

The Paths of Glory

Structure, Selection, and Leaders

by

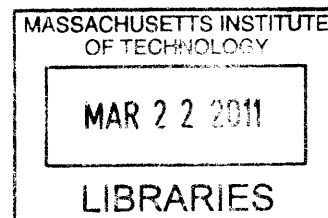
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A.B. Government
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ABSTRACT

Practitioners, journalists, and historians believe that leaders play a crucial role in determining events. Social science theories, however, generally argue that leaders are unimportant. This dissertation proposes a two-stage theory of leader impact called Leader Filtration Theory (LFT). In the first stage, leaders are usually chosen from among a pool of candidates by a filtration process that homogenizes the pool. This makes actual leaders highly similar to those who almost got the job, rendering individuals fungible. Sometimes filtration is bypassed. When this occurs, leaders can gain power who are very different from potential alternates. In the second stage, leaders face constraints from within their organization and outside it. If these constraints are sufficiently weak an unfiltered leader can have a very large impact on outcomes. Such leaders are likely to display a high degree of variance in their performance.

The theory is tested quantitatively using historians' rankings of U.S. Presidents. Unfiltered leaders should be disproportionately represented among the best and worst Presidents. LFT's prediction of higher variance in performance is very strongly supported by this test.

The theory is also tested by examining three American Presidents and two British Prime Ministers.

Jefferson, a Filtered President, made decisions with regards to the Louisiana Purchase very similar to those that alternative Presidents would have made. Lincoln and Wilson, by contrast, both Unfiltered Presidents, made decisions that were radically different from those that would have been made by alternative Presidents.

Chamberlain, a Filtered Prime Minister (PM), made decisions with regards to appeasement of Germany before the Second World War very similar to those of alternative PMs. When his preferences diverged

from those of potential alternate PMs, British policy followed the alternates' preferences, not his. When Churchill, an Unfiltered PM, gained office, his unique preferences determined British policy.

The theory should have power outside democratic politics as well. Eight leaders from other domains – dictatorships, the military, business, and scientific research - who are commonly believed to have been highly consequential are examined. All eight would have been classified as Unfiltered by LFT. Finally, five approaches to choosing better leaders suggested by LFT are described.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Gautam Mukunda is a PhD Candidate in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Department of Political Science. He is a Soros New American Fellow, an NSF IGERT Fellow for the study of emerging technologies, and a Next Generation Fellow. He has published four peer-reviewed articles: "We Cannot Go On: Disruptive Innovation and the First World War Royal Navy" in *Security Studies*; "What Rough Beast: Synthetic Biology, Uncertainty, and the Future of Biosecurity" with Kenneth A. Oye and Scott C. Mohr in *Politics and the Life Science*; "Aspects of the Political Economy of Development and Synthetic Biology" with Rachel Wellhausen in *Systems and Synthetic Biology*; and "Caught in the Net: Lessons from the Financial Crisis for a Networked Future" with Lieutenant General William J. Troy in *Parameters*. He received a Derek Bok Certificate for Excellence in Teaching from Harvard College in 2008. He has taught on Science, Technology, and Public Policy at MIT and on Ethics and International Relations at Harvard. Before graduate school he was a consultant with the New York Office of McKinsey & Company and a Program Coordinator and Administrator with the Harvard Kennedy School's Strengthening Democratic Institutions Project. He graduated from Harvard College in 2001 with a degree in Government, *magna cum laude*.

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Finally, and far above and beyond anything I can express, I must thank my parents. This work is dedicated to them and if any credit derives from it, those honors are entirely theirs.

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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION: THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERS

This dissertation is about leaders, their performance, and how they gain power. Every large organization, from a country to a company, has a leader. Most put great effort into choosing the leaders. Sometimes they pick a leader who takes them to extraordinary success. Sometimes they pick one who takes them to catastrophic failure. Most often they pick a leader who does neither.

Why do organizations – from countries to companies to military units – sometimes have leaders whose behavior is far out of the ordinary, leaders who are, in many senses of the word, “extreme?” This dissertation seeks to answer that question. Such leaders can destroy – or save – countries or companies. In politics in particular they can make history and transform societies. They can launch wars or commit genocide. Such leaders may be an uncommon phenomenon but when they gain power the consequence can be enormous.

Large organizations, like countries or companies, have a vast pool of potential leaders from which to draw and enormous resources to evaluate them. Some companies spend years, or even decades, identifying potential CEOs and testing them against their peers. Yet both countries and companies sometimes end up with leaders who seem spectacularly unsuited for the position. They rarely choose great leaders. How can such leaders, men and women who are sometimes so dysfunctional that disaster seems certain to follow their appointment to power, gain high offices?

In 1860 the United States of America faced its greatest crisis since the Revolutionary War. The Republican National Convention met in Chicago in the middle of May. The delegates knew that the Democratic Party had already split. The man they nominated would almost certainly become President and face the Herculean task of dealing with secession. In the face of this crisis they could have chosen

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William Henry Seward or Salmon P. Chase, both Senators and Governors with international reputations. Both were superbly educated and had decades-long careers of public service. Both were renowned for their work in the anti-slavery cause. Both were at the peak of their powers and reputation. Instead the Convention chose Abraham Lincoln, a one-term Congressman whose sole claim to fame was his unsuccessful run for the Illinois Senate.

In 1937 Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, retired. Neville Chamberlain, who had twice been Minister of Health and Chancellor of the Exchequer, was chosen as his replacement. Chamberlain had been a successful businessman and had steered the British economy through the Great Depression. He had been the Prime Minister-in-waiting for several years and had a dominant role in the Cabinet. He was the consensus choice of party leaders. He immediately moved to deal with the ambitions of Nazi Germany. Even as Chamberlain took his new office his longtime rival, Winston Churchill, lingered on the backbenches. Churchill had been widely discredited by his repeated misjudgments over the First World War, over British policy towards India, and in the just-resolved crisis over the abdication of King Edward VIII. His eloquent warnings against Britain's attempt to appease Germany were easily dismissed.

Given what was known at the time, who would have picked Lincoln over Seward, or Churchill over Chamberlain? A second question though, is how much did it matter which one was chosen? When groups succeed, leaders often get the credit. When groups fail, leaders often get the blame. Is the leader truly responsible for the outcome, though, or just the person who happens to be there?

This dissertation is not about all leaders. Even small groups usually have a leader, formally or informally. They may do well or poorly, and that could happen for innumerable reasons. Such groups, however, have only a few people to choose between and their fate is often not in their hands. Their ability to choose the right leader could be driven by availability or history or simply by luck. This dissertation is not about them.

Philosophers and social scientists have thought about leaders and how they should be chosen for, literally, thousands of years. The role and importance of leaders has been a consuming question for historians and philosophers since Plato discussed how the ideal city would choose leaders in *The Republic* and Thucydides described how the quality of Athenian leadership was a crucial factor in the course of the Peloponnesian War. Thomas Carlyle, the great 19th century Scottish writer, declared that the "History of the world is but the Biography of great men."¹

Even poets have joined the discussion. Thomas Gray, in the poem that gave this dissertation its title, gave one answer to the endless debate on the primacy of individual or circumstance. He wrote of visiting a small graveyard filled with those unknown to history and musing:

Full many a gem of purest ray serene / The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear: / Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen, / And waste its sweetness on the desert air. / Some village-Hampden, that with dauntless breast / The little tyrant of his fields withstood; / Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest, / Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood. / ... / Their lot forbade: nor circumscrib'd alone / Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd; / Forbad to wade through slaughter to a throne, / And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,...

Gray's narrator believes that lying forgotten in that churchyard might be people who, in a different place and time, would have won all the glory given to a Milton or a Cromwell. Instead, they were born in an obscure village and, like the flower in the desert, their talents were ignored and forgotten.

Modern research on the importance of leaders has generally agreed with Gray, not Carlyle. On the whole, social scientists in every field, from psychology to political science to management to economics, argue or assume that individual leaders are surprisingly *unimportant*. Experimental psychologists, for example, have found that mistakenly attributing choices to individual characteristics that are really the product of circumstance is a flaw in human judgment so powerful that they have

¹ Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History*, ed. Murray Baumgarten, *The Norman and Charlotte Strouse Edition of the Writings of Thomas Carlyle* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), Plato, *The Republic*, trans. Allan Bloom, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1991), 153-154, Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, Paperback ed., *Penguin Classics* (Hammondsworth, England: Penguin, 1972), 10-11.

² Thomas Grey, *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard* (Bluepete Poetry, 1751 [cited September 17 2010]); available from <http://www.blupete.com/Literature/Poetry/Elegy.htm>.

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dubbed it the Fundamental Attribution Error. Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, the most influential book on international relations written in the last fifty years, entirely ignores the role of individual leaders in state behavior, focusing instead on the ways in which the need to compete with other states influences governmental behavior.³

Social scientists who study management and organizations have paid the most attention to the role of individual leaders. Organization theorists who focus on the organization's external environment find that competing organizations and market conditions combine to ensure that individual managers have very little impact. Those who examine the internal dynamics of organizations find that organizations of all types contain powerful internal forces and cultures that resist change and prevent individual leaders from having an impact. Studies of how organizations choose leaders generally come to a similar conclusion. Organizations select leaders carefully, so that the higher in an organization you look, the more similar the people in it become. CEOs in particular are chosen from a homogenous pool of candidates. Overall this selection process minimizes "the range of behaviors" exhibited by leaders. This finding on the influence of selection processes has generally been echoed by political scientists.⁴

³ Lee Ross, "The Intuitive Psychologist and His Shortcomings: Distortions in the Attribution Process," in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. L. Berkowitz (New York, NY: Academic Press, 1977).

⁴ Michael D. Cohen, James G. March, and Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *Leadership and Ambiguity: The American College President* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1986), 282, Michael T. Hannan and John Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations," *The American Journal of Sociology* 82, no. 5 (1977), Michael T. Hannan and John H. Freeman, *Organizational Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), Charles F. Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," *International Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 1 (1990): 22, Rakesh Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior: The Irrational Quest for Charismatic CEOs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), Yasumasa Kuroda, "Leadership Recruitment Patterns in the Japanese House of Representatives: General Elections 1-30, 1890-1963," *International Political Science Review / Revue internationale de science politique* 9, no. 2 (1988): 120-121, 127, Diane K. Mauzy, "Leadership Succession in Singapore: The Best Laid Plans," *Asian Survey* 33, no. 12 (1993): 1164, James Ockey, "Thai Society and Patterns of Political Leadership," *Asian Survey* 36, no. 4 (1996), Jeffrey Pfeffer, "The Ambiguity of Leadership," *Academy of Management Review* 2, no. 1 (1977): 106, Jeffrey Pfeffer and Gerald R. Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Classics, 2003), Robert C. Tucker, "The Dictator and Totalitarianism," *World Politics* 17, no. 4 (1965): 575-576, Noam Wasserman, Nitin Nohria, and Bharat N. Anand, "When Does Leadership Matter? The Contingent Opportunities View of CEO Leadership," in *Working Paper* (Cambridge, MA: Strategy Unit, Harvard Business School, 2001).

One of the striking facts about arguments that individual leaders are largely unimportant is that constraints within and outside organizations only bind leaders *some of the time*. This is particularly true for the arguments about internal and external constraints. Sometimes leaders have no choice. These situations do exist, but they are not universal. No President could have avoided declaring war on Japan after Pearl Harbor. It seems at least plausible, though, that a different President would not have invaded Iraq in 2003. So sometimes the identity of a leader matters, and sometimes it does not.

If the power of constraints on leaders can vary, so might the power of leader selection systems to homogenize candidates for leadership. Sometimes these systems ensure that all potential leaders are similar. When this happens, then it does not matter which individual gets the job. In every field there sometimes seem to be unique individuals who are very different from everyone else who might have been in their shoes. If there was any consistent pattern behind the way they became leaders, then that pattern could enable the identification of those unique individuals in history who really did make a difference, for good or for ill. That pattern might also make it possible to identify contemporary leaders who could have a large impact, and even help us evaluate candidates for leadership to see how likely they are to make a big difference for the organization they lead, be it a government or a company. It could be the basis for a new theory about leaders, one that built on the old theories instead of superseding them. Even as it acknowledged that most of the time leaders have little impact, it would identify the relatively rare circumstances in which the old theories do not apply and single individuals who are in the right place, at the right time, can make history.

A New Theory of High-Impact Leaders

The first part of this dissertation proposes a new way of identifying and understanding high-impact leaders called Leader Filtration Theory (LFT). LFT has two stages. The first suggests that the process that determines who becomes the leader acts like a filter that homogenizes those who get to its

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final stages. When that filter is bypassed, however, a leader can come to power who is very different from potential alternate leaders. The second stage examines the constraints on leaders on they are in power. If those constraints are sufficiently weak, an individual leader can have a large impact on events.

In the first stage (Figure 1), LFT's Independent Variable (IV) is the extent to which a leader has been filtered by the process which determines an organization's leader. Every organization, from a country to a business to a military unit, has a **Leader Filtration Process (LFP)**. LFPs can vary greatly from organization to organization and over time within a single organization. An LFP is simply the way leaders gain power, from bureaucratic succession to elections to coups. As the LFP nears its end there will usually be only a handful of plausible potential leaders. These are **candidates**, and all of them together make up the **candidate pool**. The characteristics of members of the candidate pool have some frequency distribution. This distribution is different for candidates than it is for the general population because of the LFP. People whose characteristics are close to those most likely to pass through the LFP are more likely to become candidates and so occupy a disproportionate fraction of the candidate pool. Candidate pools consist of two types of potential leaders: **Modals** and **Outliers**. Modals are the vast mass of candidates for power. They are near the mode of the distribution of candidate characteristics. They are largely fungible. If a Modal candidate is replaced by another Modal the marginal difference in outcomes is likely to be small.

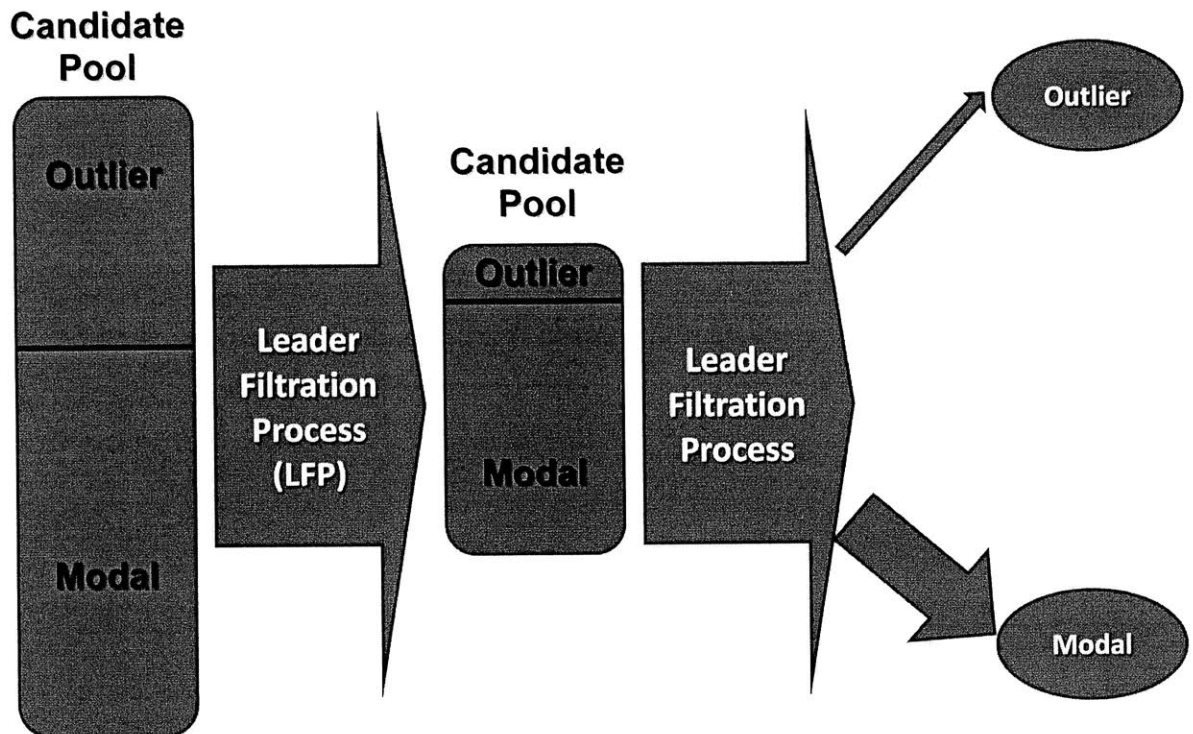
Outliers, on the other hand, are relatively rare. They are far from the mode of the LFP and very different from Modal candidates. They are few and far from the mode, so the likelihood of an Outlier gaining power is usually quite small. That may be the only thing which Outliers have in common as the ways in which they differ from Modal candidates can vary widely. If an Outlier leader were replaced by a Modal the difference in outcomes is likely to be quite large.

LFPs include different degrees of random variance. The greater the power of random factors in the LFP, the less it can homogenize candidates. If a candidate has been thoroughly examined by the LFP

then he or she is a **Filtered** candidate. Filtered candidates are nearly always Modal. If they were not, then the LFP would have removed them from the candidate pool.

If, on the other hand, the LFP has not thoroughly evaluated a candidate, then that candidate is **Unfiltered**. Such candidates are disproportionately likely to be Outliers because the LFP has not had the opportunity to remove them from contention for power. Unfiltered candidates are thus Potential Outliers. Whether a Potential Outlier is a true Outlier can only be determined with certainty retrospectively by examining the historical record.

FIGURE 1: LEADER FILTRATION THEORY STAGE I



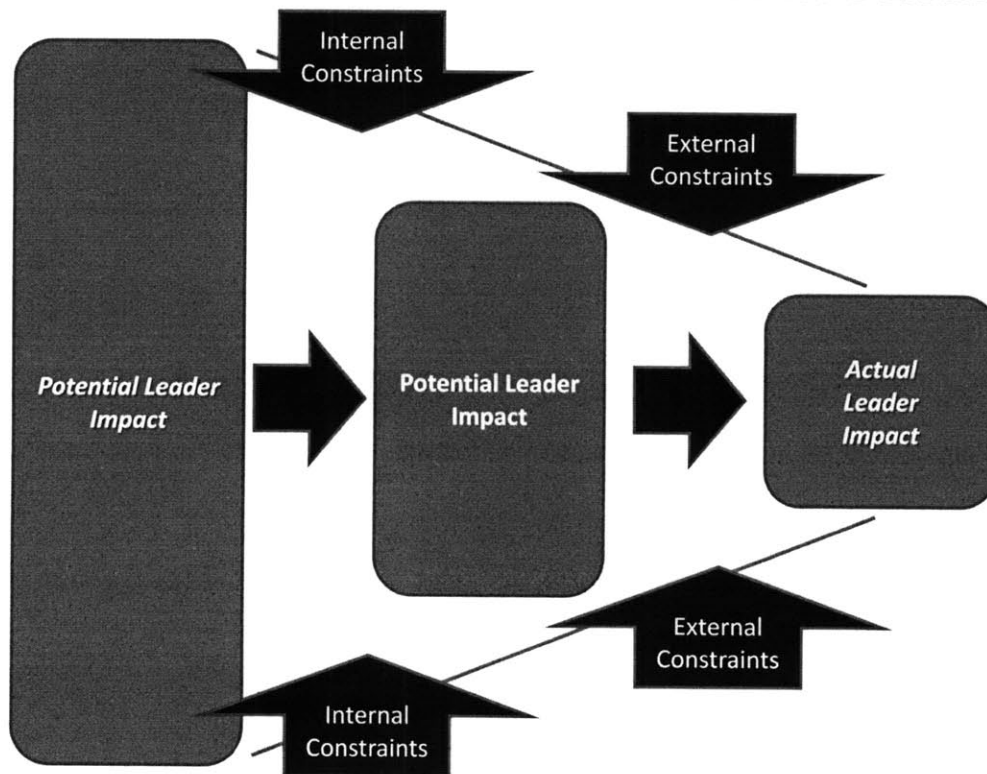
LFT's second stage examines the constraints on a leader's ability to determine policy (Figure 2).

These constraints are divided into two Conditional Variables: **Internal Constraints** and **External Constraints**.⁵ Internal constraints are governed by a leader's institutional powers and the strength of his

⁵ CVs are simply variables whose presence or absence affects the power of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Domestic and International constraints are CVs appropriate to the

or her internal opposition. External constraints are determined by an organization's position within its environment, be it an industry, a market, or the international system. A small or weak organization may have little freedom of action, while a powerful one, like a Great Power or a monopoly, is likely to face much weaker constraints and thus give its leader much greater flexibility in both choices and actions.

FIGURE 2: LEADER FILTRATION THEORY STAGE II



The theory has two Intervening Variables and one Dependent Variable (Figure 3). Constraints serve as Conditional Variables that act on the Intervening Variables to determine the magnitude of the Dependent Variable. The first Intervening Variable is **Leader Characteristics**. Unfiltered leaders should be much more likely than Filtered ones to be risk acceptant or charismatic, have unique personal qualities like family wealth, an ownership stake in the company, or national hero status, and exhibit psychological and personality disorders. The second Intervening Variable is **Policy Choice**. Potential

international relations focus of this dissertation. If the theory were applied to other settings they should be transformed into the appropriate sources of constraint internal and external to the leader's organization.

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Outliers are much more likely to be responsible for significant shifts in the goals of the organization or the means used to pursue those goals.⁶ The Dependent Variable is **Impact**. Policies, once changed, must still be implemented, and must still influence both the organization and its outside environment. The Conditional Variables do not equally affect all Intervening Variables. Leader characteristics are driven by the LFP. Policy choices are constrained primarily by internal constraints and only secondarily by external ones. Impact is limited by both.

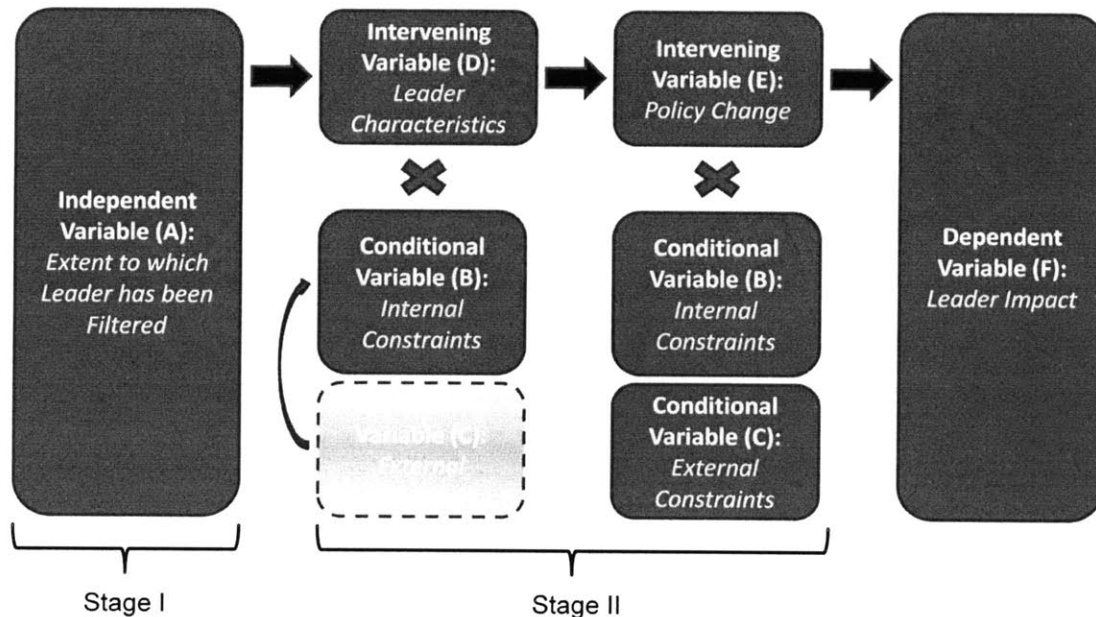
The policies chosen and implemented by Outlier leaders will be those few others would have chosen. Such policies, and therefore such leaders, are likely to display high variance in performance. They are likely to either succeed or fail dramatically.

Thus an Unfiltered candidate may be an Outlier. Outliers are much more likely than Modals to display out of the ordinary Characteristics. Outliers may wish to enact particular policies that alternative leaders would not have chosen and do so if they can overcome internal and external constraints. These policy changes may have an impact on the organization and the external environment if they can overcome external constraints, and they may be enormously beneficial or disastrously harmful to the organization.⁷

⁶ A measure of Policy Change assumes static policies. The opposite could also occur, where conventional candidates would engage in policy change but an outlier instead maintains the status quo.

⁷ Stephen Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

FIGURE 3: ARROW DIAGRAM OF LEADER FILTRATION THEORY (LFT)



Testing Leader Filtration Theory

This dissertation's second section tests a variety of predictions drawn from LFT. The theory's two most important predictions about the difference between filtered and unfiltered leaders are:

- 1) Unfiltered leaders will display a greater variance in performance than Filtered leaders
- 2) Unfiltered leaders will have a much higher impact on outcomes than Filtered leaders.

The first prediction is tested quantitatively using historians' rankings of the performance of United States Presidents. These assessments have been previously used to test theories in political science and psychology.⁸ If every U.S. President who spent a significant time in office is classified as Filtered or Unfiltered and these classifications are compared to the rankings, then if LFT is correct Unfiltered

⁸ John Balz, "Ready to Lead on Day One: Predicting Presidential Greatness from Experience," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 43 (2010), Dean Keith Simonton, "Presidential IQ, Openness, Intellectual Brilliance, and Leadership: Estimates and Correlations for 42 U.S. Chief Executives," *Political Psychology* 27, no. 4 (2006).

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Presidents should be disproportionately represented at the top and bottom of the rankings. This is found to be very strongly the case. Forty Presidents were examined, with nineteen classed as Unfiltered. These classifications are extremely robust to changes in coding rules. Four of the top five and four of the bottom five Presidents are Unfiltered. Overall the greater variance in performance for Unfiltered Presidents than Filtered ones is statistically significant at over the 99.9% level.

Case studies of three U.S. Presidents – Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Woodrow Wilson - and two British Prime Ministers – Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill – similarly strongly support LFT. All three Unfiltered leaders had a very large impact on policy outcomes while both Unfiltered leaders could have been replaced by their most likely alternatives without greatly impacting history. Jefferson and Chamberlain are classified as Filtered leaders. Both were the consensus leaders of their political party and had long experience in the senior ranks of the government. In both cases the most important decisions of their Administrations were made with the full concurrence of the likely alternate leaders. Jefferson's purchase of the Louisiana Territory (Chapter 5) was strongly supported by James Madison and John Adams, the two most likely alternate Presidents, and he did not initiate the Purchase; instead he simply took advantage of an offer by Napoleon. Similarly, Chamberlain (Chapter 8) continued a policy of appeasement instituted by his predecessor, Stanley Baldwin. He was initially fully supported in this by other members of his Cabinet, which eventually included Lord Halifax, the most likely alternative Prime Minister. As Hitler became more ambitious, Halifax and other members of the Cabinet split from Chamberlain, preferring a more resolute stance. British policy, strikingly, followed the Cabinet's consensus, not Chamberlain's preferences for further appeasement.

When Unfiltered leaders are in power, however, the results are strikingly different. Abraham Lincoln (Chapter 6) had only two years in a national political office before becoming President. He was chosen as the Republican nominee in 1860 through a combination of his own skillful political maneuvering and several strokes of remarkable luck. Seward, the leading candidate for the Republican

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nomination, was the most likely alternative President. Seward and Lincoln had great differences in their preferred actions during the early stages of the crisis over Fort Sumter that began the United States Civil War. Seward wanted to cede the Fort to the South in the hopes of finding a peaceful resolution to the secession crisis while Lincoln preferred to fight to defend it. After a behind-the-scenes power struggle Lincoln was able to get his way. During the course of the war Lincoln's remarkable political, rhetorical, managerial, and strategic abilities became crucial elements in the Union's victory.

Woodrow Wilson (Chapter 7) had less than two years as Governor of New Jersey before becoming President. After World War I he attempted to persuade the Senate to ratify the Treaty of Versailles that ended the war and made the United States a member of the League of Nations. Wilson's opponents in the Senate based their strategy on their belief that his personality rendered him uniquely incapable of compromise and that this would force him into self-destructive behaviors that would ensure their triumph. This is exactly what occurred during the ratification struggle, which ended with Wilson instructing members of his own party to vote against the Treaty rather than see it ratified with relatively minor reservations added by his Senate opponents.

Winston Churchill (Chapter 9) was exceptionally experienced before becoming Prime Minister. Over the course of his long career, however, he had been decisively filtered out of the system. His repeated misjudgments in and out of government had left him a marginalized figure with no path to higher office. The collapse of appeasement resurrected his political career, but even then he became Prime Minister only because Halifax declined the job. He was the preferred choice of none of the major players in the British political system. Once in power he and Halifax – again the most likely alternate – struggled over whether to open negotiations with Germany. Churchill was able to carry the Cabinet with him, however, and England decided to fight on under any circumstances.

Each of these five studies of democratic political leaders strongly supports LFT's second prediction. Had the filtered Jefferson been replaced by other plausible Presidents the Louisiana

Purchase would almost certainly have occurred exactly as it did. Had Chamberlain been replaced by another leading Conservative, British appeasement would have been little different. By contrast Lincoln was irreplaceable in the events of the opening days of the United States Civil War. Wilson was crucial to the outcome of the debate over the Treaty of Versailles. Churchill's preferences and abilities helped ensure that Britain would not open negotiations with Germany during World War II. Such support in all five case studies, when combined with the already powerful quantitative evidence, strongly suggests that LFT identifies a real, and powerful, phenomenon.

All five case studies used to fully test LFT are of democratic leaders, as a theory on leader impact has a much more difficult task predicting impact for someone with the limited powers of a U.S. President or a British Prime Minister than it would with an autocratic or totalitarian dictator. The third section (Chapters 10 and 11) profiles leaders in a variety of other contexts. Brief examinations of Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and Mao, four dictators whose idiosyncrasies had a vast effect, show that their careers match LFT's predictions. All four were clearly unfiltered before they took power.

The forces underlying Leader Filtration Theory should apply in many areas beyond politics. Militaries, businesses, and even the sciences have people to whom they will give authority and resources. Everything that makes LFT work in politics should be happening there as well. Short examinations of prominent leaders in all of those fields suggest that it does.

In the military world, Sir Jacky Fisher was the revolutionary head of the Royal Navy who introduced the dreadnought battleship and transformed British naval strategy. He gained his office through civilian intervention, bypassing the Royal Navy's normal promotion processes.

In business a CEO hired from outside the organization is usually an Unfiltered leader. As the evidence for the low impact of leaders is stronger in the business world than in any other arena, the both cases people profiled here are Unfiltered leaders whom LFT predicts are likely to have a large impact. Al Dunlap was brought in by Sunbeam's Board of Directors to revitalize their company. Instead

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he destroyed it. Jamie Dimon was hired by BankOne's Board of Directors based on a search that spent little time focusing on his experience at other companies or plans for the institution. He negotiated the merger which created JPMorgan Chase and then steered it successfully through the 2008 financial crisis.

Perhaps most intriguingly, Leader Filtration Theory may lend some insight into the scientific world, allowing the identification of truly revolutionary scientists and demonstrating flaws in the way scientific research is currently supported. One of the most promising recent developments in cancer research has been the idea of anti-angiogenesis, an approach pioneered by the late Judah Folkman, a Boston surgeon who had previously invented the implantable pacemaker. Folkman's ideas, however, were fiercely resisted by most cancer researchers and struggled to find funding support. They were so controversial that he was forced to give up his career as a surgeon in order to pursue them. Even as Folkman's ideas struggled to gain acceptance, the federal government invested vast resources into defeating cancer. Scientists wishing federal support must apply to and be evaluated by a prolonged grant process that seems very similar to a Leader Filtration Process. These grant evaluations eliminate poor proposals, but they seem to eliminate the potentially revolutionary ones as well, meaning support usually goes to useful, but not groundbreaking, science.

Implications of Leader Filtration Theory

LFT has significant implications for organizational strategy and design. The ideal level of filtration is context dependent. Three key features of the context are crucial. The first is the relative magnitude of low probability but high impact outcomes at each tail of the distribution of potential outcomes for the organization. A catastrophically poor political leader can do almost unimaginable amounts of harm, while even the best will be somewhat limited in the magnitude of their successes. Thus high levels of filtration will usually be appropriate. In the sciences, however, downside risk is limited to the amount awarded in a grant, while the potential upside from a revolutionary scientific

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discovery is virtually unlimited. Under such circumstances there should be a positive bias towards the selection of Outliers.

The second is the current circumstances of the organization, particularly with regards to its competitive position. An organization in dire straits is probably justified in gambling on an Outlier leader who might be able to rescue it. One that is secure or in a dominant position would like be better served by staying with the Modal leaders who are more likely to serve it well.

The third is the purpose of the organization beyond survival. Because loose LFTs increase variance in performance both the best- and worst-performing organizations will tend to have them. If the organization's creators can capture the benefits of Outlier-driven successes and minimize the costs of Outlier-driven failures, then loose LFPs are desirable. If, on the other hand, this cannot be done – for example because the organization is a dominant company in an economy so small that it does not have enough variance to guarantee a sufficient number of successful Outliers – then minimizing the prevalence of Outliers is likely to be a better strategy.

Maximizing the odds of getting a successful Outlier is an inherently difficult task. In a real sense such a task transcends the boundaries of social science, moving from a positive to a normative question. Nonetheless, some conclusions can be drawn based on both the theory and cases developed in this project. The first and most important is to avoid false signals. A candidate could conceivably bypass filtration because of extraordinary talents. He or she could also do so, however, because of unearned advantages like inherited wealth or fame. Such unearned advantages are likely to be strongly related to unsuccessful Outliers because they not only allow filtration to be bypassed, they degrade the informational value of achievements the candidate claims in his or her past.

The second is to match Outlier candidates to the situation. Winston Churchill's sensitivity to threats and resolve to fight no matter the odds were a perfect match for the situation Britain faced in 1940. In 1945, when the nation's most important obligation was to manage the dissolution of the

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Empire, it is hard to imagine a set of characteristics that were less well-suited to the task at hand. An Outlier who would succeed in one situation might fail in another.

The third is to take seriously the statements and behavior of Outliers before they gain power. LFT suggests that power has far less of a moderating influence than it sometimes appears; instead careful filtration systems will tend to select either moderates, or people who will be moderated by, power. This does not mean that anyone placed in the same situation would be similarly restrained. Positions of power may have considerably more ability to influence events than is generally realized if previous holders of those positions were restrained more by their own preferences than by the limitations of their office.

The fourth is to choose Outlier leaders from among candidates who were successful Modals in other contexts. Demonstrating the ability to succeed in one context does not guarantee the same ability in another. Some qualities, like intelligence, are likely to be conducive to success in most contexts. Some, like managerial incompetence, are likely to increase the probability of failure in most. The fact that an Unfiltered candidate for leadership in one context was a successful Modal in a different one increases the probability that such a candidate has the qualities that lead to success and not those that produce failure. It may at least minimize the odds of choosing a completely incapable Outlier.

Fifth is the question of personal characteristics that lead to success in Outliers. Filtered leaders can and should be judged by their performance in earlier jobs, but Unfiltered ones often will not have enough experience for this to be a useful criterion. Outliers are those who make decisions that others will not, so their greatest failures (and greatest successes) are likely to come when they pursue a policy against the advice of those around them. This suggests that although there are many criteria likely to correlate with success in Unfiltered leaders, the most important may be the flexibility to change course when convinced of a mistake paired with the resolve to move forward despite opposition. Combining

both traits in a single individual is clearly a difficult task, but it is of such seemingly antagonistic qualities that great leaders are made.

Overall Leader Filtration Theory has significant promise as both an explanation for the rise to power of extreme leaders and a guide to assist in the choice of good leaders. Its predictions find strong support in a variety of texts in a variety of contexts. Improving social science's theories about leaders has the potential to greatly advance both understanding and policy. Better understanding the origins the disastrous extreme leaders who marked so much of the twentieth century could greatly advance knowledge of political behavior. Improving the ability to understand and identify such leaders could assist policymakers in a variety of foreign policy problems. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the attempt to choose good leaders plays a large part in almost every field of human endeavor, and any theory that can assist in this quest may be of significant value.

CHAPTER 2 - "OH CAPTAIN, MY CAPTAIN"⁹: WHAT DO SOCIAL SCIENTISTS KNOW ABOUT LEADERS?

James MacGregor Burns, the dean of American leadership studies, once wrote that "[l]eadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth."¹⁰ The vast interest in leadership inspires predictable results; the published literature on leaders and leadership is functionally infinite. After all, every work of military or diplomatic history and every biography of someone in politics or business is, in some ways, a study of leaders and their impact. Despite this, a survey of the literature on leaders, leadership, and leader effects from political science, management, economics, and psychology reveals both significant commonalities and important gaps.

This review focuses on the implications of these literatures for international relations (IR), but they clearly have applications in a variety of fields, including domestic politics, business, and organizational behavior. Across fields there are common theoretical arguments for why leaders should not matter and empirical findings that suggest that they do. Strikingly, literatures in every domain fail to deal with the implications of the fact that leaders are chosen through fallible processes that favor candidates with particular traits. Such processes can either minimize or maximize the impact of individual leaders. Although leadership is a major field of research across the social sciences and cross-pollination across different social science domains is often a productive way to identify gaps in current research and make significant theoretical advances, no review of the literature across the different fields that examine leaders has ever been conducted. This chapter attempts to fill that gap.

⁹ Walt Whitman, "Oh Captain, My Captain," in *Leaves of Grass: Selected Poems and Prose* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1997), 282.

¹⁰ James MacGregor Burns, *Leadership*, Paperback ed. (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1979), 2.

The Central Question: Individual or Circumstance?

Leaders have been central to social sciences since its infancy. Beliefs about leadership have always split between those who attribute causal importance to individual leaders and those who argue that leaders are epiphenomenal. Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* attributes Athenian successes and failures to the quality of Athens' leadership:

Pericles...by his rank, ability, and known integrity, was enabled to exercise an independent control over the multitude – in short, to lead them instead of being led by them...With his successors it was different. More on a level with one another, and each grasping at supremacy, they ended by committing even the conduct of state affairs to the whims of the multitude. This, as might have been expected in a great and sovereign state, produced a host of blunders....¹¹

Pericles' death removed the one man who could have led Athens to victory in the war with Sparta. The quality of Athens' leadership was crucial to its fate. Pericles developed and then persuaded the people to implement a defensive grand strategy that brought Athens considerable success in the early stages of the war. After his death Athens fell into the hands of his less-capable successors and tumbled into disaster. Thucydides believed that Athenian leaders had considerable discretion and that their talents and desires were crucial to determining Athenian foreign policy. They were more than just the pawns of systems and circumstance.

Plato, born a year after Pericles' death, expressed a very different view in *The Republic*. Plato clearly attaches great importance to who leads his ideal city and argues that it can never be created unless philosophers rule or those who are currently kings philosophize.¹² His philosopher-kings, though, are depersonalized. They are the product of a carefully designed system meant to produce kings with particular characteristics. The bravest and most educable children are chosen as potential leaders, then trained and evaluated until they reach the age of 50. They are then shown "the good itself" and "compelled...to use it as a pattern for ordering city, private men, and themselves for the rest of their

¹¹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, 10-11.

¹² Plato, *The Republic*, 153-154.

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lives.”¹³ Philosopher-kings are interchangeable components in a perfect system. Their individual identities make little difference to the city. Any particular one could be replaced.¹⁴

Karl Marx and Thomas Carlyle set the parameters of the modern debate in the nineteenth century.¹⁵ In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* Marx dismisses individuals from any significant role in events.¹⁶ For Marx, “[m]en make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past.”¹⁷ His vision goes further than this quote might indicate, however, for Marx accorded Napoleon III little agency. Instead, the coup of December 1851 was the product of the class struggle. The elements that “prepared or determined” the Revolution were “the dynastic opposition, the republican bourgeoisie, the democratic-republican petty bourgeoisie and the social democratic workers....”¹⁸ Notably absent from this list is, of course, Napoleon III. In the end, Marx suggests that leaders can do little but choose among the roster of options presented to them by the past, and that even this choice is so limited that “the bourgeoisie had no choice but to elect Bonaparte.”¹⁹ Leaders are just the froth on history’s tide.

Carlyle took the role of individuals to the opposite extreme. For him, “[t]he History of the world is but the Biography of great men.”²⁰ Kings are the last and most important type of Great Man. The whole purpose of government is to identify the “Ablest Man” in the population and invest him with

¹³ Ibid., 200-219.

¹⁴ I wrote those words several years before reading *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, but Popper makes precisely this point about Plato’s work as a whole, not just *The Republic*.

Karl R. Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, Fifth ed., 2 vols., vol. 1: The Spell of Plato (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966), 137.

¹⁵ Benjamin F. Jones and Benjamin A. Olken, “Do Leaders Matter? National Leadership and Growth since World War II,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 120, no. 3 (2005): 837-838.

¹⁶ Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978).

¹⁷ Ibid., 595.

¹⁸ Ibid., 599.

¹⁹ Ibid., 614.

²⁰ Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, & the Heroic in History*, 26.

power. The perfect government is one in which that man has absolute power.²¹ Revolutions fail because they consistently put an “Unable Man” into power. Carlyle’s views have modern echoes in John Keegan’s statement that the “political history of the 20th century can be written as the biographies of six men: Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, Mao Zedong, Franklin Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill.”²²

Weber, characteristically, made a more nuanced argument than Marx or Carlyle. There are different types and qualities of leaders, and these differences mattered a great deal. Leaders who chase “after the ultimate good in a war of beliefs, following a pure ethic of absolute ends” and damage the interests and honor of their nation are inferior to practical ones who understand that “[p]olitics is a strong and slow boring of hard boards.”²³ Charismatic leaders derive their authority from “the extraordinary and personal *gift of grace* (charisma), the absolutely personal devotion and personal confidence in revelation, heroism, or other qualities of individual leadership. This is ‘charismatic’ domination, as exercised by...the elected war lord, the plebiscitarian ruler, the great demagogue, or the political party leader.” Most leaders, however, are legitimated by tradition or law, and neither possess nor require charismatic gifts.²⁴ For Weber some leaders matter a great deal, while others, perhaps even most others, are essentially unimportant.

Literature too has chimed in on the question of the importance of leaders. Tolstoy, for example, seeking an explanation for Napoleon’s invasion of Russia, believed that:

For us it is not understandable that millions of Christians killed and tortured each other because Napoleon was a lover of power, Alexander was firm, English policy cunning, and the duke of Oldenburg offended. It is impossible to understand what connection there is between these circumstances and the fact of killing and violence...For us descendants – who are not historians, who are not carried away by the process of research and therefore can contemplate events with unobscured common sense – a countless number of causes present themselves...The willingness or unwillingness of one French

²¹ Ibid., 169-170.

²² John Keegan, "Winston Churchill," *Time Magazine* 2003. I find his omission of Gandhi to be quite strange.

²³ Max Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, ed. Franklin Sherman, trans. H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, *Social Ethics Series* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1965), 53, 55.

²⁴ Ibid., 3.

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corporal to enlist for a second tour of duty appears to us as good a cause as Napoleon's refusal to withdraw his army beyond the Vistula....²⁵

If Tolstoy dismissed individual leaders from a position of central importance, however, Arthur Conan Doyle took a very different perspective. He has Sherlock Holmes describe his archenemy, Moriarty as "the Napoleon of crime...the organizer of half that is evil and nearly all that is undetected in this great city [London]."²⁶ With no Moriarty London would be a vastly safer place.

Social scientists have grappled with the question of individual or circumstance into the present day. Their answers have not always been obvious. Much political science usually thought of as focusing on individuals actually minimizes their importance. Robert Jervis's seminal *Misperception in International Politics*, for example, convincingly shows how leaders' cognitive shortcomings result in mistaken policies. All of the flaws he identifies, however, are common to all human beings, not particular to specific individuals.²⁷ Similarly, models of international politics rooted in prospect theory generally use its predictions about how *all* human beings will behave to explain the behavior of particular leaders, even though as many as one-third of people can behave differently than it predicts.²⁸

The end result of such research, particularly in IR, has often been the dismissal of leaders by omission. To an extraordinary extent, major theories of international politics have simply ignored leaders, so much so that Robert Keohane described leadership as a "leading example of a subject that is understudied (relative to its importance)...."²⁹

²⁵ Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace*, Reprint ed. (New York, NY: Vintage Classics, 2008), 604.

²⁶ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Final Problem," in *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes Volume 1: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, the Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, ed. Leslie S. Klinger (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005), 719.

²⁷ Robert Jervis, "Hypotheses on Misperception," *World Politics* 20, no. 3 (1968), Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976).

²⁸ Paul A. Kowert and Margaret G. Hermann, "Who Takes Risks? Daring and Caution in Foreign Policy Making," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 41, no. 3 (1997), Jack S. Levy, "Prospect Theory, Rational Choice, and International Relations," *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1997).

²⁹ Robert Keohane, "Disciplinary Schizophrenia: Implications for Graduate Education in Political Science," *Qualitative Methods*, Spring 2003.

The Three Forces

Although they often do not explicitly say so, arguments emphasizing the relative unimportance of leaders assume that at least one of three forces is in action. If leaders are unimportant, at least one of them *must* be in effect. These forces can be identified by thinking about why a leader engaged in seemingly incomprehensible behavior might actually be entirely unimportant.

Imagine a head of government who believed in human sacrifice and put that belief into effect. A leader with such seemingly bizarre beliefs might be expected to have a significant impact on his country's domestic and international behavior. Every Aztec Emperor, however, engaged in human sacrifice.³⁰ Changing Emperors had no impact on the Empire's propensity to sacrifice its subjects or its prisoners, because the new Emperor had exactly the same beliefs.

Imagine, however, that by some accident an Emperor gained power who did *not* believe in human sacrifice. This might not affect the Empire's policies. Human sacrifice was a key part of the Empire's belief structure. An Emperor who tried to abandon it might well have risked his own hold on power; even an Emperor who personally abhorred the practice might have felt it a necessary one.

Finally, the tribes subject to the Empire were controlled by fear. An Aztec Emperor might have felt that the preservation of his Empire required maintaining both constant wars against its neighbors and the sacrifice of captured warriors if this was the best way to prevent those tribes from revolting.³¹ The details of this example are largely irrelevant. It simply demonstrates how individual impact can be minimized. The three forces are thus:

- I. **The external environment.** The external environment forces leaders to act in response to its pressures, leaving individual leaders little control or influence on policy and implementation.

³⁰ My thanks to Prof. Chappell Lawson for the illustrative example of human sacrifice.

