# Dædalus

## On Political Leadership

Archie Brown, guest editor

with Nannerl O. Keohane
S. Alexander Haslam & Stephen D. Reicher
Eric A. Posner · Michele L. Swers
Robert Elgie · Eugene Huskey
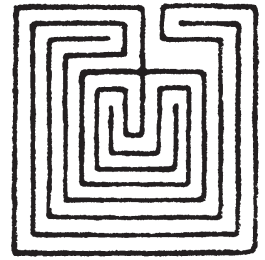Barbara Kellerman · Alfred Stepan
Anthony King

# Dædalus

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*Inside front cover:* Martin Luther King, Jr., speaking in 1963 at a rally in Los Angeles. © 1963 by Julian Wasser. Malala Yousafzai speaking about gender inequality and education at the Southbank Centre's Women of the World Festival 2014. Photograph by Sarah Jeynes. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0). For information and more images from the event, see https://www.flickr.com/photos/southbankcentre/albums/72157642042959713.

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# Dædalus

Nineteenth-century depiction of a Roman mosaic labyrinth, now lost, found in Villa di Diomede, Pompeii

Dædalus was founded in 1955 and established as a quarterly in 1958. The journal's namesake was renowned in ancient Greece as an inventor, scientist, and unriddler of riddles. Its emblem, a maze seen from above, symbolizes the aspiration of its founders to "lift each of us above his cell in the labyrinth of learning in order that he may see the entire structure as if from above, where each separate part loses its comfortable separateness."

The American Academy of Arts & Sciences, like its journal, brings together distinguished individuals from every field of human endeavor. It was chartered in 1780 as a forum "to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honour, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people." Now in its third century, the Academy, with its more than five thousand members, continues to provide intellectual leadership to meet the critical challenges facing our world.

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# Introduction

*Archie Brown*

The character and quality of political leadership, both in one's own country and in those of others, has huge implications for us all. It is a subject that has been widely studied, but this issue of *Dædalus* takes a distinctively fresh look at it. It appears during an American presidential election campaign that is even more than usually abrasive and which raises questions about the nature and efficacy of political authority. The contributors to the issue come from different disciplines and from different countries.

The geographical scope of the discussion is also wide-ranging, but political leadership in the United States figures prominently. The conflicting roles of an American president, as simultaneously leader of the country, the executive branch, and the party, are examined in Eric Posner's essay, and the U.S. presidency is placed in comparative context in the contributions of Robert Elgie and Anthony King. Michele Swers directs her attention to American legislative leaders and focuses on the notable underrepresentation of women in the House and Senate, whether the comparison is made with women as a proportion of the U.S. population (more than half ) or with the proportion of female members of the legislature in other democracies. Swers also identifies the distinctiveness of the policies women legislators espouse and the laws they back, even at a time when the partisan divide between the parties has become sharper.

There has been a protracted debate in political science about the institutional design most conducive to democratic governance. Strong arguments have

been advanced that it is best attained – and also *main*tained – by a parliamentary system, but the empirical evidence suggesting presidentialism is, indeed, a bad idea for fledgling democracies is contradictory. The institutional design actually adopted by many countries emerging from long periods of authoritarian rule is known as *semipresidentialism*, and Elgie argues that some variants of semipresidentialism are more consonant with the consolidation of democracy than others. There is no getting away from the fact, however, that large-*n* statistical studies find it hard to capture the significance of the quality and style of particular political leaderships as distinct from drawing conclusions based on analysis of their constitutional and de facto powers.

In a democracy there are, and should be, multiple leaders. That the United States has numerous leaders is one of the themes of Posner's essay. He notes that Congress has four: specifically, the top party officers in the House and Senate. Nevertheless, in the course of the twentieth century, the president acquired a leadership and agenda-setting role more capacious than the authors of the Constitution envisaged. Posner's argument that successful leadership "seems to depend fundamentally on the ability of the leader to acquire and maintain the trust of the group" to which he or she belongs fits with the social identity approach of psychologists Alexander Haslam and Stephen Reicher. They are critical of studies that concentrate on the qualities and characteristics of leaders in the abstract, emphasizing that the successful leader is both prototypical of the group and someone capable of mobilizing followers around a collective sense of "who we are" and "what we are about."

Barbara Kellerman is likewise skeptical of any assumption that the individual leader is overwhelmingly important. She emphasizes the necessity of studying the relationships between leader and led and of seeing them in their social and political contexts. Kellerman takes issue not so much with leadership studies as an area of intellectual inquiry as with the teaching of "leadership development" (or what she calls the "leadership industry"). She observes that during the decades in which the attempt to teach people *how* to be leaders has burgeoned globally, but especially in the United States, leaders in virtually every walk of life, including politics, have fallen increasingly into disrepute. She provocatively suggests that "we do not have much better an idea of how to grow good leaders, or of how to stop or at least slow bad leaders, than we did one hundred or even one thousand years ago."

Political theorist (and leader, as former president of two of America's most prestigious higher educational institutions) Nannerl Keohane underlines, however, the necessity of leadership as an activity, one needed "to protect the vigor and capacity of democratic governments." It is required not only from presidents or other heads of governments but, for example, also in congressional committees, local politics, and education. In addressing the linkage of "Leadership, Equality & Democracy," Keohane shares the concern of a number of analysts that the extremes of economic inequality that now prevail in many advanced countries, and in the United States more than most, engender a political inequality so great as to undermine democracy. If, as other essays in this collection make very clear, there are enormous dangers in a polity in which few, if any, checks and balances constrain a leader, there are hazards of a different kind in a system where the power of money so exceeds the power of the majority of the people, and so limits the actions of political office-holders, as effectively to veto social change. Yet in the absence of leadership that combines passion and pragmatism, the threat posed by "profound socioeconomic inequalities" will hardly begin to be overcome.

A case can be made that the American president – who has a stronger democratic legitimacy than any other actor in the system, having been elected by the whole country (with occasional aberrations caused by the electoral college when, as in 2000, occupancy of the White House went to the candidate who received fewer votes) – should be somewhat less constrained in domestic policy-making than he has been. A multitude of constraints on the presidency is not, however, a problem in the countries with which Eugene Huskey is concerned – quite the opposite. His essay on "Authoritarian Leadership in the Post-Communist World" examines half of the fifteen successor states to the Soviet Union and explores the origins and development of personalistic rule in the region. Several of these states have seen the emergence of monstrous cults of personality, and their presidents, in a number of cases, wield even more individual power than that of a party leader in Soviet times, since – the period of "high Stalinism" apart – Communist rule was generally more oligarchic than autocratic.

If a majority of the post-Soviet states have moved from one form of authoritarianism to another, the same, alas, appears to be true of several Middle Eastern and North African countries in which high hopes for democracy were expressed during the Arab Spring. Even worse, some have been plunged into bloody anarchy and civil war. The one encouraging exception has been Tunisia, whose impressive, albeit still fragile, democratic transition is analyzed by Alfred Stepan. He puts the Tunisian experience in comparative context, noting that in common with the transitions that produced effective democratic leadership in Spain, Chile, and Indonesia, Tunisia has had a multiplicity of cooperating leaders, rather than a single "strong leader." Successful democratization, he argues, often involves the formation of a powerful coalition that brings together one-time enemies. This transpired in Tunisia but notably failed to occur in Egypt, Syria, and Libya.

The yearning for a strong individual leader comes under more sustained critical scrutiny in the last two essays in this issue. While an effective government is a requirement of any modern state, this does not necessarily imply a president or prime minister who dominates the entire executive and his or her political party. I argue that within authoritarian regimes, a more collective leadership is a lesser evil than personal dictatorship, and that in countries attempting to escape from authoritarian rule, a collegial, inclusive, and collective leadership is more conducive to successful democratic transition than great concentration of power in the hands of one individual at the top of the hierarchy. In established democracies, too, the quality of governance benefits from dispersed power within the executive, and from members of the top leadership team having no qualms about contradicting the top leader.

Anthony King draws on his long study of the American and British political systems to provide a critique of particular presidencies and premierships. He pays attention also to the interesting case of Switzerland, which, he suggests, has flourished economically and politically in recent times, notwithstanding its linguistic and religious differences and the absence of an instantly identifiable leader. Eschewing such personal dominance has, it would appear, contributed to Swiss success. The occasions in a country's history when a mighty individual leader is necessary are mercifully rare. A "strong" leader wielding great power at the apex of the political system is liable to do more harm than good. Indeed, King concludes, there is much to be said for a country's "political culture and institutions having built into them a fair amount of 'leader proofing.'"

*Archie Brown*

# Leadership, Equality & Democracy

*Nannerl O. Keohane*

*Abstract: The goal of this essay is to clarify the relationship between leadership and equality as two essential constitutive factors of a democratic political system. The essay is motivated by concern about increasing inequalities in the political system of the United States and other countries that describe themselves as democracies. The first section notes the logical tension between leadership and equality, and spells out my understanding of the key terms I use in this essay. I show how the tension between leadership and equality poses a conundrum for democratic governance. Yet the crux of my argument is that profound socioeconomic inequalities pose the more basic threat. I identify disparities in power, as distinct from leadership, as the root of the problem here.*

*Leadership and power are often conflated. Eliding the differences between the two impedes our understanding of the dilemmas we face. The classical answer to concerns about the abuse of power is to establish institutional constraints on political leadership. Yet good leadership is essential in solving the problems we confront. Because leaders can take significant steps to reduce inequality, leadership and equality are not always in tension. If we are to emerge from our current malaise, we must recognize and draw upon the positive contributions of leadership to efficacious democratic governance.*

NANNERL O. KEOHANE, a Fellow of the American Academy since 1991, is a political philosopher and university administrator who served as president of Wellesley College and Duke University. She has taught at Swarthmore College and Stanford, Duke, and Princeton Universities. Her books include *Philosophy and the State in France: the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (1980), *Higher Ground: Ethics and Leadership in the Modern University* (2006), and *Thinking about Leadership* (2010). She is a member of the Harvard Corporation, and serves on the Board of Trustees of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the Board of Directors of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

We begin with a conundrum:

1) Democracy, as a system of government, depends upon political equality: each citizen must have a voice and the opportunity to use it to influence decisions made within the political community, particularly those that have a direct effect on the interests of that citizen. Each person's voice should count as much as that of any other citizen.

2) Democracy, like any complex social system, requires leadership. In any situation in which more than a few people want to accomplish some shared goal, leadership will be needed to mobilize their energies effectively.

3) Leaders have more power than those they lead. The disparity is less dramatic when the leadership is gentle and benign, rather than coercive, but it holds across the board. In order to clarify goals and mobilize energies to accomplish a joint project, leaders must persuade others to engage in behaviors that these in-

dividuals might not otherwise choose to undertake. In that sense, leaders are always, to use the memorable phrase from *Animal Farm*, "more equal than others."[1]

The first principle asserts that equality, in some form, is constitutive of a democratic regime. Other kinds of government may be responsive to popular needs and demands because of a sense of obligation, or from a shrewd awareness of how authority is best sustained. Thus, a regime's responsiveness to popular needs and demands is not the same as democratic governance.

The term *democracy* usually denotes *popular sovereignty*, government in which ultimate power resides in the body of the citizens. Other definitions emphasize popular participation in determining policies that affect the whole community. Popular sovereignty requires the people to choose their leaders, hold them accountable, and potentially remove them from office. Participation in policy-making is a more active and continuing requirement. In either case, power rests with *the people*, theoretically defined as all citizens of a polity, though democracies throughout history have understood the term with an implicit asterisk, excluding women, slaves, children, felons, or those without property, among other groups.

Despite these exclusions, political theorists from Plato to the present have associated democracy with equality. Readers of the *Republic* will recall how Plato, in book VIII, scorns democracy as a system of government precisely because it can carry its distinctive principle (equality) to absurd and destructive ends. Aristotle defines democracy in book IV of the *Politics* in terms of equality as the principle by which we recognize whether any polity deserves this name. The most basic form of democracy is one that comes closest to abstract equality, where the law declares "that the poor are to count no more than the rich; neither is to be sovereign, and both are to be on a level … with all sharing alike, as far as possible, in constitutional rights."[2]

In discussing the principles of the social contract, Rousseau adds: "From whatever side one traces one's way back to the principle, one always reaches the same conclusion: namely, that the pact establishes among the Citizens an equality such that all commit themselves under the same conditions and must all enjoy the same rights."[3] More recently, Robert Dahl, listing the basic principles of democratic theory, chose "to lay down political equality as an end to be maximized, that is, to postulate that the goals of every adult citizen of a republic are to be accorded equal value in determining government policies."[4]

*Equality* is a notoriously tricky term. For our purposes, I want to concentrate on *political equality*. I understand this term to describe a situation in which each citizen has the same rights as any other citizen to participate in determining the outcome of a decision for the community. No one's voice is amplified by extraneous factors such as wealth, education, race, or gender. Nor are any voices suppressed by fear of negative consequences for trying to express one's views.

This first principle – the link between democracy and equality – is one that most readers may already take for granted. The second principle in my conundrum is less familiar. *Democracy, like any complex social system, requires leadership*.

In *Thinking about Leadership*, I argue that "leaders determine or clarify goals for a group of individuals and bring together the energies of members of that group to accomplish those goals."[5] This approach builds on an understanding of leadership as set out by, for example, Philip Selznick, who describes leadership as "a kind of work done to meet the needs of a social situation."[6] Such a low-key conception of leadership is more often associated with administration or volunteer activities than with political authority, but defining goals

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and mobilizing energies are the essential components of leadership in any context, including politics.

Even in this basic understanding of leadership – as a common feature of complex human social interactions – the tension with equality arises. If, with Dahl and other theorists, we define *power* as influence over the behavior of others, whether by persuasion or coercion, it follows that leaders even in this minimalistic sense have more power than other individuals. This is why radically egalitarian movements, including Occupy Wall Street, have always tried to downplay or ignore leadership.

Some political theorists, well aware of the tension between equality and leadership, reason that in order to protect popular sovereignty, leadership must be severely constrained. Ideally, for such theorists, a democracy would do without leaders altogether. Benjamin Barber, an eloquent advocate for democratic government, asserts that precisely because of the tension between leadership and equality, our ideal goal would be to dispense with leadership entirely. He asserts that because it encroaches on individual autonomy, "leadership is opposed to participatory self-government." Therefore, "one might wish to say that in the ideal participatory system leadership vanishes altogether." He recognizes grudgingly that "actual participatory systems . . . are clearly burdened with the need for leadership."[7] Regarding leadership as a *burden* with which democracies are saddled, instead of an essential part of what makes them work, is part of the problem I want to address.

*Leadership, in the sense I am using the term, is a basic feature of all complex human activity, including democratic politics.* Thus, the principles of our conundrum, taken together, identify a basic dilemma. Leadership is essential for democratic government. Because leaders have more power than other individuals, leadership is incompatible with democracy's basic principle: equality. Therefore, democracy is an inherently contradictory form of government.

How can this dilemma be resolved?

The first step is to acknowledge that democracy can never be achieved in its pure form. As defined above, democracy is an abstract standard, an ideal that governments may approach more or less closely, but never fully reach. Most theorists of democracy, including both Dahl and Rousseau, have recognized this explicitly. Having spelled out eight criteria for a political system in which citizens effectively control their leaders, Dahl notes that, "it may be laid down dogmatically that no human organization – certainly none with more than a handful of people – has ever met or is ever likely to meet these eight conditions."[8] Dahl's mood reflected that of Rousseau, who wrote: "If there were a people of Gods, they would govern themselves democratically. So perfect a Government is not suited to men."[9]

We must also recognize that a completely egalitarian sociopolitical structure would not provide a habitable environment for humans. Dystopias, including Kurt Vonnegut's short story "Harrison Bergeron," make this point unassailably.[10] The differences between us as individuals are fundamental to our species. Inevitably these disparities in talent, aspiration, effort, opportunity, and preference, multiplied by the accidents of fortune, yield a society in which some individuals are more advantageously placed than others. The challenge we face if we aspire to come closer to democracy is to ensure that these differences do not durably aggregate to form a society rigidly stratified into castes or impenetrable social classes, with some members almost inevitably winning in the game of life and others perpetually disadvantaged, no matter how talented they are or how hard they work.

We usually speak of our form of government in the United States as a democracy. The term *republic,* used by Madison and memorialized by Benjamin Franklin, may be more appropriate. As Philip Pettit has shown, a republic is a form of government that concentrates on protecting the freedom of its citizens by avoiding domination. This is not the same as democracy, though the two are closely aligned. As Pettit points out in his Seeley Lectures, it is possible to develop a "republican theory and model of democracy."[11] In the rest of this essay, I will use the term *democracy* to identify republics in which citizens aspire to popular sovereignty and vigorous popular participation, and feature this aspiration as their dominant ideology, as opposed to the abstract ideal form of democracy discussed above.

The tension I have identified between leadership and equality will emerge in any kind of political system. Thus, it is not surprising that the first instinct of some theorists of democratic government is to try to minimize or even do away with leadership. A more familiar response is to create multiple checks and balances, to tie Gulliver down so that he cannot injure the Lilliputians. This was, of course, James Madison's tactic, which forms the basic framework of the American constitution.

The abuse of power by leaders is a significant concern for democracy, as it is for any form of government. It does not follow, however, that constraints on leadership should be so severe that they make it impossible for our leaders to lead. There is ample evidence that such constraints become self-defeating. *Theorists who regard leadership solely as a threat to good government, a brute force to be cabined and constrained, undermine the performance of the political system they wish to promote.*

Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Linz have shown the correlation between the multiple blockages in the U.S. political system and our increasing inequalities. They cite data based on the Gini index, a familiar way to measure inequality, which show that the United States has a worse score than other "long-standing democracies in advanced economies," and that this situation has become markedly worse since 1970. They also cite research that shows that "the more veto players there are in a political system, the more difficult it is to construct a win-set to alter the political status quo." Such actors have "the potential to control a constitutionally embedded, electorally generated veto point" that can obstruct significant political change.[12] The United States has more veto players by this definition than any other advanced democracy; thus, it is not surprising that it has been hard for our polity to tackle the problem of growing inequality.

As Stepan and Linz's evidence makes clear, the dramatic socioeconomic inequalities in the United States are correlated with the difficulty of taking any bold political action. Such action requires leadership in the halls of government, leadership that can build alliances and find ways to work with, rather than be completely stymied by, the checks and balances.

The next step in resolving our dilemma is to recognize that those who see leadership solely as a threat to democracy are confusing leadership with power and authority. There are connections between leadership and each of these other terms, but it is not reducible to either of them.

At a minimum, *power* involves the kind of relationship so described by Dahl: "My intuitive idea of power is something like this: *A* has power over *B* to the extent that he can get *B* to do something that *B* would not otherwise do."[13] This minimalist definition has been usefully elaborated by social scientists in several ways; but the basic point – getting someone to do what he or she would otherwise not do – remains.

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*Authority* usually denotes some formal office or position that conveys, in the words of the American Heritage Dictionary, "the power to enforce laws, exact obedience, command, determine or judge." Authority can also connote recognition of someone's eminence, experience, or wisdom, and a resulting disposition to accept his or her opinion as guidance. In political contexts, someone in authority usually has a title, badge, or office: an institutional position in a bureaucratic hierarchy. This office confers the legitimacy to enforce laws and exact obedience within that system of government.

But authority is not the same as leadership as I have defined it. A title or an office may convey a formal license to direct the activities of others, but says nothing about whether the person occupying the office has any clue about how to lead them. As John Gardner put it, "We have all occasionally encountered top persons who couldn't lead a squad of seven-year-olds to the ice cream counter."[14]

The key to my argument is the distinction between *power* and *leadership*. Leaders inevitably have some kind of power. But leaders on whom official authority has been conferred are not the only powerful members of a democratic community. Inequalities in power, not leadership as such, threaten political equality. Therefore, constraints on leadership are not the only step we need to take to assure a healthy democracy. Limiting opportunities for the abuse of power, not just constraining political leadership, is the basic goal we must pursue.

Lord Acton's famous dictum – "Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely" – is usually taken as a statement about political leadership. There are good reasons for this: the most prominent and dangerous power-holders in history have been in positions of political authority. However, Acton goes on to say:

"Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority." It is the capacity to affect or direct the behavior of other individuals that opens opportunities for abuse.

In discussing "great men," Acton identifies individuals who have unusual influence over others. Powerful persons prone to this "badness" may operate in a very limited domain. Some of the most corrupted power-holders are petty tyrants who abuse their wives and families or mistreat their employees, servants, or slaves. This has nothing to do with leadership; it arises instead when persons prone to this behavior have some licensed privilege to dominate other individuals.

Any leader capable of mobilizing the energies of others to pursue some goal has a form of power. Thus, all leaders are subject to temptations that may lead to corruption because of the power they exercise, however benign and minimal. It can be exhilarating to affect the behavior of other men and women. Power-holders (including political leaders) may in this way experience power as a kind of personal high. They may also use it for their own aggrandizement. Powerful individuals are often tempted to deploy the resources that power allows them to accumulate – wealth, status, access to privileges – to pursue selfish ends. If you possess political authority, you may also be tempted to oppress others in order to keep them docile or magnify yourself.

Arnold Rogow and Harold Lasswell connect the belief that power corrupts with the Christian conception of original sin. Acton thus gave memorable form to "one of the deepest convictions of modern liberals and democrats."[15] However, Rogow and Lasswell warn against relying so heavily on this conviction that we render our leaders incapable of leading. And they remind us that not all leaders succumb to temptations that may arise. "For every Nero sunk in corruption and debauchery"

they assert, "there is a Trajan or Marcus Aurelius who was notably upright."

It would be hard to prove that history has produced an equal number of corrupt and upright leaders. Yet we can surely agree that "the personality structure of the power-seeker" goes far to determine how any specific individual will react.[16] Most leaders, like most of us, combine good and bad qualities, strengths and weaknesses. As James David Barber put it, "Power may corrupt – or ennoble or frighten or inspire or distract a man. The result depends on his propensity for, his vulnerability to, particular kinds of corruption or cleansing. . . . Political power is like nuclear energy: available to create deserts or make them bloom."[17]

In the decades since Dahl defined power in the minimal but memorable phrase quoted above – the extent to which $A$ can "get $B$ to do something $B$ would not otherwise do" – social scientists have elaborated on this insight to deepen our understanding of power. The key work here is Steven Lukes's book, *Power: A Radical View*. Lukes criticizes Dahl's definition as overly simplistic, identifying only one dimension of power: decision-making about issues over which there is an observable conflict of interests expressed in policy preferences. Lukes follows Bachrach and Baratz in identifying a "second face of power" revealed when "$A$ devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to $A$."[18] In other words, where $A$ can control the agenda so that only certain kinds of issues or conflicts are even up for decision, $B$ may be precluded from pursuing goals that he would otherwise prefer.

Lukes's own contribution to this discussion is in naming "the third face of power":

"$A$ may exercise power over $B$ by getting him to do what he does not want to do, but he also exercises power over him by influencing, shaping, or determining his very wants." This happens, Lukes goes on to say, "through control of information, through the mass media and through the processes of socialization."[19] He identifies ways in which $A$ can manipulate $B$ to $A$'s own advantage, thus getting him to do something which is against his "real interests," however we might determine these.

When Lukes considers "the necessary conditions for human beings to flourish" – which is another way of describing "real interests" – he supports the capabilities approach subsequently developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. The goal is to identify and bring about "the necessary conditions" for all individuals to live "lives fit for human beings, who are treated and treat one another as ends, have *equal dignity and an equal entitlement to shape their own lives*, making their own choices and developing their gifts in reciprocal relationships with others."[20]

This linkage of the concept of *equality* with the concept of *power* draws our attention to the ways in which $A$'s exercise of power, in any of Lukes's three senses, can undermine or constrain $B$'s equal status and capability. There are numerous ways in which $A$ can get one or more $B$s to do something they would not otherwise do, and sometimes do things that an objective observer would regard as not in their "real interests." $A$s might use multiple resources – traditional status, seniority, educational attainments, networks of partners, tribal or ethnic ties, religious authority, intellectual shrewdness, rhetorical gifts, an aggressive personality – to get others to do something that $A$ prefers.

The resources used may include force or violence – threats to the safety and security of individuals – resulting in oppression and domination. But in a healthy so-

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ciety, the resources do not always involve coercion, even though coercion is used (or threatened) in some situations. In close relationships of family or friendship, the resources are commonly benign, fluid, and sometimes reciprocal. These include affection, altruism, gentle persuasion, and collaboration, as well as coercion or threats of sanction. In larger communities, the resources are more likely to be used impersonally and less positively for the *B*s.

The resources that can be used most effectively to get others to do what you want them to do are often economic. As Rousseau pointed out in his *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*, wealth is the most important of the various factors that conduce to inequality, because it can be used to purchase or secure most of the others.[21]

The power conveyed by the possession of wealth is especially insidious in democratic systems because of this all-purpose nature of wealth. Among the things that wealth can purchase, of course, is political power or access to influence in governing. A polity that allows the wealthiest citizens to purchase speech that drowns out other voices cannot claim to be a democracy. The problem is even greater when those who have the most wealth are able to adjust the political institutions in such a way that some issues have no chance of making it onto the political agenda – the "second face" of power, in Lukes's terms.

We have become so accustomed to the impact of wealth in American politics that we accept too readily the ways in which it debilitates our democracy. We may grumble about the consequences of *Citizens United*, or express concern about laws advantaging some voters rather than others, laws passed by legislatures dominated by wealthy citizens or those who finance their campaigns. But if we understand a democracy as a system in which citizens enjoy basic political equality, it becomes hypocritical to speak of an electoral or governmental system so profoundly shaped by these forces as a "democracy."

Political scientists in the last few years have provided ample evidence that political decision-makers at all levels, especially in Washington, pass laws and hand down regulations that disproportionately benefit more affluent Americans, particularly the very rich.[22] This point may seem unsurprising. But the striking fact is how great the disproportion has become in U.S. politics, despite our cherished conception of our country as governed democratically. Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page note: "The central point that emerges from our research is that economic elites and organized groups representing business interests have substantial independent impacts on U.S. government policy, while mass-based interest groups and average citizens have little or no independent influence."[23]

In his book *Affluence and Influence*, Gilens documents "enormous inequalities in the responsiveness of policy makers to the preferences of more- and less-well-off Americans."[24] He concludes that there is overwhelming evidence that money makes a profound difference in who gets elected in our country, and what policies are adopted. It is "political donations, not voting or volunteering," that produce this result.[25] Borrowing a term from James Snyder, Gilens asserts that very affluent Americans use their wealth to make "long-term investments" in individual politicians whose views accord with their own, knowing that the decisions of these politicians will over time favor their interests. This kind of investment in American politics does not usually involve direct bribery (although such corruption is surely not unknown). But the practice of "long-term investment" raises "the disturbing prospect of a vicious cycle in which growing eco-

nomic and political inequality are mutually reinforcing."[26]

Other students of politics make parallel arguments, including Larry Bartels in *Unequal Democracy*, Jacob S. Hacker and Paul Pierson in *The Winner-Take All Society*, Nicholas Carnes in *White-Collar Government*, and the authors of the essays in Lawrence Jacobs and Desmond King's volume *The Unsustainable American State*.[27] The arguments are somewhat different in identifying the culprit. According to Bartels, perhaps the problem is that many American citizens are uninterested in politics and too apathetic to vote, or too uninformed to vote their own apparent interests. Or it may be, as Carnes argues, that not enough working-class candidates are recruited, trained, and encouraged to run for office, so that our government is dominated by leaders from the professional and business classes. Their conclusion, however, is identical: the health of our "democratic" polity is in very poor condition because of glaring socioeconomic disparities among American citizens, reflected in our politics.

As a consequence of these findings, several students of American politics, including Jeffrey Winters and Benjamin Page, assert that it is "now appropriate . . . to think about the possibility of *extreme* political inequality, involving great political influence by a very small number of extremely wealthy individuals. We argue that it is useful to think about the U.S. political system in terms of oligarchy."[28] Gilens argues that "the patterns of responsiveness" he documents "often corresponded more closely to a plutocracy than to a democracy."[29]

We can simply accept this state of affairs as the lamentable consequence of the actions of a variety of powerful individuals, and do our best to navigate within it. If, on the other hand, we are committed to the United States as a democracy in the sense understood by Abraham Lincoln, as a government of, by, and for the people, with rough political equality for all citizens, we cannot simply accept what we now face. Even if our goal is more modest – to preserve the republican political system that protects citizens from oppression, and address those areas in which some citizens (particularly young black men) are less well protected than others from abuses of power – we cannot be complacent about our situation.

The vague hope that the unpredictable fortunes of our economic cycles will reduce the glaring inequalities is a very dubious source of amelioration. A rising tide does not lift all boats when some of the boats are firmly anchored in the mud and will simply be swamped by the rising waters. Yet a falling tide will lower all boats without specific human intervention to protect those most at risk.

In the modern era, the French, Russian, and Chinese revolutions brought about a dramatic short-term reduction in inequality. The first and second world wars, along with the Great Depression, accounted for significant short-term reductions in inequality in Europe and the United States.[30] Yet it would surely be perverse to hope for war or revolution as a means to reduce inequality.

The most common response to the growing power of money in contemporary politics in the United States is to urge citizens to mobilize, to wake up from their apathy, to put pressure on the government and take back the state.[31] However, large numbers of citizens cannot accomplish this goal individually and spontaneously. Furthermore, this suggestion runs athwart the huge body of evidence about the problems posed by those who want to be "free riders" on the efforts of others to achieve collective goals.[32]

Here is where leadership – clarifying goals and mobilizing energies – becomes deeply relevant. Good leadership is a potential source of repair and reconstitution for our political system.

*Nannerl O. Keohane*

A number of contemporary commentators assert that complex social systems can do without leadership, relying on crowd sourcing, social media, or other ways of achieving social harmony and pursuing joint purposes. Clay Shirky argues that throughout history until the contemporary era, in order to "organize the work of even dozens of individuals, you had to manage them." This meant setting up a centralized organization with management by a CEO, a king, a chair. The "new tools" of social media, email, websites, and other technological aids allow us to circumvent this problem. "By making it easier for groups to self-assemble and for individuals to contribute to group effort without requiring formal management (and its attendant overhead), these tools have radically altered the old limits on the size, sophistication and scope of unsupervised effort." Shirky argues that social media allow potential groups to avoid Ronald Coase's "transaction costs" for organizing, and thus do without management. Another version of this idea, focusing on the formation of networks, has been provided by Ori Brafman and Rod Beckstrom in *The Starfish and the Spider: The Unstoppable Power of Leaderless Organizations*.[33]

Shirky includes government among the institutions that have lost their "relative advantages," compared with "the direct effort of the people they represent." Although the obsolete villain of his piece is management rather than leadership, he occasionally hints at the implications for political life as well. At the end of his book, he acknowledges that so far, in the political realm, technology-aided "collective action is more focused on protesting than creating," because protesting is easier to do. He is optimistic that as social media continue to develop, this difficulty will be overcome. "Reciprocal altruism" (as in barn-raising in a farming village) will provide the motivation for creative constructive action without leadership.[34]

But the collective action for protest that Shirky regards as the harbinger of broadly dispersed political activities is, in fact, deeply reliant on leadership in the sense that I have used the term. Occupy Wall Street and the Arab Spring have been offered as paradigmatic examples of "leaderless" activities. Yet these are surely not instances of spontaneous behavior motivated by "reciprocal altruism." Fifty thousand people did not magically turn up at Tahrir Square at exactly the same time on January 25, 2011. There had been protests in Egypt for more than a decade, most notably the broadly based strike on April 6, 2008. Dozens of young activists had tweeted and communicated by email for months, planning the January 25 event. They reached out to colleagues and friends to let them know about the chosen date. These activists had identified a goal – to protest against Mubarak's government – and effectively mobilized the energies of many others to join them. The same is true for the organizers of the Occupy Movement, whose goals were to highlight profound inequalities in our contemporary societies and politics; use social media effectively to mobilize the energies of large numbers of individuals to protest in specific, organized communal spaces; and provide the supplies, schedules, and publicity that characterized these spaces.

In the Occupy protests around the world, the principled commitment to equal status for all protestors prompted aversion to the emergence of identified leaders. However, adherence to this principle made it difficult for the leaders to translate the fluid power they exercised into the work of institution-building. Protest is ultimately fruitless unless you establish a new set of institutions and policies in the space your activities temporarily clear in a political system. The young activists who organized the movement were deliberately contemptuous of "politics as usual," in-

cluding compromise and coalition-building. They had neither the will nor the tactics to mobilize the political energy potentially available in the broad concern about inequality that their protests both represented and helped intensify.

*The only path that promises success in tackling the glaring inequalities that mar the American political system is visionary, pragmatic political leadership.* Leadership can make a difference in several ways. Leaders in authority can in some circumstances persuade others to pass laws limiting the acquisition of wealth through the power to tax and redistribute. Leaders can inspire citizens to think collectively and put the public good higher on the list of personal priorities for more of us. We need leaders who can avoid the entanglements of excessive bureaucracy as well as personal corruption and effectively enlist the talents and energies of other citizens. Most basically, we need leaders who are motivated to use their power to help citizens less privileged than others, and work for the creation of a more nearly democratic polity.

This prescription may sound utopian in our current circumstances, in which money is a powerful force in politics, many citizens are cynical and apathetic, and the difficulties of being in the public spotlight deter many potential leaders from choosing politics as a career. Yet history provides multiple examples of leaders who have used their political talents in difficult circumstances to reduce inequalities and work toward a more balanced system. In U.S. history, the list of such leaders includes, most obviously, Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Lyndon Baines Johnson.

None of these leaders were perfect, by any means; we could easily recite their flaws. But each was determined to reduce glaring inequalities in the American polity – inequalities of race or wealth – and

each made significant progress toward this goal. It is worth pondering the distinctive qualities such leaders may possess that motivate them to work toward the goal of reducing inequalities, and make it possible to achieve success.

*Nannerl O. Keohane*

Max Weber's 1918 lecture on "Politics as a Vocation" tells us that "three pre-eminent qualities are decisive for the politician: passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion." By "passion" Weber means not "sterile excitation," but "passionate devotion to a 'cause,'" deep commitment to something a leader believes is worth working for. But passion alone is not enough. The political leader also needs "a sense of proportion" or perspective, which Weber defines as the "ability to let realities work on him [the leader] with inner concentration and calmness." This includes harboring a certain amount of "distance to things and men," rather than being so caught up in dedication to a cause that a leader cannot see clearly how to make wise strategic judgments in pursuing that goal. As Weber notes, this combination of qualities is not often found together. "For the problem is simply how can warm passion and a cool sense of proportion be forged together in one and the same soul?"[35]

Such a combination may be rare, but it is not unknown. In the broader global context, the premier example of a leader who possessed a passion to reduce inequality, and the sense of proportion that made it possible to do so, would surely be Nelson Mandela. He also possessed in large measure Weber's other desideratum for a leader, "a feeling of responsibility." His passionate commitment to South Africa, and his well-developed vision for its future, led him to feel deep responsibility for all South Africans, white as well as black and colored. His sense of perspective and distance, honed by the long years on Robben Island, made it possible for him to lead without being distracted by parochial goals or petty loyalties.

If such leaders, when they come on the scene, are so constrained by political checks and balances that they can achieve very little, this pathway to social change is effectively blocked. As we have seen, this problem affects the U.S. presidential system especially acutely, compared with contemporary parliamentary systems, for example. But the basic principle should be kept in mind in assessing the health of any polity.

Leaders of the caliber of Nelson Mandela or Abraham Lincoln are rare. Yet we do not need to accept the "great man" theory of history to understand how leadership is necessary to protect the vigor and capacity of democratic governments. Leaders at a less lofty level than the presidency are also essential: leaders in congressional committees, the courts, in local political activities. Leadership by multiple actors within our political system, including leaders of corporations and nonprofit organizations, is crucial if we are to reduce the dangerous and growing inequalities that threaten to undermine our quasidemocratic polity.

In the first sections of his essay "Politics as a Vocation," Weber discusses the special qualities of charismatic leaders and the effects they may achieve. In his conclusion, however, he describes politics as "the strong and slow boring of hard boards."[36] Prominent charismatic leaders committed to decreasing the inequalities in our polity can make a profound difference, and we can hope that more of them will be willing to run for high office. Equally important, however, are the steady, dedicated efforts of less visible leaders at every level of our system, leaders willing to persist through the "slow boring of hard boards" to restore greater democracy and equity in our system of government. Without this contribution, we have little hope of reversing the dangerous trends in contemporary politics that so many of us deplore.

ENDNOTES

[1] George Orwell, *Animal Farm* (New York: Penguin, 1956).

[2] Aristotle, *Politics*, ed. Ernest Barker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 22–23.

[3] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Of The Social Contract*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4, 63.

[4] Robert Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1956), 32.

[5] Nannerl O. Keohane, *Thinking about Leadership* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2010), 23.

[6] Philip Selznick, *Leadership in Administration: A Sociological Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 22.

[7] Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 237–238.

[8] Dahl, *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, 71.

[9] Rousseau, *Social Contract*, 92.

[10] Kurt Vonnegut, "Harrison Bergeron," in *Welcome to the Monkey House* (New York: Delacorte Press [Random House], 1968).

[11] Philip Pettit, *On the People's Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[12] Alfred Stepan and Juan J. Linz, "Comparative Perspectives on Inequality and the Quality of Democracy in the United States," *Perspectives on Politics* 9 (4) (December 2011): 844.

[13] Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2 (3) (July 1957): 203.

[14] John Gardner, *On Leadership* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 2.

[15] Arnold A. Rogow and Harold Dwight Lassell, *Power, Corruption and Rectitude* (Englewood, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1963), 1–6.

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[17] James David Barber, *The Presidential Character: Predicting Performance in the White House*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1977), 12.

[18] Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, 2nd ed. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 20.

[19] Ibid., 27.

[20] Ibid., 117. Emphasis added.

[21] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin and the Foundations of Inequality among Men*, ed. Victor Gourevitch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 184. Rousseau asserts that of the various kinds of inequality, "riches is the last to which they are finally reduced, because, being the most immediately useful to well-being and the easiest to transmit, it can readily be used to buy all the rest."

[22] Benjamin Page, Larry M. Bartels, and Jason Seawright, "Democracy and the Policy Preferences of Wealthy Americans," *Perspectives on Politics* 11 (1) (March 2013): 51–73.

[23] Martin Gilens and Benjamin Page, "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens," *Perspective on Politics* 12 (3) (September 2014): 564.

[24] Martin Gilens, *Affluence and Influence* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012), 12.

[25] This point is made forcefully by Elizabeth Drew, "How Money Runs Our Politics," *The New York Review of Books*, June 4, 2015, 22–26.

[26] Gilens, *Affluence and Influence*, 239, 246, 252.

[27] Larry Bartels, *Unequal Democracy: The Political Economy of the New Gilded Age* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation; and Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Jacob S. Hacker and Paul S. Pierson, *Winner-Take-All Politics: How Washington Made the Rich Richer – and Turned Its Back on the Middle Class* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010); Nicholas Carnes, *White-Collar Government: The Hidden Role of Class in Economic Policy Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Lawrence Jacobs and Desmond King, eds., *The Unsustainable American State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[28] Jeffrey A. Winters and Benjamin I. Page, "Oligarchy in the United States?" *Perspectives on Politics* 7 (4) (December 2009): 744.

[29] Gilens, *Affluence and Influence*, 234.

[30] For the reduction in inequalities in these periods, see the charts in Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2014), 24, 316–317.

[31] One example is Matt Stoller's blog Naked Capitalism, cited by Jeffrey Isaacs in "Rethinking American Democracy" in a recent issue of *Perspectives on Politics* devoted to the topic of the increasingly oligarchical character of our democracy. Stoller says: "The lesson here is to organize. Citizens can matter, but only if they make themselves heard." See Jeffrey Isaacs, "Rethinking American Democracy," *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (3) (September 2014): 560.

[32] Mancur Olson, *The Logic of Collective Action: Public Goods and the Theory of Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965).

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34 Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody*, 312 – 314.

35 Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in *From Max Weber : Essays in Sociology*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York : Oxford University Press, 1958), 115. Emphasis in the original.

36 Ibid., 128.

# Rethinking the Psychology of Leadership: From Personal Identity to Social Identity

## S. Alexander Haslam & Stephen D. Reicher

*Abstract: Leadership is an influence process that centers on group members being motivated to reach collective goals. As such, it is ultimately proven by followership. Yet this is something that classical and contemporary approaches struggle to explain as a result of their focus on the qualities and characteristics of leaders as individuals in the abstract. To address this problem, we outline a social identity approach that explains leadership as a process grounded in an internalized sense of shared group membership that leaders create, represent, advance, and embed. This binds leaders and followers to each other and is a basis for mutual influence and focused effort. By producing qualitative transformation in the psychology of leaders and followers it also produces collective power that allows them to coproduce transformation in the world. The form that this takes then depends on the model and content of the identity around which the group is united.*

"I have always regarded myself, in the first place, as an African patriot."
– Nelson Mandela

"I am, if I am anything, an American. I am an American from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet."
– Theodore Roosevelt

"Above all, I am a German. As a German I feel at one with the fate of my people."
– Adolf Hitler[1]

S. ALEXANDER HASLAM is Professor of Psychology and Australian Laureate Fellow at the University of Queensland.

STEPHEN D. REICHER is Wardlaw Professor of Psychology at the University of St. Andrews.

(*See endnotes for complete contributor biographies.)

Effective leadership is the ability to influence people in a way that motivates them to contribute to the achievement of group goals. As such, Nelson Mandela, Theodore Roosevelt, and Adolf Hitler were all effective leaders. We may evaluate their various achievements in very different ways (it would be worrying if we did not) but it would be hard to deny that their capacity to mobilize a mass constitu-

ency to bring about these achievements – that is, their capacity for leadership – was truly remarkable.

