

## **“Leadership: A Definition”**

William G. Howell (University of Chicago) and Stephane Wolton (LSE)

A leader, like an institution or culture, is typically understood in its instantiated rather than its essential form. We are reasonably confident that Congress, marriage, and the stock market are institutions, even though we are not especially sure what, exactly, defines an institution. Hip hop, Coco Chanel, and Dada all express aspects of culture, while culture itself remains elusive. And so it is with leaders. We are confident that Adolf Hitler, Martin Luther King, and Mao Tse-tung count in the category. Though we may not admire them all, we recognize that each indisputably was a leader. Still, as a purely conceptual matter, we know very little about what distinguishes these three men from other agents of social change.

There exists, of course, a massive body of work on leadership. The vast preponderance of such scholarship, however, focuses on what leaders do, what traits they exhibit, and what modes of persuasion they employ. We see them in motion, fully formed, exercising influence and attracting plaudits. The expressed purpose of this scholarship is to unearth the personal qualities and styles of leadership (Greenstein 2004; George and George 1998); assess the capacity of leaders to refashion the environments in which they work (Burns 2004; Edwards 2013; Hargrove 1989); fit leaders within broader theories of democratic representation by distinguishing, for instance, delegates from trustees (Jacobs and Shapiro 2000); catalogue the biographies of individuals we all would consider leaders (highlights include Robert Caro’s magisterial works on Lyndon Johnson and Edmund Morris’s on Theodore Roosevelt); and identify the structural conditions under which leaders exercise more or less influence (Skowronek 1997).

Rarely, though, does this research pause and define its terms. It speaks elliptically about leadership, making the class of individuals it wishes to call “leaders” opaque and undifferentiated. As Morris Fiorina and Kenneth Shepsle (1989, 17) recognized a quarter century ago, most studies of leadership are, from a theoretical standpoint, “neither precise nor reliable,” and the overall literature on the topic is sufficiently fragmented that “few formal deductive treatments of the subject have emerged.” Or as John Alquist and Margaret Levi argue in a recent literature review (2011, 3), “the theoretical understanding of the causal importance of leadership is still fairly impoverished,” in no small part because the concept of leadership itself is “vague” and “contested.” Our definitions of leaders are akin to definitions of dogs as animals with four legs. They are accurate, as far as they go, but they do not go nearly far enough.

This volume constitutes important corrective to this state of affairs. The chapters herein help us understand when leaders succeed, when they fail, and the various contextual environments—bureaucratic, legislative, judicial, and executive—in which they work. We see the particular challenges that congressional leaders, agency leaders, and executive leaders face, and the strategies that they must employ to overcome them.

Still, we often are left to wonder what makes these women and men leaders rather than, say, managers, organizers, statesmen, or everyday politicians. And so in this chapter, we try to add some conceptual clarity to the discussion. We do so in two steps. First, we characterize, rather axiomatically, basic criteria that any definition of leadership must satisfy. Then, after illustrating some of the deficiencies of existing definitions, we

present our own. In it, we suggest that a leader distinguishes herself by: the objectives that she extols; the followers who not only revere her, but who willingly take actions that advance these objectives; and the ways in which she comes to personify these objectives. To be a leader, all of these conditions must be met. Should any one of these criteria not be satisfied, an individual, no matter how influential, relinquishes her status as leader.

From the outset, we want to be clear about our own objectives for this chapter. We do not seek to explain how one can reliably identify leaders in the material world. We have little to say about the very real challenges of detection, except insofar as we distill a minimal understanding of what one ought to look for.<sup>1</sup> We also do not evaluate the impacts of leaders on the real world. We do not argue that leadership is indispensable for the realization of social order, nor do we require that the actions of leaders and their followers are in any sense “good.” Our objectives are more circumscribed than all of this.

We hope to provide some conceptual clarity about the meaning of leadership, and to do so, we offer a definition of leadership. We make no pretense that ours is the only definition worthy of its name. But we do think that ours, more than most, satisfies the prerequisites of leadership. And for that reason alone, it may do some good.

## I. Definitional Criteria

Given the pervasive lack of conceptual clarity about leadership along with the pervasive sense, which we share, that leaders constitute vital—though not unique—agents of social change, it is worth pausing for a moment before offering a formal definition. In this section, we distill some basic criteria that any definition, very much including our own, must satisfy. We offer five, three of which are conceptual in nature, two of which concern their empirical regularities, and all of which are listed in Table 1. These criteria are deliberately cast in very general terms in order to allow for the possibility that leaders, like those considered in this volume, work in diverse professions and contexts.

**Table 1: Definitional Criteria**

<b>Conceptual Criteria</b>	<b>Empirical Criteria</b>
Relationality	Exceptionality
Normative Distinction	Publicity
Exclusivity	

We begin with the conceptual criteria, which appear in the left column of Table 1. The first requires that leadership be understood in relational terms. As Eric Beerbohm (2015, 639) observes, leadership is a “relational property between one agent and a set of agents.” Leaders are not leaders for the traits that they exhibit or the authority—formal or otherwise—that they possess. People are not born leaders. Nor do they become

<sup>1</sup> To be sure, the well-meaning empiricist who is equipped with a conceptual definition may fail to identify the true leaders who live among us. Corroborating evidence of leadership simply may not exist, while leaders and followers deliberately misrepresent their true intentions and relationships, making it impossible, as an observational matter, to sort leadership from the many other forces that order our social, economic, and political lives.

leaders through some training regimen or by studying the habits of past leaders. Nor do they acquire the status of leader simply by virtue of their election or assignment to some post. Rather, leaders become leaders because of the relationships that they foster and maintain with followers. It is through the relationships with followers that they cultivate, and the unique opportunities of influence that subsequently arise, that leadership arises. Any definition of leadership, as such, must recognize and then characterize the relationships between leaders and followers.

Second, a definition of leader makes at least one normative distinction about the publicly expressed ends that leaders seek. Rather than accepting any and all ends and focusing exclusively on means, a definition of leadership must have something to say about the purposes to which it is put. It need not distinguish “good” from “bad” ends (though it may). Nor need it require that leaders pursue “moral” objectives rather than “immoral” ones (though it might). All that we require is that the definition eschew agnosticism and embrace partiality. Hardwired in the definition itself must be some bounds on the variable goals that intermittently motivate leaders and that find their translation into action through the actions of followers.