³¹ For a good survey of the newest research on the Aztec Empire, see: Dirk R. Van Turenhout, *The Aztecs: New Perspectives* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2005).

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- II. **Internal organizational dynamics.** Leaders respond to the bureaucratic politics and interests of constituencies within their organization, making the identity of the leader unimportant as long as the internal dynamics of the organization remain constant.
- III. **Leader selection systems.** The processes by which leaders come to power homogenize the pool of potential leaders. Different people might have acted differently, but those who would have chosen differently never gain power in the first place.

All three forces were explicitly identified by Lieberman and O'Connor, who argued that CEOs have relatively little impact because "[l]eadership influence can be viewed as a product of two factors: the internal and external constraints on a leader and the relative ability of leaders. If constraints are high or leadership variance low, the leaders' effects will be minimal." Leader effects varied substantially from industry to industry. Leader effects accounted for as much as 70% of variance in profit margins in soap and as little as 15% in ship building and clay products. Overall, however, "much of the variance in three performance variables – sales, earnings and profit margins – can be explained by factors other than leadership variance." This might be because "leaders are not selected randomly from the universe of all employees, [so] the low leadership effect on sales and earnings could reflect a company's uniformly consistent judgments in leader selection."³² Empirical work has generally supported their conclusions, finding a relatively small "CEO effect," although there have been some very strong challenges to this conclusion.³³

Force 1: Systemic/External Constraints

Binding Constraints

Kenneth Waltz made the most famous and influential case for Force I in *Theory of International Politics*. It simply ignores leaders and leadership. Waltz builds on microeconomic theory, using an

³²Although others have focused on one or two of the three assumptions, they first, and best, described all three. The Three Assumptions were identified independently based primarily on political science, but the fact that such a similar set was identified in business suggests that similar dynamics occur in both domains.

Stanley Lieberman and James F. O'Connor, "Leadership and Organizational Performance: A Study of Large Corporations," *American Sociological Review* 37, no. 2 (1972): 124, 127, 128-129.

³³ Alison Mackey, "How Much Do CEOs Influence Firm Performance - Really?," *SSRN eLibrary* (2005).

analogy between states and firms as a way to construct a theory driven entirely by structure.³⁴ Waltz's decision to ignore leaders may stem from *Man, The State, and War*, where Waltz argued that human nature cannot explain warfare because human nature is a constant, not a variable.³⁵ This argument is simply wrong. While human nature is constant, the natures of *individual humans* can vary radically.³⁶

Similarly, organizational ecology holds that competing organizations and market conditions combine to limit managerial impact, sometimes limiting the role of managers to acting as a symbolic focal point for the organization's performance, manipulating the pressures on the organization, and processing the requirements imposed by those constraints.³⁷

Finance presents perhaps the most powerful argument for the irrelevance of individual decision-makers. Investors and government leaders share some crucial similarities. Both the head of a mutual fund and a head of government need to make decisions under uncertainty in a competitive environment. Both are the product of extended selection processes. These similarities are pronounced enough that prospect theory has been used to challenge rational-actor assumptions in both IR and finance.³⁸ Although behavioral finance has begun to play a significant role in the field, finance remains dominated by the Efficient Markets Hypothesis (EMH).³⁹ The EMH argues that market "prices 'fully reflect' available information..."⁴⁰ It suggests that because the rewards for success in financial markets are so high and the number and skill of the players so large, any information released to the market is

³⁴ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, First ed. (Boston, MA: McGraw Hill, 1979).

³⁵ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, Revised ed. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2001).

³⁶ Daniel L. Byman and Kenneth M. Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," *International Security* 25, no. 4 (2001): 112.

³⁷ Hannan and Freeman, "The Population Ecology of Organizations.", Hannan and Freeman, *Organizational Ecology*, Pfeffer and Salancik, *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*, Wasserman, Nohria, and Anand, "When Does Leadership Matter? The Contingent Opportunities View of CEO Leadership."

³⁸ Kowert and Hermann, "Who Takes Risks? Daring and Caution in Foreign Policy Making," 620, Burton Gordon Malkiel, "The Efficient Market Hypothesis and Its Critics," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 17, no. 1 (2003): 63.

³⁹ Andrei Shleifer, *Inefficient Markets: An Introduction to Behavioral Finance*, *Clarendon Lectures in Economics* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ Eugene F. Fama, "Efficient Capital Markets: A Review of Theory and Empirical Work," *The Journal of Finance* 25, no. 2 (1970): 384.

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rapidly reflected in the price of securities. The constant pressure to improve performance means that it is functionally impossible for “investors to earn above-average risk adjusted returns.”⁴¹ Some will do so simply by luck, but this past performance has no predictive value and thus is not a product of skill.⁴²

This means, however, that institutional investors are unlikely to perform differently than the market for an extended period. Any single investor can underperform the market. The head of an investment firm who did so for an extended period, however, will be forced out of business, either through dynamics internal to his firm or through his clients’ decision to remove their assets. An investor who has an approach that outperforms the market will soon find her analysis imitated by her competitors, eliminating her competitive advantage.⁴³

The empirical support for the EMH is remarkably strong. Eugene Fama, its father, surveyed the literature in 1970 and concluded that “the evidence in support of the efficient markets model is extensive, and (somewhat uniquely in economics) contradictory evidence is sparse.”⁴⁴ Thirty-three years later, Burton Malkiel evaluated the EMH in light of behavioral finance and found that the market’s deviations from efficiency were too small to result in economic profits from exploiting them.⁴⁵ When markets are efficient, if an investor believes that their judgment about the value of a security is better than that of the market, the odds are very good that the market is right.

One need not believe that markets are perfectly efficient in finance or politics to believe that the logic underlying the EMH has power in both domains. The rewards for high performance in politics are every bit as great as in finance and the competitive pressures just as high. Measures of success may be less clear-cut, but few would argue that becoming President is anything but a success. At the least the

⁴¹ Malkiel, "The Efficient Market Hypothesis and Its Critics," 60.

⁴² Burton Gordon Malkiel, *A Random Walk Down Wall Street: The Time-Tested Strategy for Successful Investing* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2003).

⁴³ Peter L. Bernstein, *Against the Gods: The Remarkable Story of Risk* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), Peter L. Bernstein, *Capital Ideas: The Improbable Origins of Modern Wall Street*, First Free Press Paperback ed. (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1992).

⁴⁴ Fama, "Efficient Capital Markets: A Review of Theory and Empirical Work," 416.

⁴⁵ Malkiel, "The Efficient Market Hypothesis and Its Critics."

EMH suggests that it is more difficult for an individual leader to have a large impact on organizational performance than one might expect.

Limitations on External Constraints and the Goals of Theories

Even without addressing the question of whether systemic pressures are so powerful, the problem with focusing solely on them is that the purposes of microeconomic and IR or management theories are fundamentally different. The theory of the firm makes predictions about markets in equilibrium. It is driven by selection effects. Firms that disobey the theory's precepts are selected out of the market. Microeconomics is uninterested in which firms survive or why those that made the wrong choices did so.

Political scientists, however, are surely as interested in the fate of the units as the fate of the system. So *even if* the system gives states little discretion, the fact that not all states succeed means that political scientists should study why they fail. Structural pressures cannot justify failing to study other factors that might influence policy.

Waltz argued that anarchy forces states to pursue security. States that fail to concentrate on their own survival will be selected out of the system, homogenizing state behavior. Despite this, Waltz explicitly disclaims the idea that his theory predicts foreign policy. Neorealism explains the behavior of the system and the pressures that it puts on states, not the behavior of the states themselves.⁴⁶ Waltz himself states that "[a]n international political theory [like neorealism] can explain states' behavior only when external pressures dominate the internal disposition of states, which seldom happens."⁴⁷ Some realists have argued that structural pressures interact with domestic factors to produce foreign policy, rarely dominating decisions but often shaping choices.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*.

⁴⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Neorealism - Confusions and Criticisms," *Journal of Politics and Society* XV (2004): 3.

⁴⁸ Gideon Rose, "Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy," *World Politics* 51, no. 1 (1998).

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The best way to understand the extent to which the system constrains leaders is to think about *how* it does. There are four mechanisms: extinction, punishment, forethought, and socialization.⁴⁹ *Extinction* is the ultimate sanction inflicted on a state that ignores the system. If the international system is a market that cannot be affected by its components then it is a market in which all firms are price-takers in perfect competition. When firms are in perfect competition, deviation is impossible. Even the largest firm cannot change key characteristics of the market because any attempt to do so will be neutralized by new entrants and other firms.

This analogy of the international system to a perfectly competitive market is unconvincing. Entry of new states into the system is not so trivial, nor selection pressures so fierce. The international system is more analogous to an oligopolistic market than a perfectly competitive one. Oligopolistic markets have room for flexibility.⁵⁰ Despite this, over multi-decade periods even the most successful companies face a substantial death rate. Only 74 of the companies in the S&P 500 in 1957 were still on it forty years later.⁵¹ Countries are far less likely to be extinguished.⁵² States can survive even the most extraordinary misjudgments. Germany, for example, lost the two largest wars in human history. Yet it remains one of the wealthiest and most powerful states on Earth. This suggests that states and their leaders have far more room to maneuver than most companies.

Punishment occurs when a state has contravened systemic imperatives and the consequences are so negative it reverses course. States' longevity could thus be explained by systemic pressures creating a stable equilibrium in which restoring forces push policy back to conformity.

⁴⁹ Waltz describes two: "socialization" and "competition". I break out competition into extinction, punishment, and forethought as this more clearly demonstrates the limits of the power of systemic forces. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 76.

⁵⁰ Xavier Vives, *Oligopoly Pricing: Old Ideas and New Tools* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999).

⁵¹ Richard N. Foster and Sarah Kaplan, *Creative Destruction: Why Companies That Are Built to Last Underperform the Market - and How to Successfully Transform Them* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001).

⁵² Tanisha M. Fazal, *State Death : The Politics and Geography of Conquest, Occupation, and Annexation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

Punishment, however, is a weak reed with which to restrain leaders. The outcome of alternatives to adopted policies can never be observed, only inferred with varying degrees of certainty. Inferences are nearly always debatable. Leaders can always argue that the results of their choice are superior to unobserved alternatives. The greater a leader's skills or power, the better the chance are of this argument succeeding. Thus the extent to which punishment is able to reverse a decision is dependent upon many of the same factors that failed to constrain the leader in the first place. Even if punishment makes a government want to reverse course, this may not be possible. A choice, once made, can often not be unmade. This is the problem of path dependence, something to which IR is particularly subject.⁵³

Foresight leads to the dog that did not bark in the night.⁵⁴ It restrains leaders when they believe that actions they would otherwise take would lead to punishment or extinction. This, however, leaves enormous scope for disagreement about the likely implications of various choices. International events are difficult to predict, just as predicting changes in capital markets is virtually impossible.⁵⁵ Thus there will usually be scope for debate. Foresight certainly constrains some decisions, but different leaders can and will have different visions of the future. Leaders with different backgrounds, for example, judge situations differently.⁵⁶ Leaders may make changes precisely because their foresight is different from that of most of their contemporaries. This leaves room for individual characteristics and judgment to govern leaders' expectations of the outcomes of their policy choices.

⁵³ Robert Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 155-161.

⁵⁴ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, "Silver Blaze," in *The New Annotated Sherlock Holmes Volume 1: The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes, the Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, ed. Leslie S. Klinger (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2005).

⁵⁵ Malkiel, "The Efficient Market Hypothesis and Its Critics," Philip E. Tetlock, *Expert Political Judgment*, Paperback ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), Philip E. Tetlock, "Good Judgment in International Politics: Three Psychological Perspectives," *Political Psychology* 13, no. 3 (1992).

⁵⁶ Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, *Princeton Paperbacks* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

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Socialization is how states learn what the system requires. Waltz uses socialization to refer to any way the system influences behavior that is not a product of competition. People seek the esteem of their peers, so they act in accord with social norms.⁵⁷ In the interstate arena, however, Waltz conflates socialization and competition, describing how states accord with norms because “[r]efusal to play the political game may risk one’s own destruction.” States behave similarly because their “close juxtaposition...promotes their sameness through the disadvantages that arise from a failure to conform to successful practices.”⁵⁸ This is a response to competitive pressures, not social ones.

Socialization is different from other mechanisms because it is, at least by implication, arational. It is a tendency to do things in a certain fashion either because everyone else does them this way or because we have always done them this way. Both tendencies are powerful. The need to be like one’s peers may be fundamental to human nature.⁵⁹ Giving socialization such power, however, eliminates innovation from the leader’s repertoire. Innovation has received extraordinary attention in the business literature, and some in the political science literature, particularly military innovation.⁶⁰ Yet it has received surprisingly little attention at the level of IR.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 74-77.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 127, 128.

⁵⁹ Judith Rich Harris, *No Two Alike*, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2006).

⁶⁰ For some of the best among many, many examples, see: Clayton M. Christensen, *The Innovator's Dilemma* (New York, NY: HarperBusiness Essentials, 2003), Clayton M. Christensen, Scott D. Anthony, and Erik A. Roth, *Seeing What's Next* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2004), Clayton M. Christensen and Michael E. Raynor, *The Innovator's Solution: Creating and Sustaining Successful Growth* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2003), Owen R. Coté, "The Politics of Innovative Military Doctrine: The U.S. Navy and Fleet Ballistic Missiles" (Dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1995), Peter Dombrowski and Eugene Gholz, *Buying Military Transformation: Technological Innovation and the Defense Industry*, Hardcover ed. (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff, "The Sources of Military Change," in *The Sources of Military Change: Culture, Politics, Technology*, ed. Theo Farrell and Terry Terriff (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2002), Richard N. Foster, *Innovation: The Attacker's Advantage* (New York, NY: Summit Books, 1986), Foster and Kaplan, *Creative Destruction: Why Companies That Are Built to Last Underperform the Market - and How to Successfully Transform Them*, Adam Grissom, "The Future of Military Innovation Studies," *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 29, no. 5 (2006), Barry R. Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine: Britain, France, and Germany Between the Wars* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), Stephen Peter Rosen, *Winning the Next War* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), Harvey M. Sapolsky, *The Polaris System Development: Bureaucratic and Programmatic Success in Government* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972).

Force II: Domestic/Internal Constraints

Leaders as the Pawns of Internal Constituencies

Domestic constraints on leader discretion can be organizational or political. On the organizational side, arguments depending on bureaucratic politics have often minimized the role of leaders.⁶² Organizations are resistant to change and pursue their own interests. Individuals who deviate from an organization's culture are often marginalized or forced to leave.⁶³ Similarly, culture generates internal pressures that determine much of militaries' behavior, overcoming leader preferences.⁶⁴

Internal constraints can also be the product of domestic political arrangements that can influence a state's foreign policy, ranging from autocrats rewarding supporters to public opinion to collective memory.⁶⁵ Similarly, economic interests ranging from ties to potential threats and allies to dependence on international trade can overcome or determine leader preferences.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Yehezkel Dror, "Main Issues of Innovative Leadership in International Politics," in *Innovative Leaders in International Politics*, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), Stanley Hoffmann, "De Gaulle as an Innovative Leader," in *Innovative Leaders in International Politics*, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993), Barbara Kellerman, "The American President as World Leader," in *Innovative Leaders in International Politics*, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1993).

⁶² Graham T. Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed. (New York, NY: Longman, 1999), David Braybrooke and Charles E. Lindblom, *A Strategy of Decision* (London: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963), James G. March and Herbert A. Simon, *Organizations* (New York, NY: John Wiley and Sons, 1959), Herbert A. Simon, *Administrative Behavior* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1968), John D. Steinbruner, *The Cybernetic Theory of Decision* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), James D. Thompson, *Organizations in Action* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967).

⁶³ Albert O. Hirschman, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), Joanne Martin, *Cultures in Organizations: Three Perspectives* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992).

⁶⁴ Carl H. Builder, *The Masks of War: American Military Styles in Strategy and Analysis* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), Lynn Eden, *Whole World on Fire: Organizations, Knowledge, and Nuclear Weapons Devastation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), Theo Farrell, *Weapons without a Cause: The Politics of Weapons Acquisition in the United States* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997), Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics, New Directions in World Politics* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), Gautam Mukunda, "We Cannot Go On: Disruptive Innovation and the First World War Royal Navy," *Security Studies* 19, no. 1 (2010).

⁶⁵ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, *The Logic of Political Survival* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), Bruce Bueno de Mesquita et al., "Testing Novel Implications from the Selectorate Theory of War," *World Politics* 56, no. 3 (2004), Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy, Analytical Perspectives on Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2004), Ole R. Holsti, "U.S. Leadership Attitudes toward the Soviet Union, 1976-1988,"

Remaining Leader Discretion

Leaders can have *no* discretion only if domestic interests are either always arrayed overwhelmingly on one side of every issue or if they have no institutional power. Even when populations are unified, leaders can have a significant impact on implementation. Generally, however, the population is not united and potential leaders compete for power. If leaders are elected, then the Median Voter Theorem suggests that political parties will struggle to get as close to the midpoint of the electorate as possible, making at least some political debates closely balanced.⁶⁷ In either case, if the executive has institutional powers, then they may be able to sway the decision on closely contested issues by using those powers to support their favored side.

Most CEOs have broad discretionary authority. CEOs with more power have a greater impact on corporate performance.⁶⁸ In militaries, senior officers' control over promotions is a primary tool they use to shape their institutions.⁶⁹ The Institutional power of heads of government is sometimes less clear, yet always significant. Neustadt's classic *Presidential Power* has yet to be surpassed in describing how a President can use the tools of his office.⁷⁰ How many more are available to the leader who need not worry about a hostile legislature, Constitutional limits, and an active political opposition?

It is unclear to what extent domestic political factions are capable of restraining leaders for many of the same uncertainty-based reasons that weakened Force I. The impact of policies on a

in *Diplomacy, Force, and Leadership: Essays in Honor of Alexander L. George*, ed. Dan Caldwell and Timothy J. McKeown (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich, *The German Predicament: Memory and Power in the New Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), James N. Rosenau, *Public Opinion and Foreign Policy: An Operational Formulation, Studies in Political Science* (New York, NY: Random House, 1961), James N. Rosenau, ed., *Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1967).

⁶⁶ Paul A. Papayoanou, *Power Ties: Economic Interdependence, Balancing, and War* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), Beth A. Simmons, *Who Adjusts?: Domestic Sources of Foreign Economic Policy During the Interwar Years, Princeton Studies in International History and Politics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

⁶⁷ Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper, 1957).

⁶⁸ Wasserman, Nohria, and Anand, "When Does Leadership Matter? The Contingent Opportunities View of CEO Leadership."

⁶⁹ Rosen, *Winning the Next War*.

⁷⁰ Richard E. Neustadt, *Presidential Power and the Modern Presidents: The Politics of Leadership from Roosevelt to Reagan* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1990).

leader's standing will be decided by their *success*, not by the support they had when decisions were made.⁷¹ An optimistic or aggressive leader, for example, might choose to engage in foreign military adventures with the expectation that they will improve his standing after the results are in.

Domestic constraints' power over any particular national leader is also partly a function of that leader's personal characteristics. Charismatic leaders can receive extraordinary levels of obedience, and even devotion, from their followers.⁷² They get support simply by asking for it. This, after all, is what charisma means. A charismatic leader will be less constrained by domestic political considerations because she can shape the domestic political environment. When domestic factors' ability to constrain a leader is dependent on the personal characteristics of that same leader, it is difficult or impossible to use them as an argument for the *irrelevance* of political leaders.

Force III: Perfect Selection

Homogenizing Selection Systems

If leaders are chosen in such a way that every potential leader would make the same decisions, then their individual traits are of no importance. Only the selection system matters.⁷³ Paranoids, for example, exist in every population and paranoia may be advantageous in revolutionary struggles for power.⁷⁴ If that advantage is strong enough, then *only* paranoid leaders could triumph in a revolution.

⁷¹ George W. Downs and David M. Roake, "Conflict, Agency, and Gambling for Resurrection: The Principal-Agent Problem Goes to War," *American Journal of Political Science* 38, no. 2 (1994).

⁷² Burns, *Leadership*, 244, Cynthia G. Emrich et al., "Images in Words: Presidential Rhetoric, Charisma, and Greatness," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 46, no. 3 (2001), Margaret G. Hermann, "When Leader Personality Will Affect Foreign Policy: Some Propositions," in *In Search of Global Patterns*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: The Free Press, 1976), Robert J. House, William D. Spangler, and James Woycke, "Personality and Charisma in the U.S. Presidency: A Psychological Theory of Leader Effectiveness," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 36 (1991), David A. Waldman and Francis J. Yammarino, "CEO Charismatic Leadership: Levels-of-Management and Levels-of-Analysis Effects," *The Academy of Management Review* 24, no. 2 (1999), Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*, Ann Ruth Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984).

⁷³ Some organizational theorists argue that bureaucratic methods of choosing leaders have essentially this effect. Cohen, March, and Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *Leadership and Ambiguity*, 282.

⁷⁴ Tucker, "The Dictator and Totalitarianism."

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Even in the United States homogenizing systems have many opportunities. Candidates must win many primaries to gain their party's nomination. They must then face an opponent with similar resources who has gone through the same winnowing process. The characteristics of any particular President could be just the product of this marathon. If that President had different characteristics they would never have become President in the first place.

Robert Tucker best summarized the belief that selection systems prevent deviant leaders from coming to power, even though he thought that belief mistaken. He argued that many political scientists had an implicit "theory of organizational rejection of aberrant personalities from leadership positions." Since modern societies are highly bureaucratic and the behavior of individuals in bureaucracies is tightly circumscribed, there is little room for individual idiosyncrasies. Any such system will eliminate people with psychological disorders from contention for leadership.⁷⁵

All arguments about the influence of selection systems currently in the political science literature use essentially the same logic. The most prominent is the "operational code" approach pioneered by Leites in 1951.⁷⁶ Although developments of this idea move the focus to individuals, Leites' original concept was driven by the idea that Soviet elites all shared "precepts or maxims of political tactics and strategy that characterized the classical Bolshevik approach to politics."⁷⁷ Individuals are irrelevant; if one were removed, he would simply be replaced by another with the same code.

Despite his structuralist orientation, Waltz acknowledged the importance of leader selection, because "[s]uccess in foreign policy depends upon the ability of political leaders to set sensible goals for their nation...."⁷⁸ British Prime Ministers have considerable power in determining foreign policy and

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*: 575-576.

⁷⁶ Nathan Constantin Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo* (New York, NY: Rand, 1951), Nathan Constantin Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1953).

⁷⁷ Alexander L. George, "The 'Operational Code': A Neglected Approach to the Study of Political Leaders and Decision-Making," *International Studies Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1969): 193.

⁷⁸ Kenneth N. Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1967), 16.

Britain has an “apprentice” system of choosing Prime Ministers. British Members of Parliament who seek to be Prime Minister have exceptional amounts of experience, almost always having served in a previous Cabinet and having been closely evaluated by party leaders for an extended period of time. American Presidents, by contrast, are less thoroughly evaluated than their British counterparts but also have less institutional power. Great Britain tends to get older, more experienced Prime Ministers who are “surer and safer” than American Presidents, while the United States is more likely to have a President with force and energy, but one whose decisions may need to be countered by a strong and opposed Congress. The British constrain their leaders through careful selection, making sure that the Prime Minister will not use his power capriciously. The United States constrains its Presidents institutionally, choosing them less carefully but also giving them less ability to enact their desires. The British system is about “will not,” the American one about “cannot.”⁷⁹

Other literature on selection has made similar arguments. Charles Hermann suggested that “heads of state emerging from the recruitment process exhibit characteristics appropriate to the circumstances in which they find themselves,” an argument echoed by a study of Thai leadership.⁸⁰ In Japan, similarly “[a] political leader must possess certain attributes which would maximize his or her chances of becoming a leader. He or she needs to go through some sort of leadership recruitment process. This process is the ability to manipulate one’s environment in such a manner as to cause one person to be much in demand.”⁸¹ Singapore’s Lee Kuan-Yew even created a system to select his successor with precisely this outcome in mind, creating a pool of potential successors who competed

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Hermann, "Changing Course: When Governments Choose to Redirect Foreign Policy," 22, Ockey, "Thai Society and Patterns of Political Leadership."

⁸¹ Kuroda, "Leadership Recruitment Patterns in the Japanese House of Representatives: General Elections 1-30, 1890-1963," 120-121, 127.

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with each other for an extended period, resulting in a group of “new leaders...committed to a ‘custodial’ view of governing that emphasized continuity rather than change.”⁸²

Political scientists have, however, occasionally made the opposite argument, pointing to the diversity of leaders as a reason why they cannot explain outcomes. Stephen Walt argues that “the popular stereotype about revolutionary leaders is inconsistent: the same leaders are sometimes portrayed as simultaneously both irrational and fanatical, on one hand, and disciplined, calculating, and crafty, on the other.”⁸³ The wide variance in personalities thrown up by revolutions does weaken the traditional argument about revolutionary leaders. Since such leaders are often critical to arguments about the impact of leader personality, any leadership theory needs to deal with this phenomenon.

Similarly, many studies of organizations and businesses find that leader selection processes produce largely homogenous outputs. Organizations select leaders carefully, so as you move up an organization, “the population of managers becomes more and more homogenous...At the limit, one vice-president cannot be reliably distinguished from another...” This means that executives may be essentially interchangeable. Management is important, but this can be true “even though managers are indistinguishable. It is hard to tell the difference between two different light bulbs also; but if you take all light-bulbs away, it is difficult to read in the dark.”⁸⁴

Managers, particularly CEOs, undergo an evaluation and selection process that has few political analogues. This process has many features of questionable rationality. Corporate boards often search for CEOs with qualities, particularly charisma, whose relevance to performance has little or no empirical support. The end result of this process, however, is that CEOs are remarkably homogenous along almost all characteristics, and particularly those relevant to decision-making.⁸⁵ Overall, “[p]ersons are selected

⁸² Mauzy, “Leadership Succession in Singapore: The Best Laid Plans,” 1164.

⁸³ Stephen M. Walt, *Revolution and War*, ed. Robert J. Art, Robert Jervis, and Stephen M. Walt, *Cornell Studies in Security Affairs* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 11.

⁸⁴ Cohen, March, and Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, *Leadership and Ambiguity*, 282.

⁸⁵ Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*.

to leadership positions. As a consequence of this selection process, the range of behaviors or characteristics exhibited by leaders is reduced....” People tend to like more those whom they perceive as similar, established interests within organizations will act during succession struggles to ensure that the winners are conducive to their interests and thus to the established balance of power within the organization, and leaders themselves are partly self-selected.⁸⁶

Problems with Leader Selection

Force III was clearly extremely weak when states were ruled by absolute monarchs. Even in the modern era, however, it seems questionable. Few observers of the 2000 American Presidential election would argue, at least in retrospect, that there were no significant differences between the contenders; it is impossible to argue that the outcome of an election decided by a few votes in Florida was determined solely, or even primarily, by the characteristics of the two candidates.

What theories of both homogenous and random leader selection do not take into account is the *variability* in the extent to which selection systems homogenize their outputs. Some systems evaluate thoroughly. Sometimes, however, leaders come to power who have been far less thoroughly evaluated. When a Vice President ascends to the Presidency, a revolutionary overthrows a government, or a dark horse candidate wins an election, how thoroughly evaluated could they be? *As long as some states have imperfect selection processes, there is room for leader impact.*

The Rebuttal: The Impact of Leaders

Empirically-focused researchers in political science, management, and psychology have all found significant leader effects. Political scientists have tied a variety of leader characteristics to both specific decisions and broader tendencies in state behavior. Management researchers have identified

⁸⁶ Pfeffer, "The Ambiguity of Leadership," 106.

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circumstances in which CEOs can have a substantial impact on corporate performance. Psychologists have established that there are substantial leader effects on group performance and that some leader traits are related to organizational behavior.

Political Science

In 2001, Byman and Pollack used cases ranging from Hitler to Napoleon to Saddam Hussein to argue that political scientists have underemphasized leaders. They proposed four foundational hypotheses: 1) Individuals determine a state's intentions; 2) The prestige and competence of individual leaders influences a state's diplomatic standing and its military power; 3) Leaders help to determine a state's strategies – not just what goals it pursues, but how it pursues them; and 4) Other states' behavior is affected by their reactions to the peculiarities of a state's leaders.⁸⁷

Glenn Paige developed a variety of hypotheses about leadership, noting that despite institutional constraints, any formal leadership role could be executed in a variety of ways.⁸⁸ Paige found that “[t]he empirical evidence shows that a close relationship exists between certain distinctive personal characteristics of great rulers and the extent of their political achievements...rulers who display more of certain distinctive characteristics...are more likely than those who display fewer of these characteristics to be credited with certain important political achievements.”⁸⁹

Political science outside of IR has usually been more interested in leaders. *Who Governs?*, for example, spends a chapter on the role of the Mayor, arguing that leaders operate in an environment of high uncertainty and so incorporate a high degree of “hunch, guesswork, impulse, and the assessment of imponderables...” into their work.⁹⁰ Richard Samuels' *Machiavelli's Children* argues that “all choices are subject to powerful constraints. Still, it is clear that political actors – particularly leaders – routinely

⁸⁷ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," 133-136.

⁸⁸ Glenn D. Paige, *The Scientific Study of Political Leadership* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1977), 111.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 348.

⁹⁰ Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs? Democracy and Power in an American City*, ed. David Horne, *Yale Studies in Political Science* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1961), 89, 96.

stretch these constraints." This makes leadership "that constrained place where imagination, resources, and opportunity converge."⁹¹ This vision of the role of leadership occupies the uncertain middle ground between Carlyle and Marx. It acknowledges the importance of circumstance while still rejecting a political science without "proper nouns." Samuels feels, however, that there is "no point" to attempting to determine if leaders able to stretch constraints will be available when the opportunity arises.⁹²

IR scholarship's inattention to leaders is particularly ironic given the characteristics of situations likely to maximize the importance of individuals: 1) Nonroutine, 2) Decisions are made at the pinnacle of government by leaders with significant discretion, 3) Involving long-range plans, 4) High degrees of ambiguity, 5) Information overload, 6) Surprise, and 7) High stress.⁹³ These factors are particularly present in foreign policy. "[S]ingle, powerful leaders" make crucial decisions when they have a particular interest in foreign and defense policy, think themselves faced with a regime-threatening crisis, the issue involves high-level meetings, and the issue involved is of particular interest to the leader. On issues of particular importance, even leaders with relatively little institutional power can take a dominant role in foreign policy.⁹⁴

Perhaps the two most prominent methodological tools used in the analysis of the effects of individual leaders are content analysis and psychological profiling. Content analysis is dominated by the works of Margaret Hermann, who has profiled many different leaders and convincingly linked foreign policy behavior to leader traits. Hermann and others have been able to link characteristics as diverse as

⁹¹ Richard J. Samuels, *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), xi, 6.

⁹² Richard J. Samuels, "Roundtable Discussion of Richard J. Samuels's *Machiavelli's Children: Leaders and Their Legacies in Italy and Japan.*," *Journal of East Asian Studies* 6, no. 1 (2006): 22, 25.

⁹³ Ole R. Holsti, "Foreign Policy Decision Makers Viewed Psychologically: "Cognitive Process" Approaches," in *In Search of Global Patterns*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: The Free Press, 1976).

⁹⁴ Margaret G. Hermann et al., "Who Leads Matters: The Effects of Powerful Individuals," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 2, Leaders, Groups, and Coalitions: Understanding the People and Processes in Foreign Policymaking (2001): 85.

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policymakers' self-image and their cognitive complexity to their foreign policy decisions.⁹⁵ Hermann developed a system for determining some psychological traits of leaders based on their spontaneous verbal communications. This system allows leaders to be classified in a variety of ways, including their responsiveness to constraints and need for power.⁹⁶ This system has been widely used to study leadership style, leading to findings ranging from the passive crisis behavior of democracies whose leaders respect constraints to the tendency of American Presidents who believe that foreign threats are the product of the internal dynamics of other states are to intervene to transform those other states' domestic institutions.⁹⁷ These studies generally do not engage with arguments based on selection, however, so they have difficulty demonstrating whether it is the leaders themselves who are important, or that those leaders have risen to power precisely because they were selected for such traits.

⁹⁵ Margaret G. Hermann, "Assessing Leadership Style: Trait Analysis," in *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders*, ed. Jerrold M. Post (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), Margaret G. Hermann, "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Leaders," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980), Margaret G. Hermann, "How Decision Units Shape Foreign Policy: A Theoretical Framework," *International Studies Review* 3, no. 2, Leaders, Groups, and Coalitions: Understanding the People and Processes in Foreign Policymaking (2001), Margaret G. Hermann, "Introduction: A Statement of Issues," in *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders*, ed. Margaret G. Hermann and Thomas W. Milburn (New York: The Free Press, 1977), Margaret G. Hermann, "Leaders and Foreign Policy Decision-Making," in *Diplomacy, Force, and Leadership: Essays in Honor of Alexander L. George*, ed. Dan Caldwell and Timothy J. McKeown (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), Margaret G. Hermann, "Leaders, Leadership, and Flexibility: Influences on Head of Government as Negotiators and Mediators," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 542 (1995), Margaret G. Hermann, "Some Personal Characteristics Related to Foreign Aid Voting of Congressmen," in *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders*, ed. Margaret G. Hermann and Thomas W. Milburn (New York: The Free Press, 1977), Margaret G. Hermann, "Verbal Behavior of Negotiators in Periods of High and Low Stress: The 1965-66 New York City Transit Negotiations," in *A Psychological Examination of Political Leaders*, ed. Margaret G. Hermann and Thomas W. Milburn (New York: The Free Press, 1977), Hermann, "When Leader Personality Will Affect Foreign Policy: Some Propositions.", Margaret G. Hermann, "Who Becomes a Political Leader? Some Societal and Regime Influences on Selection of a Head of State," in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder: Westview Press, 1979), Margaret G. Hermann and Joe D. Hagan, "International Decision Making: Leadership Matters," *Foreign Policy*, no. 110 (1998), Margaret G. Hermann and Charles W. Kegley Jr., "Rethinking Democracy and International Peace: Perspectives from Political Psychology," *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995), Hermann et al., "Who Leads Matters: The Effects of Powerful Individuals.", Michael D. Wallace and Peter Suedfeld, "Leadership Performance in Crisis: The Longevity-Complexity Link," *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1988).

⁹⁶ Margaret G. Hermann, "Handbook for Assessing Personal Characteristics and Foreign Policy Orientations of Political Leaders," in *Mershon Occasional Papers* (Columbus, OH: Mershon Center, 1987).

⁹⁷ Jonathan W. Keller, "Leadership Style, Regime Type, and Foreign Policy Crisis Behavior: A Contingent Monadic Peace?," *International Studies Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (2005), Karen A. Rasler, William R. Thompson, and Kathleen M. Chester, "Foreign Policy Makers, Personality Attributes, and Interviews: A Note on Reliability Problems," *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980), Elizabeth Nathan Saunders, "Wars of Choice: Leadership, Threat Perception, and Military Interventions" (Dissertation, Yale University, 2007).

The two most prominent voices in the subfield of leader psychological profiling are those of Alexander George and Jerrold Post. Alexander and Juliet George's *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House*, describes a President whose epic achievements and equally epic failures both stemmed from his tortured relationship with his father.⁹⁸ Its description of Wilson's behavior and its argument that a more flexible President could have produced a different outcome for the Versailles Treaty demonstrate the importance of an individual leader's traits and show how psychological profiling can be a powerful explanatory tool in skilled hands.

Post grounds many of his profiles in a larger description of the narcissistic personality and a specific subtype, malignant narcissism, which may characterize some dictators.⁹⁹ Post and Robert Robins similarly examine political paranoia, describing an array of leaders ranging from Hitler and Stalin to Pol Pot and Idi Amin as clinical paranoids.¹⁰⁰ Robins also theorized that although political systems usually attempt to ensure that psychological deviants do not come to power, they sometimes fail, and sometimes may even select for such personalities.¹⁰¹

IR scholars have also found success studying leaders' operational codes, their cognitive maps, and their images of the world.¹⁰² Operational codes are "a set of political beliefs embedded in the personality of a leader or originating from the cultural matrix of society."¹⁰³ They introduce

⁹⁸ Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study* (Mineola: Dover Publications, Inc., 1964).

⁹⁹ Betty Glad, "Why Tyrants Go Too Far: Malignant Narcissism and Absolute Power," *Political Psychology* 23, no. 1 (2002), Daniel Landau, "One Man's Wickedness: Malignant Narcissism and Major Blunders in International Relations" (Master's Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004), Jerrold M. Post, "Current Concepts of the Narcissistic Personality: Implications for Political Psychology," *Political Psychology* 14, no. 1 (1993).

¹⁰⁰ Robert S. Robins and Jerrold M. Post, *Political Paranoia: The Psychopolitics of Hatred* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

¹⁰¹ Robert S. Robins, "Recruitment of Pathological Deviants into Political Leadership," in *Psychopathology and Political Leadership*, ed. Robert S. Robins, *Tulane Studies in Political Science* (New Orleans, LA: Tulane University, 1977).

¹⁰² Michael D. Young and Mark Schafer, "Is There Method in Our Madness? Ways of Assessing Cognition in International Relations," *Mershon International Studies Review* 42, no. 1 (1998).

¹⁰³ Stephen G. Walker, Mark Schafer, and Michael D. Young, "Profiling the Operational Codes of Political Leaders," in *The Psychological Assessment of Political Leaders*, ed. Jerrold M. Post (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), 216.

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“propensities” into a leader’s decisions, influencing both the range of options he will consider and which one he will choose.¹⁰⁴ A study of Soviet leaders during crises revealed that their operational codes had significant differences that could have resulted in policy variations.¹⁰⁵ Again, however, most such research does not investigate if leaders gained power because of or despite their operational codes.

Cognitive mapping, like operational code analysis, is an attempt to “lay bare the structure of [policymakers’] thoughts and the connections between their beliefs.” Content maps are built on the original text of policymakers’ communications. These are analyzed to identify the causal connections expressed in them until analysts can understand, and perhaps even forecast, how these policymakers change their opinions over time and in response to new information.¹⁰⁶

States’ images of each other appear to play a crucial role in their foreign policy.¹⁰⁷ Attempts to link policymakers’ images of other states to their actions have been bedeviled by a tautology problem, as analysts’ assessments of those images are often inferred from actions. A variety of methodological innovations, however, including experimental methods, nevertheless suggest that policymakers’ images play a significant role in their decisions.¹⁰⁸

Even without moving into the detailed psychological analyses required for profiling, some political scientists have studied the role of personality factors in politics. High-dominance personalities, for example, are more likely than low-dominance ones to advocate the use of force.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁴ Alexander L. George, “The Causal Nexus between Cognitive Beliefs and Decision-Making Behavior: The “Operational Code” Belief System,” in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979).

¹⁰⁵ Steven W. Hoagland and Stephen G. Walker, “Operational Codes and Crisis Outcomes,” in *Psychological Models in International Politics*, ed. Lawrence S. Falkowski (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979).

¹⁰⁶ Young and Schafer, “Is There Method in Our Madness? Ways of Assessing Cognition in International Relations,” 75-78.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Jervis, *The Logic of Images in International Relations* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1989).

¹⁰⁸ Richard K. Hermann et al., “Images in International Relations: An Experimental Test of Cognitive Schema,” *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (1997), Young and Schafer, “Is There Method in Our Madness? Ways of Assessing Cognition in International Relations,” 82.

¹⁰⁹ Graham H. Shepard, “Personality Effects on American Foreign Policy, 1969-84: A Second Test of Interpersonal Generalization Theory,” *International Studies Quarterly* 32, no. 1 (1988).

More broadly, Fred Greenstein argued that individuals remain crucial to politics and that many dismissals of leaders are driven by a belief in "Actor Dispensability." Actor dispensability is a product of the tendency that "[e]ven when it is acknowledged that some action taken by an individual has been a crucial node in a decision-making process, it may sometimes be argued that the action is one that would have been performed by any actor in the same situation or role."¹¹⁰ Some actors are not dispensable. Wilson was not, for example, because "[t]here was no question either to his contemporaries or to subsequent commentators that his actions (and inactions) had a major impact on historical outcomes and that they were highly *personal* actions. Wilson behaved in ways that we would not expect other comparably placed political actors to behave."¹¹¹ Greenstein and the Georges also studied the relationship between Presidential personality and performance, concluding that the personality of the President can have a substantial and predictable impact on both the process through which he comes to decisions and the quality of those choices.¹¹²

Tucker made the best argument for how leadership selection might produce psychologically abnormal leaders. He noted the existence of some leaders with a "warfare personality," one which leads them to identify personal enemies as the enemy of society as a whole and which can powerfully inspire militant organizations. Leaders with such a personality can be a powerful asset to organizations attempting to seize power.¹¹³ This argument has a subtle, but important, distinction from selection-based arguments that minimize the importance of leaders. These theories hold leaders dispensable by arguing, in essence, that any particular person can be replaced by someone with similar traits. Tucker,

¹¹⁰ Fred I. Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization*, ed. Aaron Wildavsky, *Markham Political Science Series* (Chicago, IL: Markham Publishing Company, 1969), 46.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹¹² Alexander L. George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, Paperback ed., *Westview Special Studies in International Relations* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1980), Alexander L. George and Juliette L. George, *Presidential Personality & Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), Fred I. Greenstein, "Foreword," in *Presidential Personality & Performance* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), Fred I. Greenstein, *The Presidential Difference: Leadership Style from FDR to George W. Bush*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹¹³ Tucker, "The Dictator and Totalitarianism."

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by contrast, argues that the leader's personality contributes to his organization's ability to gain power, and then influences the organization's means and ends. Without that particular leader, a different organization with different goals would have won.

Political scientists and doctors have explored the impact of illness in leaders. Cases ranging from Franklin Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson to Winston Churchill and Anthony Eden have shown that physical or mental illness in the President or Prime Minister can cripple democratic governments. This can be greatly exacerbated when the afflicted leader is a dictator.¹¹⁴ States ruled by older leaders are more likely to begin wars, which may be caused by both the strength of the leader and older leaders' propensity to fall ill.¹¹⁵ If a leader's illness or incapacity can have a decisive effect on policymaking, then this clearly weakens the argument that other distinctions between leaders are unimportant.

Yehezkel Dror explored issues surrounding innovative leaders in IR, noting that no general theory of innovation in IR exists, but concluding that "[i]f...specific cases of extreme innovative leadership are studied, the difference they can make seems even larger than most theories tend to permit."¹¹⁶ These findings were echoed by Greenstein's study of the end of the Cold War, which he attributed in large part to Reagan and Gorbachev's willingness to innovate and the very significant differences in their backgrounds from those of their contemporaries and rivals for leadership.¹¹⁷ James Goldgeier, focusing just on Soviet leadership, similarly found that the Soviet Union's crisis bargaining strategy was determined by the experiences of Soviet leaders in their domestic conflicts during their rise

¹¹⁴ Herbert L. Abrams, "Dealing with Presidential Disability: The Assassination Attempt on Ronald Reagan and the 25th Amendment," in *Diplomacy, Force, and Leadership: Essays in Honor of Alexander L. George*, ed. Dan Caldwell and Timothy J. McKeown (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), Arno Karlen, *Napoleon's Glands and Other Ventures in Biohistory* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), Rose McDermott, *Presidential Leadership, Illness, and Decision Making*, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Bert Edward Park, *The Impact of Illness on World Leaders* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), Jerrold M. Post and Robert S. Robins, *When Illness Strikes the Leader: The Dilemma of the Captive King* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 1993).

¹¹⁵ Michael Horowitz, Rose McDermott, and Allan C. Stam, "Leader Age, Regime Type, and Violent International Relations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 49, no. 5 (2005).

¹¹⁶ Dror, "Main Issues of Innovative Leadership in International Politics," 23.

¹¹⁷ Fred I. Greenstein, "The Impact of Personality on the End of the Cold War: A Counterfactual Analysis," *Political Psychology* 19, no. 1 (1998).

to leadership, and that different leaders with different backgrounds could have and would have adopted different tactics.¹¹⁸ Dror's study of "visionary" political leaders found that although such leadership is enormously risky and sometimes fails catastrophically, it can sometimes enable a state to confront major political problems.¹¹⁹ Bunce found statistically significant evidence that leader turnover was related to budgetary changes in Western Europe and the United States.¹²⁰

There have also been attempts to use theories rooted in the biological sciences. Dominic Johnson has shown how overconfidence driven by "positive illusions" plays a key role in taking states to war and how leaders, particularly those of nondemocratic states, are particularly likely to suffer from them.¹²¹ Stephen Rosen examined how non-rational factors like discount rates, the need for dominance, and the influence of stress can play critical roles in foreign policy.¹²² Both argued that the factors they identify vary from person to person.

Economics, Management, and Psychology

Economists have also examined the impact of leaders. A study of 20th century leaders showed that the assassination of autocratic leaders produces substantial institutional change, while the assassination of democratic leaders does not.¹²³ Similarly, autocrats have an impact on economic growth while democrats do not; among autocrats, the more power is centralized in the hands of the

¹¹⁸ James Goldgeier, *Leadership Style and Soviet Foreign Policy: Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev, Gorbachev*, ed. Richard Ned Lebow, *Perspectives on Security* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

¹¹⁹ Yehezkel Dror, "Visionary Political Leadership: On Improving a Risky Requisite," *International Political Science Review* 9, no. 1 (1988).

¹²⁰ Valerie Bunce, "Changing Leaders and Changing Policies: The Impact of Elite Succession on Budgetary Priorities in Democratic Countries," *American Journal of Political Science* 24, no. 3 (1980), Valerie Bunce, *Do New Leaders Make a Difference? Executive Succession and Public Policy under Capitalism and Socialism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981).

¹²¹ Dominic D.P. Johnson, *Overconfidence and War: The Havoc and Glory of Positive Illusions* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹²² Stephen Peter Rosen, *War and Human Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

¹²³ Jones and Olken, "Do Leaders Matter? National Leadership and Growth since World War II."

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head of government, the larger the impact on economic growth leaders have.¹²⁴ Similarly, the unexpected death of senior executives in a company is associated with abnormal price changes when that executive has firm-specific human capital that generates economic value for his or her company or when it would be difficult to replace that executive at the same level of compensation.¹²⁵

Good to Great, one of the best-selling business books of all time, describes “Level 5” leaders, whom it credits with transforming ordinary companies into extraordinary ones. Echoing some of the conclusions of its predecessor, *Built to Last*, it found that these leaders are rarely charismatic figures with large egos.¹²⁶ Both books are weakened by severe methodological problems and admiring profiles of companies that no longer seem nearly as impressive as they were when the book was written in 2001 (most strikingly, both Fannie Mae and Circuit City are profiled as “Good to Great” companies).¹²⁷ Their continuing influence in the business community, however, and even to some extent among business academia, testifies to the power held by the belief in the importance of managers.