Because leadership mobilizes people and focuses them on the achievement of cherished goals – even where this requires major social change – it is highly prized and a major focus of academic and public debate. In fields as diverse as politics and religion, science and technology, art and literature, sport and adventure, and industry and business, leadership is commonly seen as the key process through which people are marshalled to contribute to the collective projects that ultimately make history. In light of this, two key questions have fascinated scholars and commentators for over two millennia: What *makes* people effective leaders? And, if we discover this, can we train others to be effective leaders themselves?

Answering these questions has spawned an industry so vast that its scale is hard to fathom. For example, although their value has been seriously questioned,[2] there are close to one thousand different degree courses in leadership in the United States alone, and it is estimated that U.S. companies spend around $14 billion a year on leadership training. It has also launched an academic literature that spans multiple disciplines, uses multiple approaches from laboratory experimentation to historical biographies, and again is so vast that no one could digest more than a small fraction of it. The British Library alone holds over eighty thousand documents with leadership in their title, including over fifteen thousand books (of which around forty are simply called *Leadership*).

Given all this information and knowledge, it might seem arrogant, if not foolhardy, to suggest that there is a need to fundamentally rethink the nature of leadership or that we require (to cite the title of the book we recently coauthored with Michael Platow) a new psychology of lead-

ership.[3] But that is precisely what we do suggest – and what we hope to provide – in this essay. We start by explaining why a new approach is needed. This conviction derives from the fact that classical and contemporary understandings of leadership have been constrained by an individualistic metatheory. This has led researchers and commentators alike to seek the roots of effective leadership within the person of the leader, and the ability of the leader to satisfy the personal needs of followers. We then outline our alternative approach that argues, in contrast, that effective leadership is always about leaders and followers seeing themselves as bound together through their joint membership of the same group, and working together to satisfy group needs and realize group ambitions.

In short, whereas the existing leadership literature tends almost universally to see the psychology of leadership as an *I* thing, we will endeavor to show that it is actually a *we* thing. Where the vast majority of the tracts on leadership write about its psychology in the first-person singular, we argue that it needs to be written in the first-person plural. Leadership, we suggest, can never be "all about me" (the leader). As our starting quotes from Mandela, Roosevelt, and Hitler suggest, ultimately it needs to be "all about we" – where *we* enfolds leaders and followers in the same psychological group.

The definition of leadership provided in our opening sentence contains at least four important elements that we need to come to grips with before attempting to make headway. *First*, leadership is a process, not a property, and it is more akin to a verb than a noun. Accordingly, it is not something that a person possesses, but rather something that he or she does. *Second*, leadership can never be something that a person does on his or her own. Precisely

because it requires the mobilization of others, it necessarily encompasses other people beyond the leader. This point is made pointedly by Bertolt Brecht in his poem "Questions from a Worker Who Reads."[4] "Who built Thebes of the seven gates?" he asks, alongside a range of similar questions about the feats of other heroic leaders. "In the books you will read the names of kings. Did the kings haul up the lumps of rock?" Of course the answer is *No*. *Third*, this observation speaks to the fact that ultimate proof of leadership is found not within leaders – neither their character, their vision, nor even their actions – but in the *followership* of those they influence. Brecht's poem speaks to the fact that in the absence of hard work on the part of loyal group members, there can be no leadership to speak of, no leadership book to write. Accordingly, by telling us only about leaders, most analyses of leadership conceal from us a key term in the leadership equation. *Fourth*, it is important not to conflate leadership and a range of other processes with which it is commonly associated. In particular, although leadership is often discussed as a process of power, coercion, or resource management, it is fundamentally about *influence*. As the social psychologist John Turner put it, it is about *power through*, rather than *power over*, others.[5] It is about taking people with you so that they *want* to follow and do so with enthusiasm, rather than beating them with a stick (or offering a carrot) so that they participate grudgingly, or only for so long as one has carrots to offer. The mark of leadership, then, is not whether others feel obliged to do your bidding so long as you are standing over them, but whether they will go the extra mile for you and your cause even when you are absent.

In these terms, the question that lies at the core of the leadership process is what it is that allows the plans of an individual to be translated into the aims and desires of the mass? What is it that turns one person's vision into a collective mission that directs the energies of tens, thousands, or even millions of other people? As we argue in *The New Psychology of Leadership*, researchers have tended to answer this question in one of three broad ways. Proponents of a *classical approach* generally provide answers framed in terms of core qualities that particular individuals possess (or lack). This, we argue, is characteristic of an old psychology of leadership that has relatively few disciples today (at least in academic circles). Building upon this, adherents of a *contextual approach* supplement such analysis with a consideration of various features of the prevailing social context that either facilitate or else compromise the effectiveness of individual leaders. This approach takes many different forms and is characteristic of what we see as the contemporary psychology of leadership. Finally, as we have already intimated, the new psychology of leadership that we will outline sets out an *identity approach*. This sees leadership as a group process that centers on a psychological bond between leaders and followers grounded in an internalized sense of their common group membership; that is, a sense of *shared social identity* or "we-ness." However, to appreciate what makes this approach new, and what is distinctive and useful about the analysis it affords, we first need to spend some time reflecting on the forms of understanding that it seeks to challenge and move beyond.

Plato is commonly acknowledged as having provided, around 380 BC, the first formal analysis of leadership. For him, as for Heraclitus before him, true leaders constitute a rare breed of people who are born with a cluster of attributes and qualities that set them apart from the hoi polloi. These include quickness of learning, courage, broadness of vision, and physical prow-

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ess. Moreover, because these qualities are so rarely encountered in one person, when they are they need to be nurtured and rewarded. As Heraclitus put it: "The many are worthless, good men are few. . . . One man is ten thousand if he is the best."[6]

Although largely conversational, Plato's analysis provided a narrative framework that has dominated leadership thinking for the last two-and-a-half millennia. Its influence today can be seen in the range of popular texts that proliferate in airport bookstores and that serve to catalog the distinctive prowess of the leader of the moment – often as "secrets" to be generously shared with readers. But the popularity of this approach – and of this literary genre – was cemented in the nineteenth century through the writings of the Scottish historian and philosopher Thomas Carlyle. His best-selling text *On Heroes and Hero Worship* declared that "the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here."[7]

This thesis of the great man invited everyone from schoolchildren to scholars to see leadership not as the stuff of ordinary mortals but as the stuff of gods, arguing that great leaders' distinctive and exceptional attributes qualified them not only for responsibility and high office, but also for widespread admiration and respect. Today still, it is the exceptional nature of such "stuff" that is used to justify the exorbitant salaries routinely awarded to executive leaders. But what precisely are the qualities involved? It is in pinning down the details that the problems begin.

Psychologists have studied an impressive array of candidate variables: everything from conventionalism and confidence to sociability and surgency.[8] Yet whatever the target variable, summary reviews have generally concluded that personal attributes prove rather unreliable as predictors of leadership. This is true of the two attributes that have had the most enduring appeal for researchers and commentators alike: charisma and intelligence.

Max Weber's original definition of charisma refers to "a certain quality of an individual personality by which [a leader] is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional, powers or qualities."[9] This definition is therefore somewhat ambivalent, referring to both a quality that the individual has, and qualities that he or she is treated as having by "ordinary men." In the work of neo-Weberian leadership theorists like James MacGregor Burns, this ambivalence largely disappears, and the focus is placed firmly on qualities of the leader: specifically his or her capacity to articulate a group vision, to recruit others to his or her cause, and to develop close and strong relationships with group members. Yet, as we will discuss in more detail below, despite the fact that research provides fairly solid evidence that successful leaders tend to be *transformational* in being both visionary and empathic, attempts to root this in the capacities of the individual have largely failed. A key reason for this is that, on their own, vision (however brilliant) and empathy (however authentic) are not enough to guarantee success.

In contrast, the dimension of Weber's formulation that theorists tend to ignore seems more promising. For research shows that *perceptions* of charisma are critical to the leadership process. Reflecting on the Greek meaning of charisma as a "special gift," Michael Platow and his colleagues thus observe that it is best thought of as a gift that is bestowed on leaders, rather than one that is possessed by them.[10] Moreover, in bestowing charisma, followers also commit their energies to the leader. But whether followers bestow charisma is not down to the leader alone. Indeed, at different times and in different places, the same leader may be seen as more or less

charismatic. This is because perceptions of charisma are a function of the changing social relationship between leaders and followers and, more specifically, of whether the leader represents a group that the followers currently identify with. So, in the context of the 2008 presidential primaries, Democrats supporting Clinton may not have seen Obama as charismatic. But in the context of the presidential election, those Clintonite Democrats are more likely to have bestowed him with charisma. And once president, even non-Democrats may have come to see Obama's charismatic qualities.

Despite the fact that the construct of charisma has proved hard to pin down, one might imagine that *intelligence* would provide researchers greater predictive traction as a result of its proud psychometric heritage. Indeed, a key reason why this has been an important focus for research is that in systematic reviews, intelligence typically emerges as the best single predictor of leader success. Yet formal measures of leader intelligence (such as IQ scores) still only explain a very small amount of the variance in leader success. In an attempt to improve upon this, considerable energy has gone into refining the analytic construct of intelligence. The upshot is that researchers now tend to argue that it is particular types of intelligence that are especially important for leadership; notably either practical intelligence or emotional intelligence. Here again, though, the constructs prove hard to isolate, in part because their form and meaning vary markedly across contexts; and in part because, as with charisma, what really matters is a leader's *perceived* intelligence, which is not highly correlated with formally assessed intelligence. At a broader level, then, what we see is that despite researchers' efforts to keep their (and our) analytic gaze solely on the psychology of leaders, the psychology of followers keeps worming its way into the picture.

In response to the limited predictive power of approaches that focus exclusively on the character of the leader, most contemporary leadership researchers endorse *contextual* approaches that pay heed to the social environment in which leaders find themselves. Extreme versions of this interpretation suggest that context is everything and the character of the individual counts for nothing; but for good reason, theorists and practitioners have found these explanations unconvincing. Accordingly, they tend to embrace *contingency models* in which context is seen to moderate, but not entirely suppress, the contribution of the leader.

Standard contingency models essentially construe leadership as the outcome of a "perfect match" between two core ingredients of the leadership process: the individual leader and the circumstances of the group that he or she leads. There are many such models, and they constitute the most influential way of thinking about leadership, both in formal academic treatments of the topic and in everyday discourse. In particular, they lend structure and content to a plethora of management and personal development courses that try first to classify individuals as having a particular leadership style, and then to train them to identify (or create) situations in which this style will be effective.

The general notion that leadership is the product between contingencies of person and situation makes a lot of sense. Nevertheless, a core problem with standard contingency models is that they treat these two terms as fixed and, most problematically, as having no capacity to shape each other. That is, they tend to neglect the capacity for the social context to be changed by leaders or for leaders to be changed by the social context. Yet if one reflects for just a moment on the leadership of Mandela, Roosevelt, and Hitler, it is clear that in each case, the leader and his social context both exerted a powerful influence upon each

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other. Indeed, as we explained above, the reason why leadership fascinates us is precisely because of this potential for transformation. It therefore makes little sense to subscribe to a framework that allows no space for change.

Even more fundamentally, however, standard contingency models generally ignore the most important element of the leader's context: followers. And even when the importance of followers is acknowledged, such approaches fail to build their perspective into the analysis. Does it matter whether followers see the leader as the right person for the situation? Do these perceptions of fit affect the support that followers give to the leader? Yes, it does, and such considerations gain importance as the leadership stakes become higher. Moreover, the fact that the followers' perspective is ignored in most contingency models helps explain why empirical support for them is mixed at best, and why it becomes weaker the further away from the laboratory one gets.

More recently, the conceptual and empirical failings of standard contingency models have led to new transactional and transformational approaches that make followership a key part of the story. These models mark an important departure (though, as we shall see, not a complete departure) from the traditional individualist metatheory of leadership research. For they treat leadership as a social relationship between leaders and followers, rather than as something to be sought within the leader alone.

*Transactional approache*s view leadership as a form of *social exchange* in which followers work to realize a leader's vision to the extent they believe that the leader is working for them in return and that there is equity between what they put in and what they get out of the process.[11] For all their appeal (not least in pointing to the inefficiency of organizations that provide excessive remuneration to those at the top while offering meager wages to those at the bot-

tom), these approaches have important limits. In particular, they presuppose that the terms of the exchange are set. That is, leaders should only provide people with the things they already consider a reward, rather than change *what* they count as a reward. But, as we have already argued, one of the key accomplishments of leadership is to transform the things we care about and to make us concerned about things we previously ignored, whether that be particular commodities, equality, environmental sustainability, or whatever. Transactional approaches also presuppose that actors are motivated entirely by personal gain, representing one of the ways they fail to break with traditional individualism. Thus, they reduce followership to the question *what's in this for me?* But this misses another key accomplishment of leadership: the ability to transform followers' focus on individual benefit into a concern for the greater good. In short, it is generally only when leaders and followers prove willing and able to rise above their personal self-interest – to ask instead *what's in this for us?* – that they are able to advance their interests.

The latter critique provided important impetus for the development of *transformational approaches*. These approaches insist that effective leadership (in whatever context, and however newsworthy) is based on more than just mercantile arrangements in which mutual obligation flows from interpersonal account keeping. Instead, what makes the process remarkable is precisely its capacity to allow people to embrace a bigger vision of their place in the world, to work for the collective good, and thereby to scale new practical and moral heights.[12]

We fully endorse this critique. In particular, we agree that people are able to impact the world to the extent that they are able to work together as members of a group. Such an approach marks a revolutionary turn in the study of leadership. Likewise, it requires a revolutionary turn in the way

we conceptualize human psychology and, more particularly, concepts like identity and interest. Yet the limitation of transformational leadership models is that they cannot fully deliver on their promise because they still do not fully break with psychological individualism.

Thus, even if they accept that leaders can transform the motivations of followers, transformational approaches still assume that the highest state of motivation and morality is characterized by individual autonomy.[13] And even though they root the leader's ability to be transformational (that is, their charisma) in the perceptions of followers, they still assume that followers focus on fixed individual abilities and qualities of the leader (as considerate, intelligent, or whatever). They therefore miss the point – as the examples of Mandela, Roosevelt, and Hitler attest – that in different contexts, people invest in a leader for very different reasons.

What made these leaders so effective was precisely their sensitivity to social context. What each did was to envision and become emblematic of a particular group of people in a particular place at a particular point in time. This allowed them to mobilize those people to transform the material landscape of society. And this is not just true of Mandela, Roosevelt, and Hitler, but of all leaders. This points to a simple yet fundamental observation: leadership is not just about leaders and followers, but about leaders and followers *within a specific social group*. This observation takes us into new theoretical territory, for it requires us to articulate an analysis of leadership within a broader understanding of basic group processes.

Although our review has focused on the limitations of classical and contemporary approaches, these nonetheless provide valuable lessons. In particular, they help us understand what an adequate theory of leadership needs to explain. Five features in particular are important:

1) Leadership varies in form across social contexts;

2) Followers' perceptions of leadership are critical, but also vary across contexts;

3) Leadership involves leaders and followers motivating and influencing each other;

4) Leadership transforms not only the world, but also the psychology of the leaders and followers who bring transformation about; and

5) Leaders and followers are bound together by being part of a common group.

The key contention of the new psychology of leadership is that, by taking this last lesson seriously – by addressing leaders' and followers' conceptions of themselves and each other as group members – we are in a position to explain the previous four. To this end, we draw on the social identity tradition in social psychology precisely because it uses people's understandings of their own group membership, and that of others, as the starting point for understanding processes within and between social groups.[14]

This tradition proposes that human beings have the capacity to define themselves in collective terms ("us Democrats," "us social scientists") as well as in individual terms ("myself as a thoughtful person"); that collective (or social) identities are every bit as real and important to us as individual (or personal) identities; and that the psychological understandings that flow from social identification are *qualitatively distinct* from those that flow from personal identity. That is, the psychology of "we and they" cannot be assimilated to the psychology of "I and me" (the province of most psychology theory), not least because our relations with others are fundamentally transformed once we define ourselves and others in collective terms. So when we perceive another person to share the same so-

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cial identity as us (that is, to be part of our psychological ingroup), we see them as part of our self rather than as *other*.[15] In order to see why this is critical for the analysis of leadership, it is helpful to flesh out four key points that emerge from social identity theorizing and research.

First, it is apparent that when (and to the extent that) people define themselves in terms of a particular group membership, they are motivated to see that *ingroup* as positively distinct from *outgroups*. That is, as far as possible, they want to see *us* as different to, and better than, *them*.[16] In these circumstances, too, what matters is not a person's sense of how he or she is doing as an individual, but the perceived standing of the group as whole. For example, if a male baseball player defines himself first as a member of his team, he will care less about his individual statistical accomplishments in a playoff series, and will prioritize instead his team's advancement to the next round.

Second, it is clear at the same time that the process of coming to define the self in terms of a particular social identity is always meaningfully bound up with social context. In particular, it depends on whether a given group membership has been a basis for our self-definition in the past (so that it is accessible) and whether it allows us to make sense of our place in the situation that confronts us (so that it is fitting).[17] For example, it makes more sense to define oneself as a Democrat (and hence to delight in a Democratic election victory) if one has been a long-term supporter of the party and is at present watching the election results, rather than a baseball game on the other channel.

Third, when we define ourselves in terms of social identity, it is apparent that this is a basis not only for perception but also for *behavior*. If we see ourselves as Democrats, we do not just see the world differently from supporters of other parties or people for whom politics appears pointless (providing us with a very different appreciation of a Democratic victory), but we also behave differently. We go to particular meetings, we support particular candidates, we cheer particular events – and we also enact and share these experiences with particular people (even to the extent of hugging complete strangers as "our" president is elected, provided they are wearing the same blue badge). As an extensive experimental literature has confirmed, social identity is thus the basis for a range of key social and organizational processes, including social connection, communication, coordination, and cooperation.[18] That is, we feel more connected to ingroup than to outgroup members, we trust and respect them more, we are more concerned for them, we communicate more and better with them, and we are more likely to help and work with them. All in all, social identity is what underpins and indeed *makes possible* every form of group behavior.[19]

Fourth, and more critically still for present purposes, social identity is also the basis for social influence processes. Thus, when people define themselves in terms of a given social identity, they seek both to discover what being a member of that group entails and to act in ways that accord with this. But in an uncertain and changing world, it is not always clear how one should react, and so we look to guidance from others as to what is appropriate. But who do we turn to? And when there are multiple voices advocating multiple responses, which do we attend to and which do we ignore? The obvious answer is that we turn to fellow ingroup members. For if we share social identity with them, and hence share common perspectives and values, we should expect to agree with them, at least on issues of relevance to the group. So when it comes to the question of how to respond to a matter of current political import, Democrats are most likely to turn to fellow Democrats.

However, given the choice, we would not turn to just any old group member. The more we see someone as knowledgeable about the group culture, as consistently expressing in their pronouncements and their actions those norms and values that make our group distinctive from other groups – in technical terms, the more we see them as *prototypical* of the group – the more we will pay heed,[20] the more we will follow what such people say, and the more effort we will put into supporting their proposals.[21]

This is, of course, an implicit theory of leadership (even if the original work on group prototypicality and social influence did not use the term). We have turned it into an explicit theory with three core premises.

*The first premise of the new psychology of leadership is that effective leaders (those who can influence and harness the energies of followers) need to be seen to be representative of a shared ingroup.* This is true in two senses. One, that we have already discussed, is that leaders need to be seen as being *of* the group. They must instantiate what the group stands for and, as our opening quotations attest, it must be clear that they are a group member before all else.

It is important, at this point, to preempt a potential point of confusion. In arguing that leaders need to be prototypical, we are not suggesting that they are typical in the sense of being average group members.[22] Rather, they stand for all the qualities that we ascribe to our group: they may have to be seen as brilliant and humble and brave and self-effacing, if that is how we see our collective selves. To be prototypical is to be extraordinary, not to be average. Or rather, because being influential depends upon the way one is perceived by other group members, to be seen as prototypical is to be seen as extraordinary. Indeed, studies show that those who are seen as prototypical are seen to be endowed with that most elusive and most "magical" of all leadership ingredients: charisma.[23]

The second sense of being representative is that leaders need to be seen as acting *for* the group. Indeed, one of the things that is most toxic to leadership effectiveness is the perception that one is either acting for oneself or, even worse, for an outgroup. That explains, perhaps, why would-be leadership contenders must always be seen as reluctant candidates, not seeking power for themselves but being entreated to take on the burdens of office. It also explains why Cincinnatus – who came back from retirement to save Rome and, once successful, returned to obscurity – is often held up as a paragon of good leadership. Certainly, evidence suggests that where leaders are seen as promoting their own agenda or enrichment, their perceived charisma rapidly evaporates.[24] Witness, for example, how Tony Blair is now regarded by many of those who once revered him.

In this way we see that key qualities of leadership – like charisma – are not qualities of the leader, but are rooted in the relationship between the leader and group identity. This in turn allows us to understand why the qualities that define leadership vary from group to group and context to context. The qualities that made Mandela prototypical of the South African liberation movement, Roosevelt prototypical of progressive Republicanism, and Hitler prototypical of Nazi Germany are evidently different. But in each case, the relationship between the individual and the social category was the same.

At this point, the attentive reader may object that we are open to the same criticism we have (more than once) made of others. That is, if effective leaders need to have qualities that match the distinctive qualities of the group, then there is no room for creativity or transformation. The leadership process becomes entirely passive as people simply wait for circumstances to hoist the mantle of prototypicality on their shoulders. This criticism would be war-

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rented if social identity were fixed or taken for granted. But it isn't. Identity is an eminently moveable feast, and one of the key features of effective leadership is the ability to take advantage of this. Hence, *the second premise of the new psychology of leadership is that effective leaders need to be entrepreneurs of identity*. That is, they need to be able to construe (and reconstrue) what the group is, who they themselves are, and what they advocate, so as to place all in alignment.

By way of illustration, we can compare the leadership of two U.S. presidents: Franklin Delano Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy. FDR was struck down in his early adulthood with infantile paralysis (thought at the time to be polio). Because it undermined those Platonic qualities considered critical for leadership – virility, energy, physical prowess – this ought to have been, according to that model, catastrophic for his political aspirations. Certainly Roosevelt did his best to hide images of himself in a wheelchair, succumbing to paralysis; but at the same time, he was willing to show himself to be symbollic of people overcoming profound hardship.

In particular, when Roosevelt proposed a train tour to support his 1934 presidential campaign, advisors begged him not to present his broken body before the electorate. But he did. In town after town, he laboriously dragged himself from train to podium. Then he spoke of America as a country with the ability and the will to overcome economic paralysis and to flourish again. It was a message articulated most famously in his First Inaugural Address: "This great Nation . . . will revive and will prosper. . . . The only thing we have to fear is fear itself – nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

How different this was from JFK, who was also afflicted by a debilitating illness (Addison's disease, which led to the crumbling of his spine). But his narrative of America was a young, vibrant nation breaching a new frontier. To personify this narrative, he not only hid his disability entirely, but at his own inauguration, where all around him wore warm hats to combat the freezing cold, he insisted on showing his full head of hair and declared: "the new generation offers a leader."

This performative dimension to leadership can be taken a step further. Thus, leadership is not just about how the leader acts, but also how the leader shapes the performance of followers. For in order to make their versions of shared identity compelling, they need to make them real. Obviously, a critical part of this is success in enacting policies that embed group values in social reality. But another, perhaps underappreciated, part is the use of ritualized performances – celebrations, commemorations, festivals, rallies – in which people are encouraged to act out the leader's vision of group values. Accordingly, *the third premise of the new psychology of leadership is that effective leaders need to be impresarios of identity*. This involves choreographing groups and group life in ways that actualize identity through lived experience.

To illustrate this point, one can reflect on Leni Riefenstahl's infamous film of the 1934 Nazi Nuremburg rally, *Triumph of the Will*. The film begins with Hitler's plane descending through the clouds, casting the shadow of a cross on the expectant masses waiting below. Hitler then walks through the rigorously ordered, serried ranks of the faithful before ascending to a platform in front of and above them. The performance, of which the masses are an essential part, creates the Nazi vision of a *Volksgemeinshaft* – a horizontal, disciplined, ethnic community – combined with the *Führerprinzip* – a rigidly vertical form of political authority.[25] Indeed, the extent to which the performance aimed to actualize group values of hardness and order is exemplified by the care with which Albert Speer chose the materials

used in the construction of the Nuremberg arena: granite and old, hard German oak.

In summing up our analysis, it is worth emphasizing three significant points that emerge from the social identity approach to leadership. All relate to problems that arise from endorsing too narrow an understanding of leadership – problems that have routinely beset the classical and contemporary approaches that we seek to move beyond.

The first is that, when it is effective, leadership can never be the exclusive preserve of leaders. In particular, it is apparent that acts of identity entrepreneurship and impresarioship are too demanding in scale for them to be performed only by those in positions of formal authority. Leaders thus need loyal lieutenants to engage in these processes, but they also need ordinary group members to do the same. Indeed, much of the power of a social identity analysis is that it explains not only how leaders are able to be creative, but also how followers are too, so that they not only "haul up the lumps of rock" (as Brecht put it), but also do so in imaginative and generative ways. In these terms, the transformational power of social identity is that it is not simply a source of creative leadership, but also of the *engaged followership* upon which its success depends.[26]

Relatedly, leadership – and the processes of identity-building that underpin it – can never be exclusively perceptual or rhetorical. It must also be material. To be sure, leaders need to talk the talk of identity and mobilize followers around a collective sense of "who we are" and "what we are about." However, this alone is not sufficient to sustain those followers' enthusiasm in the long run. Instead, social identity is ultimately only of use to the extent that it allows group members to create a better future for their group. Accordingly, if collective mobilization fails to translate a definition of social identity into consonant forms of reali-

ty, then that definition – and those leaders who advance it – will fall by the wayside. Yet where, and so long as, mobilization succeeds in creating positive realities that reflect a given definition of identity, then that definition, and the leaders who help to advance and embed it, will enjoy considerable support. In these terms, then, the X factor that Mandela, Roosevelt, and Hitler shared was that they were responsible (or seen to be responsible) for initiating and developing *identity structures* that allowed a particular model of "us" to be lived out and translated into material change in the world.

This, though, leads to a final point about the dangers of imagining that leadership is an exclusively positive process. The trap here is that precisely because our own leadership, and that of those we follow, is an expression of a worldview that we believe to be right (a belief that is validated by our fellow ingroup members), we are generally inclined to see leadership as an inherently virtuous process. Indeed, this inclination is cemented within social and organizational science more generally in the form of a strong, usually implicit assumption that leadership is an unalloyed good (which is why the leadership industry is so vast). Yet although we have argued that the identity processes that underpinned the success of leaders like Mandela, Roosevelt, and Hitler were essentially the same, we chose to focus on these three figures to make it clear that our analysis is explanatory rather than normative. That is, the model of identity leadership that we have presented seeks to understand what makes leadership effective, not what makes it good.

The question of what makes leadership normatively good or bad, we suggest, is a matter of identity content and of identity process. When it comes to *identity content*, the way in which group boundaries and the group values are defined is critical. Contrast the Nazi definition of German identity with Mandela's definition of South Af-

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rican society. As the Nazis saw it: "What is the first commandment of every National socialist? ... Love Germany above all else and your ethnic comrade [*Volksgenosse*] as yourself."[27] As Mandela saw it (as stated in his famous 1964 speech from the dock): "During my lifetime I have dedicated myself to this struggle of the African people. I have fought against white domination, and I have fought against black domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die."[28] The one proposes an ethnically exclusive definition of identity, the other proposes a racially inclusive version. The one values love for the category, but hostility to those outside it. The other values harmony and equality between peoples. The one facilitated genocide, the other ultimately prevented racial war.

Regarding the issue of *identity process*, here the issue concerns the balance between leaders and followers in terms of who is entitled to define "who we are." This lies at the root of questions of political authority. The right to define identity is at its clearest in religious contexts in which there is a sacred text, and authority lies in the hands of those who are allowed to interpret it: the clergy alone, the clergy with congregational participation, or the congregation as facilitated by the clergy. We would argue that similar considerations extend to secular politics, and that one can identify a continuum from democratic leadership (where leaders guide a collective conversation about "who we are") to hierarchical leadership (where leaders claim special access to the definition of group identity, but do not exclude the participation of the population) to authoritarian leadership (where leaders claim to so embody the group that any criticism of them is seen as an attack on the group).

These are, of course, ideal types, and we do not suggest one can neatly map particular leaders onto particular categories. Nonetheless, this framework may be helpful in allowing us to identify the signs of creeping authoritarianism and nip it in the bud. In this way, although the new psychology of leadership is intended primarily to offer an analytic approach, it can, we hope, be directed to democratic and inclusive normative ends. At the very least, it alerts us to the power of identity as a leadership tool, and to the need to consider carefully the ways in which that tool is fashioned and wielded.

ENDNOTES

* Contributor Biographies: S. ALEXANDER HASLAM is Professor of Psychology and Australian Laureate Fellow at the University of Queensland. He is also a Senior Fellow of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research and Associate Director of its Social Interactions, Identity and Well-Being program. His research explores group and identity processes in social and organizational contexts, and is exemplified by the recent book *The New Psychology of Leadership: Identity, Influence and Power* (with Stephen D. Reicher and Michael J. Platow, 2011).

STEPHEN D. REICHER is Wardlaw Professor of Psychology at the University of St. Andrews. He is a Fellow of the British Academy and the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He has a longstanding interest in crowd behavior, mass social influence, and political rhetoric. His recent books on these topics include *Self and Nation* (with Nick Hopkins, 2000) and a five-volume series of readings on *Leadership* (with S. Alexander Haslam, 2014).

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# Presidential Leadership
# & the Separation of Powers

*Eric A. Posner*

*Abstract: The presidents who routinely are judged the greatest leaders are also the most heavily criticized by legal scholars. The reason is that the greatest presidents succeeded by overcoming the barriers erected by Madison's system of separation of powers, but the legal mind sees such actions as breaches of constitutional norms that presidents are supposed to uphold. With the erosion of Madisonian checks and balances, what stops presidents from abusing their powers? The answer lies in the complex nature of presidential leadership. The president is simultaneously leader of the country, a party, and the executive branch. The conflicts between these leadership roles put heavy constraints on his power.*

ERIC A. POSNER, a Fellow of the American Academy since 2010, is the Kirkland and Ellis Distinguished Service Professor of Law at the University of Chicago. His books on executive power include *The Executive Unbound: After the Madisonian Republic* (with Adrian Vermeule, 2011) and *Terror in the Balance: Security, Liberty, and the Courts* (with Adrian Vermeule, 2007).

While the topic of presidential leadership has fascinated political scientists and historians for decades, legal scholars have ignored it. Legal scholars rarely discuss "leadership" – of the president or anyone else. They are concerned with the legal constraints on the presidency, not the opportunities that the office supplies to its occupant. Moreover, in contrast to political scientists and historians, who find it difficult to resist celebrating presidents who show great leadership qualities, legal scholars almost universally take a critical attitude toward the president.[1] And the leaders who commentators frequently judge as "great" – including Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Ronald Reagan – receive the most critical attention. This is because those leaders turn out, with a few exceptions, to be the presidents who most frequently tread on constitutional norms. This raises a paradox. How can our top presidential leaders also be major lawbreakers?[2]

To address this paradox, we start with the Constitution. The Constitution says almost nothing about leadership. It does not identify a leader of the country, a head of state, or even a head of government.

By vesting the executive power in the president, it implies that the president is leader of the executive branch, but not that he is the leader of the country or the government. Moreover, not everyone agrees that the president *is* leader of the executive branch. Even today it is controversial whether executive agencies must answer to the president; the so-called independent agencies like the Federal Reserve do not. Congress sets up agencies and gives them their marching orders, controls their budget, and routinely harangues their chiefs. And, of course, Congress demands that the president comply with its laws, citing the Constitution's Take Care Clause and Supremacy Clause. The text of the Constitution could be read to envision a president who is merely an agent of Congress, one who has little discretion to exercise leadership except perhaps over a small staff of assistants.

The Constitution is hardly clearer about Congress. It designates the vice president as president of the Senate, but in constitutional practice, he is not its leader. The Constitution gives the Senate and House the power to elect officers, and the leadership positions in those institutions emerge from that process. Even so, there is not a leader of the House or the Senate in a meaningful sense. The real leadership positions are held by the top party official in each body; so Congress has *four* leaders, with the majority leaders being something like coequals. Finally, the Constitution does not create a leader of the courts (though it refers in passing to a chief justice presiding over impeachment trials). Congress created the position of chief justice, whose powers over the federal judiciary are limited.

Why does the Constitution say so little about leadership? The founders sought a more effective executive after the debacle of the Articles of Confederation, but they also feared an excessively powerful national government led by an imperial president or by a tyrannical legislature. Their solution was to supplement elections with the system of separation of powers. Elections would ensure that government officials enjoyed popular support when they reached office, but they could not, by themselves, prevent those officials from accumulating power while in office or using it to maintain their position and abuse the public trust. The separation of powers addressed this risk. Madison argued that each of the three branches of government would compete for power and in the process constrain each other. The usual picture is one in which the officials in each branch are motivated to inflate their personal power by expanding the power of the branch in which they operate, and hence by resisting the efforts of officials in other branches to extend *their* power. Actions that seek to redistribute power – actions that would result in power being concentrated in one office or branch – would be blocked. Actions that advance the public interest would (presumably) not be blocked. A separate executive branch would enable the government to act quickly and decisively, but because the executive would derive most of its authority from Congress, it would be blocked from expanding its power.

Consistent with the Madisonian structure, then, the Constitution – more by implication than by language – creates a *group* of leaders, but no leader of the nation. The government is a kind of institutional confederacy. The founders, who were well-versed in classical history, may have envisioned a system like the Roman Republic, where there were leaders but no *leader*. The Roman Senate was a collective body, and men with distinctive gifts like Cicero could emerge as leaders at critical moments. But leadership was fluid; it moved from one person to another in response to events. The most important office was the consul, but there always were two consuls, and they served only for a year. A dicta-

tor could be authorized for short periods during military emergencies. These and many other restrictions on office-holding worked to block – or at least retard – the emergence of charismatic individuals whose power derived from their personalities, connections, accomplishments, and family lineage, rather than from their temporary occupation of an institutional position. The Roman Republic survived for centuries without a king. Men who sought to become leaders, like Sulla and Caesar, were seen as usurpers. The imperial leadership of Augustus and his successors was not possible until the Republic collapsed.

But the founders' aversion to a national leader ran into trouble from the start. Even while debating in Philadelphia, it was widely understood that the new country would be led by a great man: George Washington. And he would not be Speaker of the House or chief justice; just as he was president of the Constitutional Convention, he would be president of the country. The selection of Washington was an obvious choice. He was not just the hero of the Revolution; he was a natural leader who had earned the trust of his officers and soldiers through many years of wartime military service. The new country's best chance was to throw its lot to a man who already enjoyed the trust of the nation. And the position of president, rather than House Speaker or chief justice, was the obvious choice as well. Washington was a military man, and what the country needed was a military leader to protect it from Indians, Europeans, and internal dissenters. So while the founders drafted a document that failed to recognize a national leader, they prepared the way for the first and greatest national leader. The negation of presidential leadership was to be a legal fiction.

The immediate resort to presidential leadership spelled trouble for the Madisonian system. The system of separation of pow-

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ers was supposed to allow decisive action by the executive while blocking it or any other part of government from acquiring excessive power, but it has never been clear how this system could work. The Constitution's checks and balances simply make it difficult for the national government to act, whether for good or for bad. The basic problem with a government action – whether a military operation, negotiation of a trade treaty, or the construction of a new canal – is that it creates losers as well as winners. Vetogates enable potential losers to head off government action that harms them, but the more vetogates that are built into the system, the easier it is for losers to block actions that may be in the public interest. Even if the actions hurt no one at all, people located at the vetogates can block the action unless they receive special treatment. Separation of powers, which is distinguished from other systems like parliamentary government by the large number of vetogates it creates, just leads to gridlock and ineffective government.

The rise of presidential leadership, beginning with George Washington, only partly ameliorated this problem. Washington alone entered office with a large enough wellspring of trust to enable him to use the office aggressively – and, even then, he frequently acted with extreme caution, careful to consult Congress and follow its laws even during emergencies like the Whiskey Rebellion. Only a few successors with exceptional talents – Jefferson, Jackson, maybe Polk – could overcome the barriers to government action, and they did so only on occasion. However, perhaps because the country was focused inward during the first sixty years of its existence – or perhaps because the party system would permit new forms of cooperation among the branches – the cumbersome structure of the national government could be tolerated. State governments undertook internal development. Congress tended to give

the president a free hand for foreign relations and military operations, when quick and decisive actions were necessary, and the gains from security or territorial conquest could be widely distributed. Otherwise, the national government was weak and presidential leadership thin. The great controversies over slavery were resolved by Congress, not the president. And then the system buckled. The country was saved by Lincoln, the greatest leader since Washington, who ran roughshod over the Madisonian system in countless ways. But it was in the twentieth century that separation of powers gave way decisively to a system of personalistic leadership by the president.

The evolution was not linear, but it was unmistakable. Markers along the way included Theodore Roosevelt's innovation of appealing directly to the public for support rather than working through Congress; the concentration of presidential power under Woodrow Wilson; the vast expansion of the federal bureaucracy under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, including the inauguration of a new form of administrative government; and the Cold War–era consolidation of presidential control over foreign policy and a vast standing army. A subtle but important change was that the locus of policy-making authority moved from Congress to the president. While Congress continued to debate legislation, the president set the agenda. From a legal standpoint, the expansion of presidential power took two forms: the enactment of hundreds of statutes that gave the president vast discretionary authority (and large staffs to implement them); and presidential assertions of unilateral authority under the Constitution. The first required active congressional participation, the second, acquiescence; but they were mutually reinforcing, and the Supreme Court – after modest resistance that ended with Roosevelt's court-packing plan – gave its imprimatur.

While the separation of powers eroded, the president's personal authority expanded. Today, President Obama can use his legal and constitutional authority to implement many of the policies he prefers. He still needs congressional authority for major legislative changes, but the president initiates the debate by appealing to the public and demanding support from the thousands of people who owe him favors for patronage and other benefits he has bestowed or has the capacity to bestow. He leads his party, which also gives him authority over Congress when his party enjoys a majority in both houses, and influence over Congress even when he does not. He nominates judges who advance his ideological goals, and fills the top ranks of the bureaucracy with his supporters. He leads an institution that gathers and processes information (especially confidential information) much better than Congress can, and this informational advantage – along with the fact that he occupies his office continuously while Congress comes and goes – gives him the ability to set the agenda and control the public debate, to act and confront Congress, passive and divided as always, with a fait accompli.[3]

President Obama came to office promising economic stimulus, financial regulation, universal health care, carbon-emission regulation, immigration reform, and reforms to counterterrorism. He set the agenda; Congress reacted. Congress gave him the legislation he sought in the first three cases: the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the Dodd-Frank Act, and the Affordable Care Act. The second two examples are of dual significance. Not only did Congress acquiesce in the president's legislative agenda; it vastly expanded his authority, and the authority of his successors, to regulate – that is, to make policy decisions – in the financial and health sectors of the economy. While Congress refused to give Obama the climate and immigration

laws he sought, the president implemented his plans administratively, relying both on constitutional norms of executive discretion and existing statutes that gave him vast authority. The regulations were not as far-reaching as the legislation he sought, but they accomplished a great deal. Obama also used his regulatory authority and his legal team to advance LGBT rights. Of all of Obama's major policy initiatives, the only one that Congress has completely frustrated is his plan to shut down the military prison at Guantanamo Bay.

But the erosion of separation of powers did not lead to the abuses that the founders feared. While his critics argue – often with justice – that Obama has violated constitutional norms, the president is not a dictator; his policies have enjoyed the support of popular majorities or large minorities. It is a major irony that the presidents whom historians and political scientists have declared great leaders have engaged in constitutionally dubious behavior on a grand scale: Washington, Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt, Truman, Lyndon Johnson, Reagan. While Nixon reigns as the greatest constitutional lawbreaker – and no one, I think, would call him a great leader – all the presidents who were constitutionally scrupulous have also been the most insignificant and are now forgotten. This raises a question. If the separation of powers no longer constrains presidents from committing abuses, what does?

The answer lies in the nature of presidential leadership, and the way in which the psychology of leadership interacts with the institutional system we have inherited from the founders. While George Washington was already turning the office of the presidency into the primary leadership position of the country, he did so from within the separation-of-powers structure. Washington was, from the start, the leader of the country – in defiance of the Constitution –

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but he was also the leader of the executive branch. Consistent with the constitutional structure, this meant that Washington found himself frequently being opposed by Congress. And then there was a development that the Constitution failed to envision. Washington soon found himself the de facto leader of the Federalists. In later years, when the party system fully emerged, the president assumed leadership of the party. The president became the leader of three separate institutions: the country, the executive branch, and a party.

To understand the significance of this development, we need to examine the concept of leadership more carefully. Broadly speaking, a leader is someone who can motivate a group to act in ways that maximize the well-being of the group or promote its values. Leaders typically face a collective action problem among group members who prefer to act in their self-interest unless they can be assured that all members of the group will act in the group interest. The successful leader provides these assurances. Leadership seems to depend fundamentally on the ability of the leader to acquire and maintain the trust of the group. As long as the group believes that the leader will act in the interest of all its members, and is intelligent and informed enough to make correct choices, the group will give the leader its trust, and the leader will be able to lead by making choices on the group's behalf.