Third, a definition of leadership must distinguish leaders from other agents of change, such as statesmen, martyrs, tyrants, or organizers. Too often, leaders represent anyone who advances social change. And as a consequence, leadership—the essential task of leaders—becomes synonymous with power or influence or office holding. But to meet this criterion, a definition of leadership cannot be so capacious as to apply to anyone who exercises influence, captures public attention, sits in a position of authority, or has the word “leader” in her job title, as many of the individuals surveyed in this volume do. Rather, the definition must identify a bounded subset of people operating in a clear subset of contexts and times.<sup>2</sup> Conceptually, the definition must isolate those individuals nurturing those relationships (see criterion #1 above) that uniquely apply to leaders—that manifest as leadership. And in so doing, it must cede conceptual space to other definitions that characterize other agents of social change.

The final two criteria, which appear in the second column of Table 1, reference empirical regularities about leadership. The first follows from the third conceptual criterion and concerns the exceptional nature of leadership. Leaders are rare, just as leadership is precarious. Few individuals ever become leaders; and even among those who do, the status of leader is never assured. Definitions that seek to democratize the incidence of leadership—insisting that we all have the potential to be leaders; or that we all, in one domain of life or another, exercise leadership—invariably miss what sets Lincoln, King, and Mao apart not only from the rest of humanity but from the subset of individuals who expressly seek to change the world we inhabit. Similarly, definitions that cast individuals as perennial leaders overlook leadership’s fleeting nature. If leadership can be won, it also can be lost. And as we shall see, the conditions that support its exercise are sufficiently tenuous that leadership all too often eludes though who seek it.

Finally, leaders are known. Rather than skulking in the shadows or organizing behind closed doors, leaders, whether anointed or ordained, stand before their public(s). Leaders do not merely facilitate change. They come to embody change, and they do so

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<sup>2</sup> Conceptually, designations of different types of social entrepreneurs (and rules) are mutually exclusive. As a practical matter, though, these designations may apply to the same person. It is quite possible that an individual may appear in one instance or domain as a leader and in the next as a statesman.

for all to see. Followers, as followers, may gain recognition for their sacrifices; but leaders, as leaders, cannot escape recognition. There are no hidden leaders. Leadership is not exercised “behind the scenes.” Rather, leaders perform in the light of day. And followers, for their part, beckon and laud not just the chosen ends of leadership, but the leaders themselves. Leaders not only speak to a public. They themselves are public.

These five criteria establish what we expect of any definition of leadership. To be sure, an insistence that leaders be understood in relational terms, accommodate specific kinds of ends, differ conceptually from other agents of change, and, as an empirical matter, be rare and public leaves ample room for competing definitions. But fail any one, as plenty do, and a definition of leadership itself runs aground.<sup>3</sup>

## II. Existing Definitions

Without pausing to clarify what they mean by leadership, scholars too often proceed straight to delineating the qualities that individual leaders supposedly exhibit. Still, the literature is not entirely bereft of definitions. Broadly speaking, such definitions tend to fall into one of three categories: consequentialist, functionalist, and essentialist. While definitions within all categories have their strengths, most, though not all, violate at least one of our evaluative criteria.

### 1. *Consequentialist Definitions*

Scholars often define leaders by the extraordinary actions that they take. Leaders see a higher purpose or possibility that is lost upon others, and they then take actions, often a great risk and sacrifice, in the service of that purpose. Consequences, then, function as a sort of litmus test for leadership, separating true from faux leaders. While plenty of people claim to be leaders, and plenty more resemble leaders, genuine leaders brandish their credentials by taking—or perhaps more accurately, instigating the taking of—extraordinary actions.<sup>4</sup>

James Read and Ian Shapiro (2014) provide a recent example. Read and Shapiro celebrate the work of leaders who see conflicts as positive sum, where others see only zero-sum outcomes, and then take the rather extraordinary step of strengthening the bargaining position of their adversary in order to demonstrate “hope for a positive future,” albeit at great personal risk. Leaders distinguish themselves by realizing outcomes that, under standard norms and protocols of political engagement, would seem impossible. By defying normal principles of bargaining arrangements, Read and Shapiro’s leaders break through impasses and realize mutually beneficial outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> Other chapters in this volume implicitly adopt easier standards for identifying leaders and leadership. And as a consequence, our criteria rule out some of the individuals and activities presented in this volume as leaders and leadership. From our vantage point, this is fine and well. The point of this exercise is not to affirm the pervasiveness of leadership. Rather, it is to be clear about what constitutes leadership and, just as importantly, what does not. Others are free to offer limiting criteria of their own. And we hope that they do. For as the conversation matures, studies may recover a language to speak clearly about the perquisites for and characteristic traits of leadership.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, empiricists who employ this formulation regularly fall into the trap of sampling on the dependent variable. Who is a leader? Answer: one who accomplishes great things. How do we identify leaders? Answer: by spotting the individual responsible for great things.

Leadership, by this definition, clearly satisfies both of the empirical criteria: exceptionality and publicity. The empathy and self-sacrifice required of Read and Shapiro's leaders certainly make them exceptional; and the "performative ingredient" of their labors puts them squarely in the public spotlight. Moreover, to the extent that it focuses on the mutual gains to be realized between warring states, their definition also satisfies the second conceptual criterion: the distinction between objectives.

It is on the first and third conceptual criteria that this definition founders. Leaders are not intrinsically defined by the relations that they hold with followers. Rather, "successful" leaders are ones who cultivate certain kinds of relations with their adversaries. Moreover, leaders under this definition are not obviously different from other individuals—statesmen, for instance—who also settle conflict. The word "leader" functions as a generic type of ruler. To qualify as leader, one must overcome a specific kind of impasse, and it does not matter so much what relationship one holds (if any) with followers or whether the achievement is realized by edict or suasion.

## *2. Functionalist Definitions*

Whereas consequentialist definitions emphasize the accomplishments of leaders, functionalist definitions focus on their actions. The two, obviously, are linked, for it is through actions that consequences arise. The distinction, then, concerns matters of emphasis. Whereas consequentialist definitions establish standards for what leaders must accomplish, functionalist focus primarily on the specific role performed by leaders and the actions that they take within a political or social ecosystem.

