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President Mwanawasa's transition to transformational leadership in combating political corruption in Zambia

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Orientation: Transformational leadership styles, characterised by vision, ethical behaviour and self-awareness are crucial for institutional change and combating political corruption; yet, the current knowledge on their relationships is limited.

Research purpose: The study investigates the influence of political and institutional context, personality traits and leadership behaviours on President Mwanawasa's anti-corruption campaign in Zambia.

Motivation for the study: There is a scarcity of academic research on the complex connections between political leadership, personal characteristics, political institutions and political corruption.

Research approach/design and method: This qualitative study utilised purposive sampling; semi-structured interviews with five key informants; and secondary data that were gathered through literature study and documentation analysis. Wilber's four-quadrant model was used for thematic data analysis.

Main findings: The study highlights the importance of transformational leadership, particularly visionary and ethical leadership, in combating political corruption. It emphasises the relationship between values, emotional intelligence and leadership transition, and describes the shift from transactional to transformational leadership by advancing through stages of ego development.

Practical/managerial implications: The study emphasises the importance of considering contextual factors when addressing corruption and its implications for political leadership, institutional norms, governance and leadership transitions in public policy and practice.

Contribution/value-add: The study enhances understanding of political corruption by utilising a multidimensional analytical approach that considers individual and institutional consciousness domains. It also enhances comprehension of leadership behaviours and personal growth by examining ego development stages and leadership transition.

Keywords: political corruption; transformational leadership; emotional intelligence; personality characteristics; ego development.

Introduction

Corruption is a widespread problem that erodes transparency, accountability and development in public affairs (International Monetary Fund [IMF], 2022; Mbao, 2011; Rahman, 2020). In Africa, the prevalence of corruption can be attributed to factors such as a lack of legal and institutional infrastructure and a dearth of ethical political leadership (Dei et al., 2016; Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021; Rahman, 2020). In spite of its pervasiveness, political corruption and poor leadership in Africa are often viewed as anathema to prevailing African norms. This is because civil leadership carries the responsibility of ensuring the welfare of public institutions and society – something frequently considered to be foundational to traditional African values (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019).

Wiatr's (2022) recent historical research reveals that political leadership requires utilising state power to attain desired outcomes. When seeking to address corruption at a systemic level, leaders invariably not only face the obstacle of corrupt individuals, but also the entrenched monolithic power of state institutions themselves. Thus, the fight against corruption for any would-be transformational leader necessitates strong and unwavering political will (Hope, 2017). This means that political actors must genuinely intend to combat corruption and take active and sustained

measures to do so (Abdulai, 2009; Hope, 2017). Conversely, it is often the lack of political will that becomes apparent to the populace when those occupying positions of power opt to ignore corruption, and prioritise their own personal enrichment instead (Hope, 2017).

According to Carbone and Pellegata (2020) and Wiatr (2022), a key factor in successfully combating political corruption is the presence of transformational leadership that effectively exercises power to drive social and institutional change. In keeping with Burns (2012), the idea of transformational leadership is that it involves a collaborative process where leaders and followers work together to enhance morale and motivation, leading to significant transformations in individuals and organisations. The success of this effort significantly depends on the leader's individual qualities; their ability to inspire change; communication skills; and capacity to set ambitious yet achievable goals (Bass, 1985; Burns, 2012). Leaders who are considered transformational, as described by Bass (1985), are recognised for their commitment to improving teams, organisations and communities. They place a strong emphasis on ethical conduct and cultivate an environment of cooperation to achieve the objectives of their organisation.

Historically, in Zambia, political corruption has been sustained by various factors, including inadequate legislation, political interference, limited accountability, elite hierarchies and ineffective leadership (Fagbadebo & Dorasamy, 2021; Malila, 2012; Mbao, 2011; Momba, 2007; Rahman, 2020). One figure who is remembered for taking a strong stance against corruption in Zambia's multi-party democratic era is Levy Mwanawasa, who served as the country's third president from 2002 until his untimely death in 2008. Mwanawasa's recognition stems from having diligently investigated allegations of high-level law-breaking throughout his tenure, taking on both political leaders and other government officials (Ntomba, 2016; Sishuwa, 2020; Taylor, 2006).

Currently, the existing body of research on the relationship between political systems, transformational leadership and personality characteristics is rather limited. This paper therefore uses the example of President Mwanawasa to examine the impact of political and institutional context, personality traits and personal leadership behaviours on clamping down on corruption in a political setting.

Background: Navigating political challenges and fighting corruption

Carbone and Pellegata (2020) highlight the importance of political leaders understanding how leadership, institutional frameworks, government policies and socio-political contexts can impact change. During his presidency and efforts in the anti-corruption campaign, Mwanawasa began to embody this understanding.