How do leaders inspire trust in their followers? A huge and inconclusive literature has failed to identify specific personality attributes or skills that are associated with leadership (though this has not stopped thousands of educational institutions from offering courses in "leadership").[4] In practice, however, we can see that the leader demonstrates persuasively – through word and action – that he or she shares the group's interests and will keep his or her promises. Most leaders thus de-

pend on their reputation, which they build up through a long career of demonstrating success in different organizations and in increasingly large and heterogeneous groups. Group members typically trust leaders because the leaders hail from their ranks, have demonstrated integrity by keeping their promises, and have shown competence by making choices that advance the group's interests. Nearly all American political leaders were born in America (and, of course, the president must be by law), and all presidents have held office or other significant leadership positions before being elected. Presidents who are judged great leaders overcome entrenched resistance to implement policies that advance the public interest; they do so usually by knitting together a coalition of groups whose trust they have managed to win.

People with identical leadership qualities can be greater or lesser leaders depending on the political contexts in which they operate. Some authors emphasize the large role of public expectations – which are shaped in part by the behavior of previous presidents – and the way that a president's biography and personality resonate with the public at a particular moment in history.[5] Sometimes there is little scope for leadership because the country is either content or excessively divided; even an exceptionally talented leader may in these contexts accomplish little. When people have diverse interests, policies that advance the interest of one group may harm another. The leader, then, faces the challenge of compensating the harmed group for its support, or promising to advance future policies whose benefits will outweigh the group's short-term losses. Circumstances also help define the interests of the group. A population will be more unified when facing a foreign threat than when debating the progressivity of taxes. This is probably why wartime presidents are often remembered as great leaders.

Regarding the question of why presidents do not abuse their positions, the answer is connected to conflicts inhering in the institutional arrangements that they must manage. In place of the Madisonian triptych of executive-legislative-judicial, let me propose a different tripartite structure: executive-party-country. And in place of the Madisonian political equilibrium maintained by the interaction of three opposing forces, consider a set of concentric circles. The president remains the leader of the executive branch under the surviving detritus of the constitutional structure imagined by Madison. By tradition, the president is leader of the country and of a party. So the president is leader of three different groups at the same time.

Remember that leadership depends on maintaining the trust of the group. This means acting in the interest of the group, which often comes at the expense of people outside the group. When the president acts as leader of the nation, the group consists of all Americans, while the outsiders are foreigners. When the president acts as leader of his party, the group consists of party members, Democrats or Republicans. When the president acts as leader of the executive branch, the group consists of the members of the federal bureaucracy, including the military. This means that members of one group may be excluded from another group, and yet they all look to the same person for leadership.

Consider, for example, President Obama's counterterrorism policies, including his use of drone strikes to assassinate suspected members of Al Qaeda and the Islamic State. Obama believes that it is in the interest of the country to maintain these policies. Aggressive counterterrorism tactics have cost Obama the support of some people in his party, but they have helped him maintain support among people outside his party. More aggressive military policies make it harder for Republicans to accuse him of be-

ing soft on terrorism, of being a closet Muslim, or of disregarding American security.

Many of Obama's policies advance his party's interests. Here I mean both the party's strategic interests and the values the party stands for. Immigration reform provides a good example. Democrats seek to cultivate the support of Hispanics, and most Hispanics support Obama's executive actions to protect people who entered the country illegally. Obama's support for the Dodd-Frank Act was consistent with Democrats' view that the financial industry should be subject to greater regulation. The Affordable Care Act also advanced a longtime Democratic position that health insurance should be provided universally.

Obama, like his predecessors, must maintain his leadership of the country and his leadership of the party, and it turns out that strengthening his leadership of one group hurts his leadership of the other. The mechanism is straightforward. When Obama takes an action that advances the interests of one group at the expense of another, the losers of the deal begin to wonder whether he has their interests at heart; they are more inclined to distrust him, even as the beneficiaries' trust in the president is strengthened.

The president's leadership of the executive branch introduces yet another complicating factor. The federal bureaucracy comprises two groups of people: political appointees and civil-service employees. Political appointees head the agencies and fill their top ranks. Within this group, the highest-ranked appointees must be confirmed by the Senate; lower-ranked positions can be filled by the president without Senate approval. The president almost always selects political officials from the pool of personal and party loyalists. And these people expect to be rewarded for loyal service with future promotions, access to the president, and plum jobs outside of government in think tanks and the private sector.

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Civil-service employees are typically appointed by agency heads who are not permitted to take partisan loyalties into account when hiring (and in any event, civil-service employees will stay in office long after the administration turns over). Civil-service employees also vastly outnumber the political employees, so while they are nominally subordinate, their expertise, mastery of institutional norms, and numbers ensure that they control most of an agency's day-to-day actions. They can also embarrass their political leaders by leaking confidential documents, complaining to the press, dragging their feet when asked to implement policies the president favors, and threatening to resign.

This is why the risk that the president could abuse power though the bureaucracy is exaggerated. This risk plays a part in political discourse, and worries about it have a distinguished historical pedigree. After all, the Romans who helped bring down the Republic owed their power to their leadership over the army. In the end, soldiers were more loyal to the generals than to the state. In 1951, Truman lost confidence in, and the confidence of, General Douglas MacArthur, and some historians have argued that the country approached a coup d'état. In modern times, citizens worry that the president can use the civilian bureaucracy to spy on them, stifle dissent, and interfere with personal freedom. And there are still respectable commentators who see the military as a threat to political independence.[6]

But as we have seen, to lead the bureaucracy, the president needs its trust, and maintaining the trust of the bureaucracy is in tension with national and party leadership. Reagan was elected on a platform that railed against burdensome federal regulation, but he could not simply abolish the bureaucracy. He needed it to unwind some regulations while maintaining others. Thus, he had to temper his criti-

cisms once in office while still trying to appease the antiregulatory wing of his party. Obama campaigned on a platform calling for greater transparency of the bureaucracy, but has failed to follow through because he needs the trust of officials who work for him. In this case, Obama was willing to anger his party in order to appease the bureaucracy, whose assistance he needed to advance policies he cared about.

Leadership depends on trust, but people tend to distrust those who exercise power over them – the president above all. Presidential leadership is constrained by deep egalitarian and antiauthoritarian norms that constantly replenish the well of suspicion from which the public draws when it evaluates presidential rhetoric and action. The country was settled by dissenters, founded on revolution against a king, and expanded by frontiersmen who contributed to a national mythology of self-reliance. While presidential leadership is acknowledged as necessary, the actions of the president and of contenders for the presidency are subject to relentless scrutiny. This level of scrutiny has increased over the decades in tandem with the rise of presidential power. Today, the president is stripped of all privacy, like the kings of old whose bowel movements were examined by courtiers for signs of disease. Every aspect of his private life (with a partial exception granted for his young children) is considered a legitimate topic for media scrutiny and public debate. This is meant not only to assure us that our trust in the president is not misplaced but, through his ritual humiliation, compensate us for our subordination to him. This tendency is everywhere, and the conspiracy theories that surround every president – in Obama's case, centering on the question of whether he was born outside this country and is secretly a Muslim – is only an extreme version of it. In the United States, conspiracy-mongering by alienated political mi-

norities combines with pervasive egalitarian resentment among the wider public – that a great man (or woman) lords over all of us – to provide a checking power far more significant than the paper barriers of the Constitution. Day after day, the president must labor to retain the public's trust.

The Madisonian system sought to prevent government abuse by creating a set of competing institutions that check the ambitions of officeholders in each. The theory is that if no branch of government can dominate the government, then power will never be concentrated enough to threaten real harm. But we can also understand this system in the light of the founders' fears about dominance by charismatic leaders like Caesar or Cromwell. Most of the individuals who operate the levers of power within the various branches would remain faceless cogs in the Madisonian wheelwork, while the handful of talented men who could distinguish themselves would never obtain a national following, or at least not for long. The system was constructed so as to block the emergence of dominating leaders at the national level.

But Madison's system failed because it set up too many vetogates, rendering the federal government unable to function effectively. It also underestimated the unifying power of national leadership. By the twentieth century, it was clear that Madison's system made it impossible for a national government to effectively regulate the new national economy, to provide for social welfare, and to protect the country from foreign threats. Activist presidents with outstanding leadership abilities dismantled the Madisonian system piece by piece, paving the way for our current president-centered system of national administration. Our contemporary system heavily relies on the magnetism, talent, and organizational abilities of sitting presidents, who are

kept in check by public scrutiny, the media, and the challenge of leading different institutions and groups in an enormous and diverse country.

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ENDNOTES

[1] A representative example is Bruce Ackerman, *The Decline and Fall of the American Republic* (Cambridge, Mass. : Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010). For an alternative view, see Eric A. Posner and Adrian Vermeule, *The Executive Unbound : After the Madisonian Republic* (New York : Oxford University Press, 2011).

[2] For purposes of this essay, I rely on the judgments about presidential greatness of historians, political scientists, journalists, and compilers of top-ten lists – and do not make my own.

[3] William G. Howell, *Power without Persuasion : The Politics of Direct Presidential Action* (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2003).

[4] In the presidential literature, an immense wave of speculation was triggered by Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power : The Politics of Leadership* (New York : Wiley, 1960); see also Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference : Leadership Style from FDR to Clinton* (New York : Martin Kessler Books, 2000); and George R. Goethals, "Presidential Leadership," *Annual Review of Psychology* 56 (2005): 545 – 570. There are also thousands of books about the leadership qualities of CEOs, generals, and so on, which collectively manage to produce a small pile of clichés. See Barbara Kellerman's essay in this volume for more on the growth of the leadership industry.

[5] Stephen Skowronek, *Presidential Leadership in Political Time : Reprise and Reappraisal*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence : University Press of Kansas, 2011).

[6] Ackerman, *The Decline and Fall of the American Republic*.

# Women & Legislative Leadership in the U.S. Congress: Representing Women's Interests in Partisan Times

## Michele L. Swers

*Abstract: Women are drastically underrepresented in American political institutions. This has prompt-ed speculation about the impact of electing more women on policy and the functioning of government. Examining the growing presence of women in Congress, I demonstrate that women do exhibit unique pol-icy priorities, focusing more on the needs of various groups of women. However, the incentive structure of the American electoral system, which rewards ideological purity, means that women are not likely to bring more consensus to Washington. Indeed, women's issues are now entrenched in the partisan divide. Since the 1990s, the majority of women elected to Congress have been Democrats, who have pursued their vision of women's interests while portraying Republican policies as harmful to women. In response, Republican women have been deployed to defend their party, further reducing the potential for bipartisan cooperation.*

MICHELE L. SWERS is Professor of American Government in the Department of Government at Georgetown University. Her re-search interests include congres-sional elections and policy-mak-ing, and women in politics. Her books examining the policy behav-ior of women in Congress include *The Difference Women Make: The Poli-cy Impact of Women in Congress* (2002) and *Women in the Club: Gender and Policy Making in the Senate* (2013). She is also coauthor of *Women and Pol-itics: Paths to Power and Political Influ-ence* (with Julie Dolan and Melissa Deckman, 2016).

In the spring of 2016, the public approval rating of the U.S. Congress stood at 17 percent. Congress has not garnered the esteem of even 30 percent of Amer-icans since 2005. To find brief periods of majority approval, one must go back to 2003.[1] This disillu-sionment with Congress coincides with long peri-ods of gridlock in which the legislature cannot seem to tackle the problems of the day, from the econom-ic recession to foreign policy. Instead, an ideologi-cally polarized Congress has continuously clashed with the administrations of Republican President George W. Bush and the current commander in chief, Democrat Barack Obama. These ideological fights are accompanied by brinksmanship politics, includ-ing government shutdowns and threats to block in-creases in the debt ceiling, which would ruin Amer-ica's credit rating and plunge the country back into recession. In this polarized political atmosphere, can the election of more women to political office cre-

ate a more consensus-driven and productive government? The emergence of Hillary Clinton as the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination focuses more attention on the question of women's leadership style and whether expanding the number of women in government can improve the American political system.

In this essay, I focus on the advancement of women into Congress since the early 1990s and the impact of women on policy-making. My research suggests that electing women will not be a miracle cure for partisan polarization because the current structure of the American electoral system favors intensely partisan candidates. Therefore, women who thrive in a partisan context are the most likely female candidates to win elections. Yet women do bring a different set of policy priorities to Congress. Women are more likely to consider the needs of women, children, and families when developing their policy agenda. As women and often as mothers, female officeholders bring a different perspective to the deliberative process, improving the quality of constituent representation and focusing more policy attention on the needs of different groups of women, from single mothers in poverty to women climbing the corporate ladder. Thus, increasing women's representation in Congress expands the range of interests and perspectives considered by government leaders.

While women constitute more than 50 percent of the U.S. population, they are dramatically underrepresented in American governing bodies. Examining legislative representation of women, the United States ranks seventy-first among the world's parliaments and far behind most other advanced democracies. While women constitute around 40 percent of the lower houses of Parliament in Nordic coun-

tries, including Sweden, Finland, Iceland, and Norway, women hold only 19.4 percent of seats in the U.S. Congress and 24.2 percent of seats in state legislatures.[2]

Unlike many European countries that use proportional representation – where candidates win seats in proportion to the number of votes garnered by their party – the American system is candidate-centered. Congressional candidates are elected from single-member districts with a plurality of the vote. Candidates must raise large amounts of money to compete in primaries to secure their party's nomination, and then raise more money to contest the general election. Given the arduous nature of congressional races, the U.S. system strongly favors incumbents who have the name recognition and connections to raise the necessary funds and build a campaign operation to mobilize voters. As a result, despite the dismal approval ratings of Congress, incumbents are consistently reelected at rates above 90 percent.[3]

Since the political incorporation of women has been a slow process, spanning the emergence of the suffrage movement in the mid-1800s to the feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s, male incumbency was already firmly entrenched when women entered the political arena (see Figure 1). In the early years, many women elected to Congress were widows, elected as placeholders to keep the seat in party control until the party elite could coalesce around a candidate. By the 1970s and 1980s, when the feminist movement opened more of the careers that lead women to politics, more women entered Congress as professional politicians. Still, these women continued to differ from their male counterparts in their occupational backgrounds and political experience. Compared to men, women in Congress were more likely to enter politics as community activists motivated by a cause or as local officeholders, such as school board members. For example, cur-

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*Figure 1*

Women in the House and Senate by Party (1917 – 2017)
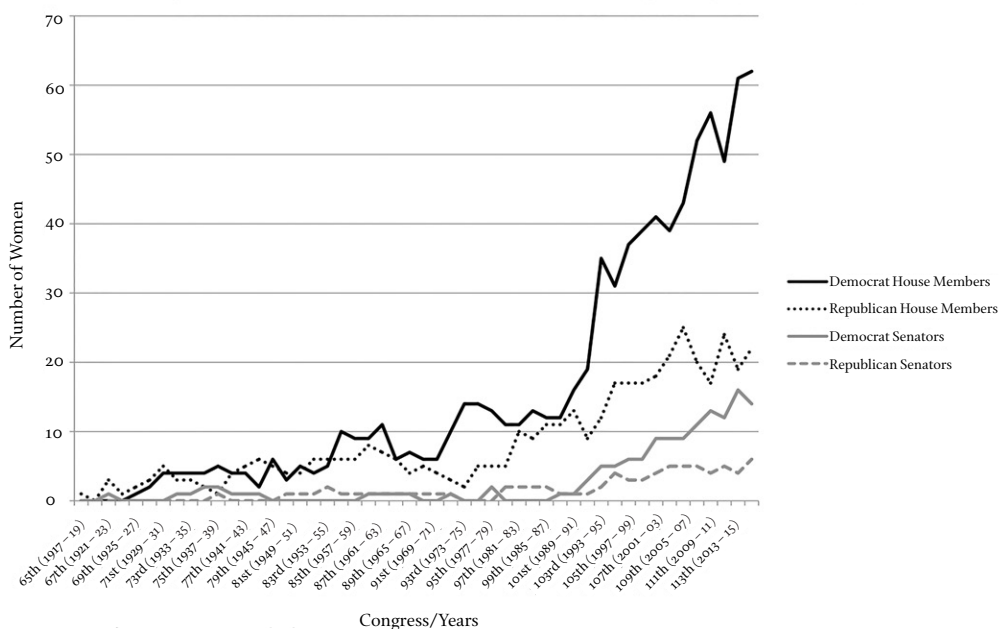


Source : Center for American Women and Politics (Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey), 2015.

rent senator Patty Murray (D-WA) began her political career as a community activist protesting the elimination of a preschool program. She went on to serve on the school board and as a state senator before she ran her first campaign for the U.S. Senate using the slogan "just a mom in tennis shoes."[4]

The largest increase in women's representation came after the 1992 election. Dubbed the "Year of the Woman," the number of women in Congress jumped from thirty-two to fifty-four. To date, this remains the greatest increase in women's representation in a single U.S. election. The advancement of more women into politics coincided with important changes in the nature of American politics and the relationship between the parties. These changes fueled a more partisan and polarized political atmosphere that rewards more ideologically driven candidates. Therefore, the women serving in the contemporary Congress are more likely to be committed partisans than moderate consensus-builders.

The rising number of women in Congress starting in the early 1990s coincided with a heightened period of political competition in which control of the presidency and the majority in Congress was continuously at stake. In 1994, Republicans gained control of Congress for the first time in forty years. Since then, majority power has shifted among Democrats and Republicans and margins of control remain so tight that the opposition perceives the number of seats needed to win the majority as always in reach. This has been particularly true in the Senate, where party control shifted from Democrats to Republicans in 1994 and briefly back to Democrats in 2001. Republicans retook the majority in 2002 until Democrats wrested control of the chamber

in 2006, only to lose power again in 2014.[5] However, for Democrats, majority control is considered within reach for 2016.

In addition to increased party competition, the parties have become more ideological, with the Republican Party more deeply conservative and the Democrats more uniformly liberal. As this polarization developed, a partisan gap emerged in the election of women to Congress. Before 1990, the parties elected small but relatively similar numbers of women to Congress. However, the 1992 Year-of-the-Woman elections really marked the year of the Democratic woman, since the number of Democratic women in Congress jumped from twenty-two to forty, while only four new Republican women were elected, increasing the presence of Republican women in Congress from ten to fourteen. Since 1992, the partisan gap has grown, with representation of Democratic women far outpacing Republican women.[6] Of the one hundred and four women in the current 114th Congress (2015 – 2016), seventy-six are Democrats and only twenty-two are Republicans.[7]

This partisan gap in women's representation is larger than the gender gap in the voting population and reflects a divergence in the nature of the parties' electoral coalitions. The emergence of the civil rights movement and the adoption of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 precipitated a movement of Southern white Democrats to the Republican Party. The formerly solid Democratic South is now a Republican stronghold; historically, this region has also been less likely to elect women to political office. As the South moved to the Republican Party, northeastern states and urban areas became Democratic bastions. Over time, the districts that elected women tended to be more urban, more racially and ethnically diverse, and of a higher median income. In contemporary politics, these districts lean Democratic.[8] Furthermore, the 1990s also saw the adoption of majority-minority districts. To guarantee that minorities could elect a representative of their choice, minority populations were concentrated into districts that are more urban and strongly Democratic. The surrounding suburban districts became whiter and more Republican.[9] As a result, the Democratic coalition in Congress and the women in the Democratic Party are much more racially and ethnically diverse. These minority members anchor the liberal end of the ideological spectrum.

Finally, the interest groups, donors, and voters that support Democrats are also more inclined than their Republican counterparts to prioritize the election of women to office. Women's groups and civil rights organizations are central forces in the Democratic coalition. These groups prioritize increasing representation of women and minorities in elective office. Women's groups, most notably EMILY's List (an acronym for Early Money Is Like Yeast), have developed operations to identify and recruit women candidates and support them with fundraising networks and campaign services. Moreover, the donors and voters who support Democratic candidates in the primary and general election are increasingly liberal. Liberals are more responsive to messages about the importance of group representation in Congress and liberal voters are more likely to embrace positive stereotypes about female candidates, such as that women are more knowledgeable about social welfare issues.[10]

Meanwhile, the Republican Party eschews identity politics, focusing instead on the ideological conservatism of the candidate. Further, social conservatives – a core constituency of the Republican Party – hold more traditional views about gender roles. Therefore, there is not a natural constituency of donors and voters within the Republican Party responsive to explicit calls to expand women's representation. While the party has made efforts to

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recruit more women candidates and form donor networks that will contribute to female candidates, these organizations do not have the presence and donor connections that groups allied with Democrats have developed.[11]

In sum, the modern American electoral system requires candidates to build a persona that can attract a highly ideological set of primary voters and donors. Candidates who excel in this atmosphere are more likely to be partisan purists than moderate compromisers. For women, the current structure of the parties' electoral coalitions favors the elevation of more Democratic women. Liberal Democratic voters and donors aggressively support the election of women and minorities who also hold liberal views on issues like abortion rights, while Republicans reject identity politics and do not prioritize efforts to elect more Republican women. Therefore, the Republican women who gain election must demonstrate their conservative credentials to their own highly ideological electorate.

Proponents of electing more women to Congress argue that because of their shared life experiences, women will better understand the needs and interests of particular groups of women. Moreover, they will bring these unique experiences to inform policy development, will prioritize various issues of importance to women, and will advocate for policy solutions to address these interests.[12]

Research examining the legislative activities of women in Congress from the 1990s to the present confirms this expectation. Particularly at the agenda-setting stage of policy-making, women are more likely to develop bills focused on the needs of women, children, and families. Examining the policy priorities of Republican and Democratic female members in the House of Representatives in the early 1990s and in the Senate in the 2000s, I found that wom-

en sponsor and cosponsor more bills related to women's issues, ranging from feminist proposals regarding equal pay, family leave, and reproductive rights to social welfare proposals related to education and health care. Women are also more aggressive advocates for these bills, expending the political capital necessary to build coalitions of support and move their favored policies through the legislative process. During floor debate, female legislators tend to discuss the impact of proposed bills on women and refer to their own personal experiences as women, for example, as single mothers struggling financially or as women experiencing discrimination in the workplace.[13]

While these general trends hold across time, the likelihood that an individual female legislator will advocate for a particular type of women's-issue bill is strongly influenced by the member's personal background, ideology, party affiliation, and the nature of her constituency. For example, one should not expect a conservative Republican woman representing a strongly Republican Southern district to support legislation protecting abortion rights. However, that legislator might advocate for bills to promote breast cancer research or curb human trafficking.

As more racial and ethnic minorities were elected to Congress in the 1990s, women of color emerged the most likely to pursue women's interest bills that target the needs of minority communities. For example, during the early years of Bill Clinton's presidency, with Democrats in control of both Congress and the presidency for the first time since 1980, Democratic women sought to advance abortion rights. Looking to leverage this unified party control into policies promoting reproductive rights, white female Democrats focused their efforts on passing the Freedom of Choice Act, a bill that would codify the right to abortion granted by *Roe v. Wade*.[14] By contrast,

minority women were more concerned with access and costs for poor women, rather than abstract rights. They therefore pursued the goal of overturning the Hyde Amendment, which prohibits the use of federal Medicaid dollars to pay for abortions. Similarly, during the debates over welfare reform, women of color were the most aggressive opponents of the Republican bill, speaking out against what they perceived as stereotyping of women on welfare as poor, irresponsible minority women. These congresswomen of color voted uniformly against the bill while white Democratic men and women split their votes.[15]

The ideological and partisan profiles of the women in Congress strongly impact their legislative priorities and leadership styles. Just as the larger chamber has polarized, Democratic women are now more uniformly liberal and there are few conservative Democratic men or women. Similarly, Republicans in Congress are more intensely conservative. In the early 1990s, many of the Republican women in Congress were moderates who would work across the aisle with Democratic women on specific women's issues, including reproductive rights, women's health research, and initiatives to help women in the workforce. Indeed, in the 1990s, moderate Republican and Democratic women worked together to pass legislation that funded research on various women's health concerns, ensured that women were included in more clinical trials, and created the Office of Women's Health at the National Institutes of Health. When Republicans gained the majority in 1994 and promoted welfare reform, Republican women who held seats on the committee of jurisdiction, the Ways and Means Committee, convinced their male Republican colleagues to incorporate child-support enforcement and greater funding for child care in the bill.[16]

Yet by the early 2000s, electoral trends resulted in these moderate Republican

women losing their seats to Democrats. The new Republican women being elected were much more conservative legislators elected from the South and West. Indeed, studies of voting behavior demonstrate that Republican women in the House of Representatives were distinctly more liberal than their male colleagues, particularly on women's issues, throughout the 1980s and 1990s. However, by 2002, the voting records of male and female Republicans in the House were converging, and the current contingent of Republican women is just as conservative as Republican men.[17] Meanwhile, the few Republican women in the Senate have remained more moderate than their male counterparts,[18] though, following the 2012 and 2014 elections of increasingly conservative women to the Senate, even this trend may reverse.

Today there is little cross-party collaboration among women legislators, particularly in the House of Representatives. Under current electoral configurations, women's issues have become strongly associated with the Democratic Party. Utilizing issues like contraception and equal pay, the party actively courts women voters, particularly young women, single women, and college-educated women, to win elections. Indeed, in both the 2012 and 2014 elections, Democrats appealed to women voters by accusing Republicans of waging a "war on women" in which Republican policies condoned pay discrimination and sought to deny women access to health care and contraception.[19]

The fact that women's issues are a key element of Democratic electoral strategy means that when Democratic women champion issues like child care, pay equity, or reproductive rights, they are pursuing their own policy priorities and helping their party energize voters and donors. For example, the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the first bill signed into law by President

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Obama, was a top priority for Democratic women looking to advance pay equity. Senator Barbara Mikulski (D-MD), House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), and Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) had worked for years to advance initiatives to combat pay discrimination. When the Supreme Court decided that Lilly Ledbetter could not recover damages from her employer Goodyear Tire and Auto because the statute of limitations to file a claim had run out, Democrats seized on her story to promote legislation that would reset the clock with each discriminatory paycheck. As a result, women like Ledbetter, who was not aware of the ongoing discrimination until a colleague secretly sent her a note outlining the disparities between her pay and that of male colleagues with less seniority, could now fight for equal pay. To build support for the legislation, the Democratic women of the House and Senate held press conferences, wrote editorials in support of the bill, organized speeches on the floor, and continuously worked to move the bill forward in the legislative process and see it through to law. [20]

While the Democratic women were fully dedicated to the policy goals behind the legislation, the Ledbetter Fair Pay Act was also used as an electoral tool to highlight Democrats' commitment to women's economic empowerment and to portray Republicans as siding with their business allies over the interests of women and their families. First proposed in the 2008 election cycle, Senate Democrats used the debate and the vote on the bill to let Democratic presidential primary candidates, senators Barack Obama (IL) and Hillary Clinton (NY), make floor speeches demonstrating their commitment to women's economic needs, while portraying the Republican nominee, John McCain (AZ), as a business apologist unconcerned with the needs of women. Once Barack Obama won the nomination, Ledbetter campaigned heavily for him and her story became an integral part of the Democratic campaign message. After Obama's victory, he signed the bill into law as his first major legislation, with Lilly Ledbetter and a group of Democratic congresswomen looking on in a visual that reinforced the image of Democrats as the party of women's rights.

In such a partisan atmosphere, Republican women could not collaborate with Democrats on pay equity. Instead, when Democrats accuse the Republican Party of being antiwomen, Republican women are called on to defend the party against these charges. In the Senate, Kay Bailey Hutchison, a Texas Republican who served in party leadership as Policy Committee chair, was the lead sponsor of a Republican alternative to the Ledbetter bill. She defended the party's position on the floor and pushed back against the characterization of Republicans as protecting their business allies and denying women equal pay. In the House of Representatives, conservative women voted against the Democratic bill, while the more moderate Republican women, particularly the moderates in the Senate, voted in favor of the Democratic bill. However, the Republican women who voted for the bill and supported the goals of the policy did not actively lobby for the bill by participating in press conferences and other efforts to build support for it; those efforts were wrapped in rhetoric to mobilize women voters for the Democratic Party and against Republicans. [21]

Similarly, Democratic women have long advocated for making contraception more affordable and accessible. President Obama's decision to pursue national health insurance created an opportunity to achieve this goal. Democratic women were among the most aggressive advocates for requiring insurance companies to provide free access to contraceptives as part of a broader package of preventative health benefits. Making contraception more widely avail-

able is popular with the public and reduces the incidence of unwanted pregnancies. However, the issue is also wrapped up in the contentious politics of abortion; it quickly developed into a fight over the need for exemptions for employers who have religious objections to providing contraception. Democratic women wanting to extend benefits to as many women as possible, including Senators Patty Murray (WA), Barbara Boxer (CA), Debbie Stabenow (MI), and Jeanne Shaheen (NH), aggressively pressed for the broadest possible coverage. Meanwhile, other prominent Democrats, including Vice President Biden, advised President Obama to create a wider exemption, fearing a backlash from the Catholic Church and antiabortion groups. Thus, while most Democrats supported including contraception in the preventative health package, Democratic women were more strongly committed to the issue and resisted efforts to scale back coverage. Ultimately, President Obama opted for broad coverage, precipitating an ongoing fight over the parameters of the religious exemption and who qualifies for it. To date, the administration has revised the rules numerous times, the Supreme Court weighed in and expanded the exemption to privately held corporations, and the courts are still considering other issues related to religious freedom and the contraception mandate. Amidst this continuing controversy, Democratic women remain among the staunchest defenders of the mandate.[22]

As with the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, the contraception mandate is also a pillar in Democratic efforts to attract women voters, and the party uses the partisan battles over contraception as supporting evidence of the Republican war on women. As a result, Republican women have been called on to defend their party. Most prominently, Senator Kelly Ayotte (R-NH) has served as a primary cosponsor and spokesperson for a religious freedom bill, and has main-

tained that Republicans are concerned with protecting religious freedom, not denying women contraception. Most recently, Ayotte has promoted a bill with Senator Cory Gardner (R-CO) to allow contraception to be sold over the counter without a prescription. Gardner successfully used the proposal to counter the incumbent Democratic senator's attempts to portray him as damaging to women's health, and subsequently won his 2014 Senate challenge.[23]

The sharp polarization surrounding women's issues has engulfed formerly bipartisan areas of agreement. Thus, while the Violence Against Women Act passed easily in the 1990s and was later renewed without controversy, the most recent effort to reauthorize the legislation was ensnared in conflict over gay rights and other issues delaying passage. The conflict followed the familiar pattern of partisan polarization, with Democratic women championing the proposal, the Democratic Party highlighting Republican resistance as evidence of the party's lack of commitment to women's rights, and Republican women speaking up to defend the party.[24]

Still, when issues arise that disproportionately impact women and are not associated with the partisan divide, women engage in cross-party collaboration. For example, Democratic and Republican women in the Senate have aggressively pursued reforms to the military justice system to address the problem of sexual assault in the military. Pentagon surveys indicate that the incidence of sexual assault in the military increased 35 percent between 2010 and 2012. Moreover, only a small percentage of victims file a report and very few perpetrators are prosecuted. Incensed by the ongoing problem of sexual assault and the military's inability to address it, the women in the Senate sought to draw more attention to the issue and began crafting policy solutions. Because

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seven women, two Republicans and five Democrats, served on the Armed Services Committee, they were able to convince the Committee chair to call a rare hearing with the chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and all the uniformed chiefs of the armed services in order to confront each of them about the issue and what could be done to improve the military's response. The female senators then worked together to craft reforms, several of which Congress ultimately adopted, including changing the procedures used to prosecute sexual assault, eliminating the ability of military commanders to overturn jury convictions, and providing services and legal counsel to victims.[25]

While the female senators agreed on the importance of the issue, they did not always agree on the necessary policy solutions. Indeed, the Senate was strongly divided over the question of whether the decision to prosecute a sexual assault should be taken out of the hands of military commanders and entrusted to independent prosecutors. The coalitions on this issue did not fall neatly along party lines. Democrat Kirsten Gillibrand (NY) – supported by most of the Democratic women in the Senate and two Republican women, Lisa Murkowski (AK) and Susan Collins (ME) – championed a proposal to remove this power from the chain of command, hoping to encourage more women to come forward to report the crime and to increase the rate of prosecutions. The Pentagon and the chair of the Armed Services Committee, Carl Levin (D-MI), strongly opposed Gillibrand's bill; in response, she worked diligently to build a cross-party coalition, even gaining the support of conservative stalwarts Rand Paul (R-KY) and Ted Cruz (R-TX). Meanwhile, another female Democrat, Claire McCaskill (MO) led a coalition working to keep the imperative to prosecute within the military chain of command in order to clearly delineate responsibility and pressure military leaders to take the

problem more seriously. McCaskill had the support of the chairman of the Armed Services Committee and the two Republican women on the Committee, Kelly Ayotte (NH) and Deb Fischer (NE). McCaskill's proposal was ultimately adopted, and efforts to improve the treatment of women in the military are ongoing.[26]

Female senators' success in building bipartisan policy coalitions to force the military bureaucracy to change its policies regarding sexual assault was facilitated by the fact that women held a significant block of seats on the Armed Services Committee, constituting seven of the Committee's twenty-six members. Further, women held pivotal leadership positions on the Committee, including Kirsten Gillibrand's position as chair of the Subcommittee on Personnel. The advancement of women into congressional leadership is a relatively new phenomenon and raises questions of whether women have different leadership styles from men. Seniority is a crucial factor for advancement into leadership positions in committees and within the parties. Since most women in Congress today were elected after 1992, women have only recently earned the seniority necessary to attain committee and party leadership posts.

The partisan gap in women's representation means that women have greater numbers and more seniority in the Democratic Party. Thus, when sexual assault reforms were adopted in 2013 and 2014, Democrats held the majority in the Senate and Democratic women chaired eight of the Senate's committees, including the powerful Appropriations Committee and Budget Committee. In the current Republican-controlled Congress, women chair only one committee in the House, the Committee on House Administration, and two committees in the Senate, the Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the Select Committee on Aging.[27] Because most Republican women

serving in Congress were elected as part of or following the 2010 Republican wave, few Republican women have gained enough seniority to acquire committee chairmanships. As a result, when Republicans control the majority, women have a much more limited influence over policy.

Looking at the party caucuses, few women have advanced to the highest levels of party leadership. Women in both the Republican and Democratic parties have served in lower-level leadership positions, such as conference vice chair, conference secretary, and deputy whip. However, in the Senate, no women have advanced to the top leadership positions of party leader and whip. In the House of Representatives, only Nancy Pelosi has reached the highest leadership position: Speaker of the House. Republicans in the House have elected two women to serve as conference chair, the fourth-ranking leadership position that is focused on selling the party's agenda to the public.[28] Both Deborah Pryce (R-OH), conference chair from 2003 to 2007, and current conference chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-WA) cite outreach to women voters and combating the Democratic war-on-women message as among their top priorities.[29]

Studies of the leadership styles of female committee chairs in the state legislatures indicate that compared with male committee chairs, women display a more egalitarian leadership style that values consensus and collaboration, while men adopt more authoritative styles that emphasize conflict and competition. However, gender differences in leadership style are less apparent in more professionalized legislatures: institutions that meet year round with a full-time staff and are likely to be partisan bodies in the mold of Congress.[30] Thus, it is possible that the institutional norms of Congress make it less likely that women will exhibit a distinctive leadership style.

Looking at female leadership in Congress, scholars who focus on legislative behavior note distinct differences in how men and women spend their time. Women engage in higher rates of bill sponsorship and cosponsorship, and when earmarks were still allowed, female members brought home more projects to their districts.[31] Thus, female legislators are more active than men and are more likely to cast a broad net in their policy activity. Examining how far members' proposals advance in the legislative process, there are clear gender differences in levels of policy success. Women are more effective legislators than men when they serve in the minority party. As minority-party legislators, women's ability to build consensus and potentially reach across party lines to forge coalitions is necessary for achieving progress on legislation. However, when serving in the majority party, women are less effective than men as measured by how far their proposals advance through the legislative process. This gender disparity is particularly true in more recent polarized Congresses; partisan environments value confrontation over female consensus-building skills.[32]

As perhaps the most prominent woman in Congress, former Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi illustrates how a female leader can both bring distinctive policy priorities to Congress and thrive in a highly polarized and partisan context. Pelosi won a contested race for minority party whip in 2001. Emerging from the more liberal wing of the Democratic Party to run against Steny Hoyer (D-MD), Pelosi emphasized the need for more diversity in leadership and had the support of most of the women in the Democratic caucus, as well as the large California delegation. Rising to minority leader in 2003, Pelosi became Speaker of the House when Democrats took back the majority in the 2006 elections. Rather than someone who builds coalitions across party lines, Pelosi has been described as a partisan warrior

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in the mold of Newt Gingrich (R-GA), the former Speaker of the House who led the Republican revolution of 1994. Like Gingrich, Pelosi draws sharp contrasts between the policy agendas of Democrats and Republicans. As Speaker, she pushed a strongly liberal agenda, and as minority leader in the current Congress, she prefers to force Republicans to find votes within their own party for must-pass bills before coming to the table to negotiate a deal. Pelosi is a prolific fundraiser and a favorite target of Republicans who characterize her as a San Francisco big-government liberal emblematic of the wrongheaded ideas of the Democratic Party.[33]

Meanwhile, in line with research on women's leadership styles, within the Democratic caucus, Pelosi is seen as a consensus-builder who listens to the needs of her members and tries to bridge differences across the different factions of the caucus. She also prioritizes bringing more diversity to the leadership table via appointing more women and more minorities to chair committees.[33] Pelosi is strongly committed to pursuing legislation focused on the needs of women, children, and families. She played a pivotal role in pressing President Obama to make his health insurance reform as comprehensive as possible, rather than scale it back in the face of Republican opposition. As Speaker, she also pushed through an expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program, which provides health insurance to low-income children whose family incomes are above the poverty threshold necessary to qualify for Medicaid. Pelosi is a staunch defender of abortion rights and a proponent of equal pay initiatives. She helped convince President Obama to make the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act the first bill he passed through Congress and she shepherded passage of other equal pay bills through the House, such as the Paycheck Fairness Act, although these bills

never advanced in the Senate.[34] Clearly, Pelosi has pursued both a partisan agenda and a distinctive set of priorities focused on the needs of women, children, and families. These priorities reflect both the policy preferences of current Democratic electoral coalitions and Pelosi's own life experiences as a woman and a mother.

In sum, it is clear that women are bringing a distinctive perspective and set of issue priorities to Congress. In comparison with men, Democratic women and moderate Republican women have focused more attention on the needs and interests of women, children, and families. Yet the advancement of women into Congress coincided with electoral trends that have created a more partisan and polarized Congress. In this contentious atmosphere, issues related to women's rights are now strongly associated with the Democratic Party, in effect reducing opportunities for bipartisan cooperation among women. Democratic women aggressively pursue policies ranging from expanded family leave to women's health initiatives while utilizing these proposals to attract particular groups of women voters, such as single and college-educated women. Since women's issues are now a part of the partisan divide, Democratic women serve their party's electoral goals by attacking the Republican agenda as harmful to women's interests. In turn, Republican women are compelled to defend their party's record rather than reach across the aisle to find compromise. While women as a group may be more inclined to compromise and consensus-building, current electoral trends and partisan dynamics in Congress reward women candidates and legislators who are aggressive partisans. Thus, the election of more women to Congress will bring more diverse viewpoints to the legislative process, but is not likely to change overall levels of polarization and gridlock.

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# Varieties of Presidentialism
# & of Leadership Outcomes

*Robert Elgie*

*Abstract: This essay explores aspects of the relationship between political leadership and institutional power, comparing the different forms that presidential institutions have taken across the world and identifying the relationship between these structures and social, political, and economic outcomes. Semipresidential systems are distinguished from presidential systems, and within the former, a distinction is made between president-parliamentary and premier-presidential regimes. Some scholars have argued that presidential regimes are less conducive to the successful transition from authoritarian rule to democracy than are parliamentary governments, but the empirical evidence is contradictory. Recent research has, however, drawn attention to finer distinctions within the various broad categories of presidentialism, focusing on more precise institutional arrangements and trying to identify which are more, and which are less, consonant with the consolidation of democracy.*

ROBERT ELGIE is the Paddy Moriarty Professor of Government and International Politics at Dublin City University. His many books include *Semi-Presidentialism: Sub-Types and Democratic Performance* (2011), *Political Institutions in Contemporary France* (2003), and *Divided Government in Comparative Perspective* (2001). He is the editor of the journal *French Politics* and the review editor for *Government and Opposition*.

What is the relationship between institutional power and political leadership? What is the effect of presidential institutions on political, economic, and social outcomes? These are questions that scholars have debated for centuries. For many years, proponents of U.S.-style presidentialism were pitted against supporters of U.K.-style parliamentarism. Here, there were seminal contributions from Woodrow Wilson and Walter Bagehot in the late nineteenth century,[1] as well as an important exchange between Harold Laski and Don Price in the mid-twentieth century.[2] In the late 1980s and early 1990s, this debate was revived with the creation of many newly independent states and a wave of democratization. At this time, many scholars warned against what they saw as the potentially negative consequences of presidential leadership on young democracies. Over the last few decades, though, the terms of the debate have broadened and changed. In particular, scholars have begun to consider the pros and cons of

what are known as *semipresidential* regimes. Scholars have also started to look at institutional variation within presidential and semipresidential regimes. This work has suggested that successful presidential leadership is a realistic possibility for countries in the process of democratic consolidation.

