

American Presidential Leadership: Leader Credit, Follower Inclusion, and Obama's Turn

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Power Distance and Other DifferenceDRAFTHollanderClareAmPresR0920.doc

The American president has been called the most personal of our elected officials (Barber, 1972), and yet is seen at a distance from the public, even when viewed on television at home. The "majesty" of the presidency also can make for perceived aloofness psychologically from citizens and their everyday concerns. This chapter is directed primarily at how a president, considered as a powerful but distant leader, bridges the "power distance gap." His essential leadership task, and someday hers, is to reach followers, to gain and hold their support by showing how he will fulfill theirs and the nation's needs.

Followers have expectations about what their leaders will provide. "Whether in a corporation... or an entire nation, constituents seek four things: meaning or direction, trust in and from the leader, a sense of hope and optimism, and results" (Bennis, 1999, p.19). These benefits are basic to "leader-follower interdependence," and are rewarded by a leader receiving credit from followers, who identify with and support the leader (Hollander, 1958, 1992a). The sharply disparate attitudes about current President Obama, by members of the two main political parties, are shown in Table 1. They markedly affect his ability to gain and use credits for action, as well as to exert authority from legitimacy. Psychologically, even if untrue, attitudes seem to be so, and must be recognized in trying to reach people where they are.

Legitimacy and Credits from Followers

TABLE 1 HERE

A president's legitimacy is essential and usually decided by the results of an election. In President Obama's case, however, some detractors raised immediate questions about whether he was born in the United States, as a candidate must be to enter the presidential election. This accusation has the effect of "discrediting" him by delegitimizing his election. These detractors proclaimed doubts that President

Obama's birthplace was the State of Hawaii, saying he was therefore not a citizen born in this country, and would not accept his birth certificate as authentic. Some detractors, including media figures, also persisted in saying that he was a Muslim, thus creating distance separating him from the nation's mainstream. He asserted that he is and has been a Christian, never otherwise. In his earlier autobiography (Obama, 1995), he told about how he had come to his religious faith many years ago.

Leaders are nonetheless faced with the reality that, whether correctly or not, their qualities are evaluated by others. The focus of study has shifted from assessing a leader's characteristics to how the leader is seen by follower attributions, and how followers in turn respond to the leader. The particular "discrediting" process used against Obama aims to nullify the legitimacy of his election, and create a barrier to his gaining support for his actions. This process amplifies and extends the usual differences between those who favor or reject a president, often based on party, with pro or anti responses to him. Further fundamental splits also exist in reactions to appeals for change or for keeping things the same, seen when either is proposed. Resistance to change or insistence upon having it are powerful motivators. Other such stark conflicts exist about freedom vs. responsibility, and freedom vs. security.

As already indicated, an approach to this phenomenon is to think of followers giving credits to a leader when seen as belonging and performing well. However, credits that would be earned from the electorate by their perceptions of a president's competence and loyalty to the nation are not given to him if he is branded a "foreigner," If believed not legitimately elected, he is likely also to be considered not trustworthy. Negative attitudes about his policies, seemingly based on economic, organizational, military, or moral concerns, are actually fixed by firm prior political tendencies (Westen, 2007). An important consequence is to make for potentially greater psychological distance for him to surmount in relating to larger portions of the nation's constituencies.

In general, credits cannot be earned when there are limiting conditions such as these. A major lack is the absence of the basic one of an "open system,"

less constrained by authority pressures, or here by opposition media campaigns and denial of who and what a leader is and does. In politics, using negative attributions is a well-known device, but the terrain and content used here are quite distinctive.

For a president to accomplish the feat of keeping a following in the face of this assault requires trying through the media, at a distance, to present facts about “getting things done.” These messages must fit the needs and expectations of a diverse electorate, by no means all his followers. Some will be skeptical and even hostile. The general evaluation of a president, pro or con, is usually based on his party initially, and underlies attitudes about him, his policies, and his ability to “sell” them successfully to constituencies and to Congress. This explains the need for a “continuous campaign mode” so a president can retain a following by positive views of what he does, and tries to do on a timely basis, despite opposition.

The physical and psychological distance between a president and his audience is bridged through the media, not just from his messages, but by many others about him, including on the internet. These messages are then interpreted by individuals’ identification with or rejection of the president, filtered through their primary groups (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). A president’s loyal followers are likely to have positive perceptions of him and his policies. In presidential elections, and in midterm ones also, turning out to vote for his party’s candidates can be especially critical, as well as getting others out, too. This “loyalty effect” is usually found (e.g., Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1948; Campbell, Gurin, & Miller, 1954).

Inclusive Leadership, Trust, and Loyalty

“Inclusive leadership” is directed toward “doing things with people, rather than to people.” It emphasizes relations of “respect, recognition, responsiveness, and responsibility, both ways” for loyalty to occur. As its name indicates, it involves including others in the tasks of leadership, as seen when listening to them about their needs and interests (Hollander, 2009, pp 3-5). Our midterm post-election surveys in different places and times showed that follower loyalty was associated with a president’s signs of inclusive leadership. These practices in leader-follower

relations are not the same as “stroking” constituents for their votes because it encourages inclusion by openness to follower influence on leader behavior. This is aptly called “upward influence” (Hollander, 2004b), and is likely to prove the value of two-way communication in achieving productive outcomes. Because listening is also respectful, it is important in inclusive leadership for maintaining relationships.

Follower perceptions of legitimacy and performance combine with evaluations of whether the leader shows the four inclusive elements of respect, recognition, responsiveness, and responsibility, which are returned in kind. They are vital in perpetuating trust and loyalty found in positive leader-follower relationships. Followers may then exercise checks on leader behavior from inclusion, even bringing about alterations. Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair (2010) concluded from his career, “... not that the power of politics is needed to liberate the people ... but that the power of people is needed to liberate the politics” (p. 687).