From the beginning of his tenure, Mwanawasa encountered corruption issues within his party, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD), and faced challenges in establishing political authority over his predecessor, Frederick Chiluba. Party challenges were resolved when Chiluba resigned as party president, but this also invited pressure on Mwanawasa to address corruption accusations against the former president, as well as other former government officials. Mwanawasa proceeded by taking the bold step to petition the National Assembly to strip Chiluba of his immunity and thus initiated criminal proceedings in Zambia, and concurrently filed a civil lawsuit against him and his associates in the London High Court to recover assets and funds invested overseas (Donge, 2009; Malila, 2012; Malupenga, 2009; Mbao, 2011; Ntomba, 2016; Sishuwa, 2020; Taylor, 2006).

Mwanawasa also made efforts to reduce political interference in law enforcement agencies and set up the Task Force on Corruption to handle high-profile cases. His administration investigated corruption cases involving government officials and business figures, and even engaged in addressing corruption cases within his own administration. Though he faced criticism for procedural delays and only saw limited success in achieving actual convictions (including the one against Chiluba), Mwanawasa continued to champion the importance of overseeing thorough investigations and respecting the taskforce's autonomy.

Mwanawasa was renowned for his acute intellect, professionalism and boldness in dealing with contentious political matters (Malila, 2016; Malupenga, 2009). He emphasised the significance of maintaining the law and believed that following it was the sole means to combat corruption (Kalungu-Banda, 2010; Malupenga, 2009; Smith-Hohn, 2009). Though his leadership style was not without flaws, Mwanawasa's time in office provides a good case study of the transformational characteristics required to address corruption under difficult circumstances.

Review of relevant concepts and theories

Mwanawasa's leadership style provides a useful focus for investigating various dimensions of political leadership. The following sections provide an analysis of some of those dimensions. They explore how psychological factors, traits and stages of ego development impact leaders' behaviour. They also emphasise the significance of transformational leadership in facilitating institutional change and examine the significance of emotional intelligence (EI) in the context of holding public office.

Exploring the psychological factors influencing political leadership

To understand political leadership, it is necessary to analyse the personality traits of a leader. These characteristics often reflect the distinct ways individuals think, feel and behave, and arrive at their actions and outcomes. Based on Paige's

(1977) six hypotheses regarding the impact of personality traits on the behaviour and performance of political leaders, Wiatr (2022) offers four psychological factors: 1. The choice of a leader's values; 2. The personality traits exhibited during times of intense pressure; 3. The influence of the political system on the leader's character; and 4. The possibility of psychological transformation because of traumatic experiences. To fully understand Mwanawasa's approach to tackling corruption and the resulting outcomes, it is crucial to consider these factors.

Loevinger's (1969, 1976) stages of ego development are relevant to this discussion. According to Loevinger, the core of the ego is found in the quest to master, integrate and understand experience. The ego undergoes continuous transformation and growth as a result of its diverse experiences, challenges and advancements through various stages. An individual progresses through these developmental stages at different rates. To understand the development of behavioural expressions, Loevinger recommends trying to perceive them as a dynamic and evolving continuum, rather than rigid and distinct categories (1969, 1976). Loevinger's particular approach to understanding personality development allows us to examine how leaders can adapt and evolve in challenging circumstances. This idea is instructive when trying to understand how Mwanawasa's leadership style evolved over time.

The significance of transformational leadership for political leaders in driving institutional change

Burns' (1978, 2012) leadership research calls into question the virtues of transactional leadership and establishes the concept of transforming leaders. According to Burns, transforming leaders emphasise personal values, vision, morality and integrity, as well as their followers' needs and values. Transactional leadership, on the other hand, reflects the exchange character of the leadership process, with directive, task-focussed and production-oriented behaviours. Many other researchers agree, further claiming that transformational leadership is critical for successfully tackling political corruption and bringing about institutional and social change (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019; Carbone & Pellegata, 2020; Wiatr, 2022).

Bass' (1985) transformational leadership model extends Burns' transforming leadership theory by addressing the psychological factors that underpin transforming and transactional leadership. He highlights the value of having a clear vision, inspiring and motivating people, cultivating strong connections and driving positive change with the purpose of encouraging ethical behaviour and developing a constructive and collaborative atmosphere that can be directed towards achieving organisational goals. Transformational leaders may actively endeavour to affect cultural change inside their organisation, while transactional leaders often concentrate on sustaining the present organisational culture.

The leadership theories of Burns and Bass have had a significant impact on subsequent approaches to transformational leadership, serving to inform the servant, ethical, resonant, spiritual, authentic, network, distributed and dispersed leadership models. Common elements found in the various presentations of transformational leadership include vision, inspiration, motivation, ethics, relationships and positive change to accomplish organisational goals (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 2003). For proponents of transformational leadership, leaders reach their goals by effectively communicating a compelling vision, ensuring that their actions align with their values, nurturing the potential of others through coaching and development, questioning the status quo and cultivating strong relationships to foster a collaborative culture.