When scholars debate the pros and cons of different political regimes, the two baseline categories are well known. Presidential regimes have both a popularly elected, fixed-term president and a fixed-term legislature. The president nominates members of the Cabinet subject to legislative approval, but the government collectively cannot be dismissed by the legislature. By contrast, parliamentary regimes are headed either by a figurehead monarch or by a weak, indirectly elected president, who is often selected by the legislature. The legislature approves the choice of the prime minister, who is the central figure within the executive and who individually selects the members of the Cabinet. The prime minister and Cabinet, though, remain collectively responsible to the legislature. In presidential and parliamentary regimes, the institutional choices are very stark. For example, should there be a popularly elected president? Should the government be collectively accountable to the legislature? There has been a long scholarly debate about the effects of these different choices, particularly on the fate of young democracies.

In 1970, the French political scientist Maurice Duverger challenged the standard presidential/parliamentary dichotomy. He identified another type of institutional arrangement that he labeled semipresidential regimes.[3] These are countries where there is both a popularly elected fixed-term president and a prime minister and Cabinet that are collectively responsible to the legislature. When Duverger first identified them, there were only a handful of semi-

presidential regimes in existence, most notably France. Now, though, this type of constitutional arrangement is much more common. Indeed, in the late 1980s, there were fewer than ten countries with a semipresidential constitution; now there are more than fifty.[4] While Duverger's general label has persisted, scholars have further distinguished between two types of semipresidential regimes. These have the unwieldy names of *president-parliamentary* and *premier-presidential* regimes.[5] Both have the basic features of semipresidentialism, but under president-parliamentarism, the government is responsible to both the legislature and the president, whereas under premier-presidentialism, the government is responsible solely to the legislature. The list of president-parliamentary countries includes Kyrgyzstan, Mozambique, Namibia, Russia, Sri Lanka, and Taiwan. The list of premier-presidential countries includes France, Georgia, Lithuania, Mongolia, Romania, and Turkey. It is safe to say that while scholars previously tended to confine their analyses of presidential leadership to presidential countries, they now invariably include consideration of semipresidential countries and, indeed, presidential leadership within the two subtypes of semipresidential regimes.

Since the wave of democratization in the late 1980s and early 1990s, scholars have debated the relative merits of these regime types in relation to the transition from authoritarianism to democratic consolidation. Here, there has been considerable focus on whether presidential institutions affect the likelihood of democratic consolidation. At the very beginning of the 1990s, Juan Linz framed the terms of the debate in this regard.[6] He argued that presidentialism was a perilous choice for young democracies. At first glance, this recommendation seems highly contentious, because it flies in the face of the U.S. experience.

After all, as the world's oldest presidential regime and also the world's oldest constitutional democracy, it might be tempting to conclude that presidentialism is well suited to democratic consolidation. However, Linz drew heavily on the experience of presidentialism in Latin America, where, at the time he was writing, democracy had not yet taken firm root. Subsequently, Scott Mainwaring built on Linz's work, arguing that the interaction of presidentialism and a multiparty system was a dangerous combination for young democracies.[7] Again relying primarily on Latin America, he claimed that the difficulty involved in coalition-building in multiparty presidential systems could threaten the survival of such democracies.

By contrast, Matthew Shugart and John Carey argued that the popular election of the president was not necessarily problematic.[8] Drawing on the distinction between president-parliamentary and premier-presidential regimes, they argued that the former should be avoided, but that there were merits to the latter because premier-presidentialism allowed a degree of presidential leadership, while also constraining it within certain limits. By and large, though, Shugart and Carey's recommendation was overlooked because premier-presidentialism can also exhibit what is known as *cohabitation*. This is where the presidency is supported by one political force and the legislature is controlled by an opposing force. This is similar to divided government in the United States. The difference is that in a premier-presidential system, the prime minister and the government are also independent of the president because they have the support of the legislature. The potential for conflict within the executive, and not merely between the president and the legislature, was usually enough for constitution-builders to recommend against premier-presidentialism and, indeed, semipresidentialism in general. On the strength of these

debates, by the late 1990s, there was agreement that presidential leadership was likely to be problematic for new democracies.

In the background of this debate was the issue of political leadership itself. The institutional architecture of presidential and president-parliamentary regimes seemed to render the choices made by individual political leaders highly consequential. Were young democracies safe in the hands of the people who headed such regimes? Could they be trusted to exercise benign, never mind beneficial leadership over their country? Would leaders who were brought up under nondemocratic regimes have the requisite skills to exercise leadership safely, even if they wanted to? Scholars calculated that, on balance, it was more risky to introduce a presidential system in which idiosyncratic and potentially unpredictable leaders could exercise personal leadership than to establish a parliamentary system in which the prime minister was checked by party politics. They were also skeptical that placing checks upon presidential leadership would make a positive difference. After all, history showed that, outside the United States, frustrated presidents had a habit of calling in the military and/or ruling by decree, and even here, Watergate was still fresh in the collective memory.

This scholarly consensus against presidentialism had and continues to have concrete practical application. Many newly independent countries adopted their first ever constitution in the early 1990s. Meanwhile, other countries embarked upon a process of major constitutional reform. More than that, Tom Ginsburg, Zachary Elkins, and James Melton have shown that constitutional amendment is an ongoing process in many countries.[9] Whatever the motivation, one of the issues that constitution-builders invariably have to address is how to organize both the executive and executive-legislative relations. In short,

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they have to make a basic choice among presidential, semipresidential, and parliamentary systems. Previously, constitution-builders tended to call upon individual experts to guide their choice. Over time, international organizations, such as the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, have emerged with the expertise to provide general resources for constitution-builders across the world. The academic consensus against presidentialism has been influential in this context.

With the exception of Latin America, where there is a very long history of this institutional arrangement, and some parts of Anglophone Africa, where personalistic leaders found it convenient to centralize authority, most countries opted against presidentialism during the most recent wave of democratization. In Afghanistan, local constitution-builders did eventually opt for a presidential system, even though they were strongly warned against it by international advisers, including U.S. academics. The puzzle is why semipresidentialism has become so popular in recent decades. In general, constitutional experts warn against this form of government: it can generate strong presidential leadership when the president is backed by a secure legislative majority, but it also has the potential to generate confused lines of political authority between the president, prime minister, and legislature, which can result in cohabitation. The scholarly decks are truly stacked against this type of system. Even so, semipresidentialism has often suited local decision-makers. It provides a neat compromise between political forces that want presidentialism, usually because they calculate that their party will win the presidency, and those that want parliamentarism, usually because they believe that they are not strong enough to win the presidency, but stand a chance of entering a coalition government, thereby sharing in executive power. Mainly for this reason, semipresidentialism has emerged as the regime of choice for many young democracies. In this sense, contrary to the advice of much of the scholarly community, the opportunity for presidential leadership has spread around the world.

Nearly three decades on, though, the question is whether there is empirical evidence to support the academic consensus against presidential leadership. Here, the situation is much more confused. Initially, scholars such as Linz drew on in-depth regional knowledge to back up their arguments against presidentialism. They pointed to particular examples to show that democracy had collapsed in presidential countries. Other scholars, though, identified counter-examples in which presidentialism had survived. The same point applies to semipresidentialism. This system is said to have suited countries like Mongolia, but critics have pointed to the problems that it created in other countries, such as Niger. These examples merely show that the relationship between presidentialism and democratic collapse is not deterministic. The question, then, is whether presidential leadership increases the probability of democratic collapse. Here, the evidence is contradictory. The results are highly sensitive to the sample of countries under investigation, to the controls that are included in the equation, and to the statistical model that is used in the estimation. For example, based on a sample of 123 democratizations from 1960 to 2004, Ethan Kapstein and Nathan Converse found that parliamentarism was more dangerous for democracy than presidentialism.[10] Taeko Hiroi and Sawa Omori, looking at 131 democracies from 1960 to 2006, also concluded that parliamentarism was more perilous than presidentialism.[11] By contrast, on the basis of 135 democratic periods from 1800 to 2004, Ko Maeda discovered that parliamentarism was better than presi-

dentialism over the long run.[12] The value of the whole debate was called into question when Ming Sing, with a sample of 85 countries from 1946 to 2002, unearthed no relationship between either form of government and the collapse of democracy.[13] For his part, José Cheibub argued that presidentialism is dangerous only if it is adopted in countries that were previously subject to military rule, effectively shifting the explanatory focus to the importance of history and away from institutions altogether.[14]

Overall, after a quarter-century of systematic study, it is still unclear whether presidentialism is more dangerous for young democracies than parliamentarism, or whether the choice of regime makes no difference. Indeed, the same can be said about semipresidentialism. There is some supporting evidence for Shugart and Carey's claim about the perils of president-parliamentarism relative to premier-presidentialism,[15] but there is no reliable, replicable evidence that premier-presidentialism is either more or less likely to be associated with democratic collapse than either presidentialism or parliamentarism. Thus, after so many studies, in terms of the empirical evidence at least, the jury is still out. In one sense, this is unsurprising. The success or failure of democracy is conditional upon many different factors. Context matters. More than that, the scholarly debate about presidentialism assumes it is an exogenous factor affecting leadership outcomes. Yet it is endogenous too. As Archie Brown points out in relation to semipresidentialism, there is a "chicken-and-egg question about whether leaders and political elites in countries with a tradition of authoritarian rule opt for a strongly presidentialized semi-presidentialism, leading to an excessive concentration of power in the hands of the chief executive."[16] Faced with such issues, scholars have started to unpack presidential and semipresidential institutions, and

bring some consideration of both context and leadership back in.

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One of the reasons why arguments about the supposed perils of presidential leadership have been so difficult to resolve relates to the concepts under investigation. The presidential system in the United States is so familiar that it is tempting to think only in terms of its example when discussing presidential leadership. Yet there is great variety of presidential leadership even within purely presidential regimes. For example, in Latin America, where the U.S. presidential model has been adopted wholesale, there are currently old-style *caudillo* presidents in Venezuela and Bolivia, whereas in other countries, including Ecuador, hostile congresses have resorted to presidential impeachment to divest themselves of unpopular political leaders. Indeed, some authors have seen such presidential "interruptions" as an increasingly common way of resolving political crises in the region.[17] In Africa, where there is also a tradition of presidentialism, the "strong man" president is still a model of reference, though in some African countries, including Nigeria, presidents have recently struggled to assert their authority over the legislature. In Asia, too, there is considerable variation: in the Philippines, there is a form of hyperpresidentialism,[18] while in South Korea and currently in Indonesia, presidents have had difficulty in passing their reform agenda through a divided legislature. What this all suggests is that while the United States may be the archetypal presidential regime, presidential leadership can take many forms. This is perhaps one reason why it has been difficult to identify a general association between presidentialism and democratic performance.

This point applies even more forcefully to presidential leadership under semipresidentialism. Here, scholars are obliged right from the start to make a basic distinction within semipresidentialism, typ-

ically between president-parliamentarism and premier-presidentialism. The difference between the two subtypes is purely constitutional, relating to whether or not the president has the power to dismiss the prime minister and government. While this is a constitutional distinction, it maps quite nicely on to the overall power of presidents in practice. Presidents in president-parliamentary systems do tend to be stronger than presidents in premier-presidential systems. Even so, the distinction masks important variation within each subtype. For example, Austria and Iceland both have purely ceremonial presidents, yet their presidents enjoy the constitutional power to dismiss the Cabinet. It is simply that, by convention, this power is never used. So they are president-parliamentary in constitutional terms, but their presidents act like figurehead presidents in parliamentary regimes.

There are also differences in presidential leadership between president-parliamentary countries such as Mozambique and Namibia, on the one hand, and Taiwan, on the other. In the former, presidents have been backed by dominant parties with a cohesive majority in the legislature. This ensures that the president enjoys the political resources to exercise great power. By contrast, in the latter, President Chen Shui-bian was without a legislative majority for much of his eight-year term, limiting his power considerably. There is also the well-known case of president-parliamentary Russia. When President Putin was term-limited in 2008, he simply moved to the premiership, dominating the system from there before returning to the presidency in 2012. Putin's example shows the limitations of an analysis focused solely on a consideration of basic separation-of-powers features.

Under premier-presidentialism there is also considerable variation in presidential leadership. The list of premier-presidential countries includes a number of cases in which the presidency is also a purely ceremonial office, even if the president is directly elected. In these countries, which include Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Macedonia, and Slovenia, the practice of politics is purely parliamentary. By contrast, in countries such as France, Turkey, and Ukraine, the president is usually the most important actor in the system. What is more, there is also considerable variation across time within individual premier-presidential countries. David Samuels and Matthew Shugart have shown that cohabitation is almost unheard of in president-parliamentary systems.[19] However, it is not uncommon in premier-presidential systems. Here, when the legislative majority is opposed to the president, the president usually loses the opportunity to exercise leadership. For example, in France, power shifted from the president to the prime minister during all three periods of cohabitation (1986–1988, 1993–1995, and 1997–2002). In Romania, President Băsescu faced two periods of cohabitation (2007–2008 and 2012–2014). On both occasions, the legislative majority voted to suspend him from office and organized a popular referendum to decide whether or not he should be impeached. On both occasions, President Băsescu survived politically, but it was a sign that presidential leadership under premier-presidentialism cannot be taken for granted. In Portugal, by contrast, the opposite scenario occurs during cohabitation: the president becomes stronger. The Portuguese president is not the party leader. Instead, when the president and prime minister are from the same party, the latter has more party authority than the former. During cohabitation, though, the president is now the most senior party figure remaining within the executive. As a result, party opposition to the government expresses itself through the presidency, which becomes more powerful.

What this all suggests is that a typology of regimes based on institutional design is

a relatively blunt conceptual instrument. It may be possible to identify some very general trends about presidential leadership under presidentialism compared with parliamentarism, and also, adjusting for countries such as Austria and Iceland, about the effect of president-parliamentarism relative to premier-presidentialism. Even if this were the case, though – and so far, as has been shown, the evidence is contradictory – it would still miss much of the effect of within-regime variation. Partly for these reasons, the research agenda has started to shift toward new questions about institutions and presidential leadership.

Some scholars have chosen to focus on the study of presidential power more specifically. For example, in a recent survey of articles in top-rated political science journals, David Doyle and I identified forty-nine studies that included an estimation of presidential power.[20] In forty-five of these, presidential power was operationalized as an explanatory variable, and in thirty of these forty-five studies, presidential power was confirmed to have had a significant effect on the outcome under investigation. What is more, the outcome of interest varied considerably across the set of studies. Some authors were indeed concerned with democratic consolidation. However, other scholars were interested in the relationship between presidential power and outcomes such as economic reform, economic growth, the level and timing of privatization, protectionism, corruption, human rights violations, Cabinet stability, ministerial portfolio allocation, the effective number of political parties, and voter turnout. Most of these studies were conducted in the last few years, suggesting that there is an increasing interest in the effect of presidential power.

This approach is consistent with some of the underlying logic of the more traditional regime-based inquiry. In general, presidents in presidential systems and, in-

deed, in president-parliamentary systems are stronger than their counterparts in premier-presidential regimes, who, in turn, are stronger than their head-of-state equivalents in parliamentary systems. In other words, regime-oriented studies can already be interpreted as studies of the relative impact of presidential power. However, as has been noted, there is considerable variation in presidential power within each of these regime types. Therefore, if presidential power really is the variable of interest, then scholars have argued that it needs to be operationalized much more carefully than is possible in regime-based analysis.

The question arises, then, as to how presidential power is best measured. Typically, measures are based on a set of individual indicators, such as whether a president has the power to issue decrees with the force of law. If a president enjoys a particular power, then a value of one may be assigned for that indicator. Otherwise, a value of zero is recorded. The total score for presidential power is invariably the simple aggregate of the scores for each indicator. This generates a set of cross-national presidential power scores for individual countries. This methodology, though, begs some important questions. What powers should be included in the set of indicators? Here, scholars make very different decisions. Some prefer a relatively small number of indicators, others include up to forty. Moreover, even if they include a similar number of indicators, they do not necessarily include exactly the same ones. In addition, whatever indicators are chosen, are the values assigned in each case determined by the wording of the constitution or by presidential leadership in practice? The Austrian and Icelandic cases demonstrate clearly that constitutions can sometimes be an imperfect guide to political life in reality. So there are serious concerns about the reliability of the measurement of presidential power. These issues

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have led some observers to question the validity of the exercise altogether.[21] Recently, though, Doyle and I have tried to maximize the reliability of presidential power measures by, in effect, pooling the scores of scholars who have already come up with such measures.[22] We drew upon the mass of information contained in twenty-eight existing presidential power measures, reducing them to a single score for each country's president. We adjusted for measures that appeared to produce idiosyncratic scores for particular countries and we provided some information as to whether there was general scholarly agreement on the presidential power score for any given country.

This exercise suggests that there is now the opportunity to engage in the study of the impact of presidential power more reliably than was previously the case. All the same, it leaves open the difficult issue of within-country variation over time. For example, on a scale from zero to one, the French president has a normalized presidential power score of 0.465.[23] This figure is in the right ballpark intuitively. There are plenty of executive presidents in Latin America with higher scores, as well as plenty of figurehead presidents with much lower scores. However, as has been indicated, presidential power has varied over time within France in the context of cohabitation. A single country score cannot capture this variation. Moreover, these scores are based on twenty-eight measures of the constitutional powers of presidents. This is a more reliable foundation upon which to base a study in the sense that no in-depth country knowledge is required. It is simply a matter of reading the words in a country's publicly available constitution. That said, it does leave the issue of the difference between constitutional powers and actual presidential leadership still unresolved.

More fundamentally, though, such presidential power scores can never capture the individual quality of political leadership. Working within the same institutional framework in the same country, political leaders can exercise leadership very differently. This personal element of political leadership is very difficult to capture. In fact, comparative scholars who engage in large-*n* statistical studies do not attempt to do so. For them, the impact of political leadership can be found somewhere in the error term of the equation. This is a natural consequence of the type of analysis in which they are engaging. They wish to make general statements about the impact of certain explanatory factors. Institutions, whether operationalized as different separation-of-powers regimes or presidential power scores, can be manipulated and the effect of institutional variation on various outcomes can be tested. By contrast, variation in individual political leadership cannot be investigated in the same way. This does not mean that political leadership does not matter. On the contrary, whether good or bad, competent or incompetent, honest or corrupt, political leadership will always make a difference in particular contexts. However, the study of both regime types and presidential power scores does not place the focus on such questions. Thus, while there is a growing interest in estimating the general effect of presidential power, and while there are now measures of presidential power that are more reliable than ever before, there are nonetheless still profound limitations to this exercise.

Partly in response to these issues, some scholars have placed the emphasis on the importance of more particular aspects of presidential leadership. This work addresses head-on one of the issues that has bedeviled regime-based inquiry. Why is there variation in outcomes within particular regime types? Specifically, why is presidential leadership more successful in

some presidential countries than others? This question was first asked in relation to Latin America, where most countries have a presidential system. In this sense, the broad institutional context is constant. At the same time, and in contrast to the two-party polarization in the United States, most Latin American countries also have multiparty systems. Therefore, presidents often come to power without the backing of majority support in the legislature: they are minority presidents. Indeed, this was the difficult combination for democratic consolidation that Scott Mainwaring identified in the mid-1990s. More than that, and in this regard there are similarities with the United States, political parties in Latin America often lack cohesion in the legislature. Parties are not loyal to the president. There is party switching: deputies shift their allegiance from one party or coalition to another. In other words, even if the president has the nominal support of a particular party or coalition, such support cannot be taken for granted.

In this context, why have some minority presidents been more successful than others? For example, in Brazil, both President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and President Lula were able to pass reforms through Congress, even though their own party did not have a majority there. By contrast, in Ecuador, presidents have been stifled in their ambitions, with President Abdalá Bucaram even being dismissed from office by Congress in 1997 on the grounds that he was mentally unfit to rule. To put it another way, why have some presidents been more successful at building legislative coalitions than others? The attempt to find an answer to this question has generated a literature on so-called "coalitional presidentialism."

The work on coalitional presidentialism (or *presidencialismo de coalizão*) has roots in the study of Brazil. Here, there were repeated periods of democracy followed by democratic collapse. However, since democracy was reinstated in the late 1980s, it has survived. At least in part, this success has been put down to the success of presidential coalition-building. According to Timothy Power, the "core insight of coalitional presidentialism is that presidents must behave like European prime ministers. Executives must fashion multiparty cabinets and voting blocs on the floor of the legislature."[24] In this regard, President Cardoso wrote what has been described as a user's manual for other presidents to follow.[25]

While the study of coalitional presidentialism is rooted in the Brazilian experience, it has struck a chord with scholars of the region generally. For example, Carlos Pereira and Marcus André Melo argue that the success of coalitional presidentialism can be attributed to three factors: 1) whether the president is constitutionally strong; 2) whether the president has "goods" to trade in order to attract and keep coalition partners; and 3) whether there are institutionalized and effective checks on presidential actions.[26] For them, it is important that presidents have the constitutional power to distribute political goods, such as Cabinet posts and budgetary resources. Presidents can use these goods in the form of "selective incentives" to reward and/or punish members of the legislature. In a form of politics that would be familiar to U.S. observers, coalitional presidentialism relies on the president's ability to distribute "pork" to members of Congress. At the same time, though, it is also important for there to be checks on the president's power, including an active and independent judiciary and a plural media. For his part, Steven Levitsky emphasizes a slightly different combination of factors to explain the success of presidential coalition-building.[27] For him, the three important aspects are 1) the sharing of executive power through the distribu-

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tion of Cabinet seats to coalition parties; 2) pork, budgetary clientelism, and other discretionary side payments; and 3) the presence of oversized coalitions to compensate for the lack of party cohesion.[28] Levitsky thinks of these factors as informal institutional rules, taking the focus of the analysis even further away from the regime-based inquiry of the early 1990s.

The work on coalition presidentialism in Latin America has proved popular because it is potentially transferable to the study of presidential leadership in other regions. This has led to an interest in the so-called "executive toolbox," or "presidential toolkit" approach.[29] For example, Paul Chaisty, Nic Cheeseman, and Timothy Power have extended the logic of coalitional presidentialism to countries in Africa and in the former Soviet Union. They argue that presidents have a range of tools that they can draw upon to engage in successful coalition-building, and that the particular tools they use will vary according to the local context. Specifically, they identify five key tools for constructing legislative coalitions: agenda power, budgetary authority, Cabinet management, partisan powers, and informal institutions, though they acknowledge that other tools might be appropriate in other contexts still. For example, they show that many African presidents have failed to command the support of a natural majority in the legislature. Faced with this problem and citing Benin as an example, they show how presidents there have had little choice but "to engage in complex processes of alliance formation, appointing representatives of opposition parties to the cabinet."[30] This has meant, though, that presidents in Benin have been constrained in their exercise of power. For example, they have not always been able to monopolize control over economic rents and public policy. Instead, like President Kibaki in Kenya, presidents in Benin have

"blended cabinet management, informal institutions, and agenda power into a single coherent strategy for coalition management."[31] Indeed, this example shows how the presidential toolkit does not simply manage itself. Skillful leaders have to decide on a strategy for manipulating it successfully. This opens up a space for the study of innovative and resourceful political leadership. It is reasonable to speculate that such leadership is in fact one of the reasons why Benin has had one of the more successful democratic experiments in Africa since the early 1990s. In other words, even though Benin has a presidential regime and presidents have lacked solid support in the legislature, the judicious use of tools in the presidential toolkit by successive leaders has perhaps helped maintain broad support for the regime, not least by bringing potentially oppositional forces into the decision-making process.

How should we sum up the long debate about the relative benefits of presidentialism and parliamentarism? Over the years, this simple distinction has become less relevant, first with the rise of semipresidential regimes across the world, and then with the scholarly focus on intraregime variation and the study of coalitional presidentialism, as well as the presidential toolkit. The development of this scholarship is important not least because it indicates the need to go beyond the standard archetype of presidential leadership in the United States. Looking to Latin America for lessons about presidential leadership, Juan Linz argued that a key problem with presidentialism was the potential for conflict between presidents who failed to enjoy majority support in the legislature and the legislature itself. This was exactly the type of scenario that he believed was likely either to lead to the intervention of the military in an attempt to restore stability to the regime (the *golpe*), or to see presidents

abusing the rule of law and governing by decree (the *autogolpe*).

However, following on from work pointing out that coalitions are, in fact, relatively common in presidential regimes,[32] the literature on coalitional presidentialism and the presidential toolkit has provided an explanation as to why presidential leadership in Latin America and elsewhere has been less destructive of democracy in recent times. Specifically, it has done so by shifting the emphasis away from blunt, regime-based inquiry, and, instead, has unpacked the concept of presidential leadership. This work is at once both consistent with and neglectful of the study of individual political leadership. Underlying the arguments about the perils of presidentialism was a distrust of individual leadership, or at least a skepticism that benign leadership was likely to be exercised in presidential regimes. At the same time, the debate about the relative effects of institutional structures on outcomes, including the debate about the effects of variation in presidential power generally, has been conducted largely without reference to leaders or leadership. There are signs, though, that the most recent scholarship is trying to address this issue more directly (and yet still systematically). The logic of the presidential toolkit approach is that presidents have to choose which tools are best suited to the specific context they face. Some presidents are likely to choose well and others less well. Here, in the interaction of institutions, leaders, and context, lies the eternal dilemma of the study of presidential leadership.

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# Authoritarian Leadership in the Post-Communist World

## Eugene Huskey

*Abstract: A quarter-century after the collapse of the USSR, authoritarian politics dominates seven of the fifteen successor states. Placing the post-communist authoritarian experience in the broader frame of nondemocratic governance, this essay explores the origins and operation of personalist rule in the region; the relationship between time and power; and the role of Soviet legacies in shaping the agenda and tools of leadership. It also examines the efforts of post-communist authoritarians to enhance personal and regime legitimacy by claiming to rule beyond politics. Within the post-communist world, the essay finds significant variation among authoritarian leaders in their approaches to personnel policy and to the use of policies, symbols, and narratives to address the ethnic and religious awakening spawned by the collapse of Soviet rule. The essay concludes with a brief assessment of the trajectories of post-communist authoritarian leadership.*

> …nothing is harder to manage, more risky in the undertaking, or more doubtful of success than to set up as the introducer of a new order.
> – Machiavelli

EUGENE HUSKEY is the William R. Kenan, Jr. Professor of Political Science at Stetson University. His research focuses on politics and legal affairs in the Soviet Union and the post-communist successor states of Russia and Kyrgyzstan. He is the author of *Russian Lawyers and the Soviet State* (1986) and *Presidential Power in Russia* (1999), and editor of *Russian Bureaucracy and the State: Officialdom from Alexander III to Vladimir Putin* (with Don K. Rowney, 2009).

New countries create unique challenges and opportunities for political leadership. Founding leaders help to establish the rules of the political game and often acquire a personal authority that inspires deference, or even reverence. However, they also face the daunting tasks of building or consolidating state and nation and, in many cases, of redefining relations with an imperial power. In addition to the challenges present in all fledgling states, leaders of new post-communist countries had to confront the peculiar legacies of the Soviet era, which included a command economy, one-party rule, and a single, all-embracing ideology that removed religion from public life. It is no wonder that instead of systemic change, which characterized the transformational leadership of Mikhail

Gorbachev, most post-Soviet leaders have focused on systemic stabilization.[1] It is also unsurprising that, with their immature political institutions and uncertain identities, post-communist states have been a breeding ground for authoritarian leaders.[2] Despite the hopes of many in the West for a democratic transition throughout the post-communist world, authoritarian presidents have governed in one-third of the almost thirty post-communist countries of Eastern Europe and Eurasia. Many continue to do so today.

Scholars have offered compelling structural explanations of why some post-communist countries have pursued authoritarian rather than democratic paths,[3] and new works appear regularly on individual authoritarian leaders in the region, especially Vladimir Putin. However, as Timothy Colton has observed, "we have not learned nearly enough" about the nature and impact of leadership in the post-communist world.[4] This comment applies with particular force to the region's authoritarian countries, where the limited accountability of rulers allows them to shape political developments in ways that would be unimaginable in democratic regimes. In Turkmenistan, for example, the first leader of the post-communist era, Saparmurat Niyazov, plunged his country into diplomatic isolation while creating a cult of personality of epic proportions.

A quarter-century after the collapse of the Soviet Union, this essay examines the record of rule in seven states in order to identify and explain patterns of authoritarian leadership in the post-communist world and to locate the post-communist experience in the broader landscape of nondemocratic governance. Although several countries in the region, including Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Ukraine, have flirted briefly with authoritarian rule, the main focus here is on the post-communist states that have maintained an authoritarian regime for a decade or longer. These include Belarus and Russia, which are predominantly Slavic and Orthodox countries, and Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, states with majority Muslim and Turkic or Iranian populations (see Table 1).

Some may object that the concept of "authoritarian leadership" is an oxymoron. Because leadership is most frequently associated with the pursuit of laudable goals by fair-minded means, there is a reluctance to apply the term to the exercise of power by authoritarian rulers. Yet the most essential element of leadership – the power to persuade – is found in authoritarian as well as democratic leaders. As Sergei Guriev and Daniel Triesman recently argued, authoritarian rulers today prefer to govern with a velvet fist.[5] Thus, in authoritarian regimes, getting followers to go in the direction the leader wants requires more than applying force, rigging elections, and controlling the media.[6] It also requires the exercise of leadership in the selection of personnel, the adoption of public policies, the cultivation of a compelling personal image, and the construction and manipulation of national symbols, rituals, and narratives. These universal functions of political leadership are at the center of the analysis below.

It is tempting to regard post-communist authoritarian leadership as a legacy of the Soviet era, and yet in two fundamental ways it represents a sharp break with the past. Except for the period of high Stalinism, the Soviet system of government was an oligarchy, in which the power of the general secretary was constrained by the other members of the ruling elite and the rules and conventions of the Communist Party. Post-communist presidents, on the other hand, govern in personalist regimes where the leaders have acquired "so much power that they can no longer be credibly threatened by their allies."[7]

*Table 1*
Authoritarian Leaders in Post-Communist States

*Eugene*
*Huskey*

| Country | Polity IV Score* (2014) | Leader | Period as Leader of Territory | | Years in Office+ | Age+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Soviet Era | Post-Soviet Era | | |
| Azerbaijan | -7 | Heidar Aliev | 1969 – 1982 | 1993 – 2003 | 23 | Deceased |
| | | Ilham Aliev | | 2003 – Present | 12 | 54 |
| Belarus | -7 | Alexander Lukashenka | | 1994 – Present | 21 | 61 |
| Kazakhstan | -6 | Nursultan Nazarbaev | 1989 – 1991 | 1992 – Present | 26 | 75 |
| Russia | 4 | Vladimir Putin | | 2000 – Present | 16# | 63 |
| Tajikistan | -3 | Emomali Rakhmon | | 1994 – Present | 21 | 63 |
| Turkmenistan | -8 | Saparmurat Niyazov | 1985 – 1991 | 1992 – 2006 | 31 | Deceased |
| | | Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov | | 2006 – Present | 9 | 58 |
| Uzbekistan | -9 | Islam Karimov | 1989 – 1991 | 1992 – Present | 26 | 78 |

\* Polity IV scores, which range from 10 (consolidated democracy) to -10 (hereditary monarchy), classify two of our countries (Russia and Tajikistan) as "anocracies," which combine elements of democratic and authoritarian governance, and the remaining five as autocracies. The index from Freedom House considers all the countries under review to be "unfree," with scores between 6 and 7, where 7 is the most unfree.

# Although Putin left the presidency to serve as prime minister from 2008 to 2012, allowing his protégé, Dmitrii Medvedev, to assume the presidency, Putin remained the most important leader in the country in this period. One should also note that it was not until approximately 2003 that authoritarian rule was consolidated in Russia. It took Lukashenka, Nazarbaev, and Rakhmon two to four years to consolidate authoritarian rule.

+ As of March 1, 2016.

How does one explain these patterns of personalist over party rule, and what Milan Svolik has called an "established autocracy" over a "contested autocracy"?[8] One answer lies in the choice of institutions, specifically a semipresidential model of government that grants unusual power and prominence to an elected president. In order to reduce the role of the Communist Party and increase the efficiency and reform orientation of executive authority, presidencies were created in eleven of the fifteen republics on the eve of the Soviet Union's collapse. Within two years after the breakup of the USSR, all of the new states, except the three Baltic republics, had adopted constitutions that placed the presidency at the center of political life, which meant that this institution inherited

many of the functions, as well as some of the offices and personnel, of the old ruling communist parties. In effect, one now had the Soviet structure of government minus the ruling party, which placed the president above the other branches of government – parliament, courts, and council of ministers – like a republican monarch.

Not all countries under review succumbed immediately to authoritarian rule. Whereas leaders in Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan tolerated organized and vocal opposition forces for only a few months after arriving in office, the Russian president remained accountable to parliament and people until approximately 2003. In the end, however, all leaders eliminated the primary sources of popular and elite opposition to their rule by expanding the for-

mal powers of the presidency; arresting, exiling, or intimidating critics; manipulating elections; and, with the exception of Belarus, creating a subservient party or parties that were instruments of electioneering and not governance. To paraphrase the Russian historian Kliuchevsky, as the office of the president swelled up – in terms of power and size – the liberal institutions of state grew lean. Although the substitution of a strong president for a collective party leadership does not lead inexorably to authoritarianism in the context of post-communist rule, it creates a favorable institutional climate for the consolidation of personalist rule. Compared to authoritarian regimes based on one-party rule or a military government, presidentialism makes oligarchy or other forms of "contested autocracy" a less likely outcome because of the symbolic majesty and extensive formal powers of the office of the president.

The legacy of republican-level politics in the USSR may also have contributed to the emergence of single-man, as opposed to oligarchic, rule in post-communist authoritarian regimes. We noted above that a collective leadership governed the country through most of Soviet history, yet one-man rule by a party chieftain was the norm in subnational politics in all but the Russian Republic. Although Moscow appointed republican leaders and established intricate checking mechanisms to ensure their loyalty, in the individual republics, these party first secretaries tended to dominate the political landscape. Thus, when the former Soviet republics became independent states in late 1991, there was no tradition of collective leadership in their capitals.

Whatever the role of legacies in preparing the ground for one-man rule, each leader employed a range of measures to ensure that he controlled his own political allies as well as the governed. As numerous writers on authoritarianism have pointed out, rebellions in the street – or in the voting booth – are less likely to topple a repressive ruler than rebellions in the palace. To keep their political allies in line, authoritarians used both carrot and stick. In exchange for their fealty, political allies received important sinecures in the state apparatus and/or patronage for their lucrative and often illicit business activities;[9] for their part, suspect members of the political or economic establishment were subject to prosecution or worse. It is easy to forget, however, that some ties binding political allies to their leaders go beyond calculations based on fear or greed. President Putin, for example, has surrounded himself with a team of officials and advisers whose loyalty rests in part on lengthy personal friendships or professional collaboration, or on traditions of deference developed in the security services.

Ties based on kinship or common geographic origin, which are especially prevalent in Central Asia and the Caucasus, may also bind members of the political elite to a ruler and discourage defection. In Tajikistan, President Rakhmon has recruited his inner circle from his home region, Kulob, while in Azerbaijan, officials with origins in Nakhichevan or Erevan form the president's core support group.[10] In Turkmenistan, President Niyazov employed a different, though equally effective, tactic, surrounding himself with political eunuchs: that is, officials who had no possibility of contending for power because they were foreigners or from minority ethnic groups.[11] Both the kinship and the political eunuch principles have informed the recruitment decisions of President Nazarbaev, whose inner circle was reportedly divided into two contending groups at the end of 2014, one led by his daughter, Dariga, and the other by a member of the Uighur minority, Kasim Masimov.[12] Such tactics minimize the chances of "allies' rebellions" and serve as a reminder of the extraordinary diversity of leadership choic-

es on matters of patronage, even within a single region of the world.

The first post-communist authoritarians were unlikely candidates to lead new countries experiencing an ethnic and religious awakening. As traditional products of Soviet rule – four had been party first secretaries, two collective farm chairmen, and one a KBG officer – they clung to many of the political, economic, and cultural values of the communist era, including an aversion to ethnic nationalism and religious belief.[13] Cast against type, they faced the difficult challenge of creating a new state identity and new state policies that could satisfy the surging nationalism of the titular people, while reassuring minority groups that they had a viable future in the country. Especially in the non-Slavic authoritarian regimes, like in Kazakhstan, where there was considerable intraethnic tension based on regional or tribal/clan loyalties, it was often necessary to move gingerly along two tracks at once: using ethnic nationalism to unite and appease the titular population, while trying to transcend, or at least contain, ethnic nationalism by pursuing a symbolic politics that could draw together all communities.[14]

Authoritarian leaders of the non-Slavic countries under review reached back to the period before the Russian conquest to discover historical figures and/or political communities that could be used as foundations for the modern state. Where the Tajik president Rahmon traced the origins of post-communist Tajikistan to the Samanid Empire, President Karimov sought a legitimating lineage in the fourteenth-century founder of the Timurid dynasty, Tamerlane. To bask in the reflected glory of these earlier leaders or communities, the presidents organized grand celebrations of these ideational cornerstones of the new state: 660 years for Tamerlane in 1995 and 1,100 years for the Samanid Empire in 1999.

For President Niyazov – known as the Turkmenbashi, or Father of the Turkmen – it was not enough to be a founding leader of a modern state with ancient roots. In Paul Theroux's words, Niyazov presented himself as "a sort of reincarnation of Oguz Khan [the legendary founder of the nation], just as powerful and wise, and to prove it he has named cities and hills and rivers and streets after himself."[15] Leadership for Niyazov was in many ways a caricature of personalist rule, where the wellsprings of legitimacy flowed less from the distant past than from the nation's present fortune of living under the rule of the Turkmenbashi.[16]

Given the number of ethnic Russians in his country and a lengthy shared border with Russia, Kazakhstan's Nazarbaev has exhibited less enthusiasm for grounding his country's identity in distant historical symbols and events.[17] Nazarbaev has sought personal and regime legitimacy more in current economic performance and his ambitious plans for the future than in connections to the Kazakh past. The symbols of this radiant future include the dramatic architecture of the new capital of Astana and the long-term strategic plans that stretch out to 2050. Even Nazarbaev, however, remains vulnerable to demands from his nationalist flank, demands that increased in intensity after President Putin remarked in 2014 that Kazakhstan had no state tradition and was part of the "Russian world" (*russkii mir*). In the context of the Ukrainian crisis, which raised the specter of Russian irredentism throughout the post-communist world, Nazarbaev was forced to respond by employing the backward-looking discourse of neighboring presidents. Acceding to the wishes of Kazakh nationalists, Nazarbaev announced that the country would celebrate in 2015 the 550th anniversary of the founding of the modern Kazakh state.[18]

Unlike in Central Asia and the Caucasus, where new states rejected much of the Rus-

*Eugene Huskey*

sian and Soviet inheritance in order to indigenize their languages, toponyms, and histories, in Belarus and Russia, Lukashenka and Putin rehabilitated important parts of the Soviet heritage that had been rejected by earlier post-communist leaders in each country. In fact, nostalgia for the communist era became the centerpiece of Lukashenka's leadership.[19] Where his predecessors in the early 1990s had highlighted the distinctiveness of Belarusian language and history – thereby claiming a national identity that differed from Russia's – Lukashenka came into office intent on restoring the dominant position of Russian language and culture in the country and the centrality of a civic identity that downplayed ethnic distinctions. Instead of attempting to tame and control ethnic nationalism, Lukashenka chose to suppress it.

Under Putin's leadership, Russia has experienced a crisis of identity that is more nuanced, and more consequential, than that in the imperial periphery. As Ronald Suny has argued, the struggle over national identity in Russia is less about relations between Russians and non-Russians within the country than about who is a Russian and where Russia's boundaries should lie. Writing on the eve of Putin's accession to power, Suny noted that Russians are "deeply divided over the question of what constitutes the Russian nation and state. Russians remain uncertain about their state's boundaries, where its border guards ought to patrol . . . and even its internal structure as an asymmetrical federation."[20] Where the Second Chechen War facilitated the rise of Putin and his consolidation of authoritarian rule, Putin's recent discourse on an expanded Russian identity and his military actions in Ukraine have deepened his hold on the country and made it more difficult to challenge state policies. The result is a paradox of leadership on identity politics: as Putin expands the concept of Russian-

ness to include persons living outside the country, he treats some of his critics living inside Russia as unwelcome members of the political community, claiming that they are fifth columnists in the service of foreign powers. A trademark of authoritarian leadership everywhere, this demonization of the *other* in the post-communist world targets enemies ranging from Islamists to human rights advocates.[21]

Post-communist authoritarians had to contend with religious as well as ethnic nationalist revivals at the breakup of the USSR. While maintaining the secular status of their states, post-communist authoritarian leaders have sought to channel religious observance into the quietism found in established religions. Achieving this goal has proved especially difficult for post-communist authoritarian presidents in Muslim-majority countries, in part because of the nonhierarchical character of Sunni Islam, the dominant branch of the faith in the region, and in part because the presidents insist on using state agencies to "manage" religions.[22] Where the Moscow patriarchate exercises control over the vast majority of Orthodox believers in Belarus and Russia, there is no such authority figure for Muslims in Central Asia. Cynical efforts by Central Asian presidents, all of whom are essentially secular, to control the Islamic brand has only fed underground religious resistance. In Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, being a devout Muslim is enough to incur the suspicion, and in some cases the wrath, of the state.

