EDITED BY

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The Oxford Handbook *of*
POLITICAL
LEADERSHIP

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

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and

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Contents

PART II STUDYING POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: ANALYTICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

PART III POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AT WORK

PART IV EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE WEST

Presidential Leadership: The United States and Beyond

Prime Ministerial Leadership: Westminster and Beyond

PART V POLITICAL LEADERSHIP BELOW AND BEYOND THE NATIONAL LEVEL

PART VI POLITICAL LEADERSHIP BEYOND THE WEST

PART VII DEBATING POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

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PUZZLES OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP*

R. A. W. RHODES AND PAUL 't HART

Leaders…can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts.

(Gardner 1968: 5)

Most disasters in organizational life can be attributed to leaders, and being a leader has corrupted more people into leading unattractive lives and becoming unattractive selves than it has ennobled.

(March and Weil 2005: 11)

1 Why Bother?

THE contradiction between the epigrams is typical of the puzzling nature of political leadership. Is it a force for good or bad? Is it a pivotal or a marginal influence on public life? If leadership matters, how does it do so? Are leaders born or made? Political leadership is a tricky subject to understand, let alone master. Puzzles abound, and contradictory answers multiply, without clear evidence of a growing consensus about any of them. What we do know is that in democratic societies leadership has always been treated with

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mixed feelings. Pleas for 'strong', 'transformational', 'authentic', 'visionary', or other alleg-edly benign forms of public leadership are not hard to find in public debate in most modern democracies, challenged as they are by a debilitating economic crisis. Yet not long ago, after the horrors of the Second World War, the opposite pleas were voiced with equal vigour. We must protect societies so that they are not at the mercy of all-too ambi-tious, ruthless, cunning, and above all dominant rulers. Democracy needs good leaders, but has no clear theory of leadership to counter its inherent suspicions of strong leaders (Korosenyi et al. 2009; Hendriks 2010; Kane and Patapan 2012). Democratic leaders are caught in the cross fire between the hopes placed in them and the challenges to, and con-straints on, their authority.

Through the ages, theorists and practitioners of government have wondered how to promote 'leadership' while constraining 'leaders', especially in democracies (Keane 2009; Kane and Patapan 2012). The sheer number and variety of offices and platforms for exercising political leadership in liberal democracies has produced political struc-tures that are both complex and opaque. The many spheres of political leadership—party, government, civic, and networks among many—coexist, interact, reinforce, and neutralize one another. Moreover, in open societies, many people who are ostensibly 'non-leaders' inside and outside government also perform leadership roles; for example, 'advisers', 'administrators', and civic entrepreneurs.

Promoters of good governance wonder how much scope can be granted to individual officeholders and to leadership when designing democratic institutions (see also Helms, Chapter 13, this volume). They argue that, in governance systems, multiple lead-ership roles exist in parallel (distributed leadership), with inducements to act in con-cert (collaborative leadership) as well as going in to bat against one another (adversarial leadership). Such systems look messy to other commentators who prefer the clarity of hierarchy, and leadership as command and control from the centre. But, so the argu-ment goes, like any resilient sociocultural or sociotechnical system, governance systems thrive on variety, overlap, and competition among loci of initiative, voice, authority, and accountability (Bendor 1985). Admittedly, these systems have their transaction costs. Aligning enough people and organizations behind any particular set of ideas or pol-icy proposals can be a time-consuming and convoluted process. As many have argued, however, such institutional pluralism produces smart, robust public policies as well as keeping the arrogance of power at bay (Kane, Patapan, and 't Hart 2009).

In contrast, governance systems built around top-down, great-man leadership are said to be inherently unstable and deemed normatively objectionable. They also lack the institutional capacity for effective social problem-solving (Lipman-Blumen 2004). They are governed well only when the supreme leader and her clique are smart, wise, and honest. They are, however, quick to slide into the abyss of tyranny, stupid-ity, and corruption when the ruling elite becomes addicted to its own power, or when enlightened leaders are replaced by less capable and morally upright characters. In this Handbook, Kline's (Chapter 41) and Swart, van Wyk, and Botha's (Chapter 43) accounts of Latin American and African political leadership refer to many studies documenting such abuses.

Before we can get around to (re)designing the institutions that both empower political leaders and hold them to account, however, we must first understand the nature of the beast. How do we know 'political leadership' when we see it? How do we describe, explain, evaluate, and improve it? The study of leadership became both a field and a fad during the late twentieth century (Kellerman 2012). This period left us with a bewildering array of concepts, frameworks, propositions, stories, assessments, prescriptions, and clichés about leadership across many academic disciplines and professional domains. Inspirational books by leadership 'gurus' and biographies of celebrity Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) litter main street and airport bookstores around the world. There is an entire industry of leadership training and consulting. It began in the corporate sector but spilled inexorably into the government and third sectors. Because the study of leadership studies is such a complex and disjointed interdisciplinary enterprise, it is important to locate this Handbook in this vast domain. What are the key characteristics and debates of 'leadership studies' in and beyond the realm of politics? To answer this question, we survey how the field has addressed the key puzzles of political leadership by discussing several key dichotomies that have been the focal point of scholarly inquiry and debate past and present: leaders and leadership; democrats and dictators; causes and consequences; actors and context; personal qualities and luck; success and failure; and art and science.

2 Leaders and Leadership

The first issue concerns what it is we want to understand: is it the people we commonly call leaders, or the process we call leadership? For many scholars and practitioners understanding political leaders comes down to studying the characteristics, beliefs, and deeds of people formally occupying the top roles in political life. Foremost, there are senior politicians: heads of government, cabinet ministers, senior legislators, and key party officials. In this category, we should also include key advisers to these senior politicians, who stay behind the scenes but are often said to be influential (see also Eichbaum and Shaw, Chapter 34, this volume).

Less obvious to outside observers, but all too obvious to those who know how executive government works, senior public officials are influential actors. This category includes top officials in the departments that advise ministers and prepare and administer policies and programmes. It also includes the heads and senior ranks of administrative organizations with the task of implementing policy and delivering public services. Although their institutional role and professional ethos is to be public *servants*, there is little dispute that the upper echelons of the bureaucracy are important in shaping what governments do, when, how, and how well (Rhodes, Chapter 7).

Finally, many political leaders do not hold any formal public office at all. The penumbra of non-government organizations is vast, varied, and vigorous. Democracies nurture a big and active civil society. They value its contributions to the political process even

when its leaders are critical of the government of the day. The individuals at the helm of trade unions, churches, social movements, mass media, community organizations, and even business corporations are widely thought of as important public leaders. They do not have the power of office. They do have the power of numbers, supporters, and money. They also have the ideas, access, and moral authority, to shape public problem-solving in important ways (see also Couto, Chapter 23, this volume; see also Rucht 2012).

Understanding political leader*ship* through the lens of lead*ers* takes one to the province of psychology. It rests on the idea that it matters who governs us. It entails an agent-centred view of politics and government. In other words, public debates and decisions are shaped by the views, drives, skills, and styles of individuals who occupy formal office. Comparisons of different leaders in similar circumstances show how their beliefs and practices have an impact on the lives of citizens. Think of Helmut Kohl seizing the historical moment and forging a German reunification that almost no one in Germany, Kohl included, even deemed possible before November 1989. He was in the right position at the right time to make a difference. Counterfactual questions about the roles of leaders at such critical historical junctures may be unanswerable, but they pose interesting conundrums. What if James Callaghan not Margaret Thatcher had still been the British prime minister when the Argentinean junta invaded the Falklands Isles? What would have happened to the course of the Vietnam War or to American–Chinese relations if Robert Kennedy, not Richard Nixon, had won the 1968 US presidential election? Would America have waged war in Afghanistan and Iraq following the September 11 attacks if Al Gore had won the Florida recount during the 2000 presidential election? Would gay marriage be a much more widely accepted practice in the US today if Hillary Clinton and not Barack Obama had become president in 2009?

Once we allow the thought that leaders matter, a whole range of questions about 'leaders' arise (see also Hermann, Chapter 8, this volume). Why do people aspire to hold high public office? What keeps them going in the face of unmanageable workloads, relentless public criticism, and an often-toxic public opinion and irate stakeholders? Why do some leaders take huge gambles with history? Why do they act in sometimes blatantly self-defeating manner? For example, US President Woodrow Wilson undermined his own burning desire to create a League of Nations after the First World War by treating anyone expressing reservations about American accession to the new body with hostility and contempt. In effect, he organized his own opposition, and eventual Congressional defeat (George and George, 1956). Why do some successful, long-serving heads of government, such as Konrad Adenauer or Tony Blair, cling to office long past their political sell-by date, dragging down their party, their government, their successor, and their reputation in the process ('t Hart and Uhr, 2011)?

To answer such questions, leadership scholars have delved into the personalities of leaders, and their underlying motives. They explore the ends or purposes for which they mobilize their personal skills and resources. Some have turned to psychoanalysis and biographical methods (see also Post, Chapter 22; Walter, Chapter 21, this volume). Others have turned to experimental methods, psychometrics, and other

modernist-empiricist modes of 'measuring' personalities, motives and behaviour (McDermott, Chapter 18; Schafer, Chapter 20).

The behaviour of people holding high public office has been and will be observed incessantly by leadership scholars. 'Reading' leaders' behaviour is seen as the key to understanding what makes them tick, and a predictor of what impacts they might have. Peers, advisers, subordinates, opponents, and other stakeholders all watch how they allocate their attention, make decisions, interact with people, deal with pressure, conflict and criticism, and perform in public. They do so for good reasons. Like all of us, leaders are creatures of habit. During their personal and professional lives, they develop distinctive styles of thought and action. Such habits allow others to make educated guesses about what they may feel and how they will act when a new situation comes along. The more intimate one's knowledge about a leader's personal style, the more accurate those educated guesses are likely to be.

Questions about the individual leaders' psychological make-up abound. Many scholars display boundless enthusiasm for trying to answer them. Why do individuals holding the same or similar leadership roles display such widely different behavioural styles? The answer almost *has* to be: because of who they are. What is it, however, about leaders that drive them to the top? Are leaders smarter than ordinary people? Are successful leaders smarter than unsuccessful ones? Do they have greater self-confidence? Are they morally superior? In present-day democratic societies, few will answer these questions with a simple, 'Yes' (Winter 2005). Not only are we reluctant to concede their superiority, but there is much casual evidence to the contrary. Wherever and whenever we look, we see a minister who can only be described as 'thick'. A few American presidents suffered from low self-esteem rather than the reverse (Greenstein 2009: 8). Some presidents, like Coolidge, were clinically depressed (McDermott 2007: 34).

Easy answers don't exist. Ronald Reagan is an interesting case. He had no great desire for information before he acted. Many dismissed him as a second-rate mind. In his second term, the effects of his advanced age and the onset of Alzheimer's disease became more obvious (McDermott 2007: 28, 31). Nevertheless, he is one of the most highly-rated American presidents of the twentieth century, mainly because his robust and high emotional intelligence (EQ) compensated for what may have been a modest intellect (IQ). By contrast, intellectually gifted but emotionally impaired individuals such as Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton consistently rank much lower than Reagan, mainly because they failed to control their darker impulses while in office. Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford were widely seen as both bright and morally upright. Both were consigned to the dustbin of presidential history, the former because of a glaring lack of political skills, the latter mainly because of sheer misfortune (Greenstein 2009). Two of the America's most revered presidents—Franklin D. Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy—were effectively cripples. The latter, holding office in the television and not the radio age, took irresponsibly high doses of strong medication to hide his condition from the public (McDermott 2007; Owen 2008).

Leader-centred analysis has proved hugely popular in the United States despite its failure to deliver definitive answers. Writing in 1978, political scientist James MacGregor

Burns (1978: 1–2) was scathing about the bias created by this emphasis: 'If we know all too much about our leaders, we know far too little about *leadership*. We fail to grasp the essence of leadership that is relevant to the modern age and hence we cannot even agree on the standards by which to measure, recruit, and reject it.'

Over the past 35 years, the balance has been redressed. There is now a growing body of thought and research that understands leadership as an interactive process between leaders and followers; institutions and their rules of the game; and the broader historical context (e.g. Elgie 1995; Goethals, Sorenson, and Burns 2004; Messick and Kramer 2005; Masciulli, Mochanov, and Knight 2009; Couto 2010; Keohane 2010; Ahlquist and Levi 2011; Bryman et al. 2011; Helms 2012; and Strangio, 't Hart and Walter 2013; 't Hart 2014). Once we escape the preoccupation with the individual, a new agenda for the study of political leadership emerges. The focus on interactions leads inexorably to the question, 'Who are being led?' The focus switches to followers. Social psychologists and political communication scholars ask when, how, and why particular groups of people come to accept some people as their leaders. It considers leadership a two-way street. It explores the process by which certain individuals come to be given the authority or support they need to lead others effectively. It also explores how leaders seek to persuade others to think and act in certain ways. In its most radical form, the follower perspective views leadership processes as primarily a prod-uct of the identities, needs, desires, and fears of followers and constituencies. More com-monly, leadership is viewed as an interactive process between leaders and led, revolving in no small measure around the degree to which leaders succeed in appealing to, embodying or modifying the social identities of their followers (see also Reicher, Haslam and Platow, Chapter 10; Uhr, Chapter 17; Gaffney, Chapter 26; Cohen, Chapter 30, this volume).

