

The Unique Challenges of Public Sector Ethics



“CHARACTER IS DESTINY”

Ancient Greek Philosopher Heraclitus
535 B.C.-475 B.C.

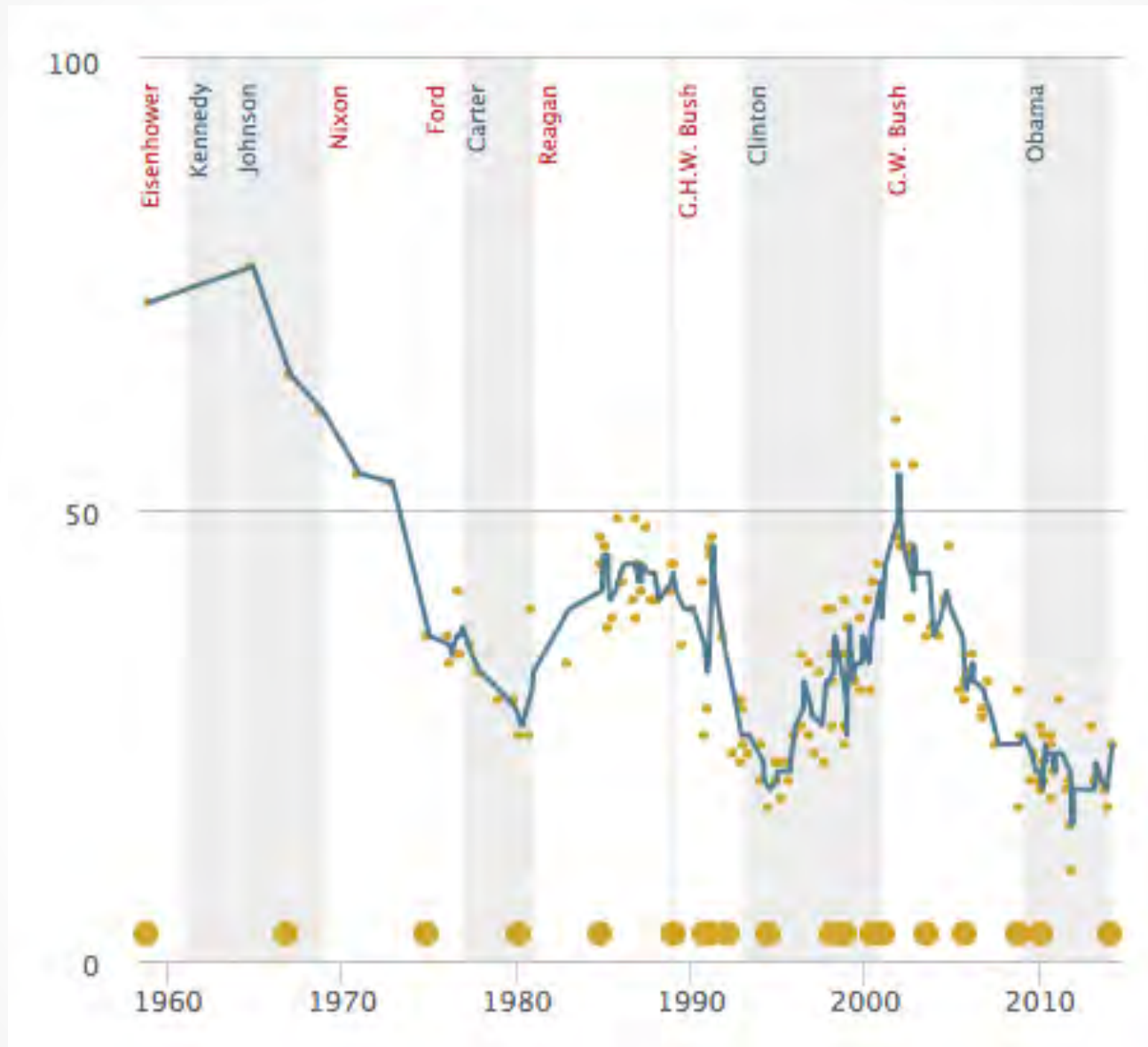


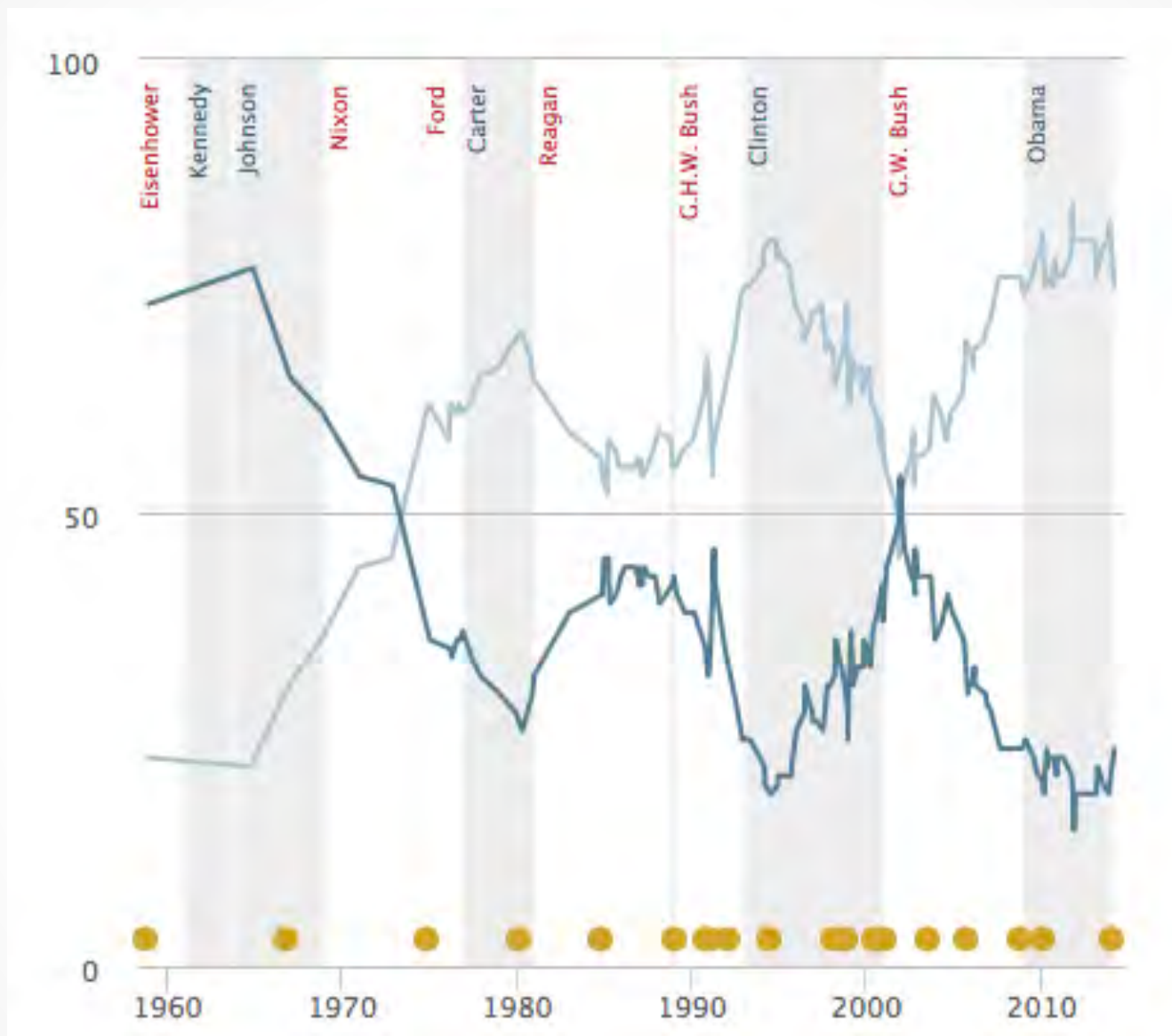
Facilitates

the Democratic Process









Greed – Personal Failings – Professional Lapses



**WHAT DID HE KNOW,
WHEN DID HE KNOW IT?**

Top Emanuel aides aware of key Laquan McDonald details months before mayor says he knew, Tribune review shows

What Message Does This Send?

