

21st Century Political Science: A Reference Handbook

Leadership and Decision Making

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Chapter 42: Leadership and Decision Making

Studies of political leadership, which are mostly applied to the foreign policy and crisis management domains, examine how the behavior of individual political leaders can have an impact on policymaking processes and how this can affect what types of decisions are made. This literature draws on psychology to identify personality characteristics that can have an important effect in the political realm and then uses these characteristics as independent variables to explain how they might influence the political process. These characteristics can be very stable, such as personality traits, or can be more volatile over time and content matter, such as cognitions and motives. Individual leaders are one of three forms of decision units that are used to explain types of outcome in foreign policy decision making. Other types of decision units are a single group and a coalition of autonomous actors. This section mainly focuses on political leaders.

After discussing why and when studying political leadership is important, this chapter goes on to discuss three different aspects of a leader's personality that can influence the political process: motives, cognitions, and traits. Next, it describes how some studies have attempted to combine three components to more accurately explain political behavior and outcomes. Finally, areas of future research are identified.

Why is Studying Political Leadership Important?

In 2003, U.S. President George W. Bush decided to invade Iraq and forcefully remove its authoritarian president, Saddam Hussein, from power. This policy was very different from the first Gulf War since the United States accomplished its objective with the help

of a much smaller coalition of countries that did not involve some of the traditional allies, such as France and Germany, and without support of the United Nations Security Council. Despite these international constraints and weak evidence concerning the *casus belli* (cause of war)—weapons of mass destruction—the president and his advisors strongly believed that invading Iraq was necessary and feasible. What the policymakers did not anticipate was that it would draw the United States into a prolonged conflict in Iraq, that weapons of mass destruction would not be found, and that it would drain resources from the war in Afghanistan, which was being conducted simultaneously. What makes this case interesting for people studying political leadership is that it was a war of choice, not one of necessity—a choice made by the president. In a case such as this, one therefore cannot help but wonder if a different leader would have taken an alternative course of action. What [p. 354 ↓] would have happened if the Supreme Court had declared Al Gore the winner of the 2000 presidential elections? Would he also have chosen to invade Iraq, or would he have selected a different course of action to deal with Saddam Hussein?

The 2003 Iraq War is just one of a large number of international cases where the person in charge appears to have played a vital role in its outcome. Robert Kennedy, the U.S. Attorney General and brother of President John F. Kennedy, for example, stated about the EXCOM—the group of high-level policymakers who dealt with the Cuban missile crisis—that “if six of them had been President of the U.S., I think the world would have been blown up” (Steel, 1969, p. 22). One could also argue that Saddam Hussein played an important independent role in his country's decision to invade Kuwait in 1990 (Post, 2003b), or that Woodrow Wilson's self-defeatist behavior influenced the outcome of the Versailles Peace Conference, which brought World War I to a close (George & George, 1956).

Although political leaders make important decisions on a daily basis and are directly linked to decisions that the administration makes, it is also important not to fall into the trap of attributing every international event merely to the personality of the participating countries' elites. There are many patterns and specific situations in international relations when one does not need to look at who was in charge to explain the outcome. The personalities of the U.S. presidents during the cold war did not affect the stalemate between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and it is not necessary to know who is in charge in Britain and France to explain why these countries no longer fight each other. The

personality of the political leaders does not matter in these conditions because their beliefs and perceptions can largely be explained by the situation. Most leaders would act similarly in these conditions.

In studying political leadership, we are particularly interested in examining the various aspects of the decision-making process, relying on psychological frameworks within an institutional setting, in cases where it not only provides us with a more in-depth understanding of what happened but also makes it possible to explain significant additional variation in outcomes. We want to examine cases where the leader really made a difference.