As already indicated, identification with a president is significantly related to followers’ perceptions of issues, voter preferences, and voter turn-out. This accords with Freud’s (1921) conception of shared identification with a leader, who is an “ego-ideal” for followers, and also fits cognitive balance theory (Heider, 1958). Its effects are demonstrated in our post-election surveys studying a president’s “pull” in his first midterm election. These archival findings from surveys directed by me in Pittsburgh in 1954 with Eisenhower and in Buffalo in 1962 with Kennedy, showed that continued loyalty to the president of one’s own party significantly influenced voting for Congress and perceptions of economic conditions as good. If not, despite others who defected, those loyal to the president still reported they were good, even if their own income had dropped (Seaman, Hollander, & Richer, 1975; Hollander, 1983). International issues had less effect, but at both times without war, other than the “Cold War” with the Soviet Union. Fighting in Korea had ended, and major American entry into Viet Nam had not occurred. Also, few “independents” were in our samples then compared with now.

A president is elected with a vice president for a four-year term by the national electorate, and is both head of state, as is a monarch, but also head of government, as is a prime minister. These roles are separable enough for a president to be liked as head of the nation, but less for policies and/or politics, as President Obama found even in his first year in office. Though often the case with a new president, Obama began on a “high” of percentage favorability in the 70s. Such numbers carry “great expectations” that can produce a significant drop when unmet. Obama fell below 50 per cent soon after his first anniversary in office, even with his legislative gains, often painfully achieved with long, and publicized, deal-making, against strong foes.

Table 1: Comparative Democrats’ and Republicans’ Percentage

Responses to President Obama on Several Issues, after a Year in Office.

Adapted from Blow (2010a), NY Times, Feb. 6, p. A-19.

	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Approval of Job Obama Is			
Doing as President	81	14	-67
Obama Trying to Reach Out			
to Change Politics in Washington	72	18	-54
Think Obama Blames Bush			
Administration Too Much	11	79	+68
for the Country’s Situation			
Think Obama is Better			
Described as a Washington	28	50	+22

Insider rather than Outsider

In February 2010, President Obama held a “health care summit” to speak with congressional leaders of both parties. David Axelrod, a presidential advisor, stated the case for it saying that the president couldn’t just “..snap his fingers or even twist arms and make change happen,” He added that, “[I]n this great democracy of ours, that’s not the way it is” (Stolberg, 2010). Still, the president got the crucial votes needed to pass the health reform bill by a great deal of persuasion, which is a president’s major power in gathering support for what he wants done (Neustadt, 1990). Kellerman (1984) considered such political skill essential to an effective presidency. She explained that the president and constituents have a relationship that evolves over time, and that presidential leadership must be accomplished within the “world of other people,” a “base” whose needs are served.

Trade offs become necessary. Soon after President Obama announced allowing some coastal oil drilling, the April 2010 oil disaster occurred in the Gulf of Mexico. He then called a six-month halt in deep water drilling there to investigate and find ways to avoid a repetition, but faced opposition. James Carville, a major Democratic strategist, said some drilling was important for Congress to pass his still waiting energy program, to keep him succeeding (Harwood, 2010). This attempted accommodation, again to try broadening his base, netted expected criticism from some of them, and a credit loss. The dilemma was to keep supporters while seeking to include different others to decrease the distance gap with a larger group of them.

President Obama still faces another such unresolved conflict in the economic crises called “Main Street vs. Wall Street,” which he hoped would improve enough by the Recovery Act (“stimulus bill”) that provided funds to create jobs related to state and national needs, including teachers, police and firemen. The effect on the unemployed looking for jobs in the recession has been limited. They have been especially distressed comparing huge governmental programs to “bail out” banks and other financial and industrial organizations with what they see as lacking in actions to help them get jobs and to rejoin the lagging consumer economy. A former

Labor Secretary for President Clinton lamented that, "... little has been done since 2008 to widen the circle of prosperity. Health-care reform is an important step forward but it is not nearly enough...Policies that generate more widely shared prosperity lead to stronger and more sustainable economic growth – and that is good for everyone" (Reich, 2010). In short, inability to buy maintains the recession.

A related crisis exists in housing foreclosures pursued by mortgage lenders, including banks assisted with taxpayer funds. Very few homeowners, many of whom lost jobs, have been enabled to save their homes from lender takeover, even with government programs to cut the great numbers of those lost. The image of despair this creates falls on Obama as the sitting president, even when the poor lending policies criticized were from the previous administration's time in office. As another president, John F. Kennedy, famously said, "Life is not fair." Nonetheless, it is Obama's task to have constituents satisfied with what he has done and will do for them. By Fall of 2010, his favorability percentage fell and stayed in the mid 40s.

Gaining and Using Credits from Followers

The long-standing "leader-centric" focus on leader qualities viewed them separately from how they affected followers. To help relate these, the concept of "Idiosyncrasy Credits" (IC) was put forward (Hollander, 1958, 1964, 1978, 2004a, 2006, 2007). Credits earned from followers' perceptions of his or her competence and loyalty to their group, even nation, can be used to provide latitude for the acceptance of a leader's influence and other actions. How successful the leader is in effecting change then depends upon the perceptions followers have of the leader's activities and associated motivations. A leader seen to fail to produce results is vulnerable to blame. It is as if followers said, "We expect good results from you. If you choose an unusual course of action, we will go along with you and give you some latitude. But eventually you are responsible if the outcome is failure to achieve our goals."

An important related expectation is that once accumulated, credits will be used to take needed actions. Failing to do so results in losing credits because the leader who "sits" on his or her credits can be seen as not fulfilling role obligations. What followers do about it depends on such actions as elections can provide. This is part of "transactional leadership," involving a social exchange in which the leader gives something and gets something (Homans, 1974, Ch. 11). A president's distance gap may be bridged if a "fair exchange" is perceived, where the incumbent is seen to be doing well enough to deserve the advantages of his status (Jacobs, 1970). However, followers may feel an inequity if the leader fails because of an apparent lack of effort, or from a disregard for followers interests, seen as a leader "out of touch" (Hollander, 1978, 1992a,b). Followers may then experience a lack of enthusiasm, even despair and distance from the process. In this way, poor leaders can create angry followers, alienated, and if not protesting, then unresponsive, with loss of interest and of participation (cf. Kelley, 1992; Kellerman, 2008).