Of the transformational leadership models mentioned above, it is perhaps the ethical and servant leadership approaches that are most essential in the public sector. Ethical leadership focusses on qualities such as empathy, respect, honesty, trust, accountability, fairness, integrity and responsible citizenship (Brown et al., 2005; Lu & Guy, 2014). Servant leadership, on the other hand, emphasises the ethical and service-oriented duties of leaders towards their subordinates, stakeholders and society (Greenleaf, 1977).

The importance of emotional intelligence in transformational leadership

The transformational leadership approach has sparked great interest in the public sector, prompting several studies into leadership in public governance (Kellis & Ran, 2013). Whichever model of transformational leadership one prefers, it is apparent that the emotional and social dimensions of leadership are crucial for organisational success (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021; Haricharan, 2022; Levitats et al., 2019). In a nutshell, it is the emotional and social dimensions of leadership that are embodied in the concept of EI, which is defined by Goleman et al. (2002) as the capacity to recognise and control one's own emotions, as well as comprehend and regulate the emotions of others. A high level of EI is therefore essential for leaders to perceive, identify and regulate their emotions in decision-making, problem-solving and adapting to change (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Goleman et al., 2002; Levitats & Vigoda-Gadot, 2017; Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Emotional intelligence is specifically associated with transformational leadership because it underpins a leader's ability to modulate their followers' perceptions, well-being, motivation, creativity and effectiveness (Cavaletti & Bizarrias, 2023; Goleman et al., 2002; Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021; Joseph & Newman, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011; Wong & Law, 2002). Emotional awareness and regulation are also important for leaders as these qualities allow them to avoid letting negative or heightened emotional states to impact their own and their subordinates' well-being, work life, psychological functioning and performance (Boin & t'Hart, 2022; Guest, 2017; Kowalski & Loretto, 2017; Ryff, 2013).

Goleman et al.'s (2002) EI model consists of 12 competencies, including self-awareness, empathy, emotional self-control,

adaptability and conflict management. Their leadership model encompasses various styles, such as visionary, coaching, mentoring, affiliative and democratic, that strive to enhance leadership effectiveness and organisational success. At the other end of the spectrum, dissonant styles like commanding and pace-setting can lead to discordant organisational cultures, negatively impacting overall effectiveness.

The present case study draws primarily on the concepts and theories relating to transformational leadership to examine the political leadership of Mwanawasa and his sustained attitude to fighting corruption in the Zambian political system.

Research design and methods

This case study employed an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research approach to examine the relationship between political leadership and anti-corruption efforts.

Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select five key informants who had relevant roles in investigating and prosecuting corruption cases, and who possessed substantial professional and personal knowledge of Mwanawasa's leadership values, attitudes, behaviours and styles. The participants included five Zambian males, with four of them being over the age of 50. A summary of their profiles is shown in Table 1.

Data collection

Two data collection methods were used: primary data from the in-depth semi-structured interviews and secondary data from a variety of sources including books, newspaper archives, public speeches, official government reports, academic and research papers, and stakeholder submissions and/or presentations. The interviews took place between October and November 2021.

Data analysis

Through a process of inductive thematic analysis, a set of main themes were identified from the data. The four-quadrant model developed by Wilber (2000) was used as the

TABLE 1: Description of study respondents.

Respondents	Description of respondent	Gender	Current sector
R1	A senior government official in the Mwanawasa administration involved in anti-corruption activities.	Male	Government
R2	An experienced technocrat and member of Mwanawasa's presidential advisory team, who closely collaborated with him.	Male	Academic
R3	A former cabinet minister and senior party official in the MMD during Mwanawasa's tenure.	Male	Business
R4	A former member of the Taskforce on Corruption from inception to court cases.	Male	Business
R5	A well-known academic and author on Mwanawasa's leadership, governance and anti-corruption policies while he was president.	Male	Academic

MMD, movement for multiparty democracy.

framework to present the emerging themes. The model illustrates the interconnected and interdependent nature of the four domains of organisational realities: intentional, behavioural, social and cultural. It explores the personal characteristics of individuals and illuminates how these influence their behaviours, which in turn significantly impact an organisation's social and cultural domains. The social domain encompasses organisational strategies, structures, resources and systems, while the cultural domain represents collective behaviour, values and internal relationships.

Research procedure

Participants were informed about the research goals and their rights, including confidentiality, anonymity and the ability to withdraw.

Ethical considerations

An application for full ethical approval was made to the University of Cape Town and ethics consent was received on 27 August 2021. The ethics approval number is REC2021/08/0032021.