The need to analyze political leadership has increased considerably following the end of the cold war, since there no longer is an agreement on the way in which the world is structured. Because of the threat of World War III and mutually assured destruction during the cold war, it was clear that no leader would significantly challenge the status quo, so conflicts were limited to the peripheral areas such as Vietnam and Korea. Since the fall of the iron curtain, and the Soviet Union in particular, this is no longer the case. There is now much more room for interpretation, innovation, misunderstanding, and miscommunication than when a bipolar world system dominated international interactions (Hermann & Hagan, 1998). For instance, there is no agreement on how big the threat of Islamic terrorism is; it is unclear to what extent China, Russia, and the European Union are threatening the United States in its hegemonic role; and countries such as Iran and North Korea are very unpredictable in their pursuit of nuclear weapons. How the elites interpret this unstable environment is thus increasingly important.

Understanding the influence of political leaders is not something that is only interesting to academics. Branches of the U.S. government such as the CIA often draw on analyses of elites to assist in the policy-making process (Post, 2003a). One classic example is how U.S. President Jimmy Carter relied on personality profiles of Israeli Prime Minister Menachim Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat during the Camp David negotiations, which led to a peace treaty between the two countries. The profiles, constructed by leading political psychologists, warned the president that the personalities of the two leaders conflicted significantly; Begin was very detail oriented, while Sadat focused more on the big picture, which could significantly complicate

negotiations. Based on this information, Carter designed a strategy that eliminated direct contact between the two protagonists and allowed him to act as a middleman. To this day, experts in political leadership cooperate with other academics such as cultural anthropologists to advise the U.S. Government.

When is the Decision-Making Process Important?

Since it is not always equally necessary to focus more narrowly on the decision-making process to understand why a country acts the way it does in the international arena, it is important to identify under which conditions leadership and the decision-making process are most likely to have an autonomous impact. As Post (2003a) states, the goal is to distinguish between situations that conform to the “covering-law generalization from a structural theory about a universe of cases or deviates from it due to the operation of intervening causal mechanisms between structural conditions and decision outcomes” (p. 64).

Scholars have been able to identify certain conditions in which the decision-making process is more likely to have an important independent impact. Hagan (2002) states that the decision making process is particularly important when the leaders (a) face real uncertainty in responding to international threats; (b) are confronted with trade-offs across competing goals, including that of retaining power; and (c) operate in decision structures in which political authority is quite dispersed and fragmented. Examining decision making in these conditions is important because a lack of information and goal certainty makes it very difficult to determine the rationally optimal [p. 355 ↓] course of action. The outcome will thus strongly rely on “how leaders perceive and interpret the threats based on their belief systems” (Hagan, 2002, p. 11). One could thus expect that in these cases different types of leaders might react differently.

One specific situation in which the decision-making process can play an important role is in a crisis (Hermann, 1976). A crisis is defined as a situation in which the policymakers perceive uncertainty, a threat to core values, and time pressure. In these conditions, policymakers are forced to make quick important decisions, often

with limited information. Because they are not necessarily able to have access to all information and have to deal with issues such as stress (Janis, 1982), psychological factors and the nature of the decision-making structure can become important (Vertzberger, 1990). This was exemplified in Jervis's (1976) groundbreaking work in which he discusses how perception and misperception can influence international politics.

It is important to stress that political leadership can be a necessary factor to explain why a certain event happened, but it is never sufficient. A political leader can be important because of the way in which this person interprets the environment, but it is the context and conditions that matter primarily. Elites only determine to what extent and in which fashion cues from the environment are interpreted.

Political Leaders as a Decision Unit

The personality of political leaders is not the only factor that can influence how decisions are made. The literature on foreign policy decision making, building on classics such as Graham Allison's (1971) *The Essence of Decision*, distinguishes among three types of decision units: a single group, a coalition of autonomous actors, and a powerful leader (Hermann, 2002). It is important to distinguish among these three types, because different factors influence how these distinct decision units come to determine a policy. The first type is a single group. This is a group composed of two or more policymakers in which all members are necessary to make the decision to commit resources. Examples of a single group are the EXCOM during the Cuban missile crisis and President Lyndon Johnson's inner cabinet during the Vietnam War. Since the focus is on how a group of people comes to a decision, the main variables used to explain how this decision unit selects a policy are derived from the study of group behavior in social psychology. This is because in a single group, decisions are made through a collective, interactive, decision process, in which all members participate. The focus is therefore on factors such as group pressures and the presence of a minority.