Nowhere was the cynicism in leadership on religious matters more pronounced than in Uzbekistan. After winning the December 1991 election, Karimov took the oath of office on the Koran and made the hajj to Mecca, but shortly thereafter launched a campaign to eliminate independent Muslim organizations and subordinate imams to the state-run Muslim Directorate of Uzbekistan.[23] Given the high level of religios-

ity in Uzbekistan, President Karimov was understandably hesitant to follow the lead of neighboring leaders Emomali Rakhmon and Saparmurat Niyazov, who sought to temper Islam's influence in their societies by legitimizing alternative belief traditions. In the case of Rakhmon, it was Zoroastrianism, which recently celebrated its three-thousandth anniversary in Tajikistan. In Turkmenistan, it was Niyazov's magnum opus the *Rukhnama* ("book of the soul") that began to displace the Koran as the country's holiest book in the last years of Niyazov's rule. In a statement a few months before his death, the Turkmenbashi noted that "anyone who reads his book three times will become intelligent and understand nature, laws, and human values. And after that he will enter directly into heaven."[24]

In Russia, the "symphonia" between ecclesiastical and civil authority in the Orthodox tradition has simplified President Putin's leadership on religious affairs. Although the Orthodox Church is not a monolith, and some of its elements have supported radical Russian nationalist ideas, the church hierarchy has signed on with alacrity to Putin's recent campaign to establish a Russian cultural identity that separates the country from the "decadence" of modern Western values on issues such as homosexuality and freedom of expression on religious themes. President Putin still struggles, however, to come to grips with the challenges posed by Islamic revivalism in a society where, by 2030, Muslims may represent as much as 20 percent of Russia's population. Even the country's deputy chief mufti recently warned that Putin's discourse about the "Russian world" had alienated many Muslim youth in Russia.[25]

Among the many contextual differences between leadership in the democratic and authoritarian worlds, none are more important than the relationship between power and time. Where democratic leaders hold office *pro tempore* – until the voters, party or parliamentary colleagues, or term limits turn them out – authoritarian rulers view death as the only insurmountable threat to their tenure. The result is a bias toward longevity in office. In the five post-Soviet democratic or hybrid regimes with strong presidencies, the average tenure of the leader has been a little less than six years;[26] in the seven post-Soviet authoritarian states, it has been sixteen-and-a-half years, and no authoritarian leader has served for less than nine years. In fact, in only two of the seven post-communist countries under review has an authoritarian leader left office. Azerbaijan's Heidar Aliev transferred power to his son, Ilham, in 2003, less than two months before his death at age eighty, and Turkmenistan's Niyazov died in office in 2006 at the age of sixty-six, succeeded by the minister of health, Gurbanguly Berdymukhamedov, who was Niyazov's dentist. In both instances, the transitions occurred with minimal interelite turmoil, which is unusual by world standards. From 1945 to 2002, authoritarian rulers worldwide died in office or transferred power by constitutional means only one-third of the time; in the remaining cases, almost two-thirds of authoritarian leaders were removed by a military coup, 12 percent by a popular revolt, and 7 percent by assassination.[27] Given this background, authoritarian leadership in the post-communist world has exhibited remarkable continuity and stability.

If younger authoritarian rulers in the region may be contemplating another decade or longer in office, older rulers, such as Uzbekistan's Islam Karimov (born 1938) and Kazakhstan's Nursultan Nazarbaev (born 1940), recognize that they are approaching the end of their tenures. This declining time horizon, especially when paired with rumors of the ill-health of both men, alters the political calculations of the leader, establishment elites, and the opposition;

it also fuels speculation about likely successors, which can destabilize the regime. To this point, however, neither leader has been willing to identify a successor, in part because to do so would eliminate the advantage of open-ended rule and transform the president into a lame duck.[28]

Authoritarian leaders in the post-communist world have reduced, but not eliminated altogether, the role of electoral cycles in structuring political time.[29] Through popular referendums or legislation adopted by quiescent parliaments, several authoritarian presidents in the region have extended the time between presidential elections, which changes the calculus of leaders and led and discourages an already weak opposition. On occasion, presidents in the region have altered electoral timing by calling early or snap elections that are designed to catch regime opponents off guard and avoid going to the nation when the health of the leader or the national economy might be in doubt. This desire to control the timing of elections suggests that although post-communist authoritarians possess numerous levers of influence over electoral outcomes – from disqualifying opponents to falsifying results – they still squirm at the thought of the "institutionalized uncertainty" represented by elections.

One measure of the degree of competitiveness of elections in post-communist authoritarian regimes is the percentage of votes won by the ruler. As Table 2 illustrates, with the exception of the election of Vladimir Putin in March 2012, all authoritarian incumbents have received over 70 percent of the vote in their respective elections, and the leaders of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan have garnered over 90 percent.[30] While the share of the results going to the incumbent authoritarians has remained relatively stable in recent years, there has been an overall decline in the results obtained by the second-place finisher, which may be a more accurate indication of

the competitiveness of the race – and the political system more broadly – because it captures the strength of the opposition. Unfortunately, that indicator has its own limitations as a measure of contestation. Post-communist authoritarian leaders have regularly recruited deferential opponents to run against them in order to create the illusion of competitiveness and to divide the opposition vote so that no single contender receives a substantial share of the results. Shattering this illusion in the 2011 presidential race in Kazakhstan was the public admission by one candidate that he had voted for President Nazarbaev.[31]

Like authoritarians everywhere, post-communist authoritarians insist on avoiding genuinely competitive elections out of fear as well as greed. In democratic societies, the loss of office reduces dramatically the visibility and influence of leaders; in authoritarian regimes it also endangers their property and their lives. Through trusted associates, post-communist authoritarians engage in acts of political repression and in self-enrichment on a grand scale, which leaves them vulnerable to prosecution upon leaving office. In these circumstances, the only way for an authoritarian to ensure his or her security on retirement is to relinquish power to another leader who is strong and loyal enough to maintain the impunity of the former ruler.

One option, already adopted in Azerbaijan, is family rule. Rumors of dynastic succession involving the sons, daughters, or sons-in-law of post-communist authoritarian leaders have circulated widely, but issues of personal character and timing complicate this form of transition. For a number of years, President Karimov's older daughter, Gulnara, appeared to be on track to succeed her father, but after a series of scandals, including accusations that Gulnara had extorted over $1 billion from foreign firms, the Uzbekistani leader placed this former diplomat/businesswoman/

Presidential Election Results in Post-Communist Authoritarian Countries

| Country | | Election 1 | Election 2 | Election 3 | Election 4 | Election 5 | Election 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Azerbaijan | Winner | 60.9 | 98.8 | 77.6 | 75.4 | 87.3 | 84.5 |
| | Second Place | 33.8 | 1 | 11.8 | 15.1 | 2.8 | 5.5 |
| Belarus | Winner | 80.6* | 77.4 | 82.6 | 79.7 | 83.5 | |
| | Second Place | 14.2 | 15.7 | 6 | 2.4 | 4.4 | |
| Kazakhstan | Winner | 81 | 91.2 | 95.6 | 97.8 | | |
| | Second Place | 11.9 | 6.6 | 1.9 | 1.6 | | |
| Russia | Winner | 54.4* | 53.4 | 71.9 | 71.3 | 63.6 | |
| | Second Place | 40.7 | 29.5 | 13.8 | 18 | 17.2 | |
| Tajikistan | Winner | 59.5 | 97.6 | 79.3 | 83.9 | | |
| | Second Place | 34.7 | 2.1 | 6.3 | 5 | | |
| Turkmenistan | Winner | 99.5# | 89.2 | 97.1 | | | |
| | Second Place | 0 | 3.2 | 1.1 | | | |
| Uzbekistan | Winner | 95.7 | 90.8 | 90.4 | | | |
| | Second Place | 4.3 | 3.3 | 3.1 | | | |

* The results here are from the second round of the election. In the other elections shown, the candidates won in the first round by receiving a majority of the votes. In the first round in Belarus in 1994, Lukashenka received 44.8 percent of the vote and his closest opponent 17.3 percent; in Russia in 1996, Yeltsin received 35.8 percent in the first round and his closest opponent 32.5.

# Niyazov ran unopposed and was never subject to reelection. The remaining figures in these rows are for contests involving President Berdymukhamedov.

pop singer under house arrest in February 2014.[32] President Lukashenka, for his part, has shown signs of preparing his preteen son, Nikolai (born 2004), to succeed him.[33] At recent military parades Nikolai has been dressed in the uniform of a marshal of the armed forces, and on a visit to Venezuela in 2012, President Lukashenka observed that Nikolai could carry the torch of Belarus-Venezuelan friendship in twenty to twenty-five years, at which point the president would be in his late seventies or early eighties.[34] Among current authoritarian leaders in the region, President Rahmon of Tajikistan has set out the clearest path for the perpetuation of family rule. For several years, he has been grooming his son, Rustam (born 1987), the head of the country's powerful anticorruption committee, as his successor.[35] In order to allow Rustam to succeed him as early as the next presidential election, in 2020, President Rahmon proposed changes to the constitution that reduce the minimum age of the president from thirty-five to thirty – Rustam would be thirty-three in 2020. As expected, a popular referendum approved these changes overwhelmingly on May 22, 2016.

Whereas numerous factors, from political economy to political culture, help to create the conditions for authoritarianism's rise, it is the leader's instinct for self-preservation that perpetuates authoritarian rule and makes an orderly transition to constitutional governance so difficult. In fact, as the Russian case illustrates, the logic of self-preservation of the president, his family, and his political allies may also accelerate the transformation of a hybrid regime into an authoritarian or-

der. To arrange protection for himself and his entourage, President Yeltsin and his advisers found a successor, Vladimir Putin, whose background in the security services and whose lack of an existing political base made him amenable to an agreement that secured the lives, properties, and even some of the jobs of the Yeltsin team. By selecting Putin as his prime minister and heir apparent, and then stepping down from office early in order to speed up the timing of the presidential election to benefit Putin, Yeltsin prevented the transfer of power to a different ruling group, which is one of the fundamental features of democratic rule.

Due to its limited accountability, leadership in authoritarian regimes is more idiosyncratic than in democracies. Even in the seven countries under study here, one finds an unusual range of leadership styles, from the supernatural weirdness of the Turkmenbashi to the business-like pragmatism of Nazarbaev. There is also significant variation in the use of force. While most of the presidents have favored an economy of violence, Islam Karimov has shown less hesitation in killing his enemies: witness the massive loss of life in the Andijon revolt of 2005. All of the authoritarian leaders in the region, however, share a desire to present themselves as governing above traditional politics. Although they retain elections, parties, and parliaments because they are universally recognized features of a modern state, post-communist authoritarians are constantly searching for discursive and institutional innovations that will illustrate not just the legitimacy but the superiority and exceptionalism of their system of governance. Perhaps in no other region of the world are authoritarians as conscious of their own image and that of their regime. An example of this sensitivity to public perception is *Direct Line with Vladimir Putin*, a three-hour live question-and-answer television show with the

Russian president that purportedly allows unmediated contact between the leader and the people.[36]

Arguing that existing intermediary institutions, such as NGOs, are unrepresentative of society, Putin and other authoritarian leaders in the region have created their own official substitutes. These range from youth groups like *Nashi* ("ours") to the appointed State Council and Public Chambers, which compete with traditional elected assemblies, and the All-Russian Popular Front, a new pro-Putin protoparty masquerading as an inclusive, grassroots national movement.[37] In their Rousseauist-like antipathy toward the idea of partial interests, authoritarians construct institutions that claim to represent, like the presidents themselves, the interests of society as a whole.

Accompanying these institutional "innovations" is a rhetoric of rule that emphasizes the special knowledge wielded by the leader, whether it emanates from a transcendent vision, as was the case with Niyazov, or technocratic expertise, in the case of rulers like Lukashenka, Nazarbaev, and Putin.[38] This rhetoric is grounded in ruling ideologies that challenge the assumptions of Western democratic thought and provide cover to authoritarian rule.[39] "Sovereign democracy," Russia's semiofficial ideology, insists that the independence and interests of the state must always prevail, and procedural democracy as practiced in the West is an insufficient guarantee of these values. The architect of sovereign democracy, Vladimir Surkov, holds that "the nation has not given its currently living generations the right to terminate its history," which is another way of saying that presidential leadership bears the responsibility for protecting the country from the mistakes of its people.[40] As Martha Olcott argues, this deep-seated suspicion of the populace is evident in Nazarbaev's view that "as Asians, Kazakhs

are not disposed by history or culture to be democratic and . . . popular rule could empower nationalist demagogues, secessionists, communists or Islamic radicals and put the future of the nation – not to mention economic reform – at risk."[41]

Governing above politics also means avoiding accountability for policy failures. Projecting an image of invincibility while shirking responsibility for corruption, incompetence, and poor economic performance has been raised to an art form in the post-communist world. Expressions found in the lexicon of democratic politics, like "taking personal responsibility for a problem" or "the buck stops here," are alien to the leadership style of post-communist authoritarians. Continuing a tradition that began in the Soviet era, authoritarian rulers in the post-communist world engage in blame-shifting, often through ritualized humiliation of subordinates on television, as a means of deflecting public criticism of their leadership.[42] Facilitating this practice is the semipresidential form of government found in all of the states under review except Turkmenistan. By formally separating the president from the council of ministers that oversees the budget and economic and social affairs, semipresidentialism offers up the prime minister as a convenient scapegoat for policy failures.

From our vantage point a generation into the post-communist era, it may be worth returning to a question on leadership trajectories posed by Archie Brown in the late Brezhnev period of Soviet politics.[43] Do post-communist authoritarian leaders, like their Soviet predecessors, strengthen their hold on power as they age in office? The evidence is compelling that post-communist authoritarian leaders govern with fewer constraints the longer their tenure. Not every leader, of course, accumulates power to the same degree or at the same pace – on both scores, Karimov and Niyazov were

at the top of the charts. However, the control of post-communist authoritarian leaders over their populations and their political allies has grown steadily over time.[44] An obvious corollary of this finding is that authoritarian leaders are at their most vulnerable in the early years of power : witness the toppling of the fledgling authoritarian regimes in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine in 2010 and 2013.

An even more difficult and weighty question is whether the successors to current rulers will continue to steer their countries along an authoritarian path. The recent decline in energy revenues, on which many of the region's economies depend, as well as the growing attraction of radical religious movements for post-communist youth may lead to governing crises in one or more of our countries under review. It is far from clear, however, that such crises would provide an opening for meaningful political opposition. As Barbara Geddes and colleagues found in their study of authoritarianism worldwide, the very structure of rule in post-communist authoritarian regimes may impede liberalization : transitions to democracy from personalist regimes are much rarer than those from one-party or military governments.[45] Moreover, the deepening regional integration and mutual learning of post-communist authoritarian regimes on matters of security, law enforcement, and economics are helping to inoculate most of the states against internal and external pressures for reform. Given the age and health of some of the region's authoritarians, we may not have long to wait to acquire additional evidence on the trajectories of leadership in post-communist regimes.

ENDNOTES

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[1] For a discussion of the concept of transformational leadership, see Archie Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader : Political Leadership in the Modern Age* (New York : Basic Books, 2014), chap. 4.

[2] New states give birth to 36 percent of "authoritarian spells" worldwide, where a spell is an uninterrupted period of authoritarian rule in a single country. Milan W. Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2012), 26.

[3] See, for example, M. Steven Fish, *Democracy Derailed in Russia : The Failure of Open Politics* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[4] Timothy J. Colton, "Political Leadership after Communism," *Demokratizatsiya* 20 (2) (Spring 2012) : 65.

[5] Sergei Guriev and Daniel Triesman, "The New Dictators Rule with a Velvet Fist," *The New York Times*, May 24, 2015.

[6] W. H. Cowley, "Three Distinctions in the Study of Leaders," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 23 (July – September 1928) : 145, cited in Glenn D. Paige, *The Scientific Study of Political Leadership* (New York : The Free Press, 1977), 74.

[7] Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, 6.

[8] Ibid.

[9] As Fiona Hill and Clifford Gaddy explain, "Participants in the system are not bought off in the classic sense of that term. They are compromised ; they are made vulnerable to threats. . . . Loyalty is ensured through blackmail." Fiona Hill and Clifford G. Gaddy, *Mr. Putin : Operative in the Kremlin* (Washington, D.C. : Brookings Institution, 2013), 215.

[10] Farid Guliyev, "Post-Soviet Azerbaijan : Transition to Sultanistic Semiauthoritarianism ? An Attempt at Conceptualization," *Demokratizatsiya* 13 (3) (2005) : 402 – 405.

[11] Sebastien Peyrouse, *Turkmenistan : Strategies of Power, Dilemmas of Development* (Armonk, N.Y. : M.E. Sharpe, 2012), 73 – 76. According to Peyrouse, because Niyazov "had developed a pathological distrust toward his whole entourage, especially the Turkmen, [the Presidential Guard] was composed primarily of Russians, Turks, Arabs, and Caucasians." Ibid., 76.

[12] "Rakhat Aliev : deianie Nazarbaeva kvalifitsirovat' mozhno tol'ko kak prestuplenie i predatel'stvo kazakhskogo naroda," Svobodakz.net, October 31, 2014, http://www.svobodakz.net/ soprot/268-rahat-aliev-deyaniya-nazarbaeva-kvalificirovat-mozhno-tolko-kak-prestuplenie -i-predatelstvo-kazahskogo-naroda.html ; and Sebastien Peyrouse, "The Kazakh Neopatrimonial Regime : Balancing Uncertainties among the 'Family,' Oligarchs, and Technocrats," *Demokratizatsiya* 20 (4) (Fall 2012) : 359.

[13] The one exception to this pattern may be Vladimir Putin, whose expressions of Orthodox piety may be more than a political tactic.

[14] Identity divisions in post-communist states rarely ran neatly along ethnic lines. In Kazakhstan, many Russified, urban, and secular Kazakhs had more in common with ethnic Russians in the republic than with their more religious, Kazakh-speaking kin from the countryside. Cengiz Surucu, "Modernity, Nationalism, Resistance : Identity Politics in Post-Soviet Kazakhstan," *Central Asian Survey* 21 (4) (2002) : 385 – 402.

[15] Paul Theroux, *Ghost Train to the Eastern Star : On the Tracks of the Great Railway Bazaar* (New York : Houghton Mifflin, 2008), 107 ; and Michael Denison, "The Art of the Impossible : Political Symbolism, and the Creation of National Identity and Collective Memory in Post-Soviet Turkmenistan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61 (7) (September 2009) : 1167 – 1187.

[16] Under Niyazov's successor, Berdymukhamedov, Turkmenistan shed some of the symbolic excesses of the Turkmenbashi era. Abel Polese and Slavomir Horak, "A Tale of Two Presi-

dents: Personality Cult and Symbolic Nation-Building in Turkmenistan," *Nationalities Papers* 43 (3) (2015): 457–478; and Peyrouse, *Turkmenistan*, 108–131.

[17] The exception is the celebration of the December 1986 uprising in Almaty, then the capital of Kazakhstan, when crowds protested the appointment of an ethnic Russian from outside Kazakhstan to lead the republic.

[18] Ekaterina Kravets, "Nazarbaev otvetil Putinu, ob'iaviv o 550-letii gosudarstvennosti Kazakhstana," *Birzhevoi lider*, October 24, 2014, http://www.profi-forex.org/novosti-mira/novosti-sng/kazakhstan/entry1008231993.html.

[19] Steven M. Eke and Taras Kuzio, "Sultanism in Eastern Europe: The Socio-Political Roots of Authoritarian Populism in Belarus," *Europe-Asia Studies* 52 (3) (2000): 526.

[20] Ronald Grigor Suny, "Provisional Stabilities: The Politics of Identities in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *International Security* 24 (3) (Winter 1999/2000): 148.

[21] Henry E. Hale, "Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia," *World Politics* 58 (1) (October 2005): 147.

[22] Only Azerbaijan among the region's Muslim-majority countries has a predominantly Shi'a population.

[23] Shireen Hunter, "Islam and Politics in Central Asia," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, ed. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 313.

[24] "Niyazov po dogovorennosti s Allakham poshlet v rai vsekh turkmen, prochitavshikh ego Rukhnamy tri raza," Newsru.com, March 20, 2006, http://www.newsru.com/world/20mar2006/ruhnama.html.

[25] Igor Gashkov, "Musul'mane khotiat drugoi russkii mir," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, March 18, 2015, http://www.ng.ru/ng_religii/2015-03-18/3_musulmane.html.

[26] This excludes the parliamentary republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

[27] Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule*, 41; and Milan W. Svolik, "Power Sharing and Leadership Dynamics in Authoritarian Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science* 53 (2) (April 2009): 478. Unlike in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East, the military stays in the barracks at moments of crisis in the post-communist world.

[28] Hale, "Democracy, Autocracy, and Revolution in Post-Soviet Eurasia," 135.

[29] The one exception was Turkmenistan's Niyazov, who became president for life at the end of 1990s.

[30] In the case of the initial post-communist presidential elections in Azerbaijan and Tajikistan, and the first two elections in Russia, authoritarian rule had not yet been consolidated and so the winners were not authoritarian incumbents.

[31] Viktor Khrapounov, *Nazarbaev: votre ami le dictateur* (Paris: Editions du Moment, 2013), 206.

[32] Joanna Lillis, "Uzbekistan: Telecoms Firms Paid Gulnara up to $1 Billion in Backhanders—Watchdog," Eurasianet.org, March 23, 2015, http://www.eurasianet.org/node/72656.

[33] Lukashenka is estranged from his two older sons and their mother. These sons complained that "now we all live encircled by barbed wire, but what will happen to us, Dad, when you stop being president?" Vladimir Shlapentokh, "Are Today's Authoritarian Leaders Doomed to be Indicted when They Leave Office? The Russian and Other Post-Soviet Cases," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 39 (4) (2006): 452. As Karen Dawisha points out, the same logic applies to those at lower levels of the establishment. "Attempts to safeguard one's children and oneself from possible persecution by former colleagues along the 'power vertical,' along with the desire to maximally enrich oneself while in power, has become practically the main purpose of all political and economic decisions." Karen Dawisha, *Putin's Kleptocracy: Who Owns Russia?* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 348.

34 Shaun Walker, "Who's that Boy in the Grey Suit? It's Kolya Lukashenko, the Next Dictator of Belarus. . ." *The Independent*, July 29, 2012, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/whos-that-boy-in-the-grey-suit-its-kolya-lukashenko-the-next-dictator-of-belarus-7897089.html.

35 Nadin Bakhrom, "Will Tajikistan Be Ruled by an Emomali Dynasty?" Silk Road Reporters, September 1, 2015, http://www.silkroadreporters.com/2015/09/01/will-tajikistan-be-ruled-by-a-emomali-dynasty/.

36 Lara Ryazanova-Clarke, "The Discourse of a Spectacle at the End of the Presidential Term," in *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*, ed. Helena Goscilo (London: Routledge, 2013), 104 – 110. President Nazarbaev also experimented with this institution from 2005 – 2009.

37 Richard Sakwa, in "Putin's Leadership: Character and Consequences," *Europe-Asia Studies* 60 (6) (2008): 879 – 897, calls these practices "para-constitutional." See also Andrew Wilson, *Virtual Politics: Faking Democracy in the Post-Soviet World* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005); and Nikolay Petro, Maria Lipman, and Henry E. Hale, "Three Dilemmas of Hybrid Regime Governance: Russia from Putin to Putin," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 30 (1) (2014): 10. Throughout the region, authoritarian leaders reacted to the color revolutions in neighboring countries by clamping down on NGOs, which were seen as instruments of revolution and potential agents of the West.

38 Karimov distinguishes himself, with his "scientific world view," from the "barbarians . . . ignorant, uneducated people who use pseudo-Islamic slogans to increase their own power." Adeeb Khalid, "A Secular Islam: Nation, State, and Religion in Uzbekistan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (4) (November 2003): 587.

39 Karimov's "national ideology" is "an extended argument against politics." Andrew F. March, "From Leninism to Karimovism: Hegemony, Ideology, and Authoritarian Legitimation," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 19 (4) (2003): 308, 310.

40 V. I. Surkov, "Nationalization of the Future: Paragraphs *pro* Sovereign Democracy," *Russian Studies in Philosophy* 47 (4) (Spring 2009): 18.

41 Martha Brill Olcott, *Kazakhstan: Unfulfilled Promise*, rev. ed. (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2010), 89.

42 Masha Gessen, *The Man without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), 265; Helena Goscilo, "Russia's Ultimate Celebrity: VVP as VIP Objet d'Art," in *Putin as Celebrity and Cultural Icon*, ed. Goscilo, 19; and Eke and Kuzio, "Sultanism in Eastern Europe," 531.

43 Archie Brown, "The Power of the General Secretary of the CPSU," in *Authority, Power, and Policy in the USSR*, ed. T. H. Rigby, Archie Brown, and Peter Reddaway (London: Macmillan, 1980), 136.

44 The only exception to this pattern may have been during the Medvedev interregnum in Russia from 2008 – 2012, when there was a "tandemocracy," with Putin as prime minister and his younger client, Dmitrii Medvedev, as president; even here Putin's role as the "national leader" remained unquestioned, and once Putin returned to the presidency in 2012, his grip on the reins of power tightened further.

45 Barbara Geddes, Joseph Wright, and Erica Frantz, "Autocratic Breakdowns and Regime Transitions: A New Data Set," *Perspectives on Politics* 12 (2) (June 2014): 313 – 331.

# Leadership – It's a *System*, Not a Person!

## Barbara Kellerman

*Abstract: This article argues that the leadership industry has been beset by a bias. This bias has been directed toward leaders and away from two other variables that equally pertain – and that equally explain the trajectory of human history. The first is followers, or others who are in any way relevant, even if passively. And the second is contexts, within which leaders and followers necessarily are embedded.*

*Together these three parts, each of which is equally important and each of which impinges equally on the other two, make up the leadership system. This article suggests that the approximately forty-year-old leadership industry has paid a heavy price for its obsession with leaders at the expense of whoever/whatever else matters. For the industry has not in any major, measurable way improved the human condition, which is precisely why it should be reconsidered and reconceived.*

BARBARA KELLERMAN is the James MacGregor Burns Lecturer in Leadership at the Harvard Kennedy School. She is the author and editor of many books on leadership and followership, including *Leadership: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (1984); *Reinventing Leadership* (1999); *Bad Leadership* (2004); *Women and Leadership* (2008); *Followership* (2008); *The End of Leadership* (2012); and *Hard Times: Leadership in America* (2014). She has also taught at Fordham, Tufts, George Washington, Dartmouth (Tuck), and Uppsala Universities.

Notwithstanding what might appear in this essay to be self-evident, no more than simple common-sense, it needs to be said. Most leadership experts, especially those who are card-carrying members of what I call the leadership industry, continue to fixate on leaders at the expense of other elements equally important to the creation of change.

What exactly is the *leadership industry*? It is my catch-all term for the now countless leadership centers, institutes, programs, courses, seminars, workshops, experiences, trainers, books, blogs, articles, websites, webinars, videos, conferences, consultants, and coaches claiming to teach people – usually for money, generally for big money – how to lead.[1] Teaching people how to lead has become a business, a big business, in which mostly the private sector, but by no means only the private sector, invests big bucks: more than $50 billion a year is spent globally on leadership development and learning. Clearly the assumption is that leaders can be developed, trained, and taught how to lead or, at least, taught how to lead better than they would without any investment in their learning.

Of course, there are several other assumptions on which the leadership industry is predicated. They include the belief that leadership can be taught to the many, not just to a select few; the conviction that leadership can be taught, simultaneously, to relatively large numbers of people, in spite of the obvious differences among them; and some sense of certainty that leadership can be taught relatively quickly and easily, in, say, a semester-long course, or an executive program that lasts a couple of weeks. But there is one overweening assumption that dominates the rest: that becoming a leader means that you are becoming something good.

Here the word "good" is used in several different ways. First, the word assumes that leadership training is training someone to be *effective*. Second, it assumes that leadership education is educating someone to be *ethical*. Finally, and most important, it assumes that developing a leader is developing someone *important* and *consequential*, as opposed to them remaining unimportant and inconsequential. Put directly, the leadership industry, in collaboration with other institutions – including corporate America and, yes, academia – has managed to make becoming a leader a mantra. It is presumed a path to money and power; a medium for achievement, both individual and institutional; and a mechanism for creating change, sometimes, though hardly always, in the interest of the common good.

As I have pointed out elsewhere, my own university, Harvard, is an obvious case in point.[2] When Lawrence Summers was inaugurated president in 2001, he asserted that "in this new century, nothing will matter more than the education of future *leaders* and the development of new ideas." Similarly, nearly every one of Harvard's graduate schools has the word "leader" or "leadership" in its mission statement. The mission of the Harvard Law School is to "educate *leaders* who contribute to the development of justice and the well-being of society." The mission of the Harvard Medical School is to "create and nurture a diverse community of the best people committed to *leadership* in alleviating suffering cause by disease." The mission of the Harvard Divinity School is to "educate women and men for service as *leaders* in religious life and thought." And the mission of the Harvard School of Education is to "prepare *leaders* in education and to generate knowledge." (Italics all mine.) Need I add that the mission statements of the Harvard Kennedy School (of Government) and the Harvard Business School contain more of the same?

This fixation on learning leadership – in particular on learning *how* to lead, as opposed to learning *about* leadership – ripples across American curricula as it does across corporate America. It is by no means confined only to higher education, any more than leadership learning is confined any longer to big business. As suggested, leadership development, education, and training are as prevalent in middle and high schools as they are in institutions of higher education, and they are considered as important in the public and nonprofit sectors as they are in the private one. Moreover, while the leadership industry was conceived in the United States, it is by no means any longer confined to it. The industry has become a global phenomenon, evidenced and invested in Europe and Asia as much as in America.

Of course, some – a select few – had an interest in leadership from the beginning of recorded history. But the leadership industry as mass phenomenon, and as big business involving large sums of money, is only about forty years old. While I will not go into the reasons for its relatively recent inception, I will note that it has come to focus nearly all of its efforts on the education, development, and training of single individuals or, occasionally, teams. In the

main it has become a how-to exercise in which, to all appearances, both seller and buyer assume that being a leader is something that can be learned, and that being a leader is better than being a follower.

There are however some parallel truths: that leaders of every stripe are in disrepute; that the tireless teaching of leadership has brought us no closer to leadership nirvana than we were previously; that we do not have much better an idea of how to grow good leaders, or of how to stop or at least slow bad leaders, than we did one hundred or even one thousand years ago; that the context is changing in ways that leaders seem unwilling or unable to fully grasp; that followers have become, on the one hand, disappointed and disillusioned and, on the other, entitled, emboldened, and empowered; and, lastly, that notwithstanding the enormous sums of money and time that have been poured into trying to teach people how to lead, over its roughly forty-year history, the leadership industry seems not in any major, meaningful, or measurable way to have improved the human condition.[3] In fact, as the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign would seem to testify, leadership, or at least the strenuous attempt to secure the nation's highest office, has hit a new low.

Which brings us to the question: what is to be done? Is there anything about the leadership industry to which one can reasonably point that could be fixed, improved, or changed so as to make the process of leadership learning richer, fuller, deeper, and therefore more likely to yield more obviously positive results?[4] While I do not for a moment presume to have a cure for what ails it, I argue that the industry's obsession with single individuals, with leaders or would-be leaders at the expense of other elements that similarly pertain, is as misleading as it is misguided.

Leadership is not about the individual man or woman. Leadership is, instead, a *system* that consists of three parts, each of which is *equally* important, and each of which impinges *equally* on the other two. The first part is the *leader* – and I am not here diminishing, and still less minimizing, the importance of the leader. The second is the *follower* – the "other" whom the leader must engage or, at least, neutralize in order to advance his or her goals. And the third is the *context* or, better, *contexts* – within which both leaders and followers are necessarily situated.

While the leadership industry is a relatively recent phenomenon, our interest in leadership stretches back across human history. In fact, to understand leadership now, in the second decade of the twenty-first century, it is important to put it in historical context. For in the beginning, learning about leadership was, for good and sound reason, all about leaders: single individuals who could, despite being a tiny minority, control the overwhelming majority and, on occasion, single-handedly change history.

It was, I should add, by no means assumed that these all-important leaders would necessarily be good: that is, simultaneously ethical and effective. Plato, one of our early written guides on the subject, wrote about tyrannical leaders: "Such a crop of evils reveals how much more wretched is the existence of the tyrannical man. . . . Not only is he ill governed within himself, but once misfortune removes him from private life and establishes him in the tyrant's place, he must try to control others when he cannot control himself. He is . . . obliged to engage adversaries in never-ending rivalry and discord."[5] Plato's attention, though, was on leaders, not on followers, for notwithstanding Athenian democracy, ancient Greeks safely assumed that it was the former, not the latter, who held most of the power, most of the authority, and most of the influence. No wonder, then, that our

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thinking about leadership – the leadership literature – was focused for eons on gods and goddesses, sages and princes, philosopher kings and virgin queens.

It took a few thousand years of history for Western political thinkers to persist in presuming that ordinary people had certain rights, rights that were naturally theirs. Previously it was given that the educated and privileged few – generally clergy and/or royalty – would control the many and that this was the natural order of things. Even into the nineteenth century as learned a man as Thomas Carlyle could still write with unmitigated fervor about the heroic leader who alone could and indeed did change the course of history: "Universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones. . . . The soul of the whole world's history, it may justly be considered, were the history of these."[6]

Notwithstanding Carlyle, led by the great political philosophers of the Enlightenment, ideas on leadership and, especially, on followership, began dramatically and irrevocably to change. The watershed to which I refer is the gradually growing conviction that leaders have an obligation to share power with their followers. For example, John Locke's insistence on the right to hold private property; his conception of social contract theory, which argued that governments derive their legitimacy from the consent of the governed; and his assertion that the social contract must apply equally to leader and led all were breakthroughs. Locke, perhaps more than any other political philosopher (with the possible exception of Montesquieu), provided the moral, legal, and philosophical basis for a system of governance based on a reasonably equitable distribution of power between the governors and the governed.[7]

Though one might reasonably point out that participatory democracy was not new altogether – recall the reference to democracy (of a sort) in ancient Athens – this was different. For pursuant to the Enlightenment were the American and French Revolutions, which sealed the idea that in democratic systems, followers have the right not only to share power, but to depose their leaders if they do not merit the privilege of governing. Further, the idea that power and influence were to be shared became enshrined in U.S. constitutional law. Our separation of powers and checks and balances are precisely to preclude the possibility that people in positions of power and authority will accrue too much of one or the other, or even both, for themselves. Not only must no single individual or institution of government be permitted to dominate, but followers – ordinary people – had the right, it was now presumed, to participate in determining their own (political) fortunes.

Of course, "we the people" was not then inclusive. Most obviously, people of color and women were excluded from the original conception, both in Europe and in the United States. But during the nineteenth century, these exclusions began to give way. Pressures from below built up: followers began to press leaders for equal rights, equal to each other's and to those of leaders. As a result of these various sociopolitical movements, slaves were freed and, in time, women gained rights that eventually came to be considered basic, including the right to be educated, the right to own property, and the right to exercise the franchise.

In the twentieth century, these pressures, and those that were roughly analogous, grew stronger, not only in the West but worldwide. Anticolonial passions, personified by Mahatma Gandhi, became in time global; anti-apartheid protests, personified by Nelson Mandela, became in

time successful; and various other socio-political movements – including, in the United States, the antiwar movement, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, the gay and lesbian rights (and, later, transgender) movement, the disability rights movement, and the animal rights movement, among many others – all signaled the continuing transfer of power and influence from up top to the middle, and even down below. To be clear: these many different movements were not simply social and political abstractions. Their real world consequences included profound changes in relations between leaders and led, shifting power and influence from the former to the latter, never again to revert (at least not in political and organizational democracies). No semblance of a democratic system has been exempt from these trends, not in the public or private sectors – in which, in recent years especially, CEOs have been under something of a siege – and not in any of the many countries that count themselves democracies.

Moreover, in the twenty-first century these trends have accelerated. Changes in culture and technology have added to follower power and detracted from leader power. Until quite recently, someone like me – a professor in an American institution of higher education – would have been addressed by her students with a modicum of respect, as in "Professor Kellerman," or "Dr. Kellerman." Now they address me differently, not without respect exactly, but with no obvious evidence of a distinction between my status as a teacher and their status as learners. By calling me "Barbara," which many, if not most, of them now do (even before we get to know each other), they level the playing field. My students are bringing me down to their level or, if you prefer, raising themselves up to mine. Either way, the gap between us has narrowed, which is another way of saying that my authority has diminished. (The

poet James Merrill recalled that when he taught at Bard in the 1940s, his students called him "Sir," even though he was fresh out of college, a stripling of twenty-two.)

Similarly, if in the past you went to see a doctor to get a remedy for whatever it was that ailed you, and he (yes, he) told you to swallow one or another red pill, the chances are good that you would have gone ahead and done just that. Now you are likely as not to second guess your physician by going online to corroborate his, or her, ostensibly expert advice. Should what you find online be in opposition, the majority recommending a blue pill not a red one, chances are that you will question your physician, having zero compunction about challenging the person in the position of medical authority. This diminishment of the expert is, in short, endemic. It is in evidence in nearly every area of twenty-first-century life; it has been, moreover, exacerbated by easy access – easy culturally and easy technologically – to the private lives of even the most highly placed individuals. Notwithstanding his persisting popularity, once we knew the coarse details of President Bill Clinton's relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky, neither he, nor, for that matter, American politics or the American presidency, were ever quite the same.

Over the last decade, revolutionary changes in technology – in particular instant, widespread access to information and instant, widespread access to social media – further fueled the changing balance of power between leaders and followers. It used to be that information was a valuable resource, harbored and hoarded by a powerful few. Now it is not; information is cheap and easy to come by, and accessible to almost everyone. Similarly, expression and connection were difficult if not impossible for ordinary people; now they are not. Ordinary people today can express themselves for all

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the world to hear, at least hypothetically; moreover, they can choose to do so anonymously, voicing ideas and opinions that they would not otherwise associate with publicly. Finally, even people without any power, authority, or influence can connect, one to the other, without interference from those with. To be sure, the capacity to connect is not altogether unmitigated, and in some countries (and companies) it is difficult or even impossible. But for countless millions, it has become remarkably unfettered.

Easy enough to see, then, even in this cursory review, that the history of leadership cannot be understood apart from the history of followership. They are, necessarily, entwined – twinned, even. Clearly, over thousands of years of human history relations between them have shifted: leaders have gotten weaker, and followers have gotten stronger. Therefore, as the history of leadership and followership would seem to attest, for the leadership industry to preoccupy itself with the one without the other cannot on any reasonable grounds be justified.

Since the inception of the leadership industry several decades ago, it has been divided, if roughly, into two parts. The first is *leadership studies*: the study of leadership as an area of intellectual inquiry. The second, and the more dominant in the industry, is *leadership development*: the practice of teaching or training people how to lead. For a number of reasons, both leadership studies and leadership development have been biased by their fixation on leaders at the expense of followers. This is not to say that followers are ignored altogether. But it is impossible to exaggerate the degree to which followers have been relegated to the margins in both segments of the industry.

Though I will not here detail the multiple reasons for this bias, I will single out three. First, as earlier indicated, it is a func-

tion of the fact that people want to think of themselves as leaders rather than as followers. Though the word "follower" remains the single reasonable antonym of "leader," the former is associated with being passive rather than active, weak rather than strong, dependent rather than independent, smacking of failure, not success.

Second, our bias is a function of what the late social psychologist Richard Hackman called the "leader attribution error." Which is to say that we assume the overweening importance of leaders, even when this assumption is demonstrably false. I sometimes ask audiences: "History tells us that Adolf Hitler killed six million Jews. How many Jews did Hitler actually kill?" The answer, it may surprise, is none. To our knowledge, Hitler himself did not murder a single Jew. What he did was issue orders that others – followers – executed. So how is it possible to know the history of Nazi Germany if we understand only its leader? How is it possible to understand what happened in Nazi Germany without understanding Germans in the 1930s and 1940s more generally?

Third, our bias is in consequence of semantic confusion. Not only is the word "follower" burdened by the presumption of weakness, it is further weighed down by the lack of clarity about what exactly it means. In fact, even those few among us who persist in using the word, and who insist that followers are as important as leaders, readily acknowledge that as we ourselves define the word, followers do not always follow. They do not always do – nor *should* they always do – what their leaders tell them to do. In other words, while there is the presumption that leaders ought to lead, there is not the presumption that a follower ought, necessarily, to follow. In fact, followers are typically encouraged *not* to follow in any circumstance in which what the leaders tell them to do manifestly is wrong.

You might think that leadership scholars, if not practitioners, would have conquered the complexities to which I allude. You might think that the study of leadership would be objective, free from the assumption that leaders are more important than followers, or even that leaders can be studied independently of those they necessarily engage. After all, leaders do not exist in a vacuum; by definition, every leader must have at least one follower. Well, you would think wrong. Leadership studies is indistinguishable from the rest of the leadership industry: it functions on the implicit assumption that leaders are more important and therefore more worthy of study than are followers. This in spite of the fact that over time, over the course of human history, and especially in the twenty-first century, followers have played comparatively larger roles, and leaders comparatively smaller ones.

