiring legitimising values such as 'democracy', 'non-racial' and 'non-sexist'". South Africa's constitutionally entrenched Bill of Rights inspires ethical leadership practices and legitimises all the values and conceptions of justice which underpin the processes of transition, moral transformation and democratisation.

Oliver Williams's article, *Responsible corporate citizenship and the ideals of the UN Global Compact* distinguishes between two sets of responsibilities, namely role responsibility (being a mother, father, doctor, or lawyer, businessman) and citizenship responsibilities (paying one's taxes and joining the neighbourhood watch). These responsibilities have a reciprocal implication for business practices in terms of the individual and "common public good". South African business is renowned for the African philosophy of *ubuntu* (cf. the King Report) – "a communitarian value" for humane life that requires quality and value-based relationships for an inter-connectedness between business and society. Corporate citizenship has become crucial for our world today; 4000 multi-national companies have signed up to the UN Global Compact, which is a set of global business principles and ideals for 21st-century business challenges. These principles deal with ethical values such as human rights, labour rights, environmental issues, corruption, etc. These companies are exemplary in advancing human and labour rights, environmental issues and the fight against corruption. Ethical business leaders can be agents of stability, "in being part of peace through

commerce"; restoring "the social fabric of society, by healing and peace building" initiatives in South Africa and beyond.

Janine Myburgh argues for business ethics from a 'combined ethics' perspective of how society should view ethical values and challenges in the business environment. Business becomes an ethical responsibility with a greater holistic role in society. Social responsibility and the environmental impact of any business decision and action become as important as making a profit. Society has increasingly demanded more ethically focused business practices and actions. "How we treat our environment has a direct impact on our people and consequently our human capital". Labour, business, government and civil society shares a collective and prominent role to hold up a moral compass that informs and transforms society and business practices.

Gordon Dames concludes with aspects of key contributions presented at the *Ethical leadership conference in and through business*. Business ethics focus on values that determine the behaviour of individual business professionals; the effect their behaviour has in society; and on the environment in which they operate. Ethical leadership is not individualistic but a collective responsibility for the common good (public morality). Business ethics cannot be separated from general (situation) ethics. Corporate ethical issues should be addressed on the basis of fundamental ethical standards for the 'common good' of all of life. Situation ethics, on the other hand, focus on the actions and challenges of society itself – the typical issues that the working class is confronted with, for example, the plight of farm workers; brutal evictions; pseudo-empowerment; wage gaps; apartheid debt; the selling of farm houses – bought with 'grant money'; and the 'dop system', despite laws prohibiting it. Corporate and social ethics, therefore, become a crucial reciprocal responsibility. Ethical business leadership and practices become key cornerstones for progressive development of a 'good public morality' and a morally transformed society.

Courtney Sampson proceeds from the challenges presented by the current political situation in the Western Cape, South Africa. He emphasises the fact that "no political party has ever won an outright majority (50% plus of the vote) in a provincial election. This environment inevitably creates levels of instability that impact negatively on long-term planning". The focus of transformation shifts continuously to short-term planning because of "the constant imminence of possible regime changes". Political leadership has shifted dramatically in the past thirteen years "from being characterized by sacrifice and suffering to political leadership as privilege and wealth". The greatest democratic challenge in South Africa has become the measure of "how well poverty is addressed and how

well transformation takes place". Sampson attends also to the media's role in addressing South Africa's challenges of nation building and restitution. He defines the media's role as 'insensitive' and that it "continues to haunt the political challenges faced in post Apartheid South Africa". The question therefore remains: what is the media's ethical leadership responsibility in an emerging democracy and a morally transforming society.

The last section, *Ethical leadership formation* addresses the evolving role of education as an agent of ethical leadership development and an agent of moral formation and transformation in South Africa.

Colleen Howell addresses ethical leadership and moral challenges in the education system of contemporary South Africa. She emphasises the importance of education for the future of South Africa. Education becomes essential in building a "morally transformed society" underpinned by "a culture of human rights". Education becomes critical to our ability as a country to produce the kinds of leaders who make meaning of the world through an ethical framework informed by democratic principles and values. Ethical leadership in education needs to grasp and respond to the historical patterns of inequality in the education system, without neglecting the qualities in young and future leadership that could empower them to move beyond the constraints of the present, and to be able to conceive of new possibilities. The ethical challenge in education is "to create a new 'psycho-social space' and a 'new value system in which learned behaviour (is) turned around'. Thus what happens within our education system and what our present educational leaders seek to achieve becomes critical to our ability as a country to produce such a consciousness".

Each of these chapters relates to the main theme of the book and focuses on a specific sector that forms a basic building block of any society's social (as well as socio-economic, political, philosophical and educational) fabric. It is therefore important that the ethical role of these diverse sectors should be to define, promote and inform its stakeholders and policy makers of the valued and fundamental role they should and must play. This book follows in the footsteps of some of the very first ethical action-reflection-action schools of Villa-Vicencio and De Gruchy (1994:ix-xi) at the beginning of our new found democracy, who proposed in their book, *Doing Ethics in Context. South African Perspectives*, that:

> Should these contributions succeed in generating ethical debate, they will have served their purpose. Ethics is, however, never reflection for the sake of reflection. It requires people to analyse, think and critically reflect in order to act and share in the process of making the world a more just and decent place in which to live. This action must, in turn,

give rise to further reflection and self-critique. Doing ethics involves participation in an action-reflection-action continuum.[4]

This book does not just aim to engage in a pure academic exercise to accumulate new knowledge, but it seeks to make a "grassroots" impact and contribution. This book is therefore a heuristic instrument that is simultaneously informed by previous ELP research initiatives, develops new knowledge, and informs and empowers its research constituencies.[5] The rationale of the book is grounded in our generic research methodology that incorporates the general research guidelines of the Ethical Leadership Project (cf. www.elp.org.za). The premise of this book, in recognition of collective morally transformed followers, is the fostering of mutual and collective moral learning and trans*form*ation, instead of a process of "banking ethical knowledge" or moral "indoctrination".[6] This book also embodies the ELP's research methodology, namely, action research. Action research can basically be defined as a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowledge in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview (Coghlan & Brannick, 2006:3). Orlando Fals-Borda and Muhammad Anisur Rahman (1991:3) argue from their perspective that participative action research is simultaneously research oriented, adult education and socio-political action.

There are numerous ethical challenges for the diverse sectors in South Africa today. Any reflection and definition of the ethical role of these sectors (religion, youth, family, education, labour, politics, etc.) should be grounded in a clear comprehension of the role of ethical leadership in transforming moral challenges in these sectors and beyond. However, care should be taken not to equate ethical (transformational) leadership[7] as altruism for

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4   Participatory action research rejects the asymmetry implicit in the subject/object (researcher/ researched) relationship that characterises traditional academic research and the tasks of daily life. Such a relationship should be transformed into a subject/subject relationship. The destruction of the asymmetric binomial is the kernel of the concept of participation (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991:5).

5   It must be emphasised that action research focuses on the direct link between intellectual knowledge/ theory and action. The objective should be that each inquiry contributes directly to the empowerment of people and their communities (Coghlan & Brannick, 2006:14).

6   Paolo Freire's (1982) conscientisation methodology is a process of self-awareness raising through collective self-inquiry and reflection. This allows exchange of information and knowledge, but is opposed to any form of teaching or indoctrination (Fals-Borda & Rahman, 1991:17).

7   Price (2003:69), however, holds that "the theory of transformational leadership underestimates the complexity of the moral psychology of leadership … the threats to ethical leadership cannot be reduced to egoism … they ignore a peculiar cognitive challenge that leadership brings … Leadership can induce and maintain a leader's belief that she is somehow exempt from moral requirements that apply more generally to the rest of us". Price (2003:70) argues that authentic [ethical] "transformational

ethical achievement and moral success (Price, 2003:67). Authentic[8] ethical (transforming) leadership refers to the "ultimate test of moral leadership" and "an ideal moral type" of ethical leadership (Price, 2003:68):

> [Ethically] Transforming leadership raises leaders and followers to "higher levels of motivation and morality". Leadership must have the "capacity to transcend the claims of the multiplicity of everyday wants and needs and expectations" … achieving the requisite transformation "by raising our level of awareness, our level of consciousness about the importance and value of designated outcomes, and ways of reaching them".

The vision of moral transformation would realise the objectives set out in this book and would promote value congruence within society, organisations and institutions – that will reciprocally "give rise to behaviour that is itself congruent with these values. Transformed [moral and ethical] followers can now act on the values they have come collectively to accept" (Price, 2003:68).

We hope that this book will contribute to new knowledge and theory building about ethical leadership, values and skills in addressing pluralistic moral challenges today, and thatscholars and reflective practitioners will draw on the collective knowledge and wisdom presented in this book in order to develop new communities of ethical dialogue and action. The overall objective of this book is to inform and empower leaders on all levels of society with ethical practices, knowledge, skills and values to foster moral transformation in their worlds of life and work for the sake of the communities they serve.

Dr Gordon Dames

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leadership guards against abuses of self-interest by requiring that leaders act on socialized, as opposed to personalized power motives".

8   See Price (2003:70).

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THE HABITATS OF ETHICAL LEADERSHIP

This section comprises of four perspectives on ethical leadership which act as the primary and foundational agents of moral and social capital in society. The meaning of ethical leadership and the challenges of moral transformation in and through families, the youth, religious traditions and the dynamics of gender roles are discussed.

Ethical leadership in and through families

Nico Koopman

This chapter draws on, and intends to reflect, the perspectives of the conference that the Ethical Leadership Project (ELP) had organised on the theme of *Ethical Leadership in and through Families*. The aim of the conference and of this chapter is to discuss and re-value the indispensable role of families in the building of ethical leadership. This leadership is practised within families and in broader societies. To achieve this aim, notions such as ethical, leadership, moral formation, family life and the role of families in building ethical leadership are discussed.[9]

1.   Ethical?

a. The word "ethical" has a threefold meaning. It firstly refers to the vision that people have for their own life and the lives of others. It refers to the ideals that we have for life and for broader society. It reflects our understanding of a life that is worth living, a life that is good, that is right, that is beautiful, that is joyous, that is happy. The Greek word "*ethos*" literally refers to the habitat of animals. The habitat is that space of safety and security where life flourishes. To talk about the "ethical" is to talk about the creation of habitats in which the good life blossoms.

The South African Bill of Rights, Chapter 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), describes the good life as one where there is dignity, justice, equality, equity (bringing what is unequal into equilibrium) and freedom. South Africans from a variety of religious and secular traditions agree about this vision for the South African society.

b. The second meaning of ethics is derived from the Latin word *habitus*. It refers to the habits with which we live. It refers to our virtues and character. It tells what type of people we are. Virtues refer to the tendency, inclination, predisposition and intuition to be and to act in accordance with what is good, right and beautiful. Character literally refers to the mark of an

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9   The bibliography lists some of my publications which deal in more detail with the categories of ethics and moral formation.

engraving tool. To have character, or to be a person of character, means that specific values and ideals are engraved into me. These incarnated values and ideals can be called virtues. The person of character embodies virtues.

The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, formulated four cardinal virtues. Cardinal means that these are the core virtues on which all other virtues hinge. The four cardinal virtues are justice, wisdom, courage or fortitude, and self-control or moderation. These virtues have a personal and public dimension.

This second use of the concept of ethics also has significance for our Bill of Rights. Where the first use of ethics refers to the vision of a good society articulated in the Bill of Rights, i.e. the vision of the common good, the second use of ethics focuses on the humans for whom these rights exist, and for the humans who strive to embody these ideals. Human rights are not enough; we need right humans as well.

c. The third meaning of ethics is derived from the Latin word for ethics, namely *mos. Mos* is the root of our word morality. It literally means "to measure". Ethics therefore has to do with measuring, judging, evaluating, deciding, choosing between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, right and wrong, wise and unwise.

The Bill of Rights provides a vision of the good society. This vision is adhered to by people of public virtue and character who strive to embody these ideals; and the vision that we adhere to, and the ideals and values that we embody, determine the decisions that we make: personal decisions in the most private spheres and broad public decisions such as policies, acts and procedures in all spheres of public life, the political, economic, ecological, social and cultural.

When we talk about ethical we refer to the *vision* and ideals of a good society, the people of public *virtue* and character who strive to embody these ideals and values, and the choices, decisions and *policies* that are rooted in this vision and virtue.

This analysis makes it clear that ethics and morality are not only for the private spheres of life, but they are a crucial ingredient of all walks of life. Neither do ethics and morality only have to do with sexual matters, as is suggested by some, but they deal with all facets of human and non-human life. Ethics and morality should also not be made synonymous with forms of absolutism, fundamentalism, intolerance, judgementalism, moralism, stigmatization, demonisation and destruction of the other. These are caricatures and distortions of the type of healthy ethics and morality that the ELP is committed to.

The ELP focuses upon those values that South Africans agree upon in general, i.e. the values of our Bill of Rights. The ELP acknowledges that people might differ on how they implement these values in the case of concrete decision making and policy making, but they do agree on the basic values. And even if they differ on the specifications and concretisation and application of these values, they will respect and celebrate the dignity of the other. And the celebration of dignity means that even amidst different opinions we do tolerate and even embrace each other.

2. Leadership?

The ELP advocates an inclusive understanding of leadership. Every citizen, young and old, in all walks of life, is viewed as a leader. That means every South African is challenged:

- to adhere to the vision of a society of dignity for all;
- to join the quest to personally embody that vision, ideals and values, and therefore to be people of public virtue and character;
- to participate in the decision-making processes in all walks of life, as well as policy making and policy implementation processes in all public spheres, that are in line with the vision, values and virtues of dignified living.

The conference on ethical leadership in and through families views every family member as a leader with regard to this threefold challenge. Members of other social institutions are in the same sense viewed as leaders in the worlds of, amongst other things, politics, business, trade unions, the media, education, youth, women, sport, art and culture.

In all walks of life appeals are made for ethical leadership, for citizens who accept this threefold challenge as their personal and civic responsibilities. The renowned political scientist Will Kymlicka (2002:284-285), amongst others, explains how prominent the idea of moral citizenship has become in contemporary political thought. According to him, political thought in the 1970s was characterised by liberal individualism. The concepts of justice and rights were proposed as alternatives to a utilitarian approach. In the 1980s communitarian thinking became prominent. In the attempt to show that liberal individualism could not account for or sustain the communal sentiments, identities and boundaries required for feasible political community, terms such as community and membership were emphasised. In the 1990s the idea of citizenship developed as an attempt to transcend the opposition between liberal individualism and communitarianism. Citizenship theory makes space both for liberal ideas of rights and entitlements, as well as communitarian ideas of membership in and attachment to a particular community. Kymlicka (2002:285) argues that both

theoretical and political considerations indicate that the health and stability of a modern democracy depend not only on the justice of its institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens. He mentions some of these qualities and attitudes:

> … their sense of identity, and how they view potentially competing forms of national, regional, ethnic, or religious identities; their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and exercise personal responsibility in their economic demands, and in personal choices which affect their health and the environment. Without citizens who possess these qualities, democracies become difficult to govern, even unstable.

William Galston (1991:221-224) has compiled a very influential list of four categories of civic virtues that enable democracies to flourish, namely general virtues (courage, law-abidingness and loyalty), social virtues (independence and open-mindedness), economic virtues (work ethic, capacity to delay self-gratification, adaptability to economic and technological change) and political virtues (capacity to discern and respect the rights of others, willingness to demand only what can be paid for, ability to evaluate the performance of those in office, willingness to engage in public discourse).

In his influential study on the role of civil society in Italy Robert Putnam (1993) argues that the success of regional governments was related to the civic virtue, or social capital, of citizens, amongst other things their ability to trust, to participate in public life and their sense of justice. Although they had the same institutions, the various post-war regional governments achieved different levels of success. Putnam contributes these differences not to the different income and educational levels of citizens, but to differences in civic virtue and social capital.

For South African democracy to work, for life in South Africa to flourish, we need citizens in all walks of life, also in the family, with vision, virtue and discernment.

3.   The process of the formation of leadership

To fulfil the requirements for ethical leadership, the process of moral formation and moral education is of great importance. All of us need to be transformed continually into people:

▪ who adhere to the vision, ideals and values of the good life of dignity for all;

▪ who live with and embody this vision and ideals of dignity and therefore become people of public virtue and character; and

- who participate in decision-making and policy-making processes that advance this vision, values and virtues.

The ELP Conference discussed the famous seven models of moral formation formulated by the Dutch scholar, Johannes van der Ven (1998). These models are discipline, socialisation, value transmission, moral development, value clarification, emotional formation and education for character.

4. Families and ethical leadership

The ELP Conference agreed that various types of families can be agents that participate in the formation of ethical leadership for life in our families and for life in broader society. This can happen despite so many threats that families face. This can happen because there are so many strengths and resources which families can draw upon.

a. Various types of families were identified: so-called nuclear and extended families; single-parent families; second-marriage families, where children from previous marriages come together into one new family (also called blended families); child-headed families, especially in the context of the HIV/AIDS pandemic; same-sex union or marriage families.

Angela Volmink (2005:1-3) sensitised the conference to the various forms of family life in South Africa. She referred to, amongst others, the so-called multiracial families. Her own family consists of black, coloured and white members. She even referred to the fact that contemporary families live on different continents. In the context of globalisation with better travelling facilities, communication techniques and higher levels of political, economic and cultural interaction and interdependence, this global, multinational type of family will grow. Pleas were made at the conference that one type of family, i.e. the so-called nuclear family, not be viewed as the ideal, whilst others like the extended family were viewed as abnormal. The challenge is to accept the integrity of each family type.

b. The broader challenges of contemporary societies impact strongly on all these types of families. In South Africa these challenges include poverty, the big gap between rich and poor, unemployment, long working hours and unfavourable working conditions, crime and violence, gangsterism and drug lords, alcohol and substance abuse, diseases such as HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancies, the breakdown of discipline and respect for authority in various walks of life, and other social pathologies such as racism, classism, misogyny and homophobia. De Klerk-Luttig (2007) depicts a pathological state of 'brokenness' between many parents and their children. It would almost be impractical to expect of these parents

to participate in the moral formation of their own children. The prospect of these children themselves becoming 'wholesome' parents for the future is both challenging and almost impossible. In her contribution Virginia Petersen (2005:1-8), who was then still Director of the Department of Social Services and Poverty Alleviation in the Western Cape, identified various problems that impact on family life and that pose challenges to the family as agent of moral formation and ethical leadership. She outlined the activities and programmes of her department regarding these immense challenges, amongst others: leadership development programmes among youths in schools and youth organisations; programmes that address crime and violence; a variety of healing, cleansing and reparative programmes; gender justice programmes; programmes to address corruption; programmes to develop multilingualism; and programmes to address poverty and economic inequality. All these problems had intensified since the 2005 conference.[10] Unemployment may be regarded as one of the major contributors to the degeneration of civil society's moral fibre. The *Mail and Guardian* (11 November 2005) for instance, reported that the unemployment rate in Delft, one of the suburbs on the Cape flats, is between 65% and 75%.

The famous American ethicist, James Gustafson (1984), discusses the negative impact of social pathologies on family life. According to Gustafson, social crises indeed inhibit the potential of families to function well and to fulfil their noble challenges in personal and public life. Families need wells to drink from in order not only to survive, but to serve broader society constructively.

c. Families do have various strengths and resources to draw upon, which will equip them to fulfil their role as agents of moral formation and the formation of ethical leadership within and outside families. These include the religious and spiritual wells that families drink from. Various religions cherish family life and give priority to supporting and strengthening families. They agree that families are crucial in the creation of forms of social solidarity and social cohesion that societies hunger for so very much. Families are crucial facilitators of processes of moral formation and moral education. At the conference the important role of religion in sustaining families was re-emphasised.

Swami Viyananda (2005:2) of the Hindu faith identified various sources of a strong family life in the Hindu tradition, including daily worship, study of Scriptures, remembrance of family ancestry, communion with the poor, communion with animals, honouring of saints

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10   These problems include the increased crime rate, poverty, violence and abuse against women and children, high percentage of drug and alcohol abuse amongst youths and adults, unemployment, teenage pregnancies, HIV/AIDS infections and increased school drop-out rates in, for example, the George, Knysna and Mossel Bay areas. See ELP Youth Workshop, 2006, online at http: www.elp.org.

and role models, an awareness that since God pervades all of reality – the whole world is your family.

Tahirih Matthee (2005:1-6) of the Bahá'í Faith mentioned that faith can help families to be renewed and to flourish. This can happen in various ways, amongst others through building unity and love in families; through emphasising the equality of the sexes; through equipping families to be spaces of education; and faith communities that can function as extended families. Through this supportive and inspirational role religions can strengthen families. And families can then fulfil the wonderful role as agents and spaces of moral transformation and ethical leadership in society.

An American expert on family life, Don Browning (2007:223-243), lists eight ways in which religious organisations can strengthen families:

1. Teach members about the rich and noble nature, purpose and calling of families in each religious tradition;
2. Develop partnerships with organisations in civil society, business, trade unions and the media to foster a constructive marital and family culture;
3. Collaboration with other denominations and faiths to build strong marriages and families, especially since most people belong to religious organisations, and since they involve religious organisations in familial rites and practices;
4. Guide and inspire the youth regarding the noble meaning and calling of marriage and family life;
5. Support and strengthen the variety of family types;
6. Support families to achieve better working hours and workplace conditions with measures such as advocacy for better policies, support groups for working parents, faith-sponsored day-care centres, baby-sitting networks and nursing support for sick children of working parents, and for sick parents, etc.;
7. Support to families that are going through a divorce; and
8. Strengthening of families, especially males, where the so-called absent father syndrome is manifested. This can be done by raising the awareness of the positive calling of fathers in various religious traditions. Such an awareness could motivate fathers to develop into role models for their children and companions to their wives.

Another important resource for families is the cherished African notion of *ubuntu*. The *ubuntu* ethic emphasises values such as social solidarity and social cohesion, participation in the life of others, concern for the other, hospitality to the other, and the fostering of respect and dignity for all. Where this ethic is used in an inclusive and all-embracing way, it is a crucial resource for healthy family life.

d. Where families are supported in the above-mentioned ways, they can make a constructive contribution to building the moral fibre of the South African nation. Families can become agents for:

- habitats in and through which people enjoy safety, security and flourishing lives;
- habits that ensure righteous, peaceable and joyous living; and
- choices and actions which serve a life of dignity for all.

Families serve these aims through their various religious practices (worship, prayer, liturgies, rites, education, diaconate, witness, discussions, meetings, pastoral care, etc.), and through processes of discipline, socialisation, clarifying of values, transmitting of values, moral development, emotional development and character formation.

5.   Conclusion

The ELP Conference on Ethical leadership in and through Families concluded on a note of hope. Referring to the role of families as agents of moral transformation and ethical leadership in the history of South Africa, Dr Louw (2005:2) articulated this hope and resilience in a remarkable way: "We were poor, but we cared for one another. We did not have much, but we always had much to share with others. We could not afford much, but we were clean. Respect for people was always more important than material possessions. Our common humanness was more important than religious, racial and other differentiations".

Families can be crucial agents for the formation of ethical leadership in families and broader society in contemporary South Africa. Families can contribute to the dawning of the day when South African society reflects the noble values that are articulated in our national visionary documents like our Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights says we are a society of dignity, equality, justice, equity, and freedom. It is not dream to wish that South African families should reflect these values and thereby help the broader human family in South Africa, the rest of Africa and the rest of the world to do likewise. We are people of hope. Our hope is nurtured by various secular and religious faith traditions. With this hope in our hearts we act concretely. Referring to Morgan Freeman's remark in the movie *The Shawshank Redemption*, that hope is a dangerous thing, Courtney Sampson (2005:1) comments: "Hope does not fear disappointment, because it is convinced that victory is certain; those who live in hope, know that they shall overcome."

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Litmus test or catalyst; vanguard or vandals

Considerations on, and from,
youth inputs to the ELP Conference on
ethical leadership in and through youth
– a praxis perspective

Rudi Buys

1. Introduction

The core perspectives offered in this chapter aim to provide a reflection and sound interpretation (in terms of youth development benchmarks) of the inputs of the youth representatives and the Western Cape Youth Commission at the Religion and Youth Conferences of the Ethical Leadership Project (ELP) in 2006. The purpose of these considerations is to show how these inputs share, speak to and introduce the most critical concepts that lie at the heart of youth development in our country. Thus, the major arguments of the various inputs are contextualised and considered against the wider literature and developments in the youth development sector. The major threads that ran through the youth inputs at the conference share a focus on the perceived lack of role-models and positive mentors; the search and calls for a shared cause to direct the efforts of our generation; the imperative for the youth to take the initiative in establishing their own future and the need for young people to take responsibility for broader society, more than only themselves (a clear call for growth in civil society).

Reflecting on the inputs at the ELP Youth Conference, the analysis followed here will consider firstly pertinent questions posed by the youth about being perceived as litmus tests or catalysts; vanguard or vandals. Secondly, the current context of youth development, outlining some of the key issues, challenges and indicators, will be discussed. Thirdly, some recent developments of interest are examined that may offer an indication of where the youth sector is heading with regard to ethical leadership. Fourthly, some issues related to integrating ethical leadership in and through youth are raised.

The major conclusions indicate that a discussion on ethical leadership and youth is primarily a discussion on development. It is also shown that young people are susceptible to programmes of ethical leadership development both because of the context they live in and the initiatives they undertake in response to their context. It is also indicated that the key issues to ensure success in development initiatives are community integration, inter-generational engagement, mentoring and coaching, and youth ownership and decision-making in development initiatives.

2.   Litmus test or catalyst; vanguard or vandals?

As a generation we wish to be more than the measure of the morality and ethical behaviour of the nation. We want to be more than a litmus test – considered to be the sector in society within which the underlying progress or regress can be witnessed. We would want to be a catalyst that unleashes wave after wave of moral and ethical growth in our country (Burger, 2006:2-3). Young people in our country, who face unemployment and poverty, often are both the victims and the perpetrators of crime – we hold the potential both to defend and to destroy; the potential indeed to be the expression of moral decay or the resilient spirit in our society (Adam, 2006:1-2).

Our country has a proud tradition of young people who served as catalysts of change. As a generation we wish to stand in the tradition of our fathers and our mothers, in the tradition of African thinkers and activists who shaped the world in which we today grow to maturity. What is left to us is the task of re-imagining our future on the foundations set by preceding generations (Buys, 2007). What would be the content of our input as catalysts? Where will this re-imagining lead us? What will it hold? What power will it unleash? What world will we create when our fathers and mothers have left this world and we take their places? Will we succeed in continuing that which is good and discontinuing that which is not? Should we be the vanguard of what is to come, or vandalise what has come before us? For in our blood lies both the signs of hope and despair; the potential to build or to destroy. The arrogance of leaders who hold power presents the most dangerous temptation that may lead youth to be destroyers rather than builders (Naidoo, 2006:1). Will the voice of the catalysts be that of the vanguard or the vandal?

We consider these questions as we reflect on the sacrifices of our fathers and mothers and previous generations who showed the moral stamina and vision to ensure a democratic, non-racist and non-sexist South Africa.

We stand humbled and proud by the immensity of what previous generations achieved in our country. And yet often we see that our generation must for itself find solutions for our time. We search through our varying histories to find the significant cornerstones of principle and ethos that would guide our debates on social cohesion for our future. We indeed find in our debates on societal values and moral regeneration a continuation of thoughts of the likes of Marcus Garvey, Kwame Nkrumah, Julius Nyerere, Pixley Seme, Sol Plaatje, Anton Lembede, Robert Subukwe, Joe Slovo, Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo, Bram Fischer, Steve Biko, Beyers Naudé, Nelson Mandela and many others, such as those among us, who, with our fathers and mothers, have through the decades refused to submit to the systemic corrosion of justice and hope. As a generation we wish to stand in the tradition of our fathers and our mothers, in the tradition of these thinkers and activists who shaped the world in which we today grow to maturity.

What we wish to become is the catalysts and the vanguard of the world to come.

3.   In and through youth

Accepting that ethical leadership should hold true in the youth sector, the question remains as to the particular nature and approach relevant in the debate. Young people make up the largest and fastest growing proportion of Africa's general population – currently 30% (Panday, 2006), while young people constitute 41% of the South African population. South Africa and the African continent thus hold a large reservoir of youthful talent that could have a major impact on development, which is dependent on the ability of states and societies to unlock the potential of young people and the youth sector.

