

MORAL COURAGE IN POLITICS

CLIL Project

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1) Moral Courage

Definition of Moral Courage

My conception of moral courage has five major components:

- presence and recognition of a moral situation
- moral choice
- behavior
- individuality
- and fear

The presence of a moral situation is necessary because an individual cannot be morally courageous if they are not faced with a morally charged situation. Recognizing that there is a moral situation is the first step toward moral courage. This may sound simple, but it is easy to ignore the big picture. When a moral situation is recognized, it immediately calls the observer to appeal to her moral intuitions, values, principles, etc. It lays a claim upon the observer, demanding that she do something. This leads us into the second component, moral choice. The individual when faced with a moral situation must choose the moral option. The observer must make the appeal to her moral intuitions, values, principles, etc. The decision must be based upon what she feels is right morally, not legally.

2) Moral Courage in Organizations or Politics

Moral courage is the strength to use ethical principles to do what one believes is right even though the result may not be to everyone's liking or could occasion personal loss. In organizations, some of the hardest decisions have ethical stakes: it is everyday moral courage that sets an organization and its members apart.

Courage is the ability to confront danger, fear, intimidation, pain, or uncertainty. Physical courage is fortitude in the face of death (and its threat), hardship, or physical pain. Moral courage, the form the attribute nowadays refers to, is put simply the ability to act rightly in the face of discouragement or opposition, possibly and knowingly running the risk of adverse personal consequences. Springing from ethics—notably integrity, responsibility, compassion, and forgiveness—it is the quality of mind or spirit that enables a person to withstand danger, difficulty, or fear; persevere; and venture. Comprehensively—as said by Christopher Rate et al., it is a willful, intentional act, executed after mindful deliberation, involving objective substantial risk to the bearer, and primarily motivated to bring about a noble good or worthy end despite, perhaps, the presence of the emotion of fear.

3) Honesty/trust

Honesty and trust affect the functioning of the state and the market and conversely the quality of formal rules and institutions has an impact on interpersonal trust. Honesty and trust are a part of moral courage in politics because of their importance in the field of cooperating and working. In democracies politics is all about cooperating and working together because no decision can be made alone. However, a big point is that the honesty should come from both sides and not only from one person.

4) Moral courage during public statements and discussions

Politics is all about discussions and statements. During the last years we experienced politicians with a lot of different statements and in addition to that we experienced different political discussions. For example, during the elections for the president of the United States or during the Austrian Parliament elections. The words the politicians used during the elections were far away from nice ones. Especially Donald Trump, the president of the United States used words in his statements which are not appropriate for the public. He used to talk against minorities like Mexicans or Muslims. Also, journalists were offended by him. But not only Donald Trump also his rival candidate Hillary Clinton used to accuse Donald Trump for cooperating with Vladimir Putin and the Russians.

Why is moral courage important during statements and discussions?

As a result of these accusations and insults also the voters (people) started to “fight” with each other which candidate is in the right. This leads to unnecessary disputes between the people.

How to discuss with moral courage?

Moral courage during public statements means to pick up the right words, in detail it is not ok to discriminate any group, person or nation in your statements. Also, it is important to respect the opinion of your opponent or in general of other people. Everyone must recognize that the others also know at least so much that they can draw solutions from provided information by themselves. Along with that you must stay out of your personal relationships because the discussion can go in a wrong way. Finally do not try to change someone's mind because everyone has an opinion based on their unique perspectives.

5) Represent your opinion/constructive criticism

We all know that moral courage in politics is a big factor. Decisions could lead to freedom, peace, collaborations with other countries and much more. The problem is that politicians promise so much before the elections but do not a lot to reach their goals. Because sometimes they set up impossible goals. It is a big point to stay realistic with your promises. But politicians should not let influence their opinion and they should represent them in a constructive way.

On the other hand, we have to say that the job of the politicians is not always easy and a lot of factors influence their decisions. It is important if you criticize to criticize constructive and not emotional. From constructive criticism the person can learn something and maybe be better next time.

6) Solidarity/stand up for rights

Solidarity

Talking about solidarity, it is to say that this topic is one of the most discussed in politics.

Topics like accepting refugees and helping other countries financially has been heavily discussed in the last years, especially in countries from the European Union and in the United States.

A lot of countries helped the refugees and welcomed them wholeheartedly, but others refused to help them.

Moral courage is that everybody should stand up and help people in crisis, not just the people who wear a uniform for example, a police officer, firefighter and so on, but it is also clear that a small amount of countries cannot solve this problem alone.

The best solution would be that every country should work together and help people from other countries, which are involved in crises or wars because it always can happen crises or wars in your country and you would appreciate the help of them.

Stand up for rights

A part of moral courage in politics is to stand up for rights. But not only for your rights and your interests. Stand up for the rights of other people, especially minorities and groups with certain problems.

In general, democratic politics is here to defend and to represent the interests of the population which elects their representatives every four or five years. So politics should be in the service of the population.

Despite that it is important to not forget the minorities everywhere in the world. Moral courage in politics means to stand in front of people who are in danger and who are treated unfairly. At least as a politician you can attract attention about this case.

7) Support women

Why should we support women in politics?

Sex stereotyping

Sex stereotyping assumes that masculine and feminine traits are intertwined with leadership. Hence, the bias leveled against women stems from the perception that femininity inherently produces weak leadership. Due to the aggressive and competitive nature of politics, many insist that participation in elected office requires masculine traits. Sex stereotyping is far from being a historical narrative. The pressure is on female candidates (and not male ones) to enhance their masculine traits in order to garner support from voters who identify with socially constructed gender roles.

Political socialization

Political socialization is the idea that, during childhood, people are indoctrinated into socially constructed norms of politics. In the case of women's representation in government, it says that sex stereotyping begins at an early age and affects the public's disposition on which genders are fit for public office. Socialization agents can include family, school, higher education, mass media, and religion. Each of these agents plays a pivotal role in either fostering a desire to enter politics or dissuading one to do so.

Lack of preparation for political activity

An aftereffect of political socialization is that it determines how inclined women are to pursue careers that may be compatible with formal politics. Careers in law, business, education, and government, professions in which women happen to be minorities, are common occupations for those that later decide to enter public office.

Balancing work and family

The work life balance is invariably more difficult for women, because they are generally expected by society to act as the primary caregivers for children and maintainers of the home. Due to these demands, it is assumed that women would choose to delay political aspirations until their children are older. Also, a women's desire for a career in politics along with the extent that the respondent feels her family duties might inhibit her ability to be an elected official. Research has shown that new female politicians in Canada and the U.S. are older than their male counterparts. Conversely, a woman may be pushed to remain childless in order to seek political office.