A second decision unit is a coalition of autonomous actors. This decision unit is composed of a group of independent actors who need to work together to come to a decision. Although the group members can share common goals, their primary loyalty

is not toward the coalition. They have their own constituency that they are accountable to. In the United Nations Security Council, for example, the member countries do not act as a single group. Their primary loyalty does not lie with the United Nations but their respective countries' self-interests. The same can be said for the political parties that compose a coalition government. This decision-making unit focuses more on the types of decision rules and factors that can help actors with different positions come to an agreement.

The focus in this chapter is on political leadership, or situations where an individual is obliged to, or chooses to, take the authoritative decision. This type of decision unit is predominant in countries or international organizations where one individual is vested with the authority to commit or withhold the resources of the government with regard to foreign policy matters (Hermann, 2002). Here, the focus is on individual leaders and how their personalities can influence the decision-making process and policy outcome. Who is in power can affect what information is taken into account, what factors motivate a decision, and how the advisory system is structured (who takes part in which format; Hermann & Preston, 1994), and so on. The predominant leaders are particularly likely to be found in authoritarian countries and dictatorships such as Mugabe in Zimbabwe and Lukashenko in Belarus but can also be important in countries such as the United States, where the president enjoys a lot of independent power in the foreign policy realm, among others. The systematic influence of leadership can also be detected in other cases such as international organizations and conditions where the leader is first among equals, but in these conditions, the individual impact will be a lot less direct and therefore more difficult to detect or measure. They can, for example, attempt to set the agenda or try to persuade other important actors, but their policy preferences do not deliver direct results.

Psychoanalytic Studies of Political Leadership

The study of political leadership emerged in the early 20th century with the rise of psychoanalysis, most famously associated with the work of Sigmund Freud, in which an important figure's behavior is explained by investigating his or her formative period.

Scholars started using these Freudian techniques to analyze why an individual leader acted the way he or she did at a certain time, or to explain his or her overall behavior, in what came to be called psychobiographies. The root causes in these studies are often the individual's relationship with parents, childhood traumas, or formative events. A classic example is Juliette George and Alexander George's (1956) study of Woodrow Wilson.

There have also been attempts to move beyond explaining individual behaviors using psychoanalysis and move toward a more comparative approach. An example of this is James Barber's (1992) study of the U.S. presidential [p. 356 ↓] character, which was originally published in 1972. He claims that the U.S. presidents can all be categorized as being active or passive in the amount of energy they put into the job and can be either positive or negative based on the satisfaction they get from the position. A combination of these two factors then determines success or failure in office. Barber argues, for example, that an active-negative president such as Hoover, Johnson, and Nixon is the most dangerous because these types of leaders tend to be compulsive, while an active-positive president such as FDR, Clinton, and Carter is most likely to succeed because these types of leaders tend to be more adaptive.

Although Barber's model remains extremely popular in classrooms, psychoanalysis is no longer widely used to explain political behavior. This is because this method is not focused on creating testable and generalizable hypotheses but instead wants to explain one individual's behavior in very specific circumstances. Even if more psychoanalysts wanted to follow Barber and create broad, generalizable theories, the reliance on creating a narrative out of historical material is also not conducive to explaining political behavior and outcomes. As Runyan's (1981) study of why the Dutch painter Van Gogh might have cut off his ear demonstrates, psychoanalytical theories are also impossible to falsify, since there can be many possible explanations why someone behaved the way he or she did. Scholars also often do not have direct access to the leaders, which means they have to rely on documents and secondary sources, which can be a problem when trying to create reliable measures (Houghton, 2009).