To be sure, to this general rule there have been important exceptions. In fact, several studies of followers and followership have been path-breaking. In the wake of World War II, several social scientists – recognizing the pivotal part played by ordinary men in the Nazi genocide – set out to explore the phenomenon of previously unremarkable men (and women) morphing into mass murderers or, at least, into bystanders, millions of whom stood by while mass murder took place. Stanley Milgram's 1963 experiment on "obedience to authority" has become perhaps the most famous – infamous, really – social scientific experiment ever conducted.[8] It was followed by Philip Zimbardo's somewhat similar (and nearly equally infamous) Stanford prison experiment, in which he, like Milgram, showed that ordinary men, in this case ordinary *American* men, could under certain circumstances quickly and easily be brutalized.[9]

Since then there have been only a very small number of leadership scholars who demonstrably have taken followership as seriously as leadership.[10] Most of these (including me) have imposed an order on followers by making some sort of distinctions among them. After all, followers no more resemble each other than do leaders, so why do we typically lump them together, as if they are one and the same: as, say, American voters or Amazon employees? Moreover, since there are usually many more followers than leaders, deconstructing their numbers by highlighting differences among them turns out to be an important exercise. In the 1960s and 1970s, Harvard Business School professor Abraham Zaleznik distinguished among followers by placing them along two axes: dominance and submission, and activity and passivity. Accordingly, he divided them into four groups: *impulsive subordinates*, *compulsive subordinates*, *masochistic subordinates*, and *withdrawn subordinates*.[11] Years later, in the 1990s, Carnegie Mellon Business School professor Robert Kelley similarly recognized that followers were different from each other, similarly placed them along two different axes, and similarly came up with four different types: *alienated followers*, *exemplary followers*, *passive followers*, and *conformist followers*. Ira Chaleff, whose book *The Courageous Follower* is a staple of the fledgling field of followership, also came up with four follower types or, as he named them, "styles": *high support*, *low support*, *high challenge*, and *low challenge*.

After years of looking at leaders, I also concluded that looking at followers was not sufficient, but was necessary; I defined them as "subordinates who have less power, authority, and influence than do their superiors and who therefore usually, but not invariably, fall into line." "Followership," in turn, I defined as "a relationship (rank) between subordinates and superiors, and a response (behavior) of the former to the latter."[12] I further developed my own typology based on a single, sim-

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ple metric that aligns followers along only a single, simple axis: level of engagement. That is, all followers were divided into five types depending on where they fell along a continuum that ranged from doing absolutely nothing, on the one hand, to being passionately committed and deeply engaged, on the other. The five types of followers are:

*Isolates*: followers who are completely detached. They have no interest in their leaders, nor do they respond to them in any way. Moreover, isolates have no interest in the system in which they are embedded, preferring instead to remain alienated. Their alienation is, however, of consequence. By knowing and doing little or nothing, isolates support the status quo. Albeit passively, they further strengthen leaders who already occupy positions of power.

*Bystanders*: followers who are observant and aware, but who deliberately and consciously stand by and do nothing. They remain disengaged, both from their leaders and from the system within which they reside. In the end, however, as with isolates, bystanders have an impact, usually a significant one. For their withdrawal is, in effect, a declaration of neutrality that amounts to tacit support for the status quo.

*Participants*: followers who are in some way engaged. Sometimes they support their leaders and the groups and organizations of which they are members. Sometimes they do not. In either case, participants care enough to put their money where their mouths are, to invest some of their resources, like money and time, to attempt to gain influence.

*Activists*: followers who are impassioned, who feel strongly about their leaders and act accordingly. Activists are, if you will, the opposite of bystanders. They are similarly aware, but in vivid contrast to those who stand by and do nothing, activists are eager, energetic, and engaged. Precisely

because they are so heavily invested, they work hard, either on behalf of their leaders, or to undermine and even unseat them.

*Diehards*: followers who are prepared to sacrifice whatever it takes for their cause, whether an individual, an idea, or both. Diehards are deeply devoted and completely committed. They will do everything in their power to support or to upend a cause. Diehards are defined by their dedication, including their willingness to risk life and limb on behalf of those in whom they believe and in what they believe to be true.

I do not for a moment assume that my (or anyone else's) typology will be embraced by everyone with an interest in the leader-follower dynamic, either in theory or in practice. I do, however, claim this: First, my typology is like the other typologies; each is a significant attempt to impose some sort of order on the whole – on all followers in all situations. Second, the five types outlined above highlight the mistake we make when we put every follower into a single basket. Again, followers are different from one another, just as leaders are different from one another. Third, the five types make clear that while followers follow most of the time, they do not, at least not necessarily, follow all of the time. Fourth, the five types imply that followers matter when they do something, but that they equally matter when they do nothing. When people are alienated and detached from the systems within which they are situated, there are consequences. Finally, each of the five types makes clear, implicitly if not explicitly, the integral relationship between leaders and followers. The one is wholly dependent on and irrevocably tied to the other, which is why thinking about leadership without thinking about followership is a fool's errand.

These considerations about followership are at least as true of context. It is

not that leadership scholars and practitioners are oblivious to the importance of context altogether. Rather, it is that it is given short shrift. The subject of context is raised; then, typically, it is dropped. Most analyses assume that context is unimportant or, at least, much less important than the individual leader. Moreover, students of leadership – whether of leadership as a subject of study, or of leadership as a practice to be mastered – are simply not taught that contexts, plural, matter. In examining business leadership, for example, the proximate context – in the workplace – matters. As does the more distant context: the industry within which the workplace is situated. Again, a term such as *contextual intelligence* is not entirely unfamiliar, nor is it completely and consistently integrated into the leadership industry. While context is thought relevant, mostly it is thought marginal, not central.

In contrast, I have come to consider context *integral to the leadership system*. It is essential to understanding how, when, and why leadership does, or does not, take place. And it is essential to understanding how, in any given situation, leadership is likely best to be exercised.

Of course, I am not the only leadership scholar to emphasize the importance of context. Archie Brown, the editor of this collection, is another. In his most recent book, *The Myth of the Strong Leader*, Brown points to the importance of context, which explains why the leaders he discusses are set in their respective circumstance. "Leadership must be placed in context if it is to be better understood," Brown writes.[13] He goes on to identify "four different, but interconnected frames of reference for thinking about leadership – the historical, cultural, psychological and institutional."

For example, Brown shows how difficult were the Russian and Soviet contexts within which Mikhail Gorbachev launched the radical reforms that became known as perestroika. Russians have traditionally been attracted to the idea of a strong man as their leader – to wit, Vladimir Putin – possessing a firm grip on power that conveys authority and obliges allegiance. Additionally, during the Soviet era there was a system of governance that had a "sophisticated array of rewards for political conformism and a hierarchy of sanctions and punishments for nonconformity and dissent."[14] Finally, the Communist Party was itself strictly hierarchical. So it was an anomaly when within this particular historical and institutional setting Gorbachev – who alone in the top leadership group had a "more critical view of the condition of Soviet society in the mid-1980s" – became General Secretary of the Communist Party and subsequently President of the Soviet Union. Nothing cultural or contextual had prepared Soviet citizens, or for that matter the Soviet elite, for a man as ready, willing, and able as was Gorbachev to break with previous traditions, practices, and values.

This discrepancy, between the nature of the man and the nature of the context within which he was located, is the most obvious explanation for why his tenure ended badly, certainly for him, and why he is now so widely criticized, belittled even, in his own homeland. Brown writes: "Gorbachev's style of leadership was at odds with traditional Russian political culture." Interestingly, notwithstanding this disjuncture, Brown's conclusion is that Gorbachev was a transformational leader. "It is certainly difficult to think of anyone in the second half of the twentieth century who had a larger (and generally beneficent) impact not only on his own multinational state but also internationally."[15] Still, the fact remains that Gorbachev did not survive, at least politically, and that his trying to save the state by changing the system ended with both collapsing. Clearly, to undertake pluralizing political change

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in the Russian and Soviet contexts was not only a tall order, but was nearly impossible to execute.

In keeping with my newfound emphasis not on leaders, or even on leaders in tandem with followers, but rather on the leadership *system*, I focused my own most recent book on context. Specifically I explored in detail what I call the distal context, in particular the United States of America in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Given that I was struck by how leadership in America is so fraught with frustration, so inordinately laborious to exercise, the question I sought to answer was : how does this particular country at this particular moment impact leadership and followership?[16]

Any reasonable response had to be multifaceted, involving a multiplicity of contextual components, such as, for example, history and ideology, religion and politics, money and technology, class and culture, innovation and competition, and risks and trends. The purpose of my exploration, then, was to answer my own question and, more generally, heighten awareness of leadership as a system in which context is key.

What are some components of context ? Here are just six :

· *History*. American revolutionaries were the first to proclaim the old authoritarian order dead and a new democratic order born. Thus was democratic leadership the only sort of leadership ever enshrined in the United States, which is precisely why effective leadership has always been relatively difficult to exercise, and why effective followership has always been relatively easy.

· *Religion*. More Americans than ever before now consider themselves religiously unaffiliated, or affiliated less strongly. Additionally, Americans are more religiously diverse. This makes it more difficult for leaders, especially political leaders, to draw on religion in America as a tie that binds.

· *Institutions*. In the not so distant past – in the early 1960s – most Americans held American institutions in high esteem. But public trust in institutions has since plummeted. This applies across the board, to private-sector, public-sector, and even nonprofit institutions, including the nation's schools and military. No surprise, then, that leaders in America – all leaders – have suffered a similar decline in public approval.

· *Law*. Americans are singularly litigious. This complicates and constrains the lives of leaders for various reasons, including by draining their resources, of which time may be the most valuable. Attending to litigation and to the possibility thereof is an important part of what leaders are now paid to do. Aggressive litigiousness is, not incidentally, in keeping with a culture that has been, since its inception, antiauthority.

· *Technology*. As soon as leaders familiarize themselves with one type of technology, it is likely to be replaced by another type of technology. Moreover, in the realm of technology, leaders are typically surpassed by their followers. They are outclassed, if not outranked, by those who are far younger and who, in other contexts, are their subordinates, but here, especially in social media, are much more knowledgeable, much more capable, and much more comfortable.

· *Divisions*. Far from being united, Americans are divided. They are, for example, divided by race and gender ; by income and class ; and by ideology and geography. Most of these divisions are not new. But for various reasons have recently been exacerbated, with more extremism and less centrism changing the character of the national debate, as they changed the character of the nation's Congress.

Two concluding comments on context. First, though the examples that I provide pertain to America in the second decade of the twenty-first century, the various components of context are fungible, as relevant to the United Kingdom and to the United Arab Emirates as to the United States. Second, while leadership and followership are different now from what they were as recently as five or ten years ago, human nature has not changed during at least the most recent millennia. We are what we were when Shakespeare, or for that matter Confucius and Socrates, walked the earth. It is precisely because of this stability that Machiavelli still matters. But what *has* changed, what *is* radically different now from before, is the context within which leadership takes place. Think of the impact of the printing press on relations between leaders and followers. And then think of the impact of social media on relations between leaders and followers. Clearly context matters – which is precisely why anyone with any interest in the theory of leadership, or in the practice of leadership, underestimates its importance at their peril.

I began this discussion by noting that what I argue might appear to be self-evident, no more than simple commonsense. However, by pulling the various threads together, by stitching them into a single tapestry or overarching argument, what I have written is, I trust, somewhat new and different. The leadership industry has disappointed; it has not lived up to its initial promise. This is not to say that it has not done anyone any good. Evidently many are persuaded that they have benefited from leadership study or, more likely, from leadership training.

But this has not translated into leadership betterment, at least not on a sufficiently sweeping scale. If the leadership industry has made any contribution at all, it has done so in infinitesimally small and unimpressive ways, and it has not demonstrably enabled us to tackle intractable problems. What I am arguing, then, is that the industry itself needs to be reconsidered and indeed reconceived; that we need to reimagine leadership learning by shedding our obsession with single individuals and adopting instead a more inclusive, systemic perspective. Only by broadening our conception of how change is created will we be able to translate leadership theory into measurably more ethical and effective leadership practice.

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ENDNOTES

¹ For an extended critique of the leadership industry, see Barbara Kellerman, *The End of Leadership* (New York: HarperCollins, 2012).

² Ibid., 155ff.

³ Ibid., xiv.

⁴ I address this question in *The End of Leadership*, especially in chapters seven and eight. The book does not, however, address what I now call the leadership system, at least not directly.

⁵ Plato, *Republic* (348 BCE). Excerpt in Barbara Kellerman, *Leadership: Essential Selections on Power, Authority, and Influence* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 25.

⁶ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History* (London: Harrap, 1840). Excerpt in Kellerman, *Leadership: Essential Selections*, 57.

⁷ Kellerman, *The End of Leadership*, 12.

Leadership –
It's a System,
Not a Person!

8 Stanley Milgram, *Obedience to Authority* (New York : Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008).

9 United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary, *Corrections : Hearings before Subcommittee No. 3 of the Committee on the Judiciary*, 92nd Congress, 1st session, Part II, "Prisons, Prison Reform, and Prisoners' Rights : California," Serial No. 15, October 25, 1971 (statement of Philip G. Zambardo, "The Power and Pathology of Imprisonment"). Zambardo's statement available at http://pdf.prisonexp.org/congress.pdf.

10 See, for example, Robert Kelley, *The Power of Followership* (New York : Doubleday, 1992) ; Ira Chaleff, *The Courageous Follower* (San Francisco : Berrett-Koehler, 2009) ; and Jean Lipman-Blumen, *The Allure of Toxic Leaders* (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2005).

11 Abraham Zaleznik, "The Dynamics of Subordinacy," *Harvard Business Review,* May/June 1965, 118.

12 Barbara Kellerman, *Followership : How Followers are Creating Change and Changing Leaders* (Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard Business School Press, 2010), xix – xx.

13 Archie Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader : Political Leadership in the Modern Age* (New York : Basic Books, 2014), 25.

14 Ibid., 165.

15 Ibid., 177.

16 Barbara Kellerman, *Hard Times : Leadership in America* (Stanford, Calif : Stanford University Press, 2014).

# Multiple but Complementary, Not Conflictual, Leaderships: The Tunisian Democratic Transition in Comparative Perspective

*Alfred Stepan*

*Abstract: Many classic studies of leadership focus on strong leadership in the singular. This essay focuses on effective leaderships in the plural. Some of the greatest failures of democratic transitions (Egypt, Syria, Libya) have multiple but highly conflictual leaderships. However, a key lesson in democratization theory is that successful democratic transitions often involve the formation of a powerful coalition, within the opposition, of one-time enemies. This was accomplished in Chile, Spain, and Indonesia. In greater detail, this essay examines Tunisia, the sole reasonably successful democratic transition of the Arab Spring. In all four cases, religious tensions had once figured prominently, yet were safely transcended by the actions of multiple leaders via mutual ideological and religious accommodations, negotiated socioeconomic pacts, and unprecedented political cooperation. A multiplicity of cooperating leaders, rather than a single "strong leader," produced effective democratic leadership in Tunisia, Indonesia, Spain, and Chile.*

ALFRED STEPAN, a Fellow of the American Academy since 1991, is the Wallace Sayre Professor of Government Emeritus at Columbia University. He previously taught at Oxford University and Yale University. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1997. His many works, which have been translated into a dozen languages, include *Crafting State Nations* (with Juan J. Linz and Yogendra Yadav, 2011), *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation* (with Juan J. Linz, 1996), *Arguing Comparative Politics* (2001), and *Rethinking Military Politics* (1988). He has been to Tunisia six times for his current research on Islam and democracy.

Many of the classic studies of leadership focus on strong leadership in the singular.[1] In this essay, I focus instead on effective leaderships in the plural, particularly in democratic transitions. Some of the greatest failures of democratic transitions have multiple but highly conflictual leaderships; whereas many of the most successful democratic transitions have multiple but complementary leaderships. Cases in which multiple leaders have been able to transform initially conflictual relationships into collaborative and complementary ones have been understudied, and are my primary concern here.

The Arab Spring illustrates three of the classic forms of democratic failure that can come about from multiple but conflictual leaderships: statelessness; prolonged and inconclusive civil wars; and what I call

"Brumairian abdication" of the chance to rule democratically in return for protection from a nondemocratic actor, such as the military.[2]

Libya is a clear example of the extreme peril – in this case, statelessness – of multiple oppositions that cannot craft any complementary goals. Qadhafi had for a long time created, dismantled, and recreated chains of commands and security structures at will. He supported his sons' emergence as possible dynastic successors, and entrusted core security posts to relatives. Few business groups could assume any politically relevant autonomy. It took a civil war – and massive help for the rebels in the form of a UN-backed NATO bombing campaign – to topple the "Brother Leader."

Weber asserted that a "state is a human community that [successfully] claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of force within a given territory."[3] It will be a long time before such a successful monopolistic claim can be made in Libya, and likely longer before a useable state comes into existence throughout its territory. A reporter who had traveled widely in the country's interior just two months before the July 2012 parliamentary elections documented the threats of Libya's extreme version of multiple leaderships with absolutely no complementary goals:

> Libya has no army. It has no government. These things exist on paper, but in practice Libya has yet to recover from the long maelstrom of Qadhafi's rule. . . . What Libya does have is militias, more than 60 of them. . . . Each brigade exercises unfettered authority over its own turf. . . . There are no rules.[4]

Obviously, Syria is also a case of multiple leaderships in opposition to Assad that have virtually no complementary goals. Some of these conflicting leaderships have included liberal-secular forces, jihadist militias (even before the arrival of ISIS), and the Kurds, who are increasingly focused on securing their own territorial autonomy. Western interventions have not helped. In this context of multiple leaderships in prolonged and inconclusive civil wars, a peaceful democracy in one state is inconceivable.

In Egypt, three generals ruled the country from 1952 until the Tahrir Square protests of 2011. But after Mubarak stepped down in the face of sustained protests, there were quite distinct leadership groups in Egypt: the Muslim Brotherhood, which had not renewed its membership or ideology in over twenty years and was committed to using "sharia as the only source of legislation"; a variety of secular leaders who feared and opposed the Muslim Brotherhood as much or even more than they opposed the military; and the "military as institution," which helped overthrow Mubarak as the "military as government," but stepped into his shoes and retained many prerogatives inconsistent with the democratic spirit of many in the opposition.

At the height of the Tahrir Square protests in February 2011, such multiple-but-conflicting leaderships did not strike most of the protestors as a problem. Indeed, because they believed a headless protest was invulnerable to "decapitation," many young protestors were against any kind of leadership.

This perception missed a fundamental point about the history and theory of successful versus failed democratic transitions in recent decades. The scholarly literature on democratic transitions normally makes a distinction between the tasks of resistance within "civil society" that help to *deconstruct authoritarianism*, and the tasks of "political society" that help to *construct democracy*. Among political society's constructive tasks is to help bring diverse groups of democratic opposition leaders – who may even dislike each other – into agreements concerning shared goals and tactics to erode the authoritarian regime, and even on plans for an interim government and

for elections capable of generating constitution-making authorities with democratic legitimacy.

Civil society in Egypt was, if anything, more diverse and robust than in Tunisia. However, to this date, Egypt has done remarkably little to create an effective political society. Why, and with what consequences? The leading U.S. scholar of the Muslim Brotherhood, Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, has explained that its "leaders affiliated with the reformist trend have never gained more than a marginal presence in the Guidance Bureau, the group's highest decision-making body."[5] Given this doctrinal opposition within the Muslim Brotherhood to internal reform, and the reluctance of secularists to reach out for possible Islamist allies who did not agree with the Brotherhood's political theology, the multiple potentially democratic Islamic and secular leaderships never tried, much less attained, any complementary goals with each other of the sort I will document were achieved in Tunisia. This may account for the fact that in Egypt, after the fall of Mubarak, but six months *before* the Muslim Brotherhood's Morsi became president, 62 percent of respondents in a survey were already hedging their democratic bets by agreeing to the statement that the military "should continue to intervene when *it* thinks necessary."[6] Indeed, a columnist in a widely read Cairo publication, *Ahram Online*, asserted as early as September 2011 that: "In general, liberal parties would like the constitution to be written before the elections take place, fearing that a post-election constitution-making process will be dominated by Islamists."[7]

Thus, in classic Eighteenth-Brumairian fashion, many Egyptian citizens were willing to abdicate their right to rule to a nondemocratic force such as the military, in return for protection from a potential and unwanted, but democratically elected, government.

A key lesson in democratization theory is that successful democratic transitions often involve the formation of a coalition, within the opposition, of one-time enemies. I look very briefly at how this task of transforming conflicting multiple leaderships into a complementary coalition was accomplished in three important cases: Chile, Spain, and Indonesia. Then, in greater detail, I will examine the case of Tunisia, the sole reasonably successful transition of the Arab Spring. What makes these cases noteworthy is that in each, religious tensions and differences figured prominently, yet to a large extent were safely transcended by the actions of multiple leaders.

In 1973, the Christian Democratic Party in Chile, with the tacit support of the U.S. government and the Roman Catholic Church, in effect asked General Pinochet to overthrow the legally elected socialist government of Salvador Allende. After this, from 1973 until the early 1980s, any possibility of joint cooperation between the Christian Democrats and Socialists in order to act against Pinochet was impossible. However, starting in the early 1980s, with the support of the German Christian Democrat Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and the German Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, the Chilean Christian Democrats and the Chilean Socialists began to consider whether they hated each other less than they hated Pinochet. Eventually, by the mid-1980s, the two parties mobilized joint anti-Pinochet protest demonstrations. These shared activities slowly turned into shared political programs. They formed an electoral coalition with a joint platform in 1988 that defeated Pinochet in a plebiscite based on Pinochet's own 1980 constitution. In 1989, this coalition won the presidency and ruled together as a successful, reformist coalition from 1990 – 2010, with the presidency oscillating between the Christian Democratic and Socialist parties.

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In the Spanish case, the legacy of the civil war was poisonous; it left approximately five hundred thousand people dead, and was followed by thirty-six years of dictatorial rule by General Franco. When Franco died in November 1976, there were many potentially conflictual leadership groups who had fought on opposite sides in the civil war. On the Republican side were the Socialists, most of whom had been militantly secularist and anticlerical, and the still very strong Communist Party, which was hated by the military but supported by many trade unionists. On the Nationalist side were the military, led by Franco; much of the Catholic Church; and many members of the propertied classes who during the civil war viewed the Communists as their mortal enemies. The idea of restoring the monarchy was a strongly divisive issue, with former Nationalists supportive, and former Republicans hostile to the idea.

The key leadership contribution of the first prime minister of post-Franco Spain, Adolfo Suárez, was that he helped transform within five years these potentially conflictual multiple leaderships into multiple but complementary, pro-democratic leaderships. Suárez talked informally to the leader of the Communist Party, Santiago Carrillo, soon after Carrillo was released from jail, and reached an implicit inclusionary agreement that the Communist Party would be legalized and could compete in parliamentary elections if it accepted democracy and a constitutional monarchy – which they did, partly because the Communist Party in Spain had already become a Euro-Communist party. With Cardinal Tarancón, the leader of the post-Vatican II Catholic Church, the politicians arrived at a mutually respectful position of "twin tolerations," whereby the Church agreed to respect and endorse the right of democratically elected officials to make legislation, and the democratic state allowed religious groups to participate in the public square.

On the key issue of socioeconomic reform and temporary price controls, Suárez invited the multiple leaders of every party with seats in the parliament to a series of private meetings in the prime minister's residence (the Moncloa). Between these Moncloa meetings, party leaders periodically held consultative meetings with their key civil society members, to explain decisions that were emerging from the process and to solicit their feedback. Suárez correctly understood that the give and take of these consultations was crucial for the Communist and Socialist opposition leaders if they were going to be able to get their own core union leaders to understand, and support, any painful Moncloa Pact wage-control policies and antistrike agreements for the first year of the democratic experiment.

Only after these extensive negotiations and agreements did Suárez call a formal session of both houses of parliament to vote on the Moncloa Pact. Despite difficult concessions made by many of the parties, there was only one vote against it in the Lower House. The Moncloa Pact is now widely considered one of the most successful pacts in the history of democratic transitions. In the process of constructing the agreement, the multiple, once-conflicting leaderships in Spain had arrived at the critical mass of complementary goals.

This pact continued to repay its members when, on February 23, 1981, the monarchy, as one of the multiple leaderships available to Spain's democracy, played its part in averting a military coup. The king, as head of state, ordered the rebellious tank commanders to end their revolt and return to their barracks. They did.[8]

In Indonesia, in the decade leading up to the fall of the thirty-six-year-long military dictatorship of General Suharto, Abdurrahman Wahid, the leader of the largest Muslim civil society group, created the "Democratic Forum," in which almost all

the potentially conflicting religious and secular groups met regularly to formulate and release joint documents in favor of human rights, greater political freedoms, and democratic values.[9] These years of cooperation turned out to be very helpful in the surprisingly successful constitution-building process that followed the fall of Suharto in May 1998, a process that Donald L. Horowitz, a major comparative constitutional scholar, recently called "meticulously consensual."[10]

This brings me to a more detailed look at how Tunisia turned multiple conflicting leaderships into multiple but complementary (and democratic) relationships.

*The Economist* named Tunisia its "country of the year" in 2014.[11] That same year, the U.S.-based democracy-evaluating organization Freedom House awarded Tunisia its highest possible score for "political rights," marking the first time an Arab country received this distinction since Freedom House's rankings debuted in 1972. No other Muslim country in the world, including Indonesia, has as high a ranking, and this puts Tunisia in a place of its own compared with the other Arab Spring countries, not one of which is remotely close to being classified as democratic.[12]

This achievement is all the more noteworthy when we situate Tunisia geopolitically. When the Warsaw Pact disintegrated, nine Central European countries suddenly found themselves in a "supportive neighborhood" of peace and prosperity and were rapidly able to join the European Union. In contrast, Tunisia is obviously in what international relations theorists call a "difficult neighborhood": ISIS recruiting and training camps abut its porous desert borders with stateless Libya, it borders authoritarian Algeria and is close to economically and politically troubled Egypt, and it has no hope of joining the European Union.

ISIS-inspired attacks launched from Libya in 2015 killed sixty people at two of Tunisia's most popular tourist destinations: the Bardo National Museum in Tunis and the beach resort of Sousse. However, no ISIS-related group in Tunisia has been able to hold territory, or set up a ruling council to implement their version of Islamic law; thus, Tunisia is not one of the eleven officially recognized "provinces" of the ISIS "caliphate" spreading from Iraq to Nigeria. I do not think such attacks will destroy Tunisia's fledgling democracy, but they did strengthen hard-line voices in the democratic coalition. They may also so hurt the Tunisian economy that despite being a democracy, Tunisia will lose its attractiveness to other countries in the Arab world.[13] But this makes it all the more important for Western nations to encourage trade with Tunisia, to give more economic and security aid to the country, and to recognize how Tunisia achieved a degree of democratic success in such a very difficult neighborhood.

Even more than in Chile, Spain, or Indonesia, the role of religion in Tunisia is central to our concern with multiple but conflicting leaderships, and raises significant questions regarding the possibility of creating effective, coalition-friendly democratic leaderships in Muslim-majority Arab countries. In my six research trips to Tunisia since the fall of Ben Ali in January 2011, four questions in particular have caught my attention, which I will use the rest of this essay to address.

First, why and how were secular, modernizing, authoritarian leaders in Muslim majority countries – like Kemal Atatürk in Turkey or Habib Bourguiba in Tunisia – able to build what I call a *constituency of coercion* against any party with Muslim-influenced religious goals, even a pro-democratic party?

Second, what religious and political arguments can be utilized by Islamic lead-

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ers to support democracy, build coalitions with pro-democratic secular leaders, and carry the day within a major Islamic party and against the constituency for coercion?

Third, unlike Egypt, why and how was Tunisia able to bring together most of the pro-democratic secular and Islamic leaderships into a joint civil and political society, unite opposition to the authoritarian regime, and eventually construct the most progressive and democratic constitution in the history of the Muslim world?

Fourth, how and why was there, in fact, a peaceful alternation of power away from the initial, Islamist-led ruling coalition? Many people believe that should a Muslim-controlled party win free and fair elections, the Muslim majority will insist on holding onto power, and democracy will end: they fear there will only be "one person, one vote, one time." Tunisia shows this need not be so. How?

W hat were the origins and consequences of the "constituency of coercion" that existed in Tunisia before the Arab Spring? Lack of trust between secularists and Islamists inhibited their cooperation against the nondemocratic regime of the first two presidents of independent Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba (1956–1987) and Ben Ali (1987–2011). One of the reasons for this was that, unlike in Indonesia or even Senegal, by the time Tunisia became independent from France in 1956, the country formed a part of what I call the *iron triangle* of aggressive *laïcité* secularism: the three points being France from 1905 to 1958 (before de Gaulle allowed the state to subsidize Catholic schools); Atatürk's Turkey; and Tunisia under Bourguiba and Ben Ali (1956–2011).[14]

Islam in Tunisia was relatively progressive in the mid-nineteenth century. The country abolished slavery in 1846, two years before France. In 1861, Tunisia created the first constitution in the Arab world. This constitution, in Jean-Pierre Filiu's judg-

ment, "enshrined a political power distinct from religion," and built upon the previous "Covenant of Social Peace," emphasizing freedom of religion.[15] The great Arabist Albert Hourani highlighted the progressive role of Zeitouna Mosque University in this period.[16]

After gaining independence in 1956, Bourguiba, in the name of modernism and *laïcité,* attempted to remove religion from the public square and from most programs of higher education, and in essence closed the progressive Zeitouna Mosque University, which had been founded in Tunis in 737 CE, more than two centuries before Cairo's Al-Azhar University.[17]

From independence until 2011, Tunisia was ruled by only two presidents, Bourguiba and then Ben Ali. In this entire period neither president allowed one fully free and fair election. Bourguiba, however, saw himself, and was seen by many, as a modernizing, secular leader. Concerning women's rights, he passed the most progressive family code in the Muslim world; in fact, it was at the time one of the most advanced family codes anywhere. Polygamy was banned and polygamists subject to imprisonment, men's right to unilaterally divorce their wives was abolished, women's rights to initiate divorce and receive alimony were put into law, and women's child custody rights were strengthened. Abortion was legalized, under some conditions, as early as 1965. Women's access to higher education soon rivaled men's.[18]

Bourguiba and Ben Ali skillfully used the progressive family code and women-friendly educational policies to help build a constituency for coercion. They crafted this constituency by maintaining that if there were free elections, Muslim extremists would win and curtail women's freedoms, so it was in women's interest not to push too hard for elections. Parties with religious affiliations were forbidden and many Muslim leaders were accused of be-

ing terrorists, sentenced to imprisonment and torture. The autocratic state's discourse about Muslim terrorism strengthened the constituency of coercion and intensified following the events in Algeria, where after the Islamist party had won the first round of elections in 1990, the military canceled the second round in January 1991. The outcome was a civil war between Islamists and the military that ravaged the country from 1992 to 1997, claiming as many as one hundred thousand lives.[19]

In these circumstances, the multiple leaderships of secularists who opposed Ben Ali and Muslims who opposed Ben Ali were not available to each other as potential allies. Most secularists who opposed the authoritarian regime of Ben Ali and wanted democracy did not see Islamists as desirable or even possible allies, given what they assumed were their anti-democratic ideologies and jihadist tendencies. For their part, Islamic activists viewed *laïcité* secularists as deeply anti-religious and complicit in the repression of Islamic parties. Thus, there existed multiple opposition leaders, but no complementary goals.

But from 2003 to 2011, something similar to what happened in Chile, Spain, and Indonesia began to happen in Tunisia: an accommodation between enemies. This accommodation was greatly encouraged by the internal democratizing changes within the major Islamic activist group known as Ennahda ("renaissance"), starting many years before in the early 1980s. These changes were led by Rachid Ghannouchi, Ennahda's leader.

One of Ghannouchi's key arguments about democracy that eased Ennahda's entry into electoral politics – first briefly in 1989, and then as the largest party in Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly (NCA) from 2011 to 2014 – was that, while democracy has universal principles, each democratic country has historic "specificities"

that new political parties, such as Ennahda, should respect. One such "specificity" for Ghannouchi was Tunisia's women-friendly educational and legal system. During a brief thaw in the transition from Bourguiba to Ben Ali, Ennahda participated in the 1989 elections, and articulated the reasons why good Muslims should treat men and women as equals. Ennahda polled very well in the capital city, Tunis, before the party was outlawed by Ben Ali, on ill-documented terrorism charges.

In the two decades of exile that followed for Ghannouchi in the United Kingdom, from 1991 to 2011, he wrote hundreds of articles in English, French, and Arabic, in which he increasingly advanced arguments against violence and against the imposition of Sharia on people (whether Muslims or not). He also insisted, along with the key Islamic democratic leaders in Indonesia and Senegal, that, as stated in one of the shortest and most explicit injunctions in the Koran (sura 2:256), "in matters of religion there can be no compulsion."

Ghannouchi noted also that the Islamic juridical virtue of *ijma* ("consensus"), when combined with the Koranic injunction against compulsion in matters of religion, creates a space in Islam for a version of democracy that respects individual rights and pluralism. Ghannouchi further stressed that in the modern conditions of cities, with their populations in millions, the traditional Islamic virtue of *shura* ("consultation") is best achieved by consulting the citizens of a polity, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in open competitive elections.

In June 2003, representatives from approximately twenty Tunisian opposition organizations met in France. Their goal was to see if they could overcome secular-Islamist distrust and become more unified and powerful, and thus erode Ben Ali's "constituency of coercion." Participants

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at the meeting included Islamist Ennahda and two secular, center-left parties: the Congress for the Republic (CPR) and Ettakatol. Together, eventually, these three parties would between 2011 and 2014 constitute the ruling coalition in Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly.

The first meeting in France in 2003 of twenty political groups from Tunisia resulted in a document that has only recently become widely known: the "Call from Tunis." In essence, it endorsed the two fundamental principles that make democracy possible in a highly religious Muslim-majority country. First, any future elected government would have to be "founded on the sovereignty of the people as the sole source of legitimacy." Second, the state, while showing "respect for the people's identity and its Arab-Muslim values," would provide "the guarantee of liberty of beliefs to all and the political neutralization of places of worship." Ennahda accepted both these fundamental agreements. "The Call" also went on to demand "the full equality of women and men."[20]

The three main opposition political parties at the meeting, together with representatives of smaller parties and some civil society leaders, met nearly every year after 2003 to reaffirm, and even deepen, their commitment to the "Call from Tunis" principles. Their key 2005 manifesto, "Collectif du 18 Octobre pour les Droits et les Libertés," stated that after a "three-month dialogue among party leaders," they had reached consensus on a number of crucial issues. All parties, including Ennahda, supported in great detail the existing liberal family code. Moreover, the manifesto added the crucial proviso that any future democratic state would have to be a "*civic state ...* drawing its sole legitimacy from the will of the people," for "political practice is a human discipline [without] any form of sanctity." Finally, the manifesto reasserted that "there can be no compulsion in religion.

This includes the right to adopt a religion or doctrine or not."[21]

Agreement on a "civic state," in which citizens were to be the *sole* source of legitimacy, helped weaken any anti-democratic claim against elections along the lines that "only God, not men, makes laws." Ennahda could easily accept that "there can be no compulsion in religion," drawing support from the Koranic verse that Ghannouchi in Tunisia, Abdurrahman Wahid in Indonesia, and Sufi leaders in Senegal like Souleymane Bashir Diagne have consistently employed in their arguments against their own fundamentalists and to reassure classic secularists.

Ghannouchi could not participate directly in these meetings because he was forbidden from entering France. However, some secular leaders like Moncef Marzouki, head of the secular CPR party, along with Islamic leaders like Ghannouchi displayed an extraordinary willingness to cooperate. Marzouki made over twenty trips from France to London to meet with Ghannouchi and other Ennahda leaders.[22] Trust, cooperation, and goal complementarity between the multiple secular and Islamist democratic opposition leaderships were deepened by the fact that Marzouki had taken the risk of a major confrontation with Ben Ali by using the Tunisian League of Human Rights, an organization he had once headed, to defend the basic human and political rights of Ennahda.

Important as these accommodations and agreements were, a militant core of secularists and feminists never joined these dialogues; indeed, they denounced them. Nonetheless, in comparison with Egypt, the existence of secular-Islamic dialogues in Tunisia were of critical importance.

In the first four months after the fall of Ben Ali in Tunisia in January 2011, a diverse group of 155 members was tasked with forming a commission whose pur-

pose was to create an even stronger political society by preparing for elections.[23] Known as the Ben Achour Commission, it agreed that the first polity-wide election should be to elect a Constituent Assembly, not a president. The decision as to whether the political system should be presidential, parliamentary, or semipresidential should be made by the elected Constituent Assembly, not an unelected working group such as the Ben Achour Commission.

The commission also agreed that there could not be an election without an electoral law outlining procedures on how to run the elections, and that transparency should be enhanced by a large network of national and international election observers. They decided to use an electoral system of proportional representation (PR), rather than a "first-past-the post" single-member-district system (as is used in the United Kingdom), because the general agreement, shared by Ennahda, was that the British system would produce an overwhelming Ennahda majority.

In an interview in Tunis on March 26, 2011, Ghannouchi told me that Ennahda could well win the first plurality in 90 percent of the seats under a first-past-the-post system, given the fragmentation of the newly emerging party system.[24] He said he was worried that such a result would produce an anti-democratic, Algerian-style backlash. Ghannouchi went on to estimate that with a PR system, Ennahda would probably not get more than 40 percent of the seats, and would thus need to govern with one or two secular parties, an outcome that he said would help protect Tunisia's young democracy. Ghannouchi, with the support of his party, was making a deliberate choice for multiple coalition leaderships, and was also helping to craft complementary goals.

The commission also decided, with strong backing from Ennahda, not only to have what is called a "closed list" PR system,

with ranked names on every list, but to ensure that every other name on each electoral list be that of a woman.

The final April 11, 2011, vote on the proposals saw only two abstentions and two walk-outs; all other members of the commission voted yes. This exceptionally creative and consensual political society work helped contribute to the success of the October 2011 election of the National Constituent Assembly, which was widely considered by national and international observers alike to be free and fair. The results were roughly as predicted, with Ennahda receiving the first plurality with 40 percent of the vote, and forming a coalition government with two secular parties with which Ennahda had been negotiating since 2003: Ettakatol, whose leader, Mustapha Ben Jaafar, became president of the Constituent Assembly, and CPR, whose leader, Moncef Marzouki, was elected interim president of Tunisia by the Constituent Assembly. These three parties, with their multiple but complementary leaderships, became the ruling troika during the constitution-writing period. Once again, nothing remotely like this consensual, political society-building process occurred in Egypt.

Despite its auspicious beginning in free and fair elections in October 2011, for a six-month period, from July to December 2013, Tunisia experienced a crisis that threatened the entire transition process. But by December of that year, Tunisia had managed to reequilibrate and consensually pass an inclusionary constitution in January 2014. How did innovative consensus-building, in the midst of crisis, enable this democratic reequilibration in Tunisia?

The roots of the crisis lay in the constitution-making process and expectations about its speed. The majority of members of the Constituent Assembly pledged to complete the new constitution within one year of starting their deliberations. This

was unnecessarily fast, dangerous, and unusual : India spent three years writing its constitution ; Spain spent two.

In this context, some of the major actors in Tunisia who had not done well or had not participated in the Constituent Assembly elections – such as Beji Caid Essebsi, who had once been the interior minister under Bourguiba and had founded the new secular opposition party Nidaa Tounes in the summer of 2012 – began to declare that the National Constituent Assembly, having failed to deliver on its promise, would become illegitimate on the one-year anniversary of its opening session. Essebsi suggested that other groups (of unclear origin) should draft a new constitution and send it to the reactivated NCA for its ratification.

Compounding this emerging crisis were the assassinations of two leading leftist Ennahda critics in February and July of 2013. The assassinations, and the fact that they were not solved, led to charges of Ennahda's incompetence or, worse, complicity. Events in Egypt colored the interpretations of those in Tunisia : the massive Egyptian petition movement called Tamarod ("rebellion"), directed against the Muslim Brotherhood President Mohamed Morsi, facilitated the Egyptian military's coup against Morsi on July 3, 2013. This, in turn, appeared to have strengthened the copycat Tamarod movement in Tunisia, and led to increasingly large protests outside the Constituent Assembly.

In this highly charged context, on August 6, 2013, one of the multiple leaders of the three-party ruling coalition, Mustapha Ben Jaafar, president of the Constituent Assembly and of the Ettakatol Party, temporally suspended the work of the NCA in order to buy time for the democratic groups, in and outside the Assembly, to develop ways to transcend the crisis.[25] Ben Jaafar's persuasive leadership achieved something virtually unprecedented in democratic constitution-mak-

ing. He managed to convince every party with seats in the NCA, no matter how large or small, to agree to have only one "voice" in the decisions about every contested article in a body that came to be called the Consensus Committee.

This was a major sacrifice of power for Ennahda : with 41 percent of the seats in the NCA, their representation in the Consensus Committee was no more than that of parties with less than 5 percent of the seats. It was also agreed that there would be no formal votes in the Consensus Committee. Rather, an article would be considered consensually agreed-upon when it was approved as the "sense of the meeting" by two-thirds of the participants. Progress in overcoming deadlocks in this fashion commenced rapidly once Ben Jaafar reopened the NCA.

Ben Jaafar used the period of the NCA's suspension to reach as many key actors in civil society who were *outside* the Assembly as possible. The most important of these was a secular group led by the most powerful trade union in all of North Africa, the UCTT ; it was rapidly supported by the Tunisian League of Human Rights and the Tunisian Bar Association, and was eventually joined by the leading employer's association, UTICA.[26] These four groups together intensified a process increasingly referred to as "the Dialogue." This external group was never a formal part of the Consensus Committee in the NCA, but in interviews, its leaders explained that, with the agreement of the Consensus Committee, they regularly sent two representatives to key meetings to listen and offer the Dialogue's suggestions.

The Dialogue leaders eventually brought other weighty political and social actors into discussions about a "road map" to transcend the crisis. This road map, which approximately twenty groups and parties supported, entailed dates for signing the constitution, the voluntary resignation of the Ennahda-led troika coalition, the ap-

pointment of an interim technocratic prime minister and government, the final appointment of an electoral commission, and the holding of parliamentary and then presidential elections.