Reviews of the literature on leadership effects usually conclude that leadership has an impact on organizational performance.¹²⁸ Wasserman, Nohria, and Anand proposed a “contingent opportunities” framework in which companies in markets where opportunities are scarce are likely to exhibit significant CEO effects because missed opportunities are not easily replaceable and found that CEOs accounted for 13 to 15% of variance in company performance.¹²⁹ Other studies have found that many managerial characteristics, ranging from experience to neurotic traits to perceived locus of control, result in

¹²⁴ Benjamin F. Jones and Benjamin A. Olken, "Hit or Miss? The Effect of Assassinations on Institutions and War," *American Economic Journal: Macroeconomics* 1, no. 2 (2009).

¹²⁵ W. Bruce Johnson et al., "An Analysis of the Stock Price Reaction to Sudden Executive Deaths," *Journal of Accounting and Economics* 7 (1985).

¹²⁶ James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last*, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997), Jim Collins, *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap...And Others Don't* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 2001).

¹²⁷ Phil Rosenzweig, *The Halo Effect...And the Eight Other Business Delusions That Deceive Managers* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2007).

¹²⁸ Jonathan E. Smith, Kenneth P. Carson, and Ralph A. Alexander, "Leadership: It Can Make a Difference," *Academy of Management Journal* 27, no. 4 (1984), Alan Berkeley Thomas, "Does Leadership Make a Difference to Organizational Performance?," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 33, no. 3 (1988).

¹²⁹ Wasserman, Nohria, and Anand, "When Does Leadership Matter? The Contingent Opportunities View of CEO Leadership."

significant changes in behavior.¹³⁰ Perhaps most interestingly, given overconfidence's importance in IR, overconfident CEOs have been shown to engage in many suboptimal behaviors. They overestimate the return on their investments and overvalue internal resources, invest more, leverage more, repurchase shares more often, and are more likely to engage in value-destroying mergers.¹³¹

Overconfidence has also played a crucial role in examinations of the psychology of entrepreneurs. Given the similarities between entrepreneurs and some types of political leaders, particularly those of revolutionary groups, these findings too are relevant to politics.¹³² Although the wide array of studies has resulted in an almost equally-wide array of findings, entrepreneurs seem to have distinct personality traits. In particular, they appear to be more risk-tolerant than non-entrepreneurs.¹³³ There are mixed findings on the prevalence of over-optimism among entrepreneurs, but the preponderance of the evidence and a game-theoretic model of the decision to become an entrepreneur suggest that entrepreneurs are more prone to over-optimism than managers.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ Marianne Bertrand and Antoinette Schoar, "Managing with Style: The Effect of Managers on Firm Policies," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* CXVIII, no. 4 (2003), Anil K. Gupta and V. Govindarajan, "Business Unit Strategy, Managerial Characteristics, and Business Unit Effectiveness at Strategy Implementation," *Academy of Management Journal* 27, no. 1 (1984), Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries and Danny Miller, "Neurotic Style and Organizational Pathology," *Strategic Management Journal* 5, no. 1 (1984), Danny Miller, Manfred F.R. Kets de Vries, and Jean-Marie Toulouse, "Top Executive Locus of Control and Its Relationship to Strategy-Making, Structure, and Environment," *Academy of Management Journal* 25, no. 2 (1982).

¹³¹ Itzhak Ben-David, John R. Graham, and Campbell R. Harvey, "Managerial Overconfidence and Corporate Policies," in *American Finance Association 2007* (Chicago: 2007), Ulrike Malmendier and Geoffrey Tate, "CEO Overconfidence and Corporate Investment," *The Journal of Finance* LX, no. 6 (2005), Ulrike Malmendier and Geoffrey Tate, "Who Makes Acquisitions? CEO Overconfidence and the Market's Reaction," in *American Finance Association 2004 Meetings* (San Diego: 2003).

¹³² Bruce Miroff, "Entrepreneurship and Leadership," *Studies in American Political Development* 17, no. 2 (2003), Adam D. Sheingate, "Political Entrepreneurship, Institutional Change, and American Political Development," *Studies in American Political Development* 17, no. 2 (2003).

¹³³ Hermann Brandstätter, "Becoming an Entrepreneur - a Question of Personality Structure?," *Journal of Economic Psychology* 18 (1997), Sally P. Caird, "What Do Psychological Tests Suggest About Entrepreneurs?," *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 8, no. 6 (1993), Manju Puri and David T. Robinson, "Optimism, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Choice," (2005).

¹³⁴ Antonio E. Bernardo and Ivo Welch, "On the Evolution of Overconfidence and Entrepreneurs," *Journal of Economics and Management Strategy* 10, no. 3 (2001), Lowell B. Busenitz and Jay B. Barney, "Differences Between Entrepreneurs and Managers in Large Organizations: Biases and Heuristics in Strategic Decision-Making," *Journal of Business Venturing* 12 (1997), Arnold C. Cooper, Carolyn Y. Woo, and William C. Dunkelberg, "Entrepreneurs' Perceived Chances for Success," *Journal of Business Venturing* 3, no. 2 (1988), David de Meza and Clive Southey,

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Psychologists have also taken up the leadership gauntlet. Arnold Ludwig's *King of the Mountain* analyzes the psychological condition of every twentieth century head of government. He found that "23% [of heads of government] risked their lives in coups, revolutions, uprisings, civil wars, wars of liberation, sabotage campaigns, terrorism, or successionist [sic.] movements before gaining high office." More than half of all coup leaders are later deposed or killed.¹³⁵ An extraordinary number had unmistakable signs of severe psychological disorders. Theories that argue that heads of government are homogenized by the process which selects them would seem to hold that:

They [political leaders] are not supposed to hold daily conversations with the voices in their head (as did Macias Nguema), wrestle for months with the urge to commit suicide (as did Salvadore Allende), drink more whiskey in one day than many people do in a year (as did Yahya Khan), have grandiose delusions that they are God (as did Bokassa), make high-level decisions after snorting cocaine (as did Manuel Noriega), show signs of being demented (as did Habib Bourguiba), or see enemies and conspirators everywhere (as did King Zogu), sometimes even in their own mirror.¹³⁶

Ludwig also found that although lifetime rates of paranoia in the United States are 0.7%-1.5%, among twentieth century rulers 4% were "definitely paranoid, and an additional 9 percent were probably so...." Paranoia need not be a political liability, because "[j]ust how much suspiciousness is realistic and adaptive and how much is psychotic and maladaptive is sometimes hard to say."¹³⁷ A study of elections among psychiatric patients for leadership positions on their wards found that paranoids were overrepresented among ward leaders by almost a factor of four. This may be because paranoids maintain their intelligence and personality and often give the appearance of being capable, or even superior. Their illness manifests instead in the form of delusions and extraordinary rigidity.¹³⁸

"The Borrower's Curse: Optimism, Finance and Entrepreneurship," *The Economic Journal* 106, no. 435 (1996), Puri and Robinson, "Optimism, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Choice."

¹³⁵ Arnold M. Ludwig, *King of the Mountain* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 93, 100.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 248, 253-254.

¹³⁸ Brent M. Rutherford, "Psychopathology, Decision-Making, and Political Involvement," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 10, no. 4 (1966).

Dean Simonton has conducted a variety of studies on the psychological components of performance. Some of his findings are extraordinarily counterintuitive. He has argued, for example, that the relationship between intelligence and the ability to rise to power is curvilinear, as intelligence that is too high makes it difficult to communicate with other group members and gain their support.¹³⁹ He has, however, found strong and consistent relationships between psychological traits and leader performance in a variety of settings. Intelligence and experience are key determinants of leadership success, while Presidential style – historically a primary focus of much research on the Presidency – has little impact.¹⁴⁰

The psychological literature on leadership supports three major points:

First, leadership is a real and vastly consequential phenomenon, perhaps the single most important issue in the human sciences. Second, leadership is about the performance of teams, groups, and organizations. Good leadership promotes effective team and group performance, which in turn enhances the well-being of the incumbents; bad leadership degrades the quality of life for everyone associated with it. Third, personality predicts leadership—who we are is how we lead—and this information can be used to select future leaders or improve the performance of current incumbents.¹⁴¹

Organizations may fail to select people with good leadership skills for positions of authority. Although failed managers tend to have similar characteristics – they have poor interpersonal skills, are unable to accomplish key tasks, fail to build teams, and cannot transition after a promotion – some selection systems have great difficulty detecting them. These tendencies make a positive short-term impression, and many organizations do not have on selection processes that might detect such negative traits.

Some studies find career success – measured by rate of promotion – and team success to be unrelated.

¹³⁹ Dean Keith Simonton, *Greatness: Who Makes History and Why* (New York, NY: The Guilford Press, 1994), 233-236.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, Dean Keith Simonton, "Land Battles, Generals, and Armies: Individual and Situational Determinants of Victory and Casualties," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 38, no. 1 (1980), Simonton, "Presidential IQ, Openness, Intellectual Brilliance, and Leadership: Estimates and Correlations for 42 U.S. Chief Executives.", Dean Keith Simonton, "Presidential Style: Personality, Biography, and Performance," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 55, no. 6 (1988), Dean Keith Simonton, *Why Presidents Succeed: A Political Psychology of Leadership* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

¹⁴¹ Robert Hogan and Robert B. Kaiser, "What We Know About Leadership," *Review of General Psychology* 9, no. 2 (2005): 169.

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People with narcissistic personalities, for example, generally make strongly positive initial impressions and are nominated for leadership positions in groups of strangers, but after prolonged contact members of these groups are likely to rate them poorly.¹⁴² Visionary business leaders, like their political counterparts, are often narcissistic and damaging, but occasionally extraordinarily productive.¹⁴³

Towards Better Theories of Leadership

The arguments against the importance of individual leaders in both politics and business, especially when paired with the empirical literature on the relatively small impact of CEOs, have both theoretical plausibility and substantial power. Although policymakers are essentially unanimous in rejecting the academic position that the impact of leaders is vastly overestimated, the Fundamental Attribution Error suggests that their belief is not surprising.¹⁴⁴ Leaders are the product of systems and are rarely chosen randomly. They act in circumstances that constrain their choices. There are often other potential candidates for leadership who, in the same situation, would act in much the same way. All of these conditions are normally only noticed if they are specifically being looked for, and together they suggest that individual leaders often play a far less important role than most give them credit for.

All of this is true, but it remains inadequate to address the substantial body of empirical evidence from across the social sciences that individual leaders can have significant or even overwhelming, impact on policy and outcomes. Leaders are both chosen and constrained. Sometimes, however, leaders choose to stretch their constraints and sometimes chosen leaders can greatly surprise

¹⁴² Ibid.: 176, Robert B. Kaiser, Robert Hogan, and S. Bartholomew Craig, "Leadership and the Fate of Organizations," *American Psychologist* 63, no. 2 (2008), Delroy L. Paulhus, "Interpersonal and Intrapyschic Adaptiveness of Trait Self-Enhancement: A Mixed Blessing?," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 74, no. 5 (1998).

¹⁴³ Michael Maccoby, *The Productive Narcissist: The Promise and Peril of Visionary Leadership* (New York, NY: Broadway Books, 2003).

¹⁴⁴ George, *Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy: The Effective Use of Information and Advice*, 58-59. Every senior policymaker I have ever spoken to on this subject – I have not kept count, but the number is certainly far in excess of twenty – has been vociferous in their belief that the political science view of leaders is, as several of them said, "absurd."

those who did the choosing. The theoretical arguments for leader dispensability are simply both flawed on their own terms and unable to explain the weight of evidence.

Leaders, with all their attendant issues ranging from psychological issues to political constraints to subjective judgments about their varying abilities, complicate theories of international relations. Given the theoretical imperative for parsimony, the benefits from this additional complexity may not be worth the cost. If any of the theoretical assumptions usually used to explain why leaders are relatively unimportant is true, then leaders are simply epiphenomenal. Albert Einstein is commonly believed to have said that “everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler.”¹⁴⁵ Perhaps appropriately, that quote is actually a simplified version of a statement in his lecture “On the Method of Theoretical Physics.” Einstein declared that “the supreme goal of all theory is to make the irreducible basic elements as simple and as few as possible without having to surrender the adequate representation of a single datum of experience.”¹⁴⁶ He sets a remarkably high bar for theory. Although theories should be as simple as possible, they must nevertheless explain *all* the available data. This goal seems far more reachable in physics than in the social sciences, and some physics theories – most strikingly the Electroweak theory – have come extraordinarily close to doing so.¹⁴⁷ Einstein’s statement is nevertheless a lodestar for what a perfect theory in the physical sciences could accomplish and what an imperfect theory in the social sciences should strive for.

Waltz argued for a different approach, suggesting parsimony as a principle criterion with which to judge theories. A parsimonious theory has fewer variables than a non-parsimonious one. Any theory, of course, is more parsimonious than the real world. The purpose of theory is to provide a simplified model of reality in order to explain it, and Waltz argues that a theory gains its explanatory power by its

¹⁴⁵ Wikiquote, *Albert Einstein* (Wikimedia Foundation, March 29 2009 [cited March 30 2009]); available from http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Albert_Einstein.

¹⁴⁶ Albert Einstein, "On the Method of Theoretical Physics," *Philosophy of Science* 1, no. 2 (1934): 165.

¹⁴⁷ Steven Bernstein et al., "God Gave Physics the Easy Problems: Adapting Social Science to an Unpredictable World," *European Journal of International Relations* 6, no. 1 (2000), Richard P. Feynman, *Qed: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

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distance from reality. His systemic theory cannot explain foreign policy behavior and does not seek to do so. Instead it describes the systemic forces that continually influence all states.¹⁴⁸ It describes broad tendencies in state behavior, largely ignoring behavior that is not in accord with systemic pressures. By abstracting away from particular behaviors in favor of tendencies, Waltz was able to create a parsimonious theory that incorporates only system-level variables.

The problem with such a parsimonious theory, however, is that such radical simplification makes it impossible for the theory to explain much, perhaps even most, of the behavior of states within the international system. One of neorealism's fundamental precepts is that states rely on self-help to ensure their survival, yet Paul Schroeder found that he "cannot construct a history of the European states system from 1648 to 1945 based on the generalization that most unit actors within that system responded to crucial threats to their security and independence by resorting to self-help...In the majority of instances this just did not happen."¹⁴⁹

Despite neorealism's prediction that states will prefer to balance instead of bandwagon, during the Napoleonic Wars, the First World War, and the Second World War states were far more likely to bandwagon with the stronger side than balance with the weaker one.¹⁵⁰ As the Napoleonic Wars set the course of the nineteenth century, and the First and Second World Wars did the same for the twentieth, a political science theory that fails to explain even the very broad outlines of their course seems starved, whatever its elegance and parsimony.

Parsimony could be entirely discarded as a criterion for evaluating theories, for even if a parsimonious theory is preferable to a non-parsimonious one when all else is equal, "[a] massive model with hundreds of variables that took a month to run but predicted international behavior perfectly

¹⁴⁸ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 7, 9, 19, 68, 69, 71-72.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Schroeder, "Historical Reality Vs. Neo-Realist Theory," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 116.

¹⁵⁰ Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*, Schroeder, "Historical Reality Vs. Neo-Realist Theory," 120-124, Randall L. Schweller, "Bandwagoning for Profit: Bringing the Revisionist State Back In," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994), Stephen M. Walt, *The Origins of Alliances* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

would be far more useful by any measure than a model with only a single variable that could illustrate only occasional tendencies and only in badly underspecified circumstances.”¹⁵¹ No such model is in the offing, of course. Thus parsimony remains a valuable theoretical attribute. A theory is like a map, and “[a]n extremely detailed map...[is not] useful for many purposes. If we wish to get from one big city to another on a major expressway, we do not need and may find confusing a map which includes much information unrelated to roads.” A good theory, like a good map, is one “that both portrays reality and simplifies reality in a way that best serves our purpose.” A good social science theory “accounts for more crucial events and provides a better understanding of trends than other paradigms at a similar level of intellectual abstraction.”¹⁵²

In fact, theories which have considerable power yet are too parsimonious to adequately describe reality can, by their very failures, demonstrate what data is significant and where further theorizing is warranted. Waltz cites Newtonian mechanics as an example of a successful theory which explains the motion of objects in the physical world.¹⁵³ Newtonian mechanics fails Einstein’s test of theoretical adequacy, but the social sciences are very far from producing any theory of equivalent performance. The places where Newton’s theory failed, however, suggested where it could be modified and improved by further research.

Imagine an artilleryman attempting to use Newtonian mechanics to predict where shells fired from his cannon will fall. He has enough knowledge of physics to realize that Newton’s three laws of motion work only in the absence of friction, but he also knows that frictional forces can be modeled phenomenologically. Instead of calculating a virtually infinite number of collisions between atmospheric molecules and his shell he simply uses an empirically and theoretically justified approximation. Upon plotting the landing points of shells he fired very long ranges to the north, however, he finds that his

¹⁵¹ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," 113.

¹⁵² Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, First Touchstone Edition ed. (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1997), 31, 36.

¹⁵³ Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 9.

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shells consistently land to the east of their target. When firing to the south, they consistently land to the west. In both cases this error increases with the range of his shots. Upon being transferred to Antarctica because of his inaccuracy, he finds that the effect is now reversed, with shells fired north landing to the west and shells fired south landing to the east. The intrepid artilleryman has discovered the Coriolis Effect. Shells fired from the surface of the Earth retain the lateral velocity imparted to them by the Earth's spin. If they are fired northwards in the Northern hemisphere, they will have more lateral velocity than the ground which they are over (which is spinning more slowly than the ground from which the projectile departed). Because the Earth's spin goes from West to East, the shell will appear to be in the grip of a force that pushes its trajectory to the East.

The Coriolis Effect does not directly appear in the standard assumptions of Newtonian mechanics. It is not a force produced by another object. It is the consequence of motion within a rotating frame of reference. Over short distances the earth can usually be treated as a fixed reference frame and the Effect ignored. It can, however, be observed experimentally. Foucault's pendulum, which appears to move in a circle as the earth revolves underneath it, functions because of the Coriolis Effect. Including the Coriolis Effect is crucial, however, in understanding phenomena that occur over long distances. Hurricanes, for example, spin and form spirals because of the Coriolis Effect.

Yet the Coriolis Effect does not invalidate Newtonian mechanics (as other, more subtle findings, like the precise details of the orbit of Mercury, do, necessitating Einstein's eventual creation of Special and General Relativity). The Coriolis Effect addresses the inherent acceleration of the surface of the earth. It is an addition to the standard toolkit of Newtonian mechanics, one applicable only under narrowly defined circumstances. Furthermore, the Effect is only visible if our artilleryman has Newtonian mechanics to shape his expectations. The discovery of a significant and consistent deviation from Newtonian predictions shows that one of the assumptions underlying a simplistic application of the theory – that humans exist in a stable frame of reference – is false. The existence of a theory allows

the classification of empirical results that cannot be explained by the theory as a meaningful anomaly, and such an anomaly necessitates the improvement of the theory.¹⁵⁴ When a parsimonious theory is confronted by such an anomaly, its simplifying assumptions can be examined to see which should be relaxed or eliminated, and what the consequences of such a modification to the theory will be.

Physics exemplifies a cumulative and fruitful research paradigm, one in which empirical anomalies lead to better theories. It presents a pointed contrast to international relations research, where theoretical disputes often seem to make theoretical progress difficult or impossible, with empirical anomalies used either to entirely discredit theories or judged outside the scope of what they predict.¹⁵⁵ The disjuncture between international relations theory and the empirical record suggests that the simplifying assumption in IR that can most fruitfully be relaxed is the one that marks leaders as unworthy of further theorizing.

Building on Greenstein's actor dispensability, the impact of any particular leader can be examined by looking at other people who would have had power if the person who actually became head of government had not done so. The question that should be used to measure a leader's impact is not: what choices did this leader make and what were their results? That conflates the impact of the leader with those of both selection and circumstance. The key question is: if this person was not the leader, *how different would the actions and their results of the person who would instead have filled that role have been?* The key idea here is not dispensability. Every organization must have a leader, so leaders are not dispensable. The key idea is *fungibility*. How interchangeable are the people who might fill that role? An individual leader can be the *cause* of something only if events would have been different if the most likely alternative to them would have done the same. If a dictator rises to power

¹⁵⁴ Clayton M. Christensen, "The Ongoing Process of Building a Theory of Disruption," *The Journal of Product Innovation Management* 23, no. 1 (2006).

¹⁵⁵ John A. Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative Versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *The American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 (1997).

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because he promises to conquer a neighboring country or a CEO is hired because he is best-suited to cut costs, then the dictator or the CEO is not the key causal variable. The system that chose him or her is.¹⁵⁶

Think, for example, of Jack Welch, the former CEO of General Electric (GE). Welch was widely acclaimed as one of the best CEOs in the world, so much so that *Fortune* magazine named him "Manager of the Century."¹⁵⁷ GE, however, has a long history of corporate success and a reputation for selecting excellent managers, so much so that candidates for the CEO position at GE who are passed over are routinely sought after by other companies to fill the same position for them.¹⁵⁸ How much was Welch, and how much was GE? It must be the marginal difference between GE's performance during and after Welch's tenure and the performance it *would have had* if someone else had been chosen.

The Three Forces can serve as a guide for future research, not just theoretical arguments for why leaders do not matter. If leaders are fungible when the Three Forces are strongest, then they are most important when the Forces are weakest. Leaders are most likely to have an impact when the international system does not bind them, when domestic constraints do not control them, and when the way they are selected does not ensure that all potential leaders are very similar. This is particularly true because these factors influencing the possibility of leader non-fungibility can interact. Domestic structure is influenced by international politics.¹⁵⁹ Presumably domestic political opposition is as well. Political opponents of the leader may gain strength if undecided actors within the state believe that his preferred course of action is precluded by international factors. Similarly, international actors may behave differently based on their assessment of the leader's level of freedom from domestic pressures.

¹⁵⁶ Donald C. Hambrick and Phyllis A. Mason, "Upper Echelons: The Organization as a Reflection of Its Top Managers," *The Academy of Management Review* 9, no. 2 (1984): 197.

¹⁵⁷ *Fortune Selects Henry Ford Businessman of the Century*, (TimeWarner, November 1 1999 [cited March 15 2009]); available from <http://www.timewarner.com/corp/newsroom/pr/0,20812,667526,00.html>.

¹⁵⁸ Rob Walker, *Overvalued: Why Jack Welch Isn't God* (2001 [cited March 15 2009]); available from http://www.robwalker.net/html_docs/welch.html.

¹⁵⁹ Peter Alexis Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed," *International Organization* 32, no. 4 (1978).

The most fruitful future approach may be to focus on leader influences that are rare, yet of large magnitude. Policymakers are likely to underrate the possibility that others in the same situation would have acted the same way, thus vastly increasing their estimates of the *frequency* of leader effects. Yet most social settings, and particularly IR, are complex environments in which relatively small perturbations can sometimes lead to large shifts in outcomes. Such causal chains are non-linear and *a priori* nearly unpredictable. This does not imply that all small changes cause large perturbations; it simply means that the potential for such large shifts always exists.¹⁶⁰ Such rare but large leader impacts are most likely to occur when the Three Forces are weakest, so one potentially fruitful avenue of research is to identify the circumstances under which this is the case. If Tolstoy and Conan Doyle assigned absolute (though opposing) values to the importance of individual leaders, the great British satirist Terry Pratchett had a more nuanced position:

Shoot the dictator and prevent the war? But the dictator is merely the tip of the whole festering boil of social pus from which dictators emerge; shoot one, and there'll be another along in a minute. Shoot him too? Why not shoot everyone and invade Poland? In fifty years', thirty years', ten years' time the world will be very nearly back on its old course. History always has a great weight of inertia.

Almost always... [Ellipsis in original]¹⁶¹

Social science research on leaders should focus upon identifying when that always becomes almost always. Most of the time leader effects are likely to vanish. Sometimes they will not and those times are likely to be of great importance. Future research, instead of superseding the voluminous literature on leader effects, could unify it, incorporating the wide variety of findings and phenomena into a single theoretical framework. Given the prominence of leaders in public debates and policymakers' opinions on foreign policy, improvements in theories of the role of leaders and leadership could be a substantial contribution to policy. It would almost certainly improve our theoretical understanding of foreign policy, and perhaps even the dynamics of the international system as a whole.

¹⁶⁰ Jervis, *System Effects: Complexity in Political and Social Life*.

¹⁶¹ Terry Pratchett, *Lords and Ladies*, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: HarperTorch, 2000), 84.

CHAPTER 3 - THE PATHS OF GLORY: A THEORY OF HIGH-IMPACT LEADERS

The three forces form the foundation of Leader Filtration Theory (LFT). If those three forces minimize the impact of individual leaders then that impact should be maximized when they are at their weakest. The theory should account for both the effects of internal and external constraints and of the process which determines who will lead an organization. That process filters candidates for power, tending to make them largely similar. Under some circumstances, however, that filtration can be bypassed, allowing a leader to come to power who is very different from potential alternatives. Such a leader, if he or she has enough freedom from internal and external constraints, can have a very large impact on his or her organization. Overall the performance of such unfiltered leaders is likely to display a high degree of variance. Unfiltered leaders will tend to perform either extremely well or extremely poorly. Organizations that have a high tendency to select unfiltered leaders will similarly display extreme performance, but the desirability of selecting such unfiltered leaders will depend on context. Unfiltered leaders may also be chosen by organizations at a rate very far from the socially optimal one.

A Two-Stage Theory of High-Impact Leaders

Stage 1: Leader Filtration Processes

Leaders of significant organizations are rarely chosen randomly. This does not make Leader Filtration Processes (LFPs) deterministic. Some random component exists in any LFP, if nothing else because the health of candidates can intervene. The impossibility of perfectly evaluating any candidate means no process will perfectly homogenize candidates. The degree of randomness, though, can vary

widely. In some LFPs the random component might only influence the choice among thoroughly filtered candidates. In others it might allow someone to bypass filtration entirely.

The nature of LFPs varies, but one always exists. Elections, coups, and revolutions are all LFPs. Any LFP must evaluate candidates based on various characteristics. Different LFPs may use different characteristics, but some set of characteristics must always exist, or it would functionally be random.

Modern American elections, for example, choose among candidates in part based on their ability to raise funds, their skill on television, and their effectiveness at managing national campaign organizations. Each election is different from the one that came before it, making each a different LFP. The British LFP for Prime Minister evaluates candidates in part on their skill at intra-party struggles. Coups choose in part on the ability to organize a successful conspiracy, revolutions for leading a mass movement. None is entirely random, but all have random components of varying importance.

An LFP can thus be envisioned as a function that produces different leaders based on different values for its random components. History only happens once, so each run of an LFP produces only one winner. If the random components had fallen out differently, however, the outcome might also have been different, so there are multiple potential winners. Not all outcomes are equally likely. If it were possible to replay history many times, different candidates would win with different frequencies. The candidate chosen most often is the most likely winner. He or she possesses the set of characteristics occupying the mode of the distribution produced by the LFP. Candidates similar to him or her are Modal. The real outcome is a snapshot of one value of the distribution. If the random elements had been different, alternative candidates might have won. Those alternatives form the baseline against which the impact of the actual leader is measured.

Instead of thinking of leaders as chosen from amongst a group of contenders, imagine them as the survivors of a winnowing process that continually eliminates candidates based on their distance from some ideal set of characteristics, plus a random element. This clearly has a parallel in real contests

for leadership. American presidential candidates who cannot raise funds must drop out. Coup leaders who cannot successfully maintain secrecy will soon find themselves eliminated by their state's internal security apparatus. Executives whose divisions underperform will not be in contention to become CEO.

Winnowing filters the pool of candidates and tends to make it more homogenous over time. Different candidates have different probabilities of victory based on how close they are to the ideal set of characteristics that is least likely to be filtered out. Although the most likely candidate can rarely be identified with certainty, when a state has a tight LFP the actual winner will almost always have relevant characteristics close to those of the mode of the LFP's distribution.¹⁶² The second most likely candidate will, most of the time, be similar to the most likely candidate, so removing the most likely candidate would only result in small changes in outcomes. The person who replaces them will be similar along relevant characteristics, even if knowing precisely what those characteristics are is impossible.

Filtration is never perfect. Even the most impressive candidates may have gained their past successes through random factors that had nothing to do with their intrinsic qualities. Some Presidential candidates may lack skill at fundraising but nonetheless find themselves with sufficient funding through luck. Some coup leaders may be poor at maintaining operational security but triumph because the state's internal security apparatus failed by luck or accident. Some executives happen to be

¹⁶² Note that this assumes a large universe of potential candidates. This assumption is less implausible than it sounds. In the United States there are, at any one time, 435 Congressmen, 100 Senators, 50 Governors, and a number of Cabinet members, ex-office holders, and so on. Most of them are not plausible candidates for the Presidency, but they are not because they have *already been filtered out* by the process. Their political resumé's are no less distinguished than many others who have previously sought, and sometimes even occupied, that office. In the real world, of course, there will often be one candidate who represents a group of policy views who is the overwhelming favorite, while other candidates with similar views and qualifications have little chance. If we think of the selection process as occurring over the course of an entire career, however, not just during a particular election season, we can see the smooth curve reappear. Robert K. Merton identified "The Matthew Effect" in the sciences in which very small differences in initial position or random variations early in a scientist's career can snowball and cause two scientists with equal talents to have radically different levels of public acclaim. The Effect is surely at least as prevalent in politics as it is in the sciences. For every person who becomes a party leader and plausible candidate for the Presidency there must be, invisible to our eyes, many others who might have stood in his or her place had events played out only a tiny bit differently. They are, to slightly misquote the poem which gives this project its title, Cromwells guiltless of their country's blood. Robert K. Merton, "The Matthew Effect in Science," *Science* 159, no. 3810 (1968), Robert K. Merton, "The Matthew Effect in Science, II: Cumulative Advantage and the Symbolism of Intellectual Property," *Isis* 79, no. 4 (1988).

in charge during an industry-wide boom, or benefit from the legacy of previous managers. The larger the random element, the more likely it becomes that an unfiltered leader will come to power who may have characteristics very different from those most likely to survive the LFP.

Imagine two ideal types of LFP. One subjects all candidates to long and thorough filtration, eliminating virtually every candidate who is not what it is looking for until a lone survivor finally takes power. This process so homogenizes the pool that every candidate is similar along those characteristics relevant to surviving the LFP. Removing any one of them would have little impact, because he or she would be replaced by another, highly similar, candidate. Even relative outliers are unlikely to be very far from the mean, because the further they are from the most likely candidate, the more likely they will be filtered out. This is a “tight” process – tight because the distribution of victors it produces in the imagined million times over re-run of history is a very small one.

The way the United States military chooses senior officers is a paradigmatic “tight” process. At every stage of their career officers are constantly evaluated and ranked against their peers. The worst performers are forced out while the best move to higher ranks. This systematic evaluation means that the backgrounds of senior officers in the armed forces are all, from an outside perspective, remarkably similar. Officers at any given rank tend to have a relatively narrow band of ages, have usually attended the same professional schools, have had similar previous commands, and so on.¹⁶³ The military’s promotion system weeds out outliers, removing them before they reach high rank and homogenizing candidates for high command. Similarly tight LFPs exist in other types of organizations. General Electric is legendary for the thoroughness with which it evaluates potential CEOs.¹⁶⁴ Singapore actually has a succession process deliberately designed to look very much like an ideal “tight” process. It identifies

¹⁶³ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*, Vintage Book (New York, NY: Random House, 1964), Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier, a Social and Political Portrait* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1960).

¹⁶⁴ Pier A. Abetti, "General Electric after Jack Welch: Succession and Success?," *International Journal of Technology Management* 22, no. 7/8 (2001).

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candidates for leadership, places them in positions of authority, and allows them to compete over a period of years.¹⁶⁵

The second type of LFP has a much larger random component. This type of process still has a mode. Here, however, there is a much higher chance that a candidate far from the mode might win; a candidate with different characteristics who would make different decisions. This is a “loose” filtration process, one that would produce a broad distribution of victors with many outliers if it could be re-run many times over. The outliers could potentially be very far away, allowing for the possibility of winners who are radically different from other candidates.

Entrepreneurship is a paradigmatic loose process. Someone becomes an entrepreneur simply by deciding to start a company. They are not filtered. If they need outside funding potential investors might choose whether or not to give it based, at least in part, on their assessments of the entrepreneur. Their information about the entrepreneur is likely to be limited, however, and only one of many factors which play into their decision. Entrepreneurs should show more diversity across a variety of characteristics than the senior executives of major corporations, with a much larger proportion of extreme outliers.

LFPs act on a pool of candidates made up of two groups. The first is made up of “Modals.” They have characteristics close to those which are most likely to make a candidate the victor of the process; these characteristics put them near the LFP’s mode. The second group is made up of “Outliers.” The only thing the Outliers might have in common is that they are far from the LFP’s Mode. Thoroughly filtered winners of the LFP will almost always be Modal. Leaders who have, somehow, escaped filtration are far more likely to be Outliers. This means that it should be possible to identify those leaders most

¹⁶⁵ Mauzy, "Leadership Succession in Singapore: The Best Laid Plans."

likely to have a high impact on their organizations *based solely on the extent to which their careers exposed them to filtration.*¹⁶⁶

What do careers that did not expose candidates to filtration look like? Corporate finance can provide some insights. Evidence from the financial markets suggests that it is effectively impossible to outperform the market without taking on additional risk. This does not mean that no investor ever does better than the market. It means that no investor can *consistently* beat the market. In any given year, some investors will, but beating the market in one year does not make them any more likely to do so in the next. Some investors will outperform the market for several years in a row simply by chance.¹⁶⁷ It is difficult or impossible to tell if beating the market is the product of luck or skill. The only clarifying factor is time. An investor who outperforms the market for one year is almost certainly lucky. If he or she does so for twenty years, then they might genuinely be that good.¹⁶⁸

Evaluating a candidate is, in some important ways, similar to choosing an investment manager. Both are attempts to choose the person who will deliver the best future results using past performances and some information about the person's characteristics. If time reveals information about investors, then it should do the same about potential leaders. If a candidate has failed at some point in his or her past, this will decrease his or her chances of becoming leader. Conspicuous successes, similarly, will improve his or her chances.

Both successes and failures are heavily influenced by random factors. A governor, for example, may be in office during a boom or recession. Over time such random factors can even out so that

¹⁶⁶ My thanks to Prof. Herman "Dutch" Leonard for his help in clarifying this argument. Outlier leaders could be thought of as "Black Swan" leaders, building on the theories of Nassim Taleb. These are leaders whose rise to power is of low probability, yet of large importance when it occurs. Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (New York, NY: Random House, 2007), Nassim Nicholas Taleb, *Foiled by Randomness*, Trade Paperback ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 2005).

¹⁶⁷ Bernstein, *Against the Gods*, Bernstein, *Capital Ideas*, Fama, "Efficient Capital Markets: A Review of Theory and Empirical Work.", Malkiel, "The Efficient Market Hypothesis and Its Critics.", Malkiel, *A Random Walk Down Wall Street*.

¹⁶⁸ Taleb, *Foiled by Randomness*.

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candidates can be accurately evaluated. At the least the passage of time increases the chances that those incapable of a minimal level of performance will reveal themselves and be filtered out.

Time is not a function of the candidate's age. An old candidate could have very little in their background that bears on their ability to function as leader. Time means time in positions with enough authority for the candidate to have made meaningful decisions that can be used as provide a basis for judgment. In the United States, for example, Congressmen, Senators, Cabinet members, most Governors, the Mayors of major cities, and senior military officers are all being filtered. A stint in a state legislature or as Mayor of a small town, on the other hand, is unlikely to provide much information simply because the level of scrutiny is so low. A thoroughly filtered candidate will have had a long career in relatively senior offices before taking power, while an unfiltered one will not.

Most prospective leaders have long records. General officers in the United States military have all served for decades. The CEOs of public companies have usually risen through the ranks of a bureaucracy. Even Presidential candidates will usually have records in lower offices. A candidate who becomes a leader without such a record is likely to have significant other advantages, have taken substantial risks, or both. These could be anything, from extraordinary charisma, to family connections, to status as a national hero. Whatever that characteristic is, it clearly differentiates them not only from the mass of candidates, but from other potential winners.¹⁶⁹ This candidate is clearly different from other candidates in some significant way, and that strengthens the likelihood that they are an Outlier.

Similarly, systems that evaluate candidates infrequently are more likely to allow Outliers to gain power. There should be more Outliers in a system where people are evaluated only after periodic, fixed terms, and fewer when evaluation and filtration is a constant process. This is, however, a relatively weak criterion unless post-accession evaluations contain a significant probability of failure. Once they have power leaders have considerable ability to reshape their environment and maintain themselves in

¹⁶⁹ Even a dazzling success in lower office may be the product of luck or simply an illusion that more time would reveal.

office. In democracies this might simply be the normal incumbent's advantage. A dictator has the more pointed opportunity to use or create an internal security apparatus that makes his overthrow difficult or impossible. A CEO can have enormous influence over the membership of the Board of Directors that is supposed to evaluate him. Although Parliamentary systems should have tighter filters because of Prime Ministers' exposure to continuous evaluations by their peers, whether a candidate is a Potential Outlier or not should be judged primarily by how thoroughly he or she was evaluated before he took power.

Outliers are particularly likely to gain power if the contest for power is winner-take-all. Imagine a contest in which some of the entrants have characteristics that lead to low mean performances but very high variance in their performance. On average they do poorly, but sometimes they do exceptionally well. Also in the contest are entrants with high mean performances but relatively low variance. On average they consistently do well. But the highest scorer in any individual contest is likely to be one of the high-variance entrants, because their higher variance means that at least one of them is likely to score higher than any of the low-variance entrants.¹⁷⁰ In a winner-take-all contest with many entrants a high-variance low-average strategy is actually superior to a low-variance high-average strategy, because there is no difference between second and last. In revolutionary struggles, for example, often the winner gets great power while the losers face execution. When there is no difference between second and last, the best strategy is to try for as much variance as possible and hope to get the single highest score.

Outliers should also be more likely in systems that are tolerant of failure. Candidates faced with the risk that any failure will be punished will tend to be very conservative, knowing that the rewards from great success are not worth the great risk of being eliminated because of small failures. Systems that allow people to re-enter the contest to become leader, however, will be more likely to produce Outliers who have deviated in the past and failed, but remained in contention.

¹⁷⁰ Taleb, *Fooled by Randomness*.

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Newly established regimes are less able to filter candidates. A state's LFP is likely to change over time. When a government is first established its leaders are unlikely to have undergone prolonged and stable filtration. Similarly, companies whose normal processes have been disrupted by an acquisition or reorganization will have looser LFPs. Over time the accumulation of organized interests is likely to calcify LFPs.¹⁷¹ This will allow less room for variation and thus fewer Outliers. Over time aspiring leaders will gain a better understanding of the qualities which maximize the odds of surviving the LFP. They will alter their behavior to maximize their chances, making them increasingly homogenous.

Finally, candidates with unique advantages may be able to bypass the filters in the LFP. Candidates with extreme levels of wealth, charisma, or positions as national heroes may be able to gain power when they would otherwise be filtered out. Emergencies may allow candidates who have otherwise been filtered out to gain office. Individual LFPs within an organization can also show great variance on these characteristics over time. Each transfer of power is thus a filtration event, reshuffling the deck to produce a new leader. Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of filtered and unfiltered candidates. LFPs show high variance on all five of these characteristics.

The effects of filtration will influence outcomes only if the characteristics used to filter candidates are related to how they will govern. An LFP that chose leaders based solely on height would be extremely tight and produce no outliers, yet the leaders it chose would act with little consistency beyond that imposed by circumstances. Such a process's decision criteria would be perfectly orthogonal to the requirements of governance.¹⁷² Although this is a theoretical possibility, any real process will mix

¹⁷¹ Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nations: Economic Growth, Stagflation, and Social Rigidities* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1982). This is a logical extension of Olson's arguments – Olson does not specifically address the question of leader selection, but the same factors that he identifies should work here as well.

¹⁷² This is different from arguing that a selection system selects for people who would be *poor* leaders. A system that perfectly selected only for those completely incapable of success in a leadership position would still produce a homogenous output, it would simply be a pool of leaders who uniformly make bad decisions. Only orthogonality produces scatter. If the characteristics which the LFP uses to choose leaders are thought of as a vector in space and the characteristics which determine actions in office are a different vector, then the tightness of an LFP is driven by the projection of the characteristics vector onto the government vector. The greater the magnitude of this projected vector, the tighter the process.

relevant and irrelevant characteristics among its criteria. From the standpoint of governance, only the relevant ones affect the tightness of the process.

Table 1: Indicators of Unfiltered and Filtered Candidates

	Unfiltered (Potential Outlier)	Filtered Candidate (Modal)
Length of career	Short. No prolonged relevant experience.	Long. Extensive career during which candidate was evaluated.
Frequency of evaluation	Low. Candidate only rarely evaluated.	High. Candidate evaluated continuously.
Winner take all process	Yes. No difference between second and last.	No. Rewards are distributed somewhat proportionally.
System's Tolerance for Failure	High. Candidates can recover from past mistakes.	Low. Any failures eliminate chance for advancement.
Age of regime	Young. Regime/organization is newly established.	Old. Regime/organization has been in continuous existence for a long time.
Unique advantages	Candidate can bypass normal filters, sometimes due to emergency.	No unique advantages or crisis situation

Stage 2: Constraints on Leaders

Once an Outlier is in power, he or she must still deal with constraints on his or her discretion. A sufficiently constrained Outlier would be functionally identical to a Modal. A sufficiently determined Outlier might challenge constraints a Modal considered binding. A leader's influence over policy and impact on the organization and the external environment is affected by internal and external constraints. Constraints will operate differently upon different pathways of leader influence, making the level of constraint depend on issue area and the type of leader effect examined.

Internal Constraints

Force II minimizes or eliminates leader influence through internal constraints on their discretion. Leader influence is thus maximized when internal constraints are at a minimum. Internal constraints can vary in their power. The CEOs of different companies have different levels of institutional power,

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and high CEO authority is linked to CEO impact on corporate performance.¹⁷³ Enough internal pressure would eliminate the discretion of all but the most outlying leader, while a sufficiently low level might enable the whims of the most modal one.

Domestic constraints depend heavily on regime type. Totalitarian governments can give the leader enormous discretion. Stalin had great control over the USSR's foreign policy. At the other extreme, a weak Prime Minister at the end of his term likely has little influence. Whatever Tony Blair's preferences were at the end of his time in office, he lacked the capacity to implement them.

External constraints interact with internal ones.¹⁷⁴ Leaders of large and powerful organizations are less constrained than the leaders of small and weak ones. The clearer the external situation, the easier it will be for internal constituencies to rally against a leader's policies. Finally, internal constraints are likely to have different impacts on different facets of a leader's performance. Such constraints may have considerable influence over choice of policy but less over the impact of managerial ability.

Keeping these factors in mind, spectra of executive discretion in different domains can be established. For national leaders, for example, regime type, institutional powers, and domestic opposition should all have an effect (Table 2). Different organizational structures will involve different levels of leader discretion. The sole owner of a privately held company, for example, will have far more freedom than a CEO with weak institutional powers who leads a publicly-held corporation. The owner of a sports team who serves as his own General Manager will have far more freedom than the General Manager of a team with an active and interfering owner (Table 3).

¹⁷³ Wasserman, Nohria, and Anand, "When Does Leadership Matter? The Contingent Opportunities View of CEO Leadership."

¹⁷⁴ Gourevitch, "The Second Image Reversed." This is simply a logical extension of Gourevitch's argument.

Table 2: Spectrum of Regimes by Increasing Domestic Constraints

Description	<i>Unified Totalitarian State with charismatic leader/cult of personality</i>	<i>Totalitarian state with divided elites</i>	<i>Authoritarian State</i>	<i>Democracy with weak opposition and/or non-charismatic leader</i>	<i>Democracy with strong opposition and/or non-charismatic leader</i>
Examples	Stalin-era USSR Late Nazi Germany North Korea Iraq under Saddam Hussein	China under Mao	Early Nazi Germany Cuba under Castro Italy under Mussolini	India under Nehru Britain under early Thatcher France under De Gaulle United States under George W. Bush (2000-2006)	Late Blair Britain United States under George W. Bush (2007-8)

Table 3: Internal Constraints in Other Domains

	Low	Medium	High
Business	Ingvar Kamprad at Ikea	Michael Eisner at Disney	Dominic Barton at McKinsey
Sports	Jerry Jones at Dallas Cowboys	Billy Beane at Oakland Athletics	Vinny Cerato at Washington Redskins
Science	Edward Witten at Princeton	George Church at Harvard Med	Drew Endy at MIT

External Constraints

External constraints also significantly influence leader discretion. Companies with no or few competitors show a higher level of CEO influence on performance than those in highly competitive markets.¹⁷⁵ The leader of a hegemon will find few opposing states able and willing to restrain him or her, while the leader of a minor power may simply lacks the ability to fulfill his or her wishes.

Constraints will also be issue dependent, with action in some areas easy and in others difficult. In politics, for example, issues of war and peace seem likely to have the highest level of external constraint.

¹⁷⁵ Wasserman, Nohria, and Anand, "When Does Leadership Matter? The Contingent Opportunities View of CEO Leadership."

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External constraints' primary influence stems from their ability to limit leaders' impact on the environment, with a secondary effect on leaders' ability to change policies. To understand the distinction, imagine if Hitler, a native-born Austrian, had stayed in that country and eventually become its leader instead of moving to Germany. He might made large changes in Austria's foreign and domestic policies. He could not, however, have conquered most of Europe. Austria simply was not powerful enough for any of its leaders to have such an enormous impact on the international system. He might have been more constrained in making policy simply because Austria's more precarious position in the international system could have strengthened his domestic opposition. Such interactions between internal and external constraints can be portrayed using an explanatory typology (Figure 4).¹⁷⁶

In the political world, the lowest level of international constraint is faced by a hegemon. The next level is that faced by a Great Power acting against a minor one. The next is that of a Great Power opposed by one or more Great Powers. The next that of a minor power opposed largely by other minor powers; and the highest that of a minor power directly opposed to a Great Power or hegemon.

Figure 4: Variable Interactions

		External Environment Constraints High	External Environment Constraints Low
Filtered	Internal Constraints High	1. Lowest Leader Impact	2. Low Leader Impact
	Internal Constraints Low	3. Low Leader Impact	4. Medium Leader Impact
Unfiltered	Internal Constraints High	5. Low Leader Impact	6. Medium Leader Impact
	Internal Constraints Low	7. Medium Leader Impact	8. Highest Leader Impact

¹⁷⁶ Colin Elman, "Explanatory Typologies in Qualitative Studies of International Politics," *International Organization* 59, no. Spring (2005).