In this regard, several recent papers in formal theory are particularly instructive (especially, Dewan and Myatt 2008; Dewan and Myatt 2012; Bolton et al. 2013). Leaders, within this literature, perform the task of orienting and coordinating the actions of followers in view of a common goal. The great advance of this literature is to take seriously *how* a leader induces followers to act. Followers want to take correct actions, but they also want to act in common purpose. As such, tensions may arise between direction and coordination. Followers prefer a leader who indicates clearly the direction to follow (either because she speaks clearly or because she believes strongly in a cause) to a leader who exhibits good judgment. Contrary to the intuition of many scholars (e.g., Keohane 2010, discussed further below), good judgment is not the most essential quality for leaders. The definition advanced in this literature, however, applies as much to individuals we recognize as leaders as to any person in charge of a team.<sup>5</sup>

In no small part because of its analytic clarity, the definition of leadership that emerges from this literature clearly satisfies the first and third conceptual criteria—the first, by denoting a clear relationship between leaders and would-be followers; and the third, by identifying the precise functions that leaders, and only leaders, perform. In a purely technical sense, the definition also satisfies the second empirical criterion. In all of the models, the identity of leaders and the possible actions that they can take are known to the other players. Nothing about this definition, however, requires that leaders be rare, the first empirical criterion. Furthermore, this definition does not distinguish

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<sup>5</sup> A recent working paper by Landa and Tyson (2016) underscores the importance of trust between candidates to leadership and followers. When followers are uncertain about the preferences of their potential leaders, leadership, as we define it, can never emerge. The agent in charge, therefore, must resort to coercion to coordinate the actions of other agents.

among the many objectives that a leader may pursue. The cause advanced by a leader can be anything from a mundane objective such as winning the election (a leading example in Dewan and Myatt 2008) to the most grandiose goal (such as coordinating a march on Washington, D.C. for racial justice). This definition, as such, fails our second conceptual criterion.

### 3. *Essentialist Definitions*

Rather than characterize what leaders accomplish or do, essentialist definitions try to make sense of what leaders are. A considerable body of scholarship—not to mention, piles of self-help books—seeks to discern the core values that leaders hold, the skills that they employ, the postures that they assume. And in so doing, some of these studies are rather intended to counsel us, their audience, on how we too might become leaders.

The paradigmatic such example is Weber's definition of the charismatic leader. According to Weber (1947), the charismatic leader exhibits a "certain quality of an individual personality, by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities. These are such as are not accessible to the ordinary person, but are regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary, and on the basis of them the individual concerned is treated as a leader." It is the qualities that charismatic leaders have, much more than the specific acts they perform or the accomplishments they achieve, that make them leaders.

Endowed with "supernatural" and "superhuman" powers, charismatic leaders plainly are exceptional.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, Weber recognizes, the retention of charisma can be fleeting, making charismatic leadership itself not only precarious but, as he puts it, "unstable."<sup>7</sup> Weber's definition, as such, plainly satisfies our first empirical criterion of leadership. It satisfies the second in insisting that charismatic cultivate and retain a followership that recognizes the unique qualities of a charismatic leader. Recognition, in Weber's formulation, requires publicity, for the leader's "charismatic claim breaks down if his mission is not recognized by those to whom he feels he has been sent" (1948[1946], 20). The simple fact that charismatic leaders, by definition, have followers also satisfies the relational criterion, while the attention paid to the unique skills and qualities of leadership distinguish charismatic leaders from Weber's "legal" and "traditional" authority figures.

Least developed, though not entirely missing, in Weber's definition is any recognition of the various ends of leadership. Treatment of the subject, to the extent that it exists, appears in the larger corpus of Weber's work. For Weber, charisma is a great deal more than just style or panache. Leaders are "regarded as of divine origin or as exemplary" because they themselves communicate "divine" and "exemplary ends." To establish their status as charismatic leaders, therefore, they must perform "miracles" and "heroic deeds." Such acts, then, must support ends that will evoke the requisite awe and inspiration among followers. The qualities leaders exhibit, in this sense, are linked to the

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<sup>6</sup> On this score, Weber's definition differs from many other essentialist definitions of leadership, which often insist that rather pedestrian qualities—e.g., keeping an open mind or listening with care and attention—are the tickets to leadership.

<sup>7</sup> And it is precisely for this reason that Weber is so interested in how rational bureaucracies come to replace charismatic leaders. According to Weber, mature states depend less upon the personal qualities of individual leaders and more upon new organizational forms characterized by divisions of labor and rational hierarchies.

ends they serve. Charismatic leaders, according to this reading of Weber, distinguish themselves by their unique capacity to translate distinctly charismatic ends.

Reading Weber more narrowly, however, it is possible to come to the opposite conclusion. Formally, Weber does not require charismatic leaders to pursue certain kinds of objectives and eschew others. Indeed, for the purposes of definition, Weber expresses general indifference towards the objectives that charismatic leaders pursue. Again, all that is required is a shared evocation of awe. It is precisely for this reason that Weber casts his attention nearly exclusively on the attributes of charismatic leaders, the spell that they cast upon their followers and the devotion that follows. The main purpose of followers, in Weber's sociology, is to legitimate charismatic leaders and the formal authority that they exercise. Followers, in this construction, are largely passive, and the relationship between followers and the leader is limited and nearly always one-sided, a point to which we return below.

Depending on which reading one finds more persuasive—and scholars of Weber differ on this account—one draws very different conclusions about whether his definition satisfies the normative distinction criterion of leadership. The consequences of this judgment, as we discuss at greater length in the conclusion, relate to the population of definitions that speak to the essential meanings of leadership.

#### *4. Hybrid Definitions*

Distinctions among consequentialist, functionalist, and essentialist definition are usually ones of emphasis rather than omission. In any one, we often find elements of the others. And what sets a definition apart, typically, is what its author chooses to place its center.

Even so, not all definitions permit such categorization. Consider, for instance, Nannerl Keohane's observation (2010, p. 19) that leaders "provid[e] solutions to common problems or offer[] ideas about to how accomplish collective purposes, and mobiliz[e] the energies of others to follow these courses of action."<sup>8</sup> In this definition, we understand leaders by reference to both the things that they accomplish (collective purposes) and the functions that they serve (mobilize energies of others). Moreover, Keohane goes on to emphasize the particular qualities that leaders, both on the basis of her study as a political theorist and her experience as a university president, tend to exhibit, above all judgment.

Keohane's definition clearly satisfies the relational criteria, as leaders are understood by reference to their relationship with followers. While she does not explicitly carve out a well-defined subset of possible objectives that leaders might serve, in her examples Keohane also has in mind purposes that are, in some sense, worthy of public emulation. As a definition of leadership, however, Keohane's plainly fails on both empirical criteria and the third conceptual criterion. Under her definition, nearly anyone can be a leader. And so in her treatment of the subject, she intermittently recognizes the leadership qualities of everyone from presidents to friends to university administrators as being leaders. Moreover, her definition does not require that her leaders be publicly recognized. Mid-level managers and community organizers each find their place under

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<sup>8</sup> Keohane's definition has more than a passing resemblance to Bill Clinton's, which stipulates that "Leadership means bringing people together in pursuit of a common cause, developing a plan to achieve it, and staying with it until the goal is achieved."

this definition. Finally, and relatedly, the definition is so capacious that it does not permit distinctions between leaders from the many other agents of change. In her efforts to recognize the pervasive need for leadership Keohane misses what is conspicuous, exceptional, and distinctive about leaders.

