

Call for Papers

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Looking into the Abyss: Global Unethical Leadership

International reflections on leadership in the face of corruption and manipulation: what is our need for corporate and public accountability and transparency?

Attention used to be paid to the exemplary contribution to economic development made by leaders of now-discredited MNCs like Enron, Parmalat, RBS, AIG and Ahold, and to the right-mindedness of politicians who favoured light regulation – such as the UK parliamentarians who freed the financial markets.

These leaders – and many of their followers – are now pilloried for unacceptable ethics, greed, corruption and deception; for a focus on achieving objectives without due regards for people or values; for overvaluing the 'self' as leader, even for narcissism. In some cases the allegations are of criminality, but to a large extent the opprobrium focuses on the unethical nature of their behaviour and their apparent lack of moral scruples – here again we look to UK parliamentarians, but this time to criticise their misuse of expenses allowances.

There is a renewed enthusiasm, in this febrile climate, for the state to impose regulations that enforce "correct" behaviour. Two challenges arise from this

- Clearly identifying what represents correct behaviour, by specifying codes or moral standards and how they are to be applied and implemented. (For instance, the UK has its Standards in Public Life Committee, which has made major recommendations, though legislators have been reluctant to implement them)
- Understanding why historically the existence of rules did not actually lead people to behave correctly.

The experience of the practice of leadership in both public and private sector suggests that individuals make decisions that touch upon the unethical, if not are unethical, no matter which rules and regulations are in place. There is a need for contributions to scholarship that help us understand the nature of the unethical temptation that typically seduces leaders – particularly on the global stage.

Hence, this Call for Papers for the Special Issue of the Journal of Public Affairs looks at global ethical leadership from the darker side, exploring

dimensions of global unethical leadership and attempting to shed further light on: what we know about it, who endorses it, what/who enables it, what can be done to prevent it, and repair damages done.

We are interested in views or evidence around WHY people behave as they do. Are they aware that their actions are self-regarding and unethical? Or do they perhaps believe that what is in their best interests will be in the best interests of their organisation and stakeholders?

As well as inviting academic papers, and seeking examples from the corporate world, we are also inviting papers which look at this phenomenon of unethical behaviour from the standpoint of political activity - such as the current UK scandal around parliamentary expenses, which seems a good example of Legal Ethics triumphing over Moral Ethics.

Unethical manipulation seems often linked to charismatic leadership and in turn to transformational leadership. Shouldn't transformational leadership be grounded morally, in values, in processes that are ethically sound to prevent manipulation of stakeholders? "Critics argue that transformational leadership is unethical. They contend that its rhetoric may appeal to emotions rather than to reason. They contend that it lacks the checks and balances of democratic discourse and power distribution" (Bass & Steidlmeier,1999).

We are inviting authors to submit

- State-of-the-art papers written by expert scholars sharing thought-provoking and stimulating research and concepts.
- Industry case studies focusing on the real-life challenges and problems faced by major private and public sector organizations, and the lessons learned.
- Applied research from leading business schools, research institutes and universities.
- Practitioner articles addressing the latest thinking, techniques and best practice.

Authors submitting articles for publication should indicate which section of the Journal they wish their paper to be considered for: academic papers (up to 6000 words) or practice papers (1000-2000 words). An essential criterion for the publication of academic papers is that they make a substantial contribution to the literature; for practice papers that they are of direct relevance and of use to those involved in the management of business and organizational communication.

All articles submitted will be subject to double-blind refereeing.

For further Author guidelines see
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/110484432/home/ForAuthors.html>

For submissions please access www.ashridge.org.uk/jpa and submit by
1st December 2009.

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