Predictions and Implications

Just as different leaders can be filtered or unfiltered, over many contests for power different LFPs will have different propensities for allowing unfiltered candidates to win. An LFP that consistently produces only filtered leaders is a “tight” process. The distribution of potential alternative leaders is narrow, so most or all leaders will be Modal. An LFP that, over time, produces a high proportion of unfiltered leaders is a “loose” LFP. Its distribution of potential alternative leaders is broad. Just as filtered and unfiltered candidates are likely to be different in significant ways, variance in LFPs efficacy at filtration will have implications both for the organization and at a systemic level. LFP has predictions at three levels: 1) Individual Leaders; 2) Organizational; and 3) Systemic (Table 4).

<i>Table 4: Key Predictions and Implications of Leader Filtration Theory</i>	
<i>Primary Prediction:</i>	<i>Unfiltered Leaders will display more variance in performance than Filtered leaders</i>
<i>Secondary Predictions:</i>	
Individual Level	When compared to Filtered leaders: 1) Unfiltered leaders will have a lower average performance 2) Unfiltered leaders are more likely to display abnormal Characteristics 3) Unfiltered leaders are more likely to produce policy changes 4) Unfiltered leaders are more likely to be innovative 5) Unfiltered leaders are more likely to have a large Impact 6) Unfiltered leaders are more likely to generate specific responses from competitor organizations
Organizational Level	1) Implications of loose and tight LFPs depend on context 2) Most and least successful organizations will have loose LFPs
Systemic Level	1) Socially optimal tightness of LFP will vary from observed tightness 2) Socially optimal level influenced by relative size of potential gains and losses 3) Larger systems will benefit from looser LFPs in organizations if they can capture gains

Individual Level

Unfiltered Outlier leaders and Filtered Modal leaders are likely to vary in many ways. Outlier leaders are more likely to have out-of-the-ordinary characteristics that would normally be filtered out, to generate significant policy changes in the organizations they lead, to cause other organizations to act in response to their unique characteristics, and to be innovative than their Modal counterparts. This means that Unfiltered leaders are likely to have a much higher impact and display significantly more variance in performance than their Filtered Counterparts.

Outlier Leader Characteristics

Leader Characteristics is LFT's first intervening variable. Outliers are, definitionally, different from Modals. They can be different in any number of ways – some bad, some good – but more than anything else they will be different. This explains why, as Walt noted, there is no consistent stereotype of revolutionary leaders.¹⁷⁷ Revolutions are very loose LFPs. They are often winner take all; losers are harshly punished; they establish new regimes; they require potential leaders to successfully negotiate a violent internal struggle; and so on. They are ideally suited to produce Outliers. Walt is correct when he says that the popular stereotype of revolutionary leaders is inconsistent, but not when he says this means they cannot be handled theoretically. It is precisely that inconsistency which LFT predicts.

Predicting increased variance is normal in the physical sciences. Some have argued that social science should abandon the quest for prediction, instead modeling itself on evolutionary biology and becoming largely explanatory.¹⁷⁸ This argument, however, is rooted in a misunderstanding of evolutionary biology's predictive power. Evolutionary biology cannot predict with certainty what a new species will be like. It can, however, describe under what circumstances speciation is *most likely* to occur, and given more data about specific circumstances it can make some predictions about some,

¹⁷⁷ Walt, *Revolution and War*, 11.

¹⁷⁸ Bernstein et al., "God Gave Physics the Easy Problems: Adapting Social Science to an Unpredictable World."

although not all, of the traits the new species will exhibit.¹⁷⁹ LFT cannot make specific predictions about whether or not an outlier will rise to power, but it can describe the circumstances in which one is most likely and hazard some descriptions of what traits an Outlier may exhibit.

Splitting leaders into two groups – Outliers and Modals – generates a new understanding of many traits often associated with leadership. Charisma, for example, has been a focus of leadership studies since Weber.¹⁸⁰ Most leaders are not charismatic. The rare leader who is, however, can have extraordinary influence, sometimes even extending to their followers “unconditionally comply[ing]” with their wishes.¹⁸¹ Narcissistic leaders in particular often display remarkable degrees of charisma and such narcissistic leaders can often take their organizations to great successes or equally great failures.¹⁸² Charisma is an *intensifier*. Charisma is simply the ability to convince people, through sheer force of personality, to do things which they could not be persuaded to do by rational argument. It increases a leader’s ability to convert his or her desires into policy and allows a charismatic figure to avoid being filtered out when a non-charismatic candidate would be. Charisma helps Outliers bypass filtration and, once they have done so, to influence policy. In and of itself it is neither good nor bad.

Other features of a candidate which allow him or her to bypass filtration are also intensifiers. Family connections, personal wealth, and celebrity, for example, all smooth the path to power without subjecting candidates to the risk of being filtered out by the LFP.

Outliers are likely to have a higher rate of psychological and personality disorders than Modals. Psychological disorders are ordinarily maladaptive so candidates with them should be filtered out by prolonged evaluation. There are circumstances in which such disorders can be beneficial, however, so they are intensifiers instead of simply a negative factor. Mild paranoia, for example, might aid the

¹⁷⁹ Jerry A. Coyne and H. Allen Orr, *Speciation* (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, Inc., 2004).

¹⁸⁰ Weber, *Politics as a Vocation*.

¹⁸¹ Willner, *The Spellbinders: Charismatic Political Leadership*, 8.

¹⁸² Maccoby, *The Productive Narcissist: The Promise and Peril of Visionary Leadership*.

aspiring coup leader or revolutionary. Under most circumstances such disorders are clearly a handicap, but sometimes they may lead to great success.

Psychological and personality disorders are not always immediately apparent. Many self-destructive characteristics, particularly narcissism, generate short-term gains like a good first impression at the price of much larger long-term costs.¹⁸³ Thorough filtration would eliminate candidates with such psychological issues. The initial positive impression narcissism creates, for example, fades over time and so a prolonged evaluation would reveal a candidate's true underlying characteristics, eliminating them from contention.¹⁸⁴ If an LFP allows Unfiltered winners, however, a candidate with such disorders might take power. Some processes might even preferentially choose Unfiltered candidates with disorders like narcissism or paranoia that improve short term impressions at the cost of long-term performance.

Outliers are likely to be disproportionately prone to risk acceptance and false optimism. Outlier leaders have survived a process that eliminated most aspirants, and they have done so by adopting an unconventional path. Most were unlikely to triumph in the struggle for power. They were either aware of this fact and chose to compete anyways, or were so over-optimistic that they did not realize it. Either condition would result in risk acceptance or over-optimism. This is likely to be particularly true in the case of the victors of a winner-take-all LFP. In this Outlier leaders are much like entrepreneurs, who similarly are engaged in a process with a high rate of failure but substantial rewards from success.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Roy F. Baumeister and Steven J. Scher, "Self-Defeating Behavior Patterns among Normal Individuals: Review and Analysis of Common Self-Destructive Tendencies," *Psychological Bulletin* 104, no. 1 (1988), Hogan and Kaiser, "What We Know About Leadership.", Paulhus, "Interpersonal and Intrapsychic Adaptiveness of Trait Self-Enhancement: A Mixed Blessing?."

¹⁸⁴ This does not mean that the candidate will be eliminated because judges perceive them to be a narcissist. The ranks of American politics would surely be greatly thinner if that were the case. Over the long term traits like narcissism actually lead to poor performance, even if they generate a short-term *perception* of good performance. All other things being equal narcissistic candidates will be filtered out *if the filters have enough time to differentiate between their actual capabilities and the initial appearance they present.*

¹⁸⁵ Bernardo and Welch, "On the Evolution of Overconfidence and Entrepreneurs.", Busenitz and Barney, "Differences Between Entrepreneurs and Managers in Large Organizations: Biases and Heuristics in Strategic Decision-Making.", Cooper, Woo, and Dunkelberg, "Entrepreneurs' Perceived Chances for Success.", de Meza and Southey, "The Borrower's Curse: Optimism, Finance and Entrepreneurship.", Puri and Robinson, "Optimism, Entrepreneurship, and Economic Choice."

Many characteristics that make a candidate into an Outlier are not psychological pathologies or unearned advantages. They might be out of the ordinary ideologies, unconventional allegiances, or goals or skills not shared by his or her peers. An examination of individual candidates or the systems that brought them to power might allow the identification of the particular traits that make them outliers. At the level of abstraction of this theory, however, identification of the particular characteristics of potential outliers can only be, at best, probabilistic (Table 5).

Filter-bypassing characteristics	Charisma, Wealth, Family Connections, Celebrity
Psychological Disorders	Full spectrum, but paranoia and narcissism are particularly likely
Risk-acceptance and/or False Optimism	Particularly a tendency to attribute certainty of success to their own unique capabilities

Outlier-Driven Policy Changes

Just as Outlier leaders are likely to be different in their personal characteristics from conventional ones, they should choose policies that are different – often very different – from those that would have been chosen by a different leader. In 1992 George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton contended to become President of the United States. Clearly the identity of the victor had some impact on policy.¹⁸⁶ Both were, however, Ivy League-educated Southerners with long careers in politics at the state or national level. Both represented moderate wings of their party. There was certainly a significant difference between the two, but neither was Unfiltered.

By contrast, consider the election of 1860, examined in more detail in Chapter 6. Abraham Lincoln, the Republican nominee, was committed to preventing the expansion of slavery. His only record in national politics was one term in Congress of no distinction. Stephen Douglas, his Democratic

¹⁸⁶ Given the status of the economy at the time it is likely that almost any mainstream Democrat would have won the election. In assessing Clinton's impact, the correct question to ask is not "What was the difference between in policies between those adopted by Clinton and those that would have been adopted by Bush?"; it is "What was the difference between Clinton and the Democrat who would have been elected if Clinton had not won the Democratic primaries?" Although it is, of course, impossible to know for certain, it seems likely that the difference would have been even smaller than the difference between Clinton and Bush.

opponent, was, if not pro-slavery at least very much opposed to attempts to its restriction and one of the most famous men in America, a multi-term Senator who had steered the Compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska Act through the Congress. Had the Democratic Party not fractured during the 1860 campaign Douglas would likely have become President. Lincoln, by contrast, had been obscure until his unsuccessful challenge of Douglas for the Illinois Senate seat in 1858. Few expected him to be the Republican candidate for the Presidency two years later.¹⁸⁷

At the broadest level, leaders can influence policy through means and ends. Outlier leaders will be much more likely to change the goals their state is pursuing and to adopt means to achieve those goals that other leaders would not. Their freedom to do so will be mediated primarily by the level of domestic constraints and secondarily by the level of international constraints they face.

Ends

Leaders' impact on ends is primarily important in politics. Traditionally the ends of business competition are non-controversial and uniform, focusing on profit maximization. The principal-agent problem inherent in managerial capitalism, however, implies that under some circumstances business leaders may significantly influence the ends of businesses.¹⁸⁸ Realist theories hold that states pursue their national interest, usually defined in terms of power.¹⁸⁹ The problem with this formulation is that it is true "but only at a level of generality that is fatuous...."¹⁹⁰ Even if the most doctrinaire strains of realism are correct and all states pursue only their own interest, power, or security, the existence of debates over foreign policy suggests that different people or factions within a state can and do conceive

¹⁸⁷ David Herbert Donald, *Lincoln* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996), Doris Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 1st ed. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2005), William C. Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2007).

¹⁸⁸ Oliver Hart, "Corporate Governance: Some Theory and Implications," *The Economic Journal* 105, no. 430 (1995), Dennis C. Mueller, "Corporate Governance and Economic Performance," *International Review of Applied Economics* 20 (2006).

¹⁸⁹ Hans Joachim Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace* (New York, NY: Knopf: Distributed by Random House, 1985).

¹⁹⁰ Stanley Hoffmann, "Notes on the Limits of 'Realism'," *Social Research* 48, no. 1 (1981): 655. Cited in: John Lewis Gaddis, "International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War," *International Security* 17, no. 3 (1992): 11.

of those interests in varying ways. Liberal theories of international politics, by contrast, focus on variations in state preferences.¹⁹¹ In either case, an Outlier who is relatively unconstrained by domestic and international factors might direct his state towards new goals. Although constraints can certainly limit and shape a leader's choices, "individuals can often transcend these factors, play them off against one another, or otherwise exercise a direct and decisive influence on a state's behavior."¹⁹²

Imagine a candidate for leadership who wished to radically change a state's goals – shifting it, for example, from a status quo to a revisionist state. The existence of such leaders could help resolve the problem of neo-realism's status-quo bias.¹⁹³ Such a leader could have a wide variety of reasons for wishing to make changes, ranging from representing a different domestic constituency, to an expansionist ideology, to psychological and personality disorders.

Some groups in the state are likely to oppose changing the state's goals. Most groups and interests in the state might prefer the status quo (if they do not, how did it *become* the status quo?). Filtration should tend to eliminate leaders who would move in a different direction. A short career might even mean that these interests were simply unaware of the Outlier's true intentions; only to be surprised by what happens when he or she gains power. Whatever the scenario, Outlier leaders should be far more willing and able to alter the state's goals than their normal counterparts.

Means

Just as leaders can influence or determine an organization's goals, they also help determine its means. Some state leaders may prefer diplomacy to violence and some the other way around. Some

¹⁹¹ Andrew Moravcsik, "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics," *International Organization* 51, no. 4 (1997).

¹⁹² Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," 134.

¹⁹³ Randall Schweller, "Neorealism's Status-Quo Bias: What Security Dilemma?," *Security Studies* 5, no. 3 (1996).

A Theory of High-Impact Leaders

CEOs may show a preference for acquisitions and others for internal growth. Whatever the circumstance, the chief executive often has significant discretion in the choice of tactics.¹⁹⁴

Leader effects may be particularly relevant when it comes to choice of allies. Kaiser Wilhelm II's animus against the House of Windsor, for example, had a substantial impact on German diplomacy.¹⁹⁵ It is easy to think of other cases where a leader's personal biases and predispositions may have shaped foreign policy. Choice of means can dictate whether to declare war and whom to declare it on, whom to form alliances with or against, when to appease and when to deter.

Risk acceptance and false optimism are likely to play their strongest role in choice of means. Even the most conservative leader might gamble when facing destruction or removal from power.¹⁹⁶ The risk-acceptant or falsely optimistic Outlier (and note that not all Outliers will be abnormally so), however, will gamble when a Modal leader would not, pursue maximal goals when a different leader would compromise, or choose a bold approach when advisors counsel caution.

Innovation

Across both policy choice and leader impact we should expect outlier leaders to be particularly innovative. Innovation is inherently uncertain. Organizations are often resistant to innovation because innovations are, by definition, untested ideas and implementing them involves a significant degree of risk.¹⁹⁷ This type of risk is not domain-specific. Innovation in any domain involves risk. The central dilemma posed by innovation is simple. Any competitive organization, when faced by innovative competitors, must innovate if it wishes to survive. Any individual innovation, however, is risky, and may destroy the career of its proponent if it fails. A purely rational individual should therefore choose *not* to innovate under most circumstances. Innovations are:

¹⁹⁴ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," 135.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, Robert K. Massie, *Dreadnought: Britain, Germany, and the Coming of the Great War*, First ed. (New York, NY: Random House, 1991).

¹⁹⁶ Downs and Rocke, "Conflict, Agency, and Gambling for Resurrection: The Principal-Agent Problem Goes to War."

¹⁹⁷ Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*.

'[F]uzzy gambles,' that is, gambles with in part unknowable outcomes...the more innovative a decision is the more its outcomes are unpredictable, not only because of limits of knowledge but because of the role of chance in determining its consequences. Conservative leaders often also engage in policy gambling, because doing the same thing as in the past but under new conditions also constitutes fuzzy gambling. But innovative leaders do so much more, up to 'gambling with history' when critical choices are made....¹⁹⁸

The choice to innovate is similar to the choice to use a deviating strategy in the pursuit of power. Both are fuzzy gambles with a low probability of success but high rewards for victory. Outliers are much more likely to take such a gamble because, after all, they already have. Taking one is how they succeeded in the LFP.

Outliers are also likely to innovate precisely because of their differences from normal leaders. Whatever those differences are – variations in background, cognitive style, beliefs, or something else entirely – they are likely to result in Outlier leaders evaluating the situation facing their organization differently than their counterparts and rivals.

Despite the positive connotations the word innovation has to most American ears, *most innovations fail*. Outlier leaders are important because they make choices most leaders would not make. If most people would choose to do one thing and one person chooses to do something else, that person might be right. But they probably are not. Those who make such choices and succeed are remembered as geniuses. Those who fail are often not remembered at all. This selection bias leads deviation from the norm to be seen as a considerably better strategy than it usually is.¹⁹⁹

Competition in most domains is surely not as efficient as that in financial markets. Nevertheless similar dynamics must occur. If an innovation was obviously superior then it would not be an innovation. It would be the status quo. For an innovation to not have already been adopted it must be non-obvious that it will succeed. It may simply be a new approach whose results cannot be predicted with certainty, or it may require new technologies whose development is uncertain. This is simply the

¹⁹⁸ Dror, "Main Issues of Innovative Leadership in International Politics," 31.

¹⁹⁹ Taleb, *Fooled by Randomness*.

logic of efficient markets in a different setting. If everyone knows that a company's profits are going to improve, the price of the stock will *already have gone up* because investors will have already bought it, pricing this improvement into the current value of the stock. Capturing the benefits of the price increase requires buying the stock before it is certain that the increase will happen and this, of course, means that it requires taking a risk. Similarly if an innovator waits until it is certain that his or her idea will work, others will have already adopted it.

Although there may be some candidates so gifted that their judgment is consistently superior to that of their rivals, such people must be rare. If they are not then much of the population of people they are competing with will have the same superior judgment, rendering it merely average once again. If someone's decisions differ from those that most would make in the same situation and they pay off, it is nevertheless likely that this performance was more due to risk and luck than superior ability.²⁰⁰ Outliers deviate. They are far more likely than Modals to have these sorts of dramatic successes and failures.

Outlier Impact

Once policy choices are made they must be converted into actions to have an impact. An Outlier who changed his or her state's foreign policy orientation from status quo to revisionist would have made a very large change in policy, but would have little impact unless this new orientation resulted in *actions*. An Outlier CEO who decided to pursue an aggressive acquisition strategy and then discovered that capital markets were not willing to fund his or her purchases would end up buying few companies. Outlier leaders have three avenues through which they can impact their own organization and sometimes even the external environment as a whole: *Actions, Effectiveness, and Responses*.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

Actions

Actions are simply the logical corollary to the policy changes explained above. In politics, Outlier leaders of powerful states who are relatively unconstrained by domestic opposition will have considerably more freedom to convert policies into actions than would their counterparts at weaker states. Powerful states can conquer weak states, while the reverse is usually impossible for even the most aggressive and ambitious leader. Just as the leaders of powerful states are likely to have a broader array of policy choices open to them, they are likely to have a much longer menu of potential actions, and those actions are likely to influence far broader swathes of the international system. Similarly, in the business world the CEO of a monopoly is likely to have much more freedom to experiment with pricing, marketing, or any number of other parts of her company's operations than would the CEO of a minor company in a perfectly competitive market.

Although external constraints are likely to affect an Outlier's discretion, they may seem less binding to an Outlier than a Modal. External constraints are, by their very nature, ambiguous. Only rarely can the external environment be assessed with certainty. A sufficiently optimistic or risk-acceptant Outlier in a minor power with weak domestic constraints might gamble, or simply be deluded in his or her assessment of the international situation, and challenge a significantly stronger state. Such an act cuts against all of the normal pressures which shape state behavior, so we should expect them to be particularly strongly associated with Outlier leaders. A Modal can thus be fungible either because they have the same preferences as alternative leaders or because they were unwilling to choose policies based on their preferences when they are faced with significant internal or external opposition.

Effectiveness

The idea that the same policy can be implemented with varying degrees of effectiveness, and that this effectiveness may be at least as important in determining outcomes as the policy choice itself,

is a truism in the business world.²⁰¹ Managerial effectiveness and implementation, however, have received surprisingly little study in political science.²⁰² Nonetheless, individual national leaders can have a large impact on the effectiveness with which a state pursues its policies. This is most striking in the case of military power and diplomatic effectiveness.²⁰³ Napoleon made the armies of France nearly invincible unless they faced the Duke of Wellington.²⁰⁴ Bismarck – not even Prussia’s head of government – manipulated the other German states and the powers of Europe with such consummate skill that they sometimes seemed almost helpless against him.²⁰⁵

Although Outliers can have a large impact on effectiveness the direction of this impact need not be consistent from leader to leader or even within a single leader’s career. An Outlier might, for example, use motivation through fear as his or her primary managerial tool. Such a strategy could be initially effective, only to collapse over time. Similarly, a bold and innovative military leader could find remarkable success until his opponents adapt. Many Outlier leaders will look, in retrospect, like a gambler riding a winning streak who raises the stakes on each hand. Their approach has brought them unlikely successes. It may continue to do so until their luck runs out or their opponents adjust. Outlier leaders will often follow a pattern of spectacular successes leading to even more spectacular failures if they remain in office long enough.

Although some Outliers may be extraordinarily good managers, particularly in the modern era Outlier leaders are more likely to be poor ones. Corporations have developed elaborate systems to

²⁰¹ Larry Bossidy, Ram Charan, and Charles Burck, *Execution: The Discipline of Getting Things Done* (New York, NY: Crown Business, 2002).

²⁰² See for two notable exceptions: Eugene Bardach, *The Implementation Game: What Happens after a Bill Becomes a Law* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1977), Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky, *Implementation: How Great Expectations in Washington Are Dashed in Oakland: Or, Why It's Amazing That Federal Programs Work at All, This Being the Saga of the Economic Development Administration as Told by Two Sympathetic Observers Who Seek to Build Morals on a Foundation of Ruined Hopes* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973).

²⁰³ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," 134.

²⁰⁴ Andrew Roberts, *Napoleon & Wellington: The Battle of Waterloo and the Great Commanders Who Fought It* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

²⁰⁵ Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 103-167, A. J. P. Taylor, *Bismarck: The Man and the Statesman* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1967).

select their leaders, and for large and successful companies these are systems that have succeeded over a significant period of time in choosing leaders able to bring that company success in the market. A McKinsey Managing Director, for example, can be elected only by the other Directors at the Firm after spending well over a decade climbing the ranks. This gives his peers an enormous opportunity to evaluate his desires and capabilities in a variety of settings over a prolonged period.

Similarly, competition in the international system has forced Great Powers, at least, to create institutions meant to ensure that their governments are managed with at least minimal levels of competence. Napoleon's greatest triumphs came when he faced opposing generals who were almost farcically inept. They were certainly not skilled enough to defeat the man the military historian Martin Van Creveld termed "the most competent human being who ever lived."²⁰⁶ When Napoleon and his Marshals faced the supremely capable Duke of Wellington, however, their performance was far less impressive, culminating in their final defeat at Waterloo.²⁰⁷ The British had been forced to find a commander who could face Napoleon on even terms and win. Had they and their allies failed to do so, Napoleon might never have been defeated, but even a commander as talented as he had at least one peer. The improvement in performance that Napoleon forced on his enemies meant that over time the advantage that his talents gave France eroded away.

This improvement, while certainly neither constant nor uniform, has extended across time. Few if any major twentieth-century militaries were led by commanders as inept as the hapless Hapsburgs whom Napoleon disposed of at Austerlitz.²⁰⁸ Although this example is military specific, it is relevant to other domains. Most LFPs will use managerial ability as a filtering criterion. Few people who have never managed *anything* become heads of government, even if it is an organization as small as a Senate office. Given this, the distribution of candidates for leadership with respect to managerial ability will be skewed

²⁰⁶ Martin Van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 64.

²⁰⁷ Gordon Corrigan, *Wellington: A Military Life* (London, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

²⁰⁸ Alistair Horne, *How Far from Austerlitz?: Napoleon, 1805-1815* (London, UK: Papermac, 1997).

towards better managers. A tight selection process will select leaders who are close to the mode of that distribution, producing few geniuses but also few incompetents. A loose process, on the other hand, may produce a few genius candidates to the right of the mode, but because of this skew, it is likely to produce far more who are poor managers. The skew also means that outliers on the poor-manager side of the distribution are likely to be further from the mode than ones on the good-manager side. Successful organizations must have either developed LFPs that choose good managers or surrounded their leader with institutional supports that can compensate for his managerial inadequacies, like the legendarily powerful British Civil Service.²⁰⁹ If they had not done so they would not be successful organizations. Instead they would have been defeated by better-managed ones.

Responses from Other Organizations

Leaders may also affect the way in which other organizations respond to their own. Some leaders are so extraordinary they motivate other organizations to shift their entire strategy. Napoleon is the classic example.²¹⁰ Napoleon's removal from power in France was a principal aim of Britain and her allies towards the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and after he returned from Elba the Congress of Vienna declared war not on France but on Napoleon himself.²¹¹ This sort of step by other countries is only likely to be provoked by the most remarkable state leaders. Yet this is precisely what Outlier leaders may be; so they will sometimes generate responses from other states who decide that a particular leader is a crucial component of the international situation.

²⁰⁹ The argument here is similar to that about successful organizational cultures in: Mukunda, "We Cannot Go On: Disruptive Innovation and the First World War Royal Navy."

For the power, influence, and effectiveness of the British Civil Service, see:

Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay, *The Complete Yes Minister* (London, UK: BBC Books, 1989), Jonathan Lynn and Antony Jay, *The Complete Yes Prime Minister* (London, UK: BBC Books, 1989).

²¹⁰ Byman and Pollack, "Let Us Now Praise Great Men: Bringing the Statesman Back In," 135.

²¹¹ David Avrom Bell, *The First Total War: Napoleon's Europe and the Birth of Warfare as We Know It*, Hardcover ed. (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007), Corrigan, *Wellington*, Robert Harvey, *The War of Wars: The Great European Conflict 1793-1815*, Hardcover ed. (New York, NY: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2006).

Leader Performance

All of this means that Outliers have double-edged implications. Outlier does not mean bad. Outlier means *different*. The better an organization's filtration methods are at selecting leaders the more likely it becomes that an Outlier leader will harm his organization, but this is never guaranteed.²¹² A paranoid head of government might seem likely to do a great deal of harm, and most of the time he or she probably would. But if a neighboring state was planning an attack at the right moment historians would remember that paranoid as someone whose caution and foresight vastly exceeded that of his or her peers. Depression can be disabling. But the depressed may actually be better at realistically evaluating their odds of success than the psychologically healthy – a phenomenon known as depressive realism - so a mildly depressed leader might actually outperform his or her psychologically healthy counterparts.²¹³ A leader whose ideology is radically different from that of his predecessors and his contemporaries could be a tyrant who destroys his or her country or the visionary who saves it.

This is because Outlier leaders make the choices that no one else would make. Such actions may succeed brilliantly or fail catastrophically. They are unlikely to be mediocre. Outlier leaders will tend to be great successes or great failures. Few will be quickly forgotten.

If the system for selecting leaders has any relationship at all to performance, however, Outliers will be more likely to perform poorly than to perform well. The logic for this is precisely the same as that for Outliers' managerial ability given above. If most people would do something else in a given situation then they are probably right.

²¹² Note that this is not solely about tightness of filtration. It is essentially the difference between accuracy and precision. A tight filtration process is extremely *precise*. It ensures that every potential leader looks basically the same. The qualities for which this tight process selects, however, need not have any relationship with the qualities that make for good leaders. Such a system would consistently select poor leaders. Its inaccuracy would make it miss the target again and again, even if it did so in the same way every time.

²¹³ Lauren B. Alloy and Lyn Y. Abramson, "Judgment of Contingency in Depressed and Nondepressed Students: Sadder but Wiser?," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General* 108, no. 4 (1979), Martin E.P. Seligman, *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Hardcover ed. (New York, NY: The Free Press, 2002), 37-38.

The prediction of increased variance in performance, however, implies that thinking about leaders as good or bad is, in some ways, a category error. Thinking about leaders as ordinary and extraordinary may be far more helpful. Al Dunlap, who destroyed Sunbeam, and Jamie Dimon, whose management of JPMorganChase is usually cited as a key reason for its relative success in the 2008 financial crisis, were both outsiders hired by a company seeking a dramatic change. Both produced one. But “[t]he kind of information and knowledge that is critical to making a CEO appointment is not easily transferred across organizational boundaries.”²¹⁴ Bringing in an outsider creates the chance of bringing in an Outlier. The radically different directions in which Dunlap and Dimon took the companies they were hired to steward may be a consequence of the way they were chosen. The processes which brought to power Abraham Lincoln, the greatest of all American Presidents, and Adolf Hitler, the most evil man to ever live, may have had surprising commonalities.

Organizational Level Implications

Organizations with loose selection processes are taking an enormous gamble. If they are very lucky, they will repeatedly get Outliers with the “right” characteristics – Outliers whose performance yields significant benefits. More likely, however, they will end up with disastrous Outliers, ones with crippling psychological disorders or bizarre ideologies. An organization that consistently rolls a hard six might well find itself uniquely successful and widely imitated even if its governing system is, in fact, simply a high-risk strategy that paid off.

Although the average performance of Outliers is likely to be inferior to that of Modals, the desirability of seeking Outliers depends on the context in which an organization finds itself and the symmetry in rewards for above- and below-average performance. A startup company has a high risk of

²¹⁴ John A. Byrne, *Chainsaw: The Notorious Career of Al Dunlap in the Era of Profit-at-Any-Price* (New York, NY: HarperBusiness, 1999), Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, 189 and passim, Duff McDonald, *Last Man Standing: The Ascent of Jamie Dimon and JPMorgan Chase* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2009).

failure.²¹⁵ An Outlier leader might make it fail sooner, but she also might make success possible. Thus startups might prefer Outliers. Large and established companies, on the other hand, are likely to be easier to destroy than to vastly improve. Although Outlier leaders can present a tempting prospect with their potential for outside gains, they may destroy such an organization instead of help it. The higher the penalties for failure, the more Modals will tend to be better choices.²¹⁶

Systemic Implications

Any organization is embedded in a larger environment whose effects go far beyond the impact of “external constraints.” This means that the *socially optimal* level of Outliers will sometimes be substantially different from that optimal at the organizational or individual level. The socially optimal tightness or looseness of LFPs is likely to be driven, at least in part, by the relative magnitude of low probability gains and losses. In scientific research, for example, grants awarded to an Outlier are more likely to produce no useful results – probably much more likely – than those awarded to a Modal researcher. An organization judged on the success rate of its grants is thus likely to fund Outlier proposals at far below the socially optimal rate. When grants are awarded to scientists to support their research, losses can be no higher than the amount of the grant. Potential gains, however, are virtually limitless given the impact of groundbreaking scientific findings. Review processes meant to select the best research proposals for support are thus likely to eliminate the Outlier researchers and approaches with high failure rates but the potential for major leaps forward. On the other hand, compensation structures that disproportionately reward top performers may incentivize the selection and development of Outliers who have simply adopted high variance strategies and been lucky repeatedly. Once in a position of power, they may damage or destroy healthy organizations.

²¹⁵ Scott Andrew Shane, *The Illusions of Entrepreneurship: The Costly Myths That Entrepreneurs, Investors, and Policy Makers Live By* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 99.

²¹⁶ This is similar to Taleb’s idea of investing in positive Black Swans. Taleb, *The Black Swan*.

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Over the longer term, the external environment will impose selection pressures at the organizational level, just as organizations do at the individual level. The international system selects among states and the market selects among firms. The best-performing organizations will be those most likely to produce Outlier leaders. So will the worst-performing organizations. But *these poorly-performing organizations will often die before they can be observed.*

In the political world Outliers may be oversupplied. Political mistakes can be catastrophes of unimaginable proportions. The citizens of a state that has been “selected out” of the international system are likely to suffer far more than the citizens of a dominant state will benefit. Even the greatest political leader would be hard-pressed to do as much good as a truly disastrous one can do harm. Additionally, some states with loose LFPs are likely to have a sequence of exceptionally successful Outliers at key moments in their history simply by luck. Such states may thus have profited greatly from their loose selection process only to be greatly harmed by failed Outliers when their luck runs out. Those states with loose filtration processes that picked disastrous leaders at key points in their history, on the other hand, are likely to remain unobserved just as failed companies are. The most successful states are likely to be imitated by less successful ones.²¹⁷ States are thus likely to choose more Outliers than they should. States with loose LFPs will be disproportionately clustered among the international system’s most and least powerful members.

The question of the optimal frequency of Outlier leaders in business is likely to depend on the nature of an organization and the market in which it operates. Startups have little to lose when they begin operating and a particularly gifted Outlier leader may take them to extraordinary success. Once a company is in a dominant position, however, a CEO’s power to destroy it may well exceed his ability to make it an ever greater success. If a society is large enough to have many companies with different approaches, thus ensuring that at least a few will be led by successful Outliers, and has markets fluid

²¹⁷ Kenneth N. Waltz, "Globalization and Governance," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 32, no. 4 (1999): 695.

enough to allow the few successes to rapidly absorb or displace their competitors, then a high rate of Outlier leaders even among established businesses may be optimal at the systemic level even if is unwise at the organizational one. Contrarily, if a society is small enough that the avoidable failure of a single company has major harmful implications, it may be better off creating institutions that encourage tight LFPs. Such issues should be a key topic of further research.

Testing Leader Filtration Theory

Many of the dynamics LFT identifies affect most organizations. Nations, companies, armies, and even universities all have leaders and choose them through processes that combine random and non-random elements. Conducting tests in a variety of domains could be particularly illuminating.

Testing LFT requires identifying Filtered and Unfiltered leaders, then engaging in counterfactual reasoning to identify alternate candidates for leadership and determining what the effects would have been had those alternatives come to power. Such counterfactual analysis has always been a crucial tool for political scientists, particularly in situations where many potential explanatory variables exist.²¹⁸

Although the primary independent variable in this study is well-suited to quantitative analysis, the dependent variables are markedly difficult to examine this way, something which plays a significant part in explaining political scientists' relative inattention to leadership.²¹⁹ Because leaders are particularly under-studied in the political realm, however, an initial test of the theory focusing on politics could be particularly valuable. Fortuitously, historians of the United States have been repeatedly surveyed on their assessments of Presidential performance. These surveys provide a somewhat objective measure of Presidential performance and allow a quantitative plausibility probe of LFT. In

²¹⁸ James D. Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science," *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (1991).

²¹⁹ Keohane, "Disciplinary Schizophrenia: Implications for Graduate Education in Political Science," 10.

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particular they allow a quantitative test of LFT's single most important prediction: that Unfiltered leaders will display substantially higher variance in their performance than Filtered Leaders do.

Policy Change and Leader Impact are the variables of the most interest to both scholars and practitioners of international relations. They are also most likely to appear in major powers. Case studies should thus focus on them. Cases should examine both Filtered and Unfiltered leaders using George's method "of structured, focused comparison": asking general questions based on the research objective, then examining only those aspects of each case relevant to answering those questions.²²⁰

The general questions about each case are relatively simple (Table 6). Cases will be divided into two parts. The first will examine a leader's career before he or she took power. It will assess how thoroughly he or she was filtered and identify potential alternative leaders. One key subjective assessment will be an evaluation of how improbably their rise to power was. A few years before they took power, would their contemporaries have placed them on a shortlist of those likely to lead their organization? This will allow the classification of a leader as a Filtered Modal or an Unfiltered Potential Outlier. Potential alternative leaders are those whose ascension to power was, in Jefferson's felicitous phrase, "among possible events..." and perhaps even more likely than what actually occurred.²²¹

The second section will examine crucial events of the leader's time in office. Taking into account the Conditional Variables, it will examine Leader Characteristics, Policy Choices, and Impact. Potential Outliers should have Characteristics and make Choices substantially different from those other alternative leaders would have made. Those traits and choices should sometimes be reflected in a significant Impact on their organization or even the external environment as a whole. Modals should have Characteristics and make Choices similar to those of other potential contenders for power, and thus have little Impact that others, in their shoes, would not have had.

²²⁰ Alexander L. George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences, Bcsia Studies in International Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005), 67.

²²¹ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia: With Related Documents by Thomas Jefferson*, ed. David Waldstreicher, *The Bedford Series in History and Culture* (New York, NY: Palgrave, 2002), 196.

Table 6: General Questions for Case Studies	
Section 1	<p>Question 1: How thoroughly was the leader filtered?</p> <p>Question 2: How likely was their rise to power?</p> <p>Question 3: Who are potential Modal alternative leaders?</p> <p>Question 4: Is he or she a "Potential Outlier" or "Modal"?</p>
Section 2	<p>Question 1: Does the leader have Characteristics substantially different from those of potential alternatives?</p> <p>Question 2: Did they make Policy Choices different from those the alternatives would have made?</p> <p>Question 3: Did they have an Impact substantially different from that alternatives would have had?</p> <p>Question 4: Is a Potential Outlier really an Outlier? / Is a Modal really similar to the alternatives?</p>

In every case, there are several key findings that would validate the theory. Potential Outliers should have taken power in a situation in which there were other plausible candidates who were different in meaningful ways. Modals, on the other hand, should have views and preferences similar to those of other candidates. The preferences of people who played a key role in the winner's accession to power can supplement this analysis. They should often express surprise or regret at the leader's performance for Outliers, and rarely for Modals.

When alternate heads of government are unidentifiable or their views are unknown, or simply as additional data, the beliefs and preferences of senior members of the government, particularly those with a power base independent from that of the leader, should be examined. Many senior members of the government will have come to power because of the leader's victory and are dependent on his position and patronage for their position, so their agreement under almost all circumstances is very likely (although their disagreement with the leader's preferences, when it occurs, will have substantial evidentiary value). Most governments include senior figures with their own power base, however, ranging from military officers to civil servants to members of a coalition. These figures will provide another way to determine "Modal" preferences and courses of action and so, again, they should disagree with Outliers more often than they do with Modals.

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Given the existence of both probabilistic and counterfactual elements in LFT, the ideal strategy for theory testing is to begin with a quantitative plausibility probe and then engage in detailed case studies of particular Filtered and Unfiltered leaders. Finally, LFT's potential implications stretch far beyond the political arena. This suggests that shadow case studies outside of politics would be fruitful. If they show that LFT has substantial explanatory or predictive power in such far-flung arenas, this would be powerful support for the theory as a whole.

CHAPTER 4 - LEADER FILTRATION THEORY AND U.S. PRESIDENTS

Bismarck famously and possibly apocryphally said that “God looks after children, fools, and the United States of America.”²²² The United States tends to choose relatively untested Presidents.²²³

Leader Filtration Theory (LFT) predicts that such Presidents are likely Outliers. Although this dissertation takes no position on divine providence, the United States may be prone to choosing Outlier Presidents and so dependent on luckily getting good ones.

Lucky or not, the United States Presidency provides a unique opportunity for a test of LFT. Since 1789, Presidents have occupied an office with the same Constitutional powers and been elected under the same legal regime. Candidates for the Presidency have had the same set of lower offices to use as stepping stones. The powers of some of those offices have shifted and the environment in which they are executed has changed enormously, as have the elections which have to be won. But the offices themselves have remained largely the same: Governor, Senator, Congressman, member of the Cabinet, General. Furthermore, securing the Presidency has always required winning a party’s support, and this has always required gaining the assent of party elites.²²⁴ Those who hope to one day become President have always had to either work their way up those offices and thus be filtered, or somehow skip them and try for the Presidency directly. The positions in which filtration occurs have thus remained relatively constant even as the qualities which determine candidates’ success in the LFP have changed. Presidents have been repeatedly evaluated by American historians. This provides a sample of 40 leaders whose performance can be analyzed in conjunction with their level of filtration.

²²² Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2001).

²²³ Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience*.

²²⁴ Marty Cohen, *The Party Decides: Presidential Nominations before and after Reform*, *Chicago Studies in American Politics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

Leader Filtration Theory and U.S. Presidents

The overall results from this test are strikingly supportive of LFT. Forty Presidents (omitting ones whose term in office was too brief to be meaningful) are coded as either Filtered or Unfiltered with nineteen coded as Unfiltered and twenty-one as Filtered. LFT predicts that Unfiltered leaders display extreme performance, so Unfiltered Presidents should display a higher variance in their rankings than Filtered Presidents. This is verified by the rankings which show that the higher variance of Unfiltered Presidents is statistically significant at well over the 99% level.

Although a simple statistical test of the form described here cannot prove causation, it can lend strong weight for or against LFT. In particular, using Presidents of the United States as a plausibility probe of LFT has several advantages. First, United States Presidents are a hard test. American Presidents tend to be considerably less experienced than, for example, British Prime Ministers.²²⁵ LFT will classify many of them as Unfiltered and therefore Potential Outliers. This means that the comparison group of Filtered Presidents will be smaller and more diverse than it would be under a system that filtered more thoroughly, making the distinction between Filtered and Unfiltered leaders less sharp than it would be in other systems. Hard, or crucial, tests are the most effective way to use case studies to test a theory.²²⁶ A statistical test using Presidents of the United States is a particularly high hurdle for LFT because previous research using Presidential rankings has found that “there is no evidence that political experience improves the likelihood of strong presidential performance.”²²⁷ A finding that pre-presidential political experience does have a significant impact on presidential performance would thus contravene a major finding in the existing literature.

Second, using Presidents of the United States allows a quantitative test of LFT’s two most important predictions. First, Outliers will be more likely than Modals to display extreme performance. Outlier leaders will perform very well or very poorly; but they are more likely to perform poorly than

²²⁵ Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience*.

²²⁶ John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2007), Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*.

²²⁷ Balz, "Ready to Lead on Day One: Predicting Presidential Greatness from Experience," 487.

Table 7: LFT Hypotheses for U.S. Presidents
Hypothesis 1: Unfiltered Presidents should be disproportionately represented at the top and bottom of historians' rankings
Hypothesis 2: Unfiltered Presidents should be more likely to be low-ranked than high ranked

they are to perform well (Table 7). Both of these predictions can be tested using the historians' rankings of Presidents.

Historians' rankings also present a hard test for the theory, because what historians are evaluating is not a perfect match with the "Impact" variable in LFT. The theory might fail the test simply because of this disjunction. A broad cross analysis has the countervailing advantage of capturing every President, eliminating one source of selection bias and creating the potential for the cross-case analyses that remain the best way to test a theory.²²⁸

Third, the rankings will assist in the choice of case studies. Presidents who are rated very well or very poorly by historians but whom LFT classifies as Filtered pose a challenge to the theory which can best be explored qualitatively. Fourth, and related to the third point, available data about Presidents of the United States is extraordinarily rich. This will improve the case studies' power.

LFT was developed at a level of abstraction that allows it to be used across many domains. Testing it requires adapting its general form to the requirements of a specific domain, in this case the political system of the United States. This means identifying (retrodicting) sets of Unfiltered and Filtered Presidents using *only information available before they were inaugurated* and then comparing these sets to historians' rankings of Presidents and testing the significance of the match. Potential sources of bias in this statistical test are identified and analyzed. Finally, the Presidents who will be examined in detailed case studies are chosen.

Filtered and Unfiltered Presidents of the United States

The American government has maintained roughly the same Constitutional form since 1789. Presidents of the United States have climbed the same political ladder for 220 years even if how they

²²⁸ Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 41.

climb it has changed. This allows Presidents to be classified using uniform standards. Candidates were filtered in the same offices in the nineteenth and the twenty-first centuries, even if the tasks they faced in those offices were different.

Filtering Positions

Not all offices are effective filters. Few sheriffs, to take an extreme example, are evaluated based on their potential as a future President. Thus the appropriate cut is political offices of national prominence. Membership in the House, the Senate, or the Cabinet, for example, clearly exposes someone to scrutiny. Flag-rank officers in the United States military must have their appointments confirmed by the Congress, making them at least partly political, and this means that these positions too should be counted in assessing degree of filtration.²²⁹ If a former Vice President was elected to the Presidency on his own behalf, his years as Vice President should also count. If he ascended to the office because the President died or was removed, then they should not, as there was no ability to filter him out of the process. Time as a state Governor clearly counts as well, with some subtleties. Some states have Governors who fulfill largely ceremonial, instead of executive, functions, and thus their time in those offices should be discounted when its value a filtration mechanism is assessed.

Temporary or now-discontinued offices that nevertheless carry a level of scrutiny and evaluation at least equal to that of a Cabinet member should be added to the normal roster of nationally prominent political positions. Appointed governors of occupied territories, for example, or the heads of temporary agencies that deal with major national or international crises, are just as likely to see their

²²⁹ Two potential complications are eliminated by historical contingency. Although the U.S. Army has had Generals since its foundation, the Navy had no Admirals, and thus no flag rank officers, until the Civil War, when David Farragut became the first. No senior Naval officer, though, has ever become President. Similarly, the Mayor of a large city, like New York or Los Angeles could easily face as much or more filtration than most Congressmen, but no Mayor of either city has ever become President. James P. Duffy, *Lincoln's Admiral: The Civil War Campaigns of David Farragut* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1997).

careers destroyed (or made) as those in more traditional governmental positions. Time in such offices should thus count towards evaluating a candidate or President's status as Filtered or Unfiltered.

Political inexperience is a key hallmark of the Unfiltered leader, but it is not the only one. Experience is a proxy for filtration. Anything that allows an Unfiltered leader to gain power makes it possible for an Outlier to become President. Time in political office is one form of filtration, but its effects can be overwhelmed by idiosyncratic features of a particular LFP. The American political system has two unique ways in which filtration processes can be bypassed, allowing the accession to the Presidency of a leader who would otherwise have been filtered out. The first is Vice Presidential succession and the second is the existence of Dark Horse candidates.

The Vice Presidency

Presidential candidates pick their running mates for many reasons, ranging from the need to unify their party to the hope that he or she will appeal to a key constituency. Some Vice Presidents came close to the nomination as the head of their ticket. Others would have been entirely forgotten had they not been chosen. If a President dies, however, all filtration is suspended. The Vice President – no matter their characteristics – *must* become President.

So which Vice Presidents are Unfiltered? Vice Presidents who ascended to the Presidency can be split into three sets. The first is those few Vice Presidents selected in the expectation that they would soon become President through the death or removal from office of the incumbent. Clearly this is a rare and special and situation. In this circumstance, however, we can expect the Vice President to have been subjected to a unique level of scrutiny. These Vice Presidents' level of filtration should be assessed in exactly the same way a Presidents would have been.

Most Vice Presidents, however, are chosen in the expectation that the Presidential nominee will serve out his full term. So the second type of Vice President is a major figure in the party who might have gained the Presidential nomination. Such a Vice President should be classified as Filtered or

Unfiltered in the same way a normal President would be. A simple test as to whether a Vice President is such a major party figure is to see if they had a significant number of delegates supporting them for the Presidency at that year's nominating convention. Such a candidate has been filtered out by the process, but not by much. Lyndon Johnson is an example of this kind of Vice President. Again, such a President's level of Filtration should be assessed the way a normally elected President's would be.