### III. A New Definition

Having briefly surveyed some existing definitions of leadership, we now offer our own:

*A Leader publicly defines, extols, and eventually personifies high objectives, thereby orienting and coordinating the efforts of followers who seek to advance such objectives.*

The definition, you'll notice, is cast in very general terms. It makes no mention of the specific feats that Leaders must accomplish and hence does not join company with other consequentialist definitions. Nor does it stipulate the specific traits that Leaders have and thus forgoes essentialist understandings. In identifying things that Leaders and their followers do, the definition most closely resembles functionalist arguments. But even so, it offers no mention of the exact acts that Leaders take, the precise appeals they make, the powers they exercise, or the styles they adopt.

Still, the definition has real content. A Leader, thus stipulated, is revealed in four parts. The first identifies the class of objectives that a Leader defines, the second characterizes the Leader's dependence upon followers to advance those objectives, the third recognizes the Leader's personification of those objectives, and the fourth distinguishes the mere "leader" from "Leader." Each warrants some elaboration.

#### 1. Objectives.

As pure types, we consider two classes of objectives that agents of change may pursue. The first, which we call "lower ends," concern an individual's immediate and often material self-interests—personal enrichment, fame, political survival, and the like. The second type, which we call "higher ends," concern larger objectives that stand apart from any individual—justice, nationalism, country, and the like. These are ends that persist, even flourish, in the absence of any single individual. Such ends, as Weber (2004, 30) puts it, contribute "something of enduring value to a suprapersonal realm." Whereas lower ends are person-specific, higher ends are impersonal. And it is higher ends that Leaders define, extol, and personify.

Higher and lower ends should not be confused with John Stuart Mill's distinction between higher and lower pleasure (1969, 211-212). Mill sought to distinguish activities that, by virtue of their intrinsic qualities, evoked qualitatively different types of pleasure. And for him, those that entertained higher faculties—e.g., the intellect, imagination, and moral sensibilities—were of greater value than those that engaged one's lower, that is purely physical, senses. The distinction we wish to draw, by contrast, principally concerns the relationship between an objective and the person who advocates it; and, more specifically, the integrity of an objective quite apart from any individual who speaks on its behalf. No matter what faculties it entertains, no matter what pleasures it renders, an objective cannot be considered higher if it exclusively relates to the personal welfare of a would-be Leader.

Higher ends may satisfy what G.A. Cohen (1991, p. 280) calls the “impersonal test,” but they need not. Such a test is expressly intended to evaluate the robustness of an argument on behalf of a particular policy by different combinations of speakers and audiences. If the perceived merits of the policy depend upon the identity of either the speaker or audience, then, says Cohen, it fails the impersonal test. To be sure, arguments about lower ends necessarily fail such a test, for the very meaning of such ends depends upon the identity of its sponsor. One can imagine ends, though, that fail the impersonal test but that nonetheless count among higher ends. Arguments about the greatness of country, of course, assume very different hues depending upon the country discussed and the citizenship of the sponsor and her audience. Such arguments, therefore, plainly fail the impersonal test. The fact that such arguments have meaning and integrity quite apart from the sponsor, though, is all that is required in order for them to count among higher ends.

Likewise, higher ends may count among the charismatic qualities that Weber says leaders exhibit. Such qualities, for Weber, are largely irreducible in form and, as Edward Shils (1965, 199) notes, reveal “some *very central* feature of man’s existence and the cosmos in which he lives” (emphasis in original). But as with Cohen’s impersonal test, Shils’ interpretation of Weber may set too high a benchmark for leadership qualities, excluding more distant and material objectives that nonetheless count among higher ends—the elimination of malaria or the practice of female genital mutilation, for instance. Higher ends may reveal something essential about the human condition or its principled aspirations, but they need not. All that matters is that the ends reside, and hence can be understood, outside of the Leader who espouses them.

Weber’s own insistence (1948[1946], 24) that charismatic leaders renounce “rationalist deductions from abstract principles” may rule out other sorts of higher ends. Leaders, under our definition, may channel the divine, but they need not. In the service of higher ends, Leaders may espouse and extol distinctly rational principles that bear no resemblance to Weber’s charismatic qualities.

A Leader also may derive personal pleasure and fulfillment in the pursuit of higher ends. A Leader’s commitment to higher ends need not be selfless. Leaders, like all of us, have egos; and their egos surely influence both their selection and understanding of objectives. Further still, Leaders may materially benefit from the realization of higher ends. The Leader’s wealth, status, or power may be enhanced through the work of followers who work steadily on behalf of higher ends. Once again, though, the distinction that matters is that higher ends can be understood on their own terms, quite apart from the person who advocates them, whereas lower ends necessarily and unavoidably implicate their sponsor. Our definition merely requires that a Leader’s enrichment is incidental to the work of followers, rather than the central objective.

To illustrate the point, consider Martin Luther King’s professed commitment to racial justice and the welfare of African Americans and other minorities. To be sure, King’s notoriety and personal wealth were enhanced by the work of his followers. These, though, were not the higher ends that King defined, extolled, and eventually personified. King spoke on behalf of a “promised land” of racial and economic justice; and that promised land shone just as brightly whether he himself made it there. Indeed, as he presciently told his followers, he expected not to do so. It is precisely for this reason that

King's objectives counted among higher ends. King's higher ends could be understood apart from himself. In his absence, they nonetheless had integrity and meaning.

In no way is the distinction between higher and lower ends, however, meant to connote any sort of normative endorsement. It is perfectly possible that an individual's lower ends warrant plaudits when a Leader's higher ends elicit justified abhorrence. The dominance of the Aryan race or the glory of nation qualify as higher objectives, just as a family's efforts to pull themselves out of poverty or a wife's interest in fleeing an abusive husband count among lower ends. What matters, instead, is the relationship between the objective and its sponsor. Objectives that can be understood without reference to the needs, wants, or egoistic aspirations of the sponsor constitute higher ends. Lower ends, by contrast, cannot be understood except by reference to the individual who holds them.

Our characterization of higher ends, as such, is quite capacious. While ruling out strictly personal—read, egoistic and self-serving—objectives, it keeps in play many objectives that would not satisfy normative standards, very much including consciously impersonal ones, such as John Rawls's difference principle.