Interactionist approaches also accord a significant role to institutional and contextual factors (Elgie 1995; Bennister 2012). In democracies, for instance, many 'event-making' decisions and policies have a whole host of fingerprints on them because power and responsibility are institutionally dispersed across many actors and institutions (Korosenyi, Slomp, and Femia 2009; Kane, Patapan, and 't Hart 2009). Institutions provide the rules of the political game. Organizational cultures provide actors with sets of beliefs about the nature and role of leadership. The historical context and present-day dilemmas and crises offer opportunities to some leaders while constraining others (see also Helms, Chapter 13; 't Hart, Chapter 14; Ansell, Boin and 't Hart, Chapter 28, this volume).

All these factors come into play when, say, a cabinet meets. When, how, and to what extent a prime minister 'leads' that cabinet, is variable (Rhodes, Wanna, and Weller 2009; Strangio, 't Hart, and Walter, 2013). Few heads of government in democracies get their way all of the time, even within the executive. They know that if pushed too far for too long their cabinet members and parliamentary colleagues have ways of undermin-ing their leadership (see also McKay, Chapter 29; Weller, Chapter 32; Blick and Jones, Chapter 33, this volume). Ministers can be powerful leaders in their own right, offset-ting prime-ministerial predominance, even if only in some policy domains and only some of the time (see also Andeweg, Chapter 35, this volume). Party rules for leader-ship selection and removal can limit the job security of leaders even if they are prime ministers. Thus, Margaret Thatcher in the UK and Kevin Rudd as well as Julia Gillard,

both Australian Prime Ministers, were ousted from office by their erstwhile supporters in their parties ('t Hart and Uhr 2011; Cross and Blais 2012).

For many students of political leadership, Greenstein's (1975) heuristic for the study of leadership holds as true today as it did on its publication almost 45 years ago. He suggested that it only makes sense for a student of politics or policy to delve into personal characteristics and leadership styles of individual political actors if there was appreciable scope for choice and action for individual actors. The individuals in question must not only have the intention but also the formal roles, and/or the informal power resources (including personal strength and skills) to make a potentially decisive contribution to the handling of the issue at stake. The extent to which these conditions are met varies from issue to issue, leader to leader, and context to context. Often, it will simply not make sense to pay much attention to the personal characteristics of a particular leader because the leader is either not motivated or not powerful enough to make a difference; in short, not indispensable (Greenstein 1975). Leader-centred explanations of public events are most likely to be powerful where leaders have a reputation for holding and wielding much power and influence. They will wield that influence on issues that are of strong personal interest or strategic importance to them; and that cannot easily be handled by routine, institutionalized procedures. Such windows of opportunity arise with unprecedented, acute, risky, and contentious issues, in particular issues seen as 'crises'.

3   DEMOCRATS AND DICTATORS

Is political leadership inherently desirable in democratic polities? Following Burns (1978, 2003: 15–16) can we distinguish between 'interactive leaders' and 'power-wielders'? The former rely on bargaining, persuasion, and genuine engagement with followers, and accept the constraints of democracy and the rule of law. The latter are ruthless Machiavellians and cold-hearted narcissists who do not shy away from manipulation and force to prevail on the led. If we adopt this explicitly normative, even moral, distinction, people like Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and Mao disappear off the leadership map. Each authorized the use of brutal force against millions they thought unworthy or dangerous. Still, to brand them mere power-wielders would be to overlook their ability to communicate a political vision and persuade millions to comply and even share it. Indeed, followers acted on the leader's vision at great risk to their own lives and limbs. Their values and purposes are morally repugnant to our present-day democratic sensibilities but that must not blind us to their exercise of leadership. Conversely, democratically elected leaders such as George W. Bush and Tony Blair were widely criticized for using deception to launch the war in Iraq and for condoning torture. Does that disqualify them from leadership analysis, or is it more productive to see them as examples of 'bad' leadership (Kellerman 2004)?

Political leaders holding office in democratic societies live in a complex moral universe. Democracy requires good leadership if it is to work effectively. Yet the idea of

leadership potentially conflicts with democracy's egalitarian ethos (see also Hendriks and Karsten, Chapter 3, this volume). The more democratic leaders lead from the front, the less democratic they appear; the more they act like good democrats, the less they seem like true leaders. Confronted with this dilemma, the general tendency among scholars has been to accept the need for leadership in practice while overlooking it in theory. As a result, they fail to offer a yardstick for assessing leadership in democracy. Leadership cannot be dispensed with without jeopardizing the conduct of public affairs. In practice, democracy's tendency is not to manage without leadership, but to multiply leadership offices and opportunities, and keep office-holding leaders in check by a web of accountabilities (Geer 1996; Bovens 1998; Ruscio 2004; Wren 2007; Kane, Patapan, and 't Hart 2009; Korosenyi, Slomp, and Femia 2009).

Yet at times democratic leaders have to make tricky trade-offs such as using debatable means to achieve inherently respectable (if politically contested) ends. Some succumb to the fallacy of thinking that the power of their office alone provides them with moral authority to lead. Indira Gandhi was an authoritarian, even repressive, yet elected, prime minister of India (Steinberg 2008). The same applies to all too many post-colonial leaders of the Latin-American 'caudillo' or African 'big man' ilk (see also Kline, Chapter 41; Swart, van Wyk, and Botha, Chapter 43, this volume). 'If the President orders it, it cannot be illegal', Richard Nixon famously claimed, in his attempt to justify to interviewer David Frost his authorization of the Watergate break-in and cover up. Going too far is a grave error for which many—including the leaders themselves—may pay a serious price. The story does not end there, however. The same Richard Nixon is credited with several bold, historic policy initiatives that have met with broad and lasting acclaim. It is unhelpful to ignore the full complexity of this man and his period in office by refusing to consider him a political leader.

Similarly, heads of government who have gained power by non-democratic means and occasionally govern by fear, intimidation, and blackmail may also aim for widely shared and morally acceptable goals (see also Zihuye, Chapter 40; Holmes, Chapter 42, this volume). They may even pursue those goals with respectable means and with the consent of a majority of the population. Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms and eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's efforts to create and modernize the Turkish state are cases in point. Neither came to power through democratic election. Are such leaders not exercising leadership? Understanding leadership requires us to take in all its shades of grey: leading and following, heroes and villains, the capable and the inept, winners and losers.

4   Cause and Consequence

There are two fundamentally different points of departure in understanding political leadership. One is to see it as a shaping force of political life, and explore how, when, and why it works and to what effect. Leadership is commonly portrayed as a source

of dynamism in the polity, breathing life into parties and institutions as they struggle with major changes. In this view, leadership is about injecting ideas and ambitions into the public arena. It is about grasping existing realities and recognizing that they can affect transformations. Leadership produces collective meaning and harnesses collective energy for a common cause. Great leaders are thus often conceived of as being 'event-making' (Hook 1943). They have the ability to garner momentum for the hopes and ambitions of their followers. Their presence affects the course of history. They have many names: Pied Pipers, visionaries, entrepreneurs, and reformers. Leaders are seen to both read and change their followers' minds, causing them collectively to go on journeys which they would otherwise never have contemplated.

Many accounts of leadership focus on leaders as the supreme decision makers. When an organization or a nation faces high-stakes' decisions that no one else is willing or able to make, somebody has to take responsibility. The buck stops here, read a sign on Harry Truman's Oval Office desk. He practised what he preached, committing the United States to using two atomic bombs in one week and proudly claiming never to have lost any sleep over so doing. Some leaders revel in that position. They do what they can to make sure that every big decision crosses their desk. They feel confident in analysing complex problems. They work through the risks and uncertainties, probing the vested interests and unstated assumptions of the experts, advisers, and colleagues pushing them into (or away from) specific courses of action.

Others leaders may loath deciding. They avoid risk. Some may feel overwhelmed by the complexity of the issues and by the policy-making process itself. George (1974) quotes US President Warren Harding confiding to a friend on how stressful he found his job.

> John, I can't make a thing out of this tax problem. I listen to one side and they seem right, and then God! I talk to the other side and they seem just as right, and there I am where I started.... I know somewhere there is an economist who knows the truth, but hell, I don't know where to find him and haven't got the sense to know him and trust him when I find him. God, what a job.
>
> (George 1974: 187)

The point is whether they enjoy it, and whether they display sound judgement. The notion of leaders as strategic decision makers portrays them as being at the helm, in control, reshaping the world around them.

Trying to understand leadership as a cause is important. Although much of social life is governed by shared traditions, rules, and practices, there are always public problems that defy routine solutions. Identifying the novel, understanding it, and making a persuasive case for adapting or abandoning routines is a leadership task. Study the history of every great reform and you will find leadership at work. Commonly, it will be a form of collective or distributed leadership rather than the single 'heroic' activist who gets all the public credit for it. Understanding political leadership as a cause raises many important analytical and practical questions about the impact of different leadership

styles and discourses in different contexts. What 'works', and when? Can it be copied and transplanted? How do particular people or groups matter? What characteristics and skills make them matter?

The other main point of departure for understanding political leadership is to look at leadership as a consequence. In modernist-empiricist jargon, leadership is the dependent variable, and we seek to explain variations in it by looking at the other variables that have an impact on it. So we ask who becomes a leader. How do they consolidate their hold on office? When, how, and by whom are they removed? How do people make it to the top in political parties, social movements, and public bureaucracies? How are they selected? What happens to leadership aspirants along their path to the top? How are they socialized? What debts do they incur, and how do these debts affect their ability to exercise leadership? What are the consequences if access to leadership roles is biased towards people of certain social or professional backgrounds (Borchert and Zeiss 2003; Bovens and Wille 2009)? We may also want to know about the offices. What responsibilities, expectations, and resources are attached to them? What are the implications of varying responsibilities, expectations, and resources for the occupant's authority and support among the led? How have they changed?

Finding out who gets to lead can teach us much not just about those leaders but about the societies in which they work. The elevation of Mary Robinson, Nicolas Sarkozy, Evo Morales, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and, most conspicuously, Barack Obama to the presidency of their respective countries would not have been possible only a few decades ago. Making it all the way to the top is evidence of upward social mobility and of the political influence of women, peasants, workers, immigrants, and ethnic minorities. In turn, these changes influence the policy agendas of leaders, and change the structure of incentives for hopefuls to the top job.

Knowledge about the ebb and flow of leadership careers is a source of lessons for future leaders. Leadership becomes possible because the populace select individuals with whom they identify, or whom they trust, or whose claims to authority they respect. Each of these levers for leadership, however, is conditional and temporary in all but the most spellbinding cases of charismatic leadership (see also Gaffney, Chapter 26, this volume). Leaders have to build carefully and maintain their leadership capital. On this view political capital is a resource of the leader who accumulates to spend. The focus of the analysis is the leader, her narrative skills, and personal qualities. Alternatively, political capital can be seen as an attribute of followers who cede reputation, trust, and so on to the leader. It is a loan that cannot be banked but must be spent, and inevitably the borrower ends up in debt and the lender forecloses. It matters whether the focus of analysis is the leader's or the lender's characteristics because the latter switches attention away from the leader's personal qualities to such key influences as the media and the *zeitgeist*. On both views, political capital is contingent and uncertain. Leaders cannot and will not please everyone always. They sometimes teach unpleasant realities, make trade-off choices, and embrace some values and interests while disowning others. Moreover, leaders hardly ever succeed in doing all that they promise. Seldom do they meet all of their followers' hopes. In fact, some scholars argue

that reducing followers' expectations at a rate they can absorb is an essential leadership quality (Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky 2009).

5 ACTORS AND CONTEXTS

Our discussion of leadership as cause makes assumptions about the importance of human agency in any explanation. Does their ability to influence people and events stem from their personal characteristics and behaviour? If so, studying their personalities and actions in depth is essential; or, do we see them as frail humans afloat on a sea of storms larger than themselves that sets the stage for their rise, performance, and fall? In that case, it is as essential to study the context they work in (see also 't Hart 2014; and Chapter 14 , this volume).

Of course, the study of political leadership is no different from that of any other social phenomenon. The so-called agency–structure duality lies at the heart of the social sciences, as does the closely related duality between ideas and realities. Is human action shaped by objective physical and social realities, or by socially constructed, contingent, and contestable interpretations of those realities? Academics have debated this topic for over a century, and we cannot review it in full here or offer any resolution. We can note the implications for the study of leadership.

Who governs matters, but not always or all the time. Economic and political context may constrain the range of policies leaders can pursue, but that context is variously understood, as are its effects. Leaders can and do go against the prevailing tide. They may be written off as quixotic. They may have been sent to jail. But they do take a gamble on history:

> Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under self-selected circumstances, but under circumstances existing already, given and transmitted from the past. The tradition of all dead generations weighs like a nightmare on the brains of the living. (Marx 1934: 10)

Despite this weight of tradition, sometimes leaders win against all odds. It pays therefore to explore political leadership as a fundamentally disruptive force, and examine how some leaders challenge existing beliefs, practices, and traditions (Skowronek 1993; Bevir and Rhodes 2003; Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky 2009). An interpretive approach will argue that traditions are not immutable. Traditions are a set of understandings, a set of inherited beliefs and practices, which someone receives during socialization. They are mainly a first influence on people. Social contexts do not determine the actions of individuals. Rather traditions are products of individual agency. When people confront unfamiliar circumstances or ideas, it poses a dilemma to their existing beliefs and practices. Consequently, they have to extend or change their heritage to encompass it, so developing that heritage. Every time they try to apply a tradition, they have to reflect on it, they have to try to understand it afresh in today's circumstances. By reflecting on it, they open it to change. Thus, human agency can produce change even when people think that they are sticking fast to a tradition which they regard as sacrosanct.

Leaders similarly are heirs to traditions. They inherit beliefs and practices: about their office in particular and the polity in general. As they confront the dilemmas of office, they modify that heritage, even when they choose not to openly challenge it. Such an ability to 'smuggle in' change incrementally, indeed almost inadvertently, means that they can survive at the helm when few thought that possible. They achieve policy reforms and social changes against the odds, and the inherited wisdom perishes.

