

Smart and empathetic: the dual imperatives of effective political leadership

Ioana Andreea DOGEANU,

PhD Student at NUPSPA Doctoral School, Bucharest, Romania

ioana.dogeanu@administratiepublica.eu

Abstract

This paper aims to explore the convergence of intelligence and empathy within the realm of political leadership, examining how these attributes synergize to tackle contemporary challenges at both national and international levels. The objectives include investigating the interplay of intelligence and empathy in political leaders, analyzing how leaders possessing both qualities navigate intricate political landscapes, assessing the impact of a smart and empathetic approach on decision-making in situations demanding nuanced understanding, discussing potential policy implications arising from a leadership model that integrates both intelligence and empathy, and conducting a comparative analysis of leaders characterized by predominantly intellectual prowess, predominantly empathetic qualities, and a balance of both. Through these objectives, the paper seeks to provide valuable insights into the optimal combination of intelligence and empathy for effectively addressing the intricate challenges inherent in political leadership. The paper serves as a bridge between academia and real-world application, providing a nuanced understanding of smart and empathetic leadership that can inform future research, academic discourse, and practical decision-making in the realm of politics. Academics contribute to the expansion of knowledge and provide a theoretical foundation, offering researchers valuable insights for future studies. Meanwhile, practitioners, including politicians, derive practical guidance to improve leadership effectiveness and shape informed policy decisions. Through a synthesis of theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, the article elucidates the multifaceted advantages of a smart and empathetic approach, shedding light on its implications for effective governance and societal well-being. The research outcomes may guide the formulation of policies that emphasize a balance between intellectual acumen and empathetic understanding, contributing to more informed and compassionate governance.

Keywords: governance strategies, decision-making processes, cognitive synergy, leadership models.

1. Introduction

This article delves into the intricate realm of leadership typologies, seeking to unravel the multifaceted dimensions of leadership through a meticulous examination of prevalent leadership models. Leaders, as architects of vision and agents of change, adopt diverse approaches to guide their teams towards success.

As organizations strive for adaptability and innovation, leadership styles become pivotal in shaping corporate culture and achieving strategic objectives. From charismatic and transformational leaders to those who emphasize situational adaptability, the spectrum of leadership models presents a rich tapestry of strategies employed by leaders to inspire and motivate people around them.

By navigating through the labyrinth of leadership theories, this article aims to elucidate the defining characteristics of various leadership typologies. Whether exploring transactional, servant, or laissez-faire leadership styles, each model imparts a distinctive set of principles that influence organizational behavior and performance.

Despite the fact that you will find examples of leaders from other fields, not only the political one, my attention was mainly those who work in the political sphere.

The research questions formulated are: "What are the potential policy implications of a leadership model that integrates both intelligence and empathy, and how might it contribute to addressing intricate challenges in the realm of politics?", and: "To what extent does a smart and empathetic leadership approach contribute to the effective governance of nations, and how does it influence societal well-being?".

The research hypothesis is: "Political leaders who exhibit a harmonious convergence of intelligence and empathy will demonstrate enhanced effectiveness in addressing contemporary challenges".

The comparative analysis of leaders characterized by predominantly intellectual prowess, predominantly empathetic qualities, and a balance of both will reveal that those with a harmonious combination of intelligence and empathy exhibit superior leadership outcomes. Furthermore, the synthesis of theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence will underscore the multifaceted advantages of a smart and empathetic leadership approach, emphasizing its positive implications for effective governance and societal well-being.

Considering all of the above, I invite you to go through the content of this article in order to better understand the proposed topic.

2. Types of Leaders

In the complex tapestry of human endeavors, leadership emerges as a pivotal force shaping the course of societies, organizations, and individuals alike. The study of leadership goes beyond mere titles and positions. *Types of Leaders* serves as a comprehensive exploration into the diverse archetypes that define leadership in various contexts.

Within this chapter, I will strive to identify various categories of leaders, which specialized literature describes within specific parameters.