## 2. Followers.

People cannot be Leaders unless they have followers. While there exists a large class of "rulers," including statesmen, who may exercise power to directly translates objectives into outcomes,<sup>9</sup> Leaders belong to the larger class of "entrepreneurs" who depend upon followers to do their bidding. The Leader cannot simply assert her will, exercise her power, issue a command, and expect the world to change. Rather, she must look to her followers to take actions that realize outcomes corresponding with her higher ends.

What is it that followers do? They do not merely applaud, celebrate, or worship their Leader. The entertainer who returns to the stage for a third standing ovation is not exercising Leadership. Nor is the celebrity whose every move is meticulously tracked and documented by a roving paparazzi. Nor is the public figure whose Twitter feed has millions of "followers." That others are interested in what you say or do, in itself, does not establish a basis for Leadership.

Followers do not merely track their Leader. Though they may monitor their Leader, draw insight and inspiration from her, come to understand their purposes through her, followers subsequently must pivot and take actions *of their own that accord* with their Leader's directives. Having sat before their Leader, they then must stand and do something that advances a Leader's expressed objectives. Fans become followers when they commit private resources—time, energy, money, and the like—that are consonant with their Leader's directions. To follow a Leader is to give of one's resources in order to advance higher objectives that are expressly understood through the Leader.

Followers, as a consequence, stand between a Leader and her goals. It is through the collective activities of followers that a Leader makes a difference in the world. It is

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<sup>9</sup> Statesmen, therefore, distinguishes themselves from Leaders in at least two ways. Because they do not require followers, statesmen, unlike Leaders, need not personify their objectives, a subject we discuss further below.

through followers that a Leader's objective is advanced. And without followers, nothing is accomplished that can be meaningfully attributed to Leadership.<sup>10</sup>

In this regard, our definition also differs rather dramatically from Weber's. Weber, to be sure, recognizes a role for followers, seeing their existence as a prerequisite for the exercise of leadership. But that is about as far as he goes. For Weber, the relationship between charismatic Leaders and followers is decidedly one-sided. The bulk of Weber's sociology, after all, is devoted to examining how charismatic leadership becomes routinized into an organizational apparatus; how, that is, essentialist qualities of an individual leader become essentialist qualities of a state. Ours, by contrast, recognizes both the dependency and agency of followers. Followers depend on a Leader to define and extol higher ends. And when such a Leader vanishes, as we shall soon see, the relationship between followers and these higher ends is deeply disrupted. But by our definition, followers are not passive. Rather, they retain the capacity to act on their own. Followers, by our definition, are responsible for anointing a Leader who, by turn, depends on followers in order to accomplish anything of consequence.

In their work to advance higher ends, however, followers must follow. They must abide their Leader's instructions. We would not call someone a Leader if her "followers" disregard her, even if they subsequently act in ways that do in fact advance her higher ends. Such a person amounts to a mere figurehead. A Leader, by contrast, has followers who recognize and abide the content of her appeals; and who subsequently behave in ways that are consistent with her directions, no matter how misguided or harmful. Followers must "bow to the greater man," to paraphrase Joseph Goebbels' yearning soon after meeting Hitler in 1926 (Toland 1976, 217). When enough followers break ranks, openly disobey their Leader's commands, and commit themselves to new pathways to realize the very higher ends that initially brought them together, the Leader's status as Leader is imperiled. And when her followers cease to listen to her instructions, she ceases to be a Leader at all.

A Leader's instructions and a follower's actions need not be identical. What we must insist upon, however, is that the Leader holds the attention of her followers, and that these followers take their guidance from their Leader. An impartial observer ought to be able to see some fidelity between a Leader's instructions and a follower's action. Such an observer may be appalled by the actions, just as she may be convinced that the Leader is a fraud. The key test, though, is whether this observer witnesses followers who take actions that broadly comport with the Leader's instructions. The individual who captivates and directs her followers has the making of Leadership. The one who loses all control over her followers, meanwhile, ceases to exercise Leadership.

In this way, followers retain agency of their own. As Benjamin Hermalin (2012, 435) puts it, a "defining feature of Leadership is that a Leader is someone with *voluntary* followers" (emphasis in original). Leadership is revealed through the demonstrated willingness of followers to abide instructions from someone who does not exercise

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<sup>10</sup> As an empirical matter, of course, Leaders often take actions that translate directly into the realization of objectives. For as an empirical matter, Leaders often hold power that enables them to intervene into and reshape the material world as they see fit. When they do so, however, they are not acting as Leaders. Being a Leader does not preclude the opportunity to take direct actions. It simply means that when Leaders take such actions, they are not behaving as Leaders per se. In their capacity as Leaders, subjects depend upon followers to advance—in any meaningful capacity—their stated higher objectives.

formal control over them. The class of followers must include individuals who freely and independently devote their own resources in the service of a Leader's objectives. The manager who dictates orders about how employees are to spend their time during work hours is not exercising Leadership. Nor is the tyrant who threatens his subjects, on pain of death, to obey his commands. Nor is the slave master whose slaves, as his property, are formally bound to his indiscriminate intentions.<sup>11</sup>

Leadership, as expressed through the communications between a Leader and followers, can be manipulative, minacious, and ugly—*just so long as followers retain some free will, and the actions they take on behalf of their Leader is based upon that free will*. This freedom distinguishes the rule of a Leader from that of a manager, and, likewise, the available options of subjects and followers.<sup>12</sup>

Leadership, in this way, does not preclude the existence of formal authority. It is possible for someone to be a Leader who is also endowed with clear power that can be formally exercised over her followers. Leadership, however, finds its clearest expression beyond authority. When an individual convinces a follower to take an action that she cannot command, or to exert a level of effort she cannot require, then her Leadership qualities come into view. And in the extreme, when an individual can attract the attention and direct the energies of followers over whom they exercise no formal control whatsoever, her position as Leader appears in full bloom.

A Leader's relationship with her followers, to be sure, may have more to do with emotion than rationality. When in her presence, followers may become spellbound. But when they turn to act, followers must recover their senses, and with them the commitment to exercise their own free will. Followers are neither dupes nor stooges. They work consciously and deliberately on behalf of their Leader and the higher ends she embodies. And when doing so, followers enjoy a certain measure of freedom. Followers are not merely the arm or instrument of a Leader. Rather, they have agency and autonomy, and thus the capacity to abandon their Leader—or even to work against her—without formal sanction.<sup>13</sup>

What keeps followers from exercising such options? It is here that higher ends come into play. Again to cite Goebbels (Toland 1976, 233), higher ends instill in followers a sense of purpose and place in the universe. Higher ends fulfill the existential needs of followers. If followers freely abide a Leader's instructions, they do so primarily

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<sup>11</sup> Leaders differ from managers, tyrants, and slave-holders in other ways as well. To begin, they need not direct the energies of followers in the service of "high" objectives, which, in turn, they themselves need not "personify"—the latter, of which, we discuss at further length below.