Results

The themes presented in Wilber's (2000) model, shown in Table 2, demonstrate the various factors, including Mwanawasa's personal characteristics that influenced his leadership behaviours, as well as his impact on the social and cultural realms within the Zambian government. In turn, these two realms also had a repercussive influence on him. In addition, there were broader social, political and institutional factors that influenced Mwanawasa's execution of his presidential tasks and the anti-corruption campaign.

The themes above highlight Mwanawasa's core values, including honesty, ethical behaviour and political will, as well as his evolving approach to leadership, shifting from transactional to transformational. The institutional themes encompass the challenges faced in implementing anti-corruption reforms. These challenges include cultural resistance to change within government institutions, a lack of ethical values, inadequate legislation and enforcement, political interference and weak administrative systems. This section will present and discuss specific aspects of these themes.

Mwanawasa's values, personal traits and conduct

Mwanawasa's leadership was typified by his strong values, personal characteristics, legal expertise, cognitive abilities, and emotional and social competence. He entered office with a very strong sense that he was there to do what was right for the people and not necessarily what would get him a second term. Mwanawasa embodied his personal values throughout his political career, consistently prioritising honesty and demonstrating extreme courage in tackling high-level corruption. His strong moral values were widely admired

and played a significant role in earning him great respect as a leader. One respondent described Mwanawasa as:

'… One of Zambia's most effective leaders who brought vision, competence and dignity to the presidency. He radiated leadership qualities that are now in short supply, namely: integrity, decency, compassion, character, courage, a predilection to consultation and a capacity to listen.' (R5)

The same respondent also reported that his exceptional personal values, unwavering courage in confronting political corruption and impeccable moral character made him an 'exemplary role model'. Another respondent (R2) framed his integrity by stating that 'Mwanawasa could claim morality over many things … he was clean, he was fair and had an aspiration bigger than himself'.

Mwanawasa's dedication to upholding professional conduct and ethics was clearly demonstrated through his unwavering adherence to judicial law (Malila, 2016). He had the reputation of seeing himself primarily as a lawyer assigned to carry out political responsibilities, rather than a politician *per se* (R1; R3). As president, he maintained a lawyer's perspective and demeanour, and was regarded as a person with strong principles. Malila, who served as the Attorney General during his presidency, highlights that Mwanawasa was a strong advocate for adhering to professional conduct and ethics:

… He belonged to a generation of lawyers who believed in practising by the book, by the rules. Mwanawasa insisted on the rules of the court being followed to the letter. He was indeed unpurchaseable. (Malila, 2016, p.77)

Several scholars have also recognised and documented the ethical leadership qualities displayed by Mwanawasa during his presidency (Kalungu-Banda, 2010; Malupenga, 2009; Ntomba, 2016). He was known for facing challenges head-on and remaining dedicated to his leadership responsibilities. He had a clear sense of purpose and was not deterred by the outcomes of his actions (R1; R3).

Mwanawasa's shift from transactional and dissonant to transformational and resonant leadership

Akashambatwa Mbikusita-Lewanika, a former Minister in the Chiluba government and a former Chief of Staff to Mwanawasa, describes Mwanawasa as a politician who entered the political arena not with preconceived revolutionary notions of transformation, but rather as someone who recognised an opportunity to do what he saw as right, and seized it (Malupenga, 2009). In short, Mwanawasa was not a firebrand, but at the same time he was not somebody who lacked his own particular zeal and sense of political purpose.

Regardless of his motivations before entering office, soon after becoming president it became clear that Mwanawasa was not simply there to maintain the status quo, and as he met against the hard edges of resistance to his anti-corruption policies, he employed a coldly legalistic transactional approach that was discordant and featured low emotional self-regulation. Shaped by the social, political and institutional context in which he operated (R1; R3), certain influences began to test his commitment to his values and principles, leading to behaviours and actions that occasionally went against his beliefs.

As time went on though, and he was able to consolidate his political authority both in the party and the government (R5), it appeared Mwanawasa's leadership strategies could afford to soften. Once his socio-economic reforms got off the ground, which included public expenditure management and a financial accountability review; the launch of the decentralisation policy; parliamentary reforms; and efforts to dismantle domestic and foreign debt, he settled into his role and gained the confidence to lead in a way that was far more transformational and resonant than it had been before, exhibiting the collaborative, visionary, and empathetic approach for which he is mostly remembered. With the eyes of the international development community on him and Mwanawasa's fight against corruption having become a major selling point in the quest for foreign direct investment, Zambia experienced one of the highest levels of economic growth during this period, which further helped Mwanawasa to build his own political base and commit to his new style of leadership.