6   PERSONAL QUALITIES AND LUCK

Are political leaders relatively autonomous actors able to make their own luck? The temptation is always to attribute their success to their special qualities or traits—the 'great man' (sic) theory of leadership. Trait theories have had a chequered and largely unsuccessful history (see also Reicher, Haslam, and Platow, Chapter 10, this volume). On close inspection, explanations based on the leader's personal qualities are not persuasive. No public leader achieves all her objectives always, yet presumably she had the same personal qualities throughout. Even heroes of history like Catherine II, Empress of Russia, Winston Churchill, Mahatma Gandhi, Abraham Lincoln, and Margaret Thatcher experienced many vicissitudes and made many discernible errors of judgement before their finest hour arrived and they achieved greatness. No public leader ever worked alone. They are embedded in webs of beliefs and dependence. Behind every 'great' leader are indispensable collaborators, advisers, mentors, and coalitions: the building blocks of the leader's achievements.

We also have to entertain the possibility that these allegedly 'great' leaders might have been just plain lucky; that is they get what they want without trying. They are 'systematically lucky'; that is, although they have resources which they can use if they want to, often they do not have to use them because they occupy an advantageous position. They get their own way by doing nothing (see Dowding 1996, 2008). Leadership and luck are often a matter of perceptions and reputations. Leaders and their reputations can be made or broken by events over which the leader in question exercised little or no control; but we have to understand how reputations are formed. They are not given, objective facts. Rather, they are narratives constructed by the leaders and her followers. They hinge on myths and symbols (Edelman 1985). The most pervasive and pernicious are the myths and symbols of nationalism, but race and religion are rarely far away. We concede that leaders may attend football games because they like the game. Indeed, few would have the sheer disdain for sports of New South Wales Premier, Bob Carr, who was caught reading Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* while attending one of the Sydney Olympics finals. More likely, political leaders attend expecting the national side to win, thus bolstering the association between leader and country. They are constructing their image and their reputation, trying to ensure that their narrative of events prevails. Opponents have their preferred narrative. Both will draw on deep-seated traditions in telling their stories and to legitimize their view of the world.

All seek to manage meanings and influence followers. Successful leaders are skilled storytellers (see also Rhodes, Chapter 7; Grint, Chapter 16, this volume).

7 Success and Failure

How do we know when a political leader has been successful? Again, there are no easy answers, or even agreement on the best way to seek an answer. The simplest criterion of all is longevity in office: getting re-elected, maintaining the support of party barons and keeping potential rivals at bay. The literature on leadership succession in both democracies and non-democracies is based at least implicitly on the premise that success equals political survival (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2004; 't Hart and Uhr 2011). Why do some leaders succeed, that is, survive, so spectacularly? Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander's 23 years in office, Helmut Kohl's 16 years as German Chancellor, or Robert Menzies' 17 years as Australian Prime Minister are a few examples. We can also mention the even longer reigns of dictators such as Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe or Cuba's Fidel Castro. Are they smarter, more persuasive, more persistent, more opportunistic, more ruthless, or just luckier than less 'successful' leaders? Did Kim Campbell, party leader and Prime Minister of Canada for a mere four months, fail to hold on to office because she lacked such skills? Or is it not personal qualities at all, but rather institutional rules of, for example, leadership selection and ejection, and circumstances that determine leaders' fates?

However, many would agree that office-holding is not a sufficient and perhaps not even a necessary condition for success (Heifetz 1994). We need more criteria. The traditional way of assessing leadership success is, of course, the tombstone biography with its measured tone and, usually, an author of forbearing even forgiving disposition (Marquand 2009). British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, was seen as devious, vacillating, pragmatic to the point of unprincipled, and prone to conspiracy theories. His reputation was rescued by his biographer Ben Pimlott (1992) and much greater credence is now given to his tactical skill in managing divisive issues. Likewise, Fred Greenstein's careful archival research led to a complete overhaul of the predominant image of Dwight Eisenhower as a hands-off, do-nothing president, revealing his 'hidden-hand' style that was far more engaged and activist than contemporary media coverage had revealed (Greenstein 1982).

The problem with biographies is that, when compared, there are no clear criteria of success or failure (see also Walter, Chapter 21, this volume). They are specific to the individual and his or her times. Undeterred, there is a mini-industry in, among others, the United Kingdom and the USA surveying the views of academics and other experts about the relative standing of prime ministers and presidents (for an overview, see Strangio, 't Hart, and Walter 2013). Belying the scientific trappings of a survey and quantitative analysis, the method is inter-subjective. It sums experts' judgement allowing much latitude on the criteria for those judgements. In effect, it fuels debate not only about relative standing, but also the criteria for judging. Such reputational techniques have been

widely criticized; for example, they are skewed towards recent political figures. Also, the rankings make some big assumptions; that leaders are 'in charge', 'in control' and, therefore, 'responsible' for their records (see, for example, Bose and Landis 2011). Yet at least they provide a platform for debate and reflection about what values, styles, and accomplishments 'we' seek in leaders past and present.

Of course, there are efforts to identify systematic criteria for measuring success or failure. Hennessy (2000: 528–9) identifies five sets of criteria: backdrop to the premiership; management capacity; insight and perception; change and innovation; and constitutional and procedural. These five categories are further sub-divided into seventeen criteria. However, this 'celestial chief justice', remains unhappy with the exercise, calling his rankings 'crude'. 't Hart (2011, 2014) proposes the much simpler 'assessment triangle' composed of three families of criteria. First, there is impact or smart leadership, which requires the leader to deliver effective policies that solve problems. Second, there is support or accepted leadership, which requires the leader to win and keep the support not only of the electorates, but also of other key actors in governing. Finally, there is trustworthiness or accountable leadership, which requires leaders to be responsive to multiple overlapping accountabilities. Despite obvious limitations, these approaches have two marked advantages. First, they are explicit about the criteria for judging political leaders. If you disagree, then you need to suggest alternative criteria and the discussion is consequently on a much sounder footing. Second, they highlight the ways in which the criteria conflict. There are trade-offs between, for example, smart leadership introducing new policies and preserving support among key actors and from the electorate. Such trade-offs underline the besetting problem of this area; the criteria are not only subjective but change with people and circumstances. All compete for standing in Congress or parliament, in the party, and in the country. Gossip is a key but unreliable currency for all. The media are fickle. Standing and performance are contingent as is the dominance of the president or the prime minister, or the standing of any of his or her colleagues. Command and control is always a possibility. Rivals rise and are vanquished, but, equally, regicide happens.

8 ART AND PROFESSION

From the West to East, many observers of political leadership have chosen to portray leadership as an art (see also Keohane, Chapter 2, Chan and Chan, Chapter 4, this volume). They claim leadership cannot be captured in law-like generalizations based on neutral data and analytical detachment. By inference, it cannot be taught in the cerebral environment of an academic classroom or executive seminar. As so often, Max Weber (1991: 115) was on the mark when he suggested that the challenge of leadership is to forge warm passion and cool judgement together in one and the same soul. In practice, this maxim condemns aspiring leaders to a life of tough judgement calls between the passion

that fires them up, the feeling of personal responsibility that drives them on, and a sense of proportion that is necessary to exercise good judgement.

Leadership is conceived by some of its most authoritative scholars as involving a large measure of practical wisdom; of insight that can be gained only through direct personal experience and sustained reflection. The core intangibles of leadership—empathy, intuition, creativity, courage, morality, judgement—are largely beyond the grasp of 'scientific' inquiry, let alone comprehensive explanation and evidence-based prescription. Understanding leadership comes from living it: being led, living with and advising leaders, doing one's own leading. Some understanding of leadership may be gained from vicarious learning: digesting the experiences of other leaders: hence the old and steady appetite for the biographies and memoirs of politicians, and the contemporary market for 'live encounters' with former leaders who strut their stuff at seminars and conferences. When we cannot get the real thing, we are still willing to pay for the next best thing: books and seminars by the exclusive circle of leadership 'gurus' who observe and interrogate the great and the good. Even academia is not immune. Academics, too, seek to get up close and personal in ethnographic fieldwork (see also Gains, Chapter 19, this volume; Rhodes 2011).

In sharp contrast to this long-standing view, a 'science of leadership' has sprung up in the latter half of the twentieth century. Thousands of academics now make a living treating leadership as they would any other topic in the social sciences. They treat it as an object of study, which can be picked apart and put together by forms of inquiry that seek to emulate the natural sciences (see also Blondel, Chapter 46, this volume). Their papers fill journals, handbooks, conference programmes, and lecture theatres. Many among them make in-roads into the real world of political leadership as consultants and advisers, often well paid. Much of this activity prompts a bemused response. It is of little help to know that 45 variables completely explain three cases. It would not persist, however, if such knowledge did not help in grasping at least some of the puzzles that leaders face and leadership poses. Alternatively, it could meet the insatiable need of leaders to understand their world and talk to outsiders 'because they are so worried about whether it makes sense or, indeed, whether they make sense' (Rawnsley 2001: xi).

It is this 'scientific' understanding of leadership that we now see echoed in widespread attempts to erect a leadership profession (see also Hartley, Chapter 44, this volume). The language of leadership has pervaded the job descriptions, training, and performance management of public servants at even junior management levels. Many public service commissions or equivalent bodies have embarked on developing integrated leadership frameworks. These frameworks stipulate bundles of leadership skills, which are linked to performance indicators for each different leadership role. People wanting to move up must meet these criteria of successful performance. They must also attend set courses, accept a set of shared values, and subject themselves to standardized tests. When they manage to get all the boxes ticked, they get ushered into a fraternity rather like a Masonic Lodge. Uniformity is nurtured and celebrated through lucrative rewards packages. Leadership education is ubiquitous. Everyone regularly attends meetings where leadership gurus perform. The aim is not to impart knowledge, but to solidify a shared

notion of professionalism. The means for such sharing are the latest nostrums, models, and metaphors. The audience is captive, and willingly so, though one might—like leadership 'guru', Barbara Kellerman (2012)—wonder for how much longer.

9 Transcending the Dichotomies?

Clearly, when taken to extremes both the art and the science assumptions about 'understanding leadership' lead to absurd results. The mystifications of wisdom and judgement untainted by evidence confront the quasi-scientific 'one size fits all' generalizations that sustain allegedly evidence-based leadership training and reform. Both privilege one form of knowledge over all others. Both generate their own quacks and true believers. Both do well out of their trade. Sadly, both pay too little attention to what we know and how we know it. Their certainties defy the limits to knowledge and the resulting failures, big and little, do a disservice to practitioners and academics alike. The best we can offer is not prediction but informed conjecture. So *caveat emptor* for those seeking solutions from the study of political leadership. There is much on offer: insight, careful analysis, and lessons for the wary. As Greenleaf (1983) suggests, however:

> The concept of a genuine social science has had its ups and downs, and it still survives, though we are as far from its achievement as we were when Spencer (or Bacon for that matter) first put pen to paper. Indeed it is all the more likely that the continuous attempts made in this direction serve only to demonstrate…the inherent futility of the enterprise.
>
> (Greenleaf 1983: 286)

So, leadership studies have no 'solutions;' nor do leaders. They acquire office by promising to solve problems, but more often than not end up presiding over problem succession as another problem emerges from the one they thought they had just solved. There is no unified theory of leadership. There are too many definitions, and too many theories in too many disciplines. We do not agree on what leadership is, how to study it, or even why we study it. The subject is not just beset by dichotomies; it is also multifaceted, and essentially contested.

Such is the world of leadership, and its contingency and complexity are why so many leaders' careers end in disappointment. In the study and teaching of heroic and transformative leadership, hubris is all too common, so perhaps the final lesson should be: 'A leader is best when people barely know that he exists, not so good when people obey and acclaim him, worst when they despise him. Fail to honour people. They fail to honour you' (Lao Tzu, *The Tao Te Ching*).

10 Summary

As this Handbook demonstrates, political leadership has made a comeback. It was studied intensively not only by political scientists, but also by political sociologists and psychologists, Sovietologists, political anthropologists, comparative and development studies by scholars from the 1940s to the 1970s. Thereafter, the field lost its way with the rise of structuralism, neo-institutionalism, and rational choice approaches to the study of politics, government, and governance. Recently, however, students of politics have returned to studying the role of individual leaders and the exercise of leadership to explain political outcomes. The list of topics is nigh endless: elections, conflict management, public policy, government popularity, development, governance networks, and regional integration. In the media age, leaders are presented and stage-managed—spun—as the solution to almost every social problem. Through the mass media and the Internet, citizens and professional observers follow the rise, impact, and fall of senior political office-holders at closer quarters than ever before.

This Handbook encapsulates the resurgence by asking, where are we today? It orders the multidisciplinary field by identifying the distinct and distinctive contributions of the disciplines. It meets the urgent need to take stock. Our objectives are straightforward:

- to provide comprehensive coverage of all the major disciplines, methods, and regions;
- to showcase both the normative and empirical traditions in political leadership studies;
- to juxtapose behavioural, institutional, and interpretive approaches;
- to cover formal, office-based as well as informal, emergent political leadership;
- to cover leadership in democratic as well as undemocratic polities;
- to draw on scholars from around the world and encourage a comparative perspective.

There was no fixed template for every chapter, but we encouraged contributors to take stock of their topic by covering most, if not all, of the following:

- the historical, intellectual and practical context of political leadership;
- key ideas, questions, and debates;
- landmark contributions—the classics, the mavericks, and the avant-garde;
- the state of the art in each field and its practical import;
- future areas of research.

