

# Introduction: In Search of Innovative Leadership in World Politics

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## A Neglected Subject

The terms "Reaganism," "Thatcherism," "Khomeinism," and in somewhat earlier periods, "Hitlerism," "Stalinism," "Gaullism," and "Nasserism," have been used widely but not very precisely, with observers in various fields attaching different meanings to them. Thus, for economists Gaullism has primarily meant an attempt to abolish small-scale farming and industries, Reaganism and Thatcherism have meant an emphasis on supply-side economics, and Khomeinism has meant a stoppage of modernization and industrialization; for the sociologists, the same four terms have been associated with social conservatism; and for historians, these terms have provided a convenient means for periodization and for delineation of the boundaries of certain historical processes.

However, the most salient common aspect of all these terms is, of course, that they are directly associated with dominant leaders who introduced new ideas or novel orientations, and for better or worse promoted major changes in their respective societies, which in turn altered both the nearer and more remote external environments of these societies. The mere variety of meanings that is attached to these same terms indicates the

significance of such leaders, and also by implication of their leadership, the innovativeness of their policies, and the importance of their role in both local and global affairs.

Most people still believe that leadership qualities are connected to personal attributes, and hence that leadership is a very individualistic phenomenon. But most scholars in this area agree that in addition to personal attributes, leadership is intimately related to the fabric of the leaders' relevant societies, to social and political organizations, to established institutions, and to leaders' relations with smaller and larger groups of followers and supporters. There is, indeed, agreement among scholars that leadership cannot exist without some form of ordered relations between leaders and followers, relations that are usually mediated by established social and political organizations. And therefore, leadership cannot be separated from broader patterns of action in the social and political spheres.

Moreover, many students of leadership agree that leaders and leadership, both in smaller and larger organizations, play essential roles in the endless competition over power, influence, and the authoritative allocation of resources and norms. Such competition, of course, constitutes the very essence of politics and of the political process. Hence, probably more than in other spheres of human behavior (such as education, culture, and probably also the economy), where there is a relatively larger scope for initiatives and actions by individuals who are not necessarily leaders, the role of political leaders and leadership in both domestic and international politics is pronounced and conspicuous. It is clear, too, that this is not a recent development, but a situation that has existed from the earliest stages of organized societies and human institutions.

In view of the centrality of leaders and leadership in politics and in most historical processes, one would expect there to be a large, and well-defined, body of theoretical and analytical literature on innovative leadership. But as most scholars, including the contributors to this volume, have observed, there is still a notable lack of synthesized theoretical and analytical knowledge in this area.

This is not, however, entirely surprising: many generations of writers, journalists as well as scholars, have noted that political leadership, particularly innovative leadership, is an awesome phenomenon. This reflects the fact that innovative leaders and leadership have to do not only with formal and "hard" aspects of politics, but probably mainly with the informal, "softer," and less well-defined elements of political life. That is, innovative leaders are engaged in highly complex but still fuzzy matters, such as vision, inspiration, conceptualization of change, articulation of ideological goals and their communication to followers and foes, risk tak-

ing, formation of groups of followers and their occasional mobilization, guidance of followers toward the achievement of goals, and so on. The greater intricacy of these matters makes it all the harder to comprehend the full scope of the phenomenon at hand.

In view of these mysteries of innovative leaders and leadership, recently some attempts have been made at creating comprehensive theories of political leadership. Such theoretical works have been intended to capture the complexity of leadership, which many people still regard as an art rather than an acquired craft that easily lends itself to theorizing, analysis, and teaching. Most of these theoretical endeavors have placed special emphasis on the interpersonal and small group-dynamic aspects of the leadership phenomenon. That is, they have discussed leadership mainly from the communications and decision-making perspectives. Probably under the influence of these trends in the study of leadership, there is an enhanced interest in political biographies of distinguished, and even of less famous, statesmen and leaders. This means that a considerable amount of information and evaluation about individual leaders is available, and can serve as raw material for further generalized work on the leadership phenomenon and various aspects of it that merit special attention. One of these aspects is leadership in international affairs.