Challenges faced by Mwanawasa in implementing his vision

Mwanawasa was the only Zambian president who clearly expressed a unique vision and mission at the start of his presidency. In his inaugural speech on 02 January 2002, he made a commitment to fighting corruption and improving governance (R5). Nevertheless (and perhaps inevitably), he encountered difficulties in putting his vision into action. His difficulties partly sprung from the perception that he did not initially have complete authority over his own party, the MMD. At first, private media, opposition political parties and civil society members seized upon this fact to express their doubts about him, viewing him mainly as a puppet of Chiluba (Ntomba, 2016). *The Post* newspaper's editorial on the day of Mwanawasa's presidential inauguration aptly expressed the public's view:

Mwanawasa is definitely a far superior human being to Chiluba in so many ways. But … is not himself, he is a puppet of Chiluba. Mwanawasa is highly indebted to Chiluba and as such cannot be expected to act freely and independently … Mwanawasa owes his presidency to Chiluba and will serve at his pleasure. (The Post newspaper, 2002)

Mwanawasa's transition to party leader was therefore by no means easy, and was made even more fraught by the post-2002 accusations of electoral malpractices (The Carter Centre, 2002) which occupied a significant portion of his first tenure as president of Zambia (R1; R5). Nevertheless, he was determined to forge his own path and establish his own identity, with the goal of dispelling any notions of being influenced by Chiluba (Malupenga, 2009).

Mwanawasa's legalistic approach

As alluded to above, Mwanawasa demonstrated mostly transactional leadership styles during his first term in office,

taking a decidedly technical and legalistic approach to decision making. Respondents agreed that his actions and decisions at this time were primarily motivated by legal considerations. According to one respondent, Mwanawasa relied too much on his legalistic approach to justify his actions, which had the unintended consequence of undermining his credibility among supporters (R1). The same respondent opined that his consistent prioritisation of legal principles sometimes clashed with public sentiment since it was felt that uncovering corruption did not always require irrefutable evidence (R1). Respondents further contended that Mwanawasa's bias towards a legalistic leadership style during his first term was indicative of a coercive or commanding attitude. It is certainly the case that Mwanawasa sometimes used his legal knowledge and authority to advance unfavourable resolutions (R5), but he was also an excellent debater whose personal character influenced the direction of the anti-corruption campaign (R3).

Mwanawasa's inconsistent ethical conduct and challenges in fighting corruption

For all his laudable leadership qualities, Mwanawasa's character was not flawless. There were, at times, even concerns about Mwanawasa's inconsistent ethical conduct. For instance, despite the ongoing corruption allegations against the Chiluba administration in 2001, it is irrefutably the case that Mwanawasa still decided to accept the MMD presidential candidature. Mwanawasa's dual allegiance to Chiluba and responsibility to the nation remained a moral dilemma with which he grappled for years, as illustrated in the following interview excerpt:

> … Despite all his shortcomings, Dr Chiluba was and still is a very close friend of mine. I regard him as my elder brother. He assisted me in my most difficult times … and when it became necessary to nominate a presidential candidate for the MMD … it was Dr Chiluba who proposed my name. So, I have a lot of love for Dr Chiluba. (Mwanawasa in Malupenga, 2009, pp. 147–148)

As noted in the 2002 Zambian election, incidents of corruption and political manipulation tainted the process, with Chiluba and his allies widely thought to have orchestrated these actions to benefit Mwanawasa (R1; R3). Stakeholders have therefore questioned Mwanawasa's failure to acknowledge this misconduct, and respondents provided differing interpretations of his actions. For instance, one respondent was content to attribute Mwanawasa's actions to internal factionalism within the ruling party (R5), while another argued that although he initially compromised his values by accepting candidature for the MMD party in the elections, he later utilised his position to strongly advocate against corruption (R3). For the latter respondent, Mwanawasa's behaviour was viewed as more pragmatic than unethical – that is, in order to gain a vantage point from which to fight corruption, small, politically expedient compromises with the MMD party inevitably had to be made (R3).

Another factor that affected Mwanawasa's leadership in tackling corruption was the criticism he faced regarding allegations of nepotism in his cabinet appointments. According to Malupenga (2009), Mwanawasa emphasised the importance of unwavering allegiance to the appointing authority but did not provide a complete rebuttal to the allegations. The appointment of individuals with personal connections to sensitive government positions was viewed as a corrupt practice and a notable blemish on his presidency (R1).

The reason for mentioning these uncomfortable realities of Mwanawasa's presidency is that they happened and must be reckoned with, even in the context of exploring his generally praise-worthy leadership example. It is important to note that being a transformational leader does not mean being perfect. However, Mwanawasa's leadership showcased ongoing growth, ultimately leading the country to a more favourable position.