In our view, a Handbook chapter should not be a cataloguing exercise. Nor is it an advertisement for the contribution of the author and like-minded scholars. Authors were

encouraged to air their own views, and not be shy about their own work, *but* they also had to do justice to the breadth and variety of scholarship in the area.

In Part I, we provide a discipline by discipline survey of the field. Although it is a Handbook of *political* leadership, our survey cannot be limited to political science, which is not even the major contributor to the subject. We cover leadership in Western and Eastern political thought, democratic theory, feminism, public administration, psychology, psychoanalysis, social psychology, economics, and anthropology. This section demonstrates the range of insights available and the vast amount of careful analysis. As important, it highlights that there are incommensurable perspectives not only between the several disciplines but also in each one. We believe it supports the case for 'genre blurring' (Geertz 1983): that is, for the several disciplines to draw on one another's theories and methods.

In Part II, we focus on analytical perspectives and methods. We cover institutional analysis, contextual analysis, decision-making analysis, social constructivism, rhetorical analysis, experimental analysis, observational analysis, at-a-distance analysis, biographical analysis, and political personality profiling. Given the persistent desire to emulate the natural sciences in much political science, we believe that this section demonstrates the value of a broad toolkit with which to explore the diverse phenomenon that is political leadership.

In Part III, we turn from theory and methods to look at leadership in several contexts. We examine political leadership at work in civic leadership, political parties, populist movements, the public sphere, policy networks, and during crisis situations. This section demonstrates that a key trend in the present-day study of political leadership is its broader compass. Moving well beyond classic preoccupation with executive government elites, political leadership elides into the broader notion of public leadership. A positional approach has given way to a functional approach (see 't Hart and Uhr 2008). For some, this trend courts the danger of leadership becoming every action that influences others. As a result, leadership loses its distinctive character. For others, it highlights the ubiquity and complexity of leadership.

In Part IV, we look at executive leadership in the West. We begin with varieties of presidential leadership in the USA and then examine presidential communication. Then, we turn to semi-presidential polities, followed by an examination of the varieties of prime ministerial leadership in Westminster and related forms of parliamentary government. Finally, we look at the contingencies of prime ministerial power in the UK, prime ministers and their advisers, and ministers. The aspiration to a comparative science of political leadership confronts the diversity and contingency revealed by these chapters. Not only has any comparative study to encompass the differences between presidential, semi-presidential, and parliamentary polities, but it must also cover the daunting diversity within each category. Idiographic studies offering plausible conjectures seem at least as plausible as nomothetic studies claiming to explain the variations and even to predict.

While the attractions of examining national leaders and leadership are obvious, political leadership below and beyond the national level is also important. So, in Part V, we examine local political leadership, regional political leadership, and international

leadership. Then, in Part VI, we look at political leadership in China, Latin America, Russia and the Caucasus, and Africa.

We end in Part VII with three reflective pieces on training political leaders, leadership and gender and a review of what we have learned about political leadership over the past 50 years. We end where we started our overview—with the questions of whether leadership is good or bad and how in democratic societies we contain its worst excesses. The present-day abuses of power in Latin America and Africa should not blind us to the less than auspicious histories of Western democracies which have supported and suffered from some of the worst despots in human history. As the populace of Northern England would phrase it, 'when push comes to shove' the study of political leadership is about the constitutional and political role of leaders in a democratic polity; about how we want to be governed, not about methods, training, and leadership skills.

Even this barest of bare summaries should indicate the scope of this Handbook, whether we are talking about major disciplines, methods, or regions. For those readers who want abstracts for each chapter, they are available at Oxford Handbooks Online (OHO), soon to be renamed Oxford Research Reviews (ORR). Please visit: <www.oxfordhandbooks.com/> and search under 'Political Science'. You will also be able to carry out a keyword search on the volume to identify those chapters most closely aligned with your interests. Finally, and an exciting innovation, the site has changed from an e-book database to an article delivery service and you will be able to download individual chapters through the university library just as you now download articles from journals.

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THINKING ABOUT POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: TRADITIONS AND DISCIPLINES

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WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

NANNERL O. KEOHANE

1 INTRODUCTION

'LEADERSHIP' is not a word that often appears in the canonical works of Western political thought. It was first included in English dictionaries in the nineteenth century (Rost 1991: 18). Yet concepts closely connected with leadership are fundamental to many texts of political philosophy. Leadership pervades the familiar concepts of sovereignty, ruling, and representation.

In its broadest sense, leadership is central to all human social activity: 'Leaders determine or clarify goals for a group of individuals and bring together the energies of members of that group to accomplish those goals' (Keohane 2010: 23). Political leadership is an especially prominent example of this behaviour, the type that springs to mind when most of us think about leadership. The history of Western political thought is full of reflections on leadership in this sense, how it originates and what its proper purposes should be, how it can be legitimated and how it can be lost.

Authority, conferred by office or attained by performance, is often linked with leadership. Yet not all political leaders have formal positions of authority, and not all persons who hold official authority provide leadership. As John Gardner puts it: 'We have all occasionally encountered top persons who couldn't lead a squad of seven-year olds to the ice cream counter' (Gardner 2010: 2). Power is also closely connected with leadership; leaders generally exercise power; but not all powerful persons are leaders. Think of a playground bully or a mugger with a gun.

Political leaders, then, are often but not always in positions of official authority. Defining goals and mobilizing energies involve the exercise of power in some form; but leadership cannot be reduced to power per se.

In conversations about political philosophy in ancient Greece and Rome, most discussions of leadership focused on how statesmen or rulers should be educated and how

they should use their power. From the Renaissance until the present day, primary attention has shifted to two other questions: the connections between leaders and citizens, and how the scope of appropriate political activity should be defined and settled.

Throughout these eras a defining tension has marked the discussion of leadership in Western political thought. This tension is between the expertise and creative possibilities of leadership, on the one hand, and the dangers of leadership, the need to control the exercise of power, on the other. This tension is also expressed in the stark contrast between a ruler doing whatever he thinks he needs to do to retain his power and accomplish his goals, and the duties and obligations of political leaders. Some political theorists highlight the work of individual leaders; others emphasize the constitutional framework that circumscribes their authority. Both perspectives emphasize important dimensions of leadership, but they are not easily compatible.

This raises a fundamental question: in what circumstances should citizens or subjects support and enable the visionary capacities of a strong leader, and when should they instead institute or bolster confining structures that will make it less likely that leaders can misuse their power? This dilemma has been central in the history of political theory in the West, was very much present in the founding discussions of the Constitution of the United States, and continues to occupy social scientists, journalists, leaders, and citizens today. Contemporary political events indicate the timeless relevance of this question.

I will juxtapose five pairs of theorists in whose work the tensions I have just described can be discerned. These writers all expound complex theories and resist pigeonholing; in broad terms, however, each pair includes theorists who take opposed positions in this debate: Plato and Aristotle, Cicero and Machiavelli, Montesquieu and Rousseau, Michels and Arendt, Lenin and Weber. Readers may question the omission of their favourite theorists from this array. The criterion for inclusion was specific attention to the problems and possibilities of political leadership. Hobbes and Locke, for instance, provide incomparable insights on a number of aspects of political life; but, in my view, they have little to say about leadership. However, if readers are moved to extend the discussion to include other theorists, this chapter will have achieved one of its major purposes.

2   PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

Plato (428–347 BC) provided one of the earliest and most influential statements of the initial perspective in the tension described above. In the *Gorgias*, *Republic*, and *Statesman*, the statesman or philosopher–guardian's distinctive art and knowledge set him apart from ordinary citizens, and both legitimate and determine the content of his rule. External constraints on this leadership would be counterproductive for all concerned.

In *Gorgias*, Socrates argues that the political art is concerned with the health of the soul, as gymnastics and medicine address the health of the body. He distinguishes

those competent to practise this art from orators or tyrants who may sway the people or control them but cannot bring about what is best for the city. Socrates counsels his young interlocutors to consider statesmanship, not as a means of self-advancement or doing what they personally desire, but to 'take in hand the tending of the city and its citizens with the aim of making the citizens themselves as good as possible' (Plato 1961: 513ᵉ).

In the *Republic*, Socrates and his friends engage in constructing a 'city in speech'. Each citizen produces a needed good or service which he is best equipped to provide; in the earliest stages of the story, none of them is charged with governing. Leadership arises only when the city is enlarged, which means going to war. Since fighting is itself an art and a profession, a new class of citizens must be created, the guardians. The remainder of the dialogue is devoted to the talents, education, and lifestyle of these philosopher–guardians.

Thus for Plato, as for Machiavelli and Weber, violence is at the root of political leadership. The philosopher–guardians' duty of readiness for war initially determines the talents they need and how they should be educated. They live in dormitories, exercise together, and take their meals in mess-halls. Yet much of their time is spent preparing to appreciate philosophy as the source of the true knowledge to direct the city. Even though the figure of the political leader in these dialogues was paradigmatically male, in the *Republic* Plato was willing to consider the possibility that women can also be appropriate practitioners of political leadership. Women in the guardian class are educated along with men and have the same pattern of life.

As is also true for Machiavelli and Weber, Plato's political leaders routinely engage in the deception of other citizens, including the younger guardians. Plato says specifically that the rulers (and only the rulers) may appropriately lie for the benefit of the state (389ᵇ).

The philosopher–guardians share all things in common to prevent any private loves or desires from causing strife within the ruling group or interfering with their basic commitment to tend the city and protect its citizens. Plato thus addresses the familiar problem of the inequality between rulers and ruled by dictating a radically different lifestyle for his rulers. Men and women in the producing classes enjoy material possessions, family life, and conventional luxuries, while the guardians have a superior education, the pleasures of comradeship and philosophizing, and the status of rulers of the city. The implication is that no one will want to exchange his pattern of life for the alternative, so envy—a major source of political discontent—is avoided from the outset.

One of the major themes of the *Republic* is the *expertise* of the philosopher–guardians, the hard-won knowledge that sets them apart from ordinary citizens. In book VI (488ᵇ⁻ᵉ), Plato offers an analogy between the political leader and a pilot who has studied the stars and currents and properties of his ship. In the *Statesman*, Plato uses other analogies from pastoral life and cybernetics. He specifies that many of the tasks we normally associate with leadership can be delegated to others, including making speeches, generalship, judging. The king's role is to oversee and guide the work of others, relying on the broad perceptions and understandings that are part of the true kingly art. This art

'weaves all into its unified fabric with perfect skill. It is a universal art and so we call it by a name of universal scope … statesmanship' (305^{d-e}).

In all these dialogues Plato describes an art of political leadership (that is, statesmanship or ruling) that emphasizes natural talent, rigorous training, the possession of arcane expertise, and responsibility for providing directive guidance to human communities. The conception of leadership expressed here is exceptionally lofty, almost godlike in its scope. The abuse of power is avoided, not by external constitutional restraints on the leader's authority, but by internal restraints of character, education, and a profound sense of duty.

Could any human being ever achieve such a lofty level of expertise and commitment, avoiding all temptations to abuse power, truly understanding what is best for all members of a community? Would other men and women be well served where so much authority and power are given to a few individuals, so that most have no role in directing their own lives? One of Plato's earliest and most acute critics was Aristotle, who devoted a large portion of his *Politics* to showing why the answer to both questions is clearly 'No'.

Aristotle (384–322 BC) endorses the principle that those best equipped to rule should do so, but denies that this entails a designated ruling group. Those best equipped to rule are the members of the political association who know the city and have a direct interest in its flourishing. The basic equality of all citizens and the requirement dictated by justice that all participate in office yield the conclusion that citizens should take turns providing political leadership. 'This means that some rule and others are ruled in turn, as if they had become, for the time being, different people' (Aristotle 1995: 1261^a).

Aristotle considers the possibility that one man could be so superior in capacity and virtue that he should be acknowledged as king (1284^b, 1288^a). He regards this, however, as an unlikely situation, and almost surely an unstable one. Like Plato, he was well aware of the tendency for monarchy to degenerate into tyranny. In addition, he was not persuaded by Plato's elaborate plans for preventing his guardians from abusing their power over other citizens. Instead, Aristotle concentrated on constructing a framework for the use of power.

Aristotle describes a constitution as 'an organization of offices in the city, by which the method of their distribution is fixed, the sovereign authority is determined, and the nature of the end to be pursued by the association and all its members should be prescribed' (1289^a). He distinguishes three major types of constitutions, depending on the locus of sovereign authority, the goals of the leaders and the size of the ruling group: kingship, aristocracy, and a constitutional government or polity; and their perversions: tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. He gives the name of constitutional government to a city in which the citizens as a whole govern with a view to the common interest (1279^a).

On the political capacity of ordinary citizens, Aristotle has a view very different from Plato's; he asserts that 'it is possible that they may surpass—collectively and as a body, although not individually—the quality of the few best … Each has his share of goodness and practical wisdom; and when all meet together, the people may thus become something like a single person [with] many qualities of character and intelligence' (1281^{a-b}).

The political art is one of a class of skills whose excellence can best be appreciated by the beneficiary rather than the practitioner, just as the diner, not the cook, is the best judge of the quality of the meal. The people as a whole generally own more property than any individual rich citizen and thus have a larger interest to protect. For all these reasons, it is rare to find any particular individual who has more expertise in governing than a group of citizens working together.

Aristotle defines the statesman as one who 'exercises his authority in conformity with the rules imposed by the art of statesmanship and as one who rules and is ruled in turn' (1252ᵃ). In his capacity as ruler, the citizen/statesman shows a distinctive art or skill. This skill, according to Aristotle, must be learned in part by being ruled; men (in this case, only men are included) learn to lead by having been good followers. The distinctive form of skill or excellence that sets the citizen as statesman or leader apart from the same citizen in his capacity as follower is practical wisdom—prudence, or good judgement (1277ᵇ). This shared prudential leadership, exercised only within a constitutional framework, is distinctly different from the godlike vision and extraordinary powers of Plato's statesman.