To avoid this dysfunctional state, inclusive leadership is useful as a remedy. It offers an overarching conception and systematic process emphasizing relational factors to create and sustain loyalty as a leader-follower bond. It incorporates the IC concept to indicate the evaluative element in follower effects on leaders. Indeed, whether leaders are called transforming or transactional, the common element that unites them is attention to followers' needs, and evidence of care if asked, "What have you done for us lately?" In the political arena, Burns stated, "...only the followers themselves can ultimately define their own true needs. And they can do so only when they ... can make an informed choice among competing 'prescriptions'" (1978, p. 36).

Follower needs will determine whether rewards, intangible as well as tangible, are found to be satisfactory in motivating them to follow. Basically, a leader must establish a following. My late friend John Gardner said, "Executives can be given subordinates, but a following must be earned" (1987, p.4). A psychologist, author (see 1961, 1963, 1990), and foundation head, Gardner served as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in Lyndon Johnson's Cabinet. He was its only Republican, and later founded Common Cause, a non-partisan public interest group. Among his

many activities was the Kellogg Leadership Studies Project, which we both served in the 1990s. He knew of the enormity of demands made on a president for many roles and tasks, apart from politics, and it is useful to show them here in a brief overview.

The President's Roles and Tasks

The big picture of the multiple roles fulfilled by a President, and the tasks they relate to, is shown in Table 2. Presented there are a large part of what political scientists, historians, journalists, and others have listed as making up the responsibilities of this immense position, even characterized as “Leader of the Free World.” All of these rightly belong on any list, but they are by no means independent. Overlapping and merging of them occurs, and in carrying out these functions many forces can intrude. Among them are inevitable sudden crises, an uprising abroad in a strategic place, an increase in unemployment, a physical disaster at home or elsewhere, all needing to be addressed, and often simultaneously. Furthermore, different voices of contending constituencies may all call for attention and prompt action in their sector of concern instead of in others.

Table 2.(HERE)Presidential Roles and Tasks -- Dynamic, Overlapping, Interrelated

ROLES

Head of State, Chief Executive, Head of Party,

Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces,

Chief Diplomat, Chief Spokesperson of Government,

“National Healer,” “The Decider,” “Definer of Reality”

TASKS

Identify Issues, Offer Solutions, Press Legislation,

Appoint Personnel, Assign and Monitor Functions,

Provide Information, Conduct International Relations,

Set Budget, Relate to Legislative and Judicial Branches,

Oversee and Coordinate Departments and Agencies,

Conciliate among Contending Constituencies

Attain and Maintain an Active Following by “Continuous Campaign Mode”[In Ital]

Further Challenges to Legitimacy

As stated earlier, as an elected leader a president generally benefits from legitimation by followers committed to his four-year term of office. Two traditional sayings reflect this: “We only have one president at a time” and “The president is president of all the people.” Both are contradicted by using untruths and abusive terms about a president, as is more evident now in the mass media and the internet.

Once in office a new president fills what journalist Lou Cannon called “the role of a lifetime,” in the title of his book about Ronald Reagan. However, having an inauguration makes every president play a special set of roles, shown in Table 2. A new president usually had a “honeymoon period,” in which the public would “rally around” if the president initially had difficulties. In his first year, John F. Kennedy as an example, gained substantially in the polls after taking responsibility for the failed invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs in 1961. The next year, he was more decisive, questioning the institutional positions and advice of senior officials, by showing restraint in the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Again Kennedy’s ratings with the public rose. These events are linked, at times confused with one another, but reveal a president’s progress in his role as leader in international military crises.

The degree of a follower’s closeness, and identification with a president, is usually affected by party identity, and whether or not that person voted for the incumbent. The sense of his legitimacy is based also in respect for the integrity of the electoral process and the nature of the election victory. But it was severely

tested in the 2000 Bush-Gore election, in which Gore won the popular vote, but the Supreme Court decided for Bush, after it stopped the recount of votes in Florida, giving its electoral college votes to him. Regarding an earlier time, George Reedy (1973), who had been a press spokesman for Lyndon Johnson during the 1960s, asserted that: "... a man might have only 51 percent of the votes, or even less, and still be able to make some rather sweeping changes...Many Presidents have found their following has increased enormously the day after election" (p. 26).

The pronounced partisan split in the public's attitudes revealed in Table 1 makes this view seem quaint now, given Barack Obama's 53% of all votes, with the highest total number ever. Yet, though thwarted, he had some notable bills passed, including child health care, the recovery act/ stimulus, health care, financial and credit card reform, among them. Legitimacy is not seen therefore just in having the presidential role, but in the public's response, its effect on passing laws, and on his appointments. At times distanced politically, his credit limited, Obama seemed to be losing. As Presidential scholar Sean Wilentz (2010) saw it, "Obama looks less like a political messiah and more a victim of unrealistic expectations raised...by his election campaign"(p.34), and with political opponents determined he should fail.

Bill Clinton won office in 1992 with just 43% of the vote, although it was in a three-way race. That contributed to difficulties he had instituting his programs at the outset, particularly a health care bill that hadn't gained enough support in Congress. But President Obama, even with 53%, faced and still faces the initial higher legitimacy hurdle already noted, of whether he was born in the United States and assertions that he is a Muslim, though he and his wife and children have attended church. Evident here too are reactions to his race, which Susan Fiske and her colleagues (2009) found to be positive in the election campaign for both non-Blacks and Blacks who fit him into the "moderately warm, highly competent Black-professional" social subtype. This was in line with what he put in his book, Audacity of Hope (Obama, 2006, pp. 234-40) about his acceptance racially in campaigning. Yet, his 49% overall favorability at 18 months dropped most among whites to 41%.

Though a ratings drop is usual in a president's second year, these global evaluations need further analyses to reveal particular public's attitudes about a president's politics and policies. President Obama's initiatives for change expose a basic split that exists when a threat is felt by those comfortable with the way things are. Rather than credit him for such initiatives as health care reform, they will criticize it and withdraw any credit, often with a feeling of distrust. Indeed, just a year after his inauguration, even with his eloquence about change, the public's trust in him fell into the 40% range across the board for his handling of the economy, health care, budget deficit, and terrorism. After his first year, therefore, Obama had about the same percentages as did Republican leaders (Blow, 2010b). Hopes truly can inspire, but require clear presentation of how a program provides added value.