I will analyze the types of leaders having as critics the type of political legitimacy. Legitimacy of political power "arises at the moment when individuals over whom it act recognizes it and accepts it" [1]. Irrespective of the nature of a structured and organized political system of the specific political regime in place, the substance of political power relies heavily on legitimacy [1]. Legitimacy emerges as a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring political stability [1].

Max Weber considered that legitimacy politics is closely linked to political authority, both of which are necessary conditions for maintenance a certain type of political power [Pârvolescu]. Political authority refers to the right to lead and take decisions, or allocate resources, a recognized right at the level of the whole society [1]. Legitimacy refers to form of recognition of this authority [1].

Weber believed that there were three types of legitimacy: rational-legal, traditional and charismatic [1].

Legitimacy of the rational-legal type is associated with structured political systems characterized by formalized political freedoms [1] These systems operate with established

rules governing socio-political interactions that are codified within a legal framework [1]. In such political organizations, the exercise and constitution of political power are contingent upon adherence to the law [1].

Leaders who exemplify of the rational-legal type often derive their authority from formalized systems and legal frameworks, are: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, former associate justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, her authority was derived from her role in interpreting and upholding the U.S. Constitution and legal principles [2]; Angela Merkel, the former Chancellor of Germany, Merkel's leadership was grounded in adherence to democratic principles and the legal framework of the German political system [3]; Kofi Annan, the seventh Secretary-General of the United Nations, who was based on adherence to international laws and treaties governing the United Nations's mission and operations [4] and Warren Buffet, the chairman and CEO of Berkshire Hathaway, his leadership is characterized by a commitment to ethical business practices and adherence to regulatory frameworks in the financial sector [5].

Traditional legitimacy refers to the respect of the holders of political power by means of norms, beliefs, habits [1].

Leaders who derive their legitimacy from a traditional perspective often have their authority grounded in historical customs, cultural norms, or hereditary succession. Some examples: Queen Elizabeth II, the longest-reigning current monarch, her legitimacy is rooted in the British Monarchy's historical continuity and traditions [6]; Pope Francis, his authority is deeply rooted in the traditions of the Catholic Church and the belief in apostolic succession [7]; Emperor Akihito, his legitimacy is rooted in the country's historical imperial lineage and traditional role [8]; King Goodwill Zwelithini, the late Zulu King in South Africa, whose legitimacy was deeply rooted in Zulu traditions and customary leadership [9].

There are also societies in which political domination and power owe their stability and has sources in charismatic legitimacy, viewed as a belief that progress and good common, the aspirations and needs of the members of society are related to the exceptional qualities of a leader recognized by the group or community as entitled to impose "the best of the political orders" [1].

Leaders who derive their legitimacy from a charismatic perspective often have authority based on their personal qualities, charm, and ability to inspire and captivate followers: John F. Kennedy, the 35th President of the United States, known for his charisma, inspirational speeches, and the ability to connect with the American public [10]; Martin Luther King Jr., an influential leader in the American civil rights movement, celebrated for his charismatic leadership, powerful oratory, and commitment to nonviolent protest [11]; Che Guevara, a key figure in the Cuban Revolution, his charismatic leadership and revolutionary fervor made him a symbol of rebellion [12]; Steve Jobs, who was known for his charismatic presentation style, innovation, and the ability to inspire teams in the tech industry [13]; Billy Graham, an American Christian evangelist, whose preaching style to connect with large audiences earned him widespread influence [14]; Nelson Mandela, who also had elements

of traditional and transformational leadership, his charisma played a significant role in uniting a divided South Africa [15]; Oprah Winfrey, a media mogul and talk show host, her charismatic personality has played a crucial role in her widespread popularity and influence [16].

These examples showcase leaders whose legitimacy is closely tied to their personal charisma, compelling communication skills, and the ability to inspire followers on a personal level. Charismatic leaders often create a sense of devotion and loyalty among their followers.

Nonetheless, legitimacy of charismatic type is doubtful in some types of power regimes, as personal dictatorships, because, as a rule, the brilliant works or the special merits of the dictator appear only after he has come to power, propaganda to impose on the masses the image that only the dictator is worthy of being the head of the state [1].