The youth sector holds an inherent potential for innovative thought and sustained energy that will expedite Africa's development when harnessed. At the same time young people remain the biggest section of the population challenged by poverty, unemployment, crime (as perpetrators and victims) and HIV infections, amongst others (Morrow *et al.*, 2005). Abbink (2005) argues this point quite avidly in an analysis of the role of young people in political conflict in Africa. He holds that most of the youth are easily recruited by political parties, armed groups and criminal networks. This scenario is due to youth that are readably available and eager to commit to anything and anyone that may relieve them of living conditions of poverty and idleness.

These realities necessitate an approach that takes young people and the youth sector both as a major untapped resource in development and as the major sector to be targeted with development aid. While the latter is most often accepted as true, the former is least often

integrated into approaches and methodologies, so that development initiatives with youths often do not yield the results that aid programmes wish and work for. The development of youth as a resource for societal growth will in turn ensure the success of any development initiatives of young people themselves.

This dual emphasis on developing youth and empowering youth as a resource reflects the psychological constitution and dynamics of young people where people, according to Christiansen *et al.* (2006), seek continuous movement in their socio-generational category – youth development as both social *being* and social *becoming*, with a constant tension between the two.

Thus, a discussion of ethical leadership in the youth sector must be approached first and foremost as a discussion on ways and means to unlock a major resource in a project to grow ethical leadership in society, while the core of such a process to unlock the contribution of young people is the development of such leadership in the sector and of young people themselves – ethical leadership "in the youth" with to view to arriving at ethical leadership "through the youth". Thus, ethical leadership in and through youth must be considered first and foremost as a question of development.

4.   On context: where we're at

The development of ethical leadership in and through youth must follow a unique approach suitable to the context of the youth. For the purpose of this chapter, the context of the youth is considered in some of the major and complex tensions that the youth face today, as well as some of the major omissions or shortcomings in the ways that institutions interact with young people.

Brown and Larson (2002) outline the major tensions young people face in terms of a susceptibility to political and historic events: the impact of globalisation and resulting fragmentation (with the impact of a global media and information technology revolution); loss of connectedness and increasing individualism; remaining gendered structures of opportunities; and the continuous shifts between optimism about and suspicion of the future. However, two of the major challenges facing African youths which impact on the discussion on ethical leadership and young people have to do with inter-generational and global cultural tensions.

Cotterell (2007:224) shows that young people and youth development in general face the challenge of contested public spaces. Spaces for young people in society are won mainly

through contesting with the remnants of youth networks and organisations of previous generations that occupy space and hold power, and which do not want to relinquish that space. This means that young people often do not find sufficient space within which to mould unique responses to challenges and reconstruct values and identities, and so remain at best observers in their own development.

Young people in Africa furthermore face the complex challenges of cultural identity and heritage as a result of the coexistence of endogenous (local) and exogenous (foreign) identities.

Nsamenang (2002) refers to a triple cultural heritage to describe the reality of African youths, who must find a way through the myriad of co-existing, and often competing and conflicting, indigenous and foreign cultural images, institutions, social thought, knowledge systems and values. Mbigi (2005:3) even goes so far as to describe this situation as a "halfway-house", a place of no identity. This immensely challenging situation is often aggravated by a break-down in family structures and the resulting loss of learning and information resources in the extended family (Jackson & Abosi, 2006). Young people are increasingly losing the inter-generational bonds that teach and transfer identity and values. The lack of functional families that convey and transfer values and identity present the most critical cause of insecurity among young people (Gamieldien, 2006:1-2). Adam (2006:2) also raised a serious concern about the increasing loss of "teachings and values" of mothers and grandparents, and the disrespectful interaction with tradition and parents by young people themselves responsible for this situation.

The cultural challenge to identity is also driven by the global popular media industry that encourages young people to want to hold more in common with youth from Europe than with their fellow South Africans, but also to buy into the belief that all that comes from the West, from Hollywood and London is good and better than what our mother Africa has to offer. These beliefs are often perpetuated by the way that communities, of which youths are part, and their customs and traditions have been constructed over many decades. However, this Western value system seems to be increasingly taking hold of young people, because of popular media culture. As much as young people from all races get to know each other at school or in the work place, we do so within the framework of clothing brands and information technology that point us towards New York and London and Beijing, instead of Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain and Ruyterwacht. Chetty and Gamieldien (2006:1-2) argued against this apparent focus of the youth solely on wealth and economic power that stands in stark contrast to the generation of 1976 who sacrificed themselves for a collective cause. Chetty claims that our generation has "lost the passion to

build this nation". The extent to which black and non-black young people remain in, and even become entranced by, "colonial thinking" may be most visible in young people not involved in building pride in African identity, but simply buying into the dictums of a global media driven by popular culture (Buys, 2007).

These tensions are often increased by certain shortcomings in the way that youth development is approached as measured against the most important benchmark indicators.

The foremost concept and commitment in youth development is that of *integrated development*. Very simply put, this challenges the notion that youth development should remain a separate avenue of development alongside and parallel to other streams of planning, resourcing and delivery – a notion that most often receives prominence as it is seen as a reflection of high levels of commitment to youth development in any given institution. However, integrated development calls for the restructuring of all efforts, initiatives and delivery of an institution in such a way that all efforts and programmes becomes ideally accessible to young people. Thus, instead of drafting a project for youth development alongside other projects in your organisation, rather restructure or promote development of all projects so that young people can also participate in and benefit from them. Lack of an integrated approach often leads to youth development initiatives that target participation by high numbers of youths without *efforts to engage the "higher skills"* of young people – young people only build houses and plant food gardens, but do not assist in project planning and accounting work, for example. This kind of oversight not only conveys an incorrect underlying message about community work, but also communicates an incorrect view of the contribution that young people can and should make in communities. Often such initiatives that expand youth participation in community development *do not translate into comprehensive participation* by encouraging youth involvement in community service work, and even less so in forums for decision making and dialogue on societal and policy issues. Again it remains a challenge to find the balance to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to youth participation and development.

A second critical concept and indicator of good practice is the approach that views *young people primarily as a resource, as well as the primary resource,* in their own development – and not firstly as only the receivers of aid and development initiatives. Brown and Larson (2002) indicate that peer education provides the most suitable, although also often the most challenging, vehicle in youth development. In such peer structures youths take up those responsibilities most often held by adults in other systems or institutions such as self-regulation within the peer culture (Nsamenang, 2002). These roles are often denied the youth by older generations. Especially regarding leadership roles within organisations

and movements, it is often apparent that young people make up the "fodder" and are not seen as fit to be "generals or captains in the battles" – of course citing lack of experience in the young, institutions get away with this and the result is that often improper power relations that in the long run inhibit integrated and significant youth development remain uncontested. This principle of youth development calls for the inclusion of the youth in forums for decision making just as much as it calls for capacity building for them to participate meaningfully. At the same time such an approach calls for self-motivation on the side of young people – one of the most important challenges that Leanie Williams (2006:2) argued for in her contribution during the conference. She stated that such motivation is the key ingredient in challenging the temptations of power and corruption among youth leaders – especially in the case of a dearth of role models for young leaders. Young people as a resource are thus called on to lead both in thinking and in action.

Ludwe Mbhele (2006:1) argued for a consideration of the legacy that leaders leave as a driving force to be considered by youth leaders themselves. He outlines the challenges of establishing credibility and finding support whilst remaining true to a meaningful vision. Such considerations indicate the level of responsibility that youth leaders take up in rethinking the cause driving our generation. What young people in essence call for is to be equal partners in dialogue on issues that impact on their lives, as well as to be equal owners of youth development initiatives – in essence a call for a shared and inter-generational agenda. Lerner *et al.* (2006) argue for the inter-generational relationship as one of the major components of any youth development initiative along with leadership opportunities and life skills development. The lack of integration of young people in decision-making forums in youth development initiatives often leads to unsustainable programmes and projects that lose support and participation. However, the peer network structure is a complex system that requires analysis of membership, diverse network systems, social clustering and boundaries (Cotterell, 2007:59). Suffice it to flag this particular aspect of youth development as the most significant in rethinking a programme to instil ethical leadership in the youth sector.

A third critical indicator of good practice in youth development is the planning and delivery of development initiatives that present *exit opportunities to participants*. The question raised here is that of the real and remaining benefit to a young person who participated in any initiative for his or her development. Often young people find they gained skills through a project, but after completion they still find themselves with no opportunity to practice or make use of the acquired skills. Again, the participation of the youth in developing such opportunities is critical as it ensures the sustainability and suitability of programmes and

opportunities and pre-empts any initiative by young people to find alternative ways to make a living and gain power (Ansell, 2005:247). Because of the immense challenges we face in youth development, it has become imperative that even the seemingly most insignificant effort for skills development or growth in the youth sector should present the participant with a channel that leads him/her to another opportunity for growth and/or employment. A lack of exit opportunities represents a break in the steps of the youth development staircase and leaves them stranded.

A fourth indicator is found in our commitment to building and extending *national youth service* programmes. All programmes that give young people the opportunity to work and serve in any community service programme may register and become part of the National Youth Service Programme led by the National Youth Commission. The purpose of this programme is to begin to inculcate among the youth in all sectors of society a spirit of serving and giving back to communities. The task of youth development in our country is thus incomplete when it focuses only on developing young people and imbuing them with skills to better their own lives. Such initiatives also need to ensure that all efforts at the same time succeed in building young people's commitment to community development work. This approach follows the key features of positive youth development outlined by Lerner *et al.* (2006), namely competence, character, confidence, connection and compassion. However, often we see a particular shortcoming in this regard in the lack of coordination in community service programmes on local level and in communities. Various agents and institutions often do not interact and coordinate efforts effectively enough, which results in fewer opportunities and access for young people to improve their lives.

5.   In practice: where we're going

O'Connell (2006:2-4) presents a suitable definition of ethical leadership from an African perspective. He argues that ethical leaders are concerned with issues of truth, respect, responsibility and justice. O'Connell shows that ethical leaders reflect certain best practices that include, amongst others, consistency and congruence, looking at the whole, questioning the culture, seeking diverse voices, fostering the community, putting people at the centre, seeking collaboration, "growing" stories of integrity and creating a culture of trust. Youth representatives did not provide analyses of developments in the sector with regard to the input of Prof. O'Connell, whilst examples of such developments indeed exist. Thus, a brief analysis of three case studies in terms of this basic definition of ethical leadership is included here that may provide some idea of where young people are heading with regard to issues of ethical leadership in the youth sector.

The first case study refers to the 30th commemoration of 16 June 1976 in 2006, which provided a platform for young people in South Africa to define how they will interact with and respond to history today. Commemorative events and programmes were designed and led by the NYC and PYCs.

These programmes were significant in at least three aspects, namely that programmes both commemorated the sacrifices made by young people in 1976 and celebrated the victories for freedom and democracy that the youth played a major part in establishing in South Africa; second, that programmes aimed to assist this generation of young people to define their cause and challenges in reflecting on the challenges that faced young people in 1976; and third, that the messages in programmes and the mobilisation of young people towards participation in the Youth Month programmes aimed to ensure participation of youths from all communities in a bid to promote social cohesion. Of particular interest was the development of a social dialogue programme as part of Youth Month in the Western Cape, which brought together young people from various backgrounds and persuasions to discuss the challenges that young people face today against the backdrop of our history.

The second case study refers to the establishment of a national social dialogue volunteer initiative called *AfrikaAfrikaan* in 2006, which aimed to bring together young people from diverse backgrounds to hold a dialogue on societal issues and to challenge the set categories and/or stereotypes of race, class, religion and culture that they are exposed to and have been brought up with. This initiative is significant in several ways, namely in that it specifically aims to create dialogue (as opposed to community service projects) as a legitimate means of challenging prejudice and overcoming the legacies of our past, in that it defines its membership solely in terms of a commitment to dialogue for positive transformation in the country and concurrent action to bring together specifically youths from different backgrounds and communities that generally would not speak to each other, and in that it aims to develop ways of speaking (language) that will allow people to move beyond the limiting and discriminatory categories of the past (Buys, 2006a).

The third case study refers to the Brightest Young Minds Conference in 2007 that brought together 100 top students from most tertiary institutions from across the country, as well as students from various other African states. The delegates reflected the racial, class and religious profile of our society and thus carried all the associated underlying dynamics, conflicts and potential. The conference set as its theme "Changing the way people see Africa" and created spaces for the diversity of delegates to together develop novel ideas and concepts as integrated teams.

The conference and the work of this student organisation is significant in that delegates develop a sense of unity of purpose reflected in the focus on development challenges relevant to local and also rural communities in all the ventures they design, in that delegates expressed a common conviction that they were able to move beyond the myths and misrepresentations of each other they had grown up with, and in that delegates concluded that as much as each individual wishes to and will make a considerable contribution to building Africa, as a collective, a team, they will increase their impact on the development agenda of our continent. Buys (2007) noted that these outcomes of the conference were all the more significant as some delegates had, by their own admission, spoken for the first time at the conference with someone from a different racial group.

These case studies illustrate that there is fertile ground for the growth of ethical leadership within the youth sector. They show that young people are able to interact with the multiple histories of our country and therefore take responsibility for the choices they make and the doors they open or close. The need for reflecting on history in an integrated way seems to be growing and that the source of this lies with the democratic principles on which the struggle for justice and liberation were founded. Thus the aims of dignity, justice and unity present core values shared by young people from all communities (Buys, 2006b). The integrity of history thus lies secure in memory built on sustainable values.

These case studies also show the intention of young leaders to honestly engage each other beyond those categories that were used to divide people systemically in South Africa in the past, and that often keep intact the boundaries between people – such as their political, religious, racial, class, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It seems as if a there is growing trend whereby young people search for a reconstruction of language not to avoid the difficult themes of the present, but to find the bridges to cross them. One could even speak of a process for the innovation of language. It is apparent that young people feel the need to discuss issues of identity. And yet this need comes with a very real condition, which is the need to explore and find multiple identities not in preparation for diversity, but specifically in conversation with diverse notions of identity and codes of ethics. Thus, in their search for a language to fit their time, categories of identity that indicate shared humanity become trendy, such as T-Shirts printed with the names of Townships and artists performing in strange locations all over the country with diverse cultural co-performers (Buys, 2006b).

These case studies also indicate that young people in all communities increasingly seem to want to take responsibility for socio-political discourse and development of society. The expressed needs for, and various initiatives to create, dialogue on societal issues among various youth sub-cultures is indicative of a spirit of belonging and belief in the real

possibility of change and progress. Most encouraging is the fact that progress to bridge the contextual divides between communities is indeed made with social dialogue initiatives and through the arts.

It could be argued that an intention to re-imagine ways of interacting with each other and a new societal context is presenting itself as young people come to realise and appreciate the efforts of previous generations to imbue our democracy with the principles required for a truly non-racial and democratic society. Yet, it is our generation that must find a way to make that vision a reality in the daily life of each South African (Buys, 2006b).

These case studies also may show that the youth are cognisant of the fact that all generations are partners in the project of transformation, but that specifically our generation of young people must be vigilant and realise that the battle to become free from racially-based identities and psyches will continue even beyond the victories for socio-economic and political reconstruction in our society. It seems as if this generation of the youth already imagine – and at times begin to see in each other's eyes – a reality where we live and interact beyond the categories of discrimination that our history of colonialism and apartheid has left us with – moving beyond mere symbolic events of celebrating unity to continuous dialogue and debate, exploring unique and shared identities and heritages (Buys, 2006a).

6.   A way forward: proposals for integration

Various proposals for integration in youth development initiatives can be derived from a consideration of the inputs from the youth leaders. It is evident from these that it is important that the challenge to integrate ethical leadership in and through the youth must respond to the context of young people and harness the existing potential of the youth sector. Apart from the basic indicators provided in section 4, youth development programmes in ethical leadership should address the following considerations and proposals.

The youth prefer a collectivist culture, where stereotypes and prejudice often provide the framework for meaning and development, leading to in-groups and out-groups that often do not question continuing discrimination on the basis of class, race, gender, disability and religion (Jackson & Abosi, 2006:221). Thus it is critical to both engage a collectivist approach in development programmes, while simultaneously inviting participants to question the messages and values of the system. This is only possible by adopting a meaningful and suitable perspective on the networks in which the youth function – the variety and unlimited number of peer groups, clusters and crowds that youths will create and belong to informally and formally during adolescence (Cotterell, 2007:55).

Naidoo (2006:1) argues for an integrated development of ethical behaviour between the family, education and religion: "The order of importance of the significant figures in a child's life is: the mother, the father, the teacher (Guru) and God". Development programmes should involve various generations of participants from the local or sectoral community as young people are socialised through such interaction toward becoming responsible and participating members of their community, which also reflects the purpose of indigenous education (Nsamenang, 2002). This indicator also speaks to the need for mentoring and coaching as a critical aspect of developmental programmes with young people (Cotterell, 2007:238) – that is development programmes that foster interaction with senior individuals who model ethical behaviour and who become dialoguing partners to youth in order to create partnerships that establish the trust relationships and shared ownership required for sustainable growth.

Leibrandt (2006:1-2) argues that this is especially true in the political environment where young leaders "often follow the leadership style of their political mentors – which would mean that a particular ideology, decision-making procedure and style would often be passed on to the next leadership generation". Thus, mentoring should be carefully considered as a core programme in ethical development. Leibrandt furthermore questions whether this approach receives enough emphasis in the political environment, which is the most in need of development of aspiring leaders. However, Gamieldien (2006:1) argues that role models do exist, but that young people do not make the effort to recognise such leaders in local communities, and are thus to blame for claims of lack of proper mentorship and leadership coaching. He calls on young people to use their own initiative in finding solutions. Youths must trigger the mentorship relationship. Clary and Rhodes (2006) argue that the clearest type of positive youth development activity is the one that involves a direct relationship between individual youths and adults. Naidoo (2006:1) argues that functional families are the most important factor leading to healthy youths – as the basis of all socialisation of young people. However, effective youth development programmes strike a balance and hold the tension between mentoring individuals and establishing coaching networks that give young people exposure to ethical leadership. Cotterell (2007:234) also indicates that youth service programmes in communities provide a means of connecting young people to key institutions and ethical value systems, model civic responsibility and establish opportunities for young people to find meaning and direction. Gamieldien (2006:2) also argues for youth service programmes as a means to instil responsibility among young people.

Ethical leadership development has to incorporate community interaction components. Of particular importance in this regard is the potential of ethical leadership development of the youth in politics. As much as community development programmes provide opportunities for young people to serve their community, engagement on policy and political matters in the public sphere provide a further, and often neglected, platform for the growth of ethical leadership. Abbink (2005) shows that specifically young people in Africa hold unlimited potential for having a political impact because of our numbers and activist inclinations. This opportunity was also advocated for by Natalie Leibrandt (2006:3), who calls for an integration of the political sector as an active participant in civil society initiatives (where political leaders are seen as absent from such initiatives to build ethical leadership). Political leadership development should therefore form an integrated and integral part of ethical leadership development programmes – both as a means to imbue youth in general with responsible civic values of participation in civil society and societal debate, and ensure ethical leadership within the political sector.

The question of ownership and decision making is critical to the success of growing ethical leadership in and through youth. Balt's (2004:43) analysis of youth leadership development programmes shows that the most critical ingredient of success in such programmes is found in the concrete and meaningful participation of young people from the outset of any programme – from conceptualisation to implementation and review. Geordin Hill-Lewis (2006:1-3) argued in his contribution to the conference that a lack of a generational cause, of a vision of our unique contribution to building society, challenges our ownership and participation to a large extent. Durand and Lykes (2006) argue furthermore that as much as inter-generational ownership and management of a youth development programme provide the correct framework for such programmes, it is even more important that the youth representatives, and not the adults, should assume the primary roles in the governing institutions of the programme. Programmes for ethical leadership development should ensure that intergenerational teams should own initiatives, but that the youth lead them. Development programmes should also engage and reflect the high mobility of the youth sector because of the growing impact of globalisation and the media and telecommunication industries (Christiansen *et al.*, 2006). Ansell (2005:83) shows that whereas the impact of globalisation is often not considered to be an issue for poorer societies and/or rural communities, in real terms even the poorest young people strive to buy into an international culture reference system with the right T-Shirt, branded wear and popular international cultural symbols. The hold of brands such as PUMA on African youth across the continent and in diverse cultural communities is a case in point. For young people who increasingly live in a world of endless potential (virtual realities) and high mobility

(media and globalisation), a development programme that sets boundaries and stationary engagement alone as its mission will simply lead to frustration for, and disengagement by, young people.

A suitable programme of action that to a large extent combine many of the required considerations for programmes of ethical leadership development is that of a sustained programme of social dialogue (Buys, 2006b). At the heart of such a programme lies the promotion and protection of dignity and equality, and the potential to establish networks and engagements required for healing, resilience and societal health in our country. Such programmes will also allow young people to explore those identities that express the similarity between people of diverse histories, while strengthening the joyful clarity of personal identity. This potential for young people today lies in the journey of exploring uniquely African identity *by everyone*, with all its intricacies, shapes, incarnations and array of sounds and colours. Not as a set of requirements for belonging, but as a matrix of celebration of locality and context.

Mbhele (2006:2-3) argues that constructive discussion must be encouraged as the means to find new initiatives and relationships. Programmes of dialogue with and through the youth establish the space to invent and find new structures of language – new ways of voicing truths; of speaking; of hearing – linguistics that moves beyond set categories we use to describe people, history and reality; language that sets people free without compromise from limiting labels (Buys, 2006b). This road of imagination lies close to the intuitive nature of young people and has never been as possible as it is now in our country – give them the challenge and they will rise to it. Mbhele (2006:3) builds a courageous argument for considerations of spirituality as a core space within which new paradigms in ethical thinking and behaviour will reveal themselves – arguing for "inner work" to lead "outer work". Such spirituality speaks to issues of identity rather than issues of religion, reflecting the consciousness of the interconnectedness of humanity and ecology. However, in the final instance, programmes for ethical youth development in our current context will stand or fall at this one indicator: the uncompromising commitment of institutions and practitioners to move beyond boundaries – to search and find those stories, histories, realities and spaces that are often called the strange, the unfamiliar, the unknown, and to reach out, meet with and listen to them (Buys, 2006b). Integrity in programmes and people lies in this.

7.   Catalyst and vanguard revisited

This chapter has shown that the expressed wish of the contributions was that the youth should indeed become the catalysts and the vanguard of the future world. And yet, on reflection, one could argue that this wish is more than just a desire, but already the lived reality of young people in Africa and South Africa today. We already challenge the voice of the vandal - as the contributions of this diverse collection indicate.

> Our indigenous African culture recognises that each individual is a tradition bearer of past generations and of those who are yet to come. It is crucial to consider the ways in which we can bring forward the good, true and beautiful that is carried in our African heritage, and to know that the quality of our lives contributes to the possibilities and challenges of future generations (Mbigi, 2005:3).

Such connectedness will be found in the considerations of the unique spirituality of African communities. The youth leaders together also expressed a warning against a danger that may prevent the eradication of the voice of the vandal in our generation. That is the inherent danger when the goal of wealth accumulation is elevated as the only means to overcome the many challenges we face to find meaning and purpose. As a generation we need to consider a different platform to debate and construct social cohesion from – a platform that would supersede and transcend the restricting end goals of wealth accumulation in favour of finding sustained meaning and a common purpose. Such a platform exists in the debate on African identity and spirituality – quite apart from a superficial debate on African identity, which centres on the positioning of resources and power based on categories of race from our past. The debate I refer to is that of African identity liberated from the vestiges of colonial thinking.

8.   Conclusion

The most significant challenge our generation faces in building and contributing to social cohesion is that of the decolonisation of our minds in favour of the mind and ethos of *umntu ngumntu ngabantu* – a decolonisation that will enable us to eradicate racial and gender-based injustice and allow us to rekindle the essence of spirituality and hope that is central to our collective rhythm and roots (Buys, 2007). Hill-Lewis (2006:3) actually argues that the challenge to injustice should be the cause that drives our generation to make a contribution and take leadership.

What we in essence argue for is the need for a cultural revolution among our generation; to build African pride and respect for the unique customs and traditions of our diverse

communities; a revolution of popular theatre productions focused on the plight and victories of our continent; a revolution of popular music, poetry and artistry focused on the unique realities of African young people, reflecting the unique and diverse identities on our continent irrespective of culture or race; a revolution of societal youth dialogue and political debate focused on reflecting African realities; a revolution of increased participation in civil society initiatives and transnational and pan-African youth activism. A revolution of leadership that will do what Burns (2004) called the fundamental process and strategy of leadership, namely to make conscious what lies unconscious among us: a vanguard of ethical catalysts.

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Ethical leadership in and through religious traditions

Clint Le Bruyns

The role of religious traditions in ethical leadership is an all-important question for the possibility of a morally transforming society in and beyond South Africa. Such a society is a more truly human society. It implies that the world as it is presently known and experienced warrants a change for the realisation of 'the good society'. It will reveal its fruits in its outcomes of human dignity and human rights, freedom and equality, justice and reconciliation, ecological care and peace. Ethical leadership has to do with leaders taking responsibility in their personal and positional capacities to facilitate moral transformation in all spheres of life. This chapter explores ways through which religious traditions contribute to a morally transforming society through ethical leadership.

1. Religion and the quest for a more desirable society

Religious communities are increasingly challenged to relate and apply their beliefs, rituals and symbols to the constructive task of healing the world and building a new society. Shortly before World War II Reinhold Niebuhr analysed the moral resources and limitations within individuals and groups for achieving ethical social goals in political and economic life. He made several observations about religion as a resource for life together (Niebuhr, 1932:51-82), including noting that many regarded religion as a hindrance rather than a help for its difficulties in dealing with complex problems – "A society which is harassed with urgent political and economic problems … is inclined to be scornful of any life-expression, which is not immediately relevant to its most urgent tasks" (1932:63); that one of religion's most primary virtues is the ethic of love and reverence for the other – "A rational ethic aims at justice … [and] seeks to bring the needs of others into equal consideration with those of the self", whereas "a religious ethic makes love the ideal … [and] meets the needs of the neighbor, without carefully weighing and comparing [their] needs with those of the self" (1932:57); and that wherever religion did concern itself with the challenges of society, it instilled a sense of future hope with courage to overcome present inadequacies

– "Without the ultrarational hopes and passions of religion no society will ever have the courage to conquer despair and attempt the impossible" (1932:81).

Nelson Mandela, during his presidential term of office in the late 1990s, called upon religious and secular traditions to give attention to the moral fibre of the nation. During its first few years of democracy South Africa had made many significant gains in the political, legal and economic realms, but where the country had faltered was in addressing its moral challenges. A healthy democracy depended on moral renewal. In 1997 the former president assembled religious leaders to meet with the ANC government to discuss the import of faith traditions for nation building and social transformation, and to find ways of mutual collaboration for the common good (Mandela, 1997:9). He bemoaned the fact that the desire for human dignity, equality and freedom was being overtaken by the desire for greed, cruelty, laziness and egotism, which in turn fostered a nation whose full potential for achieving a more truly human society was being compromised. In 1998 he instituted "a campaign for moral regeneration" as "a call to all South Africans to firm up the moral fibre of our nation", and again looked to religious and secular partners (Mandela, 1998a). At a moral summit he noted that these challenges included corruption in public and private sectors, violence and abuse in interpersonal relations and families, and the tendencies towards evasion of paying taxes and fulfilling other civic duties (Mandela, 1998b). In 1999, in his last parliamentary address, he pleaded for "the reconstruction of the soul of the nation" for constituting "an important environment for bringing up future generations" in which would be evident an ethic of respect and responsibility for life, for self and for others (Mandela, 1999).