Ennahda agreed to everything but, understandably, refused to resign until the day the final constitution was signed. On the same day the constitution was approved, Ennahda duly stepped down, and an interim government of technocrats took over to run the administration and oversee the holding of parliamentary and presidential elections. The crisis had been consensually resolved.

The Tunisian Constitution, after four drafts, was ratified on January 27, 2014. The final vote of the 216 deputies to the Constituent Assembly was quite consensual: two hundred voted yes and twelve voted no, with four abstentions. Some of the articles in the final constitution are the most progressive ever passed in an Arab or Muslim country; indeed they are more progressive than what is law in many long-standing democracies. The preamble states flatly that the Tunisian polity is based upon "equality of rights and duties between all citizens, male and female." Article 46 also affirms that "the state works to attain parity between women and men in elected Assemblies."

To accuse a person in many Muslim countries of being an "apostate" often puts that person at great risk, possibly even of death. In Article 6 of the Tunisian constitution, probably for the first time in the constitution of a Muslim-majority country, making such an accusation has itself been criminalized.

Although many members of Ennahda's base may have wanted Sharia law, Ghannouchi gave a major speech *before* the first of the four drafts of the constitution was written arguing against Sharia appearing in the constitution. This was followed by

the chief executive body of Ennahda – the Shura Council – voting against including *any* reference to Sharia in the constitution. Like Indonesia, and unlike el-Sisi's Egypt, there is thus *no* reference to Sharia in the 2014 Tunisian constitution.[27]

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Many commentators have argued that once an Islamic party wins power in elections, they will never relinquish power. However, in the parliamentary elections of October 26, 2014, Essebsi's secularist party, Nidaa Tounes, won the first plurality (and the right to nominate the prime minister); three weeks later, in December 2014, Essebsi won the presidency in a tight, second-round run-off election in which Ennahda honored its pledge not to run a candidate.

I talked to Ghannouchi three days after Ennahda's parliamentary defeat. He was philosophical and his reflections mainly concerned the future of democracy in Tunisia, to which he was convinced Ennahda had contributed:

> In a period of transition it was useful we did not push religion too hard. We are very keen to make a success of the transition. We have a very heavy responsibility for the success of democracy. Even if we lose in elections, democracy gains. The main goal is to make a success of democracy.

> Tunisia has got rid of despotism. There is chaos in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Egypt, and Iraq. We saved our country. We lose power but we saved Tunisia.

> We will try to oblige Nidaa Tounes to accept the game of democracy. Moving from government to opposition, and preserving the right to come back, this is the point of democracy. [28]

On the night of the presidential elections, Ghannouchi quickly phoned Essebsi to congratulate him on his victory and accept the results of the free and fair election.

President Essebsi's Nidaa Tounes won a plurality in the parliamentary elections with eighty-six seats, but this was twenty-three seats short of the absolute majority needed to form a government by itself. Eventually, Nidaa Tounes crafted a majority by putting together a coalition of five parties that included Ennahda. The formation of this coalition was very unpopular with those members of Nidaa Tounes's base and allies who had fought an anti-Islamist campaign, and was just as unpopular with many in Ennahda's base who feared a return to anti-Islamic repression and who did not want to share the inevitable costs of government with opponents. So why did the coalition form, when Nidaa Tounes and Essebsi could have put together a majority without Ennahda, and when Ennahda, with sixty-nine seats in parliament, was only given one ministry, while a party with only eight seats in parliament was given three?

In a democratic context, even the leaders of the two most opposing parties may at times deem it in their interest to pursue complementary rather than conflictual goals. Before the coalition was agreed upon, there was talk in Tunis of the possibility of a "two-sheikh" leadership formula that could be a "multiple-sum" compromise, rather than a "zero-sum" conflict. The two-sheikh metaphor refers to the aging founding leaders of the two major conflicting parties in Tunisia: Beji Caid Essebsi, of Nidaa Tounes, and Rachid Ghannouchi, of Ennahda.

Of the largest parties in parliament, the only two with significant overlaps in economic policy – despite great differences on Islam – are Nidaa Tounes and Ennahda. The leader of the former, Essebsi, was then eighty-eight years old, and the coalition offered the promise of majority support for many of his difficult economic reforms. If Essebsi wanted to leave a legacy of statesman-led growth, Ennahda, rather than his Marxist-secularist Popular Front allies, could help him more.

For his part, Ghannouchi probably calculated that he would be in a better position to pressure Essebsi to accept Ennahda as a normal part of democratic participation in Tunisia if that party was in the governing coalition and thus had the potential to cause the fall of the government in the event of renewed undemocratic repression against them. For Ghannouchi, the achievement of the "normalcy" of Ennahda and the persistence of Tunisian democratic politics would be his great legacy.

Tunisia has completed a "democratic transition," but a fully "consolidated democracy" normally requires more time, a supportive geopolitical neighborhood, and more tangible socioeconomic benefits from democracy than Tunisia has had so far.[29] The magnitude of Tunisia's future democratic tasks becomes clear when we situate Tunisia in a comparative geopolitical framework. I have noted the contrast between Tunisia's difficult neighborhood and that in which some Central European countries found themselves following the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact. Not only has Tunisia no hope of joining the European Union, but the United States, which gives $1.3 billion a year to the military of authoritarian Egypt, allocated only $166 million to democratic Tunisia in 2015.

The ISIS-inspired attacks at two of Tunisia's most popular tourist destinations were followed, more recently, by the ISIS onslaught of March 8, 2016, on Tunisian army and police posts near the southern border with Libya. Although repulsed, the attack was unprecedented in that ISIS seemed to have intended to hold territory within Tunisia. Such attacks may not destroy Tunisia's democracy, but economically and politically, they will make a full consolidation of democracy much more difficult to achieve.

If Tunisia, the Arab country that has by far the best chance of consolidating democracy, fails despite its multiple and complementary leaderships, democracy as a credible prospect to aspire to withers everywhere in the Arab world. It is time for the United States and other democracies to give Tunisia's fledgling but imperiled democracy much greater priority and help.

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ENDNOTES

[1] A major exception is Archie Brown; see, for example, Archie Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader: Political Leadership in the Modern Age* (New York: Basic Books, 2014).

[2] My term "Brumairian abdication" builds on Karl Marx, "The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon," *Die Revolution* (1852). Tensions between different revolutionary leaderships led some of them to make deals with Napoleon (in hopes of using him for their own ends), which in turn created the opening for him to seize power. In Brazil in 1964, Chile in 1973, and Egypt in July 2013, the Brumairian abdication was also a Brumairian invitation for the military to rule.

[3] See Max Weber, "Politics as Vocation," in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, trans. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Oxford University Press, 1946), 78.

[4] Robert F. Worth, "In Libya, the Captors Have Become the Captive," *The New York Times Magazine*, May 9, 2012.

[5] Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *The Muslim Brotherhood: Evolution of an Islamist Organization* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013), 286.

[6] Emphasis added. Data supplied to me by Professor Stephen Whitefield of Oxford University based on a not-yet-published poll he and his colleagues conducted in Egypt in December 2011 with 2,001 respondents.

[7] Samir El-Sayed, writing for *Ahram Online*, on September 23, 2011.

[8] For multiple leaderships in the Spanish transition, see Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America, and Post-Communist Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 87–115.

[9] See Mirjam Künkler, "How Pluralist Democracy Became the Consensual Discourse Among Secular and Nonsecular Muslims in Indonesia," in *Democracy and Islam in Indonesia*, ed. Mirjam Künkler and Alfred Stepan (New York: Columbia University, Press, 2013), 53–72.

[10] Donald L. Horowitz, *Constitutional Change and Democracy in Indonesia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 293.

[11] "Our Country of the Year: Hope Springs," *The Economist*, December 20, 2014.

[12] On Freedom House's seven-point scale, the highest score for political rights is one, and the worst score is seven. In 2015, Egypt and Libya received the second lowest possible score, a six, and Syria the lowest possible score, a seven.

[13] See "Islamic State: Spreading its Tentacles," and "Tunisia's Economy: The Other Victim," both in *The Economist*, July 4, 2015, 39–40.

[14] For a discussion of "aggressive secularism" in France and Turkey, in contrast to a religion-friendly "passive secularism" in the United States, see Ahmet T. Kuru, *Secularism and State Policies Toward Religion: The United States, France and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

[15] Jean-Pierre Filiu, *The Arab Revolution: Ten Lessons from the Democratic Uprising* (London: C. Hurst, 2011), 14.

[16] Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age: 1798 – 1939* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 65.

[17] Alfred Stepan, "Tunisia's Transition and the Twin Tolerations," *Journal of Democracy* 23 (2012): 89 – 103, esp. 99 – 102.

[18] M. M. Charrad, *States and Women's Rights in the Making of Post-Colonial Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

[19] Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 254 – 275.

[20] The original version was drafted in Arabic and French.

[21] Original in Arabic. Emphasis added.

[22] Interview with Marzouki in Tunis, and a separate confirmatory interview with Ghannouchi in Tunis, both in May 2013.

[23] Stepan, "Tunisia's Transition and the Twin Tolerations," esp. 91 – 94.

[24] Ghannouchi was right in this estimate: Ennahda did win a plurality in about 90 percent of the electoral districts.

[25] What follows concerning the new style of internal work of the NCA is based largely, but not exclusively, on a long interview Monica Marks and I conducted with Mustapha Ben Jaafar on November 4, 2014, in his NCA presidential office in Tunis.

[26] Monica Marks and I interviewed top leaders of these organizations in Tunis from October 30 through November 3, 2014.

[27] Article 2 of the 2014 Egyptian Constitution passed under the domination of General el-Sisi stipulates that the "principles of Islamic Sharia are the main source of legislation."

[28] Interview with Rachid Ghannouchi, October 29, 2014, Tunis.

[29] For a definition and more extensive discussion of democratic consolidation, see Linz and Stepan, *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, chap. 1, esp. 5 – 15.

# Against the *Führerprinzip*:
# For Collective Leadership

## *Archie Brown*

*Abstract: The* Führerprinzip *has not been confined to Nazi Germany. The cult of the strong leader thrives in many authoritarian regimes and has its echoes even in contemporary democracies. The belief that the more power a president or prime minister wields the more we should be impressed by that politician is a dangerous fallacy. In authoritarian regimes, a more collective leadership is a lesser evil than personal dictatorship. In countries moving from authoritarian rule to democracy, collegial, inclusive, and collective leadership is more conducive to successful transition than great concentration of power in the hands of one individual at the top of the hierarchy. Democracies also benefit from a government led by a team in which there is no obsequiousness or hesitation in contradicting the top leader. Wise decisions are less likely to be forthcoming when one person can predetermine the outcome of a meeting or foreclose the discussion by pulling rank.*

ARCHIE BROWN (Archibald Haworth Brown), a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy since 2003, is Emeritus Professor of Politics at the University of Oxford, and an Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. He was elected a Fellow of the British Academy in 1991. He is the author, most recently, of *The Myth of the Strong Leader: Political Leadership in the Modern Age* (2014), *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (2009), and *Seven Years that Changed the World: Perestroika in Perspective* (2007). He has been a Visiting Professor of Political Science at Yale University, the University of Connecticut, Columbia University, and the University of Texas at Austin, as well as Distinguished Visiting Fellow at the Kellogg Institute for International Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

The cult of the strong individual leader remains alive and well, even in democracies. Less surprisingly, but with more dire consequences, it flourishes in authoritarian regimes. Within dictatorships, vast resources are devoted to portraying the top leader as the embodiment of strength and wisdom, setting him (political dictatorship being overwhelmingly a masculine preserve) far above any colleagues or potential rivals. For the autocrat, as distinct from the people, both the accumulation of personal power and the creation of a personality cult make sense, at least in the short term. It is altogether more puzzling when citizens who have some choice in the matter – those who live in a democracy – look to, and even yearn for, a strong leader to take the big decisions on their behalf. Yet effective leadership is seldom one-person leadership, and strength – as defined by the maximization of power vis-à-vis colleagues, political party, and governmental institutions – is not synonymous with effectiveness.

There is reason also to be wary of "charismatic" leaders, especially if we follow Max Weber – who first elaborated the concept and extended its application from religious to political leaders – in holding that "genuine charismatic domination … knows of no abstract legal codes and statutes and of no 'formal' way of adjudication."[1] Charisma is very much in the eye of the beholder and, as Weber noted, however god-given a charismatic leader's claims, this sheen rubs off if the leader fails to deliver. Charisma is not a lifetime endowment but rather a personality responding to qualities and attributes that followers project upon the leader at a given time. Our approval of a charismatic leader depends very much on whether we approve of the goals toward which that person's leadership is directed. Such a leader may be a Hitler or Mussolini or, on the contrary, a Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. Following a charismatic leader involves suspending, to a large extent, one's critical faculties and independent judgment. This has adverse consequences in the long term even for the leader, and is debilitating for the follower. It is seldom, even when the values of the charismatic leader are benign, conducive to wise and accountable government. No one person is likely to embody all of the qualities desirable in a paragon of a leader. Since, indeed, leadership is highly contextual, the attributes most valuable in one situation are liable to be of very limited use in another. We would do well to replace our obsession with *the* leader by an appreciation of the advantages of power shared within a leadership team.

Much the greater part of the literature on political leadership focuses on the holders of political power, and this essay will be only a partial exception to that general rule. Nevertheless, it is worth distinguishing at the outset political leadership from political power. Power-holders can quite quickly come to believe they are gifted leaders because of the readiness with which people respond to their suggestions and commands. Yet the responsiveness of "followers" owes a great deal to the influence over their career prospects that the head of government or party leader possesses. How many leaders of major political parties had more than a handful of followers before it looked as if they might become the top leader, at which point calculations of benefit from future patronage come into play? The answer is: not many. Once a party leader is ensconced as head of government, colleagues' receptiveness to his or her wishes tends to depend heavily on the inequality of the power relationship.

Leadership in its purest form is most clearly evident when all members of the group are "on an equal footing" but there is, as Adam Smith observed, "generally some person whose counsel is more followed than that of others."[2] We need to draw a clear distinction between a leader other people wish to be guided by, and who attracts a spontaneous following, and a power-wielding leader who has the prerogative of promoting or demoting and who has an armory of other favors to bestow or withhold. Examples of outstanding political leadership divorced from positions of political power are not hard to find.

In the Soviet Union of the post-Stalin but pre-perestroika era, the moral leadership of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and of Andrei Sakharov, who were united by their civic courage and in their rejection of Marxism-Leninism but divided by political orientation, had a significant impact on, and following among, different parts of the Russian intelligentsia. The Soviet authorities were sufficiently worried by this writer and this physicist to deport Solzhenitsyn from the country and to send Sakharov into internal exile in Nizhny Novgorod (or Gorky, as it was called at that time). For celebrated examples of more overtly political leadership disconnected from

governmental power, we need look no further than Mahatma Gandhi and his promotion of nonviolent struggle for Indian independence from British imperial rule; Martin Luther King, Jr., whose inspirational leadership of the civil rights movement in the United States helped pave the way for the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 (although that legislation owed a huge debt also to the presidential leadership of Lyndon B. Johnson); and Aung San Suu Kyi, the 1991 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, whose long campaign for democracy in Burma (Myanmar) condemned her to many years of house arrest that ended only in 2010. It brought her electoral success in 2015 and, at long last, something resembling political power in 2016.

An outstanding contemporary example of political leadership is that of the youngest-ever winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, Malala Yousafzai, from the Swat Valley of Pakistan. She was seventeen years old when she became a Nobel laureate. Her campaign for girls' education, in the face of the obscurantist hostility of the Taliban, led to the assassination attempt that almost killed her in 2012, when she was fifteen. After numerous medical operations in both Pakistan and Great Britain, Malala resumed her campaigning, although now doing so as a schoolgirl in Birmingham, England. She has said that "I don't want to be thought of as 'the girl who was shot by the Taliban' but 'the girl who fought for education.'" In her speech to the United Nations on her sixteenth birthday, she described "our books and our pens" as "our most powerful weapons" and proclaimed: "One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world."[3] Herself a Muslim, Malala Yousafzai carried her activism to Nigeria in the attempt to galvanize the government of that country to do more to rescue the girls who had been kidnapped from their predominantly Christian secondary school by the radical Muslim terrorist group Boko Haram in April 2014. More recently, she has campaigned against the practice of female genital mutilation practiced by some of her co-religionists.

Writers on leadership who focus as much on followers as on leaders, and who study the interaction between the two, provide a more realistic account of the political process than those who are almost exclusively obsessed with the top person. To pay due attention to followership is not, however, enough. When we observe the top team within a government or political party, we shall almost invariably find people who cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be regarded as "followers" of the top leader. To take the example of the George W. Bush administration, does it make sense to describe Colin Powell, Dick Cheney, and Donald Rumsfeld as followers of Bush? Hardly. The president, by virtue of his office, had a higher authority, but that is far from the same as these Cabinet members seeing him as the possessor of superior wisdom or judgment. Similarly, successive secretaries of state in the Barack Obama administration, Hillary Clinton and John Kerry, who have been important players in their own right, cannot meaningfully be described as followers of Obama. In a democracy there usually are within the top leadership team people of high political standing who are relatively independent of the top leader – and so there should be. They may or may not constitute "a team of rivals," but it is essential that they should feel free to question the judgment of the top leader in any particular instance and be ready to advance contrary arguments.

Although this essay focuses mainly on political leadership during processes of democratization and in democracies, it is worth paying attention to the *Führerprinzip* in the country where the term was first employed, and to authoritarian or totalitarian regimes more generally. When in 1930

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Otto Strasser, a would-be ideologist of German National Socialism, suggested to Adolf Hitler that "A Leader must serve the Idea" – since the idea was eternal and the leader (for obvious biological reasons) was not – Hitler told him that this was "outrageous nonsense" and an example of "revolting democracy," for "the Leader is the Idea, and each party member has to obey only the Leader."[4] The "leader principle" was fundamental to Nazi doctrine, and while it "worked" for a time inasmuch as Hitler went on to consolidate his power, gain a vast following, and achieve military successes, it was the inability of informed subordinates to question his judgment that fostered the miscalculation that, more than any other, led to his downfall and that of the Nazi regime.

Although it is not a particularly salient component of popular perceptions of World War II either in Great Britain or (still less) in the United States, there is no doubt that the most substantial contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany in the ground war in Europe was made by the Soviet army. The Soviet war dead, including civilians, were vastly greater in number than those of any other allied country; indeed, some five times more Soviet than German citizens perished.[5] Of the German soldiers who lost their lives in the war, more than three-quarters of them did so at the hands of their Soviet adversary. Thus, when Hitler launched the German invasion of the USSR in June 1941, unilaterally abrogating the Nazi-Soviet Pact of nonaggression, he made a fateful error. Although the invasion was delayed for logistical reasons until the following year, it was Hitler alone who in 1940 took the decision to break the pact. His generals shared his detestation of Soviet communism and likewise underestimated the potential of the Red Army, yet they had misgivings about the desirability of war on another front. Such qualms,

however, they suppressed not only to protect their careers, but also because they did not think that they were wiser than the Führer.[6] And after the speedy fall of France following the German invasion, Hitler informed his principal military advisers that "a campaign against Russia would be child's play."[7]

Iosif Stalin, especially during the last twenty years of his life, had acquired a personal power and cult of personality that were scarcely less exalted than Hitler's. This extended even to a life-or-death power over senior figures in the ruling party: namely, members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and of its inner circle, the Politburo. Nevertheless, Stalin was not quite so free of ideological constraints as was Hitler. He could not explicitly reject Leninist concepts. As Alan Bullock aptly observed, for Nazi Germany, "ideology was what the Führer said it was," whereas "in the case of Stalin it was what the General Secretary said Marx and Lenin said it was."[8] Within Soviet society and even inside Stalin's inner circle there was a reluctance similar to that which prevailed in Nazi Germany to contradict the *vozhd'* (leader).[9] Again, this was not only because to do so would be life-threateningly dangerous, but because, to a greater or lesser extent, members of the political elite, as well as ordinary Russians, subscribed to the sedulously promoted notion of Stalin's genius.

Adam Smith, whose insights on society and government (as distinct from his economic analysis and moral philosophy) were until recent times largely overlooked, noted that "gross abuse" of power and "perverseness, absurdity, and unreasonableness" were more liable to be found under the rule of "single persons" than of larger assemblies.[10] Both Hitler and Stalin exemplified such perversity and unreasonableness not only in the murderous policies they pursued but also through

their profound failures of judgment. Thus, in June 1941 the Soviet leader made a catastrophic error that was almost on par with that of the German dictator. Whereas Hitler had made the huge mistake of invading the Soviet Union, Stalin's error was to convince himself, in the face of much evidence to the contrary from a variety of sources, that Germany would not attack Russia at any time in that year. And once Stalin reached that conclusion, there could be no dissension in Moscow. On June 21, 1941, the day before German troops launched their blitzkrieg on the Soviet Union, the head of the security police, Lavrenti Beria, issued an instruction that four NKVD officers "be ground into labour camp dust" for having persistently sent reports of an impending Nazi invasion. "I and my people," wrote Beria to Stalin on the same day, "have firmly embedded in our memory your wise conclusion: Hitler is not going to attack us in 1941."[11]

While all authoritarian regimes, by definition, suffer from lack of accountability and from censorship and self-censorship, oligarchy is generally a lesser evil than autocracy. A more collective leadership is less likely than personal dictatorship to commit state-sponsored murder on an industrial scale. A brief glance at the history of the two largest, and most important, communist states, the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, helps to illustrate the point. The Soviet Union in the 1920s and in the post-Stalin era was never less than a highly authoritarian state (until, that is, the system-transformative change of the late 1980s), as was China in the first half of the 1950s and in the years of more enlightened absolutism following Mao Zedong's death in 1976. Yet these periods in the two countries' histories were far less politically oppressive, lethal, and arbitrary than the years of Stalin's and Mao's overwhelming personal ascendancy (in the Soviet case, roughly the twenty years preceding Stalin's death in 1953; in China, from the late 1950s until Mao's death in 1976).

The worst of the Soviet purges took place during the time of Stalin's dictatorship over the Communist Party as well as over the rest of Soviet society. The show trials reached their peak in 1937–1938, when almost 1.6 million people were arrested, of whom approximately 682,000 were shot.[12] Millions more died, directly or indirectly, as a result of the policies pursued by Stalin. In China, during the years of Mao's supreme power, barbaric means were used in the attempt to reach wildly impractical utopian goals. The Great Leap Forward of the late 1950s and early 1960s sidelined the institutions of China's central government, created vast "people's communes" in the countryside, and substituted mass mobilization for the technical expertise of engineers and technologists. Along with the purposeful killing of tens of thousands, who dragged their feet rather than make the Great Leap, at least thirty million people – forty-five million according to a high-end estimate, but one based on archival research – died, mainly of starvation as a direct or indirect consequence of this attempt to fast-track China into communism.[13] Mao's other infamous brainchild, the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, killed fewer people (between 750,000 and one-and-a-half million died as a direct result of it), but it lasted much longer, from the mid-1960s until Mao's death in 1976, especially harshly in the second half of the sixties. The Cultural Revolution affected the political elite and the most educated segment of Chinese society, and the urban population more generally, to a greater extent than did the earlier revolution from above. Both the Great Leap and the Cultural Revolution were unmitigated disasters, and it was revulsion against this turmoil that enabled pragmatists and reformers to gain ascendancy

in the post-Mao era, with Deng Xiaoping playing a decisive role.[14]

If the most that can be said of collective leadership as compared with the dictatorship of one person in authoritarian regimes is that the former is a lesser evil, the general point can be made much more positively when we consider transitions from authoritarian rule to democracy. While there are a number of factors conducive to the success or failure of attempts at democratic transition, among them political-cultural inheritance and geopolitical environment, the characteristics and values of the principal leaders of the attempt to accomplish systemic change can make a decisive difference. There is a body of evidence, drawn especially from the comparative study of Latin American countries, which indicates that in the transition and early posttransition period, the normative commitment of leading politicians to democracy is of particular relevance for its attainment. Politicians who place great value on democracy as such are "less likely to understand policy failures" of the new postauthoritarian pluralist politics – following the dismantlement of the old order – "as *regime* failures," and they have longer time horizons than those who do not share their commitment to democratic values.[15]

There are also good reasons to conclude that collegial, inclusive, and collective leadership is more conducive to successful transition to democracy than great concentration of power in the hands of one individual at the top of the political hierarchy, regardless of whether that person is a prime minister or president. A focus exclusively on institutional arrangements, involving linkage of successful democratic transition to the choice of a parliamentary rather than a presidential system, or to a particular type of semipresidentialism, is attractive because it provides the possibility of measurement and gives at least the illusion of

precision. The results of such studies, however, have been contradictory and inconclusive, not least because they leave out of the analysis factors less readily measurable but still more important – the *values* of the top leader and of the leadership group and also the *style* of leadership of the head of government in a democratizing regime.

With good reason, scholars view Spain as an outstanding example of transition to democracy, following the long years of Franco's authoritarian rule. Adolfo Suárez, the Spanish prime minster who was appointed by King Juan Carlos in 1976 and who held that post for just five years, had a consensus-building style that succeeded in bridging what had appeared to be irreconcilable differences in Spanish society and among competing political groups. In a television address justifying the legalization of the Communist Party, Suárez proclaimed his belief that the Spanish people were mature enough "to assimilate their own pluralism."[16] Of equal significance, the most important opposition personality, Felipe González, the leader of the Socialist Party and future prime minister, was firmly committed to democratic values. If Suárez was the key political actor in Spain's transition to democracy, González was no less surely the most crucial figure in its consolidation.

It was an integral part of Suárez's approach to leadership to get Spain's new constitution accepted as a result of national accord, rather than by using all the instruments of power at his disposal to drive it through by a simple majority. In this strategy of inclusiveness, he was remarkably successful. The constitution was approved almost unanimously in parliament and by nearly 90 percent of the population. Suárez was by no stretch of the imagination a charismatic leader, nor was he a "strong" leader in the sense of maximizing his power and dominating all those around him. His style was collegial and he made

significant concessions and compromises in order to get agreement on important issues, not least to persuade long-standing Republicans to accept that a constitutional monarchy had a place in the new political order. The Socialist Party eventually acquiesced in exchange for Suárez agreeing to their demands for abolition of the death penalty and reduction of the voting age to eighteen.[17] This turned out to their advantage, and that of other Spanish democrats, when the king played a pivotal role in ending the 1981 attempted military coup against the new democratic regime.

Inclusive leadership and a commitment to dialogue were important also in the successful transitions to democracy of Chile and Brazil. The international environment changed beyond all recognition in the second half of the 1980s as a result of the transformation of the Soviet Union, which undermined the claims to international legitimacy of right-wing authoritarian regimes on the pretext of standing as a bulwark against the spread of communism. In Chile, this change in the external environment, including a shift of attitudes in Washington, made Augusto Pinochet's oppressive regime more vulnerable. The Chilean autocrat's loss of a plebiscite in 1988 was followed by victory for the Christian Democratic political leader Patricio Aylwin in 1989 and a return to democratic civilian rule in 1990. Aylwin sought dialogue with union leaders to get their agreement to moderate their economic demands and they, in turn, compromised in pursuit of the more fundamental goal of reestablishing and consolidating democratic rule. Noting that "throughout my political life I have always worked well in teams,"[18] Aylwin proved to be a successful coalition builder, and he played an important part in reducing the dangerous level of polarization in Chilean politics.

In Brazil's transition from military authoritarian rule, both the international context and enlightened leadership were likewise crucial. That leadership was provided, most impressively, by Fernando Henrique Cardoso, president from 1995 until 2003, who was both a distinguished social scientist and an astute politician. Summarizing the successes and shortcomings of Brazil's transition to and consolidation of democracy, Cardoso observed:

> We were able to converge around the main objectives despite the plurality of visions and interests of the different opposition parties that rose up. In this way, a culture of mutual negotiation and dialogue was reinforced as an aspect of Brazilian democracy. But this can deteriorate into co-optation and the accommodation of interests, weakening democratic politics, discouraging the citizenry, and compromising the state's ability to engage in republican action. The style of the transition conditions democratic governance, for better or worse.[19]

The Chilean academic and politician Sergio Bitar and the American specialist on Latin American politics Abraham Lowenthal undertook a series of revealing interviews with leaders of transitions from authoritarian rule in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa and reached significant conclusions. They stress that a common factor among the leaders they interviewed was a commitment to inclusionary and accountable governance and a fundamental preference for peaceful and incremental, rather than violent or convulsive, transformation. They shared power, rather than hoarding it, and relied heavily on capable associates, some of whom had specific expertise that they themselves might not possess. Although they sometimes made key choices personally, most of these leaders "concentrated on building consensus, forging coalitions, constructing political bridges, and communicating consistently with key constituencies and the broad public."[20]

The most momentous systemic change of all in the past half-century was of the Soviet Union. The second half of the 1980s witnessed the historic role that could be played by a leader who both acquired the most powerful political office and who had different values from those dominant in the regime hitherto. The Gorbachev era was one of movement from government by fiat and fear to governance by persuasion and societal empowerment. Fundamental change of the Soviet political system was accompanied by a transformation of Soviet foreign policy, including enunciation in 1988 of the principle that the people of every country were entitled to decide for themselves what kind of political and economic system they wished to live in. One year later these words became deeds, facilitating the democratization of half a continent. The countries of Eastern and Central Europe, whose sovereignty had previously been strictly limited by their Soviet overlords, became non-communist and independent while Soviet troops obeyed orders from Moscow to remain in their barracks.

In many respects Mikhail Gorbachev led from the front, especially during the first four years of perestroika; yet at the same time, government became more collegial and collective, partly from necessity. The general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union had significant levers of power at his disposal, but he enjoyed a high security of tenure only so long as he did not challenge any of the basic norms of the system. Gorbachev, however, embarked on a process of change in 1985 that had become increasingly fundamental by 1988 – 1989, with glasnost by then virtually indistinguishable from freedom of speech and (increasingly) publication, and with contested elections introduced for a legislature with real power. Thus, the last leader of the Soviet Union was running grave risks. Until the creation in March 1990 of an executive presidency,

to which Gorbachev was indirectly elected by the new legislature, the Soviet leader could have been removed from office at a moment's notice by a vote in the Politburo, speedily endorsed by the Central Committee. Only when in 1990 Communist Party organs ceased to be the highest institutions of state power did Gorbachev have some protection from removal from power by his Politburo colleagues. The threats to his leadership were by then, however, coming thick and fast from other quarters.[21]

For the first five years of his leadership, it made sense for Gorbachev patiently to persuade his Politburo colleagues to go along with policy innovation that was far in excess of anything they had contemplated, and which was to become threatening to their interests. Accepting collective responsibility, following lengthy discussions, for new policies and concepts weakened their resistance, which would have been stronger had Gorbachev simply bypassed them. Moreover, the change in the political system brought countervailing forces into play, including public opinion. Even so, in a highly ideologized system, Gorbachevian formulations, such as, from 1987, *socialist pluralism*, which by 1990 had become *political pluralism*, met with resistance in the party leadership.

Nevertheless, as even one of the more conservative members of the Politburo, Vitaliy Vorotnikov, noted, Gorbachev gave everyone around the table a chance to speak, and he listened to their arguments. His style of chairing the meetings, as transcripts of the proceedings attest and as Vorotnikov, among others, has confirmed, was "democratic and collegial." If there was significant disagreement, Gorbachev would propose a change of wording, adopt a middle position, or postpone a decision until a later meeting, although in the final analysis, Gorbachev more often than not would get his way.[22] Even those to whom in the early years of his general secretary-

ship Gorbachev could simply have issued instructions, he sought, rather, to persuade. The head of Soviet space research, Roald Sagdeev, had opportunities at that time to observe Gorbachev in small group discussions. The general secretary, he recalled, overestimated his, admittedly, formidable powers of persuasion, apparently believing that "he could persuade anyone in the Soviet Union of anything." Yet what was especially significant, Sagdeev aptly observes, was precisely that Gorbachev attempted to *persuade* his interlocutors, since this approach represented a sharp break with Soviet tradition. Hitherto, senior party officials "never tried to change people's genuine opinions or beliefs, but simply issued an instruction and demanded that it be followed."[23] Sagdeev's personal journey was just one illustration of the dramatic scale of change during the period of less than seven years of perestroika. In what would earlier have been unthinkable for a Soviet scientist with close ties to the military-industrial complex, he became the husband of Susan Eisenhower, granddaughter of President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and was able freely to move to the United States in early 1990.

Persuasion is no less central to political life in established democracies than in regimes in transition from authoritarian rule. Democracy itself has been described as "above all the name for political authority exercised solely through the persuasion of the greater number."[24] More concretely, as Richard Neustadt famously put it : "Presidential *power* is the power to persuade." Although a simplification, the statement encapsulated an important truth, and drew on President Harry Truman's remark that he spent his days "trying to persuade people to do things they ought to have sense enough to do without my persuading them….That's all the powers of the President amount to."[25] Where-

as in a number of consolidated democracies, and not only in countries in transition from authoritarian rule, there is a danger of heads of government concentrating excessive power in their hands, this is scarcely a serious problem in the United States, with the partial exception of some foreign policy areas. It is exceedingly difficult for an American president to become over-powerful, given the constitutional constraints, institutional obstacles, and powerful interests that confront him (or her). U.S. presidents have little option but to try to work collegially, given the strength of the other components of the American political system. They may wield greater power within the executive than a prime minister in a parliamentary system typically does, but there is a strong convention that the president does not readily dismiss members of the Cabinet. Moreover, American presidents are usually weaker vis-à-vis the legislature than their prime ministerial counterparts.

Yet there is a hankering in the United States for more assertive leadership, as well as ambivalence when it is provided. The chief U.S. commentator of the *Financial Times*, Edward Luce, recently wrote, "One of the loudest complaints of Mr Trump's followers is they believe America lacks a strong leader." He immediately added, "If Mr Trump is the answer, there is something wrong with the question."[26] The search for a strong leader – in the sense of one who will dominate all and sundry – is indeed the pursuit of a false god. But Luce is correct when he goes on to note that there is still a case for a president taking the initiative in a political system that has seen as much gridlock as the United States has experienced in recent years.

On the vexed issue of gun control, President Obama has, in fact, increasingly led from the front, in the face of a gun lobby that attributes the prevalence of death by shooting merely to "bad people" in the

United States without explaining why, then, there should be such a spectacularly higher incidence of evil among the American population than, for example, in the United Kingdom, Western Europe, or Australia. Obama also led from the front on health care, but was more sparing in the use of his "power to persuade" Congress than was a Lyndon Johnson. Of course, the gulf between Obama's and Johnson's ties to and knowledge of every member of the House and Senate was immense, but with his constant telephone calls, plus invitations to the White House, Johnson used to the full his considerable powers of persuasion and cajolery. If Obama has appeared less constantly engaged, his wariness of entanglement in foreign conflicts, and reluctance to accept that American leadership should consist "of us bombing somebody," is one vital area where his style contrasts favorably with the way Johnson was sucked into a disastrous war in Vietnam and did not know how to get out.[27]

The demand for a strong leader is heard in many countries, including Britain, where over the past half-century there has been an increasing focus in the mass media on the person of the prime minister (and on the leader of the main opposition party), rather than on the government as a whole or on ministers responsible for particular areas of policy. Newspaper articles have come to discuss prime ministers in much more personal terms, and with reference to their perceived leadership qualities.[28] Television has accentuated the focus on the top leader, who now has to be viewed going to the scene of a disaster, such as a flooded town, looking determined as he promises that everything will be done to avoid such devastation in the future. Similarly, on one currently controversial issue, whether or not London's Heathrow airport should open a third runway, the *Financial Times* quotes an "official close to the process" as saying: "Only David Cameron knows what he will

finally decide to do."[29] But why should the prime minister "finally" decide this question? There is a secretary of state for transport and also a Cabinet subcommittee on aviation, for the issue, with its environmental as well as economic dimensions, is politically sensitive. That suggests that the matter should, "finally," be debated and decided by the whole Cabinet. Perhaps collective responsibility will remain a political reality and the decision will emerge from Cabinet discussion rather than by prime ministerial ruling. At best, then, the political discourse is misleading. At worst, prime ministers are getting too big for their boots and treating colleagues in whom executive powers have been vested as if they were but advisers.

Some authors, who argue that heads of government have gained in power as well as visibility over the past half-century, see this as a positive development: "By focusing attention on the prime minister as an individual who is accountable for the government's collective performance, the public finds it easier to deliver reward or punishment, particularly when compared with an abstract collectivity."[30] This is very doubtful. There has been a long-term decline in voter turnout in general elections in the United Kingdom over the postwar period. Voters in 1945 or in the 1950s (when in 1950 and 1951 the turnout was as high as 84 percent and 82.5 percent, respectively) did not have any trouble in voting for or against a Labour government. We do not have survey data on the relative popularity of Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee in 1945, but given that acclaim for Churchill's wartime leadership crossed party boundaries and that victory of the Allies in World War II, in which Churchill had counted as one of the "Big Three," was the high point of his career, it is a reasonable assumption that he would have had more personal support than did Attlee that summer and would have prevailed if votes had been cast primarily for leaders rather than

for parties and policies. In fact, the election resulted in a landslide victory for the Labour Party.

The greater prominence accorded prime ministers and party leaders in postwar Britain did not translate into votes primarily for the leader, rather than for the party. Harold Wilson, the Labour leader and outgoing prime minister was more popular in 1970 than the Conservative leader, Edward Heath, but the Conservatives won the election comfortably enough. Although commentators write of Margaret Thatcher's triumph over James Callaghan in the 1979 general election, Callaghan enjoyed a popularity lead of more than twenty points over Thatcher on the eve of the poll.[31] The vote was against the Labour government, which had become unpopular during a "winter of discontent" marked by industrial unrest, and a victory for the Conservative Party, rather than a personal accomplishment of their leader. In contrast, in 1983, a year after the successful Falklands war, Thatcher polled well ahead of the policies of her party.[32]

More commonly, of course, support for a party and for the party's leader go together. Although it has been hypothesized that the personality of the party leader would be most important for people with a weak sense of party identification, the evidence points the other way. Attachment to the party label determines to a large extent the perception of particular leaders, with party loyalists the most attached to the team captain.[33] Having a popular leader is, of course, a plus for a political party and, in a closely contested election, may have real electoral significance. It is, nevertheless, rare for the personality and popularity of the top leader to make the difference between victory and defeat in a general election.

Exaggeration of the electoral impact of party leaders in parliamentary democracies is less serious than the notion, regularly encountered in the mass media, that a strong leader – who maximizes his or her personal power and attempts to take all the big decisions in different areas of policy – exemplifies the most successful and admirable type of leadership. There are only twenty-four hours in the day of even the strongest leader, and the more that person tries to do individually, the less time he or she has to focus on and to understand the complexity and nuances of each issue. A prime minister's personal aides are usually among the most enthusiastic supporters of placing ever greater power in the hands of the head of government. That is hardly surprising, for they are the main beneficiaries of a leader cult and of concentration of power in the leader's office. The more one top leader is set apart from other elected politicians, the greater the independent influence – and de facto power – acquired by his or her nonelected advisers.

A case in point is Jonathan Powell, who was chief-of-staff to Tony Blair throughout Blair's premiership. Before he entered 10 Downing Street as Blair's right-hand man, Powell expressed the wish to curb the independence of individual ministers and government departments, and to move to what he called a "Napoleonic system" of government.[34] Reflecting on his years at the heart of government, after intraparty pressure had forced Tony Blair to cede the premiership to Gordon Brown, Powell made a sustained effort to portray Blair as a strong leader and Brown as weak. His underlying assumption was that Machiavelli's maxims for a prince operating within an authoritarian system are no less applicable, with suitable updating, for a democracy. While Machiavelli and Napoleon may be useful mentors for an autocratic leader within an authoritarian regime, they are highly dubious models for political leaders in a democracy. It may be assumed also that Powell would not wish the Labour Party leader elected in 2015 to follow his and Machiavelli's precepts on

the maximization of his power, since Jeremy Corbyn abhors much of what Blair stood for.

Were we to draw a graph of the extent to which personal power has been hoarded and wielded by the various British prime ministers over the last hundred years, it would not, however, show an upward curve of increasing power, but zigzags. David Lloyd George, almost one century ago, and Neville Chamberlain, in the late 1930s, wielded more individual power vis-à-vis their colleagues than did the great majority of their post–World War II successors. A comparison over time would also not show a positive correlation between prime ministerial domination of Cabinet colleagues and of the policy process, on the one hand, and governmental achievement, on the other. The two postwar British governments that made the biggest difference to the country they ruled – they can be described as *redefining governments* in the sense that they redefined the limits of the possible in UK politics, and introduced radical change – were the Labour government of 1945–1951, headed by Clement Attlee, and the Conservative government of 1979–1990, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher. The immediate postwar Labour government set the political agenda for a generation until it was challenged fundamentally by the Conservative government of Margaret Thatcher.

The leadership styles of Attlee and Thatcher could scarcely have been more different. Attlee neither dominated the policy process nor aspired to do so. His main achievement was to keep a strong team together – a group of people of independent political standing, of great and varied experience, divergent views, and personal animosities and rivalries. Attlee played a coordinating rather than domineering role. Individual ministers had autonomy, subject to their clearing important issues of principle with the appropri-

ate Cabinet committee or with the Cabinet as a whole. With the passage of time, and partly because Attlee was such an unflamboyant politician, the nature and effectiveness of the collegial and collective style of leadership of the radical government he headed has receded not only from public consciousness, but even from the heads of many British political commentators.