The third type of Vice President is one chosen by a nominee for idiosyncratic reasons, a Vice President whom no one had considered a plausible candidate for the Presidency. All such Vice Presidents who are elevated to the Presidency should be considered potential outliers, no matter their previous history. They *have been* filtered out of the process, only to be resurrected by not one, but two, low-probability events: first their selection for the Vice Presidency, and then the death of the President. Chester Arthur was a Vice President of this type. Such Vice Presidents are always Unfiltered.

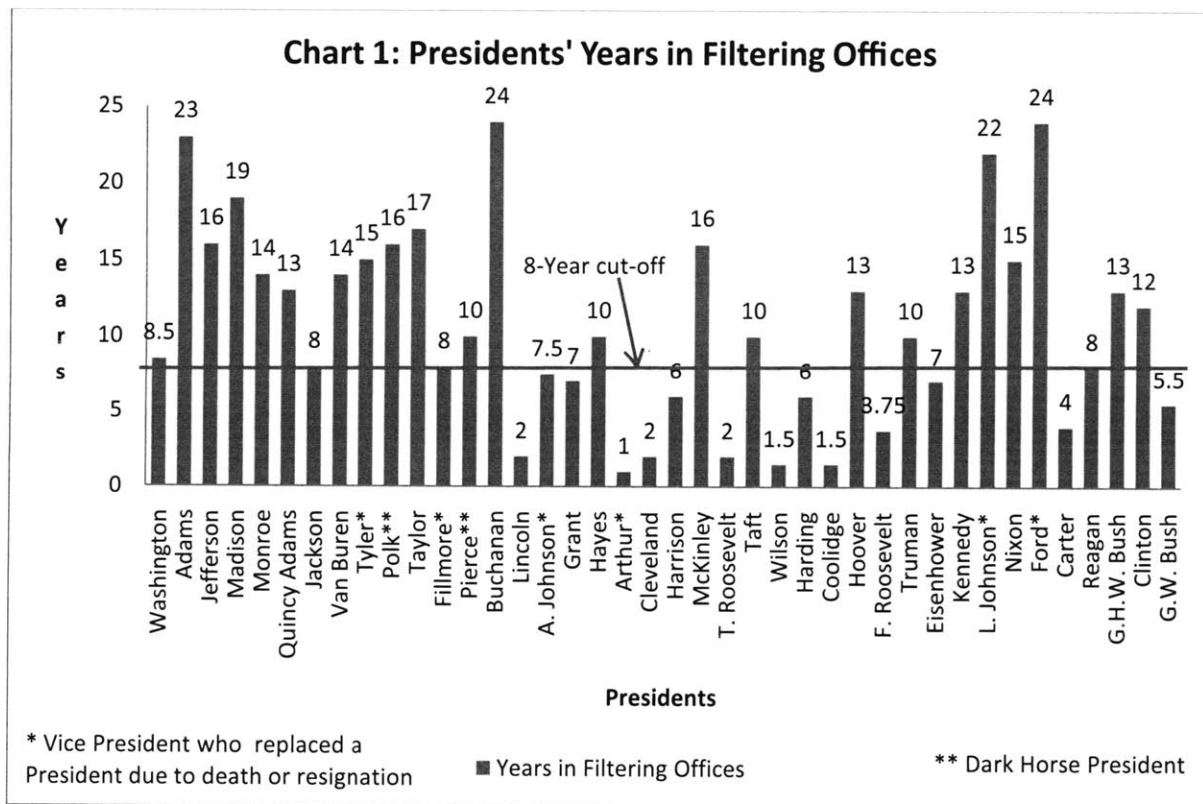
Dark Horses

Dark horse candidates are the other way in which the United States' filtration process can be bypassed even when a candidate has significant political experience. Before the advent of the modern primary system, a deadlocked convention could settle on a nominee whom no one, perhaps including the candidate, considered a contender for the Presidency before the convention. Such a candidate has been essentially filtered out, only to be resurrected by the convention deadlock. There is little historical debate on the identity of Dark Horse Presidents, but an objective measure can be developed. If a President was nominated only after multiple ballots at the convention *and* had received little or no support on early ballots, he was a Dark Horse candidate. A candidate who had considerable support in the party but simply took many ballots to secure the nomination should be judged normally. If a candidate received little or no support during a convention's initial ballots, then clearly few in the party's elite considered him of Presidential timber. Such dark horse candidates should *always* be considered Unfiltered.

Classifying the Presidents

Based on the criteria laid out in the previous chapter and the particular adaptations for the American political system described above, Presidents can now be classed as Filtered and Unfiltered. Although there have been forty-four Presidents, there are forty in the sample. Barack Obama has been in office for too short a time for LFT to be tested using his Presidency. Grover Cleveland served two non-consecutive terms as President. William Henry Harrison and James A. Garfield both died so soon after being elected that there is no point in including them.

All Dark Horse candidates and all idiosyncratically chosen Vice Presidents who become President are classified as Unfiltered. Eight years of national pre-Presidential political experience serves as a dividing line. Those with significantly more than eight years of experience should be classified as Filtered. Those with significantly less should be classified as Unfiltered (Chart 1).



Leader Filtration Theory and U.S. Presidents

Borderline cases should take into account the age of the system and the particular characteristics of the candidate, as described in Chapter 3. Nineteen Presidents are Unfiltered. Twenty-one are Filtered (Table 8). See Appendix I for a detailed explanation of how each President was coded.²³⁰

Eight years was chosen as a cut-off for several reasons. Eight years is two Presidential terms or, in most states, two terms as Governor. It is four terms in the House of Representatives, and therefore enough time to gain seniority and scrutiny. It is enough time for a Senator to be evaluated by his constituents based on a full term in the Senate and then prepare for a run at the Presidency.

The classifications are strikingly insensitive to the choice of cut-off. Twenty-nine Presidents were designated Filtered or Unfiltered because of their length of time in filtering offices. Among those 29, only two (Jackson and Reagan) are at the eight year cut-off. Both are classified as Filtered, but changing this classification would not influence the significance of LFT's predictions. Changing the cut-off to seven, or even six, years does not change even one coding. Changing it to five alters only one, Harding. Shifting it in the other direction – to nine years – would flip Jackson and Reagan to Unfiltered, but would make no other changes. Changing it to ten would move Truman, Hayes, and Taft into ambiguous territory. This suggests that eight years may be the upper limit for a cut-off.

²³⁰ Two of the codings – Polk and Taylor – are dictated by the simple coding rules described above. A more focused analysis of their careers, as described in the Appendix, would flip the categories of both.

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Table 8: Classifications of Presidents		
President	Classification	Reason
Washington	Outlier	Revolutionary leader
Adams	Modal	23 years in filtering offices
Jefferson	Modal	16 years in filtering offices
Madison	Modal	19 years in filtering offices
Monroe	Modal	14 years in filtering offices
Quincy Adams	Modal	13 years in filtering offices
Jackson	Modal	8 years in filtering offices
Van Buren	Modal	14 years in filtering offices
Tyler	Outlier	VP chosen to gain Southern support
Polk	Outlier	Dark Horse - 8th ballot at convention
Taylor	Modal	17 years in filtering offices
Fillmore	Outlier	VP chosen for geographic balance
Pierce	Outlier	Dark Horse - 35th ballot at convention
Buchanan	Modal	24 years in filtering offices
Lincoln	Outlier	2 years in filtering offices, Dark Horse
A. Johnson	Outlier	VP chosen as pro-war Southern Democrat
Grant	Outlier	National hero from Civil War
Hayes	Modal	10 years in filtering offices
Arthur	Outlier	VP to a Dark Horse, no significant public office before VP
Cleveland	Outlier	2 years in filtering offices
B. Harrison	Outlier	6 years in filtering offices, Dark Horse
McKinley	Modal	16 years in filtering offices
T. Roosevelt	Outlier	VP chosen to get him out of NY
Taft	Modal	10 years in filtering offices
Wilson	Outlier	1.5 years in filtering offices
Harding	Outlier	6 years in filtering offices
Coolidge	Outlier	VP to Harding, 2 years in filtering offices
Hoover	Modal	13 years in filtering offices
Roosevelt	Outlier	4 years in filtering offices
Truman	Modal	10 years in filtering offices, chosen as VP in expectation he would soon be President
Eisenhower	Outlier	National hero from WW2, 7 years in filtering offices
Kennedy	Modal	13 years in filtering offices
Johnson	Modal	22 years in filtering offices, leading contender for 1960 nomination
Nixon	Modal	15 years in filtering offices
Ford	Modal	24 years in filtering offices, chosen as VP in expectation he would soon be President
Carter	Outlier	4 years in filtering offices
Reagan	Modal	8 years in filtering offices, mature political system, prolonged political career
Bush	Modal	13 years in filtering offices
Clinton	Modal	12 years in filtering offices
G.W. Bush	Outlier	6 years in very limited Governorship, family connections

Ranking the Presidents

Surveys of historians asking them to rank the Presidents in terms of performance have been a recurring feature of American historiography since Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. did the first one in 1948.²³¹ Although these surveys have been conducted over a sixty year period, they display a high level of consistency from survey to survey. Psychologists have used these surveys to test leadership theories by examining the traits correlated with Presidential success.²³²

The results of thirteen rankings of Presidents were averaged, excluding rankings assigned before Presidents completed their terms in office and removing, when necessary, the scores for William Henry Harrison and James Garfield and moving Presidents ranked below them up one. The rankings were rescaled when necessary to correct for the number of Presidents included and then averaged to produce a consensus estimate of Presidential performance. The results of this synthesis are shown in Table 9.²³³ Even a superficial inspection of the results reveals that Unfiltered Presidents are remarkably concentrated at the top and bottom of the rankings, just as LFT predicts.

The top and most of the bottom of the rankings are relatively uncontroversial. Few would rank Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, and Washington as anything other than three greatest American Presidents,

²³¹ Max J. Skidmore, *Presidential Performance: A Comprehensive Review* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2004), 1.

²³² Simonton, "Presidential IQ, Openness, Intellectual Brilliance, and Leadership: Estimates and Correlations for 42 U.S. Chief Executives."

²³³ Associated Press, *List of Presidential Rankings: Historians Rank the 42 Men Who Have Held the Office* (MSNBC, Feb. 16 2009 [cited June 22 2009]); available from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/29216774/>, William A. DeGregorio, *The Complete Book of U.S. Presidents* (Ft. Lee, NJ: Barricade Books, 2001), Charles F. Faber and Richard B. Faber, *The American Presidents Ranked by Performance* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2000), Alvin S. Felzenberg, "'There You Go Again': Liberal Historians and the *New York Times* Deny Ronald Reagan His Due," *Policy Review*, no. 82 (1997), Robert K. Murray and Tim H. Blessing, *Greatness in the White House: Rating the Presidents* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), William J. Ridings and Stuart B. McIver, *Rating the Presidents: A Ranking of U.S. Leaders, from the Great and Honorable to the Dishonest and Incompetent* (New York, NY: Carol Pub. Group, 1997), Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton," *Political Science Quarterly* 112, no. 2 (1997), Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, James Taranto and Leonard Leo, *Presidential Leadership: Rating the Best and the Worst in the White House, A Wall Street Journal Book* (New York: Wall Street Journal Books, 2004), Wikipedia Contributors, *Historical Rankings of United States Presidents* (Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, May 21 2009 [cited June 22 2009]); available from http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Historical_rankings_of_United_States_Presidents&oldid=291501476.

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Table 9: Presidents by Consolidated Ranking		
Name	Years in Office	Normalized Rank
Lincoln	1861-1865	1.6
F. Roosevelt	1933-1945	2.3
Washington	1789-1797	3.0
Jefferson	1801-1809	5.0
T. Roosevelt	1901-1909	5.3
Wilson	1913-1921	7.2
Truman	1949-1953	7.5
Jackson	1829-1837	9.9
Eisenhower	1953-1961	11.4
Polk	1845-1849	12.0
Kennedy	1961-1963	12.4
J. Adams	1797-1801	13.4
L. Johnson	1963-1969	14.0
Madison	1809-1817	14.4
Reagan	1981-1989	15.1
Monroe	1817-1825	15.3
Cleveland	1885-1889, 1893-1897	16.5
McKinley	1897-1901	17.7
J.Q. Adams	1825-1829	18.7
Clinton	1993-2001	19.9
Taft	1909-1913	21.5
G.H.W. Bush	1989-1993	22.2
Van Buren	1837-1841	23.7
Hayes	1877-1881	24.3
Ford	1975-1977	26.8
Carter	1977-1981	27.1
Arthur	1881-1885	27.7
Hoover	1929-1933	28.2
Harrison	1889-1893	29.1
Nixon	1969-1975	29.9
Coolidge	1923-1929	30.1
Taylor	1849-1850	31.3
Tyler	1841-1845	33.5
Fillmore	1850-1853	34.3
Grant	1869-1877	34.5
G.W. Bush	2001-2009	35.0
A. Johnson	1865-1869	36.4
Pierce	1853-1857	36.8
Buchanan	1857-1861	38.5
Harding	1921-1923	39.1

 = Unfiltered

although they might dispute the order among them. Similarly, few would quibble with Harding and Buchanan's inglorious position at the bottom of the list.²³⁴

The top and bottom of the list are also the sections of it important in the testing of LFT. Its first broad quantitative prediction – Hypothesis 1 – is that Unfiltered Presidents will be much more likely than Filtered ones to display *extreme* performance. They will tend to do either very well or very poorly. At a first glance, Hypothesis 1 receives exceptionally strong support. Four of the five best-ranked Presidents, and four of the five worst-ranked ones, are Unfiltered. This is not sensitive to how the data is cut. If we look at only the top four and bottom four Presidents, LFT predicts six of the eight. If we look at the top and bottom six, LFT predicts ten of the twelve. Given the inexact match between what LFT is predicting and what historians are ranking, and the tendency of the American political system to produce large numbers of Unfiltered Presidents, this result is, on its face, powerful support of LFT.

LFT also predicts that Unfiltered leaders are more likely to be failures than successes. Again, this hypothesis seems supported by the data. Eleven of the 15 lowest-ranked Presidents are Unfiltered, as compared to seven of the top 15.

Statistical Test

To see if the support the data appears to give LFT is statistically significant, the hypotheses in Table 7 must be reformulated into mathematically equivalent statements. Hypothesis 1 becomes: Unfiltered Presidents have a mean consolidated rank that differs from the mean consolidated rank of all Presidents by an amount significantly greater than the amount by which Filtered Presidents have a mean consolidated rank that differs from the mean consolidated rank of all Presidents. Hypothesis 2 becomes: Unfiltered Presidents have a mean consolidated rank significantly lower than that of Filtered

²³⁴ I largely agree with the consensus ranking, with the exception that Washington should be first or second, Grant is underrated, and Wilson would be far better placed at sixth from the bottom than he is at sixth from the top.

Presidents. The null hypotheses are that the mean consolidated ranks for Unfiltered and Filtered Presidents are no different in variance or mean. Although significance above the 95% threshold would be ideal, given the limited size of the sample even a 90% finding would be acceptable.

For Hypothesis 1, distance from the mean can be tested using either absolute variance (ABS) or root-mean-squared (RMS) variance. RMS variance is used when it is desirable to maximize the impact of extreme values of the dependent variable (DV). Such extreme values are impossible here since the DV must have a value between 1 and 40. This makes absolute variance the superior test, but testing for both is simple. Rank_i is the normalized rank for any President (Table 9). Thus Rank_{Washington}=3.0. The mean consolidated rank for all Presidents, Mean(Rank) = 20.8. The number of Unfiltered Presidents is 19, and the number of Filtered Presidents is 21. Expressing the final value as the ratio of the difference from the mean for Unfiltered Presidents to the difference from the mean for Filtered Presidents eliminates any influence from the number of Presidents. As the number of Presidents increases in the future the ratios should remain the same. This leaves two equations:

$$\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}} = (\sum |\text{Rank}_{\text{Outlier}} - 20.8| / 19) / (\sum |\text{Rank}_{\text{Modal}} - 20.8| / 21) \quad (\text{Equation 1})$$

$$\text{Ratio}_{\text{RMS}} = \sqrt{(1/19 \sum (\text{Rank}_{\text{Outlier}} - 20.8)^2)} / \sqrt{(1/21 \sum (\text{Rank}_{\text{Modal}} - 20.8)^2)} \quad (\text{Equation 2})$$

The higher the two ratios are, the stronger the signal that Unfiltered Presidents have a greater spread than Filtered ones. The null hypothesis is simple. In the null hypothesis both ratios have a value of 1. The observed values for these two ratios are: Ratio_{ABS} = 1.84 and Ratio_{RMS} = 1.62.

Testing statistical significance requires determining the odds that Ratio_{ABS} and Ratio_{RMS} could have values this high or higher by chance. Many standard tests of difference of variance – like the *F* test or Bartlett’s test – cannot be used with this data because their underlying assumptions are not valid. The two samples are neither independent nor normally distributed.²³⁵ A Monte Carlo simulation,

²³⁵ G. E. P. Box, "Non-Normality and Tests on Variances," *Biometrika* 40, no. 3/4 (1953), Carol A. Markowski and Edward P. Markowski, "Conditions for the Effectiveness of a Preliminary Test of Variance," *The American*

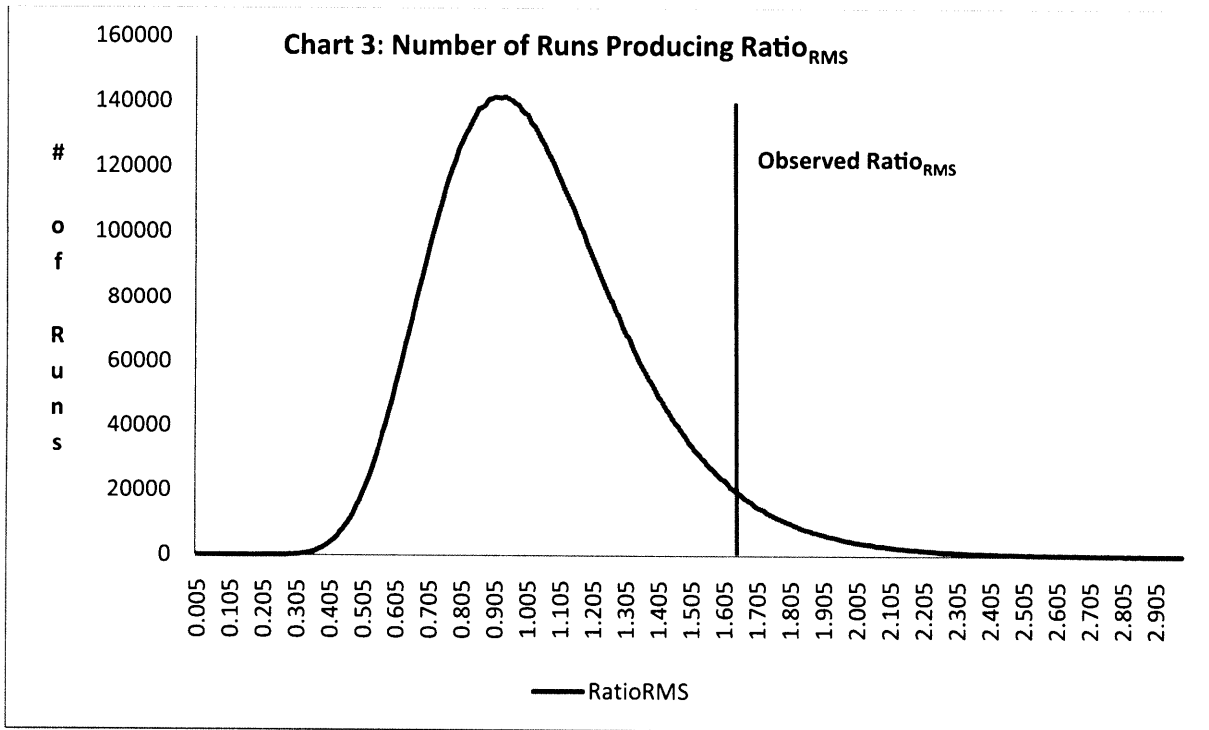
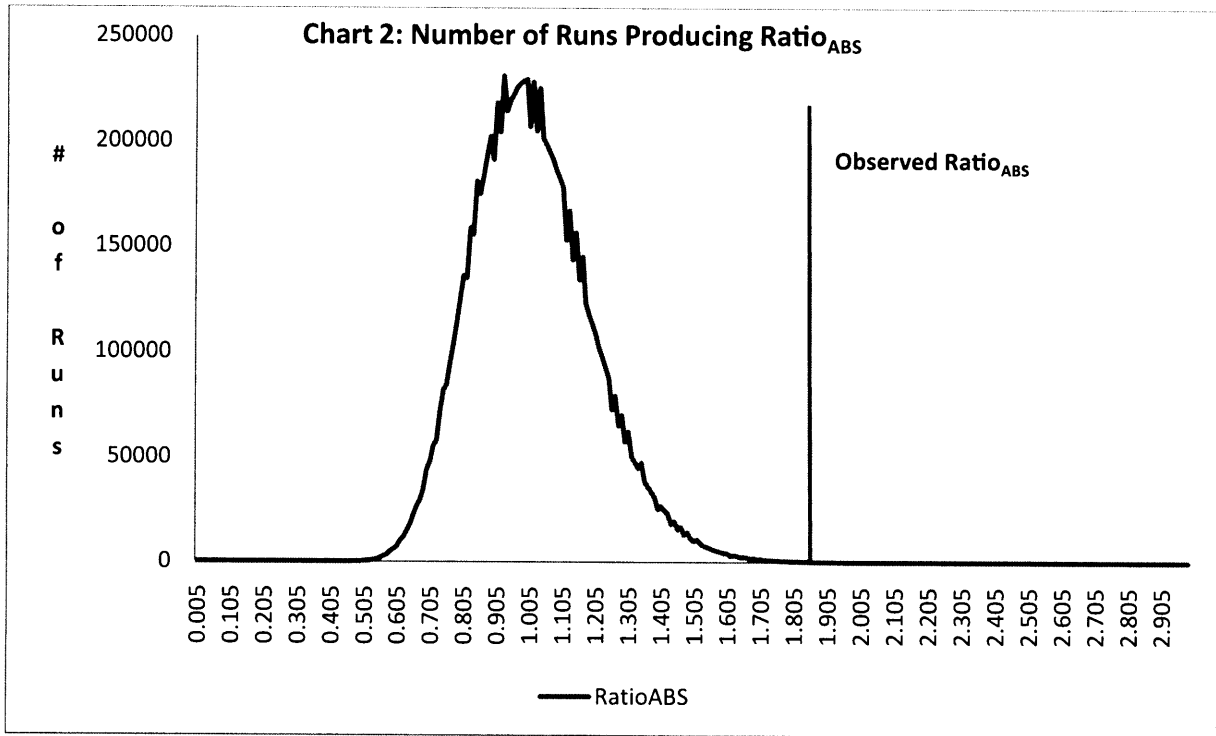
however, can be a powerful statistical tool in such situations. If a President's status as Filtered or Unfiltered has no influence on their rank, then those ranks would be distributed uniformly. Since the advent of modern computing, Monte Carlo simulations have been used in the social sciences and are a primary statistical tool in the physical sciences.²³⁶ Monte Carlo simulations have the particular advantage of having no hidden assumptions, as they generate distributions based on user-defined parameters instead of pre-existing ones. This Monte Carlo assigns ranks to all 40 Presidents randomly 10 million times. The range of ratios of the two values shows how often the observed values could have been produced by chance. If more than 1,000,000 of the Monte Carlo runs produce ratios higher than the ones in the real data, then the null hypotheses cannot be rejected. Chart 2 shows the distribution of the values of $\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}}$ produced in all ten million runs, while Chart 3 shows the distribution of the values of $\text{Ratio}_{\text{RMS}}$. Ratios were put into bins of size .01 and the number of runs with a ratio within each bin totaled to produce the graphs.

Of the 10 million runs, 2189 had a $\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}}$ higher than 1.84, and 495,980 had a $\text{Ratio}_{\text{RMS}}$ higher than 1.62 (Chart 2). The null hypothesis can be comfortably rejected for both tests, overwhelmingly so for $\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}}$, the superior one. There is only a $0.0219\% \pm 0.0005\%$ probability that a $\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}}$ greater than or equal to the observed value of 1.84 could be obtained randomly. Even on the weaker measure of $\text{Ratio}_{\text{RMS}}$, there is only a $4.960\% \pm 0.007\%$ chance that the observed results are the product of chance.²³⁷

Statistician 44, no. 4 (1990), George Waddel Snedecor and William G. Cochran, *Statistical Methods* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1989).

²³⁶ Daniel C. Minette, "Neutral and Charged Particle Production in 300 GeV/C Proton-Neon Interactions" (PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1982), Branislav L. Slantchev, "How Initiators End Their Wars: The Duration of Warfare and the Terms of Peace," *American Journal of Political Science* 48, no. 4 (2004).

²³⁷ The error bars are one standard deviation from the mean. They are calculated by assuming that the number of values greater than the observed value is normally distributed, so the calculation is $\sqrt{\# \text{ of runs higher than the expected value: } 2189 \text{ or } 495,980 / (10,000,000)}$.



Ratio_{ABS} is an extraordinarily strong signal. The data were analyzed using two different measures, so the signal strength can be adjusted to compensate for the possibility of a false positive

from one of them by multiplying the probability of a false positive by the number of tests, in this case, two.²³⁸ This results in a $0.0438\% \pm 0.001\%$ chance that the results are the product of chance. In other words, even after deliberately adjusting our measures to minimize the strength of the result, there is less than 1 chance in 2000 that the observed higher variation in ranks for Unfiltered Presidents when compared to Filtered ones is the result of chance. The signal is more than 200 times stronger than the minimum necessary to reject the null. This strongly supports LFT's most important prediction.

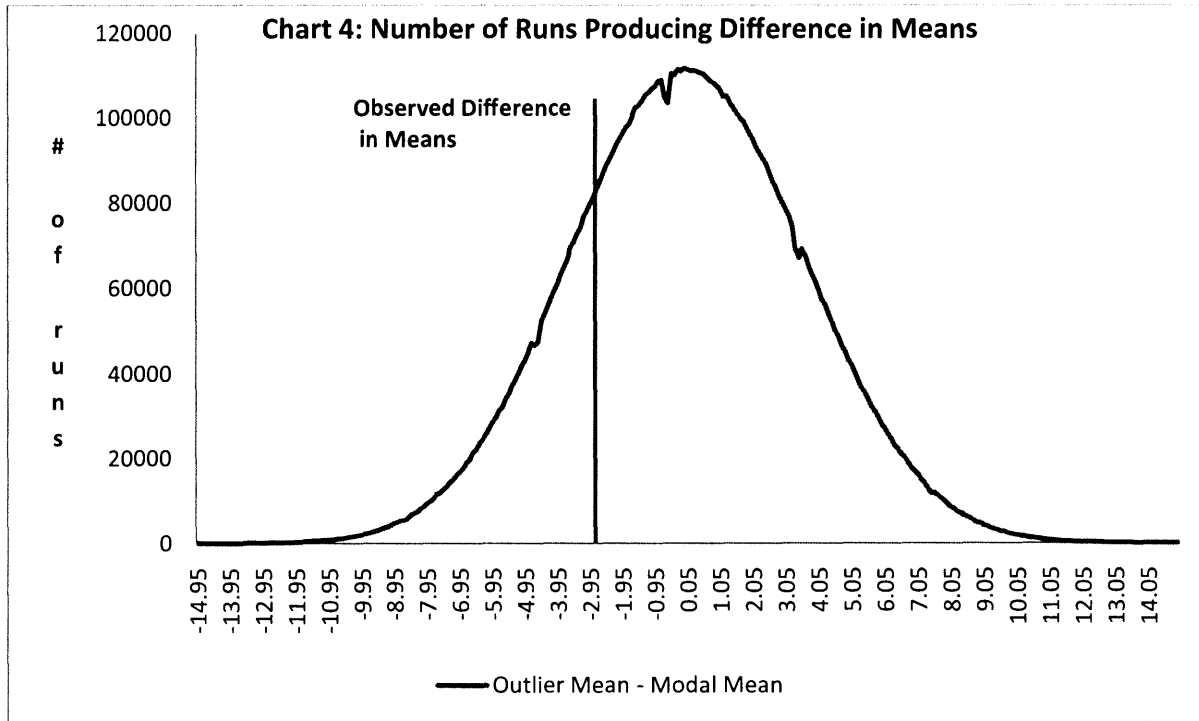
A similar test can be performed for LFT's second Hypothesis (Chart 3). In the observed data, Filtered Presidents have a mean composite rank of 22.3, while Unfiltered Presidents have a mean composite rank of 19.5. The difference between the two ranks is thus 2.8. Using the same Monte Carlo simulations as for Hypothesis 1, 2,170,615 runs had the mean Unfiltered score more than 2.8 less than the mean Filtered score, so this occurred 21.7% of the time (Chart 4). Pure random selection would thus generate a difference in means $21.7\% \pm 0.017\%$ of the time.²³⁹ The second null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

This finding is unsurprising for two reasons. First, the theory chapter argued that the power of the effect underlying Hypothesis 2 has increased over time. The United States, a young country with an old government, thus has a particularly long period of time in which this effect was relatively weak. Second, in the case of the United States the strength of Hypothesis 2 is particularly weakened by a survivor effect. Rankings of Presidents of the United States are a unique phenomenon. There is, for example, no similar tradition among British historians of ranking Prime Ministers. This testifies in part to the particular role of the President of the United States as both Head of Government and Head of State.

²³⁸ The logic here is simple, although not intuitive. The 5% standard is equivalent to a 1 in 20 chance of a false positive. If one did 20 different tests, however, there is a roughly 64% chance that one of them would break the 5% threshold for statistical significance simply by chance. To correct for this it is necessary to divide the strength of signal for any reported result by the number of different tests performed – in this case, two.

²³⁹ The error bar here is calculated the same way as in above, with an assumption that the number of values greater than the observed value is normally distributed, so the calculation is $\sqrt{(\# \text{ of runs higher than the expected value: } 2,170,615)/(10,000,000)}$.

It is also testimony, however, to the particular success of the American experiment. When the United States was founded, after all, it had a historically unprecedented form of government, and most of the



Framers of the Constitution were highly skeptical that the new nation would survive for very long.²⁴⁰ Yet it is now the wealthiest, most powerful state in history, with little prospect of its preeminent status being eclipsed in the near future.²⁴¹ This means that the American Presidency receives an unequalled degree of attention and study. Looking at the list of Unfiltered Presidents, however, had Abraham Lincoln performed poorly instead of exceptionally during the Civil War, it is at least conceivable that the United States would not even exist as a country, and likely that it would not exist in its current form. If a large number of American Presidents had been catastrophes, the United States would not be in such a unique position in the international system and would not attract the same level of disproportionate attention. Such rankings are only likely to exist if those being ranked have done remarkably well.

²⁴⁰ Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000).

²⁴¹ William C. Wohlforth, "The Stability of a Unipolar World," *International Security* 24, no. 1 (1999).

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This is analogous to the anthropic principle in cosmology. Many of the fundamental physical constants of the universe have values that make it possible for human life to exist. If some of them were different to even a very small extent, human beings simply could not exist. This does not, however, logically imply that the universe is designed to be uniquely hospitable for human life. If those physical constants had different values, human beings would not exist to observe them in the first place.²⁴²

Given these two circumstances acting to weaken Hypothesis 2, the failure to reject the null hypothesis does not mean abandoning this hypothesis entirely. It is likely, however, that the phenomenon, if it exists, is relatively weak.

Potential Sources of Error

There are four potential sources of error that could bias these results. First, some of the codings could have been biased in ways that distorted the results. This potential source of error is contained in two ways. Almost all of the Presidential codings were unambiguous and, as discussed above, they are exceptionally robust. The debatable cases are Andrew Jackson as Filtered, James Polk as Unfiltered, and Zachary Taylor as Filtered. In all three cases, however, reversing the coding would either strengthen the support for the theory or have no effect. Taylor's ranking in particular is likely an artifact. He died barely a year into his Presidency, giving him little opportunity to achieve much, and this surely explains at least part of his poor ranking from historians. Flipping the codings of Polk and Jackson would actually increase the greater spread in rankings exhibited by Unfiltered Presidents over Filtered ones. Additionally, questions about the codings are to some extent eased by the strength of the signal generated by tests of Hypothesis 1. The observed data is so unlikely to be replicated by chance that it swamps concerns about coding.

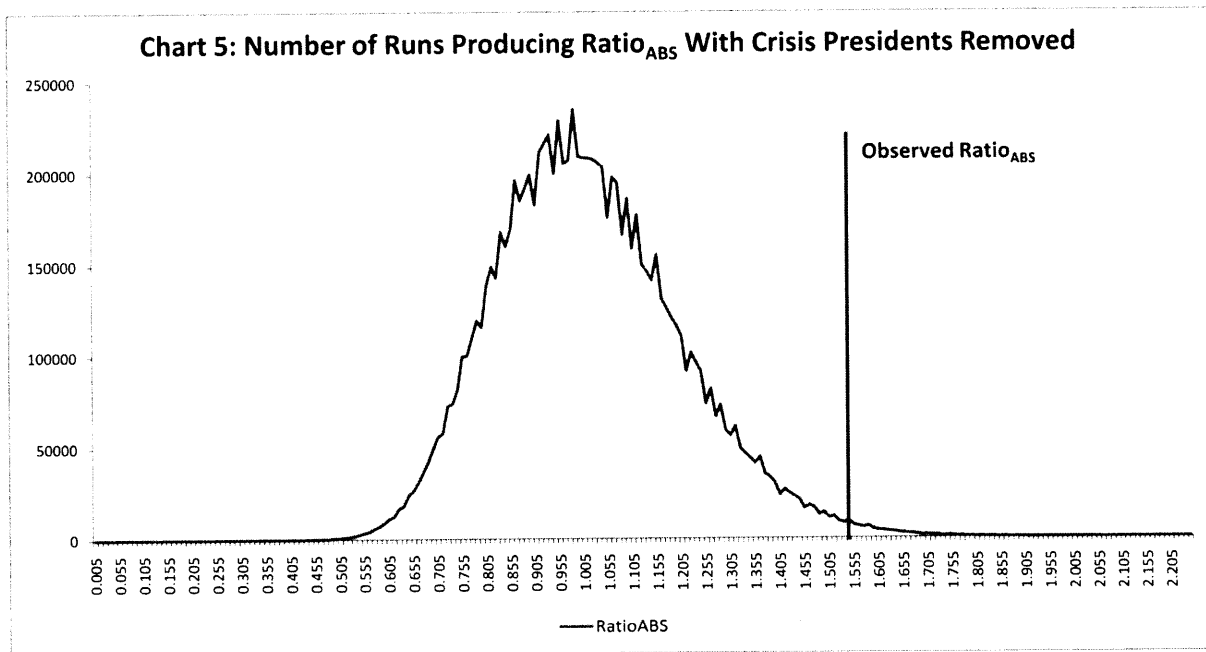
²⁴² B. Carter, "Large Number Coincidences and the Anthropic Principle in Cosmology" (paper presented at the IAU Symposium 63: Confrontation of Cosmological Theories with Observational Data, Cracow, Poland, 1973).

The second, and more pressing, cause of concern is a potential endogeneity problem stemming from omitted variable bias. If circumstances during a Presidential election are likely to cause both the election of an Unfiltered President *and* a particularly high or low score for that President in the historians' rankings, then the high statistical significance could be a product of that third, hidden, variable. To some extent this phenomenon is certainly occurring. Washington is coded as Unfiltered because he was the paramount national hero at the time of his election and the first President, but these conditions virtually assured that he would also be placed near the top of the rankings. Similarly, Lincoln's election triggered the Civil War, and he was nominated, at least in part, because he had less of a record in national politics than did his Republican rivals, something explored in more detail in the Chapter 6. His leadership of the Union made his presence at the top of the rankings certain. If the North's war effort had failed, he likely would be at the bottom of the rankings. Thus any President who had been elected at that time would have had an extreme ranking, and the situation did provide some benefit to a candidate with characteristics likely to make him Unfiltered.

This argument can be tested in two ways. The first is to eliminate the three "crisis Presidents" – Washington, Lincoln, and Franklin Roosevelt - from the sample. This is an extremely hard test for the theory. These three Presidents are the three which most strongly support LFT, and there are, after all, only forty Presidents in the set. After doing this the test of Absolute variance can be rerun. The observed $\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}}$ becomes 1.54. Of the 10 million runs in the new test, 85,259, or 0.85%, had a higher $\text{Ratio}_{\text{ABS}}$ than the observed value (Chart 5). Even with these three Presidents removed LFT's central prediction remains statistically significant at the 99% level.

This result suggests that although endogeneity likely explains some of the extraordinary strength of signal for Hypothesis 1, it simply cannot explain all, or even most, of it. The danger of an endogeneity problem can be further addressed by examining individual cases. In the Lincoln case, for example, Lincoln's Republican rivals, Seward and Chase, would both have been scored as Filtered

Presidents had they been elected, but their election would have triggered the Civil War every bit as much as Lincoln's did. Had they won the Civil War they would take Lincoln's place at the top of the rankings. It is not clear, however, that they would have been won. If Lincoln's performance as President was extraordinary, and that performance was crucial to the North's victory, then that strengthens the case for LFT. Similarly, the question with Washington is not just if he is highly ranked because he was the first President, it is if his performance was extraordinary. The overwhelming majority of historians would argue that it was. His contemporaries would have found the question absurd.²⁴³ Concerns about endogeneity and causation are thus best addressed through case studies.



Most Unfiltered Presidents took office under circumstances that could not relate their classification as Unfiltered and historians' assessments of their performance. Woodrow Wilson won in 1912 without a popular mandate against a Republican party divided between Taft and Theodore Roosevelt. He took office in a country that was peaceful and prosperous. Theodore Roosevelt was

²⁴³ Richard Brookhiser, *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), James Thomas Flexner, *Washington, the Indispensable Man* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1974).

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catapulted into the Presidency by the assassination of William McKinley. Eisenhower was elected overwhelmingly by a country mired in Korea based on the incredible popularity he had earned during the Second World War. George W. Bush won arguably the closest Presidential election in history in, again, a time of peace and prosperity. It is difficult to imagine any endogenous variable that could explain both why four such Unfiltered Presidents, or the fifteen others in the set, gained the Presidency and why historians would later assess them as Presidents who had performed so well or so poorly. Each one's accession to the Presidency was the product of specific circumstances, as were the events that resulted in their historical legacies. Yet LFT classifies all four as potential Outliers.

Third, external constraints play a key role in LFT, and the United States has faced a wide variety of external environments over its history. LFT's predictions should hold true over an extended period when the external environment remains relatively stable. The Cold War, stretching from its beginning in 1947 to the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, saw eight Presidents come to power after it began: Eisenhower, Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, Reagan, and George H.W. Bush. Two of these Presidents – Eisenhower and Carter – are classified as Unfiltered by LFT. The analysis above shows that historians rank them: Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Ford, Carter, and Nixon. The Unfiltered Presidents are thus the highest- and second-lowest ranked Presidents, another confirmation of LFT.

Fourth, the continuity of the American political system could be questioned. The country over which Washington presided hugged the East Coast, had an electorate made up only of white males, enslaved a large fraction of its population, and was different in an infinite number of other ways from the United States as it is today. The key offices relevant to filtration, however, remain the same. Significant components of the Presidential election process (for example, the need to capture a party nomination in order to win the Presidency) have also been a consistent feature of American elections since Andrew Jackson created the Democratic Party for the 1828 election. Overall:

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The first modern political parties arose in the United States, decades before they appeared in Great Britain and other nations, and this has meant that the first experiments in party politics were made in the American arena. Halting and uncertain in the first party system which emerged in the 1790's [*sic*], these experiments advanced significantly in the second party system of the Jacksonian era. By sometimes in the 1840s the general mold was set. Thus party development in the third, fourth, and fifth party systems has done little more than generate variations on the basic form and structure of the parties of the pre-Civil War era. The interplay of parties in the party system has also remained basically the same; despite significant third parties, the United States has always so far returned to a competitive two-party system. Finally, with limited but important exceptions, the American party systems have been moderate in character and less ideologically oriented than party systems in other nations.²⁴⁴

Thus, although there have certainly been changes in the way in which the United States chooses its Presidents, the key features of the system relevant to LFT have remained the same.

Most importantly, party insiders who are well-positioned to filter candidates have always had a dominant role in the nominating process.²⁴⁵ This minimizes concerns about the impact of changes in the electoral system. Although the different party systems can be used to divide the sample of forty Presidents much further, either into five sets representing the five identified party systems or, taking into account the focus on the Presidential nominating process, adding a sixth set to account for the rise of binding primaries, doing so divides the dataset into groups too small for statistical analysis (Table 10). A first examination, however, would seem to support LFT. In no period are Unfiltered Presidents in the center of the rankings, and they at least seem to have a tendency to be at the top and bottom. The best way to improve this analysis is thus to move on to detailed case studies of individual Presidents.

²⁴⁴ William Nisbet Chambers, "Party Development and the American Mainstream," in *The American Party Systems: Stages of Political Development*, ed. William Nisbet Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1975), 4.

²⁴⁵ Cohen, *The Party Decides*.

Table 10: Presidents by Party System

Presidents in Chronological Order					
First Party System	Second Party System	Third Party System	Fourth Party System	Fifth Party System	Binding Primary System
1792-1824	1828-1854	1854-1896	1896-1932	1932-Present	1972-Present
Washington	Quincy Adams	Buchanan	McKinley	Roosevelt	Nixon
Adams	Jackson	Lincoln	Roosevelt	Truman	Ford
Jefferson	Van Buren	Johnson	Taft	Eisenhower	Carter
Madison	Tyler	Grant	Wilson	Kennedy	Reagan
Monroe	Polk	Hayes	Harding	Johnson	Bush
	Taylor	Arthur	Coolidge		Clinton
	Fillmore	Cleveland	Hoover		Bush
	Pierce	Harrison			
Presidents in ranking order within each party system					
First Party System	Second Party System	Third Party System	Fourth Party System	Fifth Party System	Binding Primary System
Washington	Jackson	Lincoln	T. Roosevelt	F. Roosevelt	Reagan
Jefferson	Polk	Cleveland	Wilson	Truman	Clinton
Madison	Quincy Adams	Hayes	McKinley	Eisenhower	G.H.W. Bush
Monroe	Van Buren	Arthur	Taft	Kennedy	Ford
J. Adams	Taylor	B. Harrison	Hoover	L. Johnson	Carter
	Tyler	Grant	Coolidge		Nixon
	Fillmore	A. Johnson	Harding		G.W. Bush
	Pierce	Buchanan			

Case Selection

This cross-case quantitative analysis must be supplemented by a detailed qualitative analysis of several U.S. Presidents. A mixed-methods approach can resolve the questions of causality introduced by the circumstances in which Outlier leaders gain power. Case studies should be chosen based on their effectiveness at hypothesis testing. Given the characteristics of LFT, particularly its focus on extreme events, the best case-selection methods to use are: Diverse, Influential, Crucial, and Most-similar.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁶ Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*, 89-90.

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Diverse cases are selected to represent the range of values held by variables of interest. Influential cases are those which seem to go against a theory's predictions. Crucial cases, as said above, are those which are most or least likely to confirm a theory's predictions. A finding in a most likely case that a theory is not supported deals a strong blow to its theoretical standing, while a finding in a least likely case that the theory's predictions are correct can go a long way towards confirming it. Most-similar cases are a pair of cases which are similar in all ways except the key variables of interest.²⁴⁷ Again, in LFT the key independent variable is the extent to which a leader has been filtered, while the dependent variable is leader impact. Both can only be evaluated directly through a case study, but rough estimates can be obtained using the same classifications as above.

This suggests that the best American cases to examine are Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson. They are diverse on the independent variable. Lincoln and Wilson had little experience or public profile when they were elected to the Presidency. Jefferson, by contrast, was one of the most experienced Presidents. Jefferson represents a least-likely, and therefore influential, case. He has a high ranking yet was clearly filtered. If the cases show that the most important decision of his Presidency was one that would have been taken by plausible alternate Presidents, this would provide strong confirmatory evidence. Lincoln and Wilson are most likely cases, and therefore crucial ones. There is an overwhelming historical consensus that both were highly consequential Presidents and that their personal characteristics played a significant role in the events of their Presidency. A theory on the role and influence of leaders that failed with those three would be severely weakened. The theory can be further tested by expanding case studies beyond United States Presidents to include a most-similar comparison of two British Prime Ministers. These two will be identified in Chapter 8.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 97-144.

Conclusion

Since 1788, Presidents of the United States have been elected according to the procedures laid out in the Constitution. From George Washington to Barack Obama, the country they govern and the world it inhabits have changed dramatically. Yet some essentials of both the office and what is necessary to gain it have remained unchanged. Historians have assessed the performance of U.S. Presidents repeatedly over the last 60 years, and this provides the opportunity for a unique test of two of LFT's most important predictions. The first of these predictions, that Unfiltered Presidents will display more variance in their rankings than Filtered ones, is dramatically confirmed by the data.

Although the data used here is solely about Presidents of the United States, this finding lends significant support to LFT as a whole, not just its application to U.S. politics. Presidents present a particularly hard test for LFT. Its ability to do so well even when tested against them suggests that its predictions may have significant power in a wide variety of other settings.

CHAPTER 5 - "IT IS THE WHOLE COLONY": JEFFERSON AND THE LOUISIANA PURCHASE

Thomas Jefferson's election as the third President of the United States in 1800 was an event of enormous historical import. Jefferson, a Republican and the sitting Vice President, defeated John Adams, a Federalist and the sitting President. The election was the first time in modern history anywhere in the world in which a political party peacefully turned over power to its opponents.²⁴⁸ Jefferson's Presidency was so successful that historians rank him as the fourth best President, behind only the triumvirate of Lincoln, Washington, and Franklin Roosevelt. Even more remarkably, Jefferson's pre-Presidential life was so accomplished that the inscription on his tombstone, which he wrote, reads:

Here was buried
Thomas Jefferson
Author of the Declaration of American Independence
of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom
*and Father of the University of Virginia.*²⁴⁹

It is a full life indeed when two successful terms as President of the United States are not even worth mentioning when it is summed up.

That combination of a remarkably successful Presidency and a long and accomplished pre-Presidential career, however, presents a significant challenge to Leader Filtration Theory (LFT). Jefferson is the Filtered President most highly rated by historians. What explains the seeming contrast between LFT's predictions and historians' evaluation of Jefferson's Presidency? The most consequential event of

²⁴⁸ Susan Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 2004), 214.

²⁴⁹ Willard Sterne Randall, *Thomas Jefferson: A Life* (New York, NY: H. Holt, 1993), 595.