Personality and Politics

Political psychologists followed the evolution in psychology and no longer focus solely on psychoanalysis but instead investigate different specific components of personality to analyze political behavior. Winter (2003c) defines personality as “an array of capacities or dispositions that may be engaged, primed, or brought forward depending on the demands of the situation and a person's own ‘executive apparatus’” (p. 12). Winter compares personality to a personal computer with some relatively fixed hardware characteristics and software applications that can be opened or closed by the operator and affect the arousal and weighting of leaders’ goals and preferences, as well as conflicts and confusion among different goals.

Someone's personality is important because it acts like a filter through which information is processed and interpreted: It affects how someone interprets information from the environment, how he or she will react to the stimuli, his or her persistence and endurance, or how someone manages factors such as stress and emotions.

As the discussion on psychohistory demonstrated, one of the stumbling blocks to studying political leadership has always been that the investigators do not have access to the individuals whom they want to study. The reason for this is that presidents, prime ministers, and other important foreign policy actors, such as Barack Obama and Vladimir Putin, often do not have time, or are not interested, to complete the necessary psychological tests or clinical interviews, and even if they had the time, they might not want to participate since the results might be politically damaging if made public. Consider, for example, the implications if through direct tests, psychologists discover that a prime minister is clinically depressed. People might start questioning his or her ability to lead, which would likely be career ending.

To resolve the accessibility problem, scholars developed a number of techniques to derive the personality components at a distance. These methods, which are based on existing psychological measures and tests, rely on content analysis of text material, such as speeches and interviews, because word use can not only demonstrate conscious attempts to relay a message but also encompass unconscious factors such as beliefs, motives, and cognitive structures. The validity and reliability of these

techniques has been demonstrated through systematic research by, for example, comparing the results to those of expert panels (Winter, 2003a).

Many of these techniques can now be coded automatically, using computer software. For example, Margaret G. Hermann (1980) developed at-a-distance measures of several beliefs and interpersonal styles, such as nationalism, authoritarianism, and self-confidence (which will be discussed further in a following section). Michael Young subsequently created ProfilerPlus, a program that codes the text automatically using word libraries. The source material—the type of text—that is used for each method can differ significantly. In some cases such as leadership trait analysis, the scholars are looking for spontaneous text, like interview responses, while in other cases, they can rely on more scripted material such as speeches. Similar techniques have also been developed to code other frameworks such as the operational code, which will also be discussed later.

Single Personality Variables

The following section focuses on the three different components of personality: (1) motives, (2) cognitions and beliefs, and (3) temperament and interpersonal traits, which are also often labeled *personality traits* (Shafer, 2000). (Winter, 2003c, adds the situational context as a fourth component, but this is less generally accepted.) Each part briefly defines the component, addresses how this aspect of someone's personality can affect the way a leader behaves, discusses some important measures that are used, and mentions a number of specific findings.

Motives

One group of factors that can influence how someone will behave in the political realm is his or her motives. [p. 357 ↓] These are the different classes of goals toward which people direct their behavior. As Winter (2003b) states, motives influence how leaders construe the leadership role. Motives influence perceptions of opportunity and danger, they affect the accessibility of different styles and skills, and they determine sources of leadership satisfaction, stress, frustration, and vulnerability. For example, two students

with equal intelligence and skills can make different decisions based on what drives them. If one of them is motivated because he or she wants to be successful in his or her studies while the other is more interested in being popular among peers, their attitudes toward school are likely to differ significantly. The interpersonally motivated student is more likely to be swayed to go to a party the day before a test while a task-driven student is more likely to stay home to study. As a result, their exam scores will likely differ, despite the two students' equal intelligence.

