Abstract and Keywords

This chapter surveys how the field has addressed the central 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. The authors conclude that the study of leadership is a somewhat bewildering enterprise because there is no unified theory of leadership. There are too many definitions, and too many theories in too many disciplines. They do not agree on the meaning of leadership, on 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. Finally, the authors provide a brief conspectus of the Handbook.

Keywords: leaders, leadership, causes, consequences, leadership success, leadership failure

> Leaders…can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty pre-occupations 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?

Puzzles of Political Leadership

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 mixed feelings. Pleas for 'strong', 'transformational', 'authentic', 'visionary', or other allegedly 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 ambitious, 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 constraints 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 structures 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 leadership roles exist in parallel (distributed leadership), with inducements to act in concert (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 argument 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 policy 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, stupidity, 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.

(p. 3) 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)?

Puzzles of Political Leadership

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 (p. 5) 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 (p. 6) 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 product of the identities, needs, desires, and fears of followers and constituencies. More commonly, 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 undermining 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, offsetting 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 leadership 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, (p. 7) 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 (p. 8) 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 (p. 9) 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 (p. 10) 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 (p. 11) 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.

(p. 12) 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. (p. 13) 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 (p. 14) 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 (p. 15) 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 Mason-

ic 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*).

(p. 17) 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 (p. 18) 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, *s*ocial 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 (p. 19) leader-

ship. 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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