Mwanawasa's evolving emotional conduct

Mwanawasa's lack of emotional self-regulation, especially in his early presidential period, was evident in his irritability and short temper (R1; R2). A contributing factor to his conduct was a lack of trust in individuals and institutions (R1). Mwanawasa explained that his temper was a result of his diabetic illness and the emotional impact of a motor vehicle accident he experienced in 1991 (Malupenga, 2009). Whatever the mainspring of his unregulated emotions, his public outbursts of rage caused significant misunderstandings.

According to Kalungu-Banda (2010), Mwanawasa was frequently perceived as dissatisfied and lacking in attentive listening skills, with a reluctance to accept criticism. Vernon Mwaanga, a former minister in Mwanawasa's first cabinet in 2002, described Mwanawasa as a person with high emotional reactivity, impulsivity and a short temper. Mwaanga also claimed that the President instilled fear in his ministers (Ntomba, 2016). These behaviours influenced his anti-corruption decisions and his interactions with cabinet colleagues (R1). This was especially true in situations requiring immediate decision-making (R2). Notwithstanding emotional obstacles, however, Mwanawasa generally upheld a consultative approach to decision-making and projected an aura of authority by virtue of his esteemed senior lawyer status (R2).

As he progressed in his role as president, Mwanawasa demonstrated greater stability and less volatility. He displayed a greater sense of empathy and compassion and a shift towards decision-making based on affect rather than rationality and legal considerations (R2; R5). To cite one example of this, respondents all remembered the empathy he showed to his political opponent Michael Sata, who was openly critical of the anti-corruption campaign and later became president. In 2008, Sata required urgent medical evacuation to South Africa, and it was Mwanawasa who helped to facilitate this. Despite concerns about flight risk during the ongoing court corruption cases, he made a similar gesture to the ailing Chiluba. As such, Mwanawasa is generally remembered as a president with positive qualities, who possessed a good heart and the desire to answer a noble calling.

TABLE 2: Main themes: Relationships between external context, personal characteristics, leadership and organisational behaviours and governance systems.

Political, social and legislative context during Mwanawasa's presidency	
• Internal MMD party challenges and pressure from external stakeholders. • Mwanawasa's rise to power and consolidation of leadership within the MMD. • Political interference, limited accountability and ineffective political leadership. • Support and opposition to Mwanawasa 's anti-corruption campaign.	
Intentional domain	**Behavioural domain**
Individual consciousness (subjective awareness)	**Individual behaviour (objective)**
Represents Mwanawasa's internal consciousness ,that is, emotions, mental functioning, spiritual concerns, values, sensations, meaning and experiences.	*Represents Mwanawasa's observable behaviours and actions.*
• Honesty, integrity, determination, ethical conduct, political will and dedication to change; • Extensive legal knowledge and expertise.	• Transactional (legalistic) and discordant (low emotional self-regulation); shifting to • Transformational (collaborative, visionary) and resonant (empathetic).
Cultural domain	**Social domain**
Collective awareness (inter-subjective)	**Social systems and governance (inter-objective)**
Represents relationships, community, a shared sense of reality, shared language, norms, symbols, meaning, cohesion and belonging.	*Represents the organisational structures, systems, resources, plans, strategies, shared actions, measurement metrics and performance.*
Institutional cultural hurdles in implementing anti-corruption reforms, including • A lack of values such as probity, integrity, honesty and trustworthiness, as well as opposition to change and protecting personal interests.	Institutional difficulties, including: • Insufficient anti-corruption policies and legislation and ineffective enforcement; • Limited political and bureaucratic accountability; and • Inflexible hierarchical structures and bureaucratic administrative systems.

Source: Framework adapted from Wilber, K. (2000). *A theory of everything: An integral vision for business, politics, science and spirituality*. Shambhala
MMD, movement for multiparty democracy.

Challenges in reforming state institutions in anti-corruption efforts

State institutions in underdeveloped nations, such as Zambia, frequently exhibit features that reduce their efficacy. These features include highly structured hierarchies, inflexible bureaucratic administrative systems and operational inefficiencies (Benington & Hartley, 2011; Haricharan, 2023). In seeking to reform state institutions, Mwanawasa therefore encountered similar challenges to other transformational leaders who have embarked on executing anti-corruption initiatives (EISA, 2021). One of the primary obstacles leaders face in the fight against corruption is the arduous task of bolstering institutional capabilities to guarantee a campaign's sustainability within state structures over the long term. This restriction goes beyond the prosecution of specific individuals like Chiluba, or a handful of disreputable politicians and public officials (R4). For Mwanawasa, it was apparent that the ideals of probity, integrity, honesty and trustworthiness were not effectively integrated into state institutions themselves, nor reflected in the behaviours of many public officials (R1; R2).

In its anti-corruption endeavours, Mwanawasa's ad hoc Taskforce on Corruption attained noteworthy accomplishments. However, it is crucial to note that statutory authorities such as the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) were not sufficiently strengthened. Mwanawasa recognised the institutional difficulties he faced but attributed them to shortcomings in the legal system and the state's limited capacity (Malupenga, 2009).