Motives are not constant; they can change because of external incentives and internal dynamics and can be subject to distortion, deception, and rationalization. Goals can be accomplished, people can be disappointed, and new goals can emerge. Although there are many different motives that can drive people to act in a certain way, studies in political leadership primarily focus on three: (1) need for power, (2) achievement, and (3) affiliating themselves with others. As with many other personality variables, motives are often measured at a distance through content analysis of verbal behavior.

A first important motive is termed *need for power*. Someone who scores high on this variable is concerned about having an impact, control, or influence over another person, group, or the world at large. A high score on need for power does not mean that this individual is necessarily a Hitler, Napoleon, or comparable to any villain in a James Bond movie. Instead, these people can have qualities that can be beneficial as well as negative for their leadership function. According to Winter (2003b), people who score high on need for power tend to be more adept at building alliances with others, and they actively define the situation themselves, encourage people to participate, and try to influence others. During negotiations, they tend to be exploitative and aggressive and tend to rely on political experts for advice, instead of friends. Hermann (1980) found that among 45 world leaders, power-motivated leaders tended to be more independent and confrontational. Winter (1980) also states that power motivation is associated with involving the country in war.

Another motive that can impact political behavior is termed *need for achievement*. This motive refers to a person's concern about achieving excellence (Winter, 2003b). People who score high on this variable tend to be rational calculators, pursuing their self-interest. Although achievement-motivated individuals do well in business, they do not necessarily function well in the political domain. This is because in dealing with a

problem, once they have established the best solution, they tend to want to push this plan through, even if others disagree. In dealing with a financial crisis, for example, some believe that large-scale government intervention is necessary while others believe the market will balance itself. In such conditions, an achievement-oriented leader can alienate part of his or her constituency by pushing forward a divisive program.

The motive termed *need for affiliation* measures to what extent someone is concerned about establishing, maintaining, or restoring friendly relations among persons and groups (Winter, 1991). Leaders who score high on this motive are more focused toward others. Their circle is often small and consists of people whom these leaders agree with and whom they like. These types of leaders tend to be more peaceable and cooperative (Hermann, 1980)— so long as they are surrounded by like-minded others and do not feel threatened. They are also more vulnerable to the influence of self-seeking subordinates and scandal. Nixon, for example, scored high on affiliation as well as achievement (Winter & Carlson, 1988).

Cognitions and Beliefs

A second way in which a leader's personality can influence the decision-making process is through his or her cognitions, beliefs, or both. This includes a wide variety of mental representations, schemas, models, categories, beliefs, values, and attitudes (Winter, 2003a). This category analyzes ways in which individuals view various friendly and hostile groups, different social systems, and themselves. It also encompasses how these leaders interpret, structure, and retrieve information, as well as leaders' general beliefs about the nature of politics and the world in general. Cognitions and beliefs can play a very important role because they determine how information is processed and which information is selected. For example, someone who is convinced that the world is an evil place where everybody is out to get him or her is more likely to accept information that supports this worldview than someone who believes the international realm is more peaceful and cooperative. Beliefs tend to be fairly fixed but can be affected by persuasion. An individual who grew up fearing the Soviet Union because of the cold war is very unlikely to quickly change his or her opinion about Russia and its people. He or she can, however, change beliefs by, for example, moving to Russia or having to work with a lot of Russians on a daily basis.

One of the most studied cognitive features is conceptual complexity. Do leaders process information in simplistic ways, or do they recognize different points of view? Do they view the world in black and white alternatives, or are they able to recognize many different shades of gray? Conceptual complexity can be treated as a stable personality trait. This characteristic can lead to leadership success, affecting, for example, the length of tenure in high office and can reduce stress during crises (Wallace & Suedfeld, 1988). Bill Clinton, for example, scores fairly [p. 358 ↓] high on conceptual complexity compared to other world leaders (Hermann, 2003b).