<sup>12</sup> Insofar as the concept allows for a modicum of agency among followers, Margaret Levi's notion of "quasi-voluntary compliance" might establish a lower bound on the necessary freedoms available to followers in order for Leadership to function (1988). Levi, of course, recognizes the coercive capabilities of the Leadership and the state. But in insisting that citizens (read, potential followers) draw upon normative considerations when deciding whether to comply with government taxes, Levi also carves out a space for independent action among followers.

<sup>13</sup> Here again we see differences between our definition of Leadership and Weber's. Weber does not take nearly as hard a line as we do on with respect to the free will of followers. Indeed, as Weber traces the institutionalization of charisma into the state, he not only allows for the possibility that Leaders exercise formal authority over their followers, but he demands as much. In their efforts to "prove" their worthiness to followers, as Weber insists they must do, charismatic Leaders also can wield the various forms of formal authority that, by our schema, are available to the larger class of rulers but not entrepreneurs, of which Leaders are a part.

out of commitment to the high ends that a Leader publicly defines, extols, and, as we shall soon see, personifies.

A Leader's higher ends therefore must resonate with her followers. It will not suffice for followers to follow instructions without any regard for the higher ends involved. Nor will it suffice for a Leader to declare higher ends with a wink and a nod, while her followers embark on a project that all recognize as serving low objectives. The Leader's public expression of higher ends must be accompanied by the follower's belief in higher ends. The Leader may be engaging in a charade. But for followers, the commitment—no matter how misguided—must be genuine.<sup>14</sup>

### *3. Personification.*

While Leaders depend upon followers for their higher objectives to be realized, so too do followers depend upon their Leader to understand these objectives. As followers stand between a Leader and the actualization of her goals, so does the Leader stand between followers and the expression of a higher goal. It is through a Leader that followers identify with and come to understand their purpose.

Leaders, however, do more than just instruct and orchestrate about higher objectives. Leaders, at the peak of their influence, come to embody these higher objectives. In Martin Luther King followers see racial justice, just as in Jesus followers see God's Word. Adolf Hitler became "the personalization of flag, freedom, and racial purity" (Toland 1976, 203). Mao Tse-tung was the "Red Sun in Our Hearts" (Short 2000, 543). And by personifying higher ends, all Leaders imbue in their followers a sense of meaning, purpose, and common regard for the stakes involved in their shared work.

We are agnostic about the particular ways in which this personification comes about. For some Leaders, charisma may be the key. For others, it may be fear, carefully calibrated and selectively employed. Fervor, inspiration, or treachery all may play a part. Still others may come to personify higher aims through tireless work, self-sacrifice, wisdom, or enlightenment. What matters is not how the Leader comes to personify higher ends, but that she does.

By personifying higher ends, however she comes to do so, the Leader distinguishes herself from the organizer. While the organizer also depends upon followers, the organizer remains anonymous, working discretely behind the scenes, offering guidance and support without attracting the public spotlight. While some organizers may be especially adept, all organizers are interchangeable. While the work that organizers perform may be indispensable, the individuals who serve as organizers are not. For what organizers do, in essence, is coordinate the actions of others who independently understand their higher ends. They facilitate change without themselves representing change. Followers do not cede judgment to organizers, nor do they see organizers as the living embodiment of higher ends. There are no monuments to organizers. The image of organizers does not emblazon the national conscious.

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<sup>14</sup> Roving bandits and marauding armies whose sole purpose is self-enrichment do not establish the basis for Leadership, even if their commanders regularly and devoutly pay homage to high ends. Nonetheless, followers may behave in ways that, to an impartial outsider, appear to be entirely self-serving as long as the followers themselves believe that they are advancing a higher end. If bandits and armies act out of their commitment to tribe or country, which their commander, their Leader, defines and extols, then the first principle of Leadership is satisfied—even if the actions that followers take are abhorrent, and even if the Leader's commitment to the higher end is not true.

Not so with Leaders. Leaders do not merely speak of higher ends. Leaders personify higher ends. In Leaders, followers not only understand what action they should take, they also draw existential meaning and sustenance. They work on behalf of a higher objective because they come to believe in the Leader who personifies it. And when this Leader dies and no one stands to replace her, followers do not merely mourn. They appear lost, reeling, unsure of what to do, nor, crucially, of what to believe.

In this sense, we reject those definitions of Leadership (e.g. Gardiner 1990) that see Leaders and followers in a common community with shared understandings of values and objectives. Leaders depend upon followers, just as followers depend upon Leaders. But this reciprocity does not make Leaders and followers of a piece when it comes to larger objectives. For Leaders, the connection to objectives is immediate. For followers, understandings of objectives are channeled through Leaders.

In this sense, exactly what makes Leaders loom so large is also what makes followers so dependent. Anointed by their followers, Leaders not only articulate and defend grand tasks; in their biography, their imagery, their voice, Leaders also come to represent these tasks and the higher purposes to which they are put. Prospective followers may choose their Leader with cause, selecting an individual worthy of their adulation and doing so for clear instrumental reason. But once chosen, prospective followers become actual followers, and as a consequence their independent judgment, their critical faculties, their capacity to not only see what is right, but also to determine what is required to make right, begin to deteriorate.<sup>15</sup>

It is for precisely this reason that Leaders are best evaluated one at a time. Each Leader is understood on her own terms, through her own relationships, via her own objectives and followers. Individuals who on their own would not qualify as Leaders cannot bind together and collectively assume the status of Leader. An individual is recognized as a Leader singularly or not at all. For it is only a single individual who can come to personify a higher objective.

#### 4. *“Leader” versus “leader”*

By requiring that a leader “personify” objectives, our definition rules out many of the kinds of activities and relationships discussed in this volume. While a party leader in Congress or an agency head assuredly directs followers toward certain higher objectives, she does not obviously “personify” these ends. Rank and file members of Congress do not see in their leaders the living embodiment of higher ends. And in precisely this way, party leaders of the sort we are accustomed to electing (and then bemoaning) work in the shadows of “Leaders” such as Mao, King, Hitler, or Jesus.

With the requirement of personification, we have set a high bar for the criterion of exceptionality. Were one interested in lowering it, a distinction may be useful: whereas a “Leader” personifies higher ends, a “leader” merely defines and extols them. A “leader,” thus understood, assuredly performs vital functions. She transmits information about the world, makes the case for the primacy of certain objectives, and dispenses directions on how best to achieve them. Unlike the anonymous organizers, moreover, a “leader” curries the attention of followers. She works in the public realm, and she directs the efforts not of coequals, but of followers.