Augustine Shutte correlates religion with human existence when he asserts that the essence of religion "is not a matter primarily of beliefs, or even of values, but of desires and the hope of their fulfilment" (Shutte, 2006:6). We share a common capacity for wide-ranging desires and hopes that enhance our humanity; we also share a common incapacity to realise these ends within our manifold life situations. The religious dimension of our existence enlightens and liberates us from the predicament of unfulfilled ideals and prepares us for a new reality of fulfilled hope. Religion is vital for persuasively grounding the future and its prospective goods (Fradkin, 2005:251). As such it "generates tremendous power" in people and communities; hence the quality of this power is especially important since this "can be the kind of power that develops and fulfils our human capacities – or the kind that destroys them" (Shutte, 2006:5; cf. Taylor, 2007:618-639). Shutte's seminal question is simply, "Does religion foster the full development of our humanity or not?" (Shutte 2006:5) To what extent does it address the complex problems in society today? To what

extent does it foster a new environment of respect and responsibility that benefits the other even at its own expense? To what extent does it instil hope for a new future in situations of overwhelming challenges?

2.   Ethical leadership – in and through religious traditions?

Ethical leadership has to do with the responsibility to facilitate moral transformation through the ethos of leadership. The leadership component underlines the commitment to influence and change (Rost, 1993:102ff). Leaders are those who participate within this influence-change dynamic in their professional and/or personal capacities. They are response-able (leaders) as opposed to merely manage-able (management) in their respective spheres of action, which is to say that they actively respond to contextual and moral challenges with the hope of change instead of merely managing the status quo. The ethical component draws attention to the moral ideals envisaged in and through this leadership role. Leaders do not implement a self-serving agenda, but bear responsibility for enabling change in the moral fibre of society that benefits others. They envision, embody and enable the idea of the good society. They guide and direct others to contribute in constructive, credible and collaborative ways to the fulfilment of a more desirable humanity and environment. Leaders are empowered with knowledge, values and skills that cultivate and nurture new forms of life together. They fulfil their service with accountability, respect, solidarity. Ethical leadership, in a more comprehensive sense, may thus be understood as *responsibility by empowered leaders for the vision, embodiment and realisation of the common good in all of life in ways that facilitate moral transformation.*

2.1   Knowledge and the good society

Ethical leadership is rooted in a vision of a more truly human society, one that informs, critiques and inspires in the course of assumed responsibility. Expressions of a vision of the good society, as Ernst Conradie shows, have been a regular feature in history (Conradie, 2006:23-38). Whether it was the French Revolution's 'liberty, equality, fraternity' or Gandhi's ideal of Satyagraha instead of violence, or Martin Luther King Jr's dream of a non-racist society, or the concern for environmental integrity, there is an ever-evolving picture of what a life of fullness encompasses. In recent decades and years we have received a number of important texts that address a range of moral ideals – the Freedom Charter (1955), the Declaration of the Parliament of the World's Religions (1993), the Bill of Rights in the South African Constitution (1996), the Earth Charter (2000) and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015).

Moral visions attest to knowledge of 'the possible'. They express the awareness of "an *unacceptable present*" yet see "*new possibilities* for a transformed society," and as such comprise "both a *critical* and an *inspiring* dimension" (Conradie, 2006:20-21). A healthy democracy and society cannot do without a moral perspective. Religious traditions are well placed to contribute to the deepening and nurturing of a moral vision of society. They "express in narratives, myths, rituals, symbols and doctrines an even more comprehensive vision of the good" than many secular traditions, since theirs is an "attempt to understand what is good for society in terms of what transcends society, the country, the continent, the planet and the cosmos itself" (2006:21; cf. Taylor, 2007:623ff). The expressions of a more truly human life in the moral consensus document of the Constitution, for example, are affirmed by all, but religious traditions can complement as well as enhance these expressions through their rich tapestry of moral resources and reflections.

So where an emphasis is placed on a bill of human rights, religious communities would affirm this, while also placing an emphasis on 'right humans' in seeking to build a human rights culture (cf. Koopman & Vosloo, 2002:62-63). Or where the vision underlines employment as essential to human dignity, religious communities might agree but offer a broader perspective on work that includes unremunerated labour or voluntary service as another important component of human dignity. In other words, ethical leadership in religious traditions is about the ability to respond to the unacceptable present and see new possibilities for a more truly human society through the critical reception of the mutually interacting expressions of the good life within the religious and secular domain. These visions contribute to the evolving sociology of knowledge and thus promise a more comprehensive appreciation of a more desirable society.

In reality, however, religious and secular traditions do not necessarily collaborate in this way. The intentional need for the development of a minimal knowledge base for ethical leadership on which to order public responsibility is required. Here are some areas for the attention of leaders within religious communities that should be strengthened:

- *Vision.* Leaders should have a substantial understanding of the vision of their religious community as exemplified in their particular texts, symbols, teachings and rituals coupled with a firm grasp of the vision shared by the broader human community as exemplified in the Constitution as a moral consensus document on the good society. Religious leaders should treat with caution any sense of apparent conflict between religious and constitutional values (Lazarus, 2006:9; Boezak, 2006:3). They will need to guide others toward that which their vision hopes for in a way that also enhances the more commonly envisaged hopes of society at large, but there is also the

assumption that their moral expressions are similarly enhanced through an improved understanding of the hopes of broader communities (Vermeulen, 2006:1).

- *Human rights.* Leaders should have a working knowledge of human rights as a key aspect of this knowledge base. This equips them appropriately to lead with integrity as well as to foster the building of a human rights culture in and through the religious establishment in society. They must know that respect for human rights – and other rights – should never be compromised in their leadership and work. They can potentially foster communities that serve as models for what human rights mean in our life together, along with the nurturing of a culture of human responsibility.

- *Humanity and social existence.* There is great value in gaining a thorough understanding of the nature of humanity and social life, which AIDS both leader and community in appreciating a more balanced perspective on moral transformation and life together. This would include an openness to learning from the areas of social studies, psychology, political science, theological studies, philosophy, etc. (cf. Lazarus, 2006:8). Leaders are ideally equipped by way of a multidisciplinary educational background. Those who typically bring expertise in religious or theological matters should be encouraged to explore opportunities to receive additional training in other fields or disciplines that better prepare them to lead others toward the vision of a more truly human society.

- *Moral decision-making.* Then there is the need to understand the nature, process and skills involved in moral decision-making as a leader. This empowers leaders themselves who have to deal with extremely complex and difficult situations in the course of their work. The issue of corruption and unethical conduct in all sectors of life today does not necessarily imply that leaders and people at large are not interested in ethical living. It is more realistic to acknowledge that their dilemmas simply overwhelm them and that they do not always have a knowledge base of moral decision-making resources to draw from, which more than often results in unethical acts. Leaders require such knowledge empowerment in order to strengthen their capacity and in turn the capacity of those they serve toward the broader realisation of a more ethical society.

- *Inspiring hope.* Leaders require a knowledge that inspires them to hope in action. For example, exploring best practices of other communities, organisations and nations would be quite important for getting a sense of direction for what is possible. A knowledge base envisaging a morally transforming society requires a developing pool of resources and examples that motivate improved action. Religious texts do this very well. Other religious resources should be accessed and directed away from a merely privatised scope of influence to extend to all spheres of life. Religious leaders should also dare to devote more attention to the contribution of resources from secular traditions. Students of religious communities should seek ways to build up the body of literature, texts, liturgies, research and other resources so that those being served can benefit from them and be inspired to hope in action.

2.2   *Virtues and the good society*

Ethical leadership is grounded in virtues that can build a more truly human society through its embodiment in people and communities. As André Comte-Sponville points out, virtue has to do with "a capacity or power" that affirms our humanity (Comte-Sponville, 2001:2-3). It is "our way of being and acting humanly … our power to act *well* … the power to be human" (2001:3). To aspire to virtue indicates that we "try not to be unworthy of what humanity has made us, individually and collectively" (2001:3). Virtues are those "values we embody, live, and enact" whose presence in a person or community increases our moral regard for them (2001:4). It is these values that make up our character and empowers us to potentially fulfil a truly human life in society. Religious traditions are indeed rich in values (Boezak, 2006:1).

What virtues can be explored for empowering leaders and communities in the religious traditions to contribute to a healthy democracy? A full answer to this question requires a lengthy response, but only one virtue will be touched on here. A virtue that should receive ongoing attention in religious traditions is the virtue of tolerance. While there are indeed various exemplary virtues within all religious communities, the virtue of tolerance tends to be a weakness among many who struggle with diversity in a pluralistic milieu (Knitter, 2002:5ff). It is arguably this virtue that is found wanting in religion and which accounts for much of the public concern about religion in recent years.

Comte-Sponville (2001:157-172) offers an insightful reflection on the meaning of tolerance as a virtue. He makes several points that confirm this virtue as being a very relevant value for religious traditions:

- *Matters of opinion.* The problem of tolerance concerns matters of opinion. It is not about tolerating something we believe to be wrong that is also commonly accepted to be wrong. Only when knowledge is lacking does the problem of tolerance surface. So tolerating the acts of someone in our community who commits a criminal act is not a toleration issue, whereas tolerating someone who has a different viewpoint on a theological matter is. It is thus based on a theoretical powerlessness (2001:159-160, 165-166).
- *The interests of others.* Tolerance is an option we have when we have something to lose that we otherwise could have combated or resisted. It has value only when exercised against one's own interests and for the sake of someone else (2001:159-160).
- *The possibility of danger.* Tolerance applies to all people, even to those who do not practise it themselves. It is extended to individuals, groups and behaviour not depending on whether the others are tolerant, but on the basis of how dangerous they really are.

A person, group or action should only not be tolerated if it is clear that they threaten freedom or the conditions that make toleration possible (2001:161-164).

- *A minimum, not a maximum.* Tolerance applies to rights that others have to freedom of belief, opinion, expression and religion which should actually be respected, protected and honoured rather than merely tolerated. It really uncovers our lack of love, sympathy, respect. We have the right to condemn, prevent or forbid someone's understanding of culture, for example, but we choose to tolerate it as opposed to learning from it with respect and appreciation. Ideally toleration should be replaced by love, respect, honour. As such it belongs to an interim period as a virtue (2001:170-172).

To connect these aspects to religious traditions, it is worth noting that how religious communities deal with their beliefs can pave the way for a corrupting or liberating role of religion in public life. David Hollenbach discusses religion in public life and concedes that there seems to be no consensus about the meaning of the good life among religious communities in our current pluralistic milieu (Hollenbach, 2003:3ff). This tends at best to result in a splintered and disjointed engagement of responsibility for the common good, and at worst to a hostile and conflict-ridden relationship among these communities. Charles Kimball (2002) discusses religion as a pervasive and potent force in society for both good and evil, and identifies at least five warning signs that reflect something of religion's struggle with vision and truth:

- *Absolute truth claims* (2002:41ff). These are claims that become propositions demanding uniform assent and ultimate priority within the faith community, and are based on what are deemed to be authoritative teachings of leaders and texts.
- *Blind obedience* (2002:71ff). Individual members abdicate personal responsibility and yield to the unquestioned and unchecked authority of a leader or conviction, thus limiting intellectual freedom, honest enquiry and individual integrity.
- *The commitment to establish the 'ideal' time* (2002:100ff). The religious communities are convinced that their present realities do not match their perspective on an ideal reality, which impels them to envision and promote a more hopeful future through their distinct efforts and methods which they claim to be divinely mandated blueprints, whether rightfully so or not.
- *The conviction that their proposed end justifies any means* (2002:126ff). They pursue what they hold to be sacred and unconditional ends with determination and sacrifice, regardless of the cost and effects on others and the common good.
- *Declaring holy war* (2002:154ff). Conflict with other communities and individuals is depicted as a holy cause for the sake of their desired goods, with peace, compassion and dialogue lost in the dust of their militaristic mentality.

Kimball's methodological framework behoves all religious communities to critically assess the extent to which they employ paradigms and practices that betray the essential goodness of religion. The nature of leadership within these dynamics does not bode well for their embodying a virtue of tolerance. Firstly, these leaders do not concede the reality of a theoretical powerlessness, maintaining instead a fundamentalist obstinacy in their particular understanding of truth. Secondly, these leaders do not open themselves up to a consideration of the interests of others, but remain committed to their interests alone. Thirdly, these leaders display a dangerous mindset and behaviour that should not be tolerated; ironically, they view others who hold different views as dangerous to the integrity of their faith tradition. And fourthly, these leaders rule out any possible ethic of love, respect and honour as they choose to condemn, forbid and prevent rather than tolerate with the potential for social solidarity. Such leadership is not ethical leadership because of the ways in which it embodies intolerance as well as failing to respect the dignity, freedom and equality of others.

The nature of leadership that cultivates and nurtures such tendencies raises doubts about the virtue of their moral virtue. Such leadership fails to take responsibility for a more human society as it is not working for the common good, but for the good of the specific community at the expense of the broader society (cf. Mndende-Icamagu, 2006:1). It fails to accept that the way it envisions, embodies and promotes its understanding of the good is fraught with problems; that its mode of engagement for the perceived good is divisive rather than cooperative and collaborative, is self-preoccupied rather than self-giving, is societally indifferent rather than compassionate (cf. Walter, 2006:3-4); that the scope of its activity is confined to the private and spiritual spheres instead of being directed to all spheres of human and creational life; and that far too often its attempts to make a contribution are not necessarily constructive in providing religious capital among other role players in society similarly committed to a better life for all.

Tahirih Matthee makes clear that authentic leadership will demonstrate service "towards the creation of a better world … upon the bedrock of fellowship with all religions and people" (Matthee, 2006:1, 2). Communities "move beyond their different theological and scriptural perspectives, in the interest of the common good" as they embody exemplary values in leadership to address societal needs (2006:2). "The process of good leadership," she posits, "develops a preference for others to ourselves". As people who "no longer practise their beliefs in isolation in 'cocooned' communities but live their faith amongst other faith communities" will increasingly discover, "the more we learn to live respectfully and peacefully with each other, and show God-given love towards all people, the more we will

collectively learn about ethical leadership". Sandy Lazarus similarly reasons that people need to learn from each other, to listen to one another and to respect each other's views and perspectives as a central task in the development of ethical leadership if we are to possibly forge a different history than the painful and damaging one we have hitherto endured (Lazarus, 2006:13ff). Exercising tolerance and openness brings with it the opportunity to be personally transformed (cf. Walter, 2006:3-4).

Matthew Liebenberg also maintains that there are criteria attached to leadership that demand embodiment in the ways in which responsibility for an alternative society is carried out (Liebenberg, 2006:2). Leaders acknowledge and accept that they are servants of the people; a truly ethical leader is one who understands that he or she has sacrificed an aspect of their own personal freedom to serve the people. It is not about imposing the tradition's system of beliefs in the public domain, nor is it about promoting its ideologies at any cost in a typically moralistic fashion. On the contrary, ethical leadership within faith communities includes a willingness and capacity to respectfully appreciate different points of view and to work with different kinds of people, understanding these differences and harnessing them for the benefit of all (2006:2-3, 5). Ethical religious leaders would facilitate dialogue within and among religious communities with a conviction that no community has a monopoly on the truth and future, but that all are fellow pilgrims on a journey of increasing insight and development that carries significant responsibility for the public good (Boezak, 2006:1). Liebenberg (2006:1) emphasises the universality of these principles, which are not confined to any particular race, culture or creed, but are applicable to all traditions and communities in a democratic, secular society.

To the extent that such exclusivist tendencies as noted by Kimball are readily discernible in religious and secular traditions, the goodness and moral agency of religion and secular traditions will remain in dispute. To the extent that the spiritual foundation and social capital of religious and secular traditions that include such virtues as "kindness, love, compassion, trustworthiness, [and] respect" are rediscovered and embodied in individuals and communities, there are potentially greater possibilities for a more truly human society through ethical leadership (Matthee, 2006:2-3). Celia Walter (2006:4) rightly notes that "Since our thoughts, feelings and intentions are the driving force behind our actions, we need to know them, and understand how they affect our choices and behaviour, if we are to grow morally and spiritually". In fact, "[our] moral choices and consequent behaviour affect other people, directly or indirectly, and, cumulatively, contribute to the building or weakening of local communities and our nation, and the communities and nations of the world" (2006:4).

2.3   Skills and the good society

Ethical leadership is applied through the development of critical skills that enable a more truly human society. There are many different skills that demand attention in this regard such as those relating to moral formation, moral decision making, public advocacy, policy formulation, diversity management and social capital formation (see especially Lazarus, 2006:5-6). How religious communities contribute towards social capital formation is briefly discussed with the intention of highlighting some skills that require further development in order to strengthen the moral agency of religious traditions in the quest for a more truly human society.

Virginia Petersen (2006:2) emphasises the importance of social capital as "the substance that holds a society together" in the light of complex challenges that readily lead to fragmentation and disintegration. Reflecting on the particular problems that threaten social cohesion within our communities, she highlights social and racial polarisation, poverty and unemployment, substance abuse, violence against women and the vulnerability of young people as apt cases in point. She locates the notion of social capital in the prevailing discourse of hope that must direct responsibility for moral transformation. It involves aligning ourselves as individuals and communities with this responsibility initiative through strategically defined roles. It is a form of participatory governance, a means of partnering with government and other stakeholders for the sake of the common good.

- *Religious texts.* One of the resourceful strands of social capital within religious traditions is their religious texts (2006:2). Petersen asserts that these represent important frameworks for life that might govern our lives. Such texts share major insights concerning challenges in life and what kind of attention is required for transforming these situations. She suggests that religious communities might even consider how to help different religious and secular communities to deal with these challenges by helping them understand and draw resourcefully from their respective sacred texts. Peter-John Pearson (2006:3) affirms the social ethos and orientation within these texts: "The holy writings of every religion should celebrate these developments. The holy books of the religions teach the fundamental duty of society to care for its citizens. The virtue of righteousness and hope-giving is a primary characteristic of religions". Ethical leadership develops, nurtures and exercises hermeneutical skills that reveal this ethos and orientation among communities struggling with divisions and disparities. These skills are assessed as effective to the extent that communities, exposed to such leadership, deepen and transform as a result of this textual exposure and application.
- *Partnerships.* Petersen (2006:2-3) adds to her list the nature of partnership as reflecting additional values that contribute positively to the good society. Within faith communities we typically find a network of people formed on the basis of trust and

respect on a foundation of common beliefs and shared values. They "provide value frameworks and … a 'community base'" (Lazarus, 2006:8). Faith traditions can serve as a critical partner with government, business, labour, education and civil society. These partnerships are essential for any envisaged improvement in conditions of life for all, and thus nullify any modes of engagement that are self-seeking, competitive and uncooperative. For as Keith Vermeulen (2006:1) rightly asserts, "Religion unites us in goodness and in the belief to discern, understand and share life in the world". Ethical leadership demonstrates partnering and networking skills with others in shared learning and solidarity as they cultivate trust, respect and accountability in community life and partnerships (cf. O'Neill, 2002:43ff). They know how to harness diversity and consolidate shared beliefs and values for the enhancement of working and worshipping together in public life.

- *Resources.* On the critical and responsible stewardship of resources that each religious tradition manages and which can be applied to support the drive toward a more truly human life, Petersen does not elaborate. But here we can consider the community of diverse and influential people that play significant roles as resources. There is a wealth of expertise and input that people can offer. There is the institutional capacity of these traditions to participate in the public discourse and generate meaningful and propitious policies. There are buildings, facilities and equipment that can provide the means to change. Programmes that address the complexity of challenges facing people, coupled with skills development initiatives, are equally helpful. Religious communities ideally facilitate safe and meaningful spaces for people to share their experiences, to process possibilities and implications for engagement, and to commit action in their quest for new forms of life. They speak out critically against dehumanising situations, learn how to analyse the systemic undercurrents of such ambiguities, and develop paradigms and practices more congruent with maintaining the integrity of life. Ethical leadership develops skills that help communities to know and appreciate their internal strengths and resources and to gain insight into knowing how to apply these meaningfully and constructively to the common good (cf. Lazarus, 2006:4ff).

For religious communities to engage their responsibility for a more truly human society through ethical leadership, they will position themselves as leaders who apply their distinctive social capital for the common good. Their sacred texts are not used in self-serving ways, but are communicated, shared, interpreted and applied among a broader public in constructive fashion for assisting communities to better appreciate and exercise their public responsibility. Their partnership networks are not used to merely strengthen the specific spiritual and organisational agenda of different faith traditions, but serve as exemplary networks of power and influence and action for the sake of the common good, bearing evidence of collaborative engagement with different religious and secular traditions. Their

resources are not used for maintenance purposes, but provide practical support for the possibility of another world.

3.   Conclusion

It is perhaps true that "the religious sector remains the leading voice in the ethical and moral dialogue of the soul of the nation" (Buys, 2006:4). Religious traditions are concerned about and committed to the quest for a more truly human society. They contribute to such a morally transforming world through ethical leadership. In their development of an appropriate knowledge base, the nurturing of the virtue of tolerance, and the honing of social capital skills, religious communities can potentially have an impact on the prevailing movement for a life of dignity and wholeness in and beyond South Africa. We are called "to be 'ministers of hope'" at a time when "a ministry of hope and the gift of deep healing" are sorely needed. Religious traditions offer a modest contribution to that end, for after all, as we previously acknowledged, the essence of religion "is not a matter primarily of beliefs, or even of values, but of desires and the hope of their fulfilment" (Shutte, 2006:7). "Religion cannot be separated from life; it is life" (Vidyananda, 2006:2).

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Ethical leadership in and through gender and sexuality

Deconstructing heterosex in contemporary South African contexts[11]

Tamara Shefer

1.   Introduction

Sexuality has historically been constructed as a terrain of moral obligation where institutions from religion to sexology have regulated people's intimate relationships and sexual practices (Ndashe, 2006; Botha, 2006). Heteronormative morality, in which the married heterosexual bond has been privileged as the assumed normative and idealised model of relationship has been dominant in Western cultures at least for a number of centuries (Khumalo, 2006). Internationally, and specifically in South Africa, the last few decades have brought major gains with respect to the recognition of multiplicity in sexualities and the enshrinement of such rights through gay, lesbian, transgender and queer activism as well as the increased institutionalisation of such rights constitutionally and legally (Lewis, 2006; Van de Merwe, 2006; Fester, 2006). The challenge of HIV/AIDS, however, has brought in a new 'moral panic' with respect to sexual practices and relations, and arguably a return of constraints and a demonisation of non-normative practices (Rebombo, 2006; Barnes, 2006). Thus the ABC response (abstain, be faithful and condomise) reflects a broader return to the call for a sexuality that is only acceptable in the confines of the heterosexual monogamous dyad. In many ways this has damped down sexual freedom for women (see, for example, McFadden, 2003) and has stimulated a call for a return to traditional heteronormative gender roles and values that also then undermines the growing recognition of alternative sexual and gender practices. This paper addresses one component of the way in which ethical leadership intersects with gender power inequalities and how they are articulated through sexual practices, that of current heterosexual normative practices. The paper

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11   This chapter is based on an earlier edition first published as Shefer, T. (2003) Heterosexuality. In Ratele, K. & Duncan, N. (eds.), *Social Psychology: Identities and Relationships*. Lansdowne: UCT Press. This paper represents only one perspective among others presented at the Ethical Leadership Conference in and through Gender and reflects some but not all of the issues raised with respect to gender and ethical leadership (www.elp.org/gender/conference).

argues that it is imperative to deconstruct how gender power inequalities intersect and impact on 'normal' heterosexual practices so that knee-jerk moral reactions to sexuality and HIV/AIDS will not succeed without a challenge to broader patriarchy in our society, including traditional practices of gender, masculinities and femininities, and (hetero)sexual relationships (Barnes, 2006; Memela, 2006; Hendricks, 2006; De Waal, 2006; Lewis, 2006; Meintjes, 2006).

The primary goal of the chapter is to explore the practices of heterosexuality in contemporary South Africa as they emerge within current research and literature. Historically heterosexuality has received little critical attention, given that it has been assumed to be normal and natural. Like 'whiteness' in respect of 'blackness', or 'man' in relation to 'woman', the normative identity is always assumed to be unproblematic. The institution of heterosexuality has been idealised, romanticised and naturalised, while homosexuality remains, in many cultures, a marginalised, pathologised and stigmatised sexual orientation. Thus, as many have pointed out, heterosexuality has been relatively untheorised and unstudied across most disciplines (Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1993; Richardson, 1996).

Yet over the last few decades, heterosexual sexuality (heterosex) *has* been increasingly problematised. Feminist work since the 1960s and the urgency of the HIV/AIDS pandemic since the 1980s, have seen an increasing global focus on exploring sexual relations between men and women. It has been widely argued and empirically illustrated that heterosexuality (as both institution and ideology) is a central site for the production and reproduction of gender power inequalities, with women having little power to assert their needs or negotiate for their safety or pleasure (for example, Holland *et al.*, 1990, 1991; Jeffreys, 1990; Kitzinger & Wilkinson, 1993; MacKinnon, 1989; Rich, 1980; Richardson, 1996; Vance, 1984). Furthermore, it has now been well recognised that central to understanding the barriers to challenging HIV/AIDS through safe sex practices are the taken-for-granted sexual practices and gendered identities of men and women.

In South Africa, in part as a result of efforts of feminist and global and local priorities to achieve gender justice, and the imperative to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, heterosexual practices have been increasingly scrutinised both in public discourse and in research and interventions. Given the high rate of HIV infection in sub-Saharan Africa and the fact that heterosexual relations are the primary mode of infection in these countries, research on (hetero)sexuality has accelerated over the last decade in South Africa. As a consequence we now know quite a lot about the gender power inequalities that manifest in heterosexual relationships in local South African contexts.

This chapter reviews what we currently know from research over the last two decades about heterosexual relationships in South Africa, particularly in the light of HIV/AIDS and the imperative to understand how men and women negotiate their sexual relationships. It focuses specifically on how gender roles and gender power inequalities intersect with 'normal' sexual practices. It has now been widely acknowledged that gender roles play a crucial role in the spread of HIV (for example, Abdool Karim, 1998, 2005; Amaro, 1995; Du Guerny & Sjoberg, 1993; Holland, Ramazanoglu & Scott, 1990; McFadden, 1992; Patton, 1993; Salt, Bor & Palmer, 1995; Seidel, 1993; Weiss, Whelan & Gupta, 1996). For many, the AIDS pandemic has been viewed as facilitating the realisation of "the essential and extremely problematic nature of sex and sexuality" (McFadden 1992:158).

The chapter provides an overview of a number of key themes regarding contemporary heterosexual practices that emerge in the literature as follows: power inequalities in heterosexual relationships; gendered roles and unequal power in the negotiation of heterosex; the endemic nature of coercive and violent practices in sexuality; and the developmental and social context of masculinity and femininity in understanding heterosexual power relations. These are explored in the chapter, followed by a critical evaluation of this research. The chapter also presents a critical discussion of some of the more negative implications of the current ways in which gender and heterosex are presented in the literature and through interventions directed at encouraging safe sexual practices; and it suggests ways in which we may begin to imagine alternative, more equitable forms of heterosexuality.

2.   Intersectionality of power inequalities in sexuality

At an international level there is a growing body of work, particularly in historically disadvantaged countries and continents, that views the intersection of gender inequality with economic subordination as central to the issue of HIV infection and women's reproductive health generally (for example, McFadden, 1992; Schoepf, 1988; Seidel, 1993; WHO, 1994). With the feminisation of poverty, particularly evident in Africa, women, through the intersection of economic and gender power inequalities, are especially vulnerable to HIV infection.

Such dynamics clearly play a significant role in the South African context too. As illustrated internationally, the intersection of economic context, cultural prescriptions and gender power inequalities in the negotiation of heterosex has been widely illustrated; in particular, the articulation of gender with age, class and culture, positions young, poor women as particularly vulnerable to HIV infection through non-negotiated and coercive sexual

practices (Harrison, Xaba, Kunene & Ntuli, 2001; NPPHCN, 1995; Strebel, 1993; Simbayi *et al.*, 1999; Varga & Makubalo, 1996). Transactional sex, outside of dire economic need but in response to pressures related to consumerist pressures for girls/women, has also been shown to play an important role in unsafe sexual practices (Leclerc-Madlala, 2004).The post-apartheid heritage of poverty, war and physical dislocation (such as migrant labour systems) have been found to further mediate women's ability to protect themselves from HIV infection (for example, Hunt, 1989; Campbell, Mzaidume & Williams, 1998; Campbell, 2001).