The creeping-in of the idea in Britain that the prime minister *should* be the dominant policy-maker owes a lot to the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. In her own terms – what she set out to achieve and the extent to which she met those objectives – she was a successful prime minister, and undoubtedly a strong one. The disadvantages, however, of an overly mighty head of government became increasingly apparent the longer she was in office. Sir Geoffrey Howe, whose House of Commons speech in 1990 explaining his resignation from the government triggered Thatcher's removal from the premiership by her own Conservative colleagues, later noted how the prime minister had come to dominate the reactions of ministers and officials to such an extent that meetings in Whitehall and Westminster were "subconsciously attended, unseen and unspoken" by her. He added: "The discussion would always come round somehow to: how will this play with the prime minister?"[35]

That illustrates a major flaw of the "strong leader" who so intimidates his (or in this case, her) colleagues that they engage in self-censorship and themselves rule out policy options that might displease the leader. As no leader in a democracy was ever selected because he or she was believed to have a monopoly of wisdom, it defies common sense and is at odds with democratic values for senior politicians to subordinate their own judgments to the perceived predilections of the top leader. Eventually, of course, Thatcher's senior colleagues rebelled, and so her style of leadership – not-

withstanding her considerable, but highly controversial, achievements while she occupied 10 Downing Street – led to her political demise.

In any government, of course (including that headed by Margaret Thatcher), policy is made by a great many people, not least by the departmental heads (secretaries of state, ministers) in whom executive power is vested. A president or prime minister can do much to set the tone, but political commentary, especially in the mass media, focuses excessively on the head of government. Thus, it is common in the United Kingdom to find everything that was done between 1997 and 2007 attributed to the prime minister, Tony Blair. Yet the most far-reaching innovation of that Labour government lay in its constitutional reform: the creation of a Scottish parliament and government; the formation of a Welsh assembly and executive; devolved government and a power-sharing agreement in Northern Ireland; the passing of the Human Rights Act; the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act; and House of Lords reform (which, while incomplete, rid the legislature of 90 percent of the hereditary peers).

Of those reforms, Blair played a major role only in the Northern Ireland settlement. Indeed, he was unenthusiastic about several of the others. More important in their formulation, and as chairman of the relevant Cabinet committees, was an unsung member of the Cabinet, Derry (Lord) Irvine, the Lord Chancellor. Similarly, the economic policies of that government are regularly attributed to Blair, though they were jealously guarded by an even-more-than-usually powerful Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown. Among other things, he prevented Blair from realizing his wish to take Britain into the common European currency. Only in foreign policy – where heads of governments generally have played a more dominant role since World War II – did Blair's power and control (the euro apart) match popular perceptions. But since it is his zealous advocacy of British participation in the 2003 war-of-choice in Iraq that is most clearly remembered in contemporary Britain, its resonance does the former prime minister no favors.

Wise decisions are less likely to be forthcoming when one person can predetermine the outcome of a meeting or foreclose the discussion by pulling rank. In any cabinet, council, committee, or group, some members are better informed than others. There will be a few whose judgment generally carries particular weight. That will often include the chair of the meeting, but the collective wisdom of the group will almost invariably be greater than that of the individual presiding over the proceedings, even if he or she heads the government. The advantages of collective leadership can manifest themselves, however, only when discussion is unconstrained – not governed by obsequiousness or fear of the consequences of contradicting the top leader.

Barbara Kellerman is prominent among those who argue that "Leader-centrism no longer explains, if it ever did, the way the world works."[36] Yet her observation that "the traditional view of the leader, the suggestion that 'the leader' is all-important, is simply passé"[37] may be less true than it deserves to be, so far as popular perceptions are concerned. Social psychologists Alexander Haslam, Stephen Reicher, and Michael Platow are right to regard an "individualistic and leader-centric view of leadership to be deeply flawed," being both "a poor explanation of leadership phenomena" and "bad in the sense of sustaining toxic social realities."[38] Yet, they observe, the idea of heroic leadership remains popular, in spite of its evident deficiencies. The attraction for many a top leader of the idea that victories and successes are due to him and failures the fault of insufficiently loyal

"followers," is clear enough. Why the rest of us should go along with such illusions, put up with one-person dominance, and in its absence pine for it, rather than embrace a more collective and dispersed leadership, is altogether less obvious.

ENDNOTES

[1] H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds. and trans., *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1848), 250.

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[3] Malala Yousafzai, *I am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and was Shot by the Taliban* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2013), 261–262.

[4] Ian Kershaw, *Hitler* (London: Penguin, 2009), 200–201.

[5] Antony Beevor, *Stalingrad* (London: Penguin, 2007), 428.

[6] Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World, 1940–1941* (London: Penguin, 2007), 69–70.

[7] Ibid., 68.

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# In Favor of "Leader Proofing"

## Anthony King

*Abstract : Although it is widely assumed that successful polities require strong leaders, something like the opposite is probably the case. A successful political system may well be one that has no need of strong leaders and may even eschew them. Strong leaders may occasionally be desirable in any polity, but those occasions are – or should be – rare. As often as not (possibly more often than not) strong leaders pose substantial risks. They are liable to do as much damage as good, possibly more. There is a lot to be said for any polity's political culture and institutions having built into them a fair amount of "leader proofing."*

ANTHONY KING, a Foreign Honorary Member of the American Academy since 1994, is the Millennium Professor of British Government at the University of Essex. His books on American politics and government include *Running Scared : Why America's Politicians Campaign Too Much and Govern Too Little* (1997) and *The Founding Fathers v. the People : Paradoxes of American Democracy* (2012). He has also taught at the University of Wisconsin – Madison and Princeton University as well as the University of Oxford.

Switzerland is undoubtedly one of the world's most successful countries, probably *the* most successful in Europe. It is also one of the world's most intriguing countries, because it should probably not exist. Indeed, the most widely read book on the country (apart from guidebooks) is entitled *Why Switzerland?*[1] Historically, the country has been divided in multiple ways : by dauntingly high mountain peaks, by language and by religion. Switzerland boasts no fewer than four national languages, although a large proportion of Swiss can speak only one of them (for most, English is their preferred second language). For many centuries, the religious divide, between Catholics and Protestants, went deep. Early in the sixteenth century, Zwingli preached and practiced his brand of revolutionary Protestantism in predominantly Catholic Zurich. Soon afterward, Geneva became a hotbed of militant Calvinism. Protestants and Catholics fought three civil wars between 1529 and 1847, and a constitutional ban on Jesuit priests living and working in Switzerland was lifted only in 1973.

Yet the Swiss confederation has remained in being for more than seven centuries, its occasional civil wars have been relatively bloodless affairs (certainly as compared with the American Civil War), and for generations past the Swiss have been at peace

both with their neighbors and with each other. Whatever language they speak, Swiss people think of themselves as Swiss. Class conflict in the country, as well as religious conflict, is muted. Violent crime is virtually unknown. The Swiss are among the best-educated people in the world and enjoy one of the world's most advanced healthcare delivery systems. Switzerland is a liberal democracy in the fullest sense of both words. Not least, the people of Switzerland enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world (however measured). Switzerland positively exudes peace and prosperity.

What is intriguing for our purposes, however, is a zone of silence relating to that country. Ask the members of any audience anywhere, however well-informed, to name anyone who is now, or ever has been, a Swiss political leader and the result is invariably an embarrassed silence. No one can think of anybody. The only person anyone can ever think of is William Tell, but Tell – he of the famous crossbow and apple – may never have existed and, even if he did, it was a very long time ago, during Switzerland's earliest days. The Swiss people clearly do not suffer from any form of leader addiction.

Britain's Winston Churchill *was* a leader, in two senses. Formally, he was the leader of the Conservative Party and, on two occasions, he served as his country's prime minister. Less formally, in 1940, when Britain's fortunes in World War II were at their nadir, he emerged as the country's rhetorical and symbolic leader. His speeches, cigars and defiant V-for-victory gesture are still remembered. But in practical military terms he was less a leader than a goad, gadfly and interferer-in-chief. His military leadership was always severely constrained: not merely by circumstances (Britain's weaknesses, the strengths of the enemy, the increasing power of the United States, and so on) but also by his need to carry his military, naval and air force commanders with him. In

his dealings with them, he needed to be circumspect. He could relieve senior officers of their commands only when they had demonstrably proved ineffective. His power was overwhelmingly the power to persuade; and, when he failed to persuade, as he often did, he almost invariably failed to achieve his objectives. Especially toward the end of the war, as Britain's power waned, Churchill had no option but to be collegial, even deferential, in his mode of operations.

The position of John F. Kennedy during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis differed sharply from that of Churchill in 1940. Churchill spoke eloquently and often. Kennedy said almost nothing in public. But, informally as well as formally, all the important decisions taken by the United States government during the crisis were for Kennedy and Kennedy alone to take. As president, *he* was commander-in-chief, with duties he could neither share nor delegate. But Kennedy in 1962 found himself in a situation far outside the orbit of his own personal experience and without precedent in human history. He needed to think long and hard – and knew that he did. He also needed others' help as his ideas developed – and knew that he did.

President Kennedy, someone as grown-up as Churchill could be child-like, dealt with his problem by convening what he called the Executive Committee. However, it was scarcely a committee and certainly not an executive. Its membership fluctuated, and the president continually conducted smaller meetings, with varying personnel. Kennedy's central concern was to keep America's options open for as long as possible and to ensure that all of his advisers felt free to speak their minds. Toward the latter end, he encouraged his advisers to talk among themselves in his absence. The president's brother, Robert Kennedy, subsequently wrote: "This was wise. Personalities change when the Presi-

dent is present, and frequently even strong men make recommendations on the basis of what they believe the President wishes to hear."[2] Kennedy continues:

> During all these deliberations we all spoke as equals. There was no rank, and, in fact, we did not even have a chairman. . . . As a result . . . the conversations were completely uninhibited and unrestricted. Everyone had an equal opportunity to express himself and to be heard directly. It was a tremendously advantageous procedure.[3]

It was out of these informal and semiformal discussions that the idea of imposing a naval "quarantine" on Cuba – rather than launching air strikes to destroy the Soviets' missile sites on the island – arose. The ultimate responsibility and the final decisions were, of necessity, the president's, but throughout, his chosen style was collegial.

An implicit commentary on the functioning of any institution is provided by what happens whenever the nominal head of that institution is unavailable for any reason. How does the institution function under those circumstances?

In late June 1953, during his second term as prime minister, Churchill suffered a stroke which left him partially paralyzed down his left side. Initially, it was thought he would have to resign, but he retreated to his country home, Chartwell, to recuperate and quite quickly – within about eight weeks – he recovered. Although the prime minister was largely incapacitated, the consequences for the conduct of government were minimal. One of his senior colleagues, R. A. Butler, "took charge of the Cabinet with tact and competence," and departmental ministers went calmly about their business.[4] Business as usual also characterized Churchill's last few months in office. The old man, now eighty, was increasingly lethargic and absent-minded, but few outside his inner circle were aware of the extent of his deterioration and the govern-

ment continued to function normally. It seemed not to matter much that during these months 10 Downing Street was effectively unoccupied.

One of Winston Churchill's former companions-in-arms was similarly ill and in office during the same decade. President Dwight D. Eisenhower suffered a heart attack in September 1955 and then a stroke in November 1957. The heart attack kept him out of action for approximately a month and a half, and he actually recovered more quickly from the stroke, although his speech was impaired for a time and, like Churchill, he briefly contemplated resignation. Potentially, Eisenhower's illnesses placed a greater strain on America's president-centered – and therefore individual-centered – governing arrangements than Churchill's did on Britain's more loose-textured arrangements. In Britain, ministers simply assumed, rightly, that they would carry on as usual, with central direction, if needed, being provided collectively by the Cabinet. In the United States, however, it was far from clear what was supposed to happen.

Fortunately, in Eisenhower's case three separate factors eased the strain. One was that on both occasions the president was only briefly unable to communicate and take decisions. Even after the stroke, his mental faculties seem to have been unimpaired. The second was that, by coincidence, no difficult decisions needed to be taken during either of the president's two short periods of convalescence. In particular, no major foreign-affairs crises supervened. The third was that Eisenhower, by outlook and temperament and despite the fact that he had formerly occupied positions of high military command, was a firm believer in cabinet government and "sought to establish in the executive branch a bureaucratic structure that minimized disruption caused by the absence of the chief executive."[5] While he was recovering from his heart attack, Sherman Adams, his chief of

staff, stayed with him in Denver and relayed back to Washington any presidential decisions that had to be taken, while Richard Nixon, the vice president, presided over Cabinet meetings and meetings of the National Security Council. An informal coordinating committee began to meet regularly to oversee the government's operations as a whole.[6] Although the outward forms differed, these arrangements resembled quite closely the ones that evolved at the top of British government following Churchill's stroke.

The aftermath of the attempt on Ronald Reagan's life in 1981 was a good deal messier, even though in the meantime a new amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the Twenty-Fifth Amendment, had been ratified to provide for situations in which the president was "unable to discharge the powers and duties of his office." Having been shot and seriously wounded, Reagan for several hours underwent massive surgery and was clearly incapable of discharging the duties of his office. He remained poorly and unable to do a full day's work for another two months. His White House physician, Daniel Ruge, believed that, during the hour or so before his life-saving operation and while he was still conscious and in full possession of his faculties, Reagan should have been asked, under the terms of the Twenty-Fifth Amendment, to sign a declaration transferring his powers temporarily to the vice president, who would thereupon serve as acting president. But no such suggestion was ever made. All this occurred when Reagan had been in office for only sixty days. The new administration had scarcely begun to bed in, and nothing in the way of contingency planning had been done. "[E]normous tension and uncertainty permeated the government."[7] Reagan had already proved himself to be a wholesale delegator, but most of his delegations were to individuals. Nothing resembling Eisenhower's committee system existed.

Instead, what seems to have happened is that, with Reagan's tacit approval, effective control of the government was taken in hand by three members of his White House staff: Edwin Meese, James Baker and Michael Deaver. This trio of aides became, in effect, the president's surrogates, more than merely his aides. It was an arrangement that emerged immediately following the assassination attempt but then lasted for most of the rest of Reagan's first term. Neither Churchill nor Eisenhower would have tolerated any such arrangement, but Reagan seems to have been comfortable with it.[8] The original trio later became a quartet, with the addition of Nancy Reagan, the first lady. As we shall see later, when that collegial arrangement eventually broke down, the American system of government itself nearly broke down.

How do episodes and observations such as these speak to questions of political leadership in general and strong political leadership in particular? Before answering that question, it would be a good idea to engage in a somewhat more systematic enquiry, one relating only to liberal democracies. There is no need to labor that last point here. It is well known that political leaders in autocratic and authoritarian regimes tend to be megalomaniacs, monsters, murderers, liars and crooks.

Archie Brown, in *The Myth of the Strong Leader*, suggests that although the term "strong leader" is open to more than one interpretation, it is generally taken to mean "a leader who concentrates a lot of power in his or her hands, dominates both a wide swath of public policy and the political party to which he or she belongs, and takes the big decisions."[9] A strong leader on that definition may or may not be successful in his or her own terms or in the judgment of others. Equally, a man or woman may be successful in his or her own terms and yet may not be adjudged by himself, herself or

anybody else to have been a strong leader. Strength and success are not the same thing, and to infer strength from success is, as Daniel Kahneman and others have pointed out, a common but primitive type of logical fallacy.[10] Luck may be the key variable. Alternatively, personal qualities other than strength may well in practice count for more than strength.

By way of illustration, let us consider briefly the careers in office of the thirty men and one woman who held office as either American president or British prime minister during the eighty years between 1935 and 2015.

Given the constraints imposed on the power and authority of every American president by America's constitutional structure, Franklin Delano Roosevelt has to be accounted both strong and successful, his strengths contributing to his success. He failed in his attempt to pack the U.S. Supreme Court, and only the outbreak of World War II brought the Great Depression to an end; but much of the legacy of his New Deal lives on, and his handling of America's noninvolvement then involvement in World War II was masterly. His successor, Harry Truman, did not aspire to follow in FDR's gigantic footsteps and never tried; as president, he was neither a strong leader nor pretended to be one. But it was on his watch that the United States launched the Marshall Plan, played a leading role in creating NATO and resisted Soviet-sponsored aggression in Korea. His successor, Eisenhower, a thoroughgoing conservative, resembled Truman in having no great desire to exalt the presidential office – and he did not do so. His style was collegial, his lasting accomplishments few. Eisenhower regarded his steady-as-she-goes presidency as a success. In its own terms, it was. His more glamorous successor, John F. Kennedy, was more ambitious for his time in office, but in the event he served for fewer than three years, and, but

for his glamor, his astute handling of the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the horrific circumstances of his death, he would probably be little remembered. Through no fault of his own, the ratio of promise to performance in his case was high.

That Lyndon Johnson, who succeeded Kennedy, was a strong president – in Archie Brown's terms or anyone else's – cannot be doubted. The big Texan was also a big president. In terms of success, his performance, however, was Janus-faced: on one side, his ambitious domestic Great Society programs (including the War on Poverty and radical civil-rights legislation); on the other, the ill-advised escalation of American involvement in the war in Vietnam. Johnson withdrew from the race for the presidency in 1968. Richard Nixon, the man who subsequently won that election, certainly aspired to be a strong president and took steps to extend his and his allies' sway across the entire executive branch. Had Nixon retired on the eve of the 1972 election, historians today would probably account him a success. He began to wind down American involvement in Vietnam, normalized U.S. relations with China, initiated détente with the Soviet Union and instituted a wide range of domestic reforms. Unfortunately for him and his reputation, his vanity and mendacity during the Watergate scandal forced him from office. Nixon's successor, his vice president, Gerald Ford, remained in office for only eighteen months. He attempted to accomplish little and succeeded in doing just that.

The next two presidencies – those of Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan – were among the strangest of modern times. Carter, a complete novice to the ways of Washington, sought to be a strong president, not in the sense of being constantly in control, but in the sense of advancing a bold agenda. Apparently failing to recognize that, in Bismarck's memorable phrase, "politics is the art of the possible," he never sought to per-

fect and practice that art. His boldness did bring him some successes: civil-service reform, the return of the Panama Canal Zone to Panama and the signing of the Camp David peace accords between Egypt and Israel. But his political clumsiness ensured that many of his legislative proposals were blocked in Congress, and he signally failed to persuade either congressional majorities or the American people that the energy crisis of the late 1970s really was "the moral equivalent of war" and needed to be confronted as such.

If we accept Brown's definition of strong leadership, then Ronald Reagan, Carter's successor in the White House, was one of the weakest presidents of recent decades. He did not concentrate a lot of power in his own hands. He did not dominate a wide swath of public policy. And he did not take, except in a purely formal sense, most of the big decisions. As we noted earlier, from the time of the failed attempt on the president's life, only two months into his presidency, until toward the end of his first term in office, most of the domestic policy decisions that emanated from the Oval Office, while signed off by the president, were in fact the work of Meese, Baker and Deaver, possibly with inputs from Nancy Reagan. The members of this troika did not operate in isolation from the rest of the government, but the president himself largely did. Following Reagan's reelection in 1984, the original members of the troika dispersed, and the troika imploded into the person of a single individual: Donald Regan, the new White House chief of staff. He, too, positioned himself between the president and the rest of his administration; but whereas the three members of the troika had been subtle, emollient and protective of the president, Regan lacked both political feel and any instinct for protecting Reagan's interests. He was deeply implicated in the Iran-contra affair and did not prevent Reagan himself from be-

coming implicated. Throughout his time in the White House, Reagan relied heavily on his support staff, whatever there was of it. When that staff failed him, he failed – or did not even try.

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However, there was one front on which Reagan was anything but weak. On that one front, he held strong views, held onto them tenaciously and acted upon them. That was America's relationship with the Soviet Union. Reagan's views were often misunderstood and to the outside world could easily appear contradictory. On the one hand, he believed that the Soviet Union really did constitute an "evil empire" and that the United States, in all its dealings with the Soviet Union, should therefore do so from a position of strength. And so he promoted massive increases in U.S. defense spending. But, on the other hand, he was terrified by the possibility that someday someone, or something, would trigger an all-out nuclear war. He feared that sooner or later – absent some kind of Soviet-American rapprochement – the triggering of such a war would prove all but inevitable. He therefore went out of his way to seek a rapprochement with the USSR; and, as luck would have it, early in his second term he found someone, Mikhail Gorbachev, with whom he felt he could do business. On this issue, Reagan got stuck in: not in the sense of mastering detail (he never did that) but in the sense of taking a close continuing interest in America's relations with Russia. Between them, Reagan and Gorbachev effectively negotiated the beginning of the end of the Cold War. President Reagan proved capable of strength when, in his own eyes, strength was needed.

Neither of Reagan's successors in the Oval Office – George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton – was an especially strong president, though Clinton's charm and larger-than-life personality sometimes concealed the fact. The elder George Bush, like Eisenhower and Ford before him, did not have an

exalted conception of either himself or the presidential office. He had held many lower-level positions in government and, when he arrived in the White House, was content to do the top job to the best of his (considerable) ability. He was not remotely a presidential imperialist. However, few doubted his basic competence, especially in foreign affairs. He guided skillfully American policy during the reunification of Germany and the disintegration of the USSR itself, and his was the victory over Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the First Gulf War. Although it cost him dearly politically, he was strong enough in 1990 to break his own election pledge – "Read my lips : no new taxes" – in the interests of scaling back the U.S. government's burgeoning budget deficit. Had Bush senior won reelection in 1992, and had he then carried on much as before, history today would almost certainly account him a modest, Eisenhower-like success. Even as it is, he can hardly be accounted a failure.

Bill Clinton was more ambitious, for both himself and his presidency. He evidently saw himself as his generation's FDR or JFK ; in other words, as an archetypal strong leader. Unfortunately for him, his personal limitations, together with the rampant polarization of contemporary American politics, resulted in an eight-year tenure of office that was more memorable (sometimes for the wrong reasons) than effective. He lacked any real sense of direction, and the men and women he appointed to his administration, many of them exceedingly able, were unable either to provide him with such a sense or even to persuade him that he needed one. Clinton sought to paint a big picture but could never find the right canvas and colors to fit the frame. Especially in its early days, the administration's modus operandi often resembled an unfocussed conversation at an academic conference more than a meeting of a tough-minded advisory board. Eisenhower would have been horrified.

Predictably, given Clinton's personal style, his capacity for dithering and the fact that the Republicans controlled Congress during six of his eight years in office, Clinton's record as president was a thing of shreds and patches. He persuaded Congress to ratify the North American Free Trade Agreement, outfaced Newt Gingrich and the Republicans over the 1996 budget and helped broker the Dayton Accords, which brought peace, of a sort, to Bosnia. On his watch, the enormous budget deficits accumulated by his profligate Republican predecessors, Reagan and Bush, were eliminated. But, against all that, Clinton and his wife badly botched their vain effort to introduce a universal health care regime in the United States, Clinton in 1996 felt forced to sign Republican-inspired welfare legislation which he abhorred, few of his own legislative proposals found their way onto the statute book, and he never developed a coherent conception of what America's role in a rapidly changing world should be. It did not help that Clinton had to devote much of his second term to dealing with the fall-out from his bizarre relationship with Monica Lewinsky. As Fred I. Greenstein has put it, Clinton is likely to be remembered "as a politically talented underachiever."[11]

George W. Bush, Bush senior's son, is unlikely to be remembered as an achiever of any kind. He is more likely to be remembered as one of the most inept occupants of the White House since that elegant building was first occupied in 1801. His handling of the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated much of New Orleans, was both chaotic and insensitive. Under him the era of escalating federal budget deficits returned. His administration's response to the September 11 terrorist attacks succeeded in dislodging the Taliban from their control of most of Afghanistan, but failed to either capture Osama bin Laden or destroy al Qaeda. Subsequently, Amer-

ican troops in Afghanistan waged war for more than a decade against Islamist and anti-Western insurgents. That war was America's longest-ever. It was never won. Two years after 9/11, in March 2003, Bush extended his administration's self-declared "War on Terror" to Iraq, although there was no evidence to suggest that Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, however unpleasant, had anything to do with either al Qaeda or terrorism. In the Iraq case, military victory was quickly achieved and Saddam Hussein toppled; but – partly in response to the administration's mismanagement of post-Saddam Iraq – what amounted to a civil war ensued, one in which American forces were involved for seven more years. Needless to say, terrorism in the Middle East and elsewhere has not been eliminated. On the contrary, since 2003, it has spread, becoming ever more brutal. The terrorists have scored greater successes than President George W. Bush ever did.

One feature of Bush's deportment in office stands out. Bush aspired to be a strong leader; and, indubitably, he was a strong leader, at least during his first term. He made it abundantly clear to everyone who would listen that that was his aim (adding on occasion that he had God's backing). Following the intervention in Afghanistan, he told the well-connected journalist Bob Woodward: "I rely on my instincts. I just knew that at some point in time [immediately after 9/11] the American people were going to say, Where is he?...Where's your leadership?"[12] The American people wanted action; Bush was intent on providing it. The same went for Iraq. He wanted Saddam Hussein ousted from power. That would be made to happen. To quote Greenstein again: "George W. Bush had no lack of policy vision. He took it as an article of faith that if he failed to set his administration's policy agenda, others would set it for him."[13] He never allowed them to. Unfortunately, Bush's vision did nothing

to promote, but instead badly damaged, America's interests.

Mirrors can magnify as well as accurately reflect, and Bush allowed his vision to be both mirrored and magnified by his chosen circles of advisers. Over both Afghanistan and Iraq, he listened almost exclusively to those who already agreed with him, the so-called neocons: notably, Dick Cheney, his influential vice president, Donald Rumsfeld, his forceful defense secretary, and Paul Wolfowitz, Rumsfeld's deputy. Those who expressed doubts or entered caveats – Colin Powell, the secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, the national security adviser, and a substantial proportion of the military – were sidelined. Bush's approach to decision-making was thus the opposite of Kennedy's during the Cuban Missile Crisis. The same approach to decision-making, coupled with Bush's "vision thing," that of a low-tax, lightly regulated economy, also played its part in the great financial collapse of 2008.[14]

Bush's successor, Barack Obama, could hardly have come into office at a worse time. Bush's legacy was dire: a domestic economy in deep recession and large numbers of American soldiers still being killed in the ruinous and arguably useless wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition, by the time Obama took over, American politics was even more polarized than it had been in Bill Clinton's time. Although Obama disappointed liberal Democrats and outraged a large proportion of Republicans, some of whom positively hated him, he will leave the White House in early 2017 having led America out of recession (far more successfully than any European leader), wound down American involvement in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and succeeded, where both Truman and Clinton failed, in introducing a state-sponsored universal health care delivery system. History will almost certainly judge Obama, not to have been a barn-storm-

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ing or triumphalist president, but to have been a dignified, pragmatic and broadly successful one. He may not have been a strong leader – in the face of Republican and interest-group opposition he often appeared weak – but more often than not he got his way.

One of the most confident and balanced of modern presidents, Obama was far more Kennedy-like than Bush-like in his willingness to appoint advisers with strong views, not necessarily his own. As he said on the eve of his inauguration:

> I think that's how the best decisions are made. One of the dangers in a White House, based on my reading of history, is that you get wrapped up in groupthink and everybody agrees with everything and there's no discussion and there are no dissenting views. So I'm going to be welcoming a vigorous debate inside the White House. But understand, I will be setting policy as president. I will be responsible for the vision that this team carries out, and I expect them to implement that vision once decisions are made.[15]

Once in office, he was true to both parts of that utterance.

It would seem that, of the thirteen U.S. presidents who have held office since the late 1930s, only four – Franklin Roosevelt, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon and George W. Bush – have been strong leaders in anything approaching Brown's sense. Only those four – plus, arguably, Kennedy and Carter – have sought to concentrate an unusual amount of power in their own hands and to dominate the formation and implementation of a wide range of government policies. It is noteworthy, to say the least of it, that two of the four strongest leaders listed above – Nixon and George W. Bush – have been among the least satisfactory of modern presidents, with the Vietnam War meaning that Lyndon Johnson's record in office was also, to put it charitably, mixed. Strong presidents have not con-

sistently been admired or admirable. At the same time, many perfectly satisfactory presidents – and, happily, most modern American presidents have been at least satisfactory – have not sought to function and have not functioned in any kind of "strong leader" mode. Thus, the correlation between strength and success is low and, depending on one's own personal judgments, may even be negative.

Our survey of British prime ministers during the same eighty-year period can be shorter, for one simple reason. It has never occurred to the great majority of British prime ministers to try to function as strong leaders. They have not been directly elected and are not ceremonial heads of state as well as heads of government. They owe their position to the fact that they are the leader, for the time being, of the currently victorious political party, and they well know that they can be ousted from that particular position at any time (without the electorate's having any say in the matter). Most of them have forceful and able colleagues who are also their rivals. Given the essentially collegial nature of British government, most prime ministers see their primary tasks as promoting their party's agreed-to policies, maintaining the unity of their government and party and coping ad hoc with crises. Notions of strong leadership seldom come into it.

Sixteen individuals have held office as British prime minister since 1935, two of them (Winston Churchill and Harold Wilson) on two separate occasions. The great majority of them, like the great majority of American presidents, have been competent, sometimes more than competent, but most of them – too many to list here – have not sought to direct and dominate their administrations. They have functioned as executive chairmen rather than chief executive officers. One outstanding exception has already been mentioned:

Winston Churchill during World War II, especially during its early phases. But during his second, postwar premiership, even Churchill in no way dominated, or sought to dominate, his government. His successor, Anthony Eden, was more forceful and developed a reputation, similar to Jimmy Carter's, for paying overmuch attention to detail and attempting to micromanage his administration. Eden's successor, Harold Macmillan, functioned for the most part as a conventional premier, though he was more given than most to taking personal initiatives, including trying to take the United Kingdom into the European Common Market. Harold Wilson towered above his colleagues politically during the first phase of his first administration, but within a few years his authority had all but vanished, and during his second term he was an almost entirely passive figure. The present occupant of 10 Downing Street, David Cameron, is a more typical British premier: more a light-touch chairman of the board and public-relations chief than an actual head of government. He is certainly not in any conceivable sense a strong leader.

Apart from the wartime Churchill, only four post-1935 British prime ministers have sought to play the role of strong leader: Neville Chamberlain (though his inclusion in this list will probably come as a surprise to most readers), Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair. A word about each of them is in order.

Neville Chamberlain, although considerably more intelligent than George W. Bush and with far greater governmental experience, functioned as prime minister in a manner not unlike Bush's. Like Bush, he was determined – in contrast to his immediate predecessor, Stanley Baldwin – to be a strong leader. On becoming prime minister in 1937, he expressed in a letter to a friend "some relief at being able to carry out my own ideas without having to con-

vert someone else first." He freely admitted his determination to "leave my mark behind me as P.M."[16]

Chamberlain had a clear sense of direction. He was determined upon "the appeasement of Europe" and Hitler in particular. Toward that end, although Britain's cabinet system required him to listen to those who disagreed with him, he appeared to hear only those who applauded him. Just as President Bush, over Afghanistan and Iraq, heard only Cheney and the other neocons, so Chamberlain in his dealings with Hitler increasingly relied on the views of a close aide, Sir Horace Wilson, and a small "group of trusted advisers who all passionately shared his vision and priorities."[17] Bush sidelined the State Department, headed by Colin Powell. Chamberlain sidelined the Foreign Office, headed by an official who doubted whether a man like Hitler could possibly be appeased. It goes without saying that Chamberlain's leadership, while undoubtedly strong, was not exactly successful.[18]

Edward Heath succeeded Harold Wilson as prime minister in 1970. Heath's style was certainly more collegial than Chamberlain's had been. Unlike Chamberlain, he was a good if sometimes impatient listener, and he readily talked to people he thought worth listening to, even if they questioned his views. Nevertheless, by force of intellect and personality, he dominated his government – and dominated it across the board – to an extent that few of his predecessors had. That said, his strength in office manifested itself in one curious way. Heath always had a clear sense of direction, but he frequently changed direction, sometimes abruptly. His government's policy U-turns, well advertised and much mocked at the time, played a part in the government's defeat in an election forced upon him when he had been in office for less than four years. In the event, almost every one of the Heath government's policy initiatives, whatever

their direction, failed to survive his government. His government's only substantial achievement – and it was a substantial one – was to negotiate Britain's entry into what is now the European Union. More than four decades on, even that achievement was being called in question.

Margaret Thatcher was an even stronger leader than Heath and an infinitely more successful one. She probably conformed more than any other modern head of government on either side of the Atlantic to Brown's template of the strong political leader. A highly intelligent workaholic with few if any interests outside politics, she managed to combine, almost uniquely, a strong sense of strategic direction with an ability and a willingness to attend to the minutest details. "The Old Testament prophets," she once said, "did not say, 'Brothers, I want a consensus.' They said : 'This is my faith, this is what I passionately believe.'"[19] She believed in free markets and private enterprise and from the outset was determined to be prime minister of a government whose members spoke with one voice in promoting both : "I've got to have togetherness. There must be a dedication to a purpose, agreement about direction…[My government] must be a conviction government . . . As Prime Minister, I could not waste time having any internal arguments."[20] She silenced doubt and criticism among the ranks of her ministers by the simple expedient of firing the doubters and critics. As well as being the Churchill of the 1982 Falklands War, she and her loyal colleagues virtually destroyed the power of Britain's trade unions and launched the world's first large-scale program of privatization. Only in the last few years of her premiership did she suffer from the hubris and mental self-isolation that led to her fall, coordinated by her fellow Conservatives.

The case of Tony Blair is a strange one. On the one hand, there can be no doubt that he aspired to be a Thatcher-like leader and probably had the capacity to be one ; prior to the election that brought him to power in 1997, one of his closest advisers actually suggested that the British system of government should become less feudal and more Napoleonic.[21] On the other hand, Blair was far less clear than Thatcher had been about exactly what he wanted to achieve in government, and he had a powerful colleague, Gordon Brown, his chancellor of the exchequer, whom he could neither control nor dismiss. Brown, who coveted Blair's job and eventually seized it, found every opportunity he could think of – and there were many – to either bounce Blair or thwart him ; but his standing in the financial markets as chancellor and among the Labour Party's rank and file, to whom he continually appealed, was such that the political price to be paid for dismissing him was likely to be exorbitant. As Lyndon Johnson would have put it, it was better to have Brown inside the tent pissing out than outside the tent pissing in. The so-called Blair government was thus in reality a quarrelsome Blair/Brown duopoly, with two would-be strong leaders constantly struggling for supremacy – as though the United States had two rival presidents at the same time. That said, it was Blair rather than Brown who ensured that the United Kingdom joined the United States in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The most momentous decision of the Blair premiership, with Blair casting himself in the role of strong leader, was also the most disastrous, including to Blair's reputation.

As in the case of the United States, it would seem that the relationship in Britain between strong leadership and successful leadership is tenuous and may even, possibly, be negative. Among the acknowledged strong leaders, the wartime Winston Churchill and later Margaret Thatcher were undoubted successes ; but Neville Chamberlain and Edward Heath were

both failures as prime minister – Chamberlain in the grand manner – and history will probably remember Tony Blair more for his enthusiastic participation in the American-led invasion of Iraq than for any of his other initiatives as prime minister. Conversely, for example, Clement Attlee, not so far mentioned in this essay, was one of the most successful and respected prime ministers of the modern era; but he laid no claim to being a strong leader. He was merely shrewd, calm, sensible and, when occasion required, stubborn. He was also, famously, someone who never used one word when none would do. As in the United States, few modern British prime ministers have been hopelessly inept, though Neville Chamberlain and one or two others – including Anthony Eden, the principal author of Britain's part in the aborted Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in 1956, and Gordon Brown, once he succeeded in displacing Blair in 2007 – have come close.

What inferences should we draw from the above? The following half-dozen propositions – set out in terse summary form – are at least worth contemplating. Some are personal judgments, some are empirical hypotheses, and some are a mixture of the two.

1) Many of the best-governed liberal democracies in the world – notably but not only Switzerland – owe their good government in large part to the fact that their political institutions and political culture obviate the need for strong leaders.

2) Strong leaders may on occasion be desirable, even essential, as in the case of the United States during the Great Depression or Britain in 1940. But strong leaders should be allowed to emerge only on special occasions. A country constantly in need of strong leaders is a country in trouble.

3) Strong leaders are high-risk individuals. They may do good, but even in liberal democracies they are likely to do more

harm than good, quite possibly a lot more harm.

4) A successful liberal democracy is liable to be one that is effectively "leader proofed," one in which it is not made absolutely impossible, but is made difficult, for a strong leader to acquire and wield power and in which the government does not rely on strong leaders for its long-term success.

5) Leaders who rely on the advice only of those whose advice they find congenial should be viewed with suspicion, especially, but not only, if the group of acceptable advice-givers is small and tightly knit, operating to the exclusion of others. Collegiality, in fact as well as form, makes for better government than individuality, provided individuals are permitted, indeed required, to make their views known.

6) Given that leaders, strong as well as weak, are liable to illnesses, mental as well as physical, prudence suggests that arrangements should be made in advance either to dispose of such leaders (as can easily be done in the case of British prime ministers) or to have their functions performed by some other person or persons.

We began with Switzerland and can usefully end there. In 2015, a high-flying Swiss banker (than whom few bankers fly higher) was asked at a private gathering to name the current Swiss prime minister. He confessed that he could not remember. He thought it was a woman (it was), but even of that he could not be sure. Switzerland must be one of the most thoroughly leader-proofed countries on the planet. Being leader-proofed does not seem to have done Switzerland any harm.

1 Jonathan Steinberg, *Why Switzerland?* 2nd ed. (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1996). For a more detailed account of the workings of the Swiss political system, see Wolf Linder, *Swiss Democracy : Possible Solutions to Conflict in Multicultural Societies*, 3rd ed. (Basingstoke, Hampshire : Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

2 Robert F. Kennedy, *13 Days : A Memoir of the Cuban Missile Crisis* (New York : W.W. Norton, 1969), 37. It is not clear whether Kennedy deliberately absented himself from meetings of the actual Executive Committee. For the view that he did not go that far, see Sheldon M. Stern, *The Cuban Missile Crisis in American Memory : Myth versus Reality* (Stanford, Calif. : Stanford University Press, 2012), 156.

3 Kennedy, *13 Days*, 49.

4 For the quotation, see John Colville, *The Fringes of Power : Downing Street Diaries, 1939 – 1955* (London : Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), 669. Colville was one of Churchill's private secretaries and the one personally closest to him. Anthony Eden, Churchill's heir apparent, was out of the country at the time. Otherwise he would almost certainly have played – well or badly – the role played by Butler.

5 Robert E. Gilbert, *The Mortal Presidency : Illness and Anguish in the White House* (New York : Basic Books, 1992), 119.

6 See the quite detailed account in ibid., 120 – 122, of how the Eisenhower administration functioned before, as well as during, the president's illness. Gilbert quotes Nixon as saying that Eisenhower had "set up the Administration in such a way that . . . it can go ahead despite the temporary absence of anyone." It could, of course, be argued – and has been – that Eisenhower's style of government diminished his own decision-making capacity. See Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power : The Politics of Leadership* (New York : John Wiley, 1960), 158 – 160.

7 Gilbert, *The Mortal Presidency*, 190.

8 While Reagan was recuperating in the hospital, the White House trio spoke with him every day and sought to give the impression that, despite his physical condition, he was fully in charge. However, a pair of well-informed journalists claimed later that one of the trio admitted subsequently that "the hospital visits had been window dressing. In reality, the troika paid only brief visits to the ailing President, spending the rest of the time in the hospital cafeteria, quietly keeping the government going for him." See Jane Mayer and Doyle McManus, *Landslide* (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 26.

9 Archie Brown, *The Myth of the Strong Leader : Political Leadership in the Modern Age* (New York : Basic Books, 2014), 1.

10 Daniel Kahneman comments mordantly : "The CEO of a successful company is likely to be called flexible, methodical, and decisive. Imagine that a year has passed and things have gone sour. The same executive is now described as confused, rigid, and authoritarian." See Daniel Kahneman, *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York : Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2011), 206.

11 Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference : Leadership Style from FDR to Barack Obama*, 3rd ed. (Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, 2009), 188.

12 Bob Woodward, *Bush at War* (New York : Simon and Schuster, 2002), 168.

13 Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference*, 204.

14 On the economy, Bush listened to those who shared his determination to cut taxes even at the cost of vastly increasing the U.S. government's indebtedness, and mostly closed his ears to those, including Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve, who inclined toward greater caution. See Graham K. Wilson, "President Bush and the Economy" in *Assessing the George W. Bush Presidency : A Tale of Two Terms*, ed. Andrew Wroe and Jon Herbert (Edinburgh : Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 160 – 161.

15 Quoted in Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference*, 216 – 217.

16 Quoted in Robert Self, *Neville Chamberlain : A Biography* (Aldershot, Hampshire : Ashgate, 2006), 261. Chamberlain despised his predecessor, Baldwin. He wrote "I can't do all the things that S.B. did, as well as the things he didn't do, and I consider that at present at any rate the latter are more important" (quoted in ibid., 262).

17 Ibid., 292.

18 At least George W. Bush was – and still is – widely regarded as being a generous and good-hearted person. Chamberlain's most recent biographer admits to concluding finally that Chamberlain was "an unpleasant man" and "a nasty piece of work." See Nick Smart, *Neville Chamberlain* (London : Routledge, 2010), xiv.

19 Quoted in Anthony King, "The Outsider as Political Leader : The Case of Margaret Thatcher," *British Journal of Political Science* 32 (2002) : 445.

20 Quoted in ibid., 447.

21 The adviser, Jonathan Powell, explains himself in *The New Machiavelli : How to Wield Power in the Modern World* (London : Bodley Head, 2010), 78.

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