Charisma and Its Limits

Though charisma has been imputed to President Obama, if he does have it with some supporters for his opponents it seems more like its polar opposite, "derisma," coined from "derision" or "derisive." Has charisma helped with his programs and counteracted the criticism he receives? The answer in general is "No, or at best only for a while." Can charisma help in bridging the power distance gap? Possibly, but usually the charismatic appeal of emotional arousal and identification have limited permanence, and other negative features (Howell & Avolio, 1992; Howell & Shamir, 2005). Its major proponent, Max Weber (1947) said charisma depends upon perceptions by followers who can withdraw it, "...if the leader is long unsuccessful" (p. 360). Peter Drucker (1988) affirmed the point that charisma should not be confused with performance. "Doing, not dash" is what matters, he said. In fact, much is in the "eye of the beholder" (Simonton, 2008).

Charisma can be thought of as having a big credit balance from your supporters, initially usable for getting things done. Detractors do not want that to happen. Even for supporters, reality enters with obstacles that make it harder to have things go your way. Major ones for a president are opposition politicians, congressional leaders, such as committee chairs of one's own party, and interest group lobbies. At the other end of the scale is discontent among citizens with the

“power distance gap” and income disparities. Responding requires “inclusion,” shown by such phrases as “he cares about people like me,” when a president goes to speak and listen to citizens, often necessary to overcome a blockage in Congress.

Idiosyncrasy Credit (IC) Relationship to Transforming Leadership (TF)

A link can be made between credit and Burns’ concept of “transforming leadership.” Such leaders, wishing to bring about change, provide benefits to followers that facilitate reaching that goal. These are rewards, which are more likely to earn credit from followers and be directly oriented to a change process, by defining a situation and giving direction to activity (Hollander & Julian, 1969).

Burns said that TF operates to bring people together for higher purposes. Such leaders are interested in more than garnering votes; they want to bring about change institutionally and systemically, “... to achieve broad human purposes and moral aspirations...among potential followers, bringing them to fuller consciousness of their needs...The secret of transforming leadership is the capacity of leaders to have their goals clearly and firmly in mind... (Burns, 1984, p. 103). Two presidential examples Burns gives are Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan. Though of very different political views in office, it is notable that Reagan said he admired Roosevelt, and had voted for and supported him when he, Reagan, was a Democrat and served as head of the Screen Actors Guild, a union.

Especially in the political realm, Tucker (1981) delineated three phases that benefit this function: diagnosing the problem facing the constituency; prescribing a course of action, which is “policy formulation”; and mobilizing action, which is “policy implementation.” The latter also involves a more energized follower role, particularly in having supporters activated at election times (Hollander, 2007, 2009).

In his extension of work on transforming leadership, Bass (1997) has identified and measured “intellectual stimulation” and “inspiration” as two of its major qualities. These are clearly appropriate for a successful presidency, among others that characterize transforming leadership (See Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Regarding the first, a president needs to communicate a credible “social reality” that becomes a shared, fact-based understanding. This definition of the situation, is necessary for a President’s standing with constituents. Persuasion requires clear and repeated explanations to show what is needed and why. A mainly inspirational appeal brings up the comparison between campaigning and governing— i.e., trying to become the leader and successfully doing the tasks required of the leader.

Also noteworthy, these evident rewards associated with what the leader provides to followers has led Burns (2007) to state, “I think my book (1978) is overly dichotomized. There is a stronger connection between transforming and transactional leadership than I led readers to believe. I think we have a spectrum. A few leaders operate wholly on the transforming side, but most work on both sides of that spectrum and combine transforming and transactional leadership” (p. viii).

President Obama’s handling of a health reform bill had even his friendliest supporters saying he neither inspired nor informed the electorate enough, as he did to be elected. He was faulted in particular for not specifying what he wanted, which he did eventually, in “closing the sale.” But he had given the bill’s shaping entirely to negotiations that hung on in Congress for most of a year. Obama allies said he wished to avoid President Clinton’s mistake of having his health bill resented by Congress, and then left to die there. In 2009, two different bills, one from each house, did pass eventually. In that time, though, opposition voices gave frequent misinformation about the bills’ provisions. Fear-provoking allegations, such as “government death panels,” were not refuted soon, and strongly, but only after damage was done, therefore not in time to be effective. This lapse was in the face of opposition in Congress that was uniformly arrayed against any votes that would let Obama have his programs pass. The goal was clear even before an opposition senator said that making passage of the health reform bill fail would be “Obama’s Waterloo.” The historian Garry Wills (2010) said in this situation a president must exercise power, at least having it “be feared,” rather than signaling weakness. This is an homage to Machiavelli’s advice to his prince centuries ago. Nevertheless, Obama’s major approach still seems to be to try persuasion (Nagourney, 2009).

A quote attributed to the French philosopher John Paul Sartre is, “To be a leader is to be responsible.” Responsibility and accountability are essential to leadership, in a president, but also in those called the “loyal opposition,” referring to their presumed obligation to the interests of the nation and its citizens. Shirking that responsibility runs the risk, among others, of further alienating the public from politicians, to no one’s benefit. Maintaining communication with the nation is a significant presidential task (Baker, 2010). This has sometimes been reduced to the idea of a “continuous campaign mode,” related to what Theodore Roosevelt called the “Bully Pulpit.” Recent Presidents—Carter, Reagan, on through the second Bush and Obama --- tried to serve as Voice of the People in "cheerleading" aimed at the “public" and “players" in Congress, while seeking to act as Chief Legislator and Chief of Party. Though with different positions on the political spectrum, all of these Presidents at some point were “running against Washington," as a theme.

During the 1980 campaign, the political humorist Mark Russell commented that in 1976 Jimmy Carter said, “Washington is rotten, and I want to go there.” “Now,” said Russell, “four years later, he's the guy he warned us about.” Ronald Reagan’s defeat of Carter in 1980 marked a seismic shift for twelve years back to Republican presidents, until Bill Clinton was elected in 1992 and reelected in 1996. Reagan’s policies were predicated on his slogan that “Government is the problem, not the solution.” He had considerable appeal, including across party lines, with so-called “Reagan Democrats,” who favored his tax cuts and tough anti-Soviet Union policies, among others. He continued as president to detach himself from government by referring to it in the third person as "they" or "them" in statements criticizing public employees, and telling listeners, “Send a message to Washington.” This illustrates how a president can create distance from Congress and the federal establishment, at the same time that he shows closer identification with ordinary citizens and their discontents.