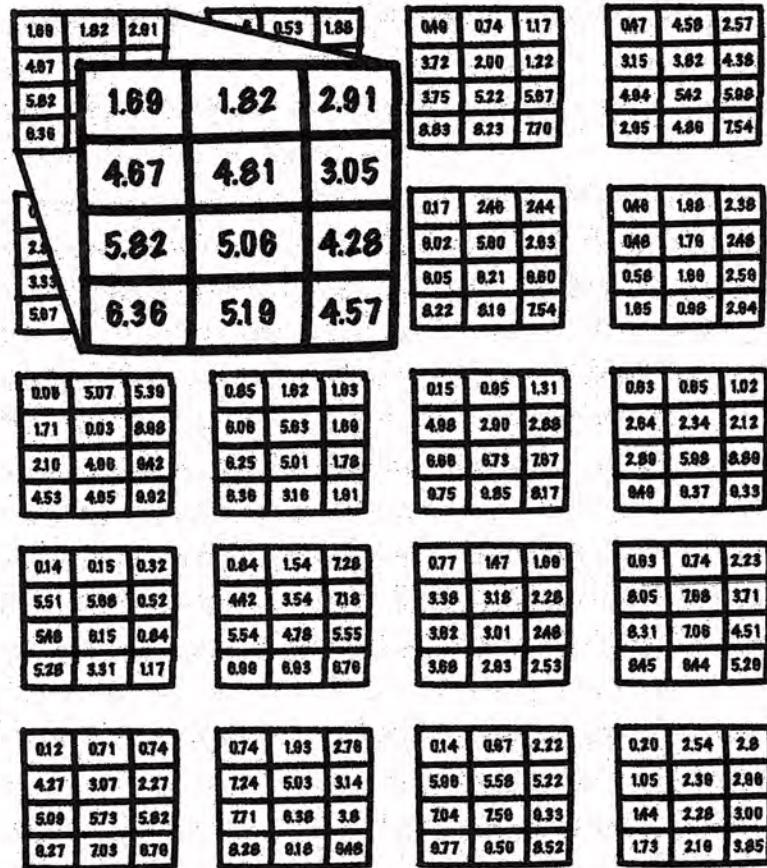


Or This?



Testing the Simple Model of Rational Crime

Figure 1: Matrix Task



The Forces That Shape Dishonesty

Increase Dishonesty

Ability to Rationalize

Conflicts of Interest

Creativity

One Immoral Act

Being Depleted

Others Benefiting from Our Dishonesty

Watching Others Behave Dishonestly

Culture That Gives Examples of Dishonesty

No Effect

Amount of Money to be Gained

Probability of Being Caught

Decrease Dishonesty

Pledge

Signatures

Moral Reminders

Supervision

Lessons

- Understand why people behave dishonestly
- Reminders at the moment of temptation
- Regulate conflicts of interest
- Be aware of the effects of mental and physical exhaustion
- Understand the impact of social infectiousness

Issues in Government Ethics

- Dedication to Democracy
- Obedience to the Rule of Law
- Fairness
- Faithful Execution and Accountability
- Conflicts of Interest
- Transparency
- Gifts and Bribes
- Favoritism
- Civility
- Personal Behavior

Typical Mistakes

- Inappropriate expenses
- Email is not private
- Unfiltered social media
- Failure to disclose conflicts of interest
- Giving in to the noise
- Ignoring established policy, rules or tradition
- Personal use of public resources
- Ignoring the glare of the public domain
- Sending mixed messages

Typical Causes

- Management shortcomings
- Time pressure
- Uncharted territory or inexperience
- Peer pressure
- Failure to accept accountability for the first mistake
- Personal loyalties
- Personal cost to do the right thing is too high
- Emotions
- Lost perspective

Ethical Development Model for Organizations

K. Hanson

- 1st Stage: Legal Compliance – “Break No Laws”
- 2nd Stage: “Highest Ethical Standards”
- 3rd Stage: Values in Management

The organization seeks to understand conflicting values and ethical concerns at every level of the organization.

Warning Signs.....

- ✓ “No one will ever know...”
- ✓ “I deserve it...” (or “They owe it to me...”)
- ✓ “They will never miss it...”
- ✓ “Everyone is doing it...”
- ✓ “They had it coming...” (or “I am just fighting fire with fire...”)

Warning Signs.....

- ✓ “Do not tell me, I do not want to know...”
- ✓ “It is okay if I do not gain personally”
- ✓ “Technically, it is legal...”
- ✓ “I can still be objective...”
- ✓ “This will not affect my work...”

Six Steps to an Ethical Decision

- The Law: Is it legal? Does it meet the spirit of the law?
- The Rules: Am I violating a policy/breaking a rule that everyone else must follow?
- Integrity: Am I breaking my word, a trust, a promise, or a value?
- Appearances: Do I have a conflict of interest in fact or appearance? Am I the only or prime beneficiary of an offer or service?
- Clear Thinking: Is emotion or bias clouding my judgment?
- Perspective : When I look back on this situation, will I be proud of my conduct? Is it my finest hour or one I might regret?

The Leader's Role in Building an Ethical Organization

- Integrate ethical strategies into routine operations
- Be consistent in enforcement and compliance messages
- Communicate standards and expectations clearly
- Commit to ethics training and compliance
- Offer opportunities to discuss ethical issues
- Provide counsel and advice
- Recruit individuals who reflect the ethical values of the organization
- Recognize and commend employee's expressions of ethical concerns

Adapted from Ethics in Action, ICMA Training Package

Preserve the Intangible

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that you’ll do things differently.”

Warren Buffett

“Your humility, honesty and strength of character are the only truly important memories about you that will live on once you are gone.”

Limardi Household