The articulation of gender with age and class positions young, poor women as particularly vulnerable to HIV infection and sexual abuse. South African studies illustrate that young women frequently get involved with older men for access to money and/or status (NPPHCN, 1995; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Harrison, 2005). Similarly, there is some anecdotal evidence that men are seeking younger women to have sex with in order to avoid sexually transmitted illnesses, which may be contributing to coercive sexual practices (Simbayi *et al.*, 1999). Another current example of the overlap between age and gender in South Africa and elsewhere in the region has been the rape of young girls and babies, which has been presented in the media as resulting from the apparently widely accepted belief that sex with virgins is a way of curing or protecting against HIV/AIDS (LoveLife, 2000; Vetten & Bhana, 2001).[12]

3.   Gendered roles and unequal power in the negotiation of heterosex

In the search for understanding the complex barriers to 'safe' sexual practices, much research has highlighted the inequitable nature of 'normal' heterosexual relationships. It has been fairly widely reported that even if women have knowledge about HIV/AIDS or wish to protect themselves against pregnancy, they are frequently unable to successfully negotiate this (Strebel, 1992, 1993; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Shefer, 1999). As discussed above, women's lack of negotiation has to be understood within the broader context of unequal gender relations and the way in which these intersect with other forms of power inequalities, such as class and 'race'.

On the other hand, traditional gender roles together with, or outside of, socio-economic factors clearly play a significant role as barriers to safe sex practices. The central role that cultural practices of gender power inequality play in creating barriers to the negotiation

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12   Also see the section entitled "The impact of HIV/AIDS on heterosex" for a critical comment on this perception.

of safe and equitable heterosex has been increasingly theorised and researched in an international context. Similarly in South Africa, a number of key studies have highlighted the way in which gender power relations manifest in the negotiation of heterosex (see, for example, Miles, 1992; Shefer, 1999; Strebel, 1993). Studies show how women's lack of negotiation is strongly associated with socialised sexual practices, where it is expected of women to be passive, submissive partners, while men are expected to initiate, be active and lead women in the realm of sexuality (Shefer, 1999; Varga & Makubalo, 1996). Men are viewed as in control of relationships and sexuality. Much of this is related to the cultural constructions of male and female sexuality. A number of qualitative studies highlight a popular construction of male sexuality as overwhelmingly strong, urgent and uncontrollable (Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Strebel, 1993; Shefer & Foster, 2001). This has elsewhere been named the "male sexual drive discourse" (Hollway, 1989) that seems to play an important role in women's lack of negotiation in heterosex.

Emerging out of the assumption that men are highly sexual is the construction of the domain of sexuality as masculine and a male preserve. Women are viewed as 'asexual' and therefore 'strangers' to matters related to sexuality and waiting on men to 'show them the ropes'. Women are expected rather to be focused on relationships and 'love', and sexuality is only legitimised for them if attached to these. A number of authors, internationally and locally, emphasise the lack of a positive discourse on female sexuality – in other words, women do not appear to be able to express or view their sexuality or their sexual desires and pleasures as positive (Holland et al., 1991; Hollway, 1995, 1996; Lesch, 2000; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer & Strebel, 2001). There is a growing body of local work that points to this lack of a positive discourse on female sexuality that is believed to play a key role in the challenges to the negotiation of safe and equitable sexual practices (Kahn, 2008; Lesch, 2000; Lesch & Kruger, 2004; Miles, 1992; Shefer, 1999, 2003).Thus, there is an increasing call for the development of women's voices in the realm of sexuality. It is asserted that if women cannot 'say yes' to sexuality, and 'own' their sexuality and sexual desires, then they certainly cannot assertively 'say no' and negotiate what they desire in their sexual relationships with men. Ironically, there is also a growing concern about the way in which responses to HIV/AIDS (in particular moralistic discourses) have impacted negatively on the possibilities of a positive discourse and practices of female sexuality in African contexts (McFadden, 2003).

Linked to the above is the reported pervasiveness of the traditional double standard, where men are encouraged to actively pursue sexuality and take multiple partners (NPPHCN, 1995; Wood & Foster, 1995). On the other hand, women are punished for being sexually active, constructed as 'loose' and promiscuous. Even having knowledge about

sexuality and admitting to having had sexual experience appear to be taboo for women (Shefer, 1999).

A focus on condom use in particular has highlighted the problematic dynamics of heterosexual negotiation, highlighting male power, women's inability to assert their needs, and the way in which men's sexuality is privileged in decisions regarding condoms (Abdool Karim, Abdool Karim, Preston-Whyte & Sankar, 1992; Bremridge, 2000; Lesch, 2000; MacPhail & Campbell, 2001; Strebel, 1993; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood & Foster, 1995). Studies have highlighted how women fear the loss of their partners, are anxious about their men not enjoying sex with a condom, and fear that a request for condoms will be interpreted as a lack of trust in the men or as an admission of their own infidelity (Strebel, 1993; Wood & Foster, 1995; Campbell *et al.*, 1998; Shefer, 1999; Bremridge, 2000). While there was a definite increase in calls for women-centred methods of protection against HIV infection in the mid- to late-1990s (e.g. female condom, spermacides) in South Africa (for, example, Rees, 1998), there was little research on the efficacy of such methods and resistance to these methods has been documented (Richards, 1996; Strebel & Lindegger, 1998). What has become increasingly evident through the failure of cognitive models of intervention in HIV/AIDS is the complexity and irrational context of the operation of gendered power in the negotiation of heterosex (Ingham, Woodcok & Stenner, 1992; Kahn, 2008).

Discourse on condom use also highlights the traditional prescriptions for female sexuality within the whore-madonna dichotomy. Qualitative research in South Africa, mirroring international literature (for example, Waldby, Kippax & Crawford, 1993), shows how men distinguish between 'clean' and 'unclean' women (Wood & Foster, 1995; Shefer, 1999; Bremridge, 2000), in which 'unclean' women constitute those who step outside prescribed feminine sexuality ('promiscuous' women, prostitutes). Condom use is therefore constructed by both men and women as inappropriate in long-term relationships where faithfulness is assumed. Clearly condoms are not neutral objects, but embody stigmas, which may differ from context to context and from one relationship to another, but nonetheless reflect the dominant discourse on gendered power relations and serve to inhibit negotiations around 'safe sex'.

While cultural constructions are found to play a huge role in the reproduction of unequal sexual practices, some authors are more critical of the way in which 'culture' may be used as a way of excusing problematic male behaviour and male power in sexual relationships (Shefer, Potgieter & Strebel, 1999; Shefer & Foster, 2001; Shefer, 2002). These authors point out how notions of 'tradition' and 'culture' are frequently used to rationalise and legitimise such

practices as the 'double standard' and male promiscuity (based on notions of historical polygamy), as well as male lack of responsibility for contraceptives and safe sex practices.

4.   Coercive and violent practices

Given the high rate of gender-based violence in South Africa, much attention has been paid to understanding the intersection of violence with HIV/AIDS and 'normal' heterosexual practices. There has been a growth of research in South Africa on violence against women, and an increasing focus on the links between violence, heterosexuality and HIV/AIDS infection. Sexual violence against women and girls, whether by known or unknown rapists, is widespread. Coercive sexual practices and abuse have been increasingly reported in studies exploring heterosexual negotiations and practices. In this respect girls and women are clearly more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and other infection, as well as unwanted pregnancies. It has become apparent that for South African communities violence and heterosex are inextricably interwoven (Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000). A range of research among adolescents and children has revealed that their sexual experiences are bound up with violence and coercion (Buga, Amoko & Ncayiyana, 1996; NPPHCN, 1995; Richter, 1996; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood *et al.*, 1996; Wood & Jewkes, 1998).

Everyday coercive practices in heterosex are also found to be common, particularly in interactions between older men, who are in more powerful social positions, and young women. Thus it is not only overt sexual violence that is commonplace, but more rather subtle forms of coercion and pressure appear to be indigenous in heterosexual relationships. Discourses of love and romance play a significant role in sexual coercion. This appears to be particularly salient for girls/women who speak of 'giving in' to male pressure for sex because of 'love', commitment and fear of loss of the relationship (Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Wood, Maforah & Jewkes, 1996; Shefer, 1999; Shefer *et al.*, 2008; Reddy & Dunne, 2007). In these studies it is evident that girls' sexuality is constructed as responsive to, and in the service of, male sexuality. Even when young women are aware of power inequalities and double standards within discourses of love and sexuality, there appears to be little space for resistance given peer pressure and male violence (Wood *et al.*, 1996). A number of South African studies also highlight the widespread nature of coercive sexuality or unprotected sexuality linked to economic factors such as poverty, financial dependence and job security (for example, Jewkes & Abrahams, 2000; Vetten & Dladla, 2000) and, as mentioned, the widespread nature of transactional sex may also facilitate or legitimise coercive sexual practices (Leclerc-Madlala, 2004). Anecdotal evidence that men are seeking younger women to have sex with in order to avoid sexually transmitted illnesses,

which may be contributing to coercive sexual practices, has also been noted (Simbayi *et al.*, 1999). Similarly, the rape of young girls and babies, which some years ago was viewed in the media as resulting from the apparently widely accepted belief that sex with virgins is a way of curing or protecting against HIV/AIDS (LoveLife, 2000; Vetten & Bhana, 2001) highlights the complex intersection of issues of gender and age in coercive, unsafe sexual practices.

A growing body of research is beginning to establish a strong link between violence against women and HIV/AIDS (see Vetten & Bhana (2001) for a review). One of the significant areas hinges around condom usage in safe sex practices. Violence plays a role in negotiations around condoms, with women speaking of the fear and actual experience of angry or violent responses if they insist on condom use (Strebel, 1992, 1993; Varga & Makubalo, 1996; Shefer, Strebel & Foster, 2000). The link between violence and HIV/AIDS also emerges around the disclosure of HIV status and attempts to practise safe sex by HIV-positive women. Although mostly anecdotal, there is evidence of male violence following women's disclosure of their HIV status in South African communities (Mthembu, 1998; Vetten & Bhana, 1991). A number of more recent studies have also illustrated empirically that South African women who are in male-dominated or abusive relationships are at higher risk of HIV/AIDS (Dunkle *et al.*, 2004; Garcia-Moreno & Watts, 2000; Kalichman *et al.*, 2005; Van der Straten *et al.*, 1998), which more firmly establishes a relationship between gender-based violence in relationships and HIV/AIDS risk.

5. Developmental and social contexts of masculinity and femininity in understanding heterosexual power relations

This is still a relatively under-researched area of knowledge with respect to heterosex in South Africa (Shefer, 1998), but there is wide acknowledgement of the significance of early gender development to heterosexual practices. Social and sexual inequalities are promulgated during childhood and adolescence that are powerfully implicated in young people's constructions of sexuality, love and relationships.

With respect to girls, some of the salient issues are related to puberty and the beginnings of their menstruation. One central thread is the lack of knowledge and access to reliable and constructive information that young people, at all corners of the globe, have through the process of their development. Young women in particular appear to lack basic knowledge about their bodies, reproductivity and sexuality (Bassett & Sherman, 1994; Bhende, 1995; Uwakwe *et al.*, 1994; Vasconcelos, Neto, Dantas, Simonetti & Garcia, 1995). This lack

of knowledge appears to be reinforced by global moralising and gendered discourses on female sexuality, where virginity and sexual naivety are prescribed for girls (Weiss *et al.*, 1996). Thus, even if women have sexual knowledge, they face social pressure to maintain an image of innocence, particularly with men, who may interpret knowledge as past sexual activity. Consequently, it is very difficult for women to protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and AIDS, given that such measures will imply "the outward appearance of an active sexual life which is not congruent with traditional norms of conduct for adolescent girls" (Weiss *et al.*, 1996:9). In this way, dominant constructions of femininity act to undermine girls' and women's agency in their relationships with men.

In the South African context both historical and contemporary studies point to the protective construction of girls as sexually vulnerable to 'dangerous' male sexuality at the onset of menstruation (Mager, 1996; Shefer, 1998; Lesch, 2000). Practices of forced and immediate placement of girls on contraception, and warnings against boys and men are apparently common in many South African communities. In this way young girls are taught about their passivity and vulnerability to men/boys, and their menstruation is constructed as a negative, dangerous transition (Shefer, 1998, 1999). As a consequence young women are often unprepared for sexual relationships, lacking not only useful knowledge but also a positive sexual identity (Thomson & Scott, 1991). Similarly, in a recent local study with adolescent girls, Reddy and Dunne (2007:167) point out the way in which

> The everyday accomplishment of gender and sexual identities was played out through a dominant discourse of heterosexuality that effectively disempowered women. Inequality in sexual decision-making and dyadic negotiation, as well as the different sexual standards regarding sexual practices for young men, posed difficulties for their performances of femininity and encouraged high-risk sexual behaviour.

Boys, on the other hand, appear to be socialised positively (for the most part) into their 'manhood', with puberty signifying a transition to active (hetero)sexuality. As Adomako Ampofo and Boateng (2007:41) point out:

> Styles of gender and sexual interaction between males and females are 'rehearsed' during adolescence, and research carried out with and among adolescent boys around the world suggests that viewing women as sexual objects, use of coercion to obtain sex and viewing sex from a performance-oriented perspective often begins in adolescence or even in childhood and may continue into adulthood.

Manhood appears to be rigidly associated with heterosexuality and the ability to be sexual with multiple women as a range of recent South African work illustrates (for example, Hunter, 2004; Lindegger & Maxwell, 2007; Ratele *et al.*, 2007). Thus, those who do

not conform or are not successful in this realm may be punished or stigmatised (see, for example, Lindegaard & Gibson, 2007). Alternative sexualities, either homosexual or those resistant to traditional macho masculinity, are still not well tolerated in South African communities. For men and boys the feminist argument of the close ties between heterosexual and masculine identity are borne out by empirical studies. For example, when asked what it means to be a boy, a 12-year-old boy replied "to have sex with a woman" (NPPHCN, 1995:35). The answer from a 14-year-old girl is similarly stereotyped but makes no mention of sex: "To be a mother ... to have a husband and to look after children" (1995:36).

While masculinity studies are relatively new internationally and in South Africa, there is a growing emphasis on understanding masculinities, particularly young masculinities, and a growing field of critical men's studies in Southern Africa (see for example *Agenda,* 1998; *Journal of Southern African Studies,* 1998; Morrell, 2001; Richter & Morrell, 2005; Morrell & Ouzgane, 2005; Shefer, Ratele, Strebel, Shabalala & Buikema, 2007), including a focus on the social constructions of masculinities and boy's and men's sexualities (for example, Shefer & Ruiters, 1998; Dunbar Moodie, 2001; Mankayi & Shefer, 2005; Pattman & Chege, 2003).

6.   Critical evaluation of contemporary findings on heterosexuality

The proliferation of research and the educational emphasis on heterosexual relationships is extremely important. It may even be argued that, disastrous as it is, the HIV/AIDS epidemic has opened up a significant space for challenging gender inequality as it manifests in heterosexual relationships, as well as gender roles and inequality more broadly. On the other hand, there are also problems and potential concerns with the way in which heterosexual relationships are currently viewed.

In relation to women, it is arguable that while it is important to highlight women's lack of negotiation in heterosex, the dominant picture of women emerging is that of an inevitable victim of male power. Nobody would argue against the significance of acknowledging women's lack of power in heterosex, but it is also important that we do not inadvertently reproduce the dominant stereotype of women's passivity. Contemporary feminist writers have begun challenging the way in which feminist theories on heterosexuality have historically constructed power as the inherent preserve of (all) men, and women as inevitably disempowered victims of male power (Hollway, 1995; Jackson, 1996; Smart, 1996). Smart (1996), for example, speaks of a conflation of the penis with the phallus, in

which she maintains all power is seen as male, and all males are seen as having access to power. She argues that both of these are problematic assumptions, given a post-modern understanding of the multiple, contextual and fluid nature of power. In this way, while most feminists distance themselves from biological determinism, she argues that power and gender are inadvertently essentialised, globalised and decontextualised.

What is probably most problematic about the continued emphasis on women's vulnerability, passivity and powerlessness is that this emphasis serves to silence the many times that women *do* resist male power and *do* challenge men. Furthermore, the stereotyped image of women as submissive, passive and powerless is ultimately reproduced. Importantly, as mentioned, the predominant picture of woman remains one of asexual victim of male desires, and women's own sexual desires and a positive female sexuality are seldom represented in the literature. While it is important not to then reverse the image to one of women as always 'survivor' and agent as arguably has taken place in much of the literature on HIV/AIDS in Africa (Jungar & Oinas, 2008), it is critical that we avoid a binarism where women and girls are either presented as helpless victims or super-women survivors.

The flipside of women being constructed as inevitable victims (or super-women survivors) is the reproduction of the stereotype of men as inevitably powerful and controlling in relation to women in heterosexual relationships. While some authors have pointed out the salience of the 'male sexual drive' discourse in talk on heterosex, the literature itself appears to reproduce this stereotype. Clearly there is a silence around alternative ways of being men. Although multiplicity in the performance of masculinity is widely acknowledged in the literature, the demonisation of men, boys and masculinity continues even in the public and academic terrain (Pattman, 2007). As Ratele (2008:521) points out:

> Yet another problem is that along the way the term masculinity has accreted negative overtones. Interestingly, this occurs among critical citizens as well. Even though analyses have shown that there are multiple, fluid forms of masculinity (Connell, 2005), there is a tendency to deploy the term as if it is a synonym for trunk-sized biceps, deep voice, gun in hand, laddish habits, unflagging sexual stamina or a more or less similar set of traits or unchanging behaviours.

There is very little literature that highlights men's resistance to traditional masculinity, or speaks of men's vulnerability to women and their difficulties with hegemonic masculinity. In some research, fragments of male vulnerability and the pressure on men to conform to hegemonic masculinity, are beginning to emerge (see, for example, Simpson, 2007; Mfecane, 2008). Nonetheless, there is still little work that gives a voice to the different

ways of being men, and offers alternative and more nuanced versions of maleness in heterosexual relationships.

Finally, it is significant to note that while heterosexuality continues to be the normative sexual practice, idealised and romanticised in the public eye, the literature on heterosexuality overwhelmingly presents a picture of an oppressive, inequitable and often violent institution. While the 'troubling' of the institution and practices of heterosexuality has been an important step in the struggle towards gender equality, it is problematic that heterosexuality is presented as a homogenous, unitary and singular experience in the literature. Furthermore, most work seems to accept a construction of heterosex as centred around penetrative sexuality, again reproducing, rather than challenging, the social stereotypes of what heterosex is. As with masculinities, alternative pictures and experiences of heterosexuality and heterosex are silenced and/or marginalised. It could be argued that if we are not presented with alternative images and discourses on heterosex, there is no way in which we can challenge the current oppressive context of heterosexual relationships.

7.   Conclusion

For the most part the current picture of heterosex emerging from research in South Africa, as it is globally, is one imbued with much negativity. We have seen how heterosex is interwoven with gender power inequality, in which both men and women are engaged in reproducing their traditional roles of masculinity and femininity. It has become evident that such roles and power inequality between men and women mean that they do not negotiate sexuality very successfully or equitably or in ways that are mutually pleasurable. Given the dangers associated with heterosex, including unwanted pregnancies, STIs and HIV/AIDS, the opportunity for men and women to negotiate their sexual practices safely is an imperative. Yet by all accounts there are major barriers, related to the power inequalities of gender, class and age that stand in the way of open and equitable sexual negotiation. Such lessons are absolutely key for leadership and intervention in the realm of gender, sexuality and HIV/AIDS in contemporary South Africa.

We also, however, need to be cautious about the way in which the current focus on heterosexuality may itself perpetuate these problematic practices. Given this negative picture of heterosex, it is evident we need to find ways to create new identities and ways of relating sexually as men and women. This means that we need to move beyond criticising and highlighting the inequities of heterosex towards also exploring the alternatives and resistances to this dominant mode of relationship. Thus, while we need to be cautious of

denying the problematic reality of heterosexuality for many women (and men), and the way in which it currently facilitates women's (and men's) vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, STIs and unwanted pregnancies, we also need to allow for the development of an alternative picture of men, women and heterosex. It is important to begin representing and narrating different experiences of heterosex and developing new ways of thinking and talking about the sexual relationships between men and women. One way of doing this involves highlighting the marginalised experiences and voices on sexuality, such as those of men who resist taking power and control in heterosex, and of women who resist passivity and have positive experiences of their sexuality with men. We need to begin documenting some of the experiences which contradict our 'normal' image of men and women – such as men who enjoy affection without sex, and examples of women's strength and agency in resisting male power in heterosex. Men need to be encouraged to admit to their vulnerability in sexual relationships, just as women need to begin to assert their sexual desires and own their sexuality. Finally, we need to be able to be able to facilitate the hearing of different stories of heterosexual relationships. In order to challenge the current context of inequitable and coercive practices and representation of heterosex, we need to be able to imagine a more equitable and mutually pleasurable experience. Ethical leadership in the realm of gender and (hetero)sexuality in the age of HIV/AIDS in particular needs to step clear of slipping into the 'moral panic' ditch and reinstating regulatory practices which ultimately reproduce and legitimise gender power inequalities between men and women.

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Corporate and institutional ethical leadership

This section deals with the dynamics of ethical leadership and the challenges in moral transformation within and through the worlds of labour, business and politics. The meaning of ethical leadership and the challenges of moral transformation in and through labour, business and politics to provide the building blocks for a morally transformed society are analysed.

Ethical leadership in and through labour

Sue Mcwatts and Geraldine Kennedy

> *… freedom translates into having a supply of clean water; having electricity on tap; being able to live in a decent home, and having a good job; to have accessible healthcare. I mean, what's the point of having made this transition if the quality of life of these people is not enhanced and improved? If not, the vote is useless!* (Desmond Tutu quoted in Gumede, 2005:67)[13]

1.   Introduction

Ethical leadership values should provide the foundation in the world of work and should encompass individual, organisational and state priorities far beyond the traditional aims of profit making and profit sharing. It should serve the greater good and be both influenced by, and provide a testament to, the ethical aspects of life, state policy, the broader society and the wider world. "Ethical leadership can be defined as responsibility for the vision, embodiment and realisation of the common good in all of life, with and for others, through just and fitting means, towards a morally transforming society. These aspects serve as components of an ethical leadership required in the world of work on the part of all role-players, including trade unionists, workers, employers, government, etc".[14]

The world of work is largely influenced by state policy. The ANC-led government came into power in 1994, conscious that it had to demonstrate that it was different from the previous regime. The party's success in the 1994 democratic elections was influenced by the electorate's perception of what it stood for: the moral values enshrined in the Freedom Charter. Fifteen years after the elections we need to ask the question whether

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13 Gumede quoted in Desai, A. (2005). " Uprooting or re-rooting poverty in post-apartheid South Africa?", Paper prepared for SANPAD Poverty Reduction Thematic Workshop.

14 Retrieved online at http://ngoleader.org/articles/61/7/Working-for-Human-Dignity-in-South-Africa/Page7.html.

South Africa's political freedom had significantly addressed the scourges of poverty and inequality, and whether the hard-won gains of the masses were sacrificed at the altar of the enrichment of a few.

However, any analysis of the rampant poverty and inequality in South Africa would not be complete without an analysis of the role of the labour movement (past and present).

It is the authors' contention that the desire for a 'moral identity' of the workplace and a 'moral basis of industry' led to the rise of unionism in South Africa. The authors also contend that Marx's argument that the *social relations* of production are a fundamental determinant of any economy is a truism for South Africa.

2.   The rise of unionism in South Africa

In apartheid South Africa unions played a significant role in the fight against a discriminatory socio-economic system. When considering the role and ethical conduct of trade unions in South Africa, it is necessary to discern between progressive trade unions in the pre- and post-democratic eras. Trade unions and the labour movement had to respond to the specific needs of the people they served; these needs were articulated and defined by the objective environment that workers lived in, worked in and prayed in.

Even though most of the historical records of South Africa's labour movement were made by racially biased historians, it is impossible to deny that with the advent of colonialism came the exploitation of workers. The rise of the working class was a natural consequence of the capitalist dogma of 'profit first'. The earlier trade unions (1900 to 1980s) fought primarily for a fair living wage, but also for the right to dignity and the right to family life for migrant and other workers. Workers from all over South Africa were employed predominantly in the mines and lived in single-sex hostels. Families were left in the rural areas (Bantustans) and were dependent upon, and eked out a living from, the money sent home from breadwinners. They also made a living from their own survival skills.

The undignified life of the workers in the years leading up to the 1990s was significantly changed by the struggles and victories of the labour movement. This history is well documented and will not be repeated here, save to say that the unions' fight has always been about restoring the natural dignity of the person, brutally removed by those focused only on profit margins.

The period before 1994 was therefore the time that regarded the directives, mandate, conduct and moral values displayed by labour leaders as largely unquestionable: apartheid

and capitalism were the battleground where workers were exploited economically, politically and at a fundamental human level. The resistance battle was therefore a righteous one. Workers were organised to challenge the state, through their employers, for the right to freedom denied to them by white rule under apartheid and capitalism.

Labour leaders then focused themselves, all their activities and campaigns towards challenging apartheid capitalism and organising the working masses towards achieving a revolutionary change in regime. The capitalist employer had free reign – the rule (with a few exceptions) was minimum wages to ensure huge profits; unhealthy, unsanitary working conditions; and long hours with virtually no benefits for workers.

Government economic policies were pro-business. Complex pre-1994 laws, such as the Labour Relations Act, 28 of 1956, made it difficult for unions to gain 'recognition'; compulsory registration for trade unions ensured that companies were not obliged to deal with unregistered trade unions and unions had to have 50% + 1 of workers signed up at the workplace. The law spoke of 'consultation' and lengthy dispute resolution procedures. The sophisticated employer had a propensity toward establishing in-house committees – providing a facade of 'consultative relations' with their employees – in effect keeping unions out. Agitating for a 'living wage', decent working conditions and a 40-hour working week were a few of the demands in ongoing trade union campaigns to organise factory workers. Trade union recognition in the main was forced – through worker strike action.

Apartheid law, by its nature, failed to protect workers taking strike action. History records thousands of 'casualties' who lost their jobs in the march towards democracy. Unprotected striking workers had no recourse – these casualties were not driven by ideological or academic compulsion; the basic guide was 'to do the right thing'. There is no question that theirs was an ethical fight for the unshackling of a people downtrodden by white capitalist rule.

To further demonstrate the orientation of the labour activist or trade union organiser before 1994, it is necessary to note that trade unions largely had no 'seed' funding. The survival – or not – of the union depended on the income from subscriptions (membership fees). However, trying to get workers to pay subscriptions to the union was a mammoth task. Stop-order facilities at workplaces were uncommon – some employers agreed to comply, provided they were able to get their 5% handling fee. (This was allowed in law for any salary deductions – such as pension, medical or garnishee orders). Unions were happy to receive money and, where they could, tried to convince employers not to hold back these fees. Organisers and union staff were paid minimal amounts – when there was money –

and mostly in line with current salaries paid in the industry they serviced. As an example, union staff and organisers in the Retail & Allied Workers Union between 1980 and 1984 received R200 per month, whilst shop workers earned a salary of R212-00 per month.

There were unions operating in industries during the pre-1994 period which were not deemed progressive as they conformed to the establishment. One such group of trade unions was FOSATU (Federation of South African Trade Unions). The unions in this fold were all registered in terms of the Labour Relations Act (LRA) and were essentially 'sweetheart' unions. They did not antagonise employers and cooperated with capital. Even wage negotiations were non-confrontational and 'comfortable'. Employers usually encouraged their workers to join these unions and enabled stop-orders and access.

With the advent of COSATU in 1985, several industry-linked mergers of both independent and FOSATU unions ensued, based on COSATU's adopted principle of *One Union, One Industry.* COSATU grew from strength to strength through the ensuing years, reaching a phenomenal membership of 2.1 million workers during the late 1990s. Strike action, campaigns and boycotts characterised worker struggles during these years. COSATU increasingly grew its membership, while consolidating its relationship with its alliance partners – the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party (SACP).

The traditional role of trade union and labour leaders before 1994 was thus to initiate and compel negotiations at workplace and industry levels – thereby setting new standards of decent conditions and fairly improved economic circumstances for workers.