Indeed, the biographies of leaders in modern times clearly show that these persons, whether they have led smaller organizations or entire societies and states, have tended to invest a great deal of their time and energy in the external relations of their respective organizations and groups. This observation is particularly applicable to dominant leaders of states and national movements. However, although these studies show the pattern of leaders' strong interest in international politics, even the overarching theoretical discussions of political leadership that have been produced until now do not make explicit and elaborate attempts to address the neglected issue of the specific roles of leaders and leadership in the formulation and implementation of international policies.

The main reason for this continuing avoidance is the lingering perception that leaders are primarily concerned with domestic affairs. Thus, many scholars still maintain that leaders' focus on domestic issues has strongly affected the nature of leadership itself, by tending to direct it toward tedious "low policies" dealing with such problems as inflation, internal debts, drugs, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

But again, even a cursory review of the time and energy that almost all dominant leaders—especially heads of state, but also other senior politicians—invest not only in formulating foreign policies but also in personally implementing them, and thus in participating in international

affairs, will show that leaders' interest in the international sphere is indeed immense, and that their involvement in it is of great importance to their followers. A review of the schedules of most national leaders, such as Presidents Bush and Mitterand and Prime Ministers Major and Kohl, reveals the enormous amount of time that they spend in state visits, summit meetings, international conferences, and so on. And this applies not only to the leaders of larger countries but also to the heads of smaller and even particularly small states.

Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence that this inherent interest in world affairs involves not merely "flights" into the more glamorous world of foreign policy from the more dull and cumbersome issues of domestic "low politics," but rather that all prominent leaders sense that their careers will not be complete, or successful, without an extensive acquaintance with, and participation in, this sphere. This has been the case with the careers of many leaders, such as Prime Minister Major, President Husni Mubarak of Egypt, and Japanese prime ministers, who initially were interested and active mainly in domestic affairs, but once reaching the status of national leaders began to show greater interest in international politics. It is equally clear that followers expect their leaders to participate in the games of nations.

Apart from visibility, glamour, enhanced self-esteem, and other similar "fringe benefits" that usually attract leaders to international politics, there is, however, a more profound explanation for this tendency: the many and inextricable links, and the greatly enhanced interdependence, between the domestic and international spheres. The increasingly blurred, and permeable, nature of the boundaries of states has led to this impressive interdependence between all polities. In turn, virtually all national leaders now confront a rapidly growing number of "intermestic" problems—problems that emerge in the domestic sphere but have profound implications for international affairs, and vice versa. Thus, even when they lack expertise in international politics, many leaders feel, if only intuitively, that they cannot avoid becoming immersed in international affairs if they wish to solve domestic "wicked problems." (This term refers to problems—such as inflation, national debt, drugs, pollution, scientific development, and the like—that are especially difficult to grasp in their scope and complexity, and so hard to solve that a solution to any part of them tends to engender other problems.)

Thus, since the interest and involvement in international politics of virtually all dominant national leaders is almost self-evident, and since essentially issues pertaining to innovation in this sphere have not been clarified by scholars, there is a definite need for more systematic under-

standing of leaders' motivations, attitudes, ideas, and ability to influence all processes in the sphere of international relations.

### Innovation in International Politics

The importance of innovation in international politics can hardly be exaggerated, for it is particularly when leaders attempt to transcend the more routine and mundane interactions of international affairs and to innovate major changes on the regional or global levels that their capacity to exert appreciable influence on the course of events, whether for good or for evil, is greatest. This has been the case with all the great leaders since the early times of known history. Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Attila the Hun, Richard the Lion-Hearted, and Napoleon, to name only a few, are remembered mainly because of their attempts, whether immensely successful or ill-starred, to innovate in both the domestic and international spheres.

There is, however, a lack of theoretical and analytical discussion of innovation by such persons. As a noted scholar in the field of the study of leadership has observed: "in surveying the vast literature on change one remarks on the absence of a clear concept of the role of artistic, or intellectual, or political, or social leadership in the process of change, on the absence in most works of references to leadership in theory or practice. Often the process of innovation is explored but not in a broad framework of the leadership motivations, goals, and processes in which innovation takes on meaning and direction."<sup>2</sup> The same author goes on to suggest that "planning for structural change, whether of the system, or in the system, is the ultimate moral test of decision-making leadership . . . ; it is also the leader's most potent weapon."