3. Forms of Leadership

Leaders can also be characterized by the leadership model they adopt in: transformational leaders, charismatic leaders, transactional leaders, authoritarian leaders, servant leaders, populist leaders, conservative leaders, liberal leaders, nationalist leaders and global leaders.

Bernard M. Bass and Roland E. Riggio's work on transformational leadership provides insights into a leadership style that goes beyond traditional transactional approaches [17].

The first typology of a leader adopt the model of a "transformational leadership", which is characterized by leaders who inspire and motivate their followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, let them develop their full potential [17].

The aspects of transformational leadership based on Bass and Riggio's perspective are: idealized influence or "charisma" by which we understand that they are seen as role models, they earn the admiration, trust, and respect of their followers, often through their personal qualities and actions; inspirational motivation, these leaders inspire and motivate their followers by creating a compelling vision of the future; intellectual stimulation, they encourage creativity and innovation among their followers; individualized consideration, the leaders pay attention to the individual needs and development of each follower; charismatic leadership, they often exhibit charismatic qualities, drawing followers in through their charm, enthusiasm, and ability to articulate a compelling vision [17].

Second category of leaders is based on a charismatic leadership. Scholars often distinguish charismatic leadership from transformational leadership, highlighting the former's emphasis on followers identifying personally with the leader [18]

However, there is a lack of precise specification regarding the distinction between these two concepts [18]. While some researchers propose that charismatic leadership is a constituent of transformational leadership, others argue that the boundary between transformational and charismatic leadership remains unclear [18]. This ambiguity is evident in the adaptable use of these terms across different research studies [18].

For example, Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States, is often described as a transformational leader and his leadership style exhibited characteristics of both transformational and charismatic leadership. He was giving proof of inspiration and vision, empowerment, inclusivity, communication skills and personal appeal.

Transactional leadership assume an exchanges between leaders and followers and is based on the idea of transactions or deals where leaders provides rewards or punishments in response to the performance of their followers [19]. Transactional leadership is contrasted with transformational leadership, which is more focused on inspiring and motivating followers to exceed expectations and transcend their own self-interest for the greater good of the organization [19].

Transactional leadership is often associated with leaders who use system of rewards and punishments to motivate and manage their followers. For example, Margaret Thatcher, the former Minister of the United Kingdom, known for her pragmatic and transactional approach to politics, emphasizing individual responsibility and free-market principles [20]; Rudy Giuliani, the former Mayor of New York City, who implemented a transactional and the use of strict measures to address crime [21]; Michelle Rhee, the former Chancellor of the District of Columbia Public Schools, known for implementing performance-based reforms, including teacher evaluations tied to student achievement [22].

Transactional leadership can be effective in situations that require clear guidelines, structure, and accountability, such as in routine and well-defined tasks.

Authoritarians willingly adhere to established authority, favor traditional norms, and may display aggression towards individuals or groups that challenge authority, deviate from conventional practices, or exhibit unconventional behavior [23].

Authoritarian leaders are characterized by a concentration of power, limited political freedoms, and strict control over their respective domains. Vladimir Putin, serving as President and Prime Minister of Russia, has been criticized for consolidation power and limiting political opposition [24].

Another examples are: Xi Jinping, as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of China and the President of China, he has centralized authority, extended presidential term limits, and tightened control over various aspects of Chinese society [25]; Kim Jong-un, as the Supreme Leader of North Korea, he oversees a highly centralized regime with strict control over political, economic, and social aspects of the country [26] or Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of Turkey, who has faced criticism for consolidating power, limiting press freedoms, and suppressing political opposition [27].

Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy that emphasizes the leader's primary role as one of service to others and the concept was introduced by Robert K. Greenleaf in his essay "The Servant as Leader", published in 1970 [28]. Servant leadership operates on the principle that the most effective leaders are those who prioritize meeting the needs of their

followers over satisfying their own personal desires [28]. Instead of focusing primarily on their own requirements these leaders concentrate on ensuring the fulfillment of their followers' needs, thus fostering motivation and loyalty [28].