Jefferson's Presidency was the Louisiana Purchase. At a stroke it peacefully doubled the size of the United States. The purchase was, quite simply, "his greatest presidential triumph" and the most important event of his Presidency.²⁵⁰ Had his Administration done nothing else of any significance it would nonetheless have been one of the most successful in the history of any country.²⁵¹ The Louisiana Purchase is thus a crucial component in Jefferson's superb performance in the historians' rankings. LFT predicts that the crucial choices made by Modal leaders would *also* have been made by their most likely alternatives. If Jefferson, and only Jefferson, would or could have made the Louisiana Purchase, then this would be a very strong blow against LFT. If, on the other hand, plausible alternative Presidents would also have purchased Louisiana, then this would support LFT and suggest that the disjunction between its predictions and the historians' rankings is a result of the difference between how historians' judge a President's success and the leader impact that LFT predicts.

A study of Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase shows that this is exactly what occurred. Jefferson was extraordinarily Filtered, making it very likely he was a Modal leader. Madison and Adams, the two most likely Modal alternative Presidents, would both have made the Purchase. Jefferson did not initiate the negotiations that led to it and his commitment to a strict interpretation of the Constitution was actually the greatest obstacle to its successful completion.

The rest of this chapter follows the two-part structure laid out in Chapter 3. It begins by assessing whether Jefferson should be classified as a Filtered – and thus Modal – leader or an Unfiltered one, and by identifying potential Modal alternatives to Jefferson. It finds that Jefferson was clearly a Filtered and Modal leader and that James Madison and John Adams were likely alternative Presidents. It then process-traces the Louisiana Purchase to determine if it was attributable to Jefferson or if it would have been made by his Modal alternatives. LFT predicts that other potential Modal Presidents would

²⁵⁰ Ralph Louis Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1971), 421, Randall, *Thomas Jefferson: A Life*, 565.

²⁵¹ Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 31.

Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase

have made the same decisions and that no qualities unique to Jefferson were required for it to occur. This shows that Jefferson did not initiate the Purchase, did not show any extraordinary abilities in executing it, and that Madison and Adams also supported it, with Madison being possibly more enthusiastic than Jefferson. The chapter seeks to answer a Jefferson-specific version of the general questions for case studies proposed in Chapter 3 (Table 11).

<i>Table 11: Questions for Jefferson Case Study</i>	
Section 1	Question 1: How thoroughly was Jefferson filtered? Question 2: How likely was Jefferson's rise to power relative to other potential heads of government? Question 3: Who are the chief Modal alternatives to Jefferson who might have won the election of 1800? Question 4: Should Jefferson be classified as a "Potential Outlier" or "Modal"?
Section 2	Question 1: Did Jefferson have relevant Characteristics substantially different from those of the alternatives? Question 2: Did Jefferson make Policy Choices different from those the alternatives would have made? Question 3: Did Jefferson have an Impact compared to the potential alternatives? Question 4: Is Jefferson really a Modal?

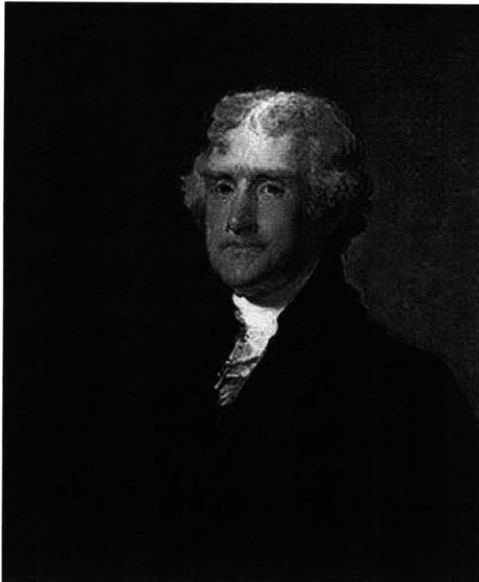
The Road to the White House

The election of 1800 featured a contest between a sitting President and Vice President of opposing parties, a tie in the Electoral College, a decision of the election by the House of Representatives after dozens of ballots, and even what may have been an attempt to steal the Presidency by Aaron Burr, Jefferson's own Vice-Presidential running mate. In the end, however, Jefferson, the sitting Vice President and Republican candidate for the Presidency, defeated John Adams, the incumbent President and Federalist candidate, and Burr, to gain the Presidency. Jefferson was clearly the nation's preeminent Republican, and upon taking office he appointed his longtime friend and lieutenant, James Madison, also a leading light of the Republican Party and his eventual successor as

President, to be his Secretary of State. These men: Jefferson, Adams, Burr, and Madison – are the four men who might have ended up as President. Three of them were Modal candidates. Burr, who came closest to defeating Jefferson, actually ended up in this position because of a fluke misfire of the Constitutional machinery, one that was corrected by a Constitutional Amendment soon after the election. Jefferson, Adams, and Madison were all well-filtered Modals, while Burr was a Potential Outlier.

The Potential Presidents

Thomas Jefferson



THOMAS JEFFERSON

Jefferson was born into the Virginia planter elite on April 13, 1743. He was tutored at home, then went to William & Mary for college, where he had an undistinguished undergraduate career. After graduating he studied law for five years. He was elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1768, where he joined the radical bloc opposing the Royal Governor. Jefferson practiced law until 1774 and won a reputation as one of the best lawyers in America before retiring to tend to his plantation. In 1776 he was appointed to the Second Continental Congress, arriving just in time to join the committee drafting the Declaration of Independence. He was chosen as the lead author at least partly at the suggestion of John Adams. Few if any of the delegates knew at the time the central role the Declaration would come to play in American thought – in fact Jefferson’s role was not even revealed until 1784 – but his authorship secured his position in American history forever.²⁵²

²⁵² Richard B. Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1, 3-4, 5-7, 8, 15, 22-13, 29.

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Soon after writing the Declaration Jefferson left Congress to return to Virginia, where he was once again elected to the lower house of the legislature and made major contributions to legal reform. In 1779 he was elected Governor for a one-year term, then re-elected in 1780. His second term ended in a fiasco. A British force led by Benedict Arnold raided the capital in its closing days. Jefferson handled the crisis even as it extended after his term in office, but returned home to Monticello instead of handing over power to his successor, leaving the state without a governor for several days. Despite this, Jefferson had secured his prominent position in American politics and made lifelong friendships with Madison and James Monroe, who also played a crucial role in the Louisiana Purchase and succeeded Madison as President. Jefferson then announced his retirement from politics.²⁵³

The death of Jefferson's wife in 1782, however, prompted him to become re-involved in political life. He was appointed Ambassador to France in 1784, and stayed in France for the next five years, only returning to the United States in 1789. Upon his return he was surprised to learn that Washington had appointed him Secretary of State. While in the Cabinet Jefferson's vision of the future of the country clashed with that of Alexander Hamilton, the Secretary of the Treasury. Jefferson wanted the United States to remain an agricultural nation with a weak central government. Hamilton wished the United States to become a commercial power with a strong central government. Jefferson wished to ally with France, Hamilton with Britain. The struggle between these two opposing views came to define American politics, with Jefferson eventually fathering the Republican (now Democratic) Party, while Hamilton's views were taken up by the Federalists. Jefferson's vicious struggle with Hamilton, often conducted in the newspapers, made Jefferson leave the Cabinet on January 5, 1794 and swear once again that he was finished with politics. As usual, such a desire would not last long.²⁵⁴

²⁵³ Ibid., 37, 43-50, David G. McCullough, *John Adams* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 315-316.

²⁵⁴ Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, 51-54, 85-91, 96-103, Ron Chernow, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Penguin Press, 2004), Joseph J. Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997).

Washington's Administration was dominated by Federalist policies, including its suppression of the Whiskey Rebellion and making a peace treaty with Great Britain on terms very favorable to the British. Jefferson, appalled, returned to politics. When Washington announced his retirement from public life in September 1796, it was generally assumed that Jefferson and Adams would contend to replace him. Jefferson himself initially preferred that Madison be the Republican candidate, but Madison persuaded Jefferson to take the lead. The race ended with a narrow victory for John Adams. Jefferson, the second place candidate in the Electoral College, became Vice President.²⁵⁵

This left Jefferson in the unique position of being the leader of the opposition from *inside* the Adams Administration. The Federalists responded to building Republican strength by passing the Alien and Sedition Acts which, among other striking restrictions on political freedom, made criticism of some federal officials illegal – although they notably exempted the Vice President from the list of protected offices. As the election of 1800 neared, Jefferson and Adams were expected to face off again.²⁵⁶

Jefferson's career going into the election thus made him very much a known quantity. He had played a role in American public life matched by only a handful of his contemporaries. He had been a Governor, a Secretary of State, and Vice President of the United States, holding each of those offices for multi-year periods and meeting enough success at each step that he had become the unquestioned leader of the Republican Party. This prolonged evaluation by the American LFP for President marks him as a Modal candidate.

John Adams

John Adams was born on October 19, 1735 in Braintree, Massachusetts, the son of a Deacon and the descendant of a family that arrived in America in 1638. Educated first in local schools, he went to

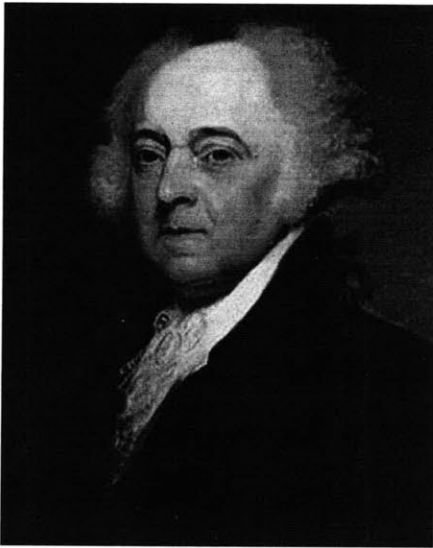
²⁵⁵ Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, 111-116.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 124-128, Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism*, 109, John E. Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, Pivotal Moments in American History* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), 111-112, 126-140.

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Harvard at fifteen and graduated in 1755. Supporting himself as a schoolteacher, Adams read law at night and was admitted to the bar in 1759. He built a successful practice as an attorney and married Abigail Smith in 1764.²⁵⁷

As opposition to British rule built in Boston during the 1760s and early 1770s, Adams took a leading role in the nascent revolutionary movement. He risked his stance as a leader of the opposition to the British by volunteering to defend the British soldiers who took part in the Boston Massacre. He won acquittals for six of the eight, with the remaining two convicted only of manslaughter. Adams' able



JOHN ADAMS

defense of the right to trial for anyone accused of a crime earned him increased respect from the public. In 1774 he was chosen by the state legislature to attend the First Continental Congress, and in 1775 he was chosen to attend the second.²⁵⁸

Adams continued to serve with distinction in the Continental Congress. In late 1777 he was appointed Commissioner to France. He arrived to discover that the treaty of alliance between the United States and France he had been tasked to negotiate had already been signed, but he worked with Benjamin Franklin, America's ambassador to France, to manage the United States' relationship with France. He returned to Boston in mid-1779 and was promptly elected to the Massachusetts state constitutional convention. In October he was unanimously chosen by Congress to go back to France to negotiate treaties with Great Britain, despite the fact that he had "neither solicited nor expected" the position, and he was in Amsterdam attempting to garner support for the United States from the Netherlands when news arrived of the American victory at Yorktown. He returned to France and helped negotiate the Treaty of Paris, ending the Revolutionary War and securing British recognition of American

²⁵⁷ McCullough, *John Adams*, 31, 35, 44, 54.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 59-136.

independence. Joined by Jefferson after the treaty was signed, Adams, Jefferson, and Franklin maintained America's position in the French capital until Adams' departure in 1785 to become the United States' first ambassador to Great Britain, where he remained until returning to the United States in March 1788.²⁵⁹

A few months after leaving Britain Adams became the first Vice President of the United States. While Adams was Vice President his formerly close relationship with Jefferson suffered a severe rupture, as Jefferson's and Adams' political views diverged, culminating in a controversy over an edition of Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* that included an introduction written by Jefferson that Adams correctly interpreted as a public attack. In February 1793 he was re-elected to the Vice Presidency despite an effort by the Republican Party to replace him with George Clinton. When Washington announced his retirement, Adams and Jefferson took the leads in their respective parties in a race to become the second President. Adams' Federalists still had the significant advantage of Washington's enormous popularity and so, despite divisions between Adams and Hamilton, Adams was able to capture the Presidency, receiving 71 Electoral College votes while Jefferson got 68.²⁶⁰

Adams' Presidency was dominated by conflict with France and domestic struggle with the Republicans. France and the United States were engaged in an undeclared naval war as French naval vessels attacked American merchant shipping. Adams sent envoys to France to negotiate a settlement, which culminated in the "XYZ Affair" when French secret agents demanded a bribe for Talleyrand, the French foreign minister, and a large loan from the United States to France before they would begin negotiations. The country was swept by war fever in response, and the Federalists were able to pass the Alien and Sedition Acts during the crisis. In the face of enormous pressure for war from members of his own party, Adams sent a minister plenipotentiary to France to negotiate a peaceful settlement. This

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 174-175, 209, 219-220, 225, 267-284, 330, 383.

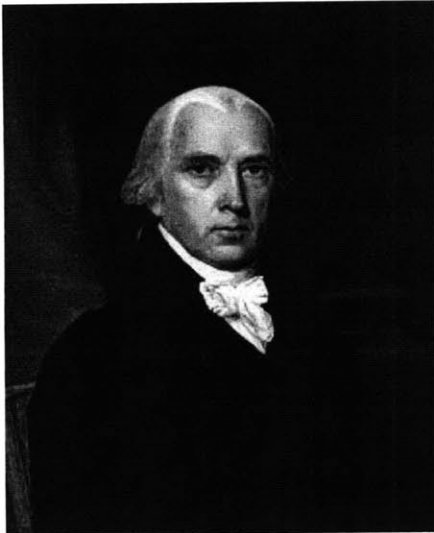
²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 393-394, 422, 429-431, 439, 462-465, 471.

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succeeded, but the terms required divided the Federalists, leaving them critically weakened going into the 1800 rematch with Jefferson.²⁶¹

Like Jefferson, Adams had been very thoroughly evaluated by the American LFP before the election. His long and accomplished record in both domestic and foreign affairs meant that was a quintessentially known quantity before taking office and thus very much a filtered, and therefore presumably a Modal, President.

James Madison



JAMES MADISON

Madison did not run for any office in the election of 1800. He is, however, the logical leader of the Republican Party had Jefferson chosen not to run. Jefferson, after all, actually wanted Madison to be the Republican candidate in 1796. Had Jefferson gotten as he originally wished, Madison is the person most likely to have been the Republicans' standard-bearer. He did succeed Jefferson in 1808.²⁶²

Madison, like Jefferson, was born to a prominent and wealthy Virginia family. In 1769 he left Virginia to attend Princeton and graduated in 1771. In December 1774 he was elected (along with his father) to a "Committee of Safety" in Orange County, Virginia meant to enforce the ban on trade with England voted by the First Continental Congress. In April 1776 he was chosen to attend a convention which would declare Virginia's independence. In 1777 he was elected to the Virginia "Council of State" by the state Assembly. Jefferson's election to the governorship in 1779 led to a close relationship between the two

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 486-489.

²⁶² Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, 113-114.

that dominated the rest of their political lives, and Madison was soon elected to the Continental Congress.²⁶³

While in the Continental Congress Madison showed himself to be a skilled parliamentary tactician with a budding interest in foreign affairs.²⁶⁴ France's Minister to the United States, La Luzerne, deemed him "the man of soundest judgment in Congress...."²⁶⁵ Madison's observations of the difficulties the Congress had in supporting the war effort convinced him of the need for a central government with the ability to levy taxes and conduct foreign policy. He left the Congress in 1783 and spent the next four years largely retired from politics, instead focusing primarily on improving his financial position, although he did serve as a delegate to the Virginia Assembly. In 1787 he reentered national public life when he was elected to Congress.²⁶⁶

In 1787 Madison arrived in Philadelphia for the Constitutional Convention. It met from the end of May through the middle of September, debating every detail of the document. Madison earned the sobriquet "Father of the Constitution" by playing a leading role in virtually every detail of the design of the new government.²⁶⁷ Most of the innermost circle of the American political elite had the months-long opportunity to observe in person exactly how Madison dealt with the critical task of creating a new government and assembling a coalition to support it. Rarely, if ever, has a political leader been exposed to more thorough scrutiny by his peers.

Madison traveled to New York after the Constitutional Convention where he was one of the leaders in the ratification struggle there.²⁶⁸ He worked with John Jay and Hamilton to write the essays

²⁶³ Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, 1-85.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 95-111.

²⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 112.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 158, 179.

²⁶⁷ Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September, 1787* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1986), Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, 190-230, Garry Wills, *James Madison, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2002).

²⁶⁸ Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, 232.

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now known as *The Federalist Papers* supporting the new Constitution.²⁶⁹ In March 1788 he left New York to return to Virginia to aid the ratification struggle there. His enormous abilities as a speaker and debater proved a crucial asset to the pro-Constitution forces in Virginia's political debates, who finally won by only 8 votes.²⁷⁰

In January of 1789 Madison ran for election to the first session of the House of Representatives. Despite a district that had been deliberately gerrymandered to be difficult for him to win, he decisively triumphed in a race against his old friend (and eventual successor as President) James Monroe. He soon took a prominent role in Congress on issues ranging from placing tariffs on imports to relations with France and Britain to opposing Hamilton's plans to fully fund federal debt to leading the effort to add the Bill of Rights to the Constitution. In 1797 Madison retired from Congress and, save for stints in the Virginia state legislature, stayed out of politics until Jefferson made him Secretary of State in 1801.²⁷¹

Like Adams and Jefferson, Madison had been closely examined for a prolonged period of time by the American political elite before the election of 1800. It is impossible to determine with any degree of certainty whether Adams or Madison would have taken the Presidency had Jefferson chosen not to run. It is, however, clear that like those two, Madison had been thoroughly filtered by the system and thus was, like them, a likely Modal President.

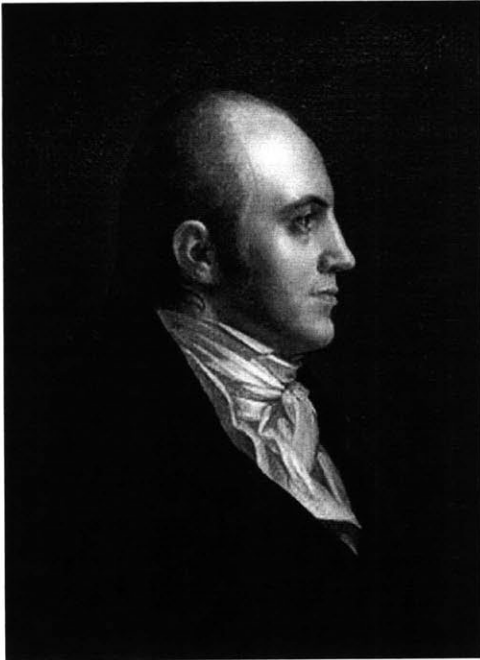
Aaron Burr

Burr was born in New Jersey on February 6, 1756. His father was the President of the College of New Jersey (which would become Princeton), his mother the daughter of Reverend Jonathan Edwards. After being admitted to Princeton as a sophomore at age 13, he initially attempted to pursue a career in the clergy, but after six months instead chose to become a lawyer, only to abandon that path when he joined Benedict Arnold's disastrous attack on Quebec in 1775. Burr rose to lieutenant colonel but left

²⁶⁹ Clinton Rossiter et al., *The Federalist Papers* (New York, NY: New American Library, 1961).

²⁷⁰ Ketcham, *James Madison: A Biography*, 253-264.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 277, 280-282, 290-292, 304-310, 337-368, 388.



AARON BURR

the Army in 1779 due to ill health. He resumed his legal studies, passed the bar in 1782, and moved to New York City to pursue his legal career as the war wound down in 1783.²⁷²

Burr spent most of the 1780s focused on his legal career. He was elected to the state legislature in 1784 but had little impact there, although he did begin to build his ties with the Anti-Federalists. In 1788 and 1789 Burr worked to elect George Clinton Governor of New York. When Clinton won he rewarded Burr for his efforts by making him the state's Attorney General and then, in 1791, supporting him in his race to represent New York in the Senate. Burr won

the election, but in the process made a permanent enemy of Hamilton, who supported Philip Schuyler, Hamilton's father-in-law. Burr took a prominent role in the Senate, focusing particularly on foreign affairs, allying himself with the Republicans, and unsuccessfully seeking an appointment as Minister to France. In 1796 he tried for the Vice Presidency, but came in fourth in the Electoral College, getting only 30 votes to Adams' 71 and Jefferson's 68. In 1797 his term in the Senate ended, and he was not re-elected, as the Federalists had captured the New York legislature.²⁷³

After returning home to New York City, Burr focused on rebuilding his shattered personal finances. He served two terms in the state legislature where he supported a commercial agenda designed to garner support for the Republicans among the city's mercantile and commercial classes, as well as tax cuts calculated to gain him support from laborers. His abilities were conspicuous enough that the Federalists successfully targeted him for defeat, narrowly knocking him out of the Assembly in 1799. Despite this, Burr's successes in strengthening the Republican Party in New York – traditionally a

²⁷² Nancy Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr* (New York, NY: Viking, 2007), 3-76.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 87-126, 146-155.

Federalist stronghold – made him the unquestioned leader in constructing the Republican slate for the state legislature, which would determine how to award New York’s crucial Electoral votes.²⁷⁴

Burr was thus a major figure in the Republican Party. His record in national public office, however, was vastly shorter than that of Jefferson, Adams, or Madison. His single term in the Senate as part of the minority party left him with some contacts with other American political elites, but far less than those of his soon-to-be rivals for the Presidency. Had Burr been elected President, his relatively abbreviated political career along would have been sufficient to classify him as Unfiltered and therefore a Potential Outlier. As will be seen, the manner in which he came close to the Presidency unambiguously would have qualified him as one had he won.

The Election of 1800

The nascent Republican Party was given two tremendous boosts going into the campaign. First, Washington’s death removed from the scene the single most popular Federalist– indeed, the single most popular American – and deprived the Federalists of the residual advantage stemming from his public adulation. Second, the Federalists had splintered over Adams’s handling of the undeclared naval war with France. Despite the urgings of Hamilton and his allies to declare war, Adams had successfully negotiated a peaceful settlement. Hamilton had retaliated by publishing a pamphlet declaring Adams unfit for the Presidency, critically weakening him going into the election.²⁷⁵

The 1796 election had been close. The Republicans knew going into the 1800 contest that they were in the driver’s seat. Republicans captured the New Jersey legislature and the Pennsylvania governor’s mansion in 1799, along with three Congressional seats in Federalists’ traditional powerbase of New England. A major blow was struck to the Federalists’ last hopes during the spring elections in 1800. Burr had worked furiously to strengthen the Republicans’ position there, particularly in New York

²⁷⁴ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 8-9, Isenberg, *Fallen Founder: The Life of Aaron Burr*, 155, 178-188, 196-158.

²⁷⁵ Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, 127-128, 140.

City, going so far as to violate the accepted rules of political campaigning by speaking at street rallies. The slate he assembled to run for the New York legislature included a variety of luminaries, including a former governor and the United States Postmaster. Hamilton, perhaps the only Federalist in New York who could have matched Burr, was absorbed by his duties leading the new national army. The result was a decisive Republican capture of the legislature that elated Jefferson and stunned Adams. In 1796 Adams had captured all 12 of New York's Electoral College votes. Adams had won by only 3 votes. In 1800 all 12 of New York's Electoral College votes would go to Jefferson. By early summer Jefferson was the overwhelming favorite to win the election.²⁷⁶

Beyond individual events, the Republicans were simply vastly more effective democratic politicians than the aristocratic Federalists. The Federalists "were still playing by the old rules, though the nature of the game had changed. The Republicans' energetic, emotional outreach to voters did not galvanize the Federalists to respond in kind." The Federalists were even ambivalent about whether it was appropriate for newspapers to discuss public affairs, with many preferring that such discussions be conducted in private among the elite.²⁷⁷

The procedures governing the choice of President in 1800 were very different from those used today, and one of those differences was crucial in transforming the election from a close one to a national crisis. The Constitution gives the responsibility for choosing the President and Vice President to the Electoral College, with each state represented by a number of electors equal to the sum of the number of its Senators and Members of Congress. How electors were chosen was left up to each state. The person with the highest number of electoral votes would become President if the number of votes he received was equal to a majority of the whole number of electors. The person with the second highest number of votes would become Vice President. Crucially, *each elector was to cast two votes*. Although these were supposed to be one for President and one for Vice President, there was no

²⁷⁶ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 127-128.

²⁷⁷ Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism*, 145-146.

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distinction between ballots cast for each office. When the Constitution had been written, the Framers had never anticipated the formation of cohesive political parties that might split the electors into uniformly voting blocs. They had expected that every Presidential election would see many candidates receiving votes and that most of the time no candidate would gain a majority.²⁷⁸

In the case of a tie the election would be decided by the House of Representatives. Here, again, the process was complicated. First, the House would vote not as representatives, but by state. With sixteen states, that meant that to be elected President a candidate would have to capture not a majority of Representatives, but a majority of the delegations of at least nine states. Second, the House that would choose the new President would be the House currently in session – in this case, the House elected in 1798, not the one elected in 1800.²⁷⁹ The potential for chaos, unanticipated outcomes, or backroom partisan deals seeking to sway the election was almost limitless once the stabilizing factor of Washington's virtually guaranteed unanimous election was removed.

The election of 1800 stretched over months as the sixteen states chose their electors in a variety of ways. Some, like New York, had the legislature choose who the votes would go to. Others relied on direct elections. Some states were winner take all. In others, electors were chosen by district. Most expected that the election would be decided by South Carolina, and this general expectation turned out to be correct. The elections for the South Carolina legislature in October were decisive. Although the Federalists did well in Charleston, Jefferson's Republicans captured an overwhelming majority of the rural votes, giving his party decisive control of the legislature and convincing everyone that Adams was

²⁷⁸ James E. Lewis Jr., "What Is to Become of Our Government?" The Revolutionary Potential of the Election of 1800," in *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic*, ed. James Horn, Jan Ellen Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 4-8.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

finished.²⁸⁰ Republicans had also done well in the Congressional elections, taking the House of Representatives from the Federalists and gaining a five-seat margin in the Senate.²⁸¹

Even by December 15 the exact results in the Electoral College were not perfectly clear. Jefferson wrote a letter to Burr telling him that he expected an Elector from South Carolina, and possibly one from Tennessee, to withhold a vote for Burr, guaranteeing Jefferson the Presidency. He admitted, however, that the task of assuring that one did had been “‘badly managed’ and ‘left to hazard.’” Burr responded by reassuring Jefferson that he had no plans to attempt to take the Presidency and would gladly yield that office to Jefferson.²⁸² On December 19, however, when Jefferson finally ascertained the exact vote totals in the Electoral College, the nation was suddenly faced with a crisis that was widely believed to threaten its survival. Both Jefferson and Burr would receive 73 votes, throwing the election into the House of Representatives. For the purposes of determining the President, crucially, the House was controlled by the Federalists, not the Republicans. This presented the Federalists with the temptation to throw the election to Burr in exchange for promises to govern according to the Federalist agenda.²⁸³ A high-stakes parliamentary struggle ensued as the Federalists were presented with a freak opportunity to neutralize some of the effects of the Republicans’ triumph.²⁸⁴

Most expected Burr to simply yield the Presidency to Jefferson, as he had promised that he would.²⁸⁵ The Senate had the responsibility of tallying the Electoral College votes on February 11, after which the House would meet in continuous session to choose the next President. Even though a majority of the members of the House were Federalists, the Republicans actually controlled eight of the sixteen *state delegations*, with two deadlocked and six under Federalist control. Jefferson had to

²⁸⁰ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 156-159.

²⁸¹ Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism*, 192.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 193-194.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 195, Joanne B. Freeman, "Corruption and Compromise in the Election of 1800: The Process of Politics on the National Stage," in *The Revolution of 1800: Democracy, Race, and the New Republic*, ed. James Horn, Jan Ellen Lewis, and Peter S. Onuf (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 91-92.

²⁸⁴ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 174.

²⁸⁵ Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism*, 196.

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capture one additional state delegation. Burr, by contrast, would need unanimous support from all six Federalist delegations, both deadlocked delegations, and one of the Republican ones.²⁸⁶ Another possibility was simply that the House would deadlock until Adams' term expired. If this occurred then two outcomes were possible. The Senate's president pro tempore might claim the Presidency. In this case, however, the Senate did not have a president pro tempore, and Jefferson could prevent the Federalist-controlled Senate from electing one simply by attending every session of the Senate and fulfilling the Vice President's Constitutional role as President of the Senate. Alternately, the Constitution gave the Congress the power to enact legislation as to who would claim executive power in the absence of a President and Vice President, for example by designating a member of the cabinet to fill the role. It might have chosen a Federalist if there were an extended deadlock.²⁸⁷

Burr was maneuvering to find a path to victory behind the scenes. Republicans controlled Vermont, New Jersey, Maryland, Georgia, and Tennessee by one vote each. If he could consolidate the Federalists behind him, Burr need capture only three congressmen – one each from three of those five states – to gain the Presidency. Burr wrote to Samuel Smith, a Maryland Congressmen, who could have swung the Maryland delegation in his favor, and stated that he would accept the Presidency if it were offered him, and was alleged to have met Smith and told him he intended to fight for the position. Congressman James Bayard, a Federalist and the sole representative from Delaware and thus the single most powerful individual in resolving the crisis, announced that he would support Burr.²⁸⁸

The Federalists generally had a very low opinion of Burr. Hamilton was perhaps the most extreme example of this, considering him “simply the ‘most unfit man in the U.S. for the office of

²⁸⁶ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 185.

²⁸⁷ Edward J. Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2007), 244-246.

²⁸⁸ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 182-183, 185-186, Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign*, 246.

President.”²⁸⁹ Hamilton was hardly alone. Most Federalists preferred him only because of their hatred of Jefferson and their belief that Burr’s ambition would make him willing to accept Federalist control of his administration in return for the Presidency.²⁹⁰ While many Federalists were willing to risk a Burr Presidency in order to maintain power, Hamilton was not. He set out to convince Federalist Congressmen to support Jefferson instead of Burr. Although Hamilton no longer had anything close to the influence that he had once had, he correctly focused on Bayard as the man who would decide the election. He also suggested that the Federalists reach out to Jefferson, suggesting that he commit not to reverse several key Federalist policies in exchange for the Federalists’ accession to his victory.²⁹¹

The electoral votes were opened and counted at noon on February 11, 1801. Surprising no one, Jefferson and Burr were tied with 73 votes apiece. Adams received 65, Charles Pinckney, the Federalist Vice Presidential candidate, received 64, and John Jay received 1. This threw the election into the House of Representatives. At 1:00 PM the House began voting. Jefferson took the eight Republican states, Burr took the six Federalist states, and Maryland and Vermont split evenly and so abstained. The election was deadlocked. The House voted thirty-three times with no change in the results before going into recess on February 14. As the voting continued tensions increased, the Republican Governors of Virginia and Pennsylvania threatened to mobilize the militia and use force if Jefferson were denied the Presidency.²⁹²

Delaware’s Bayard took advantage of the recess to meet with John Nicholas, a Virginian who was close to Jefferson, and ask him if Jefferson would agree to continue with three key Federalist policies: continuing to pay federal debts, continuing to fund the Navy, and not removing Federalists

²⁸⁹ Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism*, 202-203.

²⁹⁰ Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign*, 248.

²⁹¹ Dunn, *Jefferson's Second Revolution: The Election Crisis of 1800 and the Triumph of Republicanism*, 202-204, Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign*, 252-254.

²⁹² Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 187-189, Larson, *A Magnificent Catastrophe: The Tumultuous Election of 1800, America's First Presidential Campaign*, 264-266.

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from government offices solely because of their party affiliations. Nicholas told Bayard that his demands were reasonable, but refused to go to Jefferson with them. Bayard then met with Samuel Smith from Maryland, who agreed to meet with Jefferson. Bayard later said that Smith had returned and told him that Jefferson agreed. Despite these maneuvers, the House went back into session on February 16 and voted twice more that morning with no change, before going into recess once again for the afternoon.²⁹³ Burr, at least in public, played no role in the negotiations, although many years later Madison would argue that Burr had caused the impasse as part of a plot to seize the Presidency, and Jefferson later wrote his daughter that he thought of Burr “as a crooked gun, or other perverted machine, whose aim or stroke you could never be sure of.”²⁹⁴

Events came to a head that afternoon. Burr had sent messages to several Federalist members of Congress. Their contents are unknown as they were destroyed soon after they were read. Bayard, however, told both his wife and Hamilton that Burr’s terms were not acceptable to the Federalists. At noon the next day, February 17, Bayard – and therefore Delaware – abstained. By itself this would have elected Jefferson. Additionally, however, Federalists from Maryland, Vermont, and South Carolina abstained as well. This swung Maryland and Vermont to Jefferson and changed South Carolina – with an entirely Federalist delegation – from supporting Burr to abstaining. Jefferson won with 10 states, while Burr received 4, with two states abstaining.²⁹⁵

Jefferson always denied compromising to secure the Presidency. Bayard, on the other hand, always said that he did, and Jefferson’s actions during his Presidency matched closely with the outlines of the deal the Federalists had proposed. Samuel Smith – whom Bayard had named as the intermediary between himself and Jefferson – declared in a legal deposition that when he had approached Jefferson with the proposed deal, Jefferson had refused to make any public statements that might imply he was

²⁹³ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 189-192.

²⁹⁴ Bernstein, *Thomas Jefferson*, 202.

²⁹⁵ Ferling, *Adams Vs. Jefferson: The Tumultuous Election of 1800*, 193.

making a deal for the Presidency. With typically Jeffersonian elegant logic, however, he continued that he was perfectly willing to make a *private* statement of his beliefs to Smith, and in that private statement he responded to each of the Federalists' demands, citing his own writings to prove that he would keep to the tacit bargain.²⁹⁶

Jefferson won for a variety of reasons. Foremost was simply the fact that virtually everyone knew that he was the person the public had wanted to win and that his Presidency was in question only because of a freak misfire of the Constitutional machinery. Second, he was flexible enough to negotiate with the Federalists, and politically skilled enough to do so without being *seen* to negotiate. Third, many Federalist elites had seen enough of Burr to know that they did not like what they saw and that even the hated Jefferson was preferable to him. In the parlance of Leader Filtration Theory, Burr was exposed to the Leadership Filtration Process and, in the end, it filtered him out.

Assessment

The first set of four questions proposed at the beginning of this chapter can now be answered. Jefferson was thoroughly exposed to the LFP, which had the opportunity to judge him in vast a variety of situations over, literally, decades of time at the senior-most levels of the American government. His rise to the Presidency was very likely as, more than a year before the election of 1800, all observers expected him to be the Republican candidate for the Presidency and the most likely winner of the election. The chief Filtered alternatives to Jefferson are John Adams and James Madison. Burr, by contrast, would have been very much Unfiltered had he somehow triumphed in the House. All of this means that Jefferson should clearly be classed as a Filtered President.

²⁹⁶ Freeman, "Corruption and Compromise in the Election of 1800: The Process of Politics on the National Stage," 110-111.

The Louisiana Purchase

The path to the Louisiana Purchase began with the signature of the Treaty of Mortefontaine on September 30, 1800. The treaty was a product of the Adams Administration's efforts to settle the undeclared Naval War between the United States and France and succeeded in establishing permanent peace between the two countries. The very next day, the French signed a secret treaty with Spain that ceded the vast Louisiana Territory from Spain back to France, with the French promising never to transfer the territory to a third power. The dynamic Napoleon, absolute ruler of France, was far more likely to engage in American adventures and pose a threat to the United States than the weak Spanish government. No one in the United States knew about the transfer, but the stage had been set.²⁹⁷

While Adams and the Federalists generally preferred to ally with Great Britain, Jefferson and his Republicans were extremely pro-French. Jefferson and Madison, his Secretary of State, were aware that France was interested in reacquiring Louisiana from Spain, but believed that this interest stemmed from the Adams Administration's hostility to France. Despite their favorable view of France, however, both considered the possibility of French control of the Mississippi an enormous threat to American interests, up to and including the survival of the United States.²⁹⁸ The Mississippi was the crucial route used for exports from the American interior to reach the rest of the world. If the Mississippi were closed to American shipments, many feared that those territories which relied on the river would seek an independent accommodation with the foreign power controlling it, one that could well lead to independence and the fracturing of the American Union. This threat was so great that Jefferson commented: "There is on the globe, one single spot, the possessor which is our natural and habitual enemy. It is New Orleans, through which the produce of three-eighths of our territory must pass to

²⁹⁷ Thomas J. Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase* (Hoboken, NJ: J. Wiley, 2003), 8-10.

²⁹⁸ James E. Lewis, *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain?*, *Monticello Monograph Series* (Charlottesville, VA: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 24, 32-23.

market.”²⁹⁹ Thus maintaining an open Mississippi River was a vital national interest. Spain seemed unlikely to cause major problems for the United States. Napoleonic France, far more ambitious and active, seemed likely to do so, a feeling shared widely throughout the United States. This threat was so great that Jefferson believed, and made it clear to the French, that a transfer of New Orleans to France would make hostility between the United States and France almost inevitable, and might even provoke an American alliance with Great Britain. The fate of New Orleans was the single most important subject facing the Jefferson Administration.³⁰⁰

Jefferson, aware of the possibility that France might move to take Louisiana back, appointed Robert Livingston, a New York lawyer, politician, and long-time Republican, special envoy to France in 1801. Livingston had two tasks: negotiating final settlement of the claims American citizens had for French attacks on American shipping during the Naval War and preventing France from reclaiming Louisiana. Livingston had been offered the position once before, by Washington in 1794. Although he had turned it down then, he accepted it this time.³⁰¹ Soon after he arrived in France Livingston learned of the treaty giving France control of Louisiana and sent a message back alerting Jefferson of the bad news. His mission had failed even before he was appointed.³⁰²

In 1802 the general concern about the Mississippi became a crisis. France had officially, albeit secretly, taken control of the Louisiana Territory in 1800, but Spanish officials remained in administrative positions. In November 1802 a Spanish official named Juan Ventura Morales closed the port and cancelled American merchants' right to store cargo there while waiting export. His motivations

²⁹⁹ Mark S. Joy, *American Expansionism, 1783-1860: A Manifest Destiny?, Seminar Studies in History* (New York, NY: Longman, 2003), 18.

³⁰⁰ Charles A. Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble: The Remarkable Story of Jefferson, Napoleon and the Men Behind the Louisiana Purchase* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 2003), 27, 64-25, 119-125.

³⁰¹ Frank W. Brecher, *Negotiating the Louisiana Purchase: Robert Livingston's Mission to France, 1801-1804* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2006), 21, 30-32.

³⁰² Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 35.

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in doing so are unclear even to this day, but most Americans at the time thought the act was the result of a French plot. There was enormous popular outrage with major Federalists calling for war.³⁰³

Jefferson responded to the pressure by appointing James Monroe, a fellow Virginian, his longtime friend, and a former Senator and Governor, ambassador plenipotentiary to France and requesting that Congress appropriate \$2 million to aid in his negotiations. Monroe had served as Ambassador to France under Washington, but had been recalled in disgrace when his public support of France against England violated American neutrality. Jefferson, however, had maintained their friendship and supported Monroe in his successful race for the Virginia Governor's Mansion.³⁰⁴

Jefferson knew that Monroe was in financial straits and likely to be reluctant to re-enter public service, but he was so concerned by the possibilities inherent in the crisis that he asked his old friend to once again "sacrifice" his own interests to help resolve the situation.³⁰⁵

Jefferson and Madison gave Monroe clear instructions before he left for France. Madison, for example, instructed Monroe that his goal "was 'to procure a cession of New Orleans and the Floridas to the United States and consequently the establishment of the Mississippi as the boundary between the United States and Louisiana.'...They were not looking beyond the river, which was perfectly satisfactory as a western boundary." For these two territories combined they were willing to pay up to six million dollars. Madison further informed Monroe that if France was not willing to sell New Orleans, then it was important to acquire enough territory for the United States to build its own port or, at the least, to ensure that the United States would maintain the right of deposit in New Orleans and gain the right to

³⁰³ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 125-127.

³⁰⁴ Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 70-71, 81.

³⁰⁵ Noble E. Cunningham, *Jefferson and Monroe: Constant Friendship and Respect, Monticello Monograph Series* (Charlottesville, VA: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 38.

own territory there.³⁰⁶ Not once in Madison's four-page letter of instructions was the possibility of purchasing the entire Louisiana Territory even mentioned.³⁰⁷

Even as Monroe was traveling to Paris events were moving quickly there. Napoleon and Talleyrand, his Foreign Minister, undoubtedly had ambitions for a French empire in North America.³⁰⁸ These dreams, however, had taken a heavy blow from France's disastrous reverses in Haiti on the island of Saint Dominigue. The combination of Toussaint L'Ouverture's extraordinary leadership of rebels against French forces until his treacherous capture by the French, the massive revolt triggered by Napoleon's re-imposition of slavery on the island, and the incredible toll that tropical diseases, particularly yellow fever, took on newly-arrived French troops cast the idea of a French Empire in the New World into deep shadow. Yellow fever even killed General Charles Leclerc, the commander of French forces on the island and Napoleon's brother-in-law. Napoleon dispatched twenty-five thousand additional troops, but they were unable to make much progress.³⁰⁹ In Napoleon's vision, French colonists in Louisiana would have exported the products of their farms to the West Indies, allowing French planters there to concentrate solely on growing sugar on their plantations using slave labor.³¹⁰ In fulfillment of this vision, French General Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte was assembling ten thousand troops and many colonists in the Netherlands in preparation to taking them to Louisiana.³¹¹ Profits from the sale of sugar could help pay for France's war effort against Britain, which used its vast economic power to subsidize opposition to Napoleon.³¹² Without control over Saint Dominigue, Louisiana was much less valuable to France.

³⁰⁶ Lewis, *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain?*, 49-50.

³⁰⁷ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 182-185.

³⁰⁸ Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 8-10, 106-107.

³⁰⁹ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 45-54, 164.

³¹⁰ Lewis, *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain?*, 57-58.

³¹¹ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 55.

³¹² Harvey, *The War of Wars*, 90, 115, 117, 143, 487, 556.

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Even more important were the steadily increasing tensions with Britain. The French expected war to break out soon and were desperate for money to finance the war effort. The Louisiana Territory might have long term potential, but the needs of the moment in Europe were far more pressing. Napoleon was also aware of American hostility to French control of New Orleans, including threats of war being made in the Senate.³¹³ A war with Britain would consume all of his resources, and further diversions of French power to North America, particularly a simultaneous war with both Britain and the United States, might threaten this far more pressing effort. On March 24, 1803 Livingston wrote to Madison noting that Bernadotte's gathering of troops and colonists had been halted because of the steady increase of tensions with Britain.³¹⁴

The combination of factors made Napoleon contemplate a decisive change in French policy. On Easter Sunday, April 10, 1803 Napoleon convened a meeting at his palace in Saint Cloud to discuss whether he should sell the entire Louisiana Territory. Monroe, the American officially empowered to discuss purchases of French territory, had not yet even arrived in Paris. Napoleon asked Admiral Denis Decrès, the Minister of the Navy, and Francois Barbe-Marbois, the Minister of Finance, to debate the sale. Decrès was strongly opposed, arguing that without the colonies, France would soon no longer be a naval power. Marbois, on the other hand, was strongly in favor of the proposal, arguing that the territory would eventually fall to the United States anyways. Napoleon himself noted that while he could not give up the territory for free, "If I leave the least time to our enemies [the British], I will transmit only an empty title to those republicans whose friendship I seek [the United States]. They ask for only one town of Louisiana [New Orleans]; but I consider the whole colony as completely lost, and it seems to me that in the hands of that growing power, it will be more useful to the policy and even the commerce of France than if I should try to keep it." Marbois would later write in his memoirs that despite the debate, he believed that the decision had already been made. The next morning, Napoleon

³¹³ Lewis, *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain?*, 109.

³¹⁴ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 153-154, 162.

told him “I renounce Louisiana. It is not only New Orleans that I mean to cede; it is the whole colony, reserving none of it.”³¹⁵

At this point no American had even approached the French about purchasing New Orleans, much less the entire territory. In fact, no one in the United States even appears to have considered the possibility. Monroe, the special commissioner appointed to negotiate on the fate of New Orleans, had not even arrived in Paris yet. Once Napoleon had made his decision with his characteristic dispatch, however, the French government sprang into action. That afternoon Talleyrand invited Livingston to his residence and casually inquired if the United States would be interested in buying all of Louisiana. Such casual inquiries were a standard tactic of Talleyrand’s when he wished to open a discussion without committing himself to a position. An understandably stunned Livingston initially declined, saying that the United States was interested only in New Orleans and Florida. Talleyrand replied by arguing that without New Orleans the rest of the Louisiana territory was valueless. Livingston then proposed a sum of twenty million francs, or around four million dollars for the whole area. Talleyrand replied that this was too low and suggested Livingston think about it.³¹⁶

Monroe arrived on April 12 to hear the stunning news. Even as Monroe and his family sat down to dinner with the Livingstons that evening, Marbois, the Minister of Finance, came to visit and asked the two of them to come see him in his office that evening. Monroe had not yet been formally accredited and Livingston was hoping to claim credit for negotiating the Purchase, so Livingston went to meet him alone that night. There Marbois suggested a purchase price of \$25 million, with \$5 million of that being used to settle the claims Livingston had been sent to negotiate. When Livingston protested that the price was too high, Marbois dropped his offer to \$15 million and reminded Livingston that American credit was so good – ironically because of the Hamiltonian policies that Jefferson and Madison had opposed – that it would be easy for the United States to borrow the money. Livingston pretended

³¹⁵ Ibid., 163-164, Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 110.

³¹⁶ Cerami, *Jefferson’s Great Gamble*, 169-170, Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 111-112.