There is a need, then, to enhance our understanding of when, how, and especially why leaders initiate willed processes of change particularly in the international arena, and of their complex interactions with their followers, with public-opinion molders, and with social and political institutions at home and abroad when they try to innovate. This is true particularly in regard to leaders in democratic and in fading authoritarian states. For although it may seem paradoxical to some, since leaders in totalitarian regimes do not face major constraints at home, it is easier for them to engage in innovation in regard to their international policies; whereas, despite their freedom of thought and communication, it is probably least clear to what extent democratic leaders are free to initiate and implement organized change. In these states there exist constraints that do

not exist in more rigidly controlled polities. Usually the result is that in modern democracies, instead of innovation that creates profound changes in the rules of the game, "muddling through"—that is, initiating piecemeal responses, introducing small adjustments, implementing marginal changes, and so on—is the most usual pattern.

In order, then, to shed light on the question of innovation in contexts of varying degrees of political freedom, one needs, as the authors of both the theoretical chapters and the case studies in this volume have done, to focus on leaders who tried to introduce innovative changes within democratic systems, or on leaders who guided successful transitions to democracy or at least introduced liberalizing changes leading to the transformation of authoritarian systems. None of the chapters in this volume address leadership in totalitarian systems, the mostly coercive nature of which tends to reduce the relevance of the more interactive aspects of leadership, aspects that tend, as argued above, to produce significant constraints on innovative leadership.

At this stage it is useful to consider the main theoretical and practical issues that are raised and discussed in this volume as a whole.

### Eight Questions about the Essential Requisites for Innovation in International Politics

The various contributions to this volume, no matter what type of leader they focus on, deal with a number of similar and intertwining theoretical and practical aspects. The overarching question concerns the parameters within which innovation is generated and implemented by noted leaders in regard to their states' basic international alignments and behavior in world affairs. In many cases, of course, this also entails considering factors on the domestic level since, as noted, the domestic and international spheres are often inseparably linked, and hence without a certain congruence between international and domestic constraints innovation cannot occur.

More specifically, in an attempt to determine the essential requisites for successful political innovation in the international sphere, the authors deal with eight broad questions.

In view of the widely held notion that leaders' personal psychological traits are of paramount importance in shaping their attitudes and activities, the first question concerns which, if any, personal qualities enable a person to become an innovative leader, and how much of a role these in fact play apart from institutional and organizational innovative-

ness. As noted above, these two aspects of the same question involve one of the more controversial issues in the study of leadership in general: the relative importance of personality vs. institutions in shaping the roles of leaders.

As also noted, the most difficult issues leaders must deal with are those known as "wicked problems." Hence, the second major question has to do with the role played by leaders' ability to accurately assess the problems facing their state or organization, and therefore also themselves. Can leaders rely on their intuition and given analytical powers, or should they intentionally develop a special intellectual capability for identifying and comprehending such difficult problems?

The third question is whether a given or inherent inclination of a leader to innovate is sufficient to effect changes at the international level, or need this inclination also, and to what extent, be accompanied by the leader's astuteness in realizing when a window of opportunity is open and consequently sizing up whether and when favorable external conditions exist. Differently put, the question here involves the ever-present tension in international politics between planning of willed changes and luck.

The next question is whether talented innovative leaders are dependent, and to what extent, on the existence of a policy-making process that is capable of responding to the leader's innovation and implementing organized change, or whether a sufficiently strong-willed leader can "go it alone" without the persistent support and cooperation of a sympathetic and flexible government apparatus.

Fifth, how important are the contents of a premeditated policy in affecting whether an innovation will succeed? That is, how much depends on the intelligence, energy, will, and determination of innovative leaders and how much depends on the soundness of the specific policy changes that they try to implement?

Sixth, and on a more general level, to what extent can domestic constraints modify and limit attempted innovations in the international sphere? As we have seen, this is a central consideration regarding democratic regimes, in which leaders must take into account the needs and wishes of various domestic interests as well as the accepted norms and rules of the political game.

We also hypothesize that because of the multiple linkages between opportunities that occur on the international level and domestic constraints, an innovative leader must have both a sense of appropriate timing as well as a sense of the degree of freedom that both the domestic and international environments will afford him or her in carrying out innovations. The seventh question, then, concerns whether and to what extent

such astuteness about timing and maneuverability is necessary for innovative leaders.