When, late in the twentieth century, the consequences of globalisation impacted severely on workers and the broader communities in which they lived, unions responded and had to deal with issues outside of their traditional roles. They adopted a community-based approach to organising, especially around issues of social capital. Unions found strong resonance in the concepts of reciprocity and mutuality, which is premised on a non-exploitative value system and a sense of solidarity (Hess, 2008:500). Indeed, the new role of organised labour could best be described by Chun's (2005:256) concept of "symbolic leverage", which focuses on the intersection between exploitation and social discrimination. In focusing on both exploitation and social discrimination, these new roles appealed to workers and their communities alike. Thus the concept of symbolic leverage is useful in understanding the significance of campaigns involving race, gender and class, which fall outside the traditional role of organised labour (Von Holdt & Webster, 2008:337).

They also use the concept of "symbolic power" to embody the sphere of public and symbolic contestation. Intrinsic to this sphere are actions such as street marches and strategies that not only focus on workers rights, but also social and citizenship rights. They argue that symbolic power is articulated with associational power and are able to provide unions, who are fighting the loss of traditional sources of power in the labour market, with new sources of power. The symbolic, powerful associational strategies that organised labour in South Africa has embarked on is the mobilisation of support for civil society campaigns and participating in an alliance with the ruling party. Thus the new role of worker struggles is the ethical struggle of 'right' against 'wrong' (*Ibid.*). Union members have the knowledge and thus a strong moral mandate that their contributions will benefit both the individual and the community (Hess, 2008:500). Indeed, as the provincial secretary of COSATU in the Western Cape maintains: "Ultimately the only way to change the world is through civic action" (Ehrenreich, 2007:321).

3. Theoretical orientation – Ethical leadership in and through labour

A person lives best when s/he maintains some central belief upon which s/he could hang all action and to which s/he could refer all moral problems. S/he then has a backbone to sustain him/her. Men and women who do not have this central belief wander and make hideously wrong decisions because in time of crisis they have nothing to which they could instantly refer (James Michener, 1978:190).

Michener's comment is a truism for leadership in any capacity, but even more so when you are an elected leader of a labour movement. Koopman (2007:211.) aptly describes the desired habitat that society dreams of. In drawing from the Bill of Rights, Koopman refers to the basic human desire for a social order based on dignity, where the needs of people are met: the need for food, water, shelter, medical care, education and meaningful inclusion in economic life. In locating the labour leader in the context of a desired habitat, society dictates that a central belief be held that there is a need for a moral and honourable leader with private virtues which demonstrably translate into public values. Indeed, the role of a labour leader should be that of a 'servant leader' which Greenleaf (1977:13) defines as being a "servant first. It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first. The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types".

Servant leadership raises the question though: who are labour leaders seeking to lead? It should not just be a matter of defining the class or group or workers that they wish to mobilise, but rather the motives, aspirations, values and goals that are to be mobilised

within those that follow. Labour leaders should therefore demonstrate the aspirations of the workers that they lead.

One of the most significant challenges to moral and civic education in our time is how best to think about, and how best to apply, values to public life without being embroiled in the politics of virtue or dogma (Joseph, 2006). In South Africa leaders find that their capacity to claim the moral 'high ground' is constantly challenged. The electorate perceives the rule of law as being undermined; crime and corruption flourish; and greed, homophobia, xenophobia and racism are a reality. When confronting this paradox, the labour movement cannot succumb to the comfort of ambiguity when demanding high standards of moral and ethical conduct from their elected leaders.

Howard (2007:213) poses the challenge for the labour movement to advance and enforce moral regeneration in the context of the South African Constitution and Bill of Rights. He maintains that these progressive foundational documents of principle should as a primary objective dictate a new value system, which should enhance a culture of human rights in all spheres of political, economic and social life. However, the challenge for the ordinary member of the trade union is that these new societal value systems have not been entrenched, nor have they translated into tangible transformation.

Furthermore, the ethical challenge for the union movement is the changing role of labour leaders (Howard, 2007:213). In the past trade union organisers were *activists*, who worked for low or no pay, with an attitude of working towards the 'common good'. Howard argues that this ethic has been changed and union organisers increasingly threaten to take strike action against their employers – the worker leaders. For progressive unions in the time-honoured context, this was an unusual and unlikely phenomenon. There may be several reasons for this shift:

- Firstly, worker leaders have taken the concept of 'worker control' to the business extreme;
- Secondly, union organisers are no longer activists, but 'ordinary' workers, who see trade union work as another job. They have a greater need to secure their income and future. Union employment and office become a stepping stone with which to access corporate and government posts;
- Thirdly, for the committed, there is general frustration brought about by the contradiction of a labour union almost unable to fulfil its mandate for the lack of will.

Howard asserts that "Fundamentally, we must not allow any Labour leaders (workers and officials) at all levels to engage in business while representing the interests of workers and

the values of the working class movement. This is a conflict of interest" (2007:236). This assertion suggests the need for an attitude change and the return to the drive towards moral renewal that characterised the movement in the past. Furthermore, Howard maintains that unions should 'weed out' or convert those who are in unions for reasons other than providing a meaningful service to the people who contribute towards paying their salaries.

However, at a fundamental level, workers and working families cannot be deemed to be ready to engage in a conversation on moral renewal when their dignity has not been restored. People work and live in abject poverty and in adverse conditions, while the South African economy is growing. This skewed pattern of 'growth' which has benefited big business, the 'new elite' and the already rich, as opposed to real difference in the lives of the poor and working masses, has culminated in several new (old) challenges for the labour movement (Howard, 2007). A discussion of these challenges would be incomplete without an analysis of the impact of globalisation on the unemployed, the skilled and unskilled worker.

4. The challenges of globalisation with respect to the labour movement

Although globalisation "brought meaning to economic integration within the world of work", Palane (2007:235) maintains that it "continues to reflect that capital lacks the human touch".

Whilst organisations after 1994 had to become more competitive to retain and protect local markets against international competitors, and ensure that they are able to compete internationally, national managerial initiatives had to follow those of the international arena. Workplace transformation processes are informed by issues that impact on global competitiveness (Palane, 2007). This is evidenced in the fact that, as a result of globalisation, many organisations had to restructure, rationalise and re-engineer themselves to decrease labour costs and increase efficiency, resulting in an increase in the unemployment rate. In order to become globally competitive, trade liberalisation led to retrenchments in certain sectors and tariff levels were reduced. According to Cebekhulu (2007:225), dairy and clothing are but two examples of industries that could not compete with cheap subsidised imports from the European Union and Asia. Furthermore, the strong rand undermined exports, particularly in the manufacturing industry. Desai (2005:26) refers to the following advertisement in a weekly newspaper[15] placed by the South African Textile and Clothing Workers Union (SACTWU), which makes for "chilling" reading:

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15 *Mail & Guardian,* March, 18–23, 2005.

- Every hour a clothing or textile factory loses a job;
- Every hour a family loses a breadwinner who worked in a clothing or textile factory;
- Every day a community loses 35 clothing and textile jobs;
- In 2004 South Africa lost 16 547 jobs in the clothing and textile sector;
- Between 1996 and 2004 South Africa lost 75 000 clothing and textile jobs.

The loss of one job for one worker has to be contextualised. One worker's income feeds approximately 5 family members, where family members will include at least two children, one or two maternal or paternal grandparents and a sibling or two. When multiplied to the thousands of jobs lost in the manufacturing sectors, this will start to account for the astronomical numbers of unemployed poor in the Western Cape.

The Labour Force Survey (April 2007) conducted by Statistics South Africa[16] with respect to employment statistics yields the following results:

- South Africa has a total of 47.4 million people, of which approximately 30 million (63%) are of working age (15-65 years);
- 12 million (25%) are employed;
- 4 million (8%) are unemployed (actively looking for work);
- 12 million (25%) are not economically active, of which 9 million (19%) are not available to work and 3 million (6%) are discouraged work seekers.

Although the government's official unemployment rate is 25% (the 'not economically active' category), if this is combined with the 8% of the unemployed category and 6% of the discouraged work seekers, structural unemployment amounts to 39%.

The following trends in unemployment were extracted from the results of two surveys conducted by Statistics South Africa[17] by Cebekhulu (2007:224):

- Official unemployment increased from 16% in 1994 to approximately 30% in early 2000. Expanded unemployment, which included people who have ceased to search for jobs, also increased from 28% in 1994 to a high of 41% in 2001;
- Both the official and expanded unemployment rates began to decrease marginally since 2003. Official unemployment decreased from 30% in 2003 to approximately 25% in 2006. Expanded or structural unemployment decreased from 43% to 39%.

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16   Retrieved online at www.statssa.gov.za.

17   The statistics computed for 1994-1999 are the results of the October Household Survey. The October Household Survey was discontinued and replaced by the Labour Force Survey. The statistics computed for 2000 to 2006 are the results of the Labour Force Survey. Online at www.statssa.gov.za.

The aforementioned surveys also illustrated that unemployment has gender, racial, age and geographic dimensions (Cebekhulu, 2007) Women, in particular black women, face higher unemployment rates compared to men, and black people in general have higher unemployment rates compared to white people. Furthermore, over 75% of unemployed people are under the age of 35 years and this includes a significant proportion who have never been employed before and therefore do not have work experience.

To compound the problem of unemployment, the restructuring of the production process – allowing for production processes to be broken down and dispersed globally – enables "business to exploit value opportunities along parts of the production process in other countries" (Elsey, 2007:240). Furthermore, the restructuring of the production process and the resistance of managers from the apartheid regime to incorporating black workers into a more democratic workplace system led to increasing casualisation and externalisation of labour. Elsey argues that newer modes of employment continue to emerge and atypical work has become the norm. The labour legislation does not protect casual workers and they are therefore subjected to unfair labour practices and have little or no job security and benefits. According to Jafta (2007:218), the gains achieved through unions are being eroded because they benefit only those in stable employment. The author calls for 'ethical globalisation', which reaffirms universally shared values and respect for human rights and dignity, as enshrined in the charter of the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Declarations for fair globalisation entail creating opportunities for all (Jafta, 2007:219). The priorities of globalisation should be the opportunity for all South African nationals to participate in the global economy with a fair distribution of economic resources, accommodating regional economic frameworks, whilst decreasing the gap between rich and poor. Furthermore, the integration of regional and global coordination demands strategic and visionary leadership in order to prosper and survive in the global competitive environment (Palane, 2007:235).

It can be concluded that the workplace transformation processes necessitated by globalisation has contributed towards, rather than diminished, socio-economic inequality in South Africa.

5. Questioning the moral basis of macroeconomic strategies: RDP and GEAR

After the 1994 democratic elections the ANC-led government saw its primary objective as being the eradication of black poverty within the context of a stagnating economy

brought about largely as a result of economic sanctions against apartheid South Africa. The government adopted an anti-poverty strategy embodied in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) by meeting basic needs such as investing in job creation, housing, welfare, water and sanitation, health-care, transport, land reform and so forth (Luiz, 2002:595). This strategy was expected to increase the demand for producer and consumer goods and services and thereby stimulate growth of the economy.

However, according to Luiz, the RDP ignored macroeconomic fundamentals and failed to recognise constraints. The author argues that, although it was a comprehensive programme, it was too broad and attempted to be "all things to all people". In the first year little progress was made in meeting its targets and Blumendal (cited in Luiz, 2002:595) asserts that at the end of the first year the "programme was in difficulties, both practically and politically". Furthermore, Blumendal maintains that some of the reasons for the apparent failure of the RDP were conceptual difficulties, funding, institutional uncertainties, ideological struggles and implementation failures. Instead of prioritising the need to build state capacity, the RDP assumed state capacity (Luiz, 2002:595).

The RDP began suffering a loss of credibility in 1996. The failure of the RDP was seen as a failure of government to deliver what they had promised when they mobilised the masses before the 1994 democratic elections. Indeed, Ehrenreich (2007:231) maintains that the RDP was based on the values of the Freedom Charter and government had an ethical obligation to ensure growth through distribution, as was promised. Promising to reduce poverty and inequality levels formed the basis of the ANC-led government's claim to ethical leadership.

In 1996 President Nelson Mandela's opening speech in parliament lamented "South Africa's slow economic growth, rising unemployment and persistent poverty" and he called on the public and private sectors to develop and implement a "national vision to lift us out of this quagmire" (cited in Natrass, 1996:25). Government and its social-partners (business and labour) responded to this call and presented their economic strategies. The South African Foundation (SAF) – "an organisation of top South African companies" – presented the 'Growth for All' strategy, the Nedlac Labour Caucus (COSATU, FEDSAL and NACTU) responded with the 'Social Equity and Job Creation' strategy, and government published their 'Growth, Employment and Redistribution' (GEAR) macroeconomic framework (in Natrass, 1996:25). In a subsequent ILO review of the South African labour market, labour's views on macroeconomic policy were supported by the ILO (Standing *et al.*, 1996, cited in Nattrass, 1996:25). Nattrass maintains that "the moral claims of the contending positions are rooted in contrasting approaches to the labour market, and … the coherence of each

growth strategy depends on different views towards fiscal policy and the determinants of investment" (1996:25).

Labour presented 6 strategies to promote equity:

1. Job creation (public works, mass housing programme, job sharing, increased domestic demand, pragmatic trade policies, land reform etc);
2. Redistributive fiscal policy;
3. Proposals to break up economic concentration;
4. Measures to promote workers rights (including a 40-hour week);
5. Industrial democracy (strengthen shop steward structures, reduce managerial prerogatives, etc.); and
6. Promote equity and development globally (Nattrass, 1996:31).

However, government decided to adopt GEAR to promote market-led economic growth by means of trade liberalisation, privatisation and macroeconomic stability. According to Luiz (2002:597), GEAR is situated within the supply-side, new classical paradigm, although it has Keynesian elements. Nattrass (1996) relegates the GEAR document together with the 1996 document prepared by big business to a 'right-wing stable' and highlights their similarity by stating that both documents envision a world economy as an "integrated capitalist system where market forces reign supreme, punishing countries which do not obey the unwritten code of 'sound' fiscal, monetary and labour-market policies" (1996:26). Inherent to GEAR is the commitment to labour market flexibility, which is assumed to create an investor-friendly climate that will result in output and employment for the poor and unemployed. To quote Natrass, "Herein lies the moral claim (most bluntly made by the SAF) that lower wages are good for the poor". The ILO/labour contests this moral claim by arguing "that high levels of inequality undermine growth, and that reducing inequality should be a precondition for – rather than merely an outcome of – economic growth … poverty should be addressed (at least in part) through improving the wages of low-paid workers" (1996:26).

As poverty increases, it has consequences for society as a whole. The casualisation of labour affects women in particular. Unemployment rates are higher for women than men. A survey done by Statistics South Africa (2002) shows that the unemployment rate for women in 2001 was above 50% (Statistics South Africa, 2002),[18] with the figure for black women in employment at 17% (Desai, 2005:49). These are ethical issue as social problems stemming from poverty tear apart the social fabric of society (Ehrenreich, 2007:232). With

18   In Desai (2005); available online at www.statssa.gov.za.

the rise of unemployment, the feminisation of poverty and the residues of migrant labour, many social ills take root in society, with some of the examples being domestic and sexual violence, infectious diseases and drug addiction.

Nattrass argues that while the 'architects' of GEAR tend to stifle debate, presenting GEAR as a strategy that is 'technically correct' and maintaining that the ANC had limited choices in developing a macro-economic policy, "left writers have pointed that the ANC made some deliberate choices and had the space to make others" (cited in Desai, 2005:14). Bond (2004), for instance, has argued: "Flashing back, it is tempting to point out that neoliberalism was promoted by the IMF in December 1993 before being codified in *Gear*. But four prior decisions were also crucial: to formally drop 'nationalisation' from ANC rhetoric (April 1992, although within four months of Mandela's February 1990 release the decision was already taken); to endorse the apartheid regime's agreement to join the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (June 1993); to repay the $25 billion of inherited apartheid-era foreign debt (October 1993); and to grant the SA Reserve Bank formal independence in an interim constitution (November 1993)" (cited in Desai, 2005:15).

In assessing whether GEAR has in fact addressed the problems of economic growth, rising unemployment and persistent poverty, it would be pertinent to analyse the concept of poverty in the South African context.

6.   Defining poverty and its moral implications in a South African context

Terreblanche (2003) maintains that there are four critical issues keeping people trapped in poverty in South Africa:

1.   High unemployment in an economy growing slowly;
2.   Large inequalities in access to economic power, property and opportunities (these inequalities largely follow racial lines);
3.   Dysfunctional social structures and high levels of crime in most communities;
4.   The combination of ill-health and exposure to violence and criminal behaviour in poor communities.

"Defining poverty levels in South Africa is an inexact science, with furious methodological disputes" and areas of contention (Cebekhulu, 2007:225). However, there is consensus among many researchers that the levels of poverty that exists remain shockingly high. In 2003 the South African Human Development Report (2003:xvi), as commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), maintained that about 48.5% of the

entire South African population, that is 21.9 million people, fall below the national poverty line, even though poverty decreased between 1994 and 2000 (Von Holdt & Webster, 2008:338).

The result of the Income and Expenditure Surveys for 1995 and 2000 of the poverty head-count of all South Africans is graphically illustrated below:

Figure 1 Poverty head-count (1995 and 2000)

	Oct-95	Sep-00
■ R322 per month	52.3	58
■ R174 per month	30.6	37.9
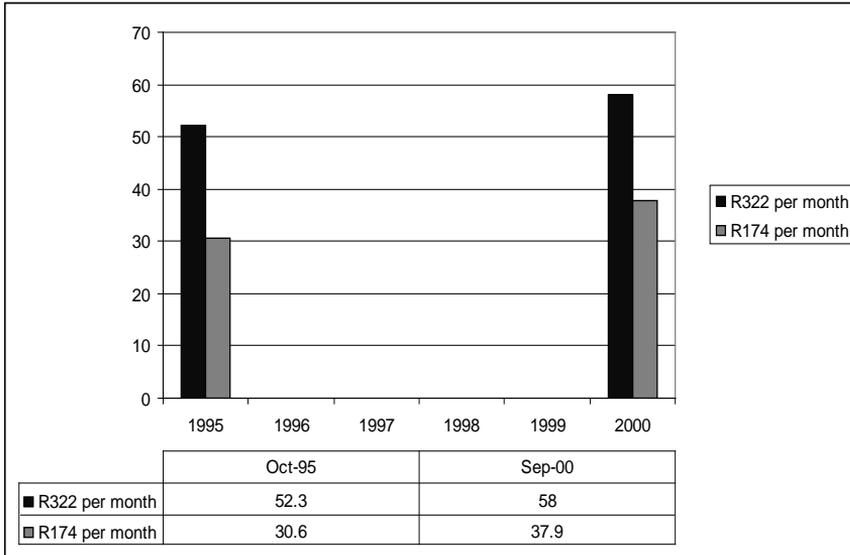
Source: DPRU Data Corner, based on Income and Expenditure Surveys, 1995 and 2000

Figure 1 is representative of the trend of a decrease in poverty that most researchers have found from the mid-1990s to 2000, and since 2000 there has also been consensus between many researchers that poverty has decreased (Cebekhulu, 2007 p. 225).

Prof. Haroon Bhorat , director of the Development Policy Research Unit at the University of Cape Town's School of Economics, maintained that "poverty levels had decreased from 2000 onwards, primarily because of the expansion of the social security system, and because the extended family system remained a crucial element for ameliorating the impact of poverty".[19]

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19   Quoted from IRIN, UN Office for the Co-ordination of Human Affairs. Retrieved online at http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=75191.

As the majority of the labour force in South Africa is black, it would be useful to study the poverty statistics of this population group, as many researchers aver that black poverty remains a serious problem and one cannot homogenise communities. Van der Berg and Louw (2004:567) maintain that by 2002 44% of the black population could still be considered poor. Furthermore, although between 1995 and 2000 the number of the black poor as a percentage of the total black population declined, the number of blacks living in poverty increased, as evidenced in Table 1.

Table 1   Estimates of poverty headcount and poverty headcount ratio for Blacks 1970-2000

1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Number of Blacks living in poverty						
10,397,430	9,761,669	10,427,844	12,003,438	13,026,970	15,311,490	16,400,691
Percentage of Blacks living in poverty						
64,6	52,9	49,3	49,10	45,90	48,40	47,40

Source: Van der Berg and Louw (2004)

Although there was a decrease in poverty across the wide spectrum of the South African, there is consensus too that there has been an increase in income inequality (Von Holdt and Webster, 2008:338) and intra-group income inequality (Cebekhulu, 2007:225; Van der Berg and Louw, 2004:567), deepening the stratification of South African society.

In Table 2 Buys (2007:263) illustrates the approximate stratification according to class and income distribution in 2004, drawing from research attributed to Prof. Sampie Terreblance[20] (unreferenced):

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20 Prof. Sampie Terreblanche is a leading South African economist; until 1987 he was a member of the ruling National Party, the party of apartheid, but later became one of their fiercest critics, becoming a founding member and economic adviser of the Democratic Party, while also being involved in clandestine meetings with the ANC in the 1980s. He lectured at some of the universities in South Africa and is now an independent economist.

Table 2   Stratification according to class and income distribution in 2004

Middle class (bourgeois)	Working lower class	Non-working "underclass" (lumpenproletariat)
Population		
15 million (11 million black; 4 million white)	15 million (14,67 million black; 330 000 white)	15 million (14.93 million black; 70 000 white)
% Distribution of Income		
+/- 85%	+/-10%	+/- 5%

Source: Prof. Sampie Terreblanche

- Approximately 15 million who constitute the working class receive about 85% of the income;
- Approximately 15 million who constitute the working lower class receive 10% of the income; and
- Approximately 15 million who constitute the non-working class or the proletariat receive about 5% of the income.

The exact Gini-coefficient for the entire South African population is in dispute; however, some compute it to be second to that of Brazil. Cebekhulu (2007:226) draws from data cited in *Finweek* 2006. and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005) to illustrate the discrepancies, as evidenced in Table 3.

Table 3   Estimates for the Gini-coefficient for South Africa

Mid-1990s	Early 2000s	Increase/Decrease	Source
0.68 (1996)	0.73 (2001)	↑	SALDRU
0.593 (1995)	0.578 (2006)	↓	World Bank*
0.58 (1995)	0.62 (2001)	↑	Fedderke *et al.* (2003)
0.56 (1995)	0.57 (2001)	↑	Stats SA (2002)
0.66	0.69	↑	Fedderke *et al.* (2003)
0.639	0.682	↑	Powell (2004)
0.565 (1995)	0.578 (2006)	↑	Ozler

*Expenditure

Source: *Finweek* (26 September 2006:56-57), Development Bank of Southern Africa (2005)

Cebekhulu argues that the discrepancy in results between the World Bank and the other institutions could be attributed to whether the results are based on income data or consumption (expenditure) data, and/or whether household or individual income data are used. It must be noted, though, that the trend across all the studies shows an increase in inequality levels, with the exception of the World Bank. However, Cebekhulu maintains that the World Bank's estimates would show an increase in inequality if they had used the same source for their research; they used the research conducted by Ozler in 2006 and research conducted by a different source in 1995 to make a comparison of the Gini-coefficient.

Similarly, as mirrored in the wider South African population, whilst poverty decreased in the black population, the income inequality within the black community increased as a whole, widening the gap between rich and poor, as evidenced in Table 4.

Table 4   Gini-coefficients estimated from various surveys of black intra-group distribution.

	1995	1993	1995	1996	2000
Gini-coefficient for blacks	0.49	0.56	0.57	0.68	0.59

Source: Van der Berg and Louw (2004)

Referring to the black population, Terreblanche (2003) is quoted as stating, "ANC policies over the past 13 years have created a Black elite, the so-called 'Black Diamonds', of [around] 2 million people, and a Black middle class of [about] 6 million.[21] The gap between the [roughly] 8 million rich Blacks and the 20 to 25 million poor Blacks has become dangerously big. The other 10 to 15 million blacks are neither poor nor rich".[22] Indeed, the *Business Times* (12 October 2008)[23] reports that for the first time the spending power of the black middle class has matched the spending power of the country's white population, and surprising research results[24] suggests that this class has remained resilient to the interest rate and inflation hikes that put pressure on many South Africans.

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21 This figure is in dispute, as UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing and TNS Research Surveys report that the black middle class has grown to 3 million people over the last year.

22 Cited in IRIN, UN Office for the co-ordination of human affairs. Retrieved online at http://www. irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=75191

23 *Business Times* – a supplement of the *Sunday Times*, 12 October 2008.

24 Research done by UCT Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing and TNS Research Surveys.

In 1999 Thabo Mbeki[25] argued that "As part of our continuing struggle to wipe out the legacy of racism, we must work to ensure that there emerges a black bourgeoisie, whose presence within our economy and society will be part of the process of the deracialisation of the economy and society" (cited in Desai, 2005:57). In stark contrast, in a speech to the Chamber of Mines in Johannesburg, Moeletsi Mbeki maintained that "If South Africa is to develop in the 21st century, and get rid of endemic poverty and high unemployment, the elite in this country cannot continue to enjoy the standards of living of the middle classes of the West without the equivalent productivity, which is the case at present".[26]

The transformation of paid work has been a critical challenge to the social democratic values enshrined in the Constitution. Le Bruyns (2007:223) maintains that as a result of globalisation life has become economised, that is, the worth and dignity of a human being is bound up with economic value and one's worth depends on the economic worth one has to the nation.

The dignity of human beings in the community context is severely compromised with a lack of housing, running water and electricity and free national benefits such as medical care and quality education. The consequences of these challenges are, amongst others, rising frustration in communities with an increase in crime and civil unrest (not vastly different to the pre-democratic period of apartheid rule). In the labour context, unrest as a result of low wages or poor working conditions often takes the form of strike action and at times violent confrontation. In this context the moral basis of collective bargaining to quell unrest and strike action needs to be explored.

7.   The ethics of collective bargaining

The pooling of resources and power gives unions strength when entering into a negotiating situation for the raising of aggregate levels of income and social interests. Trade union or labour sector negotiators are entrusted to represent workers and the working class in matters of collective interest. It thus becomes incumbent upon the negotiator to be acquainted with the needs and desires of those so represented. The underlying practices through collective

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25 Speech of former President Mbeki at the National Conference of the Black Management Forum, Kempton Park.

26 Moeletsi Mbeki is the deputy -chairperson of the South African Institute of International Affairs and the brother of former President Thabo Mbeki. Cited in IRIN, UN Office for the co-ordination of human affairs. Retrieved online at http://www.irinnews.org/PrintReport.aspx?ReportId=75191.

bargaining are ethical practices that need to be identified and pursued in order to ensure that the outcomes emerge ethically and with organisational value (Louw, 2007:243).

However, if the outcomes of collective bargaining are analysed, it emerges that there is very little variation in the basic conditions of employment (Elsey, 2007:240). The author maintains that, with a few exceptions, "the basic conditions set some kind of ethical floor and exert a great deal of influence on the collective agreements that come out of collective bargaining. We see low floors and high ceilings. It's very concerning that, when we looked at several hundred collective agreements, we found that two thirds of them did not represent a living wage to the lowest paid worker in a particular bargaining unit" (Elsey, 2007:240). Thus, the lowest paid workers are not earning enough to support their households. Furthermore, directors are remunerated in line with global corporations and businesses. Elsey maintains that there is a ratio of about 150:250 between the average minimum wage of the lowest paid workers and the average remuneration of a director. Even at a ratio of 150:1, a worker would have to work about three lifetimes to earn what a director earns in one year. Statistics such as these make the notion of ethical leadership in the workplace farcical.

In addition, there have been limited responses and plans around social issues such as skills development and HIV/AIDS in the workplace, suggesting that there are some very strong limitations on what can be achieved through collective bargaining.

Elsey argues that since the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) seems to exert a great deal of influence in the make up of collective agreements, this suggests that there is some sort of 'legislated ethics' at work – that our own idea of what is ethical is substituted for the laws enshrined in the BCEA, and it is perceived that anything remotely resembling those laws are ethical. However, the author argues that BCEA cannot possibly "capture the richness and the possibilities of interaction in the workplace". Furthermore, 'contractual ethics' has emerged, that is, if laws or policies can be captured in a contract, it has a legal reality that translates into its being ethical (2007:241).

The approaches to bargaining also become a question of ethics. In South Africa collective bargaining always entails a win/lose situation. It has been argued that a paradigm shift is required, that is, a move to a more integrated mutual gains approach to collective bargaining, which could create the possibility of a different atmosphere and different outcomes (Elsey, 2007:241).