3   Cicero and Machiavelli

In a Platonic vein, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–43 BC) gives his highest praise to 'a ruler who is good and wise and versed in all that contributes to the advantage and prestige of the state; who is, as it were, the guardian and steward of the commonwealth, for so we should call anyone who directs and pilots the state' (Cicero 1929: ii, p. xxix). Yet he favours a mixed form of government combining elements of kingship, aristocracy, and democracy (i, pp. xxxv, xlv). In such a framework, the leader's political skill, the merits of the nobler classes, and the rights of the many are all accommodated. In this way he echoes the balanced approach advanced by Aristotle.

Like Plato and Aristotle, Cicero argues that, if a single man could govern the state well by reason of his superior wisdom and prudence, nothing else would be needed (i, p. xxxiv). However, he notes that, even in the best monarchy, everyone except the king is effectively disbarred from the protection of the law and from participating in deliberation about public functions. In Cicero's view, these are rights that should extend to all citizens (i, p. xxvii). Thus the ideal system is one in which the people are wise enough to *choose* superior men for public office, rather than deferring to those best qualified to govern them (as Plato would have it) or sharing equally in the ruling (Aristotle's preferred arrangement).

Political leadership, however, does not depend only on one's qualifications for office; Cicero acknowledges the role of luck in obtaining and maintaining power (Cicero 1991: i. 115). He asks: 'Can anyone be unaware of the great power of fortune, which impels one in either direction, towards success or towards adversity? Whenever we enjoy her prospering breezes we are carried to the haven for which we long; when she blows in our face we are shipwrecked' (ii. 19).

Cicero reserves his sharpest condemnation for the view that a human act can be honourable but not beneficial, or beneficial but not honourable. He says specifically that cruelty can never be beneficial, since this vice is so deeply hostile to the nature of man (iii. 46). When he considers the motivations that lead some men to follow others, he insists that 'there is nothing at all more suited to protecting and retaining influence than to be loved, and nothing less suited than to be feared . . . Fear is a poor guardian over any length of time; but goodwill keeps faithful guard for ever' (ii. 23). With this in mind, he catalogues the virtues that elicit the love of the people, including liberality, beneficence, and keeping faith (ii. 32).

Theorists for more than a millennium built on Cicero's ideas as counsel for rulers. In *Il Principe*, Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) was clearly in dialogue with Cicero and the subsequent 'Mirror of Princes' literature. But he inverted Cicero's message in a bold and shocking fashion. *The Prince* provides the paradigmatic statement in the Western political tradition of the view that effective leadership is personal, powerful, and, to a large degree, unconstrained. The theme of the treatise is not guardianship or statesmanship, but the success of the individual prince in obtaining and retaining power.

Machiavelli notes that rulers succeed primarily because of their innate abilities (*virtú*)—qualities such as courage, decisiveness, good judgement, and ruthlessness— but also by luck (*fortuna*) (Machiavelli 1988: ch. I). Like Cicero, he uses metaphors from nature to describe the power of *fortuna*, comparing it to a dangerous river that destroys everything in its path when it is in flood. A wise man takes precautions to protect against the ravages of fortune, building dikes or dams to control its flow. Princes succeed when their actions are in line with the circumstances they confront, and fail when these two things are not in harmony (ch. XXV).

New princes should imitate great predecessors and learn from their examples. From the lives of men of exceptional ability—Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus— Machiavelli draws the insight that leaders are most likely to succeed if they do not have to rely greatly on luck. He notes also that these men were warriors, asserting that 'all armed prophets succeed whereas unarmed ones fail' (ch. VI). In the light of the success of unarmed prophets such as Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr, we might question this bold generalization. For Machiavelli, however, it was clear that armed men are feared and respected, whereas unarmed princes are despised by all and distrusted by the military, whose loyalty is crucial to their success. Therefore, a wise prince should study the art of war and be continually prepared to practise it (ch. XIV).

More generally, Machiavelli asserts that 'a ruler who wishes to maintain his power must be prepared to act immorally when this becomes necessary' (ch. XV). It is advantageous to have the *reputation* of being virtuous (generous, merciful, honest, trustworthy), but that does not mean a ruler should always *be* generous or merciful; and he has no obligation to keep his promises when doing so would undermine his power. Quite the opposite: a successful prince must be 'a great feigner and dissembler' (ch. XVIII). The prudent prince should also recognize that 'doing some things that seem virtuous may result in one's ruin, whereas doing other things that seem vicious may strengthen one's position and cause one to flourish' and provide more effective government (chs XV, XVII).

A prince may seek the support either of the populace or of the nobles, since these two classes are found in all cities. The nobles are ambitious for power, whereas the people can be satisfied if they are protected from oppression. Also, it is more difficult to protect yourself from the people because there are so many of them, whereas the ruler can replace hostile nobles if necessary (ch. IX). A wise prince makes sure that the people recognize their dependence on him, and never takes their support for granted.

Machiavelli notes specifically Cicero's question about whether it is better for the prince to be loved than feared (ch. XVII). In his view, 'it is desirable to be both loved and feared; but it is difficult to achieve both, and if one of them has to be lacking, it is much safer to be feared than loved'. No one can count on the love of his people, particularly in hard times, and a wise ruler should always depend on something he can control, not factors that are controlled by others. If the people fear him, they will be less likely to harm or resist him. Above all, the ruler should avoid being hated; a leader who is despised is always vulnerable to being overthrown or assassinated.

Referring to the prince's relationships with his closest followers, the members of his cabinet, or inner staff, Machiavelli says that choosing ministers is a particularly important decision for a ruler (ch. XXII). A prince's intelligence and capacity will be judged by the 'quality of the men around him. If they are capable and loyal, he should always be taken to be shrewd, because he was able to recognize their ability and retain their loyalty.' Even a man with a second-rate mind can appear intelligent and shrewd if he is well counselled; but a prince must always be on guard against flattery, taking counsel wisely (ch. XXIII).

Such direct, practical advice, rooted in Machiavelli's own experience and observation of many leaders, explains the durable influence and fascination of *The Prince*, even for readers put off by its more 'Machiavellian' sections. The text has also served as a perennial handbook for princes interested above all in maintaining power and willing to use any measures to achieve this goal.

4 Montesquieu and Rousseau

In a passage from *The Spirit of the Laws* that sheds a rather different light on the maxims of *The Prince*, Montesquieu (1689–1755) notes that 'the principle of despotic government is fear', and in such situations, 'the preservation of the state is only the preservation of the prince' (Montesquieu 1949: iii. 14). Against the stark simplicity of despotism he juxtaposes a moderate government akin to that proposed by Aristotle and Cicero, which requires that the lawgiver 'combine the several powers: to regulate, temper and set them in motion; to give, as it were, ballast to one, in order to enable it to counterpoise the other. This is a masterpiece of legislation, rarely produced by hazard, and seldom attained by prudence' (ii. 1).

Explaining how this masterpiece might be assembled, Montesquieu notes that in a country of free citizens everyone should essentially govern himself, and the whole

people together should exercise the legislative power. However, such a formula cannot be achieved in large states, and faces significant inconveniences in smaller ones. Therefore, in practice, the best system is one in which representatives of the people undertake what they cannot do for themselves (xi. 6). Unlike Aristotle, Montesquieu regards the people collectively as incapable of dealing with public affairs. He asserts that a monarch should hold executive power because of the need for rapid and expeditious action; this power should not be in the same hands as the legislative power exercised by the people's representatives.

Montesquieu specified that the legislative body should be made up of two parts, which can 'check one another by the mutual privilege of rejecting', and are in turn 'both restrained by the executive power, as the executive is by the legislative'. In a passage that Machiavelli would have scorned, but that holds no surprises for observers of American democracy, Montesquieu notes that 'these three powers should naturally form a state of repose or inaction'. Since, in order to govern, they sometimes have to bestir themselves, 'they are forced to move, but still in concert'. What 'forces' them to move, however, is left unclear.

In his most profound political treatise, *The Social Contract*, Montesquieu's iconoclastic contemporary Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) identifies with unusual precision the 'forces' that can move a political body. Unlike many later theorists of democratic participation, Rousseau is quite clear that, without leadership, a body of people cannot act, beyond voting yes or no on straightforward questions that are put to them. The people should be the author of the laws, but how will they produce these laws? 'Will it be by common agreement, by a sudden inspiration? Has the body politic an organ to state its wills? Who will give it the foresight necessary to form its acts…?' A 'blind multitude' cannot undertake an action as complex as writing a set of laws, and thus the first requirement for a good political order, in Rousseau's book, is a gifted and inspired Lawgiver (Rousseau 1997: ii. 6).

Rousseau insists that this extraordinary founder is not a prince; he should have no power to command other men. Anticipating recent discussions of charismatic authority, he says that 'the great soul of the Lawgiver is the true miracle which must prove his mission' (ii. 7). Anyone can feign contact with some divinity, bribe an oracle, delude a gullible populace; but Rousseau's Lawgiver is an inspired genius, a leader whose mission ends when the legal system he designs has been accepted by the people. From that point forward, laws must be passed by the whole people assembled as the sovereign (iii. 12). Whenever that happens, the government that has been formed to execute the popular will is temporarily dissolved, because where those who are the principals are assembled, there is no place for representation (iii. 14).

Like Plato, Cicero, and Montesquieu, Rousseau was convinced that the best system is one in which 'the wisest govern the multitude, so long as it is certain that they will govern for its advantage and not for their own' (iii. 5). He was referring here to rule by a small number of wise men rather than a monarch, believing that monarchs will inevitably abuse their power. Kings are told that their true interest lies in having their people flourish, 'but they know perfectly well that this is not true. Their personal interest is first

of all that the people be weak, wretched, and never able to resist them' (iii. 6). To prevent such an outcome, instead of Montesquieu's system of elaborate institutional checks and balances, Rousseau preserves the legislative sovereignty of the community assembled as a whole.

Rousseau was insistent that the people are the only appropriate sovereign in any state. Like Montesquieu, however, he believed that ordinary people are not good at making complex political decisions. Moreover, requiring them to do so undermines their effective sovereignty (iii. 15). The implementation of the laws consists in decisions that affect individuals or some portion of the state, not the body of citizens as a whole. If the people had such a power, this would violate their collective wholeness, the foundation of the political system. 'The public force therefore has to have its own agent which unites and puts it to work in accordance with the directives of the general will', and this agent is the government, or the executive (iii. 1). Describing the character and duties of those who hold this executive power is a key purpose of the rest of the treatise.

The Social Contract endeavours to 'combine what right permits with what interest prescribes, so that justice and utility may not be disjointed' (i. 1). In this Rousseau departs both from Cicero, who asserted that what is honest will always be beneficial, and from Machiavelli, who argued that the prince must sometimes be prepared to behave immorally in order to do his job. Rousseau recognizes that justice and utility can sometimes dictate different outcomes; his goal is to find a way to bring them together in a form of leadership that will provide both effectiveness and accountability.

Notwithstanding his normative purposes and commitment to popular sovereignty, Rousseau was an acute realist in thinking about power. Among several different political bodies, he argues that power will gravitate to the one with the smallest number of members (iii. 4). He also asserts that the government (the executive) will strive to gain power from the sovereign (the *demos*), so that the basic political forces will inevitably be in tension (iii. 1, 18). In these generalizations, he anticipates some of the most heated debates about governance and leadership in the next two centuries, as republican and democratic governments were for the first time widely instituted in the West.

5 Michels and Arendt

Like Rousseau, Roberto Michels (1876–1936) was convinced that broadly shared executive power and a 'leaderless organization' are impossibilities. 'In all times, in all phases of development, in all branches of human activity, there have been leaders' (Michels 1962: 72). Beyond this, however, Michels claims that democracy, in the sense of equal political participation, inevitably encounters obstacles 'not merely imposed from without, but spontaneously surgent from within'. This powerful tendency toward oligarchy rests '(1) upon the nature of the human individual; (2) upon the nature of the political struggle; and (3) upon the nature of organization' (p. 6).

Michels points to several features of human nature that explain the 'inevitability of oligarchy'. One is the ubiquitous desire to transmit good things to your children, including political privilege and status. Like Montesquieu, Michels also had little faith in the political competence of ordinary people or their potential for sustained political involvement. 'Man as individual is by nature predestined to be guided,' he says, and 'the apathy of the masses and their need for guidance has as its counterpart in the leaders a natural greed for power' (p. 367). Some individuals desire power and are willing to expend considerable effort to obtain it; once they have done this, they are often reluctant to return to ordinary life. For their part, followers may be quite content to let others do the hard work of politics while they get on with their own lives. In this way, Michels implicitly rejects Aristotle's system of ruling and being ruled in turn as unrealistic in terms of both human psychology and the dynamics of organizations.

Certain individuals in any society have particular advantages in becoming leaders. These include 'money and its equivalents (economic superiority), tradition and hereditary transmission (historical superiority)', and, most important, 'the formal instruction of the leaders (so-called intellectual superiority)'. For Michels, even when roughly equal individuals create an organization such as a political party, the experience and knowledge that some obtain through holding positions of leadership soon sets them apart from their fellows (pp. 107–10). It is hard to sacrifice such expertise in favour of enforced rotation in office-holding when the success of the organization may depend on the skills the leaders have acquired through their experience.