Servant leaders can be found in various fields and at different levels of organizations: Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of the Indian independence movement, he is often cited as a servant leader for his emphasis on selflessness, humility, and dedication to the well-being of others [29]; Mother Teresa, a catholic nun and missionary, she devoted her life to serving the poor and sick and her acts of compassion and care for the less fortunate reflect servant leadership qualities [30] or Simon Sinek, an expert and author, who promotes servant leadership principles in his work and his emphasis on leaders who prioritize the well-being of their teams aligns with servants leadership [31].

Populist leaders often appeal to the concerns and grievances of the common people, positioning themselves as champions of the "ordinary" citizen against a perceived elite or establishment [32]. They tend to use populist rhetoric and messaging to connect with a broad base of supporters [32].

For instance, Donald Trump, the 45th President of the United States, known for this populist communication style, anti-establishment messaging, and focus on issues affecting the working class [33]; Marine le Pen, the leader of the National Rally Party in France, she is associated with right-wing populist politics, emphasizing anti-immigration policies and economic nationalism [34].

Conservative leadership in a political context refers to a style of governance and decision-making that is grounded in traditional values, a preference for incremental change, a commitment to preserving established institutions, and a cautious approach to social and economic transformation [35]. Conservative leaders typically advocate for the maintenance of cultural norms, social stability, and the protection of individual liberties [35]. They often resist rapid or radical changes, preferring to rely on established practices and institutions to guide policy decisions [35].

Some examples of individuals often associated with conservative leadership: Ronald Reagan, the 40th President of the United States, is a key figure in modern American conservatism and his presidency focused on reducing government intervention in the economy, cutting taxes, and promoting a strong national defense [36] and Viktor Orban, the Prime Minister of Hungary, leads the Fidesz party, and is known for his nationalist and conservative policies and his government has focused on immigration control, economic nationalism, and a strong emphasis on traditional values [37].

Liberal leadership refers to a style of leadership that aligns with the principles and values of liberalism, a political and philosophical ideology [38]. Liberalism emphasizes individual rights, equality, freedom, democracy, and the rule of law [38].

In the context of leadership, a liberal leader is someone who incorporates these principles into their approach to governance or organizational management [38].

For example, Justin Trudeau, the Prime Minister of Canada, is associated with liberal leadership and he has emphasized diversity, gender equality, and progressive social policies during his tenure [39]; Emmanuel Macron, the President of France, is known for his centrist and liberal stance and his leadership is focused on economic reform, European integration, and environmental initiatives [40] or Joe Biden, the 46th President of the United States, has pursued a liberal policy agenda, including measures on climate change, healthcare, and social justice [41].

National leaders are individuals who hold influential positions within a country's governance structure and play a pivotal role in guiding and shaping the direction of the nation [42].

A national leader, whether elected or appointed, may serve in various branches of the government, including the executive or legislative branch [42]. The responsibilities of a national leader span a broad spectrum, with a primary focus on safeguarding the sovereignty of their nation [42]. Effective communication and interpersonal skills are essential attributes, along with a comprehensive understanding of their own language, culture, and those of foreign dignitaries they may engage with [42].

In this category of leadership, we can include: Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin, Emmanuel Macron, Scott Morrison, Boris Johnson, Narendra Modi, Moon Jae-in or Macky Sall.

The last, but not least, category of leaders after the adopted leadership model are global leaders.

Global leaders, often seen as the leaders of the future, adeptly navigate the complexities of the international arena, establishing cross-cultural connections and promoting growth for businesses and communities worldwide [43].

Integral to global leadership is the infusion of traditional leadership qualities with a Global Mindset [43]. Cultivating a Global Mindset begins with the capacity to articulate a compelling vision, engage in strategic thinking, and inspire collaborative efforts [43]. To emerge as a global leader, one must demonstrate proficiency in navigating challenges and leveraging opportunities within the ever-evolving, dynamic landscape of the international ecosystem [43].