Ethical leadership and ethical practices are embodied in representation, participation and democratic practices at many levels – from shop stewards to office bearers and employers

(Elsey, 2007:240). Labour leaders and employers represent, lead and make decisions on behalf of, and through, others and must therefore demonstrate and utilise an ethical framework. It is evident that in the world of work, democracy and accountability and the mandate to act are some of the foundations upon which unity and common purpose could be built. Fortune (2007:245) suggests that "a Code of Ethics be adopted by both labour and management as a way to articulate values, responsibilities and an ethical stance". He calls for special training on ethical leadership, which will ensure that leaders truly understand their roles and the reasons why workers and members place their trust in them.

Palane (2007:237) advises that talented leaders are required more than those who claim to be knowledgeable. Talented leaders, he maintains, "break the rules and or traditions, they create, they take the initiative, they invent and are proactive – while those who are knowledgeable simply take orders and are traditionalists. They fear to enter the unknown because they fear the unknown outcomes. …The workplace must be a fearless home without any discriminatory obstacles based on gender, race or colour". Howard's (2007:216) contention that labour can provide moral leadership nationally, continentally and globally, would then be entirely achievable.

8.   ASGISA and JIPSA – implications for skilled and unskilled workers

One of the results of following a neoliberal economic policy is that skilled worker are favoured and not the unskilled, and so those with a low level of education are at a distinct disadvantage. Besides the negative consequences of apartheid giving rise to a skewed education system, there has been a muted response from employers to engage in skills development. Buys (2007:264) argues that the low levels of education and training can be attributed to the unwillingness of employers to train their staff and the flaws in the education and training system. For instance, when the Skills Development Act[27] introduced the skills levy, "many companies abdicated their training responsibility to the state".

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27 The Skills Development Act (1998) was initiated "to provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce; to izntegrate those strategies within the National Qualifications Framework contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995; to provide for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications; to provide for the financing of skills development by means of a levy-financing scheme and a National Skills Fund; to provide for and regulate employment services; and to provide for matters connected therewith". Retrieved at http://www.acts.co.za/skills_dev/index.htm.

The state responded by shifting its emphasis to the knowledge economy. The Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) was launched in February 2006 with the aim of achieving the Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015. Indeed it argued that improving the quantity and quality of education received by an individual is regarded as one of the best ways to bring that person out of poverty (Bhorat *et al.*, 2001 cited in Behar, 2006).

ASGISA attempts to address some of the following economic challenges:

- The relative volatility of the currency as well as establishing a measure of macro-economic stability in the country
- Barriers to entry and competition in some sectors of the economy;
- The cost and efficiency of the national logistical systems as well as the infrastructure in the country;
- The regulatory environment and its implications, especially for small business;
- The shortage of suitable skills, but also disjointed spatial settlement patterns;
- The deficiencies associated with state organisations and its capacity to deal with the projected trajectory;
- The improvement of quality education and skills development and the re- capitalisation of FET colleges and;
- The need to build governance and state capacity in order to accommodate some of these initiatives, actions or objectives as part of ASGISA or of the new trajectory (Mokalobe, 2007:246).

As part of ASGISA, JIPSA was launched in March 2006 to:

- Prioritise skills development and human resource capacity;
- Provide momentum and support to the implementation of ASGISA;
- Transform the education and training system to respond to economic challenges and identify obstacles that impede this ideal; and
- Mobilise various social partners towards the implementation of ASGISA (Mokalobe, 2007:246).

Thus ASGISA attempts to broaden and improve educational access for a portion of the population, thereby equipping them with skills that generate enough growth to benefit those who do get access to those skills. It is argued that removing some of the obstacles to growth will increase demand for unskilled workers. Behar (2006:1) maintains that inherent to this argument is that "this positive influence on the unskilled is supposed to be larger than a second, potentially negative, effect. The second effect is that firms may hire skilled

workers to *replace* unskilled workers, not necessarily to embark on new projects. If the second effect is large, then income inequality could rise while the effect on GDP would be limited". Also, Bils and Klenow (2000) argue that if improved education only indicates ability and is not a producer of it, then there are no productivity effects from education, and only those who enjoy higher earnings will benefit, not the broader economy.

Furthermore, there is a view that skills make it possible to develop and adopt new technologies for both the skilled and unskilled. However, the 'directed technical change' literature indicates that skills make it profitable to develop technologies that benefit only the skilled workers and therefore with a rise in skill supply the poor are at a disadvantage (Behar, 2006:4).

ASGISA's and JIPSA's attempts to provide skills development and contribute to human capital are laudable; however, an awareness of what happens to those who do not benefit directly or acquire skills must be an important, ethical consideration.

9.   Conclusion

This chapter attempted to show the ethical dimensions of poverty and inequality in the world of work and the brutality of compromised human dignity. The labour movement indeed needs to insist on 'capital with a human touch'; the 'humanisation of globalisation'; redistribution for all; and ethical leadership among all role players. Maybe then the conclusion could be that South Africa's political freedom has significantly addressed the scourge of poverty and inequality, and the hard-won gains of the masses can be celebrated.

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ETHICAL LEADERSHIP IN AND THROUGH BUSINESS

Introduction

This chapter consists of four different but related articles that analyse the ethical challenges of business in and through its leaders and their respective business practices. Willie Esterhuyse presents his views on *ethics in action;* Oliver Williams focuses on *responsible corporate citizenship and the ideals of the UN Global Compact;* Janine Myburgh reflects on the implications of *bottom line ethics in business;* and Gordon Dames concludes with some of the *reflections presented at the Ethical Leadership Conference in and through Business.* We will firstly contextualise the challenge of ethical leadership in the following background description.

Ethical leadership in context[28]

The quest for ethical leadership and the rowing moral challenges in South African civil society and the business fraternity are dominating the public domain. These challenges are an existential threat to the future of civil society and its public institutions. Newspaper reports have persistently illustrated (rightly or wrongly) the challenge of unethical leadership and immoral socio-economic and corporate business practices. The following examples highlight the situation.

Firstly, the destruction of the moral fibre of society is most evident in the pathological trends of alcohol and drug abuse. The consequences are fatal – of which the foetal alcohol syndrome is probably one of the most destructive factors of our time. A *Mail and Guardian* article raised the issue: "Foetal damage in De Aar: A tragic fate awaits children whose mothers drink too much alcohol while pregnant. De Aar is renowned for the highest rates of foetal alcohol syndrome[29] in the world". The question of what is to be done about something so destructive should be raised. The immoral and recurring practice of the notorious 'dop system' in which alcohol forms part of workers' wages is an indictment to our country's young democracy (Beresford, 2007:14).

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28 An earlier version of this section first appeared in the *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal,* written by Gordon Dames (NGTT, 2008:100-101).

29 "About one million people in South Africa are affected by the mental retardation and physical effects of foetal alcohol syndrome. Children and adults living with the syndrome face a life of certain poverty and social dysfunction … New research has confirmed that at least 12 out of 100 children in the Northern Cape town have been damaged by alcohol while in their mother's womb. About 80% of the 27 000 people living in the town are unemployed" (Beresford, 2007:14).

Secondly, unethical and immoral leadership in South Africa's police structures is one of the biggest threats for a safe and secure society. The following newspaper headline illustrates the twisted nature of such leadership: "Three police officers who turned state witness against Robert McBride are themselves involved in cash-in-transit networks" (Basson, 2007:9). Boyle (2007:1) assessed crime and punishment and described the criminal justice system and the social cause of crime. He depicts the pathological state of our society as follows: "If one thinks that so many people are involved in crime, and so many people are victims of crime, there is an immense sadness and despair".

Thirdly, the role of business is not only questionable, but frightening according to recent reports of interference with the country's national intelligence agencies. Dawes's (2007:12) report on the controversial affairs of business with regards to sensitive national intelligence serves as an example. The Fidentia[30] corruption saga is another example of how far business leaders would go to gain personal wealth at the expense of children, pensioners and widowers. One of the country's biggest financial banks, First National Bank (FNB) and some of its clients, for example, the directors of Discovery, have made secret off-shore investments in excess of the legal investment limit. They have committed income tax evasion (Dawes & Sole, 2007:6). The report on the arrest of a controversial businessman, Charles Modise, by the Scorpions on charges of corruption[31] (Joubert, 2007:7); and Cabinet's call for criminal charges against executives of the Land Bank[32] are indicative of the immoral status quo in the country today (Ngobeni *et al.*, 2007:1).

These are some of the moral and ethical challenges leaders in the world of business have to deal with. We will visit the views of prominent leaders in the following sections to assess whether ethical leadership in and through the business sector is possible or a mere ideal.

Gordon Dames

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30 Fidentia had misappropriated money and companies linked to it were placed under curatorship by the Cape High Court. COSATU was deeply shocked "at the apparent disappearance of R689 million of funds invested in Fidentia by the Mineworkers' Provident Fund (MPF) and the transport SETA. The MPF had invested R1,47 billion of its members' money in Fidentia Asset Management through a trust set up to pay money to the widows and orphans of workers killed in mining accidents" (www.iol.co.za, accessed February 05 2007).

31 The case relates to business dealings in the Northern Cape and his close ties to ANC provincial chairperson John Block. Block approved tenders worth more than R20 million to Modise's company, Sedipeng Construction (Joubert, 2007:7).

32 See the article "How Fat Cats Looted Land Bank Billions. Cabinet calls for criminal charges after R2bn is siphoned off to fund associates' business schemes" (Ngobeni *et al.*, 2007:1).

Ethics in action

Willie Esterhuyse

Business Ethics

In their book *Business Ethics. Ethical Decision Making and Cases*, Ferrell and Fraedrich (Boston, 1994:5) make a short but significant statement: "The term 'ethics' has many nuances". In moral discourses no other statement about ethics and morality could be closer to the truth! Ethics, similar to politics, is a contested area. So much so that the phrase "business ethics" was for quite a long time regarded as an oxymoron! Why this state of affairs?

Ferrell and Fraedrich (1994) refer to a book written in 1965 by Wroe Alderson: *Dynamic Marketing Behavior*. Alderson makes an interesting point in view of the general theme of "dynamic marketing". Ethical decisions, according to Alderson, are decisions of a special kind. They should be differentiated from "ordinary" decisions, i.e. decisions coming naturally given an accepted system of rules and conventions. An ethical decision emerges when the "accepted rules no longer serve". The person having to make the decision is now faced "with the responsibility for weighing values and reaching a judgement in a situation which is not quite the same as any he or she has faced before" (in Ferrell & Fraedrich, 1994:320). I do not agree with Alderson's restriction of ethical decisions to so-called borderline cases. "Ordinary" decisions, or decisions in terms of "accepted rules", also have an ethical and value-based dimension. But Alderson, however, should get credit for emphasising that ethical decisions are value-based judgements, requiring responsibility for "weighing values". They are not mechanical or purely technical decisions.

There is not a single book written on ethics and morality, whether from a Western, Eastern, African or South American perspective, and no matter which belief or lifestyle system is displayed, that does not emphasise the role of values in ethical decision making and moral judgements. The difference arises when we start to focus on the nature, content and importance of the values.

The value of this collection of reflections is two-fold. Firstly, the collection focuses on what Alderson calls "the responsibility for weighing values and reaching a judgement". This particular focus puts the collection firmly within the very important but sometimes

complicated area of applied ethics, or ethics in action. It represents a sincere and valuable attempt to bridge the gap between theory and practice – a need Karl Marx pointed out many years ago. Ethical decision making, in the final analysis, is not about theory and ideal states of affairs. It is about doing the right and legitimate thing in a specific situation. It is about the choices we make in our relationships with others. Or, stated differently, it is about putting values, rights and the ideals of justice to work.

Secondly, the collection – perhaps not deliberately or intentionally – highlights a South African reality as far as the issue of values and morals is concerned: it can be read as a case study in cultural and belief diversity! The point I want to make, rather crudely stated, is the following: values and morals are not standardised, pre-packed and pre-cooked pumpkin slices obtainable at a fixed price from the supermarket and ready to swallow after a few minutes in the microwave. Values reflect hard-earned commitments, convictions, belief systems, personal histories and influences, experiences and exposures. In fact, they even reflect the issue of masculinity and femininity.

To make a controversial statement: if those in the knowledge and information industry (whether as professors or consultants) with regard to, for instance, business ethics are predominantly white males from a Calvinist background and intellectually schooled in Europe, will this state of affairs have no influence whatsoever on the way in which they perceive the nature and content of values? Hopefully this collection will spark a serious intercultural dialogue on at least understanding the value diversity prevailing in South Africa. We have, in my opinion, as yet not even started to scratch the surface.

Admittedly, the issue of values is a contested field – highly complex and emotional. "Ethics in action" will inevitably put this contest at our front doors. In fact, as in the case of racist values, the "elephant" is still very cosily at home in our sitting rooms – albeit that we do not want to admit it.

Despite the complexity and emotionality of the issue of values in a diverse and divided society such as ours, we cannot avoid the issue. This is, in my opinion, in fact the subtext of the collection. It represents a sincere attempt to deal with the issue of ethical leadership in a diverse and troubled society. It is commonly accepted that leaders, in particular institutional leaders, should primarily be experts in the promotion and protection of values (Selznick, 1919). This is why leadership is bound to fail if it concentrates on sheer survival. In this respect it is necessary to point out the following.

Looking back over the past 10 to 15 years, and taking stock of how we have fared in recovering the soul of the South African nation, we have reason to be very thankful. We come from a past which has had a devastating effect on the "soul" of the South African nation. The most challenging part of our journey towards the future, however, still remains the building of a workable moral consensus across cultural and other divides on what our core guiding values should be.

Our Constitution, fortunately, is imbued with inspiring legitimising values such as "democracy", "non-racialism" and "non-sexism". Moreover, our constitutionally entrenched Bill of Rights legitimises all the values and conceptions of justice underpinning the processes of transition, transformation and democratisation.

The general theme of this collection, "Ethics in action", however, does present us with a critical question: have we succeeded in restoring the "soul" of the South African nation? Do we have, even in a relative way, a functioning national consensus on the core values needed to take South Africa into the future?

In their book *The Sovereign Individual* (New York, 1998:359) JD Davidson and W Rees-Mogg remark: "The most successful periods in the history of societies tend to be those in which the collective morality is shared. Such morality not only performs specific functions such as reducing crime, and helping to support family and social structure, but gives citizens a sense of purpose and direction".

I am positive that this collection of essays will contribute to the debate on values and the attempt to recover the soul of the South African nation.

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Responsible corporate citizenship and the ideals of the UN Global Compact

Oliver F. Williams

Responsible Corporate Citizenship

In discussing the notion of corporate citizenship, we like the analogy that it is helpful to consider individual citizenship and then from there get a better idea about what corporate citizenship might mean.

When you think about it, as individual citizens all of us have two sets of responsibilities. The one set of responsibilities may be called one's role responsibility – being a mother, father, doctor, or lawyer, a businessman, and one has a role responsibility to try and meet the duties of the particular role that one has. A second set of responsibilities may be called the citizenship responsibilities – paying one's taxes, or if one has the time, to join the neighbourhood watch, coach your child's soccer team. What we do as individual citizens depends on our resources, the time we have, the amount of money we have, our skills.

There is something similar to corporate responsibility. Firstly, a business has its role responsibility – it has to produce goods and services and make a return on investment; if it does not do these things, it ceases to exist. As we know businesses go under every day and new ones are created. In addition, what is becoming clearer is that business has a citizenship responsibility. Businesses are part of the wider society, and in fact for their own good health businesses depend on the health of wider society. And so, if the business has the resources, most businesses have seen that they have to be good corporate citizens; and the participating good corporate citizenship, becomes an ethical project. More and more businesses are taking up that challenge.

What are the reasons why businesses are participating and becoming good corporate citizens? Part of the challenge involves looking into this question: why are a lot of companies doing good and interesting things, whilst some are not? There is not one simple answer to this question. The explanation is not obvious.

The following summary provides some of the answers to this question; the King report on corporate governance, in particular, provides a very interesting insight. That report talks

about businesses needing a license to operate. King says that twenty years ago all that was needed to get a license to operate was to fill in a form for a bureaucrat; but in the society that we live in today, the license to operate is an implicit social contract you have with the many stakeholders. One has to be responsive to what consumer expectations are, to what people understand your responsibilities to be, and if one does not comply with that license to operate, one does not meet consumer expectations. The people can change the terms of one's licence to operate. In the United States of America, after the big Enron and WorldCom failures, the government passed a very strict bill that says if a managing director or CEO signs off on a falls statement, he goes to jail and he pays a big fine. In other words, the people changed the license to operate. No longer did they trust business, particularly big business, to fill out their accounting statements correctly and they made very strict penalties. It seems that one can find many examples as to what the license to operate entails.

The laws in South Africa about Black Economic Empowerment introduced new terms, new licenses to operate which society feels business should take out in trying to deal with one of the serious problems in our society, which is the equity issue deriving from a politics which previously systematically disadvantaged people. Meeting the consumer's expectations is one reason that you see businesses becoming involved in corporate citizenship. Smart businesses want to be proactive; they don't want to wait until someone tries to regulate or force them to do something; they have people who are thinking about what it is they ought to do with the power they have in society, and how they can help the society to be a better place with their assistance.

Some companies really believe the notion of *ubuntu;* the King report speaks of South African business not forgetting about the important African philosophy of *ubuntu,* which is a communitarian value. It helps, because I am what you are, and you are because we are in this together; it promotes the idea that leading a humane life requires certain relationships and that there is an inter-connectedness between business and society.

Other companies are interested in what they call reputational capital. That is, being known as a good corporate citizen does have some pay-offs, in the sense that you are admired as a company and certain people make their decisions on whether to buy your product or not on the basis of your reputation. The *Financial Times,* for example, estimates that IBM's reputational capital is worth 55 billion dollars! The primary value of IBM as a company is not planting equipment; it is in their reputation, the high regard in which they are held by people. This is why many governments and many companies buy their products around the world. For example, IBM gave 150 million dollars to corporate citizenship programmes around the world.

Another reason why big businesses, in particular, participate in corporate citizenship projects is because they are so large; they feel that people expect them to help with the problems in the wider society because of their size. There are 190 nation states in the world; there are number of companies that are larger than all the nation states in the world. For example, General Electric had sales of 100 billion dollars last year, and there are only seven nation states with an annual budget larger than that. IBM's annual budget was 80 billion dollars. Today, because businesses have been so successful in pleasing us, we buy their products; this is why they have amassed such wealth and power. Many big companies feel, however, that where there is power there is also responsibility. This is why they decide to take on some of wider society's problems.

There is a serious need for reflection on corporate citizenship in our world today. In 2000 Kofi Annan started what he called the UN Global Compact. That is a set of principles or ideals for business around the world. There are ten principles that have to do with human rights, labour rights, environment, corruption, etc. There are over 4,000 companies in the world that have signed up. They will try to advance human and labour rights; they will try to take care of environmental issues and try to avoid corruption.

Business can be an agent in bringing about stability, be a part of creating peace through commerce in trying to restore the social fabric of society by healing and peace building.

Globalisation and the Business Case for Corporate Social Responsibility

Take one look at the smog that hangs over the Olympic host city Beijing and it becomes abundantly clear – globalisation and economic expansion come at a price. Resource depletion, worker exploitation, pollution and corruption – this is the dark underbelly of globalisation that has raised alarm bells around the world. Thankfully, more and more individuals and organisations are waking up to the social, environmental and ethical costs of a global marketplace and are making a sound business case for a new era of moral capitalism. Leading the way in this regard is the United Nations with its groundbreaking Global Compact initiative. Launched in 2000, the Global Compact now has more than 5,600 participants – including 4,300 businesses in 120 countries around the world – making it the world's largest voluntary corporate social responsibility project. The Global Compact is effectively trying to encourage multinational corporations and all companies around the world to conduct their business ethically and responsibly – with respect for human rights, labour rights, the environment and a commitment to fighting corruption. These ideals are outlined within ten key Principles that signatories of the Compact make a commitment

to upholding. Every company that signs up is invited to make a clear statement of support and must include some references in its annual report (or other public documents) on the progress it is making on internalising the Principles of the Compact. Those who fail to submit a report within two years of becoming a signatory are de-listed and effectively named and shamed in the public domain. As of June 2008 the number of de-listed companies stood at 630. Critics of the Global Compact maintain that such a voluntary project – with no enforcement mechanism – and no real sanctions for those who do not comply can do little to influence the behaviour of companies who act irresponsibly in the name of profit-making. However, without any 'world government' or hard international law to enforce ethical business practice, few alternatives exist. In this light, the Global Compact can be seen as the first step on the ladder towards a responsible brand of capitalism. It is by no means a foolproof solution, but it does represent the beginnings of a paradigm shift in which "soft" trans-national law is gradually complementing and completing "hard" national law.

Interestingly, the impetus for this shift comes not from national political discussion but from businesses who are concerned and from the work of NGOs who are critical of globalisation and who research and lobby in the worldwide society for collective action across national borders. At the base of this paradigm shift is a fundamental concern to retrieve the moral purpose of business. The current state of the global economy and the planet mean this is a concern that cannot be taken lightly. In recent years the media has frequently reported on companies who exploit the lax legislative laws in developing nations needing to attract foreign investment. Cases in point include the regular dumping of toxic e-waste in Ghana and elsewhere by the developed world, the exploitation of child workers in the Indian textile industry and the destruction of African rain forests to fuel China's booming manufacturing industry, to name a few. In a globalised world, even where nation-states are willing or able to regulate these actions they are often reluctant to do so for fear of losing new investment to nations with less stringent regulations. This so-called 'race to the bottom' is unfortunately a fact of life in developing countries – and critics of globalisation are adamant that the citizens and resources of such nations cannot be left vulnerable to the forces of supply and demand. But moral reasons aside – does a business case exist for a more ethical strain of capitalism? The Global Compact, for example, is such a business case in offering a greater ethical effort of capitalism. The Compact maintains that responsible business practices not only contribute to the well-being of stakeholders, they have increasingly become a long-term value proposition for business itself. It makes business sense for companies to invest in creating a sound environment in which to do business, to minimise risks and to harness new business opportunities by supporting developing and emerging markets.

Consumers too are starting to change the way business operates. The largest-ever survey on global public opinion about the changing role of companies – *The Millennium Poll on Corporate Social Responsibility* – conducted in 1999, showed clear evidence that citizens around the world are judging corporations and their actions more closely – and then voting at the till. The survey showed that "one in five consumers report either rewarding or punishing companies in the past year based on their perceived social performance, and almost as many again have considered doing so." The same poll says that "two in three citizens want companies to go beyond their historical role of making a profit – they want companies to contribute to broader societal goals as well." It is quite probable that almost a decade later these numbers are likely to be much higher today. The flipside of globalisation together with the expansion of the Internet means that more knowledge – and with that power – rests with ordinary citizens than ever before. Companies increasingly have to consider their reputation capital in the marketplace and protect their brand by ensuring their operations are beyond reproach. This has been seen particularly in the apparel industry where consumers have put pressure on sports clothing giants Nike and bargain clothing retailer Primark (UK) to review the conditions in their factories, stop child labour and pay a living wage. Furthermore, creating sustainable value in a company by attending to environmental, social and governance performance is increasingly being rewarded by the international investment community – and thus increases the business case for corporate social responsibility. So while the Global Compact may not have the sanctions that critics of globalisation are looking for, it is at least giving the public a platform from which to judge companies and their actions. As climate change and other pressing social issues continue to get prominence in the media, the public is likely to continue to push companies towards sustainable business models and it is this pressure, coupled with the moral imperatives for change, which will usher in a new era of responsible capitalism in the years ahead.

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The bottom line ethics in business

Janine Myburgh

Ethics in business consists of a form of combined components. It is how society in general regards ethical guidelines and moral or ethical challenges that come to the fore in a business environment.

Is compromise ever possible?

In the past the only factor that was of any relevance to business was the business's bottom line. The making of a profit at all costs was the only requirement expected of any successful business person. The old saying that 'all is fair in love and war' was often applied. Doing business successfully was often regarded as being at war. The prize of winning the battle against all odds was profit. The bottom line for any successful business is the making of a large profit. No business can survive in the long run without making a profit. Profit is needed for survival. It is needed by our economy.

The financial growth of a business is to be found in the financial statements and yearly reports. The one criterion applied to gauge a successful business was the bottom line – the profit made, as mentioned.

Business has increasing realised, however, that we have a responsibility to play a more holistic role in society and the community as a whole. Globally as well as in South Africa the business environment has evolved. Among other factors involved here, business has realised that certain businesses were showing a better profit, a better bottom line, by giving other dimensions as much consideration and importance as was given to making a profit.

The additional factors I am referring to are the all important People and our Planet.

As a society we can no longer be afforded the luxury of considering only ourselves. Differently put, only looking inwards is no longer the solution. Similarly, the business community can no longer only look inwards. The triple bottom line is the only recipe that should be applied by business: People, Planet and Profit, also known as the three Ps, in equal ratios. Social responsibility as well as considering the environmental impact of any action is just as important as making a profit.

The world, society as well as the business community at large, is insisting on commitment from business and demanding that this commitment is conveyed in a structured way to ensure the responsibility of adhering to the three Ps. The quality and parameters of business ethical issues to a great extent indicate the range to which business is to be perceived to be complying with non-economic social values. But it is necessary to bear in mind that perception is often the reality we have to deal with.

A business's ethics is gauged by the philosophy of the relevant business; fundamentally it can be seen that the aim of the business fosters its success. Business's responsibility to its people is addressed under the corporate social investment policy of the relevant business. Corporate social responsibility is the policy whereby a business takes into consideration society's interest by taking responsibility for the impact of their actions on the society (as well as the environment) they operate in. This commitment extends much further than legislative obligations, but is also seen as the business accepting responsibility, of its own accord, for improving conditions of their workers, their workers' families as well as the communities – often concentrating on the areas the business impacts on the most.

Corporate social investment can take many forms, but the bottom line is that it is an investment in, firstly, employees, and, secondly, the community in which business operates.

Instead of looking at the subject in abstract philosophical terms with lots of long words and sociological jargon, I would like to take a more practical approach and look at training as an example of investment in employees. This can be expensive and there are no guarantees that the people whom you have trained will stay with you. They could easily leave to join a rival firm and compete against you. So why do it? The answer is simple. Trained people help to grow economic activity and that makes for a better environment in which to do business and that, inevitably, leads to improvements to the bottom line. Let's take an example. For decades most apprentice training in South Africa was done by the railways and the mines. They knew that many of the people they invested in would leave and there would be few direct benefits to the organisations. But the indirect benefits made it worthwhile. The mines knew that many of their artisans would end up working for some of their suppliers and well-trained men would produce better goods and that would be good for the mines.

What goes around comes around. Or, if you prefer – as ye sow, so shall ye reap.

Some pessimists could still be of the view that business is selfishly still only looking inwards, only acting for its own advantage. There could be merit in this view, but the fact that society as well as the environment benefits as a whole cannot be disregarded.

Business has moved very much into the conscience-focused realm of doing business, being accountable for our actions, and doing business ethically. Rightly so, there has been an increasing demand by society at large for more ethically focused business practices and actions. By making the commitment to take responsibility for the influence – be it negative or positive – that a business has on society is how a business accounts for its negative or positive influence.

Socrates was one of the first Greek philosophers to encourage both scholars and the common citizen to turn their attention from the outside world to the conditions of humans and their environment – in other words the needs of people. Socrates believed that a person should be aware of all the facets relevant to life in order to attain self-acceptance. Rightly so. Socrates' views can be equated to how a business should be driven and what responsibilities business should take.

A business has to invest in people, their human capital to grow in this day and age. In the event that the business does not grow, it will stagnate and die. This will be of no benefit to society, the economy or the environment. Investing in people or the human capital of society cannot be done without drastically impacting on the environment these people live in. The environmental practice of a business is intrinsically linked to its sustainability in the foreseeable future. As business we need to take a leading role in nurturing our environment. The environment cannot sustain the continuous plundering of its resources. The plundering of resources has to stop. It is the accepted norm that commitment to our planet and our environment goes beyond the walls of the boardroom. But does impact greatly on the boardroom.