Leadership as a Process: Micro and Macro

Leadership is critical to the health of a group, organization or nation. Because of its vital function, especially in the presidency, there is the potential for a so-called "leadership crisis" to occur and take on great significance. One such crisis is revealed in the expression about a "lack of leadership," which suggests aimless drift and purposelessness. Two helpful "inclusive leadership" remedies are listening to concerns and clarifying intentions of what is proposed. Through such open communication with followers, it is possible to bring about inclusion and reduce the effects of psychological distance. Oftentimes a crisis produces a call for "strong leadership," often meaning something quite different, tending toward dominance by a leader. At best, what is desired is a balance yielded by authentic follower involvement in the leadership process, which is far more challenging to achieve at the macro level, given the distance from a president and intervening media voices.

The traditional social psychology literature on leadership deals primarily with small groups. A good representative survey of it is by Valerie Kent (1996). In micro-leadership study, face-to face discussion groups predominate, concerned with influence, supervision, some management of production groups, and work on group decision-making. Worthwhile as it is, it does not translate in all particulars to the macro-leadership scene of presidential leadership on a national, indeed global, scale.

Many things are different going from micro- to macro-leadership events. Not least among them are the intensity and consequences of exercising power on a large scale. However, there is a parallel process both in small groups and in mass society: an elected leader has a particular commitment from constituents. The legitimacy of a leader, through election or appointment, has been found routinely to create differing effects on American subjects in their relating to leaders (Hollander & Julian, 1970). More is expected of elected leaders by followers who voted for them.

Study of the relationship of leaders and followers has increased in recent decades (e.g. Hollander & Offermann, 1990; Kelley, 1988, 1992). An early

contributor to it was Chester Barnard (1938) with his “Acceptance Theory of Authority,” centered on the follower’s role in judging if an order is authoritative. Mary Parker Follett (1949; see also Graham, 1995) raised a similar point, and put forth her concept of “power with.” Followership is now becoming more prominent as a field of study (e.g., Riggio, Chaleff, and Lipman-Blumen, 2008; Kellerman, 2008; Chaleff, 2004; Van Vugt, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2008). Price (2008) has done a philosophically-based analysis to explain leader initiatives, especially as they are seen to be rule-breaking. Using the study of ethics and moral theories, he considers that leaders have special latitude from followers to behave in different ways, what he calls “leader exceptionalism.” Building on the credit concept, Price’s formulation is another “relational” concept, stressing follower influence in the acceptance of leader behavior, too often disregarded as a feature of leadership in the past.

Personal Qualities of a President

Perceived competence is widely recognized as a major variable in evaluating performance, and it is especially essential in believing a president is successful. But it can be highly affected by situational factors. Among these are institutional structures and culture, as well as changed circumstances over which one has no control, though still held responsible by attributions of followers (Calder, 1977). Among the examples, world oil cost more under President Carter, and less under President Reagan (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994). A president is credited or faulted for a policy or situation left by his predecessor (Simonton, 2008).

With the volume of writings about the presidency by journalists, historians, political scientists, and even presidents, there is no one major approach to it. However, when “psychological” factors have been considered, they are seen mostly regarding the personality qualities of a particular president, as in “psycho-history,” essentially an analytic biography (e.g., Betty Glad, 1980, on Jimmy Carter). A variant is the character typology, i.e., positive-negative crossed with active-passive, contributed by Barber (1972). In that system, Franklin Roosevelt was an active-positive and Richard Nixon an active-negative. How and what this adds to a

president's relationship with the public, especially in reducing the distance gap by inclusion, is worth attention by analyzing personal qualities, such as character.

One of those often considered a great president is Abraham Lincoln, who was controversial at a bitter time leading up to and during the Civil War (1861-65). Yet, he is recognized now for his ability to rally support for great attainments, not least ending slavery in this nation. Three qualities Lincoln possessed made him stand out among his followers, according to a Lincoln biographer, historian James Oakes (2009). He said these are, "capacity for growth," "political skill," and a "way with words" to communicate and persuade. Oakes concluded that in a responsive way great leaders invite themselves to be "forced into glory" by followers (pp. 3-5), thereby showing a leader's achievements arise from strong identification with him.

Clearly, these individual differences among Presidents affect the way they deal with the distance gap in relating to constituents and governmental institutions. Harold Laski (1940) emphasized at the outset of his classic work The American Presidency that political institutions "change with changes in the environment within which they operate, and...differ, from one moment to the other, in terms of [those] who operate them" (p. 1). David McClelland (1964) emphasized motives of achievement, power, and affiliation as a leadership need system. His colleague, David Winter (1973) did content analyses of 20th century presidential inaugural addresses to assess these needs, and found that the need for power was mainly associated with presidents involved in the onset of wars. Relatedly, presidents seen as "great" in history were most often wartime ones. Is confidence inspired then by being "a wartime president," even if made distant from constituents who oppose the war? Does it protect a president from such critics, by calling them "unpatriotic"?

Though it seems not to be a benefit for a president to have an unpopular war, a state of war may allow a president to extend his powers, much as those of a monarch. This appears not to be the case for President Obama as he oversees two wars, albeit inherited from his predecessor. George Washington rejected having the president be like royalty, but concern has been expressed since over the

"Imperial Presidency" (Schlesinger, 1973). In a book (1966) by the late Senator Fulbright, whose name graces teaching and study awards internationally, he deplored the "arrogance of power." He saw it largely in the presidency of a fellow Democrat, Lyndon Johnson, in conducting the war in Viet Nam. These tendencies again were criticized when aggressive initiatives were taken abroad in recent times, through various secret assertions of presidential power (Dean, 2004). The Gallup Poll Director (Newport, 2007) reported that the intensity of this issue explained President Bush's low approval rating of just 37% on the sixth anniversary of his inauguration, the lowest of all his prior ones. Respondents were disapproving of President Bush's assertion of his role as "the decider" to do whatever he wanted without regard for the expectations of constituents and Congress.