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to be unconvinced, but rushed home to dispatch a midnight letter to Madison that concluded, “We shall do all we can to cheapen the purchase, but my present sentiment is we shall buy.”³¹⁷

Jefferson had authorized Monroe to go as high as fifty million francs for ownership of large parts of the Floridas and navigation rights on the Mississippi. This was vastly more than Congress had authorized. Monroe had never even discussed with anyone the possibility of buying the entirety of the Louisiana Territory. Faced with this unanticipated opportunity, Monroe offered forty million francs for the entire territory on April 15 and fifty million on April 16. Both offers were rejected. Two weeks later, sensing that the window of opportunity might be closing, Monroe raised his offer to eighty million francs, or around twenty million dollars. Twenty million francs of that would go to pay off the American claims on France that Livingston had originally been sent to negotiate. The formal treaty was signed May 2, 1803. Two weeks later, Napoleon declared that war between France and England had broken out once again. That same day, though, he announced that France had ratified the sale of Louisiana, because “he did not ‘want to leave any ground for considering the colony as still French.’”³¹⁸

Livingston’s midnight letter to Madison arrived in Washington in late June. Madison immediately replied by authorizing Monroe and Livingston to make the purchase (which, unbeknownst to Madison, they had already done) and commenting that purchasing the whole territory “had not been considered ‘within the frame of probability’ when Monroe sailed to France.” The news of the completed negotiations was first announced in the United States in Boston on June 30th and reached Washington on July 3rd. Many Federalists publicly opposed the Purchase. Their influence was steadily dwindling, however, as the Republicans had followed up their triumph in the 1800 elections with further gains in the midterm elections of 1802. The Republicans now held the House 103-29 and the Senate 25-9. Some Federalists favored the Purchase. Hamilton strongly supported it in *The New York Evening Post*.³¹⁹

³¹⁷ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 176-177, Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 115-117.

³¹⁸ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 191, 194-195, 201-195, 208, Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 124-125, 130.

³¹⁹ Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 133-137.

Privately, so did John Adams, who wrote in 1811 that he “was pleased with the purchase of Louisiana because, without it, we could never have secured and commanded the navigation of the Mississippi.”³²⁰

Upon receiving the details of the treaty, however, Jefferson was faced with a dilemma. He was perhaps the foremost proponent of a strict constructionist interpretation of the Constitution that sharply limited the powers of the federal government. His problem was simple. Jefferson believed that nowhere in the Constitution was the federal government given the power to add new territory to the United States and he had campaigned on the platform that if the Constitution did not explicitly give powers to the federal government, it did not have those powers at all.³²¹

In order to take advantage of this extraordinary opportunity, Jefferson had to abandon his most dearly-held political principles. He attempted to square the circle through a constitutional amendment giving the federal government the power to annex territory. He proposed such an amendment at a Cabinet meeting on July 16. No one in the Cabinet was in favor of it, however, pointing out that the treaty stipulated it be ratified within six months of its signing date. This gave the United States until October 30th (the official date of the treaty was April 30th). No Amendment could be passed in such a short time. Despite this Jefferson continued to press for one, informing Republican leaders in the Senate that one would be necessary. He also began to prepare to occupy Louisiana, ordering the Army to prepare to take possession of New Orleans and calling for a special session of Congress on October 17 to gain Senate approval of the treaty and an appropriation of the necessary funds from the House.³²²

It was a combination of international and domestic pressures that finally convinced Jefferson to abandon his plan for a constitutional amendment. Napoleon was entirely unsympathetic to the argument that the United States needed more time because of constitutional issues. When told that

³²⁰ John Adams and John Quincy Adams, *The Selected Writings of John and John Quincy Adams* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), 158, McCullough, *John Adams*, 586.

³²¹ Jeremy D. Bailey, *Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 172-173.

³²² *Ibid.*, 177-178, Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 140.

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selling Louisiana without the consent of the Chambers (essentially the French legislature) was unconstitutional, he replied “Constitution! Unconstitutional! [R]epublic! [N]ational sovereignty! – big words! [G]reat phrases! Do you think yourself still in the club of St. Maximin?” Thus Jefferson was faced with the choice of foregoing either his Constitutional principles or the Louisiana Territory when he received a letter from Livingston on August 17 informing him that Napoleon was beginning to express a desire to rescind the treaty. The next day Jefferson forwarded Livingston’s letter to Madison and included instructions to stop discussing the need for an Amendment so as to refrain from giving Napoleon an excuse to abrogate the treaty.³²³

The second issue was the question of moving the Treaty through the Senate. In September, the Republican Majority Leader in the Senate, Wilson Cary Nicholas of Virginia, wrote Jefferson that if he even mentioned the necessity of an Amendment, it would jeopardize ratification of the treaty because “if the treaty shou’d be by you declared to exceed the constitutional authority of the treaty making power, that it would be rejected by the Senate...”³²⁴ Madison himself stepped in, taking an uncharacteristically hard line with Jefferson, quoting from a letter from Livingston and Monroe to send the message that “[a]ny mention of a constitutional amendment could destroy this whole result.”³²⁵

In the face of such concerted pressures, Jefferson yielded and moved forward without pursuing an amendment, never publicly recommending one and never informing the Senate of his concern that he had overstepped his constitutional authority.³²⁶ After Jefferson’s internal debate, the ratification struggle in the Senate was quite anti-climactic, with the treaty winning ratification by twenty-four votes to seven on October 20.³²⁷

³²³ Bailey, *Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power*, 179-180, Fleming, *The Louisiana Purchase*, 141-143.

³²⁴ Bailey, *Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power*, 181, Lewis, *The Louisiana Purchase: Jefferson's Noble Bargain?*, 71-73.

³²⁵ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 211-212.

³²⁶ Bailey, *Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power*, 183.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, 183-184, Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 214-215.

Had Jefferson indulged his desire for a Constitutional Amendment, the treaty might well have been defeated in the Senate if strict constructionist Senators had combined them with Federalists opposed to the Administration.³²⁸ When it came down to it, however, he instead chose to compromise his principles in order to seize the chance to double the size of his country. Jefferson chose to be flexible, and he and his country were rewarded for it.

Assessment

The second set of four questions about Jefferson and the Louisiana Purchase can now be answered. Jefferson was, of course, remarkably talented by almost any standard, but so, of course were many of his peers. A political era that included Madison, the primary author of the Constitution, Hamilton, who wrote most of the Federalist Papers and whose reports as Secretary of the Treasury are a foundation for the modern economy, and even Franklin, renowned as one of the foremost scientists in the world, did not lack for gifted politicians. More strikingly, those gifts clearly played little role in the crucial events of the Louisiana Purchase. There was no act of diplomatic virtuosity or intellectual brilliance involved. An extraordinary opportunity was seized with commendable skill, but there is nothing in the events surrounding it that suggests any other reasonably-skilled President could not or would not have done the same.

Even by the standards of the day and the Republican Party Jefferson had a strong preference for limited government, although hardly ones that put him out of the political mainstream. Those views, however, were matched by a pragmatism that allowed him to work effectively within the constraints of both the international system and domestic politics. They made Jefferson less likely to be able to capitalize on the opportunity Napoleon presented him, but he was willing to sacrifice his political principles when the moment of decision came. Had Jefferson possessed ideological rigidity that made him unwilling to agree to the Purchase, or made him pursue his desire for a Constitutional Amendment

³²⁸ Bailey, *Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power*, 186-191.

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despite pressure from his advisors to do otherwise, then he would certainly have had unique policy-relevant Characteristics. He did not. Instead he was ideologically flexible enough to adapt and succeed. Had he been so ideologically rigid that he could not bend in the face of the chance to gain all of Louisiana, it seems likely that such rigidity would have been revealed during his long career, and it is reasonable to ask if he would have become President at all. The delicate negotiations with the Federalists that secured him the Presidency, for example, required flexibility and pragmatism.

Jefferson did not exhibit any of the traits of the extraordinarily charismatic leader. He was a remarkably poor public speaker, for example. Some even argue that he chose to deliver the State of the Union as a written address because of his aversion to public speaking.³²⁹ Nor did Jefferson have any significant signs of psychological disorders or out of the mainstream ideologies that might similarly have influenced his decisions. He largely lacked Characteristics, therefore, that would have increased his odds of being filtered out by the LFP.

In the case of the Louisiana Purchase – unquestionably the most important decision of his Administration – it is clear that Jefferson's Policy Choices were virtually indistinguishable from those that would have been made by potential Modal alternative Presidents. Both Adams and Madison unquestionably favored the Louisiana Purchase. Madison, in fact, was probably more enthusiastic about it than Jefferson, and helped push him into the strategies that led him to success in the Senate.

This suggests – strongly – that Jefferson's Impact on the Louisiana Purchase was minimal at most. Had either Madison or Adams been in his shoes it is difficult to identify any significant differences in policy outcomes. This is not to suggest that Jefferson did not execute his office with skill. Clearly he did. After his extraordinary record before the Presidency, however, skill is exactly what one would expect. Had Adams or Madison been in office, however, there is every reason to believe that they would have filled it with similar skill – as, after all, they did before and after Jefferson's time in office.

³²⁹ Noble E. Cunningham, *The Process of Government under Jefferson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978), 25.

Conclusions

Napoleon himself – the only truly irreplaceable figure in the chain of events that led to the Purchase – said that because of it “the Americans may be found too powerful for Europe in two or three centuries.” He continued, “But my foresight does not embrace such remote fears.”³³⁰ Jefferson’s presumably did not either, but he had argued for an American “Empire of Liberty” when he was Governor of Virginia.³³¹ The Louisiana Purchase transformed the future of the United States. Jefferson, deservedly, is given enormous credit by historians for virtually doubling the size of the United States peacefully and at negligible cost. Historical ratings of Presidential success are similar to leader Impact, but they are distinct, and here the distinction is thrown into sharp relief. Jefferson was unambiguously a successful President. Had Adams or Madison still been in office when Napoleon made the offer, however, the Louisiana territory would still have been bought, and they would have reaped the credit for what was, by any measure, an extraordinary achievement. Without the Louisiana Purchase he would surely be lower in the rankings – as Adams and Madison are – suggesting that the rankings actually understate Leader Filtration Theory’s power to identify high impact leaders. LFT predicted that Jefferson was a Modal President, and a close examination of the most important moment of his Presidency strongly confirms this prediction.

³³⁰ Cerami, *Jefferson's Great Gamble*, 240.

³³¹ Bailey, *Thomas Jefferson and Executive Power*, 183.

CHAPTER 6 - "IN YOUR HANDS, AND NOT IN MINE": LINCOLN AND THE CIVIL WAR

Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States, is said to be the subject of more books in English than any man save Jesus. A towering figure by any definition of the word – he remains to this day the tallest man ever to be President – Lincoln dominates American history and popular memory in a way that no other person even approaches.³³² Lincoln became President at a moment of supreme national crisis. When he departed his home of Springfield, Illinois for Washington he told the gathered crowd, "I now leave, not knowing when, or whether ever, I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington."³³³ He returned only in death, but he returned as the President who saved the Union and issued the Emancipation Proclamation. His position in the American pantheon has been occasionally questioned, but seems in little danger of going into eclipse two centuries after his birth.³³⁴

With so much already written about Lincoln, is there anything new to say? A case study of Lincoln meant to test LFT, however, provides a new way to examine his rise to power and the importance of his presence in office. The eight specific questions for a case study of Lincoln are in Table 12. These questions can be answered by examining, first, the careers of the leading candidates for the Presidency in 1860, and second, details of Lincoln's life and key events and aspects of his Presidency. The focus is on the contenders for the Republican nomination. Clearly if a Democrat (presumably Stephen Douglas) had been elected, events would have been radically different. At the simplest level, it

³³² Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1994).

³³³ Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865, The Library of America* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1989), 199.

³³⁴ The most famous, although still entirely unconvincing, example: Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1973).

is unlikely that Southern states would have chosen to secede. The Republican margin in 1860 was, in any case, so large that there was little chance of a Democratic victory, making all of the “most likely” alternatives to Lincoln his fellow Republicans. A Democratic victory implies a different country with different structural constraints and incentives, not just a different leader.

This examination of Lincoln and his time in office dramatically supports Leader Filtration Theory. Lincoln was exceptionally unfiltered before becoming President and his rise to that office was exceedingly improbable. He had out of the ordinary traits, including a severe history of chronic and periodic major clinical depression. Once in office his policy preferences were radically different from those of potential alternative Presidents, most importantly William Henry Seward, his Secretary of State. Even beyond those policy differences his Impact was extraordinary, as his remarkable strategic, political, managerial, and rhetorical abilities were key factors in the course of the war and the Union’s victory.

<i>Table 12: Specific Questions for Lincoln Case</i>	
Section 1	Question 1: How thoroughly was Lincoln filtered by the LFP before 1861? Question 2: How likely was Lincoln's rise to power relative to other potential Presidents? Question 3: Who might have become President if Lincoln had not? Question 4: Should Lincoln be classified as a "Potential Outlier" or "Modal"?
Section 2	Question 1: Did Lincoln have Traits substantially different from his rivals? Question 2: Did Lincoln make Policy Choices different from those his rivals would have made? Question 3: Did Lincoln have an Impact substantially different from that his rivals would have had? Question 4: Based on the answers to the questions above, was Lincoln an Outlier?

The Road to the White House

The Contenders

The contest for the Republican nomination was essentially William Henry Seward against the field. Seward was the unquestioned frontrunner and the preeminent figure in the Republican Party. After Seward, the Party’s most prominent leader was Salmon P. Chase. Even the day before the Republican National Convention, few would have named Lincoln as a major rival to either. Both had

histories of success in politics and levels of national awareness that vastly exceeded Lincoln's. Lincoln's dominant position in American history makes his Presidency seem, in retrospect, almost inevitable, driven by "a remorseless logic...."³³⁵ But in fact Lincoln's seizure of first the nomination and then the Presidency was a product of both skillful political infighting and a healthy dose of luck.

Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln was born in a log cabin in Kentucky on February 12, 1809.³³⁶ His family moved to Indiana, then Illinois. In 1832 he served briefly in the Black Hawk War, but saw no combat. Returning home he ran for the Illinois legislature as a Whig and was defeated. In 1834 he ran again and was



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victorious. He would be re-elected in 1836, 1838, and 1840, gaining a reputation as an effective legislator and becoming the Whigs' floor leader and chairman of the finance committee. In 1842 he decided not to run for re-election. In 1843 he ran for the House of Representatives but was decisively defeated. The Whigs decided to rotate their nomination for the Congress, and Lincoln received it in 1846. He served one term in Congress, during which he had no legislative achievements of any significance. His term was chiefly marked by his opposition to the Mexican War, an

opposition that rendered him so unpopular that he chose not to run for re-election and a Democrat took the seat. When his term was up "he seemed destined for political obscurity..."³³⁷

³³⁵ Richard Carwardine, *Lincoln: A Life of Purpose and Power* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 91.

³³⁶ By a strange coincidence, Charles Darwin was born on the same day.

Adam Gopnik, *Angels and Ages: A Short Book About Darwin, Lincoln, and Modern Life* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

³³⁷ Carwardine, *Lincoln*, Donald, *Lincoln*, 22-44, 52-111, William E. Gienapp, *Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America: A Biography* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2002), 22, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 13, 40-57, John C. Waugh, *One Man Great Enough: Abraham Lincoln's Road to Civil War* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2007).

Lincoln spent the next five years focused on his law practice, building a reputation as a capable and honest lawyer and demonstrating considerable courtroom skill.³³⁸ Although his practice became quite lucrative, he established no legal philosophy and tried no cases of legal or national significance. In 1854, however, everything changed. Sectional peace had been maintained by a series of compromises meant to maintain the balance of power between the North and South, the most important of them the Missouri Compromise. The Missouri Compromise mandated that federal territory below the southern border of Missouri would allow slavery, and that states made up from that territory would enter the Union as slave states, while territory north of that line would be free, and states made from it would be free states. Missouri, a slave state, was the exception. In January 1854, Stephen Douglas introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Act. The act created two states, Nebraska and Kansas, both north of the Missouri Compromise line. It repealed the Compromise and mandated instead that the status of slavery in federal territories would be decided by “popular sovereignty” – that is, a vote by the residents of the territory. Nebraska’s status as a free state was never in question, but partisans from both sides poured into Kansas in an attempt to decide the outcome, resulting in a guerrilla war known as “Bleeding Kansas.” Even as the Whig Party was in its death throes, the Act inflamed the North, allowing anti-slavery Whigs and Democrats to coalesce around an “Anti-Nebraska” opposition.³³⁹

Lincoln, still an anti-slavery Whig, re-entered politics to oppose the Act. Senators at the time were elected by state legislatures. Anti-Nebraska forces captured the Illinois legislature in the 1854 elections and Lincoln believed he would be their choice for Senate. In February 1855, however, when the legislature voted, Lincoln discovered that a small group of Anti-Nebraska Democrats were unwilling

³³⁸ In one murder case Lincoln asked a prosecution witness to repeat that he saw the murder by the light of a full moon more than a dozen times, only to use the rare tactic of judicial notice to introduce an almanac demonstrating that the moon had set that night before the murder, destroying the witness’s credibility and winning his case. This trial was dramatized in the John Ford classic *Young Mr. Lincoln*.
John Ford, *Young Mr. Lincoln* (Hollywood, CA: Twentieth Century Fox, 1939).

³³⁹ Donald, *Lincoln*, 149, 170-172, Harris, *Lincoln’s Rise to the Presidency*, 66-68, James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1988).

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to vote for a Whig. Although Lincoln had the most support, he was unwilling to see the seat go to someone whose standing on Nebraska was uncertain, so he threw his support behind Lyman Trumbull, an anti-Nebraska Democrat who took the Senate seat. This marked Lincoln's first defeat in a Senatorial election and left Lincoln without any political office, but the clear leader of the Illinois anti-Nebraska coalition and the logical candidate to challenge Douglas for his Senate seat in 1858.³⁴⁰

On its face, any contest between Lincoln and Douglas would seem enormously one-sided, for reasons Lincoln himself laid out in 1856: "Twenty-two years ago Judge Douglas and I first became acquainted. We were both young then; he a trifle younger than I. Even then, we were both ambitious; I, perhaps, quite as much so as he. With *me*, the race of ambition has been a failure – a flat failure; with *him* it has been one of splendid success. His name fills the nation; and is not unknown, even, in foreign lands."³⁴¹ Douglas was the preeminent politician of his generation. He had already been twice elected to Congress and the Senate, where he had been chief architect of the Compromise of 1850 and the sponsor of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.³⁴² The two had been rivals since 1838, constantly opposed in politics and even as suitors for Lincoln's wife, Mary Todd.³⁴³ To add to Lincoln's disadvantages, Douglas had split with Buchanan and Eastern Republicans were suggesting that Illinois Republicans support Douglas instead of the virtually unknown Lincoln. Lincoln defused this threat by securing a nomination at the state Republican convention – only the second time in American history that a state convention

³⁴⁰ Donald, *Lincoln, 178-185*, Gary L. Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination* (New York, NY: Thomas Dunne Books, 2008), 5, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency, 72-74*, Waugh, *One Man Great Enough*, 229.

³⁴¹ Don E. Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832-1858, The Library of America* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1989), 384.

³⁴² The Compromise of 1850 was a complicated set of laws that resolved North-South disputes over how to expand the United States following the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War, which resulted in the acquisition of territories that make up the present-day states of California, New Mexico, and Arizona.

Gerald Mortimer Capers, *Stephen A. Douglas: Defender of the Union, Library of American Biography* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1959), Robert Walter Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1973), George Fort Milton, *The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934).

³⁴³ Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates That Defined America* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 29.

nominated a Senate candidate – but his acceptance speech contained a statement on slavery so radical that it may have cost him the election:

‘A house divided against itself cannot stand.’
I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*.
I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved* – I do not expect the house to *fall* – but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided.
It will become *all* one thing or *all* the other.
Either the *opponents* of slavery, will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its *advocates* will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in *all* the States, *old* as well as *new* – *North* as well as *South*. [Emphasis in original]³⁴⁴

This was “the most extreme statement made by any responsible leader of the Republican Party.”³⁴⁵ Lincoln’s friends and advisers, shown drafts beforehand, had uniformly urged him not to say it.³⁴⁶ Lincoln and Douglas engaged in their famous series of six debates, where Lincoln’s ability to go toe-to-toe with the celebrated Douglas substantially strengthened his political standing and acquiring him the beginnings of a national reputation. In the end, however, Lincoln candidates, despite polling more votes statewide, were hindered by gerrymandered Illinois districts and took only 46 seats in the legislature, with Douglas supporters gaining 54. Despite this, Illinois Republicans did not blame Lincoln for the defeat, and Lincoln himself had become “a rising Republican star in the West who had been thrust into the galaxy of national politics....” Two days after the election, a small local newspaper, the *Lacon Illinois Gazette*, apparently entirely on its own initiative, endorsed him for the Presidency.³⁴⁷

Lincoln’s friends met January 6, 1859 to discuss making him a candidate for President. Lincoln discouraged them. He argued that he was unqualified for the Presidency, but also said. “I can be nominated, I can be elected, and I can run the Government.”³⁴⁸ As he pointed out, the Presidential field

³⁴⁴ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832-1858*, 426, Guelzo, *Lincoln and Douglas: The Debates That Defined America*, 288.

³⁴⁵ Donald, *Lincoln*, 209.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid*, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 92-95.

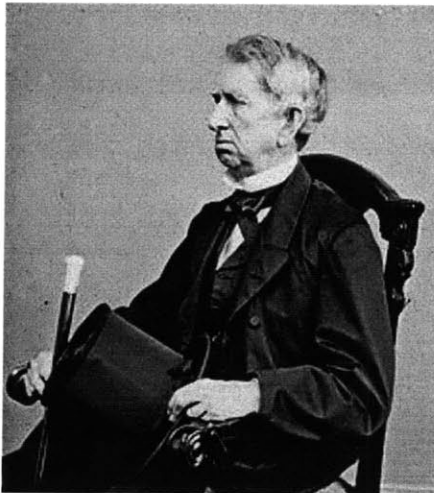
³⁴⁷ Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 147-151.

³⁴⁸ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 22, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 152.

for 1860 was crowded with men, including Seward, Chase, Senator Simon Cameron, Associate Justice John McLean, and Missouri politician Edward Bates, who were each vastly more qualified for the Presidency than he was.³⁴⁹ When Thomas J. Pickett, the editor of the *Rock Island Register*, wrote to ask to speak to him about running for President, he replied “I must, in candor, say I do not think myself fit for the Presidency...” Strikingly, however, he asked Pickett to keep this letter confidential.³⁵⁰ Whether or not Lincoln was willing to leave the starting blocks, the race for the Presidency had begun.

William Henry Seward

Seward was born on May 16, 1801 in Orange County New York, the oldest son of a wealthy businessman. He was admitted to Union College at the age of fifteen and graduated in 1820. He read



WILLIAM HENRY SEWARD

law for over a year before continuing his legal training in a law office in New York in 1821. He was admitted to practice law with Judge Elijah Miller, a prominent citizen of New York’s Cuyahoga County, and married the Judge’s daughter, Frances.³⁵¹

Seward was interested in politics from a young age. He was elected to the state senate in 1830 and nominated for Governor in 1834 when the Whigs could not resolve disputes between more senior candidates. Although Seward lost, his performance during the election cemented his position among leading Whigs in the most important state in the Union. In 1838 he would form a partnership with Thurlow Weed, the New York City machine boss widely considered the nation’s finest political operative, and win the Governorship. He won re-election in 1840 and stepped down in 1842 after two successful terms in office characterized by

³⁴⁹ Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 158.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

³⁵¹ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 14, Glyndon G. Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1967), 2-7.

progressive political policies and a strong anti-slavery stance. He had a particular commitment to improving education, but this had costs, as his insistence on extending public schooling to immigrants' children, including using public funds to support parochial schools for New York Catholics, made him hated by anti-immigrant "Know-Nothings."³⁵²

Seward returned to private practice, taking law partners and founding a firm that would eventually become Cravath, Swain, & Moore, arguably the foremost New York firm even today.³⁵³ His practice, aided by both his legal skills and political connections, rapidly became extremely lucrative. He remained in the public eye because of his courageous defense of two African-Americans, Henry Wyatt and William Freeman, who were accused of murder and brought to trial in 1846. Already a radical opponent of slavery, Seward had also shown great interest in insane prisoners, and both appeared to have "lost their reason." Despite death threats, Seward ably defended both on the grounds of insanity. Despite his efforts, Wyatt was eventually executed while Freeman died in prison of tuberculosis while Seward pursued an appeal. Despite his defeats, Seward's defense made his legal reputation. In the aftermath a book based on his defense went through four editions in a single year and his legal practice grew enormously.³⁵⁴

Seward re-entered politics in 1848 by running for the United States Senate. His campaign, ably directed by Thurlow Weed, cruised to an overwhelming victory. Once in the Senate, Seward's most important stand was his opposition to the Compromise of 1850, another in the series of sectional compromises. Seward, always tempted by high-flown rhetoric, marked himself as an anti-slavery radical in the minds of Southerners and many Northern conservatives by proclaiming that "there is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain [Western territories]...." This statement made Seward anathema in the South. He was easily re-elected to the Senate, still as a Whig,

³⁵² Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 16, 26-18, 48-86.

³⁵³ Garrard Glenn, "Review of the Cravath Firm and Its Predecessors, 1819-1947. Vol. I, the Predecessor Firms, 1819-1906 by Robert T. Swaine," *Virginia Law Review* 33, no. 4 (1947).

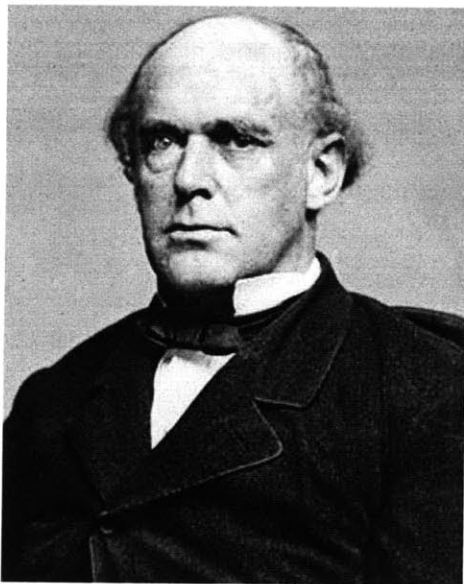
³⁵⁴ Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 88-98.

in 1854. The national collapse of the Whigs in that same election, however, persuaded him to join the newly-formed Republicans. His national prominence was such that he came close to gaining the Republican nomination in 1856 but Thurlow Weed, correctly assessing that the new party was too weak to win the Presidency, convinced him to withdraw his name and allow John C. Frémont to head the ticket. Seward and his advisors all expected that he would easily gain the 1860 nomination.³⁵⁵

After Frémont's defeat, Seward began to position himself for 1860. In campaigning for other Republicans in 1858 he predicted an "irrepressible conflict" between slave and free states. This address positioned him as an anti-slavery radical. By the end of 1858, Seward was clearly the dominant figure in the Republican Party. He was seen as a radical on the all-important slavery issue even though in substance his position was close to the center of the Republican Party.³⁵⁶

Salmon P. Chase

Chase, unlike Seward, was a genuine and committed anti-slavery radical. Chase was born



SALMON P. CHASE

January 13, 1808 to a small farmer in Connecticut. After his father died in 1817, Chase was sent to Ohio so that his uncle Philander could care for him. He graduated from Dartmouth in 1826 and moved to Washington, DC where he studied the law while supporting himself as a teacher. He returned to Cincinnati in 1830 to begin his career as a lawyer. He rapidly established a solid legal reputation and his firm became quite profitable.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 110-111, 123, 124, 160, 176-117, 180.

³⁵⁶ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 15, Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 193.

³⁵⁷ Frederick J. Blue, *Salmon P. Chase: A Life in Politics* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1987), 1-28.

Chase's views on race and slavery evolved over time. In the early 1830s what little interest he had in the slavery issue focused on the colonization movement, which sought to expel all African-Americans, slave or free, from the United States and establish them in a colony either in Africa or Latin America. In 1836, however, a pro-slavery mob destroyed the printing press of the *Philanthropist*, an abolitionist newspaper in Cincinnati. Chase argued that, despite his own disagreement with abolitionists, they were entitled to express their views. Chase broke with the Cincinnati establishment by opposing the mob and he rapidly became an abolitionist in the ensuing political struggle. This led to his involvement in a number of fugitive slave trials. In a series of cases during the early 1840s, Chase defended escaped slaves who had been arrested and argued that they should not be returned to their Southern owners. By 1845 he was commonly viewed as the most prominent attorney in Cincinnati on the fugitive slave issue.³⁵⁸

Chase entered politics in 1840, when he was elected to Cincinnati's City Council as a Whig. His increasing commitment to abolitionism, however, resulted in a change in his political allegiances. The death of William Henry Harrison and the ascension to the Presidency of his Vice President, John Tyler, a Virginia slaveholder, led Chase to join the anti-slavery Liberty Party. He rapidly became a leading figure in Ohio's Liberty Party and focused his efforts on urging anti-slavery Whigs and Democrats to join it. By 1848 Chase had gained enough national prominence to play a key role in fusing the Liberty Party into a national Free-Soil party that ran Martin Van Buren as its candidate for the Presidency.³⁵⁹

Although the Free-Soil party had only limited success nationwide, it was able to elect eleven members to the Ohio legislature. As neither major party had a majority, this gave it, and therefore Chase, significant bargaining power. The Free-Soilers had the option of electing Chase or Josiah R. Giddings, a Whig Congressman. Chase, unlike Giddings, was willing to split the party in order to gain the

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 28-40.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 42-63.

Senate seat, and was thus elected to the Senate, taking office in 1849 at the cost of a divided base of support in Ohio and long-lasting hard feelings on the part of other Free-Soilers.³⁶⁰

Chase's Senatorial career was moderately distinguished. He too opposed the Compromise of 1850, but unlike Seward he was not a leader in that effort. Democratic landslides in 1852 and 1853 solidified their control of the Ohio legislature, guaranteeing that Chase would not return to the Senate when his term ended in 1854. He had been a leading opponent of the Kansas-Nebraska Acts. Chase returned to Ohio and immediately took the lead in organizing the anti-Nebraska political factions in Ohio into a single cohesive movement. His organization and leadership of the anti-Nebraska Party was so effective that in 1855 he would be elected Governor of Ohio. This anti-Nebraska Party soon coalesced into the Republican Party. In 1856 he made a try at the Republican Presidential nomination, only to be easily defeated by Frémont. Chase was successful enough as Governor that in 1857 he was re-elected despite Democratic victories in other statewide races. He was no sooner sworn into office than he began making his moves towards the 1860 Republican nomination.³⁶¹

These, then, were the three men who would become the chief contenders for the Republican nomination in 1860, a contest fought in the shadow of a violent struggle in Kansas and the threat of Southern secession if a Republican were elected. The contest should have been no contest at all. How, then, did Lincoln stun his rivals and seize first the nomination and then the Presidency?

The Road to the Convention

On October 16, 1859, the political landscape was transformed when John Brown, an anti-slavery fanatic, led an attack on the Harper's Ferry arsenal in Virginia in an attempt to trigger a slave insurrection. The attack was a fiasco. Robert E. Lee led a counterattack that captured Brown. He was executed forty-five days later, but his act electrified the nation. In the South, it greatly strengthened

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 68-70.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 79-115.

secessionist radicals.³⁶² Most Northerners were horrified by Brown's actions, strengthening the opposition to abolitionists and other anti-slavery forces.³⁶³ Elections in New York soon after Brown's raid delivered decisive defeats to Republican candidates. Seward was viewed as the standard-bearer for the radical members of the anti-slavery movement. Seward's seemingly inevitable course to the nomination had hit a stumbling block. Lincoln, far less well-known and thus less identified with abolitionists, had an opening as Republicans began to seek a more conservative candidate.³⁶⁴

Lincoln had already conducted a speaking tour of Ohio leading up to the 1859 elections. The Republican victories that followed earned him some credit nationwide.³⁶⁵ Republican prospects in Kansas, already poor, were further weakened by Brown's raid. Mark W. Delahay, a distant relative of Lincoln's, asked him to come to Kansas and rally the territory's Republicans. For the first week of December Lincoln campaigned there, gaining support from Kansas Republicans who might otherwise have been committed to Seward.³⁶⁶

Now Lincoln made his next move. Taking advantage of the fact that few if any national Republicans had even considered him as a presidential candidate, Lincoln sent Norman Judd, his chief lieutenant, to New York City to attend the meeting of the Republican National Central Committee meant to choose the date and location of the Republican National Convention. The Committee met on December 21. The date was set for June 13, 1860 – crucially, after the Democratic National Convention. Lincoln, in a virtuoso feat of political forecasting, had predicted in December 1858 that the Democrats would split at their national convention in Charleston, South Carolina in 1860, and that Douglas would be saddled with a platform advocating the adoption of a "slave code" (laws supporting slavery) in

³⁶² Evan Carton, *Patriotic Treason: John Brown and the Soul of America* (New York, NY: Free Press, 2006), 296-313.

³⁶³ Stephen B. Oates, *To Purge This Land with Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (Amherst, MA: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1984), 353-361.

³⁶⁴ Carwardine, *Lincoln*, 96, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 174-175.

³⁶⁵ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 86-90.

³⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 97-108.

federal territories. Lincoln thought this would make Douglas bolt the Democratic Party and attempt to garner support in the North as the candidate best-suited to defeating pro-slavery forces.³⁶⁷ Such a split would make a Republican victory in 1860 an almost foregone conclusion, particularly if the Republicans ran a candidate proven to be able to run against Douglas and Lincoln had shown he could do just that.

Perhaps equally important was the choice of location. Here Judd pulled off a coup. Chicago was in contention to host the convention “primarily because Lincoln’s name had not resonated as a serious presidential candidate within the ranks of the committee.” This let Judd could promote it as a neutral site. When the choice came down to Chicago or St. Louis, the frontrunner, Judd argued that St. Louis’s location in Missouri, a slave state, meant that a convention there would be wasted. No slave state was likely to vote for the Republicans. If St. Louis won Lincoln’s nomination would be “inconceivable.” In Chicago, by contrast, the home field advantage would be significant. Judd’s arguments were effective enough that when the vote was held that evening, Chicago received eleven votes to St. Louis’s ten. Judd’s own vote was the decisive one.³⁶⁸

These slowly accruing advantages aside, Lincoln remained very much a long shot. In early 1860 even his own close friend Judge David Davis wrote that he considered it a “foregone conclusion” that either Edward Bates from Missouri or Seward would be the Republican nominee. Even in Illinois Lincoln had not yet been endorsed by the major Republican newspapers or consolidated his support among party leaders. East of Ohio, he was a virtual unknown. He remained a third-tier candidate.³⁶⁹

What Lincoln needed to break into the top tier of candidates was a chance to elevate his profile in the East. In October of 1859, Lincoln had been invited to speak in Brooklyn. That talk had been rescheduled to February of 1860 – perfect timing for Lincoln’s budding campaign. Lincoln’s low profile would actually work to his advantage once again. New York was Seward’s home ground and could

³⁶⁷ Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 161.

³⁶⁸ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 112-114.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 122-123, 125, 126, 127.

normally be expected to rally on his behalf, but few if any in the audience would think of Lincoln as a rival to him. Lincoln spent weeks crafting his speech.³⁷⁰

Building on a statement by Stephen Douglas that the Founding Fathers understood the slavery issue better than anyone alive in 1860, Lincoln, using his own research, built a careful argument that the Founding Fathers had supported preventing the spread of slavery, using five different Congressional votes as his evidence. This position was the founding principle of the Republican Party and a sharp rebuke to Douglas's popular sovereignty. Lincoln examined all the votes cast by men who had signed the Constitution or been a member of the Congress that had passed the Bill of Rights. He found that thirty-nine had voted directly on the issue of whether to forbid slavery from federal territories and that twenty-one had voted to do so.³⁷¹ He urged his listeners to continue to oppose the spread of slavery, concluding "LET US HAVE FAITH THAT RIGHT MAKES MIGHT, AND IN THAT FAITH, LET US, TO THE END, DARE TO DO OUR DUTY AS WE UNDERSTAND IT."³⁷²

Lincoln's speech was an extraordinary success. All four major New York City newspapers reprinted it in full. Even Democratic newspapers were forced to praise it, however grudgingly. Lincoln's oldest son, Robert, was in school at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. Lincoln used a visit to him to make a series of speeches up and down the East Coast, reiterating the themes he had struck in New York and catapulting himself into the national limelight.³⁷³

From this point on, Lincoln's strategy was simple. Characteristically, he expressed it best himself: "If I have any chance, it consists mainly in the fact that the *whole* opposition would vote for me if nominated....My name is new in the field; and I suppose I am not the *first* choice of a very great many. Our policy, then, is to give no offence to others – leave them in a mood to come to us, if they shall be

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 127-133.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 139, Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 115-130.

³⁷² Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 130.

³⁷³ Carwardine, *Lincoln*, 98-99, Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 136-153.

compelled to give up their first love.”³⁷⁴ Lincoln had to hope that Seward – still the unquestioned front-runner – would stumble further, and that the delegates would then turn to him as the most commonly-accepted candidate. In fact Lincoln had four hurdles to clear:

1. The convention balloting needed to begin with fewer than half of the state delegates committed to Seward to prevent him from winning on the first ballot.
 2. Those state delegates not committed to Seward on the first ballot needed to be prevented from moving to him on subsequent ballots.
 3. No other front-running candidate – particularly Chase, Bates, or Cameron – could garner enough support outside his home state to place himself so strongly behind Seward as to become the obvious second-choice candidate for the anti-Seward delegates to converge upon.
 4. Lincoln needed to be surprisingly strong – second or third out of at least ten candidates on the first ballot – in an effort to be the rallying candidate in the anti-Seward movement...
- [O]n April 1, none of the four scenarios seemed likely.³⁷⁵

Lincoln’s chances were still so poor that his friend Senator Lyman Trumbull had begun to explore the possibility of making himself the vice-presidential nominee on a ticket headed by an Eastern candidate.³⁷⁶ Lincoln received his final pre-convention boost at the Illinois Republican Convention. In a masterpiece of stagecraft, Lincoln’s campaign managers brought rails that Lincoln had supposedly split as a boy onto the convention floor to cement his populist image. His team took advantage of the frenzy to pass a resolution that Illinois’ delegation would vote for Lincoln as a unit.³⁷⁷

Despite Lincoln’s surge, going into the National Convention he was still viewed as a minor candidate. The day after the state convention *Harper’s* had published biographies of the top eleven contenders for the Republican nomination. Lincoln had made the list, but his biography was the shortest of the eleven and one of the last ones presented. Two other campaign handbooks published at

³⁷⁴ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 152.

³⁷⁵ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 161.

³⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 162-165, 171, 174.

³⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 183-184.

the same time did not even mention him. The custom at the time was that candidates did not attend the convention, so Lincoln waited in Springfield while his team went to Chicago.³⁷⁸

While Lincoln had been slowly improving his position throughout 1859, Seward had been on an eight-month tour of Europe and the Middle East. On his return to the Senate in February 1860 he delivered a powerful speech designed to conciliate conservatives and secure his hold on the nomination. This, combined with his still low national profile, meant Lincoln remained out of any ranking of even the top four contenders. When the Democrats were unable to pick a nominee in April, this both improved the Republicans' chances of gaining the Presidency and improved Seward's chances at the nomination, as the need to choose a candidate who could defeat Douglas became less pressing.

Chase's candidacy, meanwhile, was crippled by his inability and unwillingness to engage in retail politics and his close identification with the most radical wing of the Republican Party. Chase never organized anything resembling a national campaign, never appointed a full-time manager, made no efforts to solidify his base in Ohio, and made no efforts to cultivate or conciliate moderate Republicans. Chase's work building the Republican Party and brave stand against slavery had propelled him into the national spotlight but made him ill-suited to capture the nomination. Although few were aware of the extent of his weakness, Chase had so mismanaged his campaign that Lincoln knew, as Chase apparently did not, that the Ohio delegation would only support him on the first ballot.³⁷⁹

Seven Days in Chicago

Seward remained the clear favorite. His popularity in New York was so great that even the *New York Herald*, a Democratic newspaper, described him as "beloved by all classes of people, irrespective of partisan predilections." Both Republican and Democratic newspapers in New York expected him to be the winner, with the Democratic *Atlas and Argus* declaring that although "[n]o press has opposed more

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 188.

³⁷⁹ Blue, *Salmon P. Chase*, 123, 126-127, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 193.

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consistently and more unreservedly than ours the political principles of Mr. Seward. . . . we have recognized the genius and leadership of the man.”³⁸⁰

The Lincoln team’s handicaps were made clear when it reached Chicago. While every other candidate’s team had reserved rooms from which to operate, Lincoln’s did not even have a headquarters lined up, finally managing to get a few rooms and a parlor in a single hotel. The team was led by David Davis. When Davis arrived on Saturday, May 12, it was his first time attending a national convention, much less running a campaign at one. By contrast Thurlow Weed, Seward’s manager, was “arguably the ablest political tactician in the country.”³⁸¹

Weed knew that he could count on Seward having nearly half the delegates necessary to win just from the five states he had lined up and the Kansas Territory. He could expect additional support from New England and the Midwest. Even the chairman of the Republican National Committee was a staunch Seward supporter. There were, however, a wide array of “favorite son” candidates – candidates who would have the support of their home states on the first ballot. This made it difficult for Seward to capture the nomination on the first ballot unless the convention could be swept away in the initial emotional rush. Lincoln’s cause was aided by the formation of the Constitutional Union Party on May 9. It drew most of its support from border-states and anti-Catholic Know Nothings. Seward, hated by the Know Nothings and perceived as an anti-slavery radical, was particularly vulnerable to losing votes to the Constitutional Unionists, so this increased the pressure to find an alternative. The combination meant that by Sunday night Davis knew that Seward would not take the first ballot.³⁸²

On Monday May 14 the disparity in resources was put in stark relief when the Seward team arrived. They were nearly two thousand strong with rooms in every major hotel in Chicago and “oceans

³⁸⁰ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 13.

³⁸¹ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 190, 191-192.

³⁸² *Ibid.*, 191-193, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 201.

of money” at their disposal.³⁸³ Chase’s failure became apparent and Lincoln’s team continued to be quietly effective, securing the support of the Indiana delegation. Reporters began to be aware of Lincoln’s strength and to report the possibility that he would emerge as a compromise candidate.³⁸⁴

Lincoln’s team spent Tuesday attempting to weaken Seward. They argued that Lincoln’s perceived moderation on slavery, his personal story, and his greater appeal in the battleground states of Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey made him more likely to win the Presidency.³⁸⁵ Seward was further undercut by Know-Nothing’s (an anti-Catholic and anti-immigrant movement) antipathy for him, stemming from his actions as Governor.³⁸⁶ Lincoln had no sympathy for Know Nothing-ism:

I am not a Know-Nothing. That is certain. How could I be? How can any one who abhors the oppression of negroes, be in favor of degrading classes of white people? Our progress in degeneracy appears to me to be pretty rapid. As a nation, we began by declaring that “*all men are created equal.*” We now practically read it “*all men are created equal, except negroes.*” When the Know-Nothings get control, it will read “*all men are created equal, except negroes, and foreigners, and catholics.*” When it comes to this I should prefer emigrating to some country where they make no pretence of loving liberty – to Russia, for instance, where despotism can be taken pure, and without the base alloy of hypocrisy.³⁸⁷

Lincoln’s statement, however powerful, was private. Although he never catered to their sentiments, his abbreviated record meant that he had never had to take a stand that roused their opposition and he had developed great skill at garnering the support of anti-slavery Know Nothings without alienating immigrant voters, something that could be a crucial advantage in the election.³⁸⁸

Tuesday saw Judd score a second parliamentary coup. Judd had already used his influence as a railroad attorney to get fares into the city from the rest of Illinois slashed, flooding Chicago with Lincoln supporters. He now gained control of the seating arrangements in the convention hall (called the Wigwam), and had the New York delegation surrounded by other strong Seward states, while keeping it

³⁸³ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 193-194, 201.

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 197-198.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

³⁸⁶ Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 225-226.

³⁸⁷ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832-1858*, 363.

³⁸⁸ Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 165.

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as distant as possible from states like Pennsylvania and Missouri, which might have been persuaded to go to Seward after the first ballot. He also made sure those delegations were close to that of Illinois. Once the convention was in session, Seward's managers were so hemmed in by their own supporters that they found it virtually impossible to negotiate with the crucial swing delegations.³⁸⁹

When morning dawned on Wednesday and the convention opened, the Lincoln team was confident that Seward would not win on the first ballot. Behind the scenes on Wednesday Chase and other potential Dark Horse candidates dropped out of contention as they failed to pick up additional support. Seward's team began to realize that Lincoln was their chief opponent. Lincoln's team had even begun to develop some measure of overconfidence.³⁹⁰

That confidence would be dashed on Thursday when the Seward team began to rack up a series of parliamentary victories. Weed was able to convince Massachusetts and New Hampshire to swing towards Seward. Pennsylvania's votes were controlled by Simon Cameron, a Senator whom its delegates would support on the first ballot as a favorite son candidate. Cameron's friend Alexander Cummings told Weed that Pennsylvania could be persuaded to switch as well once it had cast its initial ballot for Cameron. By the end of the day Seward's team was so confident of success in the balloting that would begin on Friday that they had already begun their victory celebration, while Lincoln's team, stunned by their sudden reverses, began to express doubts about their own ability to measure up to the New Yorkers.³⁹¹ Even the legendary editor Horace Greeley, a sworn enemy of Seward's, believed that Seward would win the next day, as did most of the other attendees at the convention.³⁹²

Davis, on the other hand, sensing the rising Seward tide, had taken drastic measures to stem it. Davis already knew that he could surprise the convention on the first ballot by revealing Indiana's

³⁸⁹ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 204-205.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 199, 205, 206-207.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 208-210.

³⁹² Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 207-208.

support of Lincoln. He decided that the key to stopping Seward was to get another major state to switch to Lincoln on the second ballot. Pennsylvania was the best prospect. Davis had told Lincoln that Cameron would swing Pennsylvania if he were promised a Cabinet seat. Lincoln answered “[m]ake no contracts that will bind me.” Davis’s statement to his campaign team when they heard Lincoln’s instructions was ruthlessly pragmatic: “Lincoln ain’t here, and don’t know what we have to meet, so we will go ahead, as if we haven’t heard from him, and he must ratify it.” Davis would do whatever he had to do to make Lincoln President, whatever his instructions were.³⁹³ Cameron, despite corruption of legendary proportions, became Lincoln’s Secretary of War.

Balloting began in the morning on May 18. When each candidate’s name was placed in nomination, his supporters in the crowd of 10,000 observers inside the Wigwam would signal their approval with a roar of adulation. The Lincoln team, drawing again on their home field advantage, had stacked the crowds with Lincoln supporters, many of them specifically recruited because of the strength of their voices. Chase, McLean, Bates, and Cameron received little support from the crowd, confirming their status as also-rans. Seward’s nomination was greeted with a loud shout, but Lincoln’s was greeted by noise so loud it rattled the windows of the Wigwam and left Seward’s delegates “stunned to silence by the raging Lincoln sea surrounding them.” All the votes were counted by noon. Seward had 173.5 votes, sixty short of the 233 needed for victory. Lincoln had a strong second with 102, surprising Weed and the other members of Seward’s team, while the remaining ten candidates on the ballot split the remainder. Cameron was in third with around 50 votes.³⁹⁴

Now Davis and Judd’s machinations bore full fruit. On the second ballot, Pennsylvania shifted to Lincoln, dropping Cameron out of the race and giving Lincoln a huge boost. Seward’s once comfortable 71-vote margin was cut to only 3.5 votes, as Seward’s total went to 184.5 while Lincoln’s shot up to 181.