Finally, the various contributions address the issue of the role of feedback from both the domestic and international environments in facilitating leaders' ability to innovate, and specifically, on the domestic level, the importance of leaders' ability to communicate effectively with their followers to ensure continued support for their innovations.

### The Structure and Contents of This Volume

The first part of the volume, entitled "Theoretical Aspects," further elaborates the questions raised in these introductory comments. The two chapters included in this part begin by discussing current scholarship on leadership in general, and on leadership in international politics in particular. Both chapters focus especially on the weaknesses and gaps in the literature, and further explore the basic issues of innovative leadership in international politics at the theoretical level.

Lewis J. Edinger, in "A Preface to Studies in Political Leadership," argues that few existing studies in this area have attempted to go from the particular to the general, whether utilizing institutional, rational-behavior, or psychological approaches; instead studies have tended to be too narrowly tailored to the authors' theoretical biases and to rely too much on episodic material. The chapter then turns to the three basic issues of what is meant terminologically by innovative leadership, the matter of level of analysis, and the question of the counterfactual test. Edinger then looks further at the "formal-authority" vs. "individual-attributes" explanations of innovative leadership, and suggests that, although the degree of leaders' formal authority is important, one cannot afford to ignore the role of their ideological orientation, personal traits, and so on, which also exert a clear impact on events.

Yehezkel Dror, in "Main Issues of Innovative Leadership in International Politics," discusses the question of whether because of raised stakes and enhanced risks, innovative leadership in international politics is more essential than ever—and the dangers of innovative leaders out of control greater than ever. Contemporary political science and international relations, he maintains, are weak in general theory of innovative leadership. In this context, the chapter considers the several main problems of innovative leadership that need to be addressed in further research, focusing on such theoretical aspects as whether innovative leadership arises from chance or necessity; the nature of such leadership as



“gambling with history”; the great opportunities and risks that are involved in innovation; and how it might be possible, through improved education and training, to foster better innovative leadership.

The theoretical points raised in this introduction and in the two theoretical chapters are elaborated in the chapters in the empirical sections, which look at the records of some of this century’s outstanding innovative leaders in the international sphere, analyzing both the successes and failures of such leaders and the positive and negative impacts of their policies on their own and other countries’ histories.

Thus the second part of the volume deals with leaders in democratic polities—regarding whom, as mentioned, it has been argued that the tendency to “muddle through” as well as other constraints reduce the likelihood of innovation. The third part is concerned with leaders who, in trying to guide their states from authoritarianism to democracy or at least partial liberalization, have often faced fluid situations posing no less difficult challenges.

The chapter by Barbara Kellerman, “Making a Difference at the International Level: The American President as World Leader,” serves as an appropriate transition from the theoretical to the empirical sections. It begins by discussing further the lack of attention paid to the role of the leader in world politics, maintaining that this is especially serious because in most national political systems the head of state plays the dominant role in making foreign policy. In considering the role in international politics of the leader of the dominant democracy in the modern era, the United States, the chapter then addresses some of the questions regarding leader-follower and leader-leader relations as they pertain to U.S. presidential leadership at the international level.

In “De Gaulle as an Innovative Leader,” Stanley Hoffman considers the leadership style and legacy of Charles de Gaulle, in Hoffmann’s view an exceptionally innovative leader—especially in the international sphere—who stood at the helm of another major modern democracy. The essence of de Gaulle’s accomplishment, Hoffmann suggests, is that he “restored the national pride of the French while he led them toward necessary adaptations to the realities of the postwar world.” De Gaulle succeeded not only in persuading the French that the traumatic and violent process of decolonization conformed with their interests and values, but in establishing strong and lasting links with most of the former colonies; and he steered the country onto a course of benefiting from both independence and close cooperation with the Western alliance. The chapter also deals with the question of how de Gaulle managed to innovate so successfully within the limitations of a democratic system.

Gabriel Sheffer, in "Moshe Sharet: The Legacy of an Innovative Moderate Leader," discusses the innovative role of Israel's second prime minister and also its first dominant foreign minister, in one key aspect of Israeli politics: defense and international affairs. This chapter focuses on how Sharet arrived at and sought to implement an original, moderate approach based on gradual amelioration of conflict, and showed vision, inspiration, imagination, and effectiveness in dealing (often secretly) with leaders of Arab and other countries, such as King Abdullah of Jordan and Nasser of Egypt, in the effort to secure Israel's position in its post-1949 borders and prevent outbreaks of violence. The chapter also inquires into the role played by domestic constraints in limiting Sharet's achievements, and concludes with an analysis of the specific domestic factors that contributed to the failure of Sharet's innovations and his political demise.