Indeed, it is the Congress that the Constitution mandates as the body to declare war, but in fairness no president has requested it since Franklin Roosevelt did when Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Japanese in December 1941. Garry Wills (2010) said this showed that the intent of the recent Bush administration to have a "unitary executive" was to keep control, often by secret security programs. Tom Ricks (2006) noted that candidate Bush, in an October 2000 debate with candidate Gore, said "I will be very careful about using our troops as nation builders. I believe the role of the military is to fight and win wars and to prevent war from happening in the first place" (p.24). Subsequent events were clearly adverse, from the unpopular Iraq War over which President Bush was presiding, and the election in November 2006 of a Democratic majority in both the House of Representatives and Senate. An unfulfilled expectancy, and non-inclusive stance, evidently were not popular. A so-called "credibility gap" arose under President Lyndon Johnson, who escalated U.S. Forces in Vietnam in 1964. His actions followed the passage by Congress of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that August, after he produced the unsubstantiated story that an American Destroyer had been attacked by Vietnamese gunboats. Jack Valenti (2007), a major Johnson aide then, reported that Johnson was willing to try listening to criticism of the recommended military escalation. However, he then dismissed all alternative courses of action.

A large and powerful persuader, Johnson was successful as Senate Majority Leader, and as president in getting Civil Rights and Voting Rights Legislation passed in 1965-66. By his great persuasive skills, he was able to have many more “Great Society” social and economic programs passed in Congress. However, the Viet Nam War, and his loss of credibility and credit with the public, led to his giving up another presidential run in 1968, in a surprising and memorable TV speech. A tragic figure for his self-inflicted wounds to his presidency, by a war about which he said, “Our national honor is at stake,” he left a legacy of major domestic advances.

Presidential Promises and “The Mandate”

An obvious fact of political life is that what is promised to get elected may bear little relationship to what is delivered eventually. In an oft-cited, classic example, President Nixon pledged for a long time that he was opposed to wage and price controls to hold down inflation, though later introduced them to a shocked public and party, when thought necessary. He supported national health insurance, which failed to pass in Congress, but did establish the Environmental Protection Agency, among his domestic legacies. Greatest public concern was directed though to the costs in casualties and treasure of his continued pursuit of the unpopular Viet Nam War that he took over from President Johnson and promised to end. Secret military operations in adjacent Cambodia, which he had denied, led to many public protests in the Spring of 1970, with student deaths at Kent State University.

A paradox in campaigning is that candidate "promises" inevitably will disappoint many or at least some supporters once the President is in office. Beginning with primary contests, and even leaving aside the record before, a candidate makes a host of statements in set speeches, responses to press questions, interviews, and off-the-cuff remarks. These will have highly variable applications to coherent and workable administration programs, and may even be contradictory.

Among the most venerable of political beliefs is the notion that once elected a President has a "mandate" to put new or different programs into effect. This poses some troublesome problems of definition insofar as supporters may have highly

discrepant conceptions of what was promised. Also, constituencies that are usually brought together for the election have varying interests, and may feel differently on major issues after the election, requiring further dealings to settle on programs.

President George W. Bush took his re-election in 2004 as a certain sign of a continuing mandate to do what he wanted in the Iraq War, and in such domestic matters as changing Social Security, mainly a government run retirement insurance program established in the 1930s under President Franklin Roosevelt. Soon after reelection, President Bush said he had “political capital” and he “intended to spend it” (cf. Verba, 1961), to “privatize” social security. However, this and other domestic intentions of his were not fulfilled. Also, realistically, changing circumstances may allow the bending or reinterpretation of a mandate. Furthermore, determining what part of a President's program was supported by voters is made especially difficult by what may be the diversity of targeted appeals to "special interest constituencies." The relevant questions therefore may be: "What was promised? When? To which constituency?" At best, what can be assessed are statements about policies and intended actions that a candidate puts forward as major campaign themes.

Party, Program, and Personality

Three important factors that are most mentioned as sources of support for a candidate are party, program, and personality, not always in that order. The first of these, the national political party, is essential to a president's election, and he is bound to it. This may be troubling to the opposition, but as Rossiter (1956) said, “... if he is to persuade Congress... achieve a loyal and cohesive administration... and [be] re-elected... he must put his hand firmly to the plow of politics” (p.29). Kellerman used this theme in her The political presidency (1984), as noted earlier.

The party "platform" on which a candidate runs is a statement that usually represents varying degrees of compromise between the candidate and factions of the national party. Beyond a general ideology, there is an imperfect basis for knowing what the candidate will do as President. This perplexity was stated by Julian Bond,

a Carter supporter and Black leader, who said during the 1976 campaign that he was bothered by not being able to predict “what Jimmy Carter would do.”

Carter did have a program or pieces of a program, some of which were part of his promise. But he established one basis for his own demise when, in the 1976 campaign against Gerald Ford, he calculated a "misery index" that showed an inflation and unemployment rate each over 6%, thus yielding 12% for Ford, which Carter said was unacceptable. After Carter won and served a term, his distance gap was already wide when challenged in 1980 by Reagan, who pointed to the over 20% misery index. Carter came out badly from this contrast. A year before, Carter also had faced the burden of dealing with the Iranian Government holding diplomats taken prisoner at the American Embassy. They were held hostage more than 400 days until the day he left office, in January 1981. despite his efforts to rescue them. A former Kennedy aide, Historian Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., said during the 1980 campaign that he could not forgive Carter for having made Ford look like a great president in retrospect.

Ford was adversely affected by initially pardoning Nixon in 1975 for his role in the Watergate break in of the Democratic Party’s headquarters in 1972. Denying a possible arrangement beforehand, which circumvented justice and kept the public from learning the truth, Ford allies insisted that he wished only to “heal the nation,” thinking Nixon had agreed to make a statement on the matter, but Nixon never did. In 1968, Ford had a major crisis when the an American Naval ship, the U.S.S. Pueblo, was taken into custody by the North Koreans for allegedly spying in its coastal waters. Though its crew was eventually released, the ship remains on exhibit at a North Korean port, despite attempts to retrieve it.