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<sup>15</sup> This dependence might itself be rational. For example, it might help coordinate followers’ actions towards the objectives personified by the Leader.

A “leader,” however, does not come to symbolize higher objectives. In her image, followers do not see, understand, and derive meaning from higher ends. Portraits of “leaders” do not rest on mantelpieces. Statutes of them are not erected in public squares. Followers do not weep in their presence. All of this is reserved for “Leaders,” who are known for more than just what they do, but for what they are, and what they represent. Capital L “Leaders” are far more than celestial guides. They are celestial beings.

#### IV. Qualifiers

As we have seen, a Leader is not the same as a leader, statesman, manager, or organizer. But to say that someone is a Leader, under our definition, may not say enough. And for this reason, a variety of qualifiers can be productively invoked.<sup>16</sup>

##### *“Good”*

The first, and perhaps the most urgently needed, are “good” and “bad.” These particular qualifiers relate to the higher ends that a Leader commends to her followers. A “good” Leader pursues higher ends that are not only recognizable apart from the individual who espouses them, but higher ends that have clear moral content. A “bad” Leader, by contrast, pursues objectives that are depraved, unethical, or immoral. Good and bad, as such, relate to the normative distinctions we make about different higher ends. And with these qualifiers, we can most easily distinguish Adolf Hitler from Martin Luther King. Both, irrefutably, were Leaders. But only one would we call good.

Notice that the qualifiers good and bad do not relate to the Leader herself. It is possible, likely even, that a good Leader is not good, herself. As long as she extols higher ends that are moral and just, a Leader is free to wantonly abuse her partner, her children, and her dog and still remain “good.” The fact that Martin Luther King was a philanderer or that Hitler remain faithful to Eva Braun does not in any way force us to reconsider our evaluations of these Leaders as good and bad, respectively.

##### *“Authentic”*

While deliberately allowing Leaders to pursue a wide range of higher objectives, our definition also establishes rather lax standards regarding authenticity. To qualify as a Leader, an individual must commit herself to one or more higher ends. But of course, there may be instances when Leaders express high objectives when, at heart, they are more truly dedicated to lower ends. The pastor who calls upon his flock to follow God’s Word may, in truth, merely want to increase his coffers. The politician who rhapsodizes about the glory of country or the imperatives of equality may mask a baser interest in his individual hold on power. Our definition of Leadership, however, does not demand any fidelity between expressed and true objectives. Leadership can accommodate insincerity, even duplicity. All that matters is that the Leader publicly define, extol, and personify higher ends.

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<sup>16</sup> Though we focus on Leaders, these qualifiers might also apply to other agents of social changes, including mere leaders.

To be an “authentic” Leader, however, the higher aims that an individual professes must be the true source of her motivation, the true content of her beliefs. For the authentic Leader, higher aims do not stand in for lower aims. The authentic Leader preaches the Word of God because she believes it, not because she sees their instrumental value. Higher aims are not delivery mechanisms for personal enrichment. When an authentic Leader speaks of higher aims, she is being candid and true.

Both King and Hitler, most would agree, were authentic. Though their higher aims could not differ more from one another, King and Hitler each held his own dearly. For each of these authentic Leaders, what they said was a fair representation of what they believed. And as a result, though their followers might subsequently complain about their lack of effectiveness, they could not reasonably argue that they were ever duped. These were not charlatans.

Not so with Mao Tse-tung, perhaps the quintessential inauthentic Leader. While extolling collectivism, the worker’s welfare, and the birth of a proletarian culture, Mao, historians nearly universally recognize (e.g., Short 2000, 523-583), was principally concerned about his own hold on power and his own glory. For Mao, higher ends were important only insofar as they were useful, allowing him to conduct a carefully orchestrated ruse. Unable to carry out a campaign of terror against his political opponents, Mao launched a cultural revolution, one that in expression held forth higher ends but that in execution yielded a “stultifying shallowness” (Short 2000, 583), the direct product of Mao’s lower ends. Mao may have been great and effective, but he was neither good nor authentic.

### *“Democratic”*

Under our formulation, the only restriction on a leader’s chosen objective is that it be counted among all possible higher ends. Whether good or bad, the specific higher end a Leader defines and extols need not correspond with either the prior or latent moral commitments of followers. For the “democratic” Leader, however, such a correspondence exists, while for the “undemocratic” Leader it does not, even though followers freely take actions on behalf of the leader’s chosen higher ends.

A great deal of scholarship on democratic theory is devoted to the particular mechanisms that intermittently encourage and impel Leaders to pursue objectives that represent, in any meaningful sense, their constituents.<sup>17</sup> And many of these democratic theorists seek criteria that Leaders must satisfy not only in their selection of chosen objectives, but also in how they communicate with their followers about such objectives and the inherent rights that followers retain in their pursuit. The details of these debates are beyond the scope of this chapter. For here, we need only recognize the stakes of such debates, which center on the appropriateness of the “democratic” qualifier and not the status of Leader itself.

### *“Great”*

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<sup>17</sup> To be sure, the literature on democratic theory focuses on more than just this specific correspondence. And according to some definitions, e.g. Beerbohm’s, a democratic leader must do more than just advance objectives shared by a larger public. Her expressed objectives must also correspond with her true objectives, which in our parlance signifies authenticity.

A “great” Leader distinguishes herself by the followers she keeps. A great Leader attracts many followers who wholly commit themselves, often at considerable sacrifice to themselves, to her chosen cause. The more followers a Leader has and the harder these followers work on behalf of a leader’s higher ends, the greater she becomes. The “modest” Leader, by contrast, garners merely respect and admiration. Her followers, however, are not especially plentiful, and their devotion to her objectives, as measured by the actions that they take, generally underwhelm. They may speak fondly of their Leader and dutifully purchase overpriced and overcooked cupcakes at her fundraisers, but that is about all. Modest Leaders do not have followers who fervently seek out opportunities to take actions on behalf of the leader’s ends—actions that disrupt their daily routines, invite personal risk, and even lead to their death.

The greatness of Martin Luther King, as such, is not to be seen in King himself, in the soaring rhetoric he delivered or the brilliance of his mind. Rather, King’s greatness is seen in the devoted actions of his followers—marchers being attacked by police dogs in Selma, protesters at segregated lunch counters being hauled off to jail in Nashville, freedom riders being ambushed by a white mob in Montgomery, lawyers abandoning their northern practices in order to fight prejudice in the South, strikers who would rather lose their jobs than perpetrate perceived injustice. These actions, taken by so many people at such great personal sacrifice, constitute the true testimony to King’s greatness.