Studies have also examined how the context might influence complexity or how people with different levels of complexity react to different conditions (Suedfeld, Guttieri, & Tetlock, 2003). Suedfeld, Tetlock, and Streufert (1992) refer to this interaction as integrative complexity. High scores on integrative complexity were found to be related to peaceful resolution (versus escalation) of international conflict (Tetlock, 1977). It does not mean, however, that high complexity leads to better decisions. Chamberlain, who was comparatively complex during the Munich Conference, was outmaneuvered by Hitler in spite of the latter's low level of complexity (Suedfeld et al., 2003).

An important tool for measuring a leader's beliefs is the operational code (George, 1969). This is a set of philosophical beliefs about the nature of political life (harmony or conflict), the predictability and controllability of political outcomes, and instrumental beliefs about the best way to pursue goals and calculate risks. These beliefs function as guides to political decision making, especially under conditions of relative uncertainty about the consequences of choosing one course of action rather than another (Walker, 1990). These beliefs vary in degree over time and for different issue areas (Walker, Shafer, & Young, 2003). Renshon (2008), for example, demonstrated with his analysis of President George W. Bush that role changes and traumatic events caused major shifts in his beliefs. This technique is particularly useful for gaining an understanding of new actors about whom we know little, as was the case when Vladimir Putin replaced Boris Yeltsin as Russian president. Walker, Schafer, and Young (1998) have developed objective quantitative methods for assessing operational codes based on the verbs in context approach.

A number of other beliefs and interpersonal style variables have also been studied that can affect how leaders act in the political realm. Hermann (1980), for example,

developed at-a-distance methods to measure level of nationalism, distrust of others, belief that one can control events, and self-confidence. Hermann found that distrust and nationalism were linked to expressions of strong negative affect toward other countries and with low levels of resource commitment in foreign relations. She also found that leaders with high levels of self-confidence are more immune to incoming information and feel less compelled to adapt to the nature of the situation.

Traits

A third aspect of a person's personality is a leader's traits. Although many psychologists use the term *trait* to refer to all personality variables, others define this term as the public, observable elements of personality. Without necessarily knowing someone's beliefs, motivations, or intellectual capacities, it is possible to make some statements about an individual, purely based on what one sees. In the popular TV series *Friends*, for example, the character Rachel Green, played by Jennifer Aniston, can be described as being self-absorbed, outgoing, and image conscious, while Monica Geller, played by Courteney Cox Arquette, is obsessive, competitive, and neurotic. Scholars mostly agree that there are five big traits that are considered fundamental and are therefore most frequently used by political psychologists. They are (1) extraversion or sur-gency, (2) agreeableness, (3) conscientiousness, (4) emotional stability or neuroticism, and (5) openness to experiences (Winter, 2003a). Although most concur that these are the five most salient traits, there is considerable discussion as to the content and structure of each factor.

These variables are often coded by asking historians, or other individuals that have studied the leader, to fill in questionnaires that probe for the various traits, using, for example, adjective check lists or by content analyzing descriptions of leaders by other policymakers. Traits resembling extraversion and openness have been linked to a variety of measures of presidential performance (Simenton, 1988), and other studies found a correlation between openness and greatness (Rubenzer, Faschingbauer, & Ones, 2000).

Multivariate Approaches

The previous section treated the three major categories of personality—motives, cognitions, and traits—separately, focusing on how these different components can impact a leader's decision. Very often, however, behavior is not determined by one sole factor but is instead an interaction between different parts of someone's personality. Motives might drive you to do something, but how you interpret the situation determines whether you even observe that there is a problem or not. Some studies have attempted to combine different personality aspects to examine political behavior.

One attempt to combine the various personality dimensions is Hermann's (1987) Leadership Trait Analysis (LTA). This approach combines seven personality traits to create an overall leadership profile. These are conceptual complexity, belief that the leader can control events, self-confidence, need for power, task focus, distrust of others, and in-group bias. Combinations of these variables are then used to answer three questions: Is the leader open or closed to information, is he or she task or relationship focused, and will the individual respect or challenge constraints? How the leader scores on these questions then determines which of eight leadership styles a leader has: expansionistic, evangelistic, actively independent, directive, incremental, influential, opportunistic, or collegial. Bill Clinton, for example, is considered to be a collegial leader: He generally respects constraints, is open to information, and is motivated by both solving the problem and keeping morale high (Hermann, 2003b).