How we treat our environment has a direct impact on our people and consequently our human capital. Where should the seeds of doing business ethically be planted? Where should we learn that people, our planet and our profit are equally important? Should we look to our Constitution as our moral compass? Is making a profit, investing in people and the planet the task of business task alone?

The triple bottom line will only succeed if it is wholly embraced by all the social partners of society. Labour, business, government and civil society each has a very prominent role to play in holding the moral compass that impacts on each of us. Business is not the only gatekeeper for societies' ethical norms. Together the four social partners – labour, government, business and society – have a responsibility to hold each other accountable to ensure that we have a sustainable economy. An economy that can sustain its people and its environment is what all societies strive for. How we reach that end point will be determined by how effectively

we apply the principle of the triple bottom line. How business conducts itself does spill over into society and in that aspect alone it has a responsibility to continuously invest in its people, society, the environment and the planet to be able to be sustainable in a growing global economy.

How do we create wealth for ourselves and those around us? We need to alleviate poverty. This can only be done by applying the acceptable ethical norms of society. We have no alternative but to adhere to the triple bottom line: Profit, People and the Planet. The principle is as clear as daylight. Good businesses invest in their staff and their environment, because it is the smart thing to do. It is having foresight to plan ahead. The reward will be seen in the bottom line. It once again boils down to the bottom line. The difference in how the bottom line is reached demonstrates how society as a whole (and the business community) has evolved. The ethical policy of a particular business will eventually impact on the bottom line, the profit, of the business. It is as clear as daylight that what you put in is what you get out.

We can never comprise on our ethical norms should we wish to be sustainable.

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Building ethical leadership in and through business

Gordon Dames[33]

> *… for most people in South Africa economic life reflects threatening realities that are hard to deal with or overcome. … Human dignity must also include rather than exclude economic dignity* (Le Bruyns, 2009:292).

According to Parring (2009:306), South Africa has a history of doing business under cover; this can be ascribed to economic sanctions that prevailed and led to business being conducted immorally. Our immoral business past has been embraced as the new business culture. This new business culture seems to be: what some people perceive to be fronting others believe to be an opportunity. This new economic culture driven by both individual and collective business leaders have corrupted the entire global economic system (Fakir, 2009:9).[34] Fakir (2009:9) refers in this regard to the Nobel Laureate for economics, Joseph Stiglitz, who had forewarned global society of systematic irregularities in the economic markets: "from three decades of deregulation, low interest rates, tax cuts, high deficits, and the ignorance of early warning signs in the system and investment bubbles that created a culture of 'irrational exuberance'". The business value system and culture of our future economy may be determined by the outcome of this new 'immoral' or unethical perception and practice in business (Parring, 2009:306; Cf. Louw, H., 2009:333-334; Louw, L., 2009:304).

Many corporate companies had until a decade ago "viewed ethics as an administrative compliance" (Magamola, 2009:297). Business ethics since the Enron debacle has become a global pre-requisite for corporations and organisations.[35] The current global recession is sinking major world economies, and holds inevitable moral and ethical challenges for global communities and leadership (Boyle, 2009:1). The exorbitant bonuses Wall Street CEOs

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33 An earlier version of this contribution appeared in *Dutch Reformed Theological Journal,* written by Gordon Dames (NGTT, 2008:104-106).

34 Fakir is head of the Living Planet Unit at the Worldwide Fund for Nature. His article, in this regard, first appeared on the SA Civil Society Information Service website: www.sacsis.org.za (Fakir, 2009:9).

35 "The Enron story is an illustration of the dire implications of unethical business practices … loss of focus; violation of core values; short-term gains; lack of transparency; and a weak board" (Magamola, 2009:299).

'earned' last year were essentially instrumental in what could become the worst economic recession in the entire history of the United States of America, with a constant and widening ripple effect to the rest of global markets and communities. The consequent outcome leads to scenarios where: "Inauthentic CEOs downsize their organisations, increase their own compensation, and weep crocodile tears for the employees who have lost their jobs" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, online at http://web.ebscohost.com.ez.sun.ac.za/ehost/). Fakir (2009:9) depicts the current global economic crisis under the heading: "New Economy Rewards Dishonest Practice. When greed feeds on itself to invest wealth".

Drastic and immanent regulatory steps are required to counter unethical business practices. The King I, II and III Reports[36] are, and will become more than ever before, crucial instruments to create awareness and foster (economic) policy transformation to combat exorbitant executive salary packages, corruption and fraud. Corporate governance and reciprocal corporate social responsibility ought to envision and embody ethical business practices of integrity for the public good: "Only socialized leaders concerned for the common good can be truly transformational leaders" (Howell & Avolio in Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, online at http://web.ebscohost.com.ez.sun.ac.za/ehost/). It is here that consumers[37] and poverty-stricken communities dictate their preference for good and honourable business practices.[38] L. Louw (2009:304) and Williams (2009:316) define business enterprises in terms of the notion of corporate citizens[39] in contrast to individual citizens. L. Louw (2009:304) views each business as an integral part of our society: "As a *corporate* citizen it is subject to the same pressures and aspirations as the rest of society. The concerns of individual citizens should also be the concerns of corporate citizens".[40] Williams (2009:317) notes, as an American, that some corporations are acknowledging the notion of *ubuntu.* He refers to the King report's reference to "South African business not forgetting about the important African philosophy of *Ubuntu,* which is a communitarian value. It helps, because I am what you are, and you are because we are in this together; leading a humane life requires certain relationships

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36   Williams argues that businesses are participating and becoming good corporate citizens as a direct result of the King report on corporate governance (Williams, 2009:317).

37   Williams (2009:317) refers to 'reputational capital' in this regard.

38   Eradicating poverty and unemployment will not necessarily prevent unethical business behaviour because this is not a crime of need, but a crime motivated by greed. In executing our daily functions, it is important to work with integrity and speak out against unethical behaviour (Magamola, 2009:297-298).

39   Business has both a role and a citizenship responsibility (Williams, 2009:316).

40   See reference to individual and public ethics (Public Service Regulations, 2001:A2).

and there is inter-connectedness between business and society"[41] (Williams, 2009:317). The current global crisis accentuates the urgent need for a global market underpinned and driven by the African philosophy of *ubuntu*. Communitarian economic values are called for to readdress the widened gap between the rich and poor (global communities) and the over-emphasis on individualistic wealth accumulation. Unchecked practices of capitalism and the uncontrolled conduct of capitalists may have just caused the world the greatest existential threat since the Second World War and the Cold War between the West and the East:

> Every time capitalism is hit by a crisis it is described as being an anomaly. The latest scandal which has rocked the United States' financial sector, in which the trusted and likeable figure Bernie Madoff ran a Ponzi[42] scheme for almost two decades, is once again dismissed as the work of a rogue element (Fakir, 2009:9).

Fakir (2009:9) contends that these business leaders would not accept responsibility for their "faulty free market philosophy and irresponsible agents for the failures. A whole ideology must stand the test of time and be defended at all cost despite its failures".

Ethical leadership in context

Ethical leadership in the world of economics is not a self-evident philosophy. Knowledge and skills about leadership and even ethics may be generally required, "but ethical leadership in context might be a little more complex to understand and recognise" (Le Bruyns, 2009:292)[43]. Good governance and integrity among top management should rather become a "routine practice for everyday business life" (Magamola, 2009:298).[44] Ethical concerns in the daily business context "are more frequently characterized by concerns about relationships and responsibility than by legal issues"[45] (Magamola, 2009:298).

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41 Williams (2009:317) calls for a serious reflection on corporate citizenship in the world to advance human and labour rights and environmental issues, and to avoid corruption.

42 The term refers to Charles Ponzi, who was responsible for the largest investment scam during World War One (Fakir, 2009:9).

43 Van Niekerk (2003:128-138) develops a practical wisdom model of the ethics of responsibility to "better equip all involved to deal with the ever-increasing moral problems that business people have to deal with".

44 The examples of poor corporate governance speak for themselves in the light of the fraudulent business practices of the American, Bernie Madoff, and the Frenchman, Jerome Kerviel.

45 Ketola (2006:6) argues for trust of leaders by their staff as an essential element for corporate social responsibility. Trust in leadership depends on the relationship between the leader's values, words and actions.

"Business Ethics therefore specifically looks at those values which determine behaviour of the individual business professional as well as the effect this behaviour has on the environment in which he/she operates" (2009:298). The traits of ethical leadership are a responsibility which is not individualistic (i.e. the private needs and agendas of companies, etc.), but a responsibility for the common good (public morality) (Le Bruyns, 2009:292)[46]. Individuals and communities exist in a "delicate tension" constituting ethical grounds for the civic virtue of authentic transformational *ethical* leadership (Bellah *et al.*, 1988 in Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999, online at http://web.ebscohost.com.ez.sun.ac.za/ehost/) (emphasis added*).* Ethical leadership "goes beyond individualistic integrity[47] (being true to one's character and role – be it professional, political, artistic or intellectual) to encompass the wellbeing and future of others" (Le Bruyns, 2009:292). This represents a paradigm shift that most of us may have difficulty with:

> What we are communicating through the ELP is that any possibility of moral transformation in any sphere of life, including business, is directly intertwined with the extent to which we are willing to go beyond our private and organisational zones. So what might ethical responsibility within the business world have to do with poverty, unemployment, wage gaps, crime, family breakdown, HIV-AIDS, globalisation, social capital, skills development, gangsterism, substance abuse, war and conflict or peace, and so on? Maybe nothing, maybe everything (Le Bruyns, 2009:292).

Business ethics cannot be separated from general ethics (Pieterse, 2009:294). Corporate ethical issues must as a result be addressed on the basis of fundamental ethical standards. Pieterse argues for the application and acceptance of common ethical values such as honesty, fairness, compassion, respect and truthfulness. Pieterse's perspective is based on situation ethics that he embraces from a proponent of situation ethics, namely Montgomery (1972:26 cited in Pieterse, 2009:366).[48] Montgomery's (1972:26 cited in Pieterse, 2009:294) basic theory states that "no action is good or right in itself. It depends on whether it hurts or helps people". Situation ethics teaches that:

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46 "According to both Dewey and Weber, the modern world fragments both the 'individual' and 'community'. This fragmentation impairs meaningful political action. Thus, the question becomes, how is the fragmentation on the individual and community level to be reconciled, coherence regained and meaningful action restored?" (Roederer, 2000:75-94).

47 Magamola (2009:297) states that: "The golden rule in business says that good conduct is important for success. Integrity is great for business because in the end everybody wins". Her notion that "everybody wins in the end" should be viewed in the light of Le Bruyns's perspective on an ethics that serves the wellbeing of the 'others' rather than just honouring one's own integrity.

48 Deeper understanding of the social-cultural as well as organisational contexts is of paramount importance for responsible management and leadership (Lämsä & Pucetaite, 2006).

> The 'rightness of an action' is to be judged in relation to the situation in which it takes place, rather than with reference to laws or universally binding rules[49] (Pieterse, 2009:294).

Situation ethics takes precedence over a traditional (conformance or compliance) critique of the actions of individuals or groups. However, a note of caution should be sounded for value congruence between *business* leaders *in their corporate contexts* and *members of society in their socio-economic contexts*, which exacerbates the moral risk of ethical leadership: "Therefore, it is true that *ethical (business)* leaders can 'wear the black hats of villains, or the white hats of heroes'. The practical problem, however, is that *ethical (business)* leaders and *members of society* sometimes fail to see all the colors of their own hats" (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999:187 cited in Price, 2003:75) (emphasis added). "You can be unethical without breaking the law" (Pieterse, 2009:294). This can be ascribed to situation ethics that employ a different critique to measure whether people are hurt or helped. "Fairness and compassion transcend laws and norms" (Cf. Pieterse, 2009:294) and social responsibility transcends even legal and economic motives (Dubrin, 2007:183). Batson *et al.* (1978 cited in Price, 2003:74-75) refer in this regard to leaders' perception of the significance of their responsibility to help people in need: "If moral authority can run up against the force of alternative norms in just this fashion, then so too can generally applicable moral requirements come into conflict with 'the good that can be achieved for the group, organisation, or society for which *ethical* leaders feel responsible.' … when *ethical* leaders fail ethically, they must mistakenly believe that their behaviour is ultimately justified because the importance of 'the good that can be achieved for the group, organisation, or society for which they feel responsible'" [Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999:188] outweighs the moral costs of deviating from these requirements" (Price, 2003:74-75) (emphasis added). The question remains: whether the costs for 'the common good' could substitute the price of the moral fibre in society, therefore "leaders must be willing to sacrifice their other-regarding values when generally applicable moral requirements make legitimate demands that they do so" (Price, 2003:80).

Corporate and Social Capital?

Situation ethics, on the other hand, focuses on the actions of society itself. Reluctance to punish criminals, for example, is a direct reflection on society and its inability not to recognise its own accountability and responsibility for the very crimes which it punishes. L. Louw (2009:304) poses the same question with reference to business enterprises: how do corporate citizens behave in their environment?:

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49 "The triumph of capitalist values with its features of personal enrichment and disregard for class solidarity" (Andrew Nash, 2007:17 cited in Ronnie, 2009:315).

> South Africans grapple with the apartheid legacy and how to overcome the deliberately created backlogs in order to create a prosperous society that the country can be based on the potential inherent in its people and other resources. This is the national environment; this is the South African society in which business is a corporate citizen.

Corporate and social ethical responsibility is indeed reciprocal. Pieterse's (2009:294-296) ethical framework is both descriptive of, and informs, the typical issues that the working classes are confronted with today: the plight of farm workers; brutal evictions; pseudo-empowerment; wage gaps; apartheid debt; the selling of farm houses bought with 'grant money'; the 'dop' system despite laws prohibiting it.[50]

Magamola (2009:297) argues from a business perspective that "the cost of unethical business behaviour far exceeds the value of all street crimes".[51] Her statement that "theft and robberies cost the country thousands, maybe millions, but white collar crime costs us billions" does not quite resonate as an ethical argument. This argument may be perceived by unethical agents as an 'excuse' for, or 'approval' of, theft and robbery by villains, instead of making a collective argument that will stem any and every form of corruption as well as crime. However, Magamola (2009:298) does ask why business should behave in an ethical manner and proposes the following factors to foster ethical behaviour:

> Without Ethical Behaviour, Society cannot exist. Only Ethical and Fair Behaviour in business is "Good' Business. We can only fulfil our own desires and interests if we take those of others into account.

She is correct and emphasises that ethical business practices are the cornerstones for the development of a successful society. Parring (2009:306), however, sounds an alarm bell by declaring that business corporations may not be demonstrating adequate "commitment to invest in people in the form of skills transfer, equal opportunity in the workplace and opportunities to previously disadvantaged businesses in the form of preferential procurement and ongoing mentoring and support". Magamola (2009:299-300) pleads for transparency and collective responsibility in business conduct and practices.[52] A new business culture

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50 "The notorious 'dop' system, in which alcohol was part of a worker's wages, might have created a culture of drinking within these communities (De Aar, for example). Today enterprising shebeen owners and taxi drivers take bakkie-loads of alcohol to farms where workers buy it, often on credit" (Beresford, 2007:14).

51 "A KPMG study conducted in 1993 indicates that only 20% of white collar crimes are reported to the police. … Indeed the higher we rise in business and positions of responsibility, the greater the temptation to engage in unethical behaviour" (Magamola, 2009:297-298).

52 "The temptation to corrupt and to be corrupted has become almost second nature in the form of kickbacks in all forms" (Parring, 2009:306).

becomes crucial in order to move away from an alarming contemporary practice, which Fakir (2009:9) refers to: "Madoff is a creature of a culture in which the moral hazard was cheered. A culture that predisposed trusted characters to behave in careless and fraudulent ways". Therefore, unethical business practices have to be transformed both individually and collectively to prevent Madoff-Ponzi schemes. A recurrence of the current global economic meltdown will otherwise obstruct and destroy sound socio-economic growth and political stability.

The significance of businesses to become healing agencies and peace builders should not be underestimated, but further explored to foster 21st-century transformational and ethical local and global business (Williams, 2009:317). Williams argues that businesses could be agents to foster stability and be part of creating peace through commerce by restoring the social fabric of society. The challenge for South African business lies right here and now! The reciprocal response of politics would, however, be even more appropriate in this regard.

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Ethical leadership in and through politics

Courtney Sampson

The premise from which this chapter starts is that politicians are in no way any more dishonest or corrupt than the rest of humanity. Neither can it be assumed that they are in any way less dishonest or less corrupt than the rest of us (Sampson, 2007:1).[53] This is the reality, despite what appears to be a popular perception as expressed by a politician who was a conference panel discussant:

> Let's be honest, politicians and the practice of politics is universally looked down upon. I looked up the Penguin dictionary for a definition of politics and politicians. One of the definitions that the dictionary gave for a politician is "somebody who uses underhand methods to accumulate power" (Greyling, 2007:1).[54]

It is true that power is the central most important issue in politics and the contestation of elections by politicians, but this is a statement of fact rather than an indictment. It is through the gaining and maintaining of power that politicians are able to implement their policies. It is similarly true that many politicians continue to carry the burden of reconstructing society. Another politician who made a presentation at the conference declared:

> As a government leader, I am aware that every day people look up to us as their champions and their guide. It is a weighty burden for sure, but one that I wear every day with pride, having chosen to serve (Brown, 2007:1).[55]

Greyling (2007:1) himself qualifies and clarifies his own view by stating:

> I am involved in politics because I believe that is where I can do the most good. I don't believe that politics and politicians should be seen in such a negative light and one of the challenges we face is to restore the image of politics.

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53 Courtney Sampson's Keynote Address at the Ethical Leadership Project's Conference on "Ethical Leadership in and through Politics" held at the University of the Western Cape, 6-7 September 2007.

54 Lance Greyling (Independent Democrats) – Panel discussant at the ELP Conference (2007).

55 Lynne Brown (Member of the Executive Committee for Finance and Tourism – Presentation at the ELP Conference (2007).

The chapter will focus on the challenges facing political leaders in the Western Cape. The political scenario in the Western Cape is characterised by the fact that no political party has ever won an outright majority (50% plus one of the vote) in a provincial election. In the local sphere of government (in municipalities) only four of the twenty-five municipal councils have outright majorities – and one obtained this status through the last floor-crossing period.

This environment inevitably creates levels of instability that impact negatively on long-term planning. In the absence of significant long-term planning, the focus of transformation shifts to short-term planning because of the constant imminence of possible regime changes. Short-term planning without medium-term and long-term planning has its own challenges in a society that has to deal with the ravages of South Africa's apartheid past. This past demands from politicians, members of civil society organizations and the general public that changes be made to the living conditions of the majority of South Africans, who continue to live in abject poverty (Cairncross, 2007:7ff; Ozinsky, 2007:1-2).[56]

What must be achieved is well described by Sifiso Mbuyisa (2007:13) from the Department of the Premier,[57] who argues that:

> Social transformation is inherently an attempt to address social and economic exclusion. It is not merely about the implementation of small-scale poverty reduction initiatives, but a longer-term sustainable intervention that puts people at the centre of development. A people-centred approach recognizes the inherent worth and strengths of the poor citizens and how they get by. It then goes down to the grassroots locality, maps the existing strengths … and audits the contributions required to harness the inherent skills and capabilities for people towards a sustainable livelihood.

This reality is the single most important common factor in the presentations that were made by politicians, leaders of civil society and government officials at the Ethical Leadership Project's conference on "Ethical Leadership in and through Politics" in September 2007. Similarly, all of them in different ways made special reference to the need for ethical leadership in politics, all of them linking the need for this to the difficult past from which South Africa is emerging in the second decade of its democracy.

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56 Lydia Cairncross (Groote Schuur Hospital) – Presentation at Ethical Leadership Project on "Ethical Leadership in and through Politics" and Max Ozinsky (African National Congress) – Panel discussant at the ELP Conference (2007).

57 Sifiso Mbuyisa (Director – Human Rights and Social Dialogue; Department of the Premier and Ethical Leadership Project Board member) – Presentation to the ELP politics conference (2007).

Politicians who come from conditions of poverty face many challenges of a personal nature themselves. In the past thirteen years political leadership has shifted dramatically from being characterised by sacrifice and suffering to political leadership as a position of privilege and wealth (albeit relative) (Sampson, 2007:5). This dramatic shift brings with it pressures to create wealth for a sustainable retirement in a relatively short period of time.

Many politicians who are themselves victims of South Africa's apartheid past and were deprived of opportunities to reach their full potential now earn salaries in government that they will not be able to match in any other sector of society; so the pressure to remain in parliament and earn their keep becomes a force that can, in some cases, overshadow the calling to be a public representative (Ehrenreich, 2007:3-4).[58]

The transition from being victim to becoming ruler has generated its difficulties, but this has often been overlooked because of the relatively smooth transition South Africa has experienced. It is worth taking more serious cognisance of these difficulties, as the entire reconciliatory environment that required from victims to forgive and start with nation building demanded a tremendous shift of mindset, often propelled by the hope for a better life. The imbalances nevertheless had a serious effect. What black people lacked in material possessions, they acquired in abundance at a time when it came to forgiveness in those early years of the transition.

South Africans sought to address this process of reconciliation through the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Notwithstanding the incredible strides that were made by and through the work of the Commission, the painstaking and challenging tasks of correcting the imbalances of the past by beneficiaries and victims in tandem continue to demand attention. Thirteen years after the advent of democracy in South Africa justice remains an elusive possibility for the poor and marginalised in South Africa (Cloete, 2007).

The question as to whether publicly representing the electorate is a profession (to be distinguished as professional behaviour among politicians) or representation for a period determined by the electorate becomes a critical one. Politicians, like all other people who fulfil any kind of public function, have to act in a professional way. If the function that a politician fulfils is a profession, a job, a source of income with no other possibility to fall back on, the struggle to continue in these positions begins to surpass by far the need to satisfy the will of the electorate and it becomes difficult for politicians to subject themselves

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58   Tony Ehrenreich (Congress of South African Trade Unions) – Presentation at the ELP conference on "Ethical Leadership in and through Politics" (2007).

entirely to this will. Politicians are essentially in the service of the people who elect them. The electorate is then entitled to have an expectation to be represented in their best interests. Ehrenreich (2007:6) makes the point that "the electorate should be key."

Bennet Joko (2007:1)[59] makes the point that politicians and "those in government"

> … tell us that we have to be patient [and that] things will change for the better. What they don't say is that they are better off. The people have to tighten their belts, while they loosen theirs.

South Africa has a strong structural democracy. The Constitution of 1996, which includes the Bill of Rights, the independence of the executive, an independent judiciary, independent organisations to ensure various state functions are all indications of this (Ehrenreich, 2007:2; Sampson, 2007:1). The greatest challenge for politicians is how individuals and politicians themselves behave in relation to this structural democracy, and if and how they seek to manipulate it for purposes other than what it is intended for. Sampson (2007:1) makes a point about Plato in the *Gorgias* that "the ability … to make the worse cause appear the better struck Plato as the source of all corruption".[60]

The greatest threat to the ethical behaviour of politicians is when the personal interests of a politician begin to shoulder out the interests of the nation. The South African national agenda must always rest firmly on the two pillars of addressing the ravages of the past and nation building. Put in another way, it is about justice and reconciliation. Justice must not be brought about at the expense of reconciliation, given the serious racial fragmentation South Africa has suffered from through the many decades of apartheid. Reconciliation without justice for the poor has a hollow ring to it.

The greatest challenge facing democracy in South Africa is determining how well poverty is addressed and how well transformation takes place. Beverley Mitchell, in the documentary, *Footprint in Africa*, expresses her unfulfilled expectations in the new South Africa:

> I fought for liberation and all I got was democracy (quoted in Sampson, 2007:2).[61]

This quotation does not only spell out Mitchell's unfulfilled expectations, but of many South Africans who continue to live with effects of the ravages of the past. It is a past that

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59   Bennet Joko (Pan Africanist Congress) – Presentation at the ELP Politics conference (2007).

60   Plato – *Gorgias*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books (back cover) (1960).

61   *Footprint in Africa* – documentary aired on SABC (cf. online at http://www.evita.co.za/who_is_she. htm, accessed on 5 March 2009).

continues to haunt South Africa in many ways. Lance Greyling (2007:1) of the Independent Democrats put the matter in the following way:

> We want to build a country where the destructive divides of the past are bridged. These divides can be seen on all levels from our economy and education to health and politics.

This sentiment is endorsed unequivocally by Cairncross (2007:1):

> In the past apartheid discriminatory practices in healthcare were rife. In its place we have a new ethical and moral climate, one that values equality and human rights. The current imbalance between the private and public sector health care violates this sense of universal justice and right and wrong.

Karl Cloete (2007:3),[62] speaking on behalf of the South African Communist Party, states the challenges for South Africa as follows:

> … some of the key challenges that we must be upfront about is the fact that we have gained political freedom but economic power remain firmly in the hands of white monopoly capital. In our country today poverty, joblessness and inequality are still largely confined within and amongst the black majority. Even progress by the black middle class is constrained by the reality that whites still disproportionately control the economic and senior positions in the economy.

Sampson (2007:2) quotes the satirist Pieter Dirk Uys:

> Our future is clear; it is the past that is so unpredictable.
> and the Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel:
> The past continues to torment because it is not the past (Sampson, 2007:5).

The sentiments expressed in these quotations underline the challenges faced by politicians in fulfilling their responsibility of representing the people of South Africa in their various spheres of influence and government. The past remains so real and yet so 'unpredictable' as it rears its head at unexpected places but does so constantly.

The difficulty with the awfulness of the past is that nobody wants to own it – and who would want to take ownership of such an awful thing? At the same time, many South Africans who benefited from the past would understandably have an urge to move on. While these forces are at play, there are the many victims who themselves want to move on, but are also trapped in their need for healing. This leads to reminiscing about the past, often with incredible humour, and that this reminiscing has therapeutic value is undeniable. This is the kind of

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62 Karl Cloete (South African Communist Party) – Presentation at the ELP conference on "Ethical Leadership in and through Politics"(2007).

tension which marks South Africa's challenge to its politicians: to be sensitive, sacrificial, understanding and visionary leaders.

While South Africans in general are clearly committed to building the nation in the post-apartheid era, these conflicting tendencies do lead to accusations by those who are more prone to want to 'not live in the past', while the victims who are in need of healing tend to want to give the past a greater emphasis in their analysis of the challenges South Africa faces. Cloete (2007:4) is clear about this when he states:

> Objectively therefore we must accept that apartheid is responsible for the kind of legacy we are confronted with today.

It becomes palpably clear that politicians and political role players broadly agree on the task at hand and the challenges that are faced by politicians. Fatima Shabodien (2007:1)[63] speaks about the critical situations faced by one of the most marginalised communities in South Africa:

> In the Western Cape the primary target of land redistribution in rural areas [is] farm workers who comprise the majority of the rural black population. This is significant as we know that farm workers have weak historical, social and political capital as a demographic group.

The focus on the need for significant and meaningful land reform is criticised by Shabodien (2007:5) who argues that there is a reluctance among the political leadership in the Western Cape to "tamper with this important sector for fear of declining provincial revenues".

The statement raises the question about the ethics of considering revenue over and above the needs of communities who find themselves in dire need and appalling living conditions. Ehrenreich's (2007:13) comment is of stark significance in this regard:

> Leaders have an obligation to stand for a noble higher purpose that inspires people to action by providing them with hope. Hope is as great as the gift of life.

This kind of leadership is not foreign to the South African political scene, as Ozinsky reminds us of the prevalence of leaders he refers to as "giants … who have shown this abstract concept 'ethical leadership' in practice through the lives that they lead and the decisions that they took" (Ozinsky, 2007:1).

The presentations by politicians are accentuated by references to the heroes of South Africa's struggle against apartheid. Perhaps the point that was made that the shift from political

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63   Fatima Shabodien (Women on Farms Project) – Presentation at the ELP Conference (2007).

leadership as sacrifice and suffering to political leadership as privilege becomes salient in this context. The romanticisation of the leadership of the past must be understood in the context of the fact that the generation of leadership that is so often referred to possessed very little or nothing in terms of material goods.

The leadership of today, with whom they are compared, are materially much better off and personal interests often play a bigger role than is often acknowledged. The reality is often that many of the current generation of politicians use the same political rhetoric and so do not themselves realise how much their focus might have changed. Whatever the circumstances, however, political leadership must be seen to be beyond reproach and reflect the integrity, decency and dignity of the leaders of the struggle against apartheid.