Konrad Adenauer, as Hans-Peter Schwarz argues in "Adenauer as Political Innovator," the first chapter of the third part of the volume, was faced with the task of guiding a society's transition from outright totalitarianism to democracy. Adenauer became chancellor of a Germany that was in desperate plight, willing to accept both stringent domestic measures and far-reaching changes in foreign policy to help overcome misery. This chapter shows how Adenauer, who like President Sadat of Egypt (as discussed in the chapter by Rivka Yadlin) was well attuned to the hopes and potentialities of his public, was able to imaginatively steer Germany onto a course of modernization and adaptation to the postwar international reality. In particular, the chapter sheds light on the importance of both conducive international conditions and Adenauer's personal leadership qualities in enabling him to innovate.

Another case of innovative leadership guiding a successful transition to democracy is that of post-Franco Spain. Juan J. Linz, in "Innovative Leadership in the Transition to Democracy and a New Democracy: The Case of Spain," maintains that although conducive structural factors existed, Spain's successful transition would not have been possible without the innovative leadership of key figures such as King Juan Carlos and, particularly, Adolfo Suárez. In analyzing the specific leadership traits that were manifested by Suárez, who was prime minister during the transition era and was responsible for dismantling the institutions of the old regime and making possible the first free elections, this chapter further illuminates the issue of the personal qualities of innovative leaders.

The three preeminent figures in India's recent history, Mohandas K. Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi, were successively responsible for guiding India's evolution into a genuine, though imperiled, de-

mocracy. In "Innovative Leadership in Modern India: M. K. Gandhi, Nehru, and I. Gandhi," James Manor suggests that while all three of these leaders were effective innovators, the innovations of M. K. Gandhi and of Nehru were essentially constructive whereas those of Indira Gandhi had a destructive impact. If M. K. Gandhi was able to mobilize his populace into a nationally coherent body with strong institutions, and Nehru was able to consolidate and routinize this institutional basis, Indira Gandhi acted to undermine these institutions in a ruthless drive for personal power. These innovations and attempts at innovation occurred against the backdrop of, and were affected by, larger ideological and political trends in the international environment, highlighting the issue of the interplay between international and domestic factors.

Amnon Sella, in "Gorbachev: Continuity or Change?," considers some of Mikhail Gorbachev's innovations as a leader during his six historic years in office. The focus of this chapter is on the administrative reforms that eventually led to the devolution of political power within the Soviet Union and to the retrenchment of Soviet military power abroad. Especially pertinent both to the concerns of this volume and to the ongoing crisis of government in the Russian republics, this chapter discusses the issue of the extent to which Gorbachev was affected or constrained by domestic resistance to his attempted innovations.

Rivka Yadlin, in "Sadat: The Innovative Capacity of Traditionalization," shows that as an individual leader, Anwar el-Sadat was responsible not only for the peace initiative toward Israel but for other major innovations: the break from Soviet and shift toward U.S. patronage, a partial shift to a *laissez-faire* economic system, and the introduction of a multi-party system. Yadlin also shows, however, that Sadat's innovativeness was founded in a recourse to traditional Egyptian values, including authoritarian, one-man rule and particularistic Egyptianism; here, the discussion also pertains to the broader issue of the interplay between the innovative leader and the populace, especially the extent to which the successful innovative leader must effectively communicate with and persuade his followers.

The volume concludes with an overview that summarizes the main findings of the empirical chapters on both the analytical and theoretical levels, and answers the eight operative questions posed earlier in this introductory chapter.

Generally speaking, both the theoretical and empirical chapters emphasize the conceptual and practical difficulties involved in initiating, as well as implementing, innovative policies in the international arena. The

volume explores more fully various issues related to such leadership that have not yet received sufficient attention, and suggests some possible answers to the puzzling phenomenon of innovative leadership.

#### Notes

1. E.g., Jean Blondel, *Political Leadership: Toward a General Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 1987), pp. 62–63, 77.
2. James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978), p. 415.