In the context of influential figures with a significant impact on a global scale, global leaders can be found in various fields such as politics, business, and advocacy, for example: Elon Musk, the CEO of SpaceX and Tesla, is a visionary entrepreneur and business leader with a global influence in the fields of space exploration and electric vehicles [44]; Jeff Bezos, the founder and former CEO of Amazon, is a global business leader who has played a transformative role in e-commerce and technology [45]; António Guterres, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, is a global leader in diplomacy and international relations [46]; Bill Gates, co-founder of Microsoft and a philanthropist, is a global leader in technology, business, and public health through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation [47]; Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission, is a key leader in

shaping policies for the European Union [48] or Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder and CEO of Facebook (Meta), is a global leader in social media and technology [49].

These examples represent a diverse range of global leaders, each contributing to their respective fields and influencing global discourse in various ways. Keep in mind that the impact and perception of global leaders may evolve over time.

As we can see in Figure I below, a global leader must present a series of attributions in order to be declared in this way.



Fig. 1. The order of global leadership

Source: <https://cronkitehjh.jmc.asu.edu/blog/2015/04/inside-the-prism-of-global-leadership/>

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, this paper has undertaken a comprehensive exploration of the nexus between intelligence and empathy in political leadership, shedding light on their synergistic potential in addressing contemporary challenges at both national and international levels.

Regarding the research questions from the introductory part of the paper: "What are the potential policy implications of a leadership model that integrates both intelligence and empathy, and how might it contribute to addressing intricate challenges in the realm of politics?" and "To what extent does a smart and empathetic leadership approach contribute to the effective governance of nations, and how does it influence societal well-being?", I think that a leadership model that integrates both intelligence and empathy can have several potential policy implications and contribute significantly to addressing intricate challenges in the realm of politics. In addition, a smart and empathetic leadership approach can

contribute significantly to the effective governance of nations, influencing societal well-being in various ways.

In essence, a leadership model that integrates both intelligence and empathy is poised to generate policies that prioritize the holistic well-being of the population, foster social harmony, and address challenges with a nuanced understanding of the intricate dynamics at play in the realm of politics.

The hypothesis of research: "Political leaders who exhibit a harmonious convergence of intelligence and empathy will demonstrate enhanced effectiveness in addressing contemporary challenges"; I believe that it aligns with the objectives outlined in this paper. The validity of my hypothesis depend on the evidence and findings presented in my research, and as I analyze the interplay of intelligence and empathy, conduct a comparative analysis of leaders, and discuss the implications for effective governance, I conclude that is a discernible pattern or correlation between leaders exhibiting a harmonious convergence of intelligence and empathy and their success in addressing contemporary challenges.

In summary, a smart and empathetic leadership approach contributes to effective governance by fostering inclusive decision-making, social cohesion, trust, and transparency. This, in turn, positively influences societal well-being through policies that prioritize health, education, economic equity, crisis resilience, environmental sustainability, and cultural preservation. The interconnectedness of these factors creates a framework for governance that addresses the holistic needs of a nation, promoting a more prosperous and harmonious society.

Under the empire of the above in the content of the work, I believe that this article could serve as a foundation for a more in-depth-exploration of this topic, particularly given the current dynamic shifts occurring in societies and power structures worldwide. In these transformative times, the global landscape calls for leaders who possess not only intelligence but also empathy.

References

- [1] C. Pârvăulescu, "Fundamental concepts in political science. Course support," pp. 17-45.
- [2] K. L. Alexander, "Ruth Bader Ginsburg. National Women's History Museum.," 2020.
- [3] N. P. Petrikowski, "Angela Merkel. Encyclopaedia Britannica.," 2023.
- [4] Kofi Annan Foundation, "Kofi Annan. Biography.," 2018.
- [5] C. Munger, "These 'basic rules' made me successful in life- with Warren Buffet, I had all 3.," 2023.
- [6] Royal UK, "Queen Elizabeth II and the Commonwealth".
- [7] M. Stefon, "Francis," 2023.
- [8] The Editios of Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Akihito," 2023.
- [9] BBC, "Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini dies in South Africa aged 72.," 2021.
- [10] The White House., "John F. Kennedy.,"
- [11] D. L. C. C. Lewis, "Martin Luther King, Jr.," 2023.
- [12] A. Lupșor, "Che Guevara, o viață de revoluționar.,"