The role of the media in addressing South Africa's twin challenges of nation building and redressing the wrongs of the past is a sensitive topic which continues to haunt the political challenges faced in post-apartheid South Africa. The media are not necessarily the best measure of the health of South Africa's democracy (Sampson, 2007:4). This is because of the inevitable tendency of the media to focus on that which creates the greatest sensation.

This is a sensitive matter, precisely because the media need to be as independent and as objective as possible, and any criticism of the media must be expressed warily so as not to impede their freedom as this forms such a critical cornerstone of any democracy. Ozinsky (2007:3) argues:

> So we must not underestimate the power of the media in developing and protecting our society. It plays a very important role. However, there is another aspect and that is of the power of the media to create and control public image.

The nature of society with such a pronounced level of inequality, as gauged by the Gini-coefficient, as in South Africa is that those with wealth have access to many resources of which the poor are deprived. Access to the media is one such resource. This inevitably leads to a situation where there is a vocal minority that often projects itself as public opinion through the mass media and, on the other side, a silent majority that expresses its discontents in seething resentment because of feelings of hopelessness exacerbated by their being constantly located on the periphery of society (Sampson, 2007:4).

The failure of politicians to hear the voices of the silent majority often creates an environment which leads to an inability to ensure a fair redistribution of the resources of government.

This is an untenable situation which inevitably leads to civil unrest as the silent majority expresses its resentments in ways experienced as destructive by the vocal minority.

Mbuyisa (2007:15) notes that the Provincial Government of the Western Cape (PGWC) has identified (through its poverty index) 15 priority areas that are particularly vulnerable and that are in need of intervention and adds that:

> What is or has been lacking in these 15 communities is a recognized mechanism that can act as a VOICE for the community and that can link communities up with government.

The significance of this statement is even greater in the context in which Mbuyisa makes it. That context is the PGWC's Social Transformation Programme to focus on the development of identified communities. The identification by government of these communities as a special target for government intervention in development and social transformation bears testimony to the desperate need in which these communities, which form an integral part of the silent majority, find themselves.

Cairncross (2007:1) identifies the characteristics of these communities from the perspective of the health profession. It is necessary to quote her at length as she spells out the ills related to poverty:

> In our country the consequences of extreme levels of poverty and interpersonal violence bring people to the doors of our public health facilities. [This is the] end result of desperate lives leading to stabbings, gunshots, rape victims, gangrene from disease and personal neglect, ulcers from drug abuse, homeless people exposed to the cold, shack dwellers burnt at paraffin stoves, young children suffering the end results of malnutrition, cancers from smoking, asbestos, poor diet and of course our latest epidemic, HIV/AIDS.

According to Lynne Brown (2007:1),[64] MEC for Finance and Tourism in the Western Cape, ethical leadership is "all about good governance" in addressing these needs. She adds:

> It is about ensuring that the business of government is run fairly, efficiently in our use of public money and effectively in achieving the targets we set out in our electoral promises to the people that are delivering on a better life for all.

These intentions are often not covered by the media. This confronts society with a double jeopardy, where people begin to feel despondent because the impression is created that nothing is being done to address their material conditions and, secondly, that the needs of the silent majority remain an unknown factor unless a gruesome deed attracts the attention of the media.

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64 Lynne Brown (Member of the Executive Committee for Finance and Tourism of the Provincial Government of the Western Cape) – presentation to the ELP Politics Conference (2007).

This false silence has the explosive potential to create an impression of peace when there is none, and justice when it is in reality absent. It lulls the privileged into a sense of security that is illusionary. Worse still, it dulls the urgency that is critical in encouraging the privileged to share more purposefully of their wealth and resources to lighten the burden of their fellow South Africans.

The transparency to which the government is bound through legislation and intention often does not find expression in reality. It is a known fact that the public have few opportunities to hear politicians express themselves directly. The public are therefore deprived of hearing the mapping out of the political vision and planning from the mouths of politicians themselves. The primary interpreter and filter of the voices of politicians remains primarily the media. It remains a critical challenge for the health of our society for the voice of the silent majority to be unmuzzled and for it to make a meaningful impact on the national agenda.

This contestation of the most vulnerable communities for scarce resources has the tendency to drive these communities into identity laagers. This reality emphasises a further challenge for political leadership. That is the challenge of race, race thinking, race obsession and racism. The challenge is for political leadership to rise above the stress on such identities, which has the capacity to be destructive in the extreme.

Ryland Fisher (2007:1) refers to the Western Cape as a province "with abundant riches but also huge inequalities". Fisher refers, rather unkindly, to himself as a "racist". This certainly addresses the need to understand this issue that has haunted the history of South Africa and the world for many centuries.

This is a critical challenge in any discussion about ethical leadership in politics. The "unpredictability of the past" and the stated requirement for transforming South Africa by almost all the presenters requires a focus on race, as poverty in South Africa is undoubtedly race based. Fisher (2007:3) is unequivocal about the fact that

> For many years, coloureds in South Africa had special privileges under apartheid. For instance, the Western Cape was considered a coloured labour preference area. That meant that if you started a business in the Western Cape, you would have to employ only coloured workers. African workers had to apply for special permits or passes to be allowed into the Western Cape.

These realities have caused deep-seated resentments and suspicions that continue to present challenges in the distribution of resources by political representatives. The need for ethical leadership in such an environment is of crucial significance. Visionary political leadership is essential in addressing these hindrances to the process of effective nation building.

South Africa must attend to the imbalances of the past. For affirmative action to work and to ensure that employment equity targets are met, all those who are in management positions must be conscious of race. Such an acknowledgement of race can hardly be referred to as racism, but at the same time leaders must be sensitive to how easily this required race thinking can lead to race obsession and end up in the grossness of racism.

Racism in its very essence seeks to deprive somebody of their dignity, value and worth as a person, on the basis of race. Few people who have suffered the real effects of racism will confuse race thinking with racism.

To quote Fisher (2007:5) again:

> Surely ethical leadership means not exploiting these tensions but rather seeking ways in which to address them? Are we doing enough, as leaders, to make sure that we are addressing these issues?

South Africans have to be careful that they do not resort to the dishonesty of trying to block corrective action from taking place by dispensing of all attempts to bring about racial equality. Similarly, the abuse of the noble attempts at corrective action for personal gain and access to power and resources for that purpose is as problematic. Leadership in such crucial issues must be honest, sincere and sacrificial (Greyling, 2007:1; Ozinsky, 2007:1; Joko, 2007:2-3; Louw, 2007:1)[65].

In an environment where the need for the development of scarce skills has become a national priority, it is at our own peril that we neglect to insist on a concomitant development in ethical and moral values. The hurts, inequalities and vicious legacy of South Africa's past can only be effectively addressed by ethical leadership, particularly in politics. The people need a tangible vision which is expressed clearly and unambiguously, and where negative practice does not contradict positive sentiment. There can be no excuse for political leaders to place their needs before the needs of those who suffer in absolute desperation (Cairncross, 2007:1).

The presenters at the Ethical Leadership Project's conference on "Ethical Leadership in and through Politics" are in agreement in underlining this salient fact. As South Africans "we must train our minds to stay focused and to avoid cynicism and to become contributors and not detractors"; South Africans deserve "politicians who will form the vanguard of integrity, honesty and respect" (Sampson, 2007:2-3).

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65 Hansie Louw (African Christian Democratic Party) – Presentation at the ELP Politics Conference (2007).

Politicians need the space and support to fulfil the unenviable tasks as outlined above. This space must be safe enough for politicians to be honest about shortcomings, failures and weaknesses. There is a danger in the politicisation of honest mistakes and the almost obsessive drive to derive political gain out of these mistakes. We have to ask ourselves whether this tendency in political desperation does not drive politicians into caucuses, preventing more honest engagement with the general public.

Politicians have a crucial role to play in the reshaping of South Africa's political landscape, but more essentially in ensuring that poverty and racism are decisively addressed. Fisher (2007:7) believes that "dealing with racism should not be a job left to governments. It is something that should be tackled by everyone". He is of course moving the debate in the direction of the partnerships that are necessary between government and civil society.

The complexity and simplicity of South Africa's transition to democracy is a central theme that emerged from the Politics Conference. Complex, because of the severity of the challenges created in the country's history, the impact this continues to have on the lives of all South African's and the difficulty in achieving the goals. Simple, because of the clarity of the identification of what the problem is and the clear understanding of what the goal is.

Presenters and panellists alike identified the goals as being the alleviation of poverty and achieving reconciliation. It does appear from these inputs and insights that a significant shift is beginning to take place in overturning the order of these two challenges. In the immediate post-1994 political era the focus was primarily reconciliation and secondarily redistribution. This "order" emerged almost automatically from the spirit of negotiation among the key political role players.

The country was involved in a war, the armed struggle was still very much a matter of great significance and the South African Defence Force was as active in waging its own warfare against the majority of South African's. The volatility of this situation formed the background to these negotiations which sought to bring together contending and conflictual political forces. It is therefore not surprising that the focus tended more towards reconciliation than poverty alleviation.

As South Africa entered the second decade of its democracy, the impatience of the poor and the insignificant changes reflected in the Gini-coefficient have brought the need for poverty alleviation into much sharper focus. The situation that emerges from the outcomes of the conference presentations and discussions is a change of the order of the two major

pillars of governance to first poverty alleviation and then reconciliation rather than the other way around.

Politicians must take note of, and manage, this critical change of priority. This is directly related to a second common focus that emerged from the presentations and discussions at the conference. That is the references to the exceptional kind of leadership that South Africa enjoyed during the period of struggle against the apartheid government. This is a factor of note.

The leaders of that era were not endowed with much by the way of material wealth and assets. They carried within themselves the powerful reality of being victims of oppression. Their focus was the overthrow of a regime that had access to powerful weapons that could destroy and a system that could inflict severe damage on individuals. Inevitably, they displayed a leadership which captured, through its very essence, the moral high ground. It was a sacrificial leadership that gave and expected nothing but suffering and possibly even death in return.

Against the background of this leadership, the onus on today's leaders is a major challenge. For the struggle leadership can be seen as both a blessing and a curse. It was a blessing because of the integrity, dignity and exceptional quality overall of the leadership and its single clear focus of overcoming a regime that was internationally discredited. This leadership therefore led a cause that was highly rated.

It was a curse because of the difficulty of emulating such outstanding leadership as embodied by Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Albert Luthuli, Oliver Tambo and many others. In the light of these examples, every other leadership is bound to be found wanting. That particular generation of leaders had reached an exceptional level of humanity which was able to encompass difference and otherness in the widest and most caring sense of the word. It was a quality of leadership that could not even begin to propound the notion of excluding people on whatever basis.

In this lies the main challenge for political leaders in South Africa today. The challenge is to overcome personal ambition in order to serve the people of South Africa and to enable the country to continue to pursue the goals of alleviating poverty and building a nation of South Africans with a clear sense of belonging and citizenship. Political leaders must hold out to the nation a vision of caring and compassion and all the values of what it is that this nation must become.

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ETHICAL LEADERSHIP FORMATION

This section addresses the role of education as an agent of ethical leadership development, moral formation and transformation in South Africa. Ethical leadership formation in and through education constitutes the single most significant vehicle for moral formation. Educational systems and institutions have a collective participatory role to play in the enlightenment, edification and emancipation of the entire society, and specifically in fostering a morally transformed society.

Building ethical leadership in and through education

Colleen Howell

1. Educational change for ethical leadership

> *There is no doubt in my mind that the single most important factor for the future of our country is education. If we want to build the better life for all of which we so often speak and dream, we will have to ensure that we have a highly educated and skilled population … . For our democracy, which we cherish so much, to continue to grow and to be sustained and deepened, education is crucial. An educated, enlightened and informed population is one of the surest ways of promoting the health of a democracy* (Nelson Mandela, 2003).

In asserting the importance of education for the future of South Africa, Mandela draws attention to two important concerns about our education system. Firstly, he emphasises its role in producing and reproducing the knowledge and skills that are imperative for South Africa's growth and development within a global economy strongly influenced by the "centrality of knowledge generation and information processing" (Castells, 1999:37). While this role is recognised as important to our future prosperity as a country, he also suggests that in the context of building democracy the education system has a deeper role to play – one that is about building an 'educated', 'enlightened' and 'informed' population. He argues that it is this role that is fundamental to the health of a democracy, or, put another way, to producing and reproducing the values and principles that are at the heart of the democratic project.

This chapter is concerned with this latter role in the context of South Africa's emerging democracy and educating its future leaders. It proceeds from the premise that, given the depth of the inequalities and extent of the brutalities of South Africa's colonial and apartheid past, such a project must involve sustained attention to building a "morally transformed society" which is underpinned by "a culture of human rights" (www.elp.org.za/2006). This means building a leadership cadre where such values and principles inform how they make meaning of their world, the ethical framework that guides them and, thus, what becomes a new "common sense" way of understanding the world (Gramsci, 1971).[66] Ndebele

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66   These arguments draw on Gramsci's writings on hegemony.

(2008:237) argues that to do this we need to be able to create a new "psycho-social space" and a "new value system in which learned behaviour (is) turned around".[67] Thus what happens within our education system and what our present educational leaders seek to achieve become critical to our ability as a country to produce such a consciousness.

But such a vision for the education system and its role in building ethical leadership remains meaningless unless we consider what this role means within the present context and how this reality shapes what becomes important to consider in building the education system's capacity to produce such leaders. Steyn (2008:3) suggests that to do this education leaders must demonstrate "a willingness to engage with the historical moment". This involves developing a careful understanding of the "patterns of inequality" that have historically shaped and continue to shape the social, economic and political context, the 'context of practice' into which the post-apartheid policy framework is being implemented (Ball, 1994). Most importantly, it is about understanding how these patterns of inequality are reflected in and reproduced through the organisation and functioning of our education system with its associated practices, and then, what needs to happen to address these inequalities.

Jawoodeen (2008:1) argues that what is required is a re-assertion of the "revolutionary morality" that guided the struggles against apartheid. Demonstrating ethical leadership must involve a commitment to overcoming the inequalities that arise from the complex intersection of race, class and gender in our society. For Fraser (1994:82), this is about choosing "transformative remedies" above "affirmative remedies". For her, transformative remedies aim to correct inequalities and injustice by "restructuring the underlying generative framework". These remedies are very different from affirmative remedies, which merely seek to correct inequalities "without disturbing the underlying framework that generates them". Put simply, we cannot seek to build ethical leadership for a morally transformed society through our education system unless we transform those political, economic and social relations that maintain and perpetuate unequal access to education and its benefits. However, as Dugmore (2008:1) suggests, we are not very good at "healing the root causes". It is often easier to choose to pursue 'affirmative remedies" that address only the symptoms rather than the root causes or the underlying generative framework that Fraser (1994) speaks about. Steyn (2008:2) argues, therefore, that the leadership challenge "becomes a question of will, of preparedness to engage with power dynamics, to insert oneself into those places where unequal relationships prevail, and to act to ensure that things change so

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67   Ndebele develops these insights by reflecting on the leadership style of Morena Moshoeshoe and
      what he was able to achieve in the building of Lesotho.

that those involved can live (and learn) better, together, while paying the closest attention to the most vulnerable".

This chapter now discusses two areas of concern that are regarded as central to understanding the patterns of inequality that are reflected in, and perpetuated by, our education system and thus what then become necessary transformative remedies (Fraser, 1994) for our education system in pursuit of a morally transformed society.

2. Accessing knowledge through education (addressing barriers to learning)

In 1993 Morrow, in discussing access to higher education in South Africa, argued for the need to distinguish between formal access and actual access to higher education. He argued that, while the former involved getting into institutions, the latter involved having access to the "essential good" distributed by a university – that is, access to the knowledge that is taught, shared and produced within the university – what he called "epistemological access". Moreover, gaining formal access does not automatically translate into gaining epistemological access. His argument, although directed at higher education, is especially valuable to the concerns of this chapter. It implies that having equitable access to education and the just distribution of its benefits, including the knowledge and "enlightenment" that Mandela speaks of, involves much more than merely being able to physically attend a school, college, university or any other form of formal educational provision. It also involves being able to participate actively and confidently in the process of teaching and learning so that each learner is able to achieve and develop to his or her full potential. Where such effective learning does not take place learning breakdown may happen and the learner becomes effectively excluded from the teaching and learning process and thus from accessing all the benefits of education (Department of Education, 1998:10). They are then denied the epistemological access that Morrow speaks about.

The role of educational leaders in overcoming existing patterns of inequality must then seek to understand and address those forces that restrict or prevent any learner from gaining both 'formal' and 'epistemological' access to education. Put another way, educational leaders must proactively seek to understand and address the "barriers to learning and development" that prevent any learner from accessing educational provision and from engaging in or sustaining "an ideal process of learning" (Department of Education, 1998:10). For Pendlebury (2008:2) this is about external and internal exclusion. She suggests that children are excluded externally when they are kept out of existing educational provision

– for example, when poverty and inadequate provision of basic services such as transport prevent them from being able to attend school. Or where a child's parents have died from AIDS-related illnesses and they are forced to leave school to look after younger siblings (Baxen, 2008:3-4). However, Pendlebury (2008:2) also suggests that children can be excluded internally, when they are "included in schools and yet something about the power relations or the ways in which people treat one another within that space that is supposedly inclusive, excludes you".

Howell and Lazarus (2008), drawing from the work of the NCSNET/NCESS (1998), argue that 'internal exclusion' takes place when the education system is unable to respond to the differences that learners bring to the teaching and learning process. This may be called differences in learning needs, where learning needs refer to the nature of the teaching and learning process that is required to ensure that each learner is able to access the curriculum effectively. This argument is based on the recognition that all learners have different learning styles and methods of engaging with the teaching and learning process, they require different levels and forms of support at different times during their lives and are affected in different ways by a range of external factors, which influence their participation in the classroom (Howell, 2007). It follows then that if all learners are to have access to the curriculum, the education system has to be able to develop its capacity to respond to and accommodate these different learning needs. Such capacity is strongly associated with flexibility in teaching and learning practice, with the provision of different but sustained forms of support to all role players in the education system and, most importantly, with how educational leaders understand and respond to difference as it manifests itself in our education institutions and, in particular, within the teaching and learning process.

One of the most important barriers within the system that undermines the development of such capacity is a consistent trend among many leaders in education to understand and respond to "difference as deficit" (Muthukrishna *et al.*, 2007). When learners require adaptations to existing teaching and learning practices – for example, they cannot read an overhead project slide because they are blind and access information using Braille; when they require sustained emotional support because they were raped by a family member; or they struggle to complete their homework because they are responsible for caring for their siblings – our tendency is to regard the learner as having something wrong with them or lacking in some way because they engage with the curriculum in ways we don't regard as 'normal' or they require greater attention and support than the other 'normal' learners. Muthukrishna *et al.* (2007:39) argue that such attitudes and ways of understanding difference are commonly reflected through "powerful blaming discourses" which they

argue contribute to some learners "being inadequately supported academically, socially and emotionally in schools".

Howell and Lazarus (2008) and Howell (2008:1-2) argue that a paradigm shift is needed in the way in which people understand, conceptualise, explain and thus respond to the differences that learners bring to the teaching and learning process or into the classroom. Such a paradigm shift involves two inter-related aspects. Firstly, it involves challenging and overcoming discriminatory attitudes among all role players in education, especially education leaders, resulting from "prejudice against people on the basis of race, class, gender, culture, disability, religion, ability, sexual preference and other characteristics" (Department of Education, 1998:15). Waghid (2008:1-2) argues that for educators teaching students to respect diversity, especially different views and opinions, develops the potential for learners to value good reasoning and for this to guide their choices and behaviour. Most importantly, it teaches them that "every human being should be considered by another as a source of value" (2008:4). He extends these arguments by calling for "teaching for non-discrimination", which should aim to open up "the social world of students to what is other and different" and in this way they "become critical and their openness towards democratic justice also increases" (2008:2).

However, the paradigm shift also involves changes to the way in which we understand why particular learners experience learning difficulties in the classroom, are "internally excluded", or are excluded from the system as a whole, that is, "externally excluded" (Pendlebury, 2008:2). What is required is a recognition of how problems associated with learning difficulties or different forms of exclusion arise from the system's inability to respond to the differences that learners bring to the teaching and learning process or the systemic barriers that keep them out of the system (Department of Education, 1998). If the reasons for exclusion, internal and external, are recognised to lie with the system or we locate the 'problem' with the system, then the challenge lies in systemic change.

In the context of this chapter, what needs to be asserted as central to such systemic change is, as has been argued, how we conceptualise, make meaning of, and respond to, difference or how we deal with issues of diversity within our education system, in all its manifestations.

3. Knowledge as transformation (transformative potential issues)

Paying tribute to the struggles of the students in 1976, Mandela captures the desire for knowledge that was so important to their vision for the future. He says; "The heroes of those struggles had a noble mission. They were inspired by a thirst for knowledge:

- knowledge which knows no colour;
- knowledge acquired through persuasion and hard work;
- knowledge that taps talents and releases creative energies; and
- knowledge that puts South African youth on par with the best in the world" (Mandela, 1994, retrieved online at http://www.nelsonmandela.org/index.php/memory/resources/speeches/).

In reflecting on the students' "thirst for knowledge" Mandela emphasises both the centrality of knowledge for a democratic South Africa as well as the kind and form of knowledge that the students were struggling for. He suggests that in building and strengthening democracy we need to be concerned not only with ensuring that people have the opportunities to acquire knowledge, the issues of access discussed in the previous section, but also with producing and transferring particular kinds of knowledge. For him this should be knowledge that knows no colour, tap talents, releases creative energies and enables young people to compete confidently with the best in the world. This suggests that if our education system is to produce and reproduce the values and principles that are at the heart of the democratic project, we need to be equally focused on our education system disseminating and generating knowledge that will contribute to that ethical framework and new 'common sense' argued for at the beginning of this chapter.

It is useful here to draw on the works of Paolo Freire (1986) whose seminal work on education and its role in "conscientising for liberation" through the development of a critical consciousness has been so important to liberation struggles throughout the world. Glass (2000) captures Freire's central arguments as education for democracy and explains the kind of knowledge that such education engenders for "democratic citizenship". He says:

> Education for democracy must make possible the liberation from the oppressions that deny each person the knowledge and means to shape his or her own future. It develops each person's capacity to exercise the human power to shape the future through his or her involvement in the production of language, knowledge, culture and history. It entails not a mere understanding or state of consciousness but a way of being-in-the-world that engages in the real struggles at the core of transforming reality into a just democracy (Glass, 2000:280).

These assertions suggest that if our education system is to build ethical leadership for a morally transformed society, it needs to be able to empower learners to understand what democracy is all about and, most importantly in our context, what we need to be continually doing to strengthen it and preserve these hard-won freedoms. This places a responsibility on education leaders to approach the dissemination and transference of knowledge in

our institutions from a perspective which inherently values its transformative potential and to create the 'enabling conditions' in our institutions for this to happen (Pendlebury, 2008:2). Both Freire (1986) and Waghid (2008:1-2) draw particular attention to the role of educators in this regard. Freire (1986) goes so far as to say that "The special contribution of the educator to the birth of the new society would have to be a critical education which could help to form critical attitudes". Waghid (2008:2) extends these arguments, emphasising that for students to be able to "learn critically about democratic justice" educators have to understand their role in a particular way. He argues:

> Educators (should) not conceive of themselves as merely possessing techno-scientific knowledge which they have to convey to students to mould their minds in some predetermined way, as if they are implementing a mechanical pedagogical programme. Rather, they engage students to encourage them to make judgments in an open, autonomous and critical way.

4. Conclusion: Exploring new possibilities

It was agued at the beginning of this chapter that what happens within our education system and what our present educational leaders seek to achieve becomes critical to our ability as a country to produce the kinds of leaders who make meaning of the world through an ethical framework informed by democratic principles and values. It was argued further, however, that for education leaders to do, this they need to be able to understand and respond to the patterns of inequality that have historically torn our country apart and which, as has been suggested, continue to be reflected in and reproduced in complex and often unrecognized ways through our education system. This chapter has discussed two areas of concern that were argued to be especially important to such an understanding and what needs to change in our education system in pursuit of a morally transformed society. In each of these areas the role of education leaders in facilitating such change has been alluded to, suggesting that what happens now through their response to the challenges of the present will either perpetuate the conditions undermining our democracy or create the conditions for "restoring the moral order" and "fixing things up" (Steyn, 2008:3).

While there are many abilities that become important for education leaders that are able to achieve the latter, two stand out that seem especially important to the concerns of this chapter.

The first has to do with having and being committed to constantly developing what Gramsci (1971) has called "an historical, dialectical conception of the world". He argues that such a conception:

> understands movement and change … appreciates the sum of effort and sacrifice which the present has cost the past and which the future is costing the present, and … conceives the contemporary world as a synthesis of the past, of all past generations, which projects itself into the future.

Put simply, it is about understanding the past, recognising how it has shaped what we are confronted with in the present, the complexities of these challenges, and what this history means for how we move forward towards a better future. In many ways, it means having or developing the ability and commitment to understanding and grappling with Fraser's (1994) generative framework discussed earlier.

However, both Ndebele (2007) and Buys (2008:1) suggest that good leaders need to be able to do more than this. They both argue for qualities in leaders that enable them to move beyond the constraints of the present to be able to conceive of new possibilities, which are often outside what is 'comfortable' or 'safe' or even probable. Buys (2008:1), in outlining the role of youth leaders in building ethical leadership, defines this task as one of "re-imagination" and, in particular, "re-imagining our future on the foundations set by preceding generations". Ndebele (2007:237) calls for "counter-intuitive leadership". Such a leader, he argues, demonstrates the ability

> To read a situation whose most observable logic points to a most likely (and expected) outcome, but then to detect in that very likely outcome not a solution but a compounding of the problem. This assessment then calls for the prescription of an unexpected outcome, which initially may look strikingly improbable. Somehow, it is in the apparent improbability of the unlikely outcome that its power lies.

Both these areas of ability imply a willingness on the part of education leaders to move beyond dominant paradigms, to challenge themselves and grapple with the social, economic and political context that shapes the lives of the learners for whom they are responsible. This chapter has argued that it is through recognising and embracing this responsibility that we are able to build the leaders of tomorrow for our emerging democracy.

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This book provides perspective and guidance during times of increasing moral confusion due to contending global and indigenous messages, and leadership with a lack of brave confession, and living out, of sound moral principles that may serve the common good in South Africa's infant and fragile democracy.

South Africa's leadership from within and outside government is still faced with the consequences of the inhuman, unjust, and therefore immoral, policies of the past. At the same time, it is increasingly challenged to build and practise a shared collective morality that will restore the social fabric of society for the common good of all making a livelihood in this society.

This book speaks directly to these important and crucial issues and confirms indeed that South Africa more than ever needs ethical leadership in the face of the moral challenges of her long-awaited transformation.

Cornie Groenewald – Emeritus Professor, Stellenbosch University

The book Ethical Leadership and the Challenges of Moral Transformation is both challenging and timely. It is published at a critical period in the history of South Africa and the world as we face leadership challenges in the political and economic context. The greatest test for leadership in this decade will be its ethical and moral character. As the world is transforming politically and economically, transformational leadership must be rooted in ethics and morality for the sake of a next generation.

This book contributes a variety of critical essays, some with novel methodological touch, to the regeneration of our world.

I recommend this book to anybody interested in new engagements with the real world through the art of morality.

Prof H Russel Botman – Rector & Vice-chancellor, Stellenbosch University

This book is a most interesting anthology. The ideas of ethical leadership, the public good and the way in which disciplines and/or institutions intersect with those themes, are most apposite and to be commended.

The text draws upon insights and scholarship from mainly a South African context and does so in a way which is accessible and meaningful to readers from other parts of the world. This is a strength. It is interdisciplinary but held together tightly through the notions of 'ethical leadership' and the idea of 'in and through'. This strategy enables the reader who is a specialist in one discipline to easily 'jump' to another.

The concern for the common good, ethics and the interdisciplinary nature of the text broaden the potential appeal.

Clive Pearson – Principal, United Theological College, Sydney, and Associate head of School, School of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Australia