To be great, meanwhile, is not to be good. And so, too, can we find greatness in Hitler’s Leadership. Indeed, it is precisely the great lengths to which so many under his rule went in order to perpetrate what we now recognize as radical evil that we know that Hitler was great. The steadfast commitment of so many Germans to fight the Allied powers while committing genocide at home speaks to Hitler’s greatness. Indeed, Hitler could not have left so much carnage in his wake had he not been great.

### *“Effective”*

The effectiveness of a Leader is determined by the actions that followers take. To be a Leader, an individual’s followers must take actions that accord with her instructions. But to be an “effective” Leader, these actions must meaningfully promote the higher ends that she extols. Followers must do things that are not merely consistent with a higher end. They must take actions that in fact realize these higher ends. And by virtue of these actions, the higher ends must appear a less removed, and more entrenched, in the lives that we live.

There is, of course, a temporal dimension to effectiveness. In one moment a Leader may appear effective, while in the next, she may not. In his quest to promote the glory of Germany, Hitler appeared extraordinarily effective as he built the National Socialist German Worker’s Party and went on to annex Poland in 1939. Six years later, though, with his troops in retreat and his nation in ruin, our judgment of Hitler’s effectiveness takes a dramatic turn for the worse.

Our judgments of a Leader’s effectiveness also depend upon the standards we employ. Insofar as his follower’s actions paved the way for the 1964 and 1965 Civil Rights Acts, altered the racial attitudes of millions of Americans, and brought the racial and class injustices into the full light of day, Martin Luther King was undoubtedly effective. But his followers’ actions—extraordinary though they were—did not realize outcomes that met King’s own aspirations. Racism, class disparities, segregation, and a

great deal more besides all persist. And depending upon the stringency of our standards, we might argue that King was a distinctly ineffective Leader.

## V. In Summary

In this chapter, we offer a new definition of Leadership and, more generally, a vocabulary for talking about the larger class of “rulers” (whose influence is realized by the direct application of power) and “entrepreneurs” (who instead require the voluntary support of followers). Leaders, we argue, distinguish themselves by the objectives they extol, the followers whose actions they orient and coordinate, and the ways in which they personify higher aims. Only when specific conditions are met is Leadership possible. Relax any one and Leadership promptly dissipates, just as Leaders become something else entirely.

Ours is not the only definition of Leadership. But unlike many other prominent definitions, ours satisfies each of the criteria we laid out at the beginning of this chapter. For starters, it recognizes the relational nature of Leadership. Leadership is not realized through the mere execution of power. It is not about status, employment, or the collection of personality traits that constitute an individual. Rather, Leadership is defined through the mutual dependencies of Leaders and followers. It is through followers that Leaders can effect change, just as it is through Leaders that followers come to understand higher aims.

Built into our definition is a distinction between higher and lower ends. What distinguishes the two is neither their moral content nor their normative appeal. Rather, the distinction hinges upon the relationship between an objective and the individual who espouses it. When Leaders espouse higher aims, they point towards principles and imagined states of the world that are larger than themselves, that in no way depend upon the leader’s participation or support. Lower ends, by contrast, cannot be understood except by reference to the individual who pursues them: personal wealth, glory, or fame attain meaning only through the life of the individual who pursues them.

Higher ends have integrity and meaning quite apart from Leaders. It would be a mistake, though, to conclude that the Leaders who extol them are dispensable. They are not. Indeed, it is precisely because Leaders come to personify higher ends that actions in the service of such higher ends so crucially depend upon Leadership. Take away the Leader and the intrinsic meanings of higher ends remain undisturbed. But take away the Leader and the meanings of higher ends *for followers* become more remote. The immediate reactions of followers may differ. In some instances, they may see fit to honor the legacy of their Leader and work with renewed fervor to fulfill his stated objectives. They tend to do so, though, in highly disorganized fashion, as various factions of followers vie with one another as the true spokespersons of a leader’s heritage.<sup>18</sup> Alternatively, with the loss of the individual who connected them to their higher ends followers may become alienated from the very objectives that once kept them in common purpose. The tragedy of Leadership is found in its personification.

Crucially, our definition also establishes a template for distinguishing Leaders from organizers, statesmen, and everyday politicians. The constellation of relationships

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<sup>18</sup> For illustration, one need not look any further than the persistent infighting among the familial heirs to Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King.

and commitments of Leaders and organizers are the same save one: the personification of higher ends. Whereas organizers coordinate and orient followers toward higher objectives, they do not come to personify these objectives; and as a result, organizers are anonymous and interchangeable, whereas Leaders are public and indispensable.<sup>19</sup> The differences between Leaders and statesmen and everyday politicians, meanwhile, are more pronounced. These latter two groups, after all, do not depend upon followers to do their bidding. Rather, both are capable of exercising powers of their in order to advance either higher ends (in the case of the statesman) or lower ends (in the case of the everyday politician).

As an empirical matter, of course, individuals intermittently behave as all sorts of agents of social change. In one moment, they may take independent actions that directly advance their cause; and in the next they rely upon followers to do so. With some, they commend higher ends; with others, they admit their interest in lower ends. No person is a Leader all of the time. The notion of the born Leader, as such, is utterly nonsensical. But depending upon the ends they pursue and the relationships they cultivate, all persons have the capacity to exercise Leadership.

Our definition also comports with our empirical criteria for Leadership, the first of which concerns its exceptionality. Leadership under our definition is exceptional, first, because it is rare. Individuals may extol higher aims, other individuals may act in the service of these aims, and other individuals may come to personify these higher aims. The joint probability that these individuals will be found together as Leader and followers, each fulfilling their prescribed roles and all connected with one another, is, if nothing else, uncommon. But Leadership is exceptional, also, because it is precarious. Should Leaders abandon their higher aims, should followers refuse to act, and should neither recognize the personification of higher aims, then the preconditions of Leadership—no matter how robust they once might have seemed—promptly disappear.

And finally, our definition not only recognizes the fact of Leaders' publicity. It also identifies the mechanism by which this publicity is sustained: namely, the personification of higher ends. We keep images of our Leaders not out of reverence to the persons themselves, but because of what such images signify. In their image we see the higher ends to which we devote our energies and resources. As result, in their image, we find existential meaning and sustenance in our daily lives. We know our Leaders not merely for the instructions and guidance that they offer but for the relevance they impart.

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<sup>19</sup> The difference between organizers and leaders is more subtle, for both are counted, along with Leaders, among the larger class of "entrepreneurs." Neither the organizer nor the leader personifies higher ends, but only the latter satisfies the criterion of publicity. Whereas an organizer works behind the scenes, a leader stands in full view before her followers.

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