'The nature of organization' also promotes oligarchy. Michels says it is impossible for all members of an organization to determine together a course of action, even if they agree on policy directions. Nor can the group as a whole implement decisions. In the same spirit as Rousseau, Michels notes that, 'even in groups sincerely animated with the democratic spirit, current business, the preparation and the carrying out of the most important actions, is necessarily left in the hands of individuals'. In the end, Michels asserts, 'the principal cause of oligarchy in the democratic parties is to be found in the *technical indispensability of leadership*' (pp. 111–14, 364; emphasis added). Leadership, in this sense, is about making and implementing decisions for large numbers of other people.

The approach of Hannah Arendt (1906–75) to the exercise of political power was very different from that of Michels. She defines power as a resource available only to a plurality of persons. In this, power differs from force or strength.

> While strength is the natural quality of an individual seen in isolation, power springs up between men when they act together and vanishes the moment they disperse … What keeps people together after the fleeting moment of action has passed (and what we today call 'organization') and what at the same time they keep alive through remaining together is power.
>
> (Arendt 1958: 200–1)

The citizens of classical Athens experienced this distinctive form of human activity to the fullest; few other peoples have reached this height.

Arendt asserts that most political philosophy from Plato onwards has been dedicated to finding ways to avoid the onerous and exhilarating burdens of direct political engagement. 'The hallmark of all such escapes is the concept of rule, that is, the notion that men can lawfully and politically live together only when some are entitled to command and the others forced to obey' (p. 222). Leadership and initiative become the prerogative of one individual or a few rather than the community of citizens.

In Arendt's view, political freedom means not being subject to 'the command of another *and* not to be in command oneself', neither ruling nor being ruled (p. 32). To this idealized Greek conception of political equality and political involvement, she contrasted the medieval view that 'private individuals have interests in common, material and spiritual, and that they can retain their privacy and attend to their own business only if one of them takes it upon himself to look out for this common interest' (p. 35). This illusion that one individual can initiate political action and perform on behalf of others to achieve the common good is a profound misconception, Arendt argues. It blurs the distinction between the unequal relations characteristic of the Aristotelian household and the true space of political action. This division-of-labour approach to politics has unfortunately become a hallmark of the modern era.

For Arendt, all varieties of one-man rule, including Plato's philosopher-king, are deformations of the essential nature of political life (p. 221). The leaders may be benevolent and well disposed, but such regimes 'all have in common the banishment of citizens from the public realm and the insistence that they mind their private business' and leave the public business to the ruler. Like Aristotle, Cicero, and Rousseau, Arendt was convinced that political participation in governing is the distinctive feature of a truly human life.

For Arendt, 'the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself' (p. 57). The *polis* is defined, not by the city walls, but as 'the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together, and its true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be' (p. 198). No one can live in this rarefied space all the time: citizens also need the counterpart world of privacy, the home, and civil society, to which they can retreat. When they are engaged together in this common space, however, they create a political world and a form of plural leadership in which they make provisions for the common good and shape their shared life.

Arendt's theory can be read as describing a 'leaderless' form of political activity. She can also be interpreted, however, as presenting an alternative theory of leadership. Instead of identifying 'ruling' over others as the distinctive activity of political leadership, Arendt describes a situation in which citizens *collectively* craft solutions to common problems, define and clarify their common goals, and mobilize the energies of their community to act in concert. No one is ruling and no one is being ruled: instead, Rousseau's vision of a truly democratic decision-making process is developed in a direction that proved very fruitful for later theorists of deliberative democracy.

6 LENIN AND WEBER

Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (1870–1924) would surely have regarded Arendt's theories as naive abstractions and agreed with Michels on the 'technical indispensability of leadership'. Lenin had no use for broad political participation or vague assemblies producing the general will of the people. It was precisely such sentiments in the socialist parties with which he was familiar that led him to tackle the question 'What is to be Done?' This essay addressed a major lacuna in Marxist theory: the absence of any reference to leadership or practical political strategies in the struggle to overthrow capitalist domination and establish the dictatorship of the proletariat.

Lenin wrote specifically to 'combat spontaneity', a proclivity that he found wasteful and counterproductive (Lenin 1929: 41). He envisioned his party as a vanguard within the proletariat, disciplined, ruthless, and determined to succeed. His rhetoric left no doubt about the embattled nature of the effort: 'We are marching in a compact group along a precipitous and difficult path, firmly holding each other by the hand. We are surrounded on all sides by enemies and are under their almost constant fire.' Lenin's purpose was to overrule those who proposed to try conciliation, who wanted to bring everyone along with them or even 'retreat into the adjacent marsh' (p. 15).

The political consciousness necessary to make a revolution would never emerge spontaneously among the working class; it must be brought to them 'from without', by a small group of enlightened, battle-tested leaders (p. 32). Lenin asserted firmly that 'professional revolutionists' are essential to making a successful revolution, a 'stable organization of leaders to maintain continuity' (p. 116). 'Without the "dozen" of tried and talented leaders . . . professionally trained, schooled by long experience and working in perfect harmony, no class in modern society is capable of conducting a determined struggle' (p. 114).

This elite cadre of leaders must be thoughtfully chosen, carefully trained, and maintain secrecy among themselves. Lenin was convinced that this would lead to 'complete, comradely mutual confidence among revolutionists'. Members of a revolutionary organization do not have time 'to think about the toy forms of democracy'. However, 'they have a lively sense of their *responsibility*, because they know from experience that an organization of real revolutionists will stop at nothing to rid itself of an undesirable member' (p. 131).

Lenin's chilling conception of the 'responsibility' of leaders as designed to avoid unpleasant retribution by colleagues was very different from the meaning of this term for his contemporary Max Weber (1864–1920). In his lecture entitled 'Politics as a Vocation', Weber asserted that anyone who holds political power needs three qualities: 'passion, a feeling of responsibility, and a sense of proportion'.

Passion in this sense means serving a cause, having a goal larger than your own advancement as a leader. A good leader, however, does not just pursue such a passion single-mindedly. The leader must also be aware of his responsibility for those he leads

and for the state, and show a sense of proportion in pursuing the chosen purpose. This detached sense of proportion or perspective is rarely found in conjunction with passionate devotion to a cause, which helps explain why truly exemplary leaders are so rare. For Weber, proportion is 'the decisive psychological quality of a politician: his ability to let realities work upon him with inner concentration and calmness. Hence his *distance* to things and men', and even distance towards himself (Weber 1958: 115). The leader must be able to step back and look coolly at his own behaviour.

One of the reasons this sense of responsibility is so crucial to leadership is that for Weber, as for several of his predecessors in political theory, politics is ultimately about violence. Plato had depicted leadership as rooted in the military duty of the guardians to protect the state. Machiavelli asserted that the first business of the prince should always be preparation for war, and Lenin saw his vanguard party as an embattled group of revolutionary leaders. Weber finds the common thread in such observations when he concludes that the distinctive feature of politics is the legitimate monopoly of violence. This is what makes the politician's task so fraught with difficult ethical choices (p. 125).

Weber noted that the leader's distinctive 'ethic of responsibility' that he distinguishes from the 'ethic of ultimate ends' may sometimes involve behaving 'immorally' by conventional ethical standards. Truth-telling, for example, is morally obligatory for the saintly man, but not always the right course for the politician—if deception is necessary to save the state from enemies, for example. Such assertions recall the arguments of Machiavelli; but, unlike his Florentine predecessor, Weber recognized the agonizing impact that such choices can have on a sensitive leader, who may have to send fellow citizens to their death to defend the state. As he puts it, 'whoever contracts with violent means for whatever ends—and every politician does—is exposed to its specific consequences'.

There is no easy way out from the dilemmas such responsibilities present, no way to avoid their impact on the leader. 'No ethics in the world can dodge the fact that one must be willing to pay the price of using morally dubious means or at least dangerous ones—and facing the possibility or even the probability of evil ramifications' (p. 121). A leader cannot just step away and refuse to decide; he is responsible for the society he leads and has to take one course or another, even when every alternative is fraught with moral ambiguity. A leader is also 'responsible for what may become of himself under the impact of these paradoxes', once he 'lets himself in for the diabolic forces lurking in all violence' (p. 125).

To minimize the negative consequences of leaders being overwhelmed by such diabolic forces, many political theorists since Aristotle have concentrated their attention on devising a framework to institute alternative power centres to prevent the most heinous forms of abuse. Michels believes that all such frameworks are ultimately irrelevant. Lenin spurns them as irritating obstructions on the path towards revolution. Weber, like Plato, appears to assume that in the end these structures are less likely to be effective than the internal character and motivations of a political actor dedicated to providing responsible leadership for his community.

7 Conclusion

In this brief sojourn through several millennia, we have noted both the consistencies of attention to certain themes in the writings of ten political theorists, and also how the discussions have evolved over time. The legitimate control of violence; the role of fortune in leadership; the advantages of being loved or feared; what is useful and what is honourable; the implications of ruling and being ruled in turn—all these themes appear with regularity. Developing the tension described at the outset of this chapter, theories that propound the value of political expertise, such as those of Plato, Machiavelli, Michels, and Lenin, are balanced by the constitutional focus of Aristotle, Cicero, and Montesquieu. Other theorists take the tension between expert personal authority and limitations on the abuse of power in alternative directions. Rousseau combines absolute popular sovereignty with effective political leadership provided by a few. Arendt asserts that political power can only be a pluralistic gathering of perspectives and wills. Weber emphasizes the lonely initiative of the leader constrained by his own internal judgement and sense of responsibility.

The most significant new factor in this conversation is the advent of democracy on a large scale, sometimes called representative or republican government. The characteristic feature of such a system is the sovereignty of a large number of self-governing citizens. Self-government in such a system usually consists in collectively choosing those persons who will provide leadership for the community. Political 'leadership' takes on a new meaning: the responsibility for governing citizens who have ultimate authority over the governors (Pettit 2000: 106). The leader as ruler, statesman, or prince is replaced by the elected representative temporarily holding office in the state.

In this representative system the emphasis shifts from the character and internal qualities of the leader towards the rule of law and accountability to those who are governed. The single 'ruler' has been replaced by multiple types of leaders—elected executives and legislators, leaders of political parties and social movements—alongside more traditional leaders of smaller political units—municipal officials, bureaucrats, tribal chieftains, warlords. The 'legitimate control of violence' has surely not disappeared, but it is diffused in situations where persuasion, negotiation, conciliation, and bargaining are the most visible political activities.

It remains crucial to a healthy polity and a satisfying common life that our leaders be persons with good judgement and integrity, seriously dedicated to pursuing the common good, rather than demagogic, narcissistic individuals concerned only with advancing their own power. Both the Platonic emphasis on the beneficial expertise brought to political leadership by those who are gifted, well trained, and dedicated to the common good, and the Aristotelian concern with delimiting the scope of power available to any leader to make abuse less likely, are honoured in our understanding of what makes for good government. The tension between these two remains a vivid source of political dynamics, as it always had been.

Beyond these continuities, however, the novel challenges and opportunities of leadership in a *democracy on a large scale* are still being explored. The heavy demands and

deep benefits of participation in decisions that affect your life were well understood by classical Athenians; but they assumed that these benefits were necessarily limited to a small number of free-born male citizens living in a *polis* defined by neighbourhood and proximity. Many people now believe that such rights and benefits should be available to everyone, and that they can be adapted through the devices of representation and accountability to very large political associations incorporating millions of citizens.

However, we have not yet figured out how to design a constitution in which leadership can be broadly shared. How do we conceive of a system where sustained and vigorous political participation can be widely practised by very large numbers of engaged citizens, individuals who are also deeply involved in their own personal lives in the economy and civil society? Even if we could somehow design such a framework, it remains unclear how such a system could yield effective governance for a large and extraordinarily complex organization like a nation state. Dimensions of leadership that depend upon expertise, talent, discretion, and flexibility have been identified by theorists from Plato through Lenin and modern advocates of more authoritarian regimes. It is not easy to see how these factors can be made compatible with broad popular participation.

Despite the beliefs of theorists from Aristotle and Cicero through Rousseau and Arendt to contemporary democratic theorists that a fundamentally human political association is one in which we all actively participate—not just occasionally vote for our representatives and then retreat to private life—such a political system on a large scale has eluded our best efforts. This remains true even for those among us—not everyone, to be sure—who are convinced that such political engagement is indeed essential to a truly human life, and therefore a fundamental right that should be available to all.

Thus, even as we develop new forms of popular participation through social media technologies and other instruments still unknown to us, governance by a small number of representatives will, realistically, continue to be the defining characteristic of the political associations in which most of us will live our lives. The chapters in this volume are dedicated to helping us understand the various forms such leadership can take, and how we can make it more effective and more responsive to those who are governed.

Recommended Reading

These books are thoughtful explorations of the theme of leadership by contemporary political observers, building on the insights of the classical theorists discussed in this chapter.

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CHAPTER 3

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THEORY OF DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP*

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FRANK HENDRIKS AND NIELS KARSTEN

1 INTRODUCTION

THE idea of democratic leadership is inherently paradoxical. Whereas the concept of democracy rests on the idea of popular sovereignty—that is, self-government by an autonomous citizenry—and is based on an essentially egalitarian ethos, the concept of leadership necessarily encompasses hierarchy and hence inequality (Wren et al. 2005; Hernandez et al. 2011). In a truly democratic society, the leader is the odd one out. This paradox of democratic leadership is broadly recognized, both theoretically and empirically (e.g. Kellerman and Webster 2001; Ruscio 2008; Kane and Patapan 2012). Several scholars have provided insightful studies that have shaped our understanding of the leadership–democracy nexus (e.g. Weber 1992; Brooker 2005; Kane, Patapan, and Wong 2008; Ruscio 2008). However, most of these have not yet incorporated the theoretical diversity of understandings of democracy and its consequences for leadership.