Once in office, all presidents are evaluated for their performance, but they also are its executive producer with a formidable apparatus, uniquely capable of gaining the airwaves and headlines as a super mass media voice. Some presidents, even with this enormous communication facility at hand, have suffered from lapses, gaffes, and distance gaps in reaching their audience. The public can and does assign

meanings to events that are not the intended ones offered by politicians, including the President. Still, there is often an inclination for the public generally to want to believe in and depend on the image projected by the nation's leader. Richard Nixon, well before his resignation, said, "The American people want to believe that their president is not a crook. Well. I am not a crook." Oddly, in the coverage before he said it, the "crook" term was not used. This conception was his, not the public's.

As many observers have commented, a President usually is insulated from everyday concerns. In large part, this is due to his physical and likely psychological distance from the populace. On the other hand, the portrayals of Presidents in settings with ordinary people--as "just like other folks"--often are seen as manipulative, however sincerely motivated. When the first President Bush was shown at a supermarket checkout counter, confronting a price-scanner whose workings he appeared not to know about, it showed him distinctly out of touch. Earlier, President Carter tried to appeal to the public by such populist gestures as walking down Pennsylvania Avenue with his wife Rosalind after his inauguration, and wearing a cardigan sweater on a TV "fireside chat" on energy savings. Some saw both as too contrived.

Policy-Making

A president cannot lead entirely from a distance without grave risk of failure. When making policy, there are hazards from deferential staff members. They may keep a President continually at a distance from the give and take of informed, frank appraisals of alternative policies. Problem solving is altered or at least affected in the President's presence. Usually, Reedy (1970) said, "White House councils are not debating matches in which ideas emerge from the heated exchanges of participants. The council centers around the President himself [and] the first strong observations to attract the favor of the President became subconsciously the thoughts of everyone in the room" (p. 12).

Being in a president's presence can be quite intimidating to all but a few. Encountering any prominent person can be stunning, but suddenly speaking to a president is especially so. President Obama has made an effort to counteract this potential failing by encouraging greater participation and allowing more time for discussion. However, he was faulted by opposition criticism for so-called "diddling" when he had repeated meetings in 2009 with top military and other officials about the decision he made to send more troops to Afghanistan. The tendency for "acceptable" views to converge toward the leader's, as a show of loyalty, is a major basis for Janis's (1972) "groupthink" phenomenon. It underlies many cases he cites of catastrophically bad group decisions by otherwise capable advisors, who fell into a "groupthink" effect. President Obama is said to want "to hear from everyone in the room," to listen to a range of alternate views. Still, the power distance gap may not be easily surmounted without a strong and persisting commitment to do so.

A major obstacle is that "... the presidency is about as close to total estrangement as one can get in the modern world. The only time he ever meets a peer is during the rare visit of some foreign potentate, and...most of the potentates who visit... feel a bit diffident" (Reedy, 1970, p. 20). "Politicians need peers and without them they become remote from reality." An elder statesman Democratic Senator, who had been a Johnson ally since his Senatorial days, was asked by Reedy why he didn't go over and have a "heart-to-heart talk" with President Johnson about some national problems they agreed were bad. The Senator said, "... I can't talk to a President the way I can to a Senator " (Reedy, 1970, p. 30).

Images vs Performance

Taking account of such insularity, it is no wonder that in the White House images may easily come to represent reality in assessing presidential performance. When President Nixon said he was "not a crook," mentioned earlier, and President Carter promised, "I will never lie to you," they underscored a gap in thinking by begging the question of why they believed some people might think so. A statement by President Reagan that he was "not a bigot" seems comparable, but is not entirely

parallel. Reagan handled this problem of alleged bigotry by attributing it to a misperception fostered by the media, and not to any action of his. He offered the self-attribution that his intentions were good, and therefore should be seen to be good. If they were not, he said disarmingly, somebody was misleading the public to judge him wrongly in the opinion polls.

President Reagan continually had more people reportedly liking his personality than supporting his policies on many issues. A President's personality may give him credits to bounce back, as Reagan did after a 1982 congressional veto override, and later the Iran-Contra scandal, in which he initially denied giving weapons to Iran. At the time, the Washington Post's Robert Kaiser (1983) said on the air that President Reagan "seems to lead a charmed life, getting away with things..." His long, earlier movie career doubtless helped bolster his popularity, and gave him so-called "residual credits" in the IC Model. Despite detractors, he had identifiable successes, receiving an Oscar nomination for his role in "Kings Row," in 1942, and credibly playing a psychology professor, who in real life raised a chimpanzee for an heredity experiment, in "Bedtime for Bonzo," in 1951. Film critic Leonard Maltin (2006) rated this movie positively as "a cute, harmless little comedy," and dismissed "absurdity" notions about it that dogged Reagan (p.99).

Imagery is the lifeblood of politics, and developing a slogan or narrative can have a greater effect than any amount of facts, because politics operates with the belief that "perception is reality." Presidents use the mass media to influence public images, and do what they can to shape them to their purposes. However, the statement that "an ounce of image is worth a pound of performance" is limited as followers gain experience with a leader, and come to know whether their needs and expectations are addressed and met. If so, there will likely be trust and loyalty, with solidarity of purpose, but the reverse is also true, with the loss of them.

Trust and loyalty can bind relationships, even at great distance in time and space, and are nurtured by two-way communication, including listening. Communication can boost influence, and can be critically important to effective leadership, and fidelity to a cause or mission. It is also especially important to be

aware when such communication is absent, and what consequences can occur. As one politician put it, “Just because you ignore it, doesn’t mean it will go away.”

Cognitive psychology findings bolster the point that "labelling" can effectively "deal" with a problem or can “kill” a policy, such as renaming the “estate tax” the “death tax” during the second Bush presidency. This calls to mind the subtitle, "Words that Succeed and Policies that Fail," from Edelman's book Political Language (1977). Lakoff (2004) deals with these points too in his Don't Think of an Elephant, regarding how issues are framed. He advises not to argue by using the words of the other side that convey their frame. His further point about politicians' speech is the warning to, "Watch what we do, not what we say."