Hermann and Preston (1994) have also linked leadership style to the way in which U.S. presidents organize their advisory systems: whether it is formalistic, competitive, [p. 359 ↓] or collegial. Kille (2006) also combined different UTA variables to determine how secretaries general of the United Nations will approach their positions. He demonstrates that whether the leader is a manager, a strategist, or a visionary will determine how the individual will use his or her agenda-setting power, resolve disputes, and approach possible UN interventions.

Future Directions

So far, studies in political leadership have been very successful in determining that leadership matters (Hermann & Hagan, 1998). Research has found a number of aspects of an individual's personality that can determine politically important behaviors such as the selection of advisors, the processing of advice, risk-taking propensity, and negotiating styles. Research has also found a relationship between some personality aspects and broad foreign policy outcomes such as going to war. Still, leadership as an independent variable in international relations will always be limited in what it can explain since it will always to some extent be influenced by the environment. A leader can be very war prone and can push his or her country toward attacking another nation. Nevertheless, this does not mean that violence will necessarily occur, since other countries might intervene, or domestic factors such as other institutions or popular outcries might still force the leader to change his or her mind. Leadership can thus never by itself fully predict exact situations (Winter, 2003c).

The study of political leadership is a constantly evolving field. Next to working on making the current variables more reliable and valid, scholars are also examining how the different components that have been established might relate to each other and how they might interact in systematic ways. Researchers are also constantly expanding into new areas. They are investigating new personality components such as creativity and impulsivity. The literature is also gradually expanding into examining how emotions such as anxiety and anger influence decision making (Post, 2003a).

Next to finding new and improved measures of personality components, the literature also needs to examine new areas in which leadership can have a significant independent impact. So far, most of the studies have focused on the most likely cases of leadership or examined individuals where the impact on the political realm would be most obvious, such as presidents, authoritarian leaders, or both, or the studies have focused on situations where leaders were forced to take autonomous decisions such as during international crises. One area in which political leadership has yet to expand significantly is situations where the leadership effect is not as direct. Kille and Scully (2003) and Kille (2006), for example, study the secretaries general of the United Nations and the presidents of the European Commission and look at how their leadership

styles can be important, despite not having any true formal power that comes with their positions. Political leadership can also examine cases where leaders such as presidents and prime ministers can play a role outside the area where they have traditionally held most power. One example is the U.S. president's State of the Union address. Do presidents' motivations and openness to information influence whether these individuals will actively try to set the agenda or be more reactive to pressures from the media and public opinion?

The rapidly advancing and broadly available technology also provides great opportunities to advance the knowledge of political leadership in the near future. Websites such as LexisNexis and the World News Connection, among others, allow scholars easy access to a wide variety of source material such as speeches and interviews. This material is often translated into English and can be accessed within days, hours, or in some cases even minutes of the event. Computer-assisted content analysis techniques also allow scholars to code this material in significantly less time, without endangering validity or reliability. This increased availability of data, as well as the ability to code much faster, present the opportunity to do comparative studies of leadership on a much larger scale. These studies can either rely on a much larger sample of political leaders or look at how the personality factors of an individual evolve across time or in different conditions. For example, it is now feasible for scholars with a limited budget to create leadership profiles of all members of the U.S. Congress or other national or international bodies.

The importance of political leadership is likely to continue in the future, since the instability in the world shows no sign of changing and national and international crises can erupt at any time. Scholars will thus continue to have a plethora of cases and individuals to examine and better material and techniques to accomplish this. These results will then, it is to be hoped, be used not only to advance science but also to help design strategies that will avert disasters and help resolve conflicts on a global level.

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