Therefore, this chapter, in the tradition of Wildavsky (1984), aims to elaborate on the theoretical and empirical kinship between different styles of leadership and different models of democracy. The focal question is: what does democratic leadership amount to in different types of democracy? It finds a point of departure in Keane's three-stage model (2009) of democratic transformation (from classic 'assembly democracy', to modern 'representative democracy', to present-day 'post-parliamentary' or 'monitory democracy'), and in Hendriks's four ideal-typical models (2010) of democracy (pendulum, consensus, voter, and participatory democracy). We argue that political leaders increasingly operate in more hybrid forms of democracy—that is, democratic regimes in which characteristics of different forms of democracy are combined, and for that reason are required to develop varying political repertoires.

In Section 2, we elaborate on the paradox of democratic leadership. Section 3 presents the typology of democracies that we use in the discussion of political leadership types, the results of which are presented in Section 4. Section 5 provides an outlook for the future of democratic leadership studies.

2 The Paradox of Democratic Leadership

Many scholars have observed the tensions that are embedded in the term 'democratic leadership'. Democracy is, literally, rule by the people, the contraction of *demos* and *kratia*. In classic categorizations, by, for example, Aristotle, Plato, Polybios, and Spinoza, this mode of government is contrasted with autocracy and aristocracy. 'Rule by one' and 'rule by a few' are seen to be fundamentally different from 'rule by many', the latter of which rests on the ideal of self-government (Kane, Patapan, and 't Hart 2009a: 2). Democracy is about an autonomous *demos* governing itself as a collective, which entails that rulers who control the coercive power of the state need to be constrained. As Ruscio notes, 'the theory of democracy does not treat leaders kindly' (2008: p. ix). In a democratic context political leaders face a serious dilemma: 'the more democratic leaders lead from the front, the less democratic they appear; the more they act like good democrats, the less they seem like true leaders' (Kane, Patapan, and 't Hart 2009b: 299).

Yet, many have signalled that democratic practice cannot do without leadership. Although not all may agree with Ruscio's statement (2008: 5) that 'a rejection of leadership is implicitly a rejection of democracy', most will be inclined to recognize the empirical adequacy of such a claim. Modern democracies depend on at least some kind of political leadership (Blondel 1987). All the same, leaders are looked at with Argus' eyes; they are not always trusted, and checks and balances are institutionalized throughout democratic systems to keep them in check. In contemporary democratic regimes, in which political leadership has become vested in the executive branch of government in particular, power is subjected to a series of limits and constraints. Democratic leadership is embedded in an institutional context that aims to prevent corruption and the abuse of power and to ensure that leaders are responsive to their followers, through a variety of accountability mechanisms.

The paradox of democratic leadership is, thus, not just a conceptual ambiguity; it also carries substantial practical relevance. Political leaders in democracies face a multitude of demands, which are hard to reconcile. For that reason, several scholars have asked what being a democratic leader amounts to; and how can those involved manage the unique challenges posed on them (e.g. Ankersmit 1996; Hajer 2009; 't Hart 2011; Kane and Patapan 2012).

Many studies start from the core sense of democracy in its purest form—that is, popular sovereignty, which presents leaders with an inherent dilemma to which there is no real resolution (Kane and Patapan 2012). The picture changes when we look at the various democratic institutions that exist and in which different, equally legitimate

conceptions of democracy have materialized. Then, it transpires that leadership and democracy can work together, since some forms of democracy thrive under the guidance of certain types of leaders (see also McAllister 2011: 53–4). For this reason, we introduce a typology of democracy into the debate on democratic leadership. The main thesis is that the relationship between democracy and leadership is strongly influenced by intermediate variables, such as the type of democracy a leader operates in and the variety of accountability mechanisms that have been installed to keep leaders in check.

3 DIFFERENT UNDERSTANDINGS OF DEMOCRACY

In his bold attempt to write a new history of democracy, entitled *The Life and Death of Democracy*, Keane (2009) traces back the origins of the democratic mode of government to the 'juvenile' popular assemblies of Mesopotamia that existed up to 4 500 years ago. These are considerably older than the Athenian institutions that are traditionally seen as the first forms of democratic rule. Because of the crucial role of assemblies in the democratic process in these early days, he dubs this era as 'assembly democracy'.

Over time, and as democracy moves westwards, the idea of democracy becomes ever more strongly associated with the notion of representation. In the era of 'representative democracy', the democratic process is characterized by popular elections, political parties, and parliamentary representation. These mechanisms rest on the idea that the popular will is socially constructed in the sense that is has to be 'represented' in decision-making—that is, made present by representatives of 'the people' (see Pitkin 1967; Ankersmit 1996).

Representative democracy faced a recurring crisis in the twentieth century, Keane postulates, providing an impetus for the development of what he calls 'post-representative' or 'monitory democracy', which is characterized by a multitude of checks and balances that have been established in addition to and sometimes outside of the representative regime. Elected bodies and political executives, in the view of Keane, have become subject to extensive scrutiny by other actors, both institutional and social–political. These not only monitor the power, but also share power.

Whereas Keane suggests that post-representative, monitory democracy is a new and separate type of democracy that is essentially different from its predecessors, classic assembly democracy and modern representative democracy, we posit that it is more accurately viewed as a mixture of different and longer-existing types of democracies. The checks that have been placed on the representative regime—public referendums, for example, or citizen forums—stem from essentially diverse, but well-known normative convictions of what democracy should look like.

For our analysis we, therefore, also use Hendriks's theoretically informed typology of models of democracy. Inspired by Douglas (1996), and in the research tradition of Lijphart (1999), Hendriks distinguishes four models: pendulum democracy, consensus democracy, voter democracy, and participatory democracy. These are ideal types, in the Weberian sense, which can be used as conceptual coordinates with which once can assess empirical expressions of democracy. No 'real' democracy is as pure as the ideal types; real-existing democracies tend to a certain model and combine it with others. Switzerland, for example, is a prime example of consensus democracy (Lijphart 1999), which is combined with a relatively strong voter democracy and also participatory overtones (Kriesi 2005).

The typology first distinguishes direct democracy from indirect democracy. This distinction 'concerns the question of who makes the decisions in democracy: the citizens themselves, through self-determination (direct democracy), or caretakers, delegates or trustees, through representation (indirect democracy)' (Hendriks 2011: 48). When we combine this distinction with a second one between aggregative and integrative democracy—that is, between 'a 'counting-heads' process of aggregation in which a simple majority is decisive' and 'an integrative, 'talkative' process of conferring, seeking for the widest possible consensus and voting down minorities as little as possible' (Hendriks 2011: 48)—we arrive at the typology that is presented in Figure 3.1.

Pendulum democracy hinges on electoral competition between two predominant political parties or candidates. After each election, the winning party or candidate dominates the executive branch and makes the decisions. Citizen participation in the political process is mainly limited to casting votes. In voter democracy, however, the aggregative logic is combined with unmediated popular rule, rather than with representative delegation. Citizens take part in democratic decision-making directly by casting their votes in plebiscites. Widespread, direct involvement can also be found in participatory democracy, although here citizens' involvement means taking part in consensus-seeking deliberations, rather than casting votes. An integrative process of democratic decision-making is also characteristic for consensus democracies; yet there agreement is sought by representatives that citizens have designated, by popular election or otherwise, to act on their behalf. These models of democracy assume different types of leadership.

	Aggregative (majoritarian)	Integrative (non-majoritarian)
Indirect (representation)	**Pendulum democracy** *winner-takes-all leadership*	**Consensus democracy** *bridging-and-bonding leadership*
Direct (self-determination)	**Voter democracy** *heuristic leadership*	**Participatory democracy** *(dem)agogic leadership*

FIGURE 3.1 Hendriks's four models of democracy (2010) and corresponding leadership roles

4 THE AFFINITY BETWEEN TYPES OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND FORMS OF DEMOCRACY

Leadership in Assembly Democracy

The early days in the history of democracy were dominated by 'assembly democracy', in essence self-government through public gatherings, assembling often out in the open (Dahl 2000: 12). Keane (2009) argues that this form of democracy goes back some 2000 years before Athens, although the latter is still the strongest and best-documented example of assembly democracy.

We have a relatively good picture of how the *demos*, the free citizens of Athens, have dealt with its *kratia*, its government through the People's Assembly, the Council of 500, the Magistrates, the Law Courts, and the many rotating offices of the Athenian *polis* (Hornblower 1992; Finer 1997). This chapter is not the place to go into its details, but it should be noted that the democratic reforms of Cleisthenes (round about 500 BC) strongly encouraged the 'rule by many', while discouraging the 'rule by a few' (oligarchy), let alone 'the rule by one' (monarchy). Offices with power rotated routinely and were in most cases staffed by lot, a major exception being the military *strategoi*, who could in fact be elected year after year. Such election was how, for example, Pericles developed a strong and long-time leading position (Jones 2008: 126).

In many other ways, however, political leadership could flourish in assembly democracy, which at first sight seems to have been anathema to leadership. Athenian assembly democracy presented a context in which *demagogues* (literally 'people-leaders' or 'teachers of the *demos*') could flourish (Finer 1997: 361). Plato's negative assessment of 'mob orators' in Athenian 'theatrocracy' gave demagoguery a bad name. Finley (1977: 21) argues, however, that these people-leaders were actually 'structural to the system', in the sense that it could not function without them. On the same grounds, Keane (2009: 41 ff) suggests that Athenian democracy was not really 'direct democracy'. Yet, this claim is true only if direct democracy is defined as a political system in which *all* functions are performed by the *demos* as a whole, which is truly impossible.

Here we see direct democracy more conventionally as a system in which not representatives of the citizenry, but the amassed citizenry itself, has the 'political primacy', the mandate, and the tools to make decisions for the *polis* (Dahl 2000: 103; Kriesi 2005: 2; Held 2006: 4). In such a system 'symbolic' or 'aesthetic' representation (Pitkin 1967; Ankersmit 1996) is indeed highly important, but such representation in itself does not bring representative democracy, as is illustrated by the two types of direct democracy that we distinguish—that is, voter and participatory democracy.

Leadership in Voter Democracy

The general logic and some of the crucial institutions of Athenian assembly democracy are clearly evident in the Swiss version of democracy, which has in its turn

influenced the Swiss version of referendum democracy—both highly 'direct' in the sense of the conventional definition. At the kantonal level of Switzerland, only two small *Landsgemeinde* still decide on the most important public matters through a communal show of hands, but at the local level no less than 80 per cent of the Swiss municipalities continue to make decisions in this manner. They do so without representative institutions, but not without symbolic representation or political leadership, of sorts (Ladner and Bühlmann 2007).

The Swiss system of referendums and initiatives, which has grown strongly since the nineteenth century, can be seen as a continuation of a tradition of direct democracy with new and additional means—the small-scale, low-tech show of hands of assembly democracy being turned into the large-scale, more refined way of aggregating votes in plebiscites. Referendums and initiatives are truly direct in the sense that the amassed voter, and no one else, ultimately decides about substantial issues. The decision is not delegated to politicians or parties. As Kriesi (2005) has convincingly shown, however, members of the political elite are nevertheless crucial in providing the heuristic cues (who is for/against?) and arguments (what is for/against?) that form the basis for the collective decision. This finding suggests that, in voter democracy, leadership studies must focus less on formal positions and competences and more on heuristic and definitional powers of elites. With its New England Town Meetings (a version of assembly democracy not at all confined to the American East coast) and its initiatives and referendums in many states, the United States has been called Switzerland's 'Twin Republic'—much bigger now, but impressionable earlier on (Arx 2002). There are, however, differences, many of which have to do with the fact that voter democracy is combined with a dominant consensus democracy in Switzerland, and a dominant pendulum democracy in the USA. In the Swiss context, leadership roles are more often assumed by ordinary citizens, committed journalists, alarmed scientists, retired civil engineers, or anyone else with an aptitude for political organizing. In the American context private money plays a much bigger role. The (Californian) referendum democracy is even said to be led by an 'initiative–industrial complex' (Broder 2002; Zakaria 2003), in which direct legislation is written under the auspices of private interests, paying for the collection of individual votes.

Whether they act in a more 'commercial' context (California) or in a more 'public' context (Switzerland), leading actors in voter democracy are expected to be effective and responsive brokers of political movement in settings that are fundamentally horizontal and individualistic. The Californian organization that initiated the recall that was to bring the downfall of Governor Davis and was to usher in former movie actor Schwarzenegger went by the name of 'People's Advocate'—and that is perhaps the best job description of a political leader in voter democracy.

Leadership roles that would suit consensus democracy or pendulum democracy will not be accepted 'just like that' in voter democracy. People who act patronizingly or high-handedly ('just listen to me') will meet with resistance here. Voter democracy, in contrast to participatory democracy, does not cultivate aversion to people who take the lead per se, if only they lead in a way deemed appropriate by assertive individuals who define voter democracy.

Leadership in Participatory Democracy

There is a line that runs from ancient Athens and assembly democracy more in general, to the more aggregative forms of voter democracy that we dealt with in the previous subsection. But there is also a line that—via Rousseau, Marx, and others on the Old and New Left—runs to more transformative or developmental forms of participatory democracy (see Pateman 1970; Held 2006: 187 ff). Traces thereof can be found in many times and places: in the Paris commune, in the Israeli kibbutzim, in the New Social and Political Movements that have grown since the 1960s, in the experiments with communicative and deliberative democracy, with participatory planning and budgeting, with mini publics, and with citizen committees that have developed later on (Barber 1984; Dryzek 2002; Fung 2004; Goodin 2008; Hendriks 2010: 109 ff).