- [13] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica., “Steve Jobs- American businessman.,” 2023.
- [14] R. Balmer, “Billy Graham- American evangelist.,” 2023.
- [15] T. E. o. E. Britannica., “Nelson Mandela- president of South Africa.,” 2023.
- [16] Zippia- the carrer expert., “National Leader Overview.”.
- [17] B. M. & R. R. E. Bass, “Transformational leadership.,” *Psychology Press*, pp. 10-30, 2006.
- [18] A. & K. V. R. Tambe, “Leadership in Decision-Making.,” *Indian Management*, vol. 39, no. 5, pp. 69-79, 2000.
- [19] B. M. Bass, “From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision.,” *Organizational Dynamics*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 19-31, 1990.
- [20] H. Young, “Margaret Thatcher- Prime minister of United Kingdom.,” 2023.
- [21] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, “Rudy Giuliani.,” 2023.
- [22] Ballotpedia, “Michelle Rhee.”.
- [23] M. C. MacWilliams, “The Rise of Trump: America’s Authoritarian Spring.,” *Amherst College Press*, pp. 13-14, 2016.
- [24] S. M. Hashim, “Communist and Post-Communist Studies.,” *University of California Press.*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 25-48, 2005.
- [25] C. H. Wong, “The Making of the Xi Jinping Personality Cult.,” 2023.
- [26] A. Immelman, “The Leadership Style of North Korean Supreme Leader Kim Jon Un.,” *Psychology Department- Psychology Faculty Publications.* , 2018.
- [27] Columbia University- World Leaders Forum, “Recep Tayyip Erdogan.”.
- [28] R. C. W. S. J. L. C. M. J. D. Liden, “Servant Leadership and Serving Culture: influence on individual and unit performance.,” *The Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 57, no. 5, p. 1434, 2014.
- [29] B. R. Nanda, “Mahatma Gandhi- Indian leader.,” 2023.
- [30] The Nobel Prize, “Mother Teresa- Biographical.”.
- [31] S. Sinek, “How great leaders inspire action.,” 2009.
- [32] C. & K. C. R. Muddle, “Populism: A very short introduction.,” *Oxford University Press*, p. 62, 2017.
- [33] B. Duignan, “Donald Trump- president of United States.,” 2023.
- [34] Politico, “Marine Le Pen.”.
- [35] R. M. Ylimaki, “Curriculum Leadership in a Conservative Era,” vol. 48, no. 2, 2011.
- [36] The White House, “Ronald Reagan- the 40th President of the United States.”.
- [37] L. Bayer, “Orban accused of trying to silence all critics in Hungary with new law.,” 2023.
- [38] R. E. Colvin, “Leadership Studies and Liberal Education.,” *Journal of Leadership Education*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 30-33, 2003.
- [39] Prime Minister of Canada, “The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada.”.
- [40] M. Ray, “Emmanuel Macron- president of France.,” 2023.
- [41] A. M. I. A. Gribie, “The Personality Profile and Leadership Style of U.S. President Joe Biden.,” *Psychology Department. Psychology Faculty Publications.* , 2021.
- [42] Zippia, “Zippia- the carrer expert. National Leader Overview.”.
- [43] Thunderbird., “What is global leadership?,” 2023.
- [44] B. Fung, “Elon Musk wants to be a world leader. His own behavior is holding him back.,” 2023.
- [45] StudySmarter., “Jeff Bezos Leadership Style.”.
- [46] M. Ray, “António Guterres- Portuguese statesman and secretary-general of the United Nations.,” 2023.
- [47] StudySmarter., “Bill Gates Leadership Style.”.
- [48] European Commission., “Ursula von der Leyen.”.
- [49] E. D. Clark, “Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook Leadership.,” 2022.