It is important to consider the resistance faced by state institutions towards Mwanawasa's change agenda. Organisational change is a process that requires time and even the most influential leader may find it challenging to completely transform state bureaucracies within a few years. In fact, such a transformation may take decades to fully materialise.

Discussion

This paper has so far sought to highlight the shortcomings of transactional leadership and the value of transformational leadership in facilitating change and overcoming obstacles, particularly during times of crisis or transition. The case study of Mwanawasa has depicted a political leader's personal, leadership and governance challenges, as well as the subsequent personal development path he followed to accomplish change. The ensuing discussion centres more specifically on how manifesting effective political leadership involves a complex and dynamic process that occurs under intense conditions and is accompanied by lofty expectations (Ford et al., 2021).

During the early stages of his presidency, Mwanawasa exhibited impulsive and conformist ego state behaviours (Loevinger, 1976). Over time, however, he progressed towards the self-awareness and autonomous stages of ego development, as demonstrated by his increased ability to recognise and manage internal conflicts. His political and personal transformation entailed adopting more collaborative, empathetic, ethical and visionary behaviours. Mwanawasa's behavioural evolution provides valuable lessons about the roles played by a leader's values, political will, vision, temperament, commitment, and resolve while navigating a politically turbulent and ineffectual institutional landscape to combat political corruption.

The discussion that follows delves deeper into the significance, implications and pertinence of the findings in relation to prior research, concentrating on three pivotal components: the impact of environment on leaders' ability to shift their leadership style; the use of vision and ethics in transformational leadership; and the evolution of behaviour as leaders adapt to new leadership styles.

The influence of context on leadership transitioning: Challenges, stress and transformation

Frederickson and Matkin (2007) and Van Wart (2011) assert that context influences much of what is interesting about leadership, and comprehending the governmental context is crucial for any kind of political leadership inquiry.

Public leaders and governments are permanently confronted with significant challenges as they navigate shifting environments and grapple with fluctuating trust in their leadership and governance capacity.

Leaders experiencing crises may also encounter 'power stress', which is characterised by the uninterrupted occurrence of minor crises, major responsibilities, and the constant vigilance required to influence others. This form of stress can become overwhelming for leaders, potentially leading to a state of dissonance (Boyatzis & McKee, 2006). During the initial phase of Mwanawasa's leadership, there was a noticeable presence of power stress and dissonant behaviour.

It has already been noted how public institutions play a crucial role in shaping the ability of leaders to accomplish their objectives (Carbone & Pellegata, 2020) and how institutions can put up stiff resistance in the face of change. As well as facing obstacles related to political interreference, ineffective judicial processes and civil society pressure for political accountability, it must be remembered that Mwanawasa's anti-corruption campaign also faced the significant challenge of reforming state institutions to support his anti-corruption initiatives. Thus, despite the accomplishments of the Taskforce on Corruption and his strengthening of statutory authorities, Mwanawasa clashed with those institutions that prioritised safeguarding their own established interests and exhibited resistance towards efforts aimed at transformation (Ford et al., 2021). In addition to frustrating Mwanawasa's anti-corruption efforts, the consequences of maintaining ineffective entrenched hierarchies and archaic bureaucratic systems are deeply detrimental to leadership and governance, as well as the agility and performance of public institutions (Haricharan, 2023; Williams 2021).

Outside of the stresses peculiar to Mwanawasa's anti-corruption campaign, political systems themselves have also been found to have an influence on a leader's personality and psychology as a result of their experiences during transitions, as discussed by Carbone and Pellegata (2020) and Wiatr (2022). Moreover, Elsner and Farrands' (2012) research on leadership transition shows that in almost any circumstance a newly appointed leader will face substantial pressure and heightened stress as they are expected to produce tangible outcomes shortly after assuming their new role. Altogether, these factors can lead to newly appointed leaders experiencing immense difficulties and uncertainties, resulting in a decline in self-confidence and potential debilitation and decreased productivity (Elsner & Farrands, 2012; Haricharan & Wyley, 2013).

Visionary leader's commitment to ethical values and transformational leadership

Mwanawasa's leadership was characterised by a clear vision, strong political will, and a commitment to ethical values. His values inspired and influenced others, forming the basis for his leadership actions. Brown et al. (2005) suggest that an ethical leader's effectiveness during challenging times is linked to their discipline and moral traits such as honesty, reliability, trustworthiness and respect. In the case of Mwanawasa, he played the role of a visionary torchbearer for both the government and his party in difficult circumstances. His role was to shape the party's and the state's strategic orientation while dealing with the myriad governance issues that arose.