In evaluating presidential performance the atmosphere created by an administration is important. Before this age of terrorism, government leadership was said to have two main functions: to reduce provocation and act positively to increase opportunities for participation (Lasswell, 1948). These are achieved through goal clarification, consultation, and other signs of respect for individuals, evident up through power sharing. Both are desirable aspects of inclusion. Though they are expressions of ideal-type values, often unattainable, it is worthwhile to consider these two aspects as basic, and to be aware of their absence.

Regarding provocation, there is a reasonably clear issue of the degree to which political appeals embody threats, or avoid them. In his analysis of the rioting by African-Americans in 1960s Los Angeles, the sociologist Ralph Turner (1969) at UCLA discussed the balance needed between trying to make a statement about injustice and avoiding an excessive load of threat in doing so, thereby producing "backlash." Riots of course are not calculated so rationally, as Turner indicated.

The basic point of arousing without excessively threatening fits psychological findings regarding moderate arousal, through limited fear appeals, to gain desired actions. Fear appeals can be used for political ends by raising concerns about the greater likelihood of terrorist attacks, voiced by the opposition as a criticism of

presidential performance. The consequences of these tactics have been negative attitudes and a loss of trust in politicians and in government as a whole.

Conclusions: Dealing with Follower Needs and Avoiding “Anticipationment”

A president is the recipient of the people’s votes that placed him in that high position. To attain and retain their support, attention to their interests and needs is essential. Programs must be seen at least to be trying to meet these. Raising hopes, which then are unfulfilled, has to be avoided. Called “anticipationment,” it has the potential of rapidly reversing positive feelings toward a leader to negative ones. This means a leader needs to be open about reality factors, as much as possible.

“Followers judge leaders,” said Wills (1994, p. 21), and the credit concept presented here emphasizes how follower perceptions affect leader emergence and latitude for action. The concept of inclusive leadership provides a further alternative for follower involvement through two-way communication and influence, to bridge, the physical and psychological power distance gaps. Since only followers themselves can ultimately define their own true needs (Burns (1978, p. 36, quoted earlier), then the basic point is that a president must be responsive to major constituent needs.

The public’s current top domestic concerns in 2010 are unemployment, which also still threatens those employed, but who fear they may be next to lose a job; health coverage, its rules and costs, even for those who have it, or are intending to get it under the new law; and foreclosure with loss of one’s home, and the inability to take any equity value from it. Consternation is expressed with government programs that only made loan modifications an option for lenders, not a requirement to provide some relief for borrowers. As a result, this and other issues remain priorities, especially for those who believed that the president, whom they supported enthusiastically, would deliver on these matters. They review his record, compared to what they took to be his promise, to see if sufficient relief is underway.

Disappointment has been evident too with President Obama’s negotiating with his opponents. Often seen to be fruitless, he has spent a great deal of time

meeting with those in Congress to try persuasion on them (Stolberg, 2010). Some distressed allies would rather he be “fighting for things he knows are right,” as a major discouraged supporter said on the air. He added that the president “seems to care more for bailing out the bankers than helping a lot of ordinary people who are hurting.” Commonly overlooked was the fact that the Troubled Assets Relief Program (TARP) was passed in 2008 under President Bush at the urging of his then Treasury Secretary, Henry Paulson, a former Goldman Sachs CEO, who said it would save the financial system and avoid a depression. The program’s results appeared positive, but there is criticism and disappointment with key features of it.

Indeed, the term “anticipointment” better describes what occurred here when high expectations were not met from billions of taxpayer dollars given to banks, but without requiring them to do much needed lending in return. Offensive also were the huge bonuses paid again in banking and finance. Though President Obama’s Finance Reform Bill passed Congress in the Spring of 2010, it lacked key restraints to prevent the financial crisis repeating. Yet, he urged action in line with discontent about the banks, in polls showing more regulation of finance was favored by 2 to 1. What he settled for was described as a “loophole-ridden compromise”(Rich, 2010). Still, bitter resistance and antagonism from the finance sector had some of its major leaders who supported him in 2008 switching their funding to his opponents in 2010.

Now near the end of his second year, the poor economy President Obama found on entering office is still far from recovered, and is only coming back slowly. President Obama appears to have restored few credits with his base of support, and also independents who voted for him before. However, they were only “rented,” as one observer put it. “Main street” concerns still demand attention, but company profits and stock shares have been holding up. A jobs bill failed to meet needs sufficiently, and the health care bill has years before key provisions will take effect. A Democratic pollster praised that bill as a victory, in a column on “A win is a win” (Greenberg, 2010). However, it both raised expectations and disappointed followers, especially for not having a government-sponsored “public option,” allowing competition with private insurers, which they had squelched. As stated here often, a

president has to continue to be perceived as getting needed things done or he will likely lose credits. An implicit question asked is, “Will you make my life better?”

President Obama may still modify his approach even more, and possibly show some favorable trends with conditions that most concern the public. Among them, the economic issues of unemployment and home foreclosures remain critical. As the New York Times editorialized on the Labor Day Weekend of 2010,

“Despite occasional signs of movement...general paralysis in the housing market... coupled with high unemployment [indicate] a slowing economy. Antiforeclosure efforts, done right, are supposed to prevent that downward spiral, but the Obama administration’s efforts to date have been largely unsuccessful, with lenders reluctant to restructure bad loans and officials unable or unwilling to get them to do more” (Sept. 3, p. A20).

All the while, President Obama is still the target of an ongoing combative campaign to discredit him and have him fail. For his supporters to stay with him, alienated ones to return, and new ones to join him, requires strong positive communications from the president that he is listening and furthering their interests by his policies. That task is made especially acute with the midterm elections looming, in which the president’s party usually loses seats in Congress, and now possibly loss of control of one or both of its houses. This would put President Obama in further contention with a determined opposition in Congress, and some continuously hostile media openly allied with it. His long-standing tendency toward conciliation, reaffirmed in Remnick’s (2010) biography of him, may be further challenged and need alternative modes of engagement to revitalize his support.

To bridge the power distance gap, the passion President Obama had in his presidential campaign is essential in his speeches and other appearances. An overriding requirement is to communicate more openness to inclusion, by clearly responding to constituents’ concerns, especially to earn their support when showing beneficial results in difficult economic times.

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