One of the most powerful reproaches that Schumpeter (1934; see also Brooker 2005) made to participation thinkers like Rousseau is that they lack a proper understanding of the leadership function in democracy; present-day discourse on deliberative, discursive, or communicative democracy is also notably silent on leadership. In all strong versions of participatory democracy, authority does not descend from the top down, from competing leadership, but rises up from the bottom, from an in essence undivided base (Gutmann and Thompson 2004; Gastil and Levine 2011). In the practice of participatory democracy, less strict than the theory, leadership roles appear to be feasible but tend to be modelled not on the role of the prominent and decisive leader who makes decisions on behalf of others, but rather on the role of the inspirational coach or guide who teaches others but is also aware that these others—the ones at the base—have to walk their own walk. One could think of the way in which inspirational leaders such as Ghandi and Mandela from a distance coached and guided the movements, which saw them as their leaders, but which also had to lead themselves for lots of the time.

Participatory democracy is, more than any of the other models of democracy, averse to executive leaders who get disengaged from the base. All sorts of constructions have been devised to prevent such disengagement from happening in organizations and movements that are sympathetic to participatory democracy. Decision-making rules in New Social Movements often demand virtual unanimity, or at least massive majorities, before going along with those who try to take a lead. The German *Grünen* like to work with rotating chairpersons, and their political leaders often come in two (not one in the lead, please!). Michels (1925), however, has shown that oligarchy is almost inevitable in large organizations, even in those on the Left that adhere to a participatory ideology, much to their own dismay. Freeman (1980) has revealed that in movements like the American women's movement the oligarchization may be hidden, but nevertheless discernible. To prevent an 'Animal Farm' ('all pigs are equal, but some pigs are more equal than others') from developing, counterweight is often sought in hyper-accountability: a permanent state of being accountable to those at the bottom (Hood 1998).

An exceptional leadership role may develop in the more radical political movements inspired by Rousseau, Marx, or Mao. As an exception to the rule, thus also a demarcation of it, one extraordinary person may be singled out as the shining example, the

personification of the lesson that is yet to be learned by all other pupils progressing on the road towards advanced understanding; the one radiant sun shining its light on a cloud of equal stars orbiting around it. An extreme example would be Mao Zedong, the great helmsman inspiring the cultural revolution in the communist 'People's Democracy' of China (Chang and Halliday 2005); or Robespierre, champion of democracy and participation à la Rousseau as well as instigator of the 'Great Terror' following the French Revolution (Scurr 2006).

The latter examples testify that leadership in the more extreme expressions of participatory democracy can become highly problematic. This risk might be less apparent in more moderate forms of participatory democracy, but there the role of leadership tends to be underestimated and understudied.

Leadership in Representative Democracy

Other than the idea of direct democracy, the concept of representative democracy explicitly assumes leadership, since it rests on the principle of collective political representation of citizens' interests in the decision-making process. This, however, does not mean that all representative democracies digest leadership equally well, or that democratic leadership amounts to the same thing in different representative democracies. In this respect, there are substantial differences between leadership in pendulum democracies and leadership in consensus democracies.

Leadership in Pendulum Democracy

Of the four models of democracy that we outlined above, pendulum democracy arguably provides the best breeding ground for strong political leadership. The 'winner-takes-all' electoral system fosters competition between a limited number of political parties, which provides a strong impetus for high-profile political leadership. It necessitates having a recognizable 'face' for one's political party, especially in a mediatized society (Langer 2007; McAllister 2011; see also Karvonen 2010), not only during election times, but also in between elections.

In pendulum democracy power, executive power in particular is concentrated in the hands of a few; it has a strong elitist ethos. Decision-making in this type of democracy necessarily means deciding for all the others, including those who have lost the electoral battle. In pendulum democracy 'power to' closely corresponds to 'power over' (see Stone 1989). Leadership is vested in the institutional make-up of this type of democracy, which places research into constitutional powers and competences at the forefront of leadership studies in this field (e.g. Lijphart 1999; Mouritzen and Svara 2002; McAllister 2011).

The mayors of those cities in the United States that operate under the strong-mayor form of government—such as Rudolph W. L. Giuliani, former mayor of New York City, or Richard J. Daley, former mayor of Chicago—provide examples of how prominently leaders are positioned in pendulum democracies. Having won highly competitive, 'winner-takes-all' elections, they are the prime political leaders of their local

governments, possessing a considerable amount of statutory, executive powers; they tend to dominate the local political–administrative system in what Mouritzen and Svara (2002) would label a strong-mayor system. At the same time, Ferman's comparative study (1985) shows that leadership styles that US mayors adopt may vary within some 'feasible space'. For example, while the then San Francisco mayor, Joseph Alioto, struggled to gain indirect influence through bargaining and persuasion, the then Boston mayor, Kevin White, managed to accumulate considerable direct power and to 'take charge'.

Foley (2000) provides a provocative account of what leadership in a pendulum democracy amounts to, arguing that Prime Minister Blair's leadership was of an almost presidential nature. This claim should be qualified, though. Heffernan (2005), among others, reveals how institutional factors significantly constrain the prime minister's power. Although pendulum democracy provides considerable room for strong leadership, political offices like that of the British prime minister, or like that of the American president (Miroff 1993), still operate in complex environments characterized by various checks and balances. Leaders' control over decision-making and over resources is not unlimited (see Yates 1977; Greasley and Stoker 2008). Further, over the last decades the interdependencies between public actors, and also between public and private actors, have increased considerably (Kickert, Klijn, and Koppenjan 1997).

One of the main risks of political leadership in pendulum democracies, therefore, is that of a discrepancy between the public desire for strong public leadership and political leaders' actual abilities to make a difference in free-market economies-*cum*-democracies.

Leadership in Consensus Democracy

Consensus democracy—versions of which can be found in countries such as Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, and Switzerland—provides an 'unfavourable biotope' for strong political leadership. Even the vocabulary of leadership—'showing leadership', 'being a leader', 'leading the way', and so on—is approached here with a type of hesitancy that is not encountered so much in, for instance, Anglo-American discourse (Lijphart 1999: 31–47; Andeweg 2000; 't Hart 2005: 234).

Consensus democracy is characterized by the dispersal and sharing of power, by institutionalized interdependencies between different public actors, and by practices of consultation and coalition building (Lijphart 1999, 2001; Andeweg 2000; Hendriks 2010). These leave relatively little room for 'acting boss'. The President of the Swiss Confederation is a case in point. Although the President chairs the Federal Council, he or she is a typical *primus inter pares*, not possessing any special powers that the other six councillors do not have. The presidency is vested in the collective of the Federal Council, rather than in a single actor, and is also kept in check by a system of rotation. As such, the President of the Swiss Confederation has a rather weak position (see Kriesi and Trechsel 2008: 69–80).

Consensus democracy may be inhospitable to the very idea of strong, individualized leadership (see Kellerman and Webster 2001: 487) as its institutional make-up of checks and balances, power dispersal, and power-sharing encages leadership (Lijphart

1999). It does, however, not rule out leadership altogether, especially not in the collegial sense, for which reason leadership studies in consensus democracy must focus less on the leadership behaviour of individuals and more on the leadership function of collective entities. Consensus democracy's leaders tie interests together in umbrella organizations; they represent particular socio-political groupings in the integrative process of decision-making; they bond and build bridges, both within and between interest groups (see Bryson and Crosby 1992; Putnam 2000). Thus, although 'leaders' in consensus democracies are traditionally approached with caution, democratic leadership in the form of 'keeping things together' is rather strongly developed. Former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok was renowned for his ability to do this (Velde 2002). Likewise, former mayor of Amsterdam Job Cohen was highly respected for being able to build bridges between different communities in the difficult times that followed the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh (see Hajer 2009: 76–96).

A classic criticism of leadership in consensual settings is that it lacks decisiveness. An extreme example is the 1699 *liberum veto* in the *Sjem*, the representative body of Polish nobles. This principle of unanimity rendered the *Sjem* practically unable to pass any legislation (Keane 2009: 257–63). The presumed lack of decisiveness, resulting from power-sharing and dispersal, has legitimized the call for stronger leadership that can be heard throughout Western Europe, both at the national and local level (Leach and Wilson 2002; Borraz and John 2004; Larsen 2005: 208; Bäck, Heinelt, and Magnier 2006).

An interesting development is the rise of quasi-presidential leadership in previously rather consensual settings (see Steyvers et al. 2008). An example is presented by the Belgian city of Antwerp, and its former mayor Patrick Janssens. In a context that is riddled with (institutional) checks and balances, Janssens managed to position himself as the prime leader of his party and also of the governing coalition (Van Aelst and Nuytemans 2007). A leaning to stronger, more expressive, and competitive leadership is also evident in countries such as the Netherlands (particularly post-Fortuyn) and Switzerland (under the influence of Blocher's SVP), where consensus democracy has become mixed with competing (and competitive) notions of democracy.

Developments like these illustrate the hybridization of democracy and the implications thereof for democratic leadership. As contemporary democracy combines characteristics of different forms of democracy, the nature of leadership is also bound to change.

5 Hybrid Democracy and the Study of Leadership

The advent of monitory democracy, according to Keane (2009), means that public leaders are under constant and intense scrutiny by a variety of public and private

actors, which makes it ever more difficult to generate, and especially maintain, authority. Authorities are constantly monitored by a diverse set of forums that can become very active and inquisitive. 't Hart (2001) speaks of an 'inquisition democracy', which evokes images of a ferocious pursuit of public leaders. Keane (2009: 857) uses a more gentle metaphor for the 'chastening of power'—namely that of Gulliver trapped by the Lilliputians, strapped down by a large quantity of little ropes.

Although the metaphor is forceful, it could easily misrepresent important aspects of contemporary democratic governance. Boundary-defying, Houdini-like, leadership is far from absent in modern-day society. Former Italian Prime Minister Berlusconi provides just one example. Moreover, recent structural reforms such as the introduction of elected mayors have strengthened the position of executive leaders throughout Europe. Neither have authoritative ways of working been eliminated, even from consensus democracies (e.g. Karsten 2012). The universal applicability of Keane's metaphor—the political leader as a trapped Gulliver—can thus be questioned.

What is more important is that we question the validity of Keane's claim that 'democracy is morphing into a type of democracy radically different to that our grandparents may have been lucky to know' (Keane 2009: p. xxvii). Conversely, we argue that modern democracy presents a mixture of long-standing models of democracy, rather than a new type of democracy on its own. The checks and balances that indeed are being installed, in the form of recall procedures, watchdog institutions, participatory arrangements, and the like, find their origin in longer-existing alternatives to representative democracy.

While consensus democracy is being spiced up with ingredients of majoritarian democracy of the Anglo-American sort, Westminster democracy is being supplemented with consensual elements of continental-style representative democracy; while self-governance is on the rise on both sides (Hendriks and Michels 2011). More generally, there appears to be an empirical trend towards hybridization of democracies throughout Europe (Loughlin, Hendriks and Lidström 2011). Democratic innovations are introduced into established democratic systems that 'stretch' these systems in directions that may be new to the individual countries, but not to the wider democratic repertoire. Modern democracy thus mixes ingredients that are not really new, although the cocktail they compose might taste quite differently.

We posit that this hybridization of democratic models requires a hybridization of leadership styles, and a study of democratic leadership that is sensitive to both. The expectations and demands regarding political leadership are highly diverse nowadays. Leadership has to show a common face on one stage, and superior qualities on a next. Leadership has to be tough in one arena, and empathic in another. However, different leadership roles cannot be easily 'employed' by a single leader at the same moment. A strong, decisive, authoritative leader can hardly be a power-sharing team-player at the same time. Leadership that finds the lowest common denominator of different leadership styles provides no real solution, since, as we have shown, every type of democracy requires a particular type of leadership. The paradox of hybrid democracies is that they require contradictory ways of governance

and leadership. There seem to be two pathways along which this problem can be resolved, both variants of what can be called 'kaleidoscopic leadership' ('t Hart and Hooven 2004).

First, leadership constellations may arise in which several leaders provide counteracting checks and balances for each other's positions and leadership roles. In the institutional make-up of the European Union, for example, different bodies (the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Council, the President of the European Council, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) perform different leadership roles and often compete with each other. Constellations like these, be they leadership tandems, troikas, quintets, and so on, diverge from consensus democracy in the sense that they do not strive for mutual agreement, but, more like pendulum democracy, are characterized by contestation. At the same time they diverge from pendulum democracy in the sense that leadership becomes multilateral instead of unilateral.

Alternatively, the mixed character of democratic leadership may be embedded in single offices. The Dutch mayoral office provides an insightful example. Dutch mayors are expected to play a wide variety of roles (Karsten, Schaap and Verheul 2010; Sackers 2010), varying from being a neutral—that is, non-partisan and non-political—*burgervader* ('father of the citizens'), to being the individual, political leader of the municipal government in socially and politically salient fields such as public safety, which means that Dutch mayors are required successively to adapt their leadership style to varying social and political circumstances. In Dutch discourse this skill is called *schakelen*—that is, 'alternating' between different leadership styles. The hybridization of democracy heightens the need for such alternation.

The study of democratic leadership has to follow and evaluate developments critically along the two pathways just mentioned. To what extent and in which way is the hybridization of democracy connected to the development of variants of kaleidoscopic leadership? How is this connected to notions of good democratic governance? Questions like these need to be posed and answered. The study of democratic leadership is necessarily contextual (Hernandez et al. 2011). The modelling of democracy matters for the expression of leadership. At the same time, however, individual agency does make a difference for what leaders are able to achieve in the leader–follower relationship. The interaction between the modelling of democracy and the expressions of leadership must therefore always be central to research in this field.

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