Wiatr (2022) argues that a pivotal element of visionary leadership is the unwavering commitment to a vision that transcends the mere acquisition of power. Hope (2017) also emphasises the necessity of political will in affecting change and combating political corruption. However, despite its importance, political will is a fragile and vulnerable entity in an unstable political climate. Speville (2013, referenced in Quah, 2017, p.19) compares the political will of a newly elected president to the flame of a candle that sits in their heart. He asserts that the flame must be protected at all costs from transient political influences. Notwithstanding his shortcomings and the numerous negative forces that attempted to stifle his flame, Mwanawasa managed to remain committed to his principles and the anti-corruption campaign, which was ground-breaking and an inspiration across the African continent. It is significant indeed that his leadership style has embodied the humanistic principles of ubuntu (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019), which is not something said about many leaders once they have left office. Conversely, untrammelled political corruption is often attributed to wavering political leadership (Asomah, 2019).

The evolution of leadership styles: Transition from dissonance to resonance

Initially, Mwanawasa was perceived as a weak leader and a mere instrument for his predecessor's political manoeuvres. Seeking to correct this misunderstanding, he found it necessary to establish his authority and set a positive example, which he achieved by employing a combination of leadership styles, including those that were characteristic of transactional leadership. According to Goleman et al. (2002), the application of these dissonant styles, such as commanding and pacesetting, particularly during times of crisis or in the short term, may be acceptable. Nevertheless, as those authors also advise, it is better to exercise prudence and limit the use of dissonant styles to brief durations. Thus, while Mwanawasa's reliance on dissonant behaviours at the start of his presidency was effective, they also directly inhibited his ability to employ the more resonant styles that would serve him so well in the long term. Moreover, the limited capacity he initially demonstrated to regulate his emotions threatened to stifle his embrace of a more transformational leadership approach as his term of office progressed.

As he developed and refined his EI competencies – including emotional self-awareness, adaptability, empathy, influence and a positive outlook – Mwanawasa demonstrated a proclivity towards leadership that was more democratic and

affiliative, and geared towards building relationships and facilitating collaboration.

Thus, especially after his re-election, he adopted a decision-making approach characterised by greater stability, compassion and the extension of empathetic gestures to his political opponents. His improved EI competence enabled him to adopt transformational leadership styles such as visionary and democratic, which were distinguished by his ability to articulate a compelling vision, inspire, motivate others, promote positive change, demonstrate ethical behaviour, and take actions that aligned with his values. Over this period, he demonstrated increasing stability and self-assurance with regard to his political constituency, garnering the trust and support of a variety of stakeholders because of the exceptional reputation he had established. It was arguably as a result of his adaptability, an essential EI competency, that Mwanawasa was able to challenge the status quo and achieve his various institutional victories, as supported by various academic sources (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Burns, 1978; Kouzes & Posner, 2003).

Loevinger's (1976) conceptual framework on ego development helps us analyse how leaders such as Mwanawasa can grow and change in difficult situations. Drawing from Loevinger's work, Cook-Greuter's (2013) model shows how each stage of development becomes progressively more comprehensive, differentiated, and capable of handling life's obstacles than the one before it. It is particularly worth pointing out that multiple studies have shown a clear link between transformational leadership and EI (Cavaletti & Bizarrias, 2023). This association is particularly valuable in the realm of public leadership, as it enables leaders to establish meaningful relationships with citizens, social groups and officials when navigating change (Görgens-Ekermans & Roux, 2021; Vigoda-Gadot & Meisler, 2010). Mwanawasa's presidency showcased this intricate process of enacting change, and clearly indicated the ways that experience, understanding, and ability to influence and integrate are interconnected and constantly evolving.

Conclusion

Transformational leadership, which uses power to influence social and institutional change, is a vital element in the fight against political corruption. To better understand the characteristics that facilitate or hinder transformational leadership, this article examined the instance of one president's leadership behaviours in anti-corruption initiatives, as well as the impact of the political and institutional framework on his leadership.

Mwanawasa's visionary and generally ethical attitude, along with his political will and commitment, enabled him to launch a major anti-corruption campaign in a country that had never seen the like. Over the course of his tenure, his leadership approach underwent a gradual transformation from authoritarian to democratic as he cultivated his emotional intelligence and adopted transformational leadership behaviours. During his transition, he began a process of overcoming both personal and external challenges, including a politically volatile party and opposition from governmental institutions.

This study validates the importance of building institutional capacity and instilling principles of integrity and trustworthiness in order to resist corruption over time. Nevertheless, additional research is required to improve the field of public leadership, especially given the limited academic literature that investigates the importance of transformational leadership and leaders' EI during transition phases of government. Further research is also necessary to fully comprehend the themes that have been discussed and to examine other factors that influence political leadership and corruption, with a specific focus on Africa.

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