³⁹³ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 211, Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 246.

³⁹⁴ Ecelbarger, *The Great Comeback: How Abraham Lincoln Beat the Odds to Win the 1860 Republican Nomination*, 219, 221-215.

At this moment Weed's experience and superior resources should have kicked in, allowing him to flip undecided delegates in Seward's favor. Instead, Judd's seating arrangements hemmed him in as the cacophony from Lincoln supporters in the galleries made communication extremely difficult. The third ballot saw Lincoln surge into the lead with 230 votes, while Seward dropped to 180. Four Ohio votes then switched to Lincoln, giving him the nomination.³⁹⁵ Even after he was nominated, *The New York Times* was unable to spell his name, declaring that "Abram Lincoln" was the Republican nominee.³⁹⁶

Election and Assessment

After Lincoln's stunning victory at the Convention, the national election was something of an anti-climax. Lincoln's friends and supporters throughout the North never doubted his victory. The Democrats, meeting in April, had already fractured when eight Southern states withdrew from the Democratic National Convention rather than support a platform that was moderate on slavery. The Convention reconvened in June in Baltimore, but this time even the Border States withdrew rather than assent to Douglas's nomination. He would eventually be nominated by a convention that had less than two-thirds of the delegates in attendance who were supposed to be there. Southern Democrats convened separately and nominated Kentucky's John C. Breckinridge as their own candidate.³⁹⁷

Lincoln moved rapidly to solidify his hold on the Republican Party. He met with Weed to plot strategy, convinced Edward Bates to write a public letter endorsing him – thus weakening the Constitutional Union party – and supported a protective tariff and a Homestead Act to improve his position in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and the West. By Election Day, the leaders of all three parties opposing Lincoln were willing to acknowledge that Lincoln's victory was a virtual certainty. Lincoln won

³⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 225-230.

³⁹⁶ Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 213.

³⁹⁷ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 258-259, Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 756-771.

every free state save New Jersey, which he split with Douglas. By early in the morning on Wednesday, November 7 Lincoln knew he would become the sixteenth President of the United States.³⁹⁸

The answers to the first four questions posed above are now clear. Lincoln was barely filtered at all. His rise to the presidency was spectacularly unlikely. Seward was a far more probable President. Lincoln's previous national political career was brief and largely unsuccessful. Lincoln's ascent clearly was aided by his considerable character and skill. Lincoln had also positioned himself well to seize the nomination if Seward stumbled, as he did.³⁹⁹

For all his gifts, Lincoln was helped by an enormous measure of what can only be considered luck. John Brown's raid, the formation of the Constitutional Union Party, and the plethora of marginal favorite son candidates all hobbled Seward, while Chase's political incompetence prevented him from weakening Lincoln's base in the West. Lincoln's lack of a record allowed him to capture support from the Know-Nothings despite his opposition to their principles. His inexperienced and under-resourced team was able to outmaneuver the legendary Thurlow Weed, but only because it *disobeyed* his explicit instructions. His team was able to get the convention located in Chicago and use that to his advantage, but only because he was such a minor figure on the national scene that other candidates did not even consider him a threat. In fact if a single vote at the Committee meeting which chose the Convention's location had switched, the convention would have been held in St. Louis, where Edward Bates - like Lincoln a former Whig from the West who was perceived as an anti-slavery conservative - would have had the home field advantage. The convention was more about Seward's defeat than Lincoln's victory.⁴⁰⁰ This is not to say that Lincoln's considerable skills had nothing to do with his victory. They were crucial. But they would have made no difference had it not been for other factors. The ultimate

³⁹⁸ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 257-278, Russell McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession, Civil War America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 21.

³⁹⁹ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 254.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 253.

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irony of the choice, after all, is that Seward lost because he was thought of as too radical; yet he proved himself to be far more interested in compromise and conciliation with the South than the supposedly far more conservative Lincoln. Lincoln should clearly be classified as Unfiltered.

Lincoln as Outlier

A full analysis of the Lincoln Administration would (and has) fill many, many books. It is both far beyond the scope of this chapter and unnecessary as a test of LFT. The theory does not, after all, predict that all Unfiltered leaders will vary from Filtered ones on all dimensions at all times; it simply predicts that they will often do so in important ways. The second set of four questions about Lincoln and his Administration posed above thus allows us to narrow our focus by examining the record of Lincoln's life and Administration for the particular characteristics expected of Outliers.

Question 1: Leader Characteristics – “I am now the most miserable man living”

Outliers are predicted to have a variety of traits and characteristics different from those of Modal leaders. Lincoln obviously qualifies for this on a superficial level. He was, for example, the first president born outside the original thirteen colonies – the first, in fact, born west of the Appalachians.⁴⁰¹ On a more substantive note, one of LFT's predictions about the Characteristics of Potential Outliers is that they are likely to have a substantially higher incidence of psychological disorders.

It is, of course, difficult to diagnose anyone at a distance, and even more so when the only available evidence is the necessarily fragmentary information available about someone who died in 1865. Nevertheless, there is considerable, arguably even overwhelming, evidence that Lincoln periodically suffered from what would today be called clinical depression, including at least two complete breakdowns and a lifelong chronic depression.

⁴⁰¹ National Park Service, *Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site* (December 23 2009)); available from http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/presidents/lincoln_birthplace.html.

The first breakdown occurred in 1835 after the death of Ann Rutledge, a woman to whom Lincoln may have been engaged. There was considerable concern “for Lincoln’s immediate safety and for his long-term mental health.” Lincoln told a schoolteacher in the town that “he felt like Committing Suicide often” and Lincoln’s friends put him on a suicide watch.⁴⁰² His second breakdown appears to have begun in late 1840 and was so severe that he stopped attending legislative sessions and may have become suicidal. Joshua Speed, his closest friend, said that “Lincoln went Crazy – had to remove razors from his room – take away all Knives and other such dangerous things...it was terrible.” Another friend described him as “delirious to the point of not knowing what he was doing.” His case was severe enough that it was public knowledge, with a town newspaper making fun of his “indisposition.”⁴⁰³

Lincoln himself described his state of mind as “deplorable.”⁴⁰⁴ His letter to his law partner is a wrenching depiction of someone in the throes of a major depression: “I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on earth. Whether I shall ever be better I can not tell; I awfully forebode that I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me.”⁴⁰⁵ His best friend, Joshua Speed, would many years later remember telling Lincoln that if he did not recover he would die. Lincoln responded “he was more than willing to die, but that he had ‘done nothing to make any human being remember that he had lived, and that to connect his name with the events transpiring in his day and generation and so impress himself upon them as to link his name with something that would redound to the interest of his fellow man was what he desired to live for.”⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰² Donald, *Lincoln*, 57, Joshua Wolf Shenk, *Lincoln's Melancholy: How Depression Challenged a President and Fueled His Greatness* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2005), 18-19.

⁴⁰³ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 98-99, Shenk, *Lincoln's Melancholy*, 23, 56-57.

⁴⁰⁴ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1832-1858*, 68.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 69.

⁴⁰⁶ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 99-100, William Lee Miller, *President Lincoln: The Duty of a Statesman* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), 39.

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Although Lincoln may never again have plunged to quite the same depths, bouts of depression were a recurrent feature of his life. A law clerk noted his “blue spells” in the late 1840s.⁴⁰⁷ In the 1850s:

Some days he would arrive at his office in a cheerful mood, but then... he might fall into 'a sad terribly gloomy state - pick up a pen - sit down by the table and write a moment or two and then become abstracted.' Resting his chin on the palm of his left hand, he would sit for hours in silence, staring vacantly at the windows. Other days he was so depressed that he did not even speak to Herndon when he entered the office, and his partner, sensing his mood, would pull the curtain across the glass panel in the door and leave for an hour or so, locking the door behind him to protect the privacy of 'this unfortunate and miserable man.'⁴⁰⁸

Similarly, Lincoln's companions when he was traveling on the judicial circuit noted that he was prone to nightmares and severe dejection. Such bouts seem to have continued into his presidency, with visitors describing him trapped in a deep depression in 1862 and 1864.⁴⁰⁹

The case that Lincoln suffered from major depression is quite clear cut. In fact “[i]n three key criteria – the factors that produce depression, the symptoms of what psychiatrists call major depression, and the typical age of onset – the case of Abraham Lincoln is perfect. It could be used in a psychiatry textbook to illustrate a typical depression.” It is a flawless match for a major depressive episode. Those who have suffered two such major episodes have a seventy percent chance of experiencing a third, and the continuation of those symptoms for many years in the 1850s and 1860s suggests that he was clearly suffering from chronic depression for large portions of his adult life.⁴¹⁰

Lincoln's depression may well have been a source of considerable strength during his presidency, one of the key factors in his personality's remarkable combination of seemingly diametrically opposed qualities.⁴¹¹ At the same time, however, his 1840-1841 major depression clearly greatly inhibited his ability to perform in the state legislature, and an episode of similar duration and intensity could have crippled the North's war effort. In either case, the fact that he suffered from such a

⁴⁰⁷ Shenk, *Lincoln's Melancholy*, 108.

⁴⁰⁸ Donald, *Lincoln*, 163.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 163-164, 371, 517.

⁴¹⁰ Shenk, *Lincoln's Melancholy*, 11, 23, 99.

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, 136, 159, 165.

significant and severe psychological disorder accords with one of the predictions of LFT and allows Question 1 to be answered in the affirmative.

Question 2: Policy Choices – “Shall it be peace, or a sword?”

Lincoln, like any wartime President, faced an enormous variety of important choices during his Administration. They ranged from how to prevent Britain and France from intervening on the side of the Confederacy, to whether, when, and how to emancipate the slaves, to what terms to offer the Confederacy as the war drew to a close. One choice, however, preceded any of those. When Lincoln was inaugurated, several states of the Deep South had already seceded, but the federal government, under Buchanan, had done nothing about it. In his last address Buchanan had declared his belief that, although secession was illegal, the government lacked any legal authority to prevent it.⁴¹²

The Deep South had made its preference clear. It would rather fight than stay in the Union. The preferences of the Upper South and the border slave states were still unknown. Yet in the end the final decision was in the hands of the North. The North could, as Horace Greeley, the influential Republican editor of the New York *Tribune* advised, have chosen to let the Southern states “go in peace.”⁴¹³

The future of the Union came to pivot on Fort Sumter, a single fort in Charleston harbor that had no strategic or military significance. Sumter, besieged by troops raised by South Carolina, was one of the few remaining points controlled by the federal government in the seceded states. The Administration had to choose whether to conciliate the South by yielding the Fort peacefully, or signal its willingness to fight by attempting to reinforce and resupply the beleaguered few men there.⁴¹⁴

The outcome of the crisis was not foreordained, nor was the North united. Even Republicans, naturally far more belligerent than the Democrats, were split into three groups: the first so horrified by

⁴¹² Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*, 281.

⁴¹³ David M. Potter, "Horace Greeley and Peaceable Secession," *The Journal of Southern History* 7, no. 2 (1941): 146.

⁴¹⁴ Robert Leckie, *None Died in Vain: The Saga of the American Civil War* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1990), 136-142, McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 264-275.

the prospect of war that they wished to allow Southern states to secede peacefully; the second sought a compromise that could preserve the Union without bloodshed; and the third believed that compromise would encourage secession, reward treason, or simply destroy the Republican Party.⁴¹⁵

This fragmentation was the most important feature of the political environment. The Administration had remarkable freedom from both external and internal constraints. Externally, the slow speed of nineteenth-century travel and the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean meant that during the early stages of the Civil War there was little prospect of intervention by a European power. Later in the War preventing such an intervention required adroit diplomacy.⁴¹⁶ At its beginnings, however, foreign powers would become involved only if the Administration chose to involve them.

Domestically, the Administration had relatively free hands. Public pressure played little role in its decisions. It was largely expressed through the channel of the Republican Party, and Lincoln was able to control Party elites through his distribution of patronage, putting the crucial decisions in his hands.⁴¹⁷ The nature of the crisis gave the Republicans virtually total control over the Federal Government. The seceding Southern states took with them many of the Democratic Congressmen and Senators who might otherwise have hindered the Administration or put additional pressure on it to conciliate secessionists. The Republican Party was able to “govern exclusively in the region of its greatest strength and [possessed] a degree of control over the Congress denied it by the election itself.”⁴¹⁸

Lincoln and Seward, the two most prominent members of the Republican Party, had sharply different views on how to handle the crisis. Before leaving Springfield, Lincoln had written a draft of his Inaugural Address. It concluded with a powerful, almost belligerent, coda aimed at Southerners:

In *your* hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in *mine*, is the momentous issue of civil war. The government will not assail *you*, unless you *first* assail *it*. You can

⁴¹⁵ Milton, *The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War*, 521-522.

⁴¹⁶ Jay Monaghan, *Diplomat in Carpet Slippers* (New York, NY: Charter Books, 1962), 155-333.

⁴¹⁷ McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 277-279.

⁴¹⁸ Stephen Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make: Leadership from John Adams to Bill Clinton* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1997), 201-202.

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have no conflict, without being yourselves the aggressors. *You* have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while *I* shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect, and defend' it. *You* can forbear the *assault* upon it; *I* can *not* shrink from the *defense* of it. With *you*, and not with *me*, is the solemn question of "Shall it be peace, or a sword?"⁴¹⁹

The argument here is characteristically Lincolnian. It is essentially a legal one. Lincoln is arguing that his Presidential oath of office imposed an obligation to preserve the Union. Lincoln, however, never delivered this version of the address. Seward was horrified by its "bellicose tone" and felt that it would drive the undecided states into secession. He suggested instead a far more pacific ending:

I close. We are not we must not be aliens or enemies but fellow countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly they must not, I am sure they will not be broken. The mystic chords which proceeding from so many battle fields and so many patriot graves pass through all the hearts and all the hearths in this broad continent of ours will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation.⁴²⁰

Lincoln was clearly influenced by Seward's suggestions. At the same time he was unsatisfied with both Seward's tone and his language, and he recast the closing into his own singularly elegant prose. The Inaugural he delivered maintained his position "that in contemplation of the universal law, and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual." He appealed to reason, arguing that "the central idea of secession, is the essence of anarchy" because the South was seceding because it would not accede to the wishes of the majority, and even if it succeeded, it would eventually find a minority within itself that would again choose to secede rather than defer to the majority. He repeatedly sought to conciliate the South. He stated, for example, that he had no opposition to a proposed Constitutional Amendment that would explicitly deny the Federal Government the power to ever interfere with slavery.⁴²¹ Crucially, however, he kept the conclusion from his initial draft, deleting only the final two sentences. He ended by building on Seward's suggestion:

⁴¹⁹ Roy Prentice Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols. (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 261.

⁴²⁰ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 326.

⁴²¹ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 217, 220, 222.

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I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory, stretching from every battle-field, and patriot grave, to every living heart and hearthstone, all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.⁴²²

This clash between Seward and Lincoln, with Seward taking the more conciliatory position, became the central theme of the internal dynamics of the Administration during its first months in office.

From the election to his inauguration, Lincoln had four months to prepare to meet the crisis. Even as he assembled his Cabinet secessionist firebrands in the South made their move. South Carolina seceded on December 20. Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas followed in rapid succession. All seized federal property within their borders. Soon the only significant remaining federal installations in the rebellious states were Fort Pickens in Florida and Fort Sumter.⁴²³

Politicians scrambled to put together a compromise as the Lincoln Administration prepared to take office. Thurlow Weed, for example, began pushing for a restoration of the Missouri Compromise as a way to persuade Southern states to remain in the Union.⁴²⁴ All plausible attempts had major opposition, however, which could only have been overcome by the influence of the President-elect. Lincoln considered any such compromises to be succumbing to blackmail, saying "I will suffer death before I will consent or will advise my friend to consent to any concession or compromise which looks like buying the privilege to take possession of the government to which we have a constitutional right."⁴²⁵ Seward had been consumed by efforts to conciliate the South even as he agreed to become Secretary of State. He was committed to finding a peaceful resolution of the crisis, going so far as say "that, if a majority of the southern people wanted secession, he would let them have it..."⁴²⁶

⁴²² Ibid., 224.

⁴²³ Donald, *Lincoln*, 267.

⁴²⁴ Milton, *The Eve of Conflict: Stephen A. Douglas and the Needless War*, 522.

⁴²⁵ Donald, *Lincoln*, 268.

⁴²⁶ Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 276, 287.

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Once he was inaugurated, Lincoln was forced to deal immediately with the crisis even as he was deluged by the tasks of setting up an Administration. On Inauguration Day itself he was informed that the fortifications South Carolina had established surrounding Ft. Sumter were so formidable that it would require 20-30,000 men to overcome them – an obvious impossibility when the national army was limited to 16,000 men by act of Congress. There was widespread resistance in the North to the idea of abandoning Sumter, yet the garrison was slowly running out of supplies and would soon have to be either resupplied or withdrawn. Lincoln explored options for getting supplies to the garrison. Seward, on the other hand, argued repeatedly for evacuation. He felt that the secessionist fever would die if the federal government did nothing to provoke it. The best strategy was thus to be entirely defensive, do nothing that might provoke the already seceded states, secure the allegiance of states in the Upper South, particularly Virginia, and wait for those states that had already decided to secede to choose to return of their own free will. When Lincoln polled the Cabinet on March 15 he found that most of its members agreed with Seward. Even without external assistance, Sumter had enough supplies to last into the beginning of April. Lincoln therefore chose to wait.⁴²⁷

Matters came to a head in late March. On the 27th friends Lincoln had sent to investigate the strength of Unionist sentiment in the seceded states informed him that it was essentially non-existent. The next day he received a message from Sumter informing him that it would be impossible to resupply it. On the 29th the Senate adjourned, leaving Lincoln largely free to make his own decisions. Also on the 29th Lincoln held a second Cabinet meeting on Sumter. This time most members of the Cabinet – with Seward still disagreeing – felt it necessary to resupply Sumter, although they preferred to do it quietly so

⁴²⁷ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 336, McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 200, 203, 212-214.

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as not to provoke a violent response from secessionist forces. Lincoln announced his decision to reinforce Sumter. He had probably decided to do so before the Cabinet meeting.⁴²⁸

Seward was stunned by this decision. He had committed himself to the idea that Sumter would be yielded peacefully, going so far as to promise this to Confederate representatives. His response would be one of the most remarkable documents ever sent to a President. On April 1 he drafted a memorandum titled "Some thoughts for the President's consideration." He began by arguing that the Administration had no effective domestic or foreign policies. He urged Lincoln to abandon Sumter. Even more strikingly, he suggested that domestic attention could be deflected from secession by a foreign conflict. He suggested demanding explanations from Spain and France about their activities in the Western Hemisphere. He further suggested that the United States similarly demand that Great Britain, Canada, and Russia justify their threats to intervene in the secession crisis. If any country's response was unsatisfactory, the United States should declare war. Nor was this a one-time aberration. On multiple occasions he had told European diplomats that he hoped for wars with England, France, or Spain, as such a conflict would re-unite the country. Seward "was still clinging to the illusion that conflict with foreign nations could bring the South back into the national fold."⁴²⁹

Finally, and perhaps most extraordinarily, Seward told Lincoln:

Whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it. For this purpose, it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly. Either the President must do it himself and be all the while active in it, or Devolve it upon some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide. It is not in my especial province But I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility.⁴³⁰

Seward was suggesting Lincoln make himself a figurehead President in favor of his Secretary of State.

⁴²⁸ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 340, McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 231-232, Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 279.

⁴²⁹ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 341-342, McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 236-237, Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 247-248, 283.

⁴³⁰ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 341-342, McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 236-237.

Seward had spectacularly misread Lincoln. The President's response was immediate. He reminded Seward that so far the Administration's domestic policies had been entirely in accord with Seward's own suggestions. He simply ignored Seward's suggested diversionary war. And he rebutted Seward's attempt to usurp his authority: "I remark that if this must be done, I must do it."⁴³¹ Then his extraordinary capacity to manage relationships came to the fore. His response brought Seward under control, punctured his belief that he was the power behind the throne, and preserved the crucial relationship between two men, a relationship that would survive until Lincoln's assassination.⁴³²

Seward, chastened but resolved, continued to urge that Sumter be evacuated, arguing that it would strengthen the Unionist party in Virginia.⁴³³ He arranged for Lincoln to meet with John Baldwin, an emissary from the leader of the Virginia Union Party. The meeting backfired. Baldwin demanded that Lincoln withdraw from not just Sumter but also Fort Pickens in Florida, which no one in the Republican Party would countenance. When Lincoln told him that his would cause an unacceptable loss of support in the North, Baldwin told him that he would gain ten supporters for each one he lost. Seward believed this. Lincoln did not. Baldwin insisted that the Federal Government state that it was withdrawing from Sumter to conciliate the South, not because it was a military necessity. Finally, Baldwin demanded that Sumter not be sent any provisions, because Confederate forces would use force to stop them and any violence would tip the entire South into secession. Instead of persuading Lincoln to make further concessions, this meeting seems to have convinced him that there simply was no way to both maintain a federal presence in seceded states and keep the Upper South in the Union.⁴³⁴

Lincoln now made his next, and cleverest, move. Instead of sending in the ships secretly, as several members of his Cabinet had urged, he informed the Governor of South Carolina that he was sending ships to resupply Sumter. These ships, he stated, would convey only provisions, with no

⁴³¹ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 227-228.

⁴³² Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 342, Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 282.

⁴³³ Van Deusen, *William Henry Seward*, 284.

⁴³⁴ McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 241-243.

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weapons, munitions, or troops. He knew that South Carolina would prevent the supplies from arriving by force, if necessary. By making the pacific nature of the mission public, however, he ensured that the government's posture would remain as conciliatory as possible without sacrificing federal authority. South Carolina replied by attacking Sumter on April 12, and the Fort surrendered on April 14. Lincoln then issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteers to put down the rebellion. The last dominoes fell as, in response to the proclamation, Virginia, Tennessee, Arkansas, and North Carolina seceded.⁴³⁵

Lincoln's maneuvers bore great fruit. The North had been divided on the question of whether to fight. At a stroke, everything changed. Because the South fired the first shot, Northerners rallied to the cause as popular indignation resulted in a massive upsurge of support for Lincoln and a wave of volunteers for the Army. The effects of the South's attack were without precedent:

The news galvanized the North...The response from the free states [to Lincoln's call for volunteers] was overwhelming. War meetings in every city and village cheered the flag and vowed vengeance on traitors. 'The heather is on fire,' wrote a Harvard professor who had been born during George Washington's presidency. 'I never knew what a popular excitement can be. . . . The whole population, men, women, and children, seem to be in the streets with Union favors and flags.' From Ohio and the West came 'one great Eagle-scream' for the flag. 'The people have gone stark mad!' In New York, previously a nursery of pro-southern sentiment, a quarter of a million people turned out for a Union rally. 'The change in public sentiment here is wonderful – almost miraculous,' wrote a New York merchant on April 18. 'I look with awe on the national movement here in New York and all through the Free States,' added a lawyer. 'After our late discords, it seems almost supernatural.' The 'time before Sumter' was like another century, wrote a New York woman. 'It seems as if we never were alive till now; never had a country till now.'

Democrats joined the eagle scream of patriotic fury. Stephen Douglas paid a well-publicized national unity call to the White House and then traveled home to Chicago, where he told a huge crowd: 'There are only two sides to the question. Every man must be for the United States or against it. There can be no neutrals in this war, *only patriots – or traitors.*' A month later Douglas was dead...but for a year or more his war spirit lived on among most Democrats.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 246-251.

⁴³⁶ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 274.

With Congress out of session and Douglas supporting him, there was no focal point for any opposition. Lincoln's skills at party management, honed by his efforts to build a Republican Party in Illinois, insured that his own party was solidly behind him.⁴³⁷

Lincoln's decisions during the first crisis he faced were substantially different from those Seward, the most likely alternative President, would have made. Even setting aside Seward's bizarre proposal for what surely would have been a catastrophic diversionary war, Question 2 can be answered decisively in the affirmative. Lincoln's choices were substantially different from those Seward would have made. Seward would have withdrawn from Fort Sumter. Lincoln did not, and by refusing, forced the South to begin the war. A unified North was mobilized and ready to fight to preserve the Union against a secessionist movement that had proven it "would *make* war rather than let the nation survive..."⁴³⁸

Question 3: Impact – "The whole country is our soil."

LFT suggests that leaders can have an impact by their contribution to their organization's effectiveness. Outliers are likely to display extreme levels of managerial skill. Although historians are rarely in total agreement about any subject, the vast majority have no doubt about the extent of Lincoln's contribution to the North's war effort. Doris Kearns Goodwin's book about the Lincoln Administration, *Team of Rivals*, won the 2005 Lincoln Prize for the best book on the Civil War era. It is subtitled *The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*. Goodwin quotes William Tecumseh Sherman, one of the two pre-eminent Northern Generals of the Civil War, who said of Lincoln that "'Of all the men I have ever met, he seemed to possess more of the elements of greatness, combined with goodness, than any other.'" She tells of Tolstoy's opinion that "[w]e are still too near his greatness...but after a few centuries

⁴³⁷ McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 254, 276-259.

⁴³⁸ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 686.

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our posterity will find him considerably bigger than we do. His genius is still too strong and too powerful for the common understanding, just as the sun is too hot when its light beams directly on us.”⁴³⁹

Similarly, in his seminal *The Politics Presidents Make*, Stephen Skowronek found that “the realist portrait of Lincoln-in-context simply leaves intact the core insight of all the romantic myths that surround him: there is a difference in kind here...he is unique among presidents of the party period in successfully orchestrating radical shifts in national policy without succumbing to the operational limits of the office at the time...he successfully transposed a northern consensus for the preservation of the Union into a revolutionary force for the wholesale transformation of the nation.”⁴⁴⁰

Lincoln’s contributions to the Northern war effort can be divided into three categories. The first was the simple power of his rhetoric. In the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, for example, Gary Wills argued that Lincoln’s eloquence was a crucial component in the Civil War’s transformation from a war for the preservation of the Union to a war for emancipation.⁴⁴¹ The power of Lincoln’s rhetoric is similarly described and analyzed by Douglas L. Wilson in the Lincoln Prize-winning *Lincoln’s Sword*, while Ronald C. White argued that Lincoln’s rhetorical abilities were crucial to both the course and meaning of the Civil War.⁴⁴²

Second, Lincoln’s extraordinary political skills played a major role in the North’s success. The unity of the Republican Party was essential to the North’s ability to mobilize effectively for the war and “it can be argued that the principal reason that the Republican coalition held together was Abraham Lincoln.” Lincoln’s moderation, skill at distributing patronage, and ability to spin the secession crisis to

⁴³⁹ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 713, 747-718.

⁴⁴⁰ Skowronek, *The Politics Presidents Make*, 203.

⁴⁴¹ Gary Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

⁴⁴² Ronald C. White Jr., *The Eloquent President: A Portrait of Lincoln through His Words* (New York, NY: Random House, 2005), Ronald C. White Jr., *Lincoln's Greatest Speech: The Second Inaugural* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2006), Douglas L. Wilson, *Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words* (New York, NY: Alfred P. Knopf, 2006).

conciliate both the radical and moderate wings of the Republican Party, something which Seward was seemingly uninterested in even attempting to do, contributed enormously to the Union's victory.⁴⁴³

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Lincoln's extraordinarily skillful handling of the war effort had a vast impact, so much so that Civil War historian David M. Potter concluded: "it hardly seems unrealistic to suppose that if the Union and the Confederacy had exchanged presidents with one another, the Confederacy might have won its independence."⁴⁴⁴ Nor was this disparity in performance due to the incapacity of Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy. Although there are certainly many criticisms of Davis, his pre-Presidency experience could hardly have been bettered. Davis was a graduate of West Point, had served seven years on active duty in the Army, had led a volunteer regiment with distinction in the Mexican War, been a Senator, served as Secretary of War for four years during which he had successfully modernized the Army's weapons and ammunition, and then returned to the Senate where he had focused on military affairs.⁴⁴⁵ The contrast with Lincoln's token service in the Black Hawk War and two undistinguished years in Congress could not be more pointed.

Lincoln's management of the war was remarkable on two crucial dimensions. First, Lincoln's strategic concept was excellent. T. Harry Williams, in his seminal study of Lincoln's wartime performance, found that "[j]udged by modern standards, Lincoln stands out as a great war president, probably the greatest in our history, and a great natural strategist, a better one than any of his generals. He was in actuality as well as in title commander in chief who, by his larger strategy, did more than Grant or any general to win the war for the Union."⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ McClintock, *Lincoln and the Decision for War: The Northern Response to Secession*, 278-279.

⁴⁴⁴ David M. Potter, "Jefferson Davis and the Political Factors in Confederate Defeat," in *Why the North Won the Civil War*, ed. David Herbert Donald (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996), 111.

⁴⁴⁵ Eliot A. Cohen, *Supreme Command: Soldiers, Statesmen, and Leadership in Wartime*, First ed. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2002), 18-19.

⁴⁴⁶ T. Harry Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1952), vii.

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The main component of Lincoln's strategy was ruthlessly simple. He understood that the key to victory was the destruction of the Southern armies.⁴⁴⁷ In 1863 he wrote to Senator James G. Conkling: "The strength of the rebellion, is its military—its army. That army dominates all the country, and all the people, within its range...Meade's [Commander of the Army of the Potomac at the time] army can keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania; and, I think, can ultimately drive it out of existence."⁴⁴⁸ Too many of his generals failed to understand that. Earlier, Lincoln had written Henry Halleck, the army's Chief of Staff: "To avoid misunderstanding, let me say that to attempt to fight the enemy slowly back into his intrenchments [*sic.*] at Richmond, and there to capture him, is an idea I have been trying to repudiate for quite a year. My judgment is so clear against it, that I would scarcely allow the attempt to be made, if the general in command should desire to make it...I have constantly desired the Army of the Potomac, to make Lee's army, and not Richmond, it's [*sic.*] objective point."⁴⁴⁹

Lincoln's conception of the strategic necessity of the offensive was so strong that it consumed him, even after great victories. After his victory at Gettysburg Meade declared, in his message to the Army, that "[T]he Commanding General looks to the Army for greater efforts to drive from our soil every vestige of the presence of the invader." Lincoln was greatly perturbed by this line, reminding Halleck "You know I did not like the phrase...." When he received the text of the message "his hands dropped to his knees and in an anguished tone he said: 'Drive the invader from our soil! My God! Is that all?'" He asked, "[w]ill the generals never get that idea out of their heads? The whole country is our soil."⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁷ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 30-31, Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 7-8.

⁴⁴⁸ Roy Prentice Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., vol. 6 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 408.

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 468.

⁴⁵⁰ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 40-41, George Gordon Meade, *Meade's Congratulatory Order for the Battle of Gettysburg: General Orders, No. 68* (November 29, 2005 1863 [cited December 28 2009]); available from <http://www.civilwarhome.com/meadeorder68.htm>, Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 265.

Meade was superseded by Grant, whose career Lincoln had shepherded since his initial victories in the West in 1862.⁴⁵¹ Grant was the first general who truly won Lincoln's confidence, prompting Lincoln to write him on April 30, 1864, "I wish to express my entire satisfaction with what you have done up to this time...The particulars of your plans I neither know, or seek to know."⁴⁵² Yet Grant soon discovered that he was on a much tighter leash than this message suggested. On August 3 he told Grant that he approved of his plans to send Sheridan, the pre-eminent Union cavalry commander, to hunt down a Confederate force led by Jubal Early by "follow[ing] him [Early] to the death." Grant, however, was attempting to direct the armies from his headquarters in Petersburg. Lincoln knew that such orders would not be effectively prosecuted unless there was enormous pressure behind them, and that Grant could not deliver such pressure from Petersburg. He instructed Grant "please look over the despatches [*sic.*] you may have received from here, even since you made that order, and discover, if you can that there is any idea in the head of any one here, of 'putting our army *South* of the enemy' or 'following him to the *death*' in any direction. I repeat to you it will neither be done nor attempted unless you watch it ever day, and hour, and force it." Grant soon decamped for Washington.⁴⁵³

Lincoln understood that destroying the Southern armies would involve terrible casualties. In December of 1862 a Northern Army was decisively defeated at Fredericksburg by Confederate General Robert E. Lee. It suffered more than 13,000 casualties, more than twice Lee's losses. Lincoln was so devastated that he said "[i]f there is a worse place than Hell, I am in it." Yet he could do the "awful arithmetic" of war: "if the same battle were to be fought over again, every day, through a week of days, with the same relative results, the army under Lee would be wiped out to its last man, the Army of the

⁴⁵¹ Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 60-61.

⁴⁵² Roy Prentice Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., vol. 7 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 324.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid.*, 476, 499, Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 331-332.

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Potomac would still be a might host, the war would be over, the Confederacy gone.”⁴⁵⁴ Not for nothing did the military historian Geoffrey Perrett declare that “Lincoln’s will to fight was the North’s invisible weapon... Without the luminal nature of that will, the war would have ended, and so would the Union and its destiny. Any other politician capable of winning the presidency in 1860 or 1864 would have sought a compromise. All that interested Lincoln was victory....”⁴⁵⁵

Lincoln’s second great contribution to the war effort was his ability to utilize the talents of his subordinates, no matter their quirks and, often, insubordination. This skill bore its greatest fruit in Grant and Sherman. Both are now chiefly remembered for their crucial role in the North’s victory. Both, however, were highly controversial during the early years of the war. Grant was widely-believed to be an alcoholic and had spectacularly botched the first day of the battle of Shiloh. Sherman was thought of as mentally unstable. Their paired reputations were such that Sherman once said “Grant stood by me when I was crazy, and I stood by him when he was drunk, and now we stand by each other always.”⁴⁵⁶

This skill was most shown by Lincoln’s handling of General Joseph Hooker. Hooker would eventually be crushed at Chancellorsville. But when he was appointed to lead a Northern Army he was seen as the best hope to defeat the seemingly invincible Lee. Lincoln knew that Hooker had been scheming to overthrow his predecessor in command and had told a reporter that the country would be best served if a dictator took power.⁴⁵⁷ Lincoln, characteristically, wrote Hooker a letter. A typically elegant masterpiece of Lincoln’s epistolary management, it deserves to be quoted in full:

I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons. And yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which, I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and a skillful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you

⁴⁵⁴ Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, 486, McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 571-574.

⁴⁵⁵ Geoffrey Perrett, *Lincoln's War: The Untold Story of America's Greatest President as Commander in Chief* (New York, NY: Random House, 2004), 260.

⁴⁵⁶ L.P. Brockett, *Our Great Captains: Grant, Sherman, Thomas, Sheridan, and Farragut* (New York, NY: C.B. Richardson, 1865), 175, Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 37.

⁴⁵⁷ McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era*, 584.

do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right [here Lincoln was clearly being somewhat disingenuous]. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm. But I think that during Gen. Burnside's command of the Army, you have taken counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country, and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the Army and the Government needed a dictator. Of course it was not *for* this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes, can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its [*sic.*] ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the Army, of criticising [*sic.*] their Commander, and withholding confidence from him, will not turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can, to put it down. Neither you, nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army, while such a spirit prevails in it.

And now, beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy, and sleepless vigilance, go forward, and give us victories.

Yours very truly A. LINCOLN⁴⁵⁸

The letter left Hooker no doubts about his position with Lincoln, and no question about what was expected of him. The letter "showed Hooker that the president saw through him, understanding his faults no less than his virtues, and it administered both rebuke and encouragement...." Hooker obeyed Lincoln without question after receiving it and months later emotionally read it to a reporter and described it as "the kind of letter a father might write to his son."⁴⁵⁹ Lincoln's ability to harness the talents of such men – soldiers like Hooker, Grant, and Sherman and civilians like Seward, Chase, his Secretary of the Treasury, and Stanton, his Secretary of War – was an enormous boon to the Union.⁴⁶⁰

Question 4: Lincoln as Outlier – "Towering genius disdains a beaten path"

Lincoln may present an easier answer to this question than any other political leader. Did Lincoln have Characteristics different from most political leaders? His depression, among many other things, suggests that he did. Did his election result in substantially different policies from those that

⁴⁵⁸ Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln.*, 78-79.

⁴⁵⁹ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 20, Williams, *Lincoln and His Generals*, 213.

⁴⁶⁰ Potter, "Jefferson Davis and the Political Factors in Confederate Defeat," 103-104.

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would have been adopted had the most likely alternative (Seward) come to power? In the crisis over Fort Sumter Lincoln and Seward had substantially different preferences that would have resulted in very different outcomes. Seward's attempt to seize control of the Lincoln Administration demonstrates that this difference in policy preferences cannot be explained by Seward's position as Secretary of State or his different political constituency. Did Lincoln have a particular Impact? There is no doubt he did. His unique capabilities were crucial to the North's victory, a level of impact few others can claim. If Lincoln was not an Outlier, then no one is.

Conclusion

Lincoln once spoke about the role of individuals with special capabilities in the future of the United States. In 1838, a 29 year old Lincoln spoke at Springfield's Young Men's Lyceum on "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions." It was the first speech he delivered in his new home. His style had not yet evolved to the sparse majesty it displayed during his Presidency. His address was uncharacteristically florid, perhaps the product of a still-uncertain young man trying too hard to impress his new community. He began conventionally, by praising the Founding Fathers and asserting that the strength of the United States meant that it was immune to foreign threats. Only internal convulsions could threaten the republic, and he suggested that cultivating reverence for the rule of law was the best way to defend against such attacks. Having made, so far, a largely unoriginal speech, Lincoln moved in a new direction. He, in perhaps unintentional self-revelation, explored the psychology of those who might wish to overthrow the government. He suggests that in the past the success of the American experiment was uncertain, so the highest glory was gained by securing it. Now that the American experiment had succeeded, great glory could not come from strengthening it. But the United States would continue to produce people of enormous ability who desired equally great fame:

The question then, is, can that gratification be found in supporting and maintaining an office that has been erected by others? Most certainly it cannot. Many great and good men sufficiently qualified for any task they should undertake, may ever be found, whose ambition would aspire to nothing beyond a seat in Congress, a gubernatorial or presidential chair; *but such belong not to the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle,* [.] What! think you these places would satisfy an Alexander, a Caesar, or Napoleon? Never! Towering genius disdains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored. It sees *no distinction* in adding story to story, upon monuments of fame, erected to the memory of others. It *denies* that it is glory enough to serve under any chief. It *scorns* to tread in the footsteps of *any* predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves, or enslaving freemen.⁴⁶¹

It is, of course, striking to see a young Lincoln discussing emancipating slaves, and even more so in the context of Lincoln's unrelenting ambition, which his friend William Herndon described as "a little engine which knew no rest."⁴⁶² In 1841 Lincoln had wished to live only because he had not yet done anything for which he would be remembered. Two years earlier, he had said that emancipating slaves was one way to gain glory. Twenty-two years later, he would ensure his eternal renown by doing exactly that.

Lincoln once told Maine's Senator Lot M. Morrill, "I don't know but that God has created some one man great enough to comprehend the whole of this stupendous crisis...and endowed him with sufficient wisdom to manage and direct it...I am placed here where I am obliged, to the best of my poor ability, to deal with it."⁴⁶³ When Lincoln was assassinated, he surely died knowing that the Union had been preserved and slavery destroyed, that his own efforts were crucial to both, and that he had secured the distinction he so desperately sought. Only the most extraordinary of Outliers could have been equal to his task, but in Lincoln the United States found the one man who was great enough.

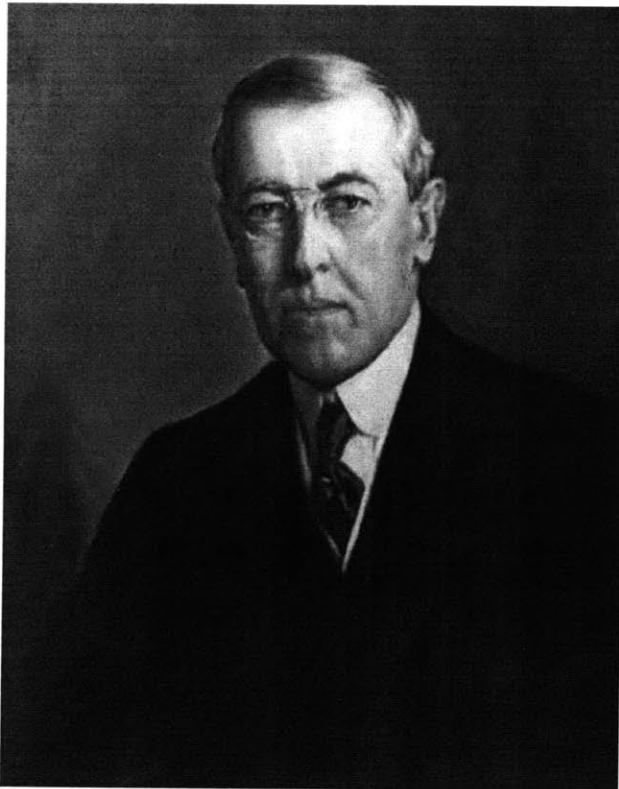
⁴⁶¹ Roy Prentice Basler, ed., *Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, 9 vols., vol. 1 (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 108-115, Donald, *Lincoln*, 80-81, White Jr., *The Eloquent President*, 14-16.

⁴⁶² Donald, *Lincoln*, 81.

⁴⁶³ Waugh, *One Man Great Enough*, 418, John C. Waugh, *Reelecting Lincoln: The Battle for the 1864 Presidency* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 1997), 17.

CHAPTER 7 - "WE CAN ALWAYS COUNT ON MR. WILSON": WILSON, THE SENATE, AND THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

When the First World War ended on November 11, 1918, the victorious Allies were faced with the task of constructing a post-war order. Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States and leader of the nation that had enabled the Allied victory by its entry into the war in 1917, chose to



WOODROW WILSON

personally attend the Paris Peace Conference that set the terms of the post-war settlement. This was the first time a sitting American President had visited Europe. There he was received as few have ever been. His idealistic stance during the war had earned him almost totemic status with the European public, and when he arrived in Paris he was greeted by two million rapturous Parisians chanting his name. Wilson used this enormous popularity and his bargaining power as President to add a League of Nations to the treaty negotiated in Paris in the hope of ensuring that the terrible cataclysm

of the war would never be repeated.⁴⁶⁴

⁴⁶⁴ H. W. Brands, *Woodrow Wilson, The American Presidents* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2003), Robert H. Ferrell, *Woodrow Wilson and World War I, 1917-1921, The New American Nation Series* (New York, NY: Harper & Row,

A League was well within the mainstream of American political thought. For example, Wilson's immediate predecessor, the Republican William Howard Taft, was a leader of the main pro-League lobbying group. Theodore Roosevelt, Taft's predecessor, had recently passed away but had also expressed his support for the formation of some sort of League after the war.⁴⁶⁵ Paris, by contrast, was not terribly welcoming terrain for Wilson's new conception of international order. David Lloyd George, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, was at best dubious of the League; Clemenceau, the President of France, openly sneered at it.⁴⁶⁶ Despite this unfavorable terrain, Wilson got assent to his League and returned to the United States to secure Senate ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and American entry into the League. Most observers assumed that the Treaty would be ratified mostly as submitted.⁴⁶⁷ Instead, after an epic parliamentary struggle, the Senate refused to ratify the Treaty and the United States never entered the League of Nations.

What caused this failure? Why would the United States refuse to enter – and by refusing to enter emasculate – the organization fathered by her own President? The decades that followed would show that the settlement reached at Paris was profoundly unstable. It took another world war, even worse than the first, for a stable peace to rise from the ashes. Had the United States been involved in the League, it is at least conceivable that it would not have retreated into isolationism. Thus the question of why the United States failed to ratify the Treaty is one of great historical importance.

Wilson was classified as an Unfiltered leader, and thus a potential Outlier, in Chapter 4. A close examination of his career shows that this classification was correct. If Wilson is an Outlier, then Leader Filtration Theory (LFT) predicts that at least some of the major events of his Presidency were a product of Wilson's particular characteristics.

1985), 136-137, Thomas J. Knock, *To End All Wars: Woodrow Wilson and the Quest for a New World Order* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 190-197.

⁴⁶⁵ James Chace, *1912: Wilson, Roosevelt, Taft & Debs: The Election That Changed the Country* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2004), 248.

⁴⁶⁶ Thomas Andrew Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1944), 182-183.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15.

Wilson, the Senate, and the Treaty of Versailles

The struggle in the Senate over the Treaty of Versailles provides an excellent case with which to further test the theory. It is not as clean a test of LFT as earlier cases were. The ratification struggle occurred in Wilson's second term, and the most likely Modal alternative Democratic President played no role in it. Additionally, Wilson was crippled by a stroke during the debate, and both the stroke itself and the deterioration in his cardiovascular health that preceded it may have had profound psychological effects. The questions for Section 1 thus remain the same, but the questions for Section 2 should be adapted (Table 13). Along with comparing Wilson to potential alternatives, it is also helpful to look at the judgments of his contemporaries and historians and at his behavior before assuming the Presidency in non-filtering positions. If his contemporary allies consistently urged him to choose a different course of action; if his opponents attributed their triumph to his unique proclivities; and if historians generally find his behavior to be exceptional, then this would be powerful support for LFT. If his behavior is further echoed by similar tendencies earlier in his career that would have hindered his ability to move through the filtration process had they been known, this is still further evidence in LFT's favor.

The Wilson case strongly supports LFT. He was almost entirely Unfiltered before becoming President. He spent less than two years in politics before he was elected. His pre-political career, however, showed many of the same behaviors that would cripple him during the Treaty fight. During the struggle over ratification Wilson's behavior was so out of the ordinary that his opposition's entire strategy was based around its belief that he would sabotage his own ambitions rather than accept a compromise. Although the case is complicated by the crippling effects of the stroke he suffered during the height of the Treaty battle, even before it Wilson's behavior was sabotaging his attempts to pass the Treaty and there is no indication in either the political landscape before the stroke or his life before the Presidency that he could have convinced the Senate to bend to his wishes. Overall Wilson's unique characteristics, policy preferences, and capabilities had a large impact on American foreign policy and directly led to the United States' failure to join the League of Nations.

Section 1	Question 1: How thoroughly was Wilson filtered? Question 2: How likely was Wilson's rise to power relative to other potential leaders? Question 3: Who are the chief Modal alternatives to Wilson who might have won the election of 1912? Question 4: Should Wilson be classified as a "Potential Outlier" or "Modal"?
Section 2	Question 1: Did Wilson have relevant out of the ordinary Characteristics that would have hindered success in a tight filtration process? Question 2: Did Wilson's Characteristics lead to significantly different policy outcomes? Question 3: Did Wilson's behavior result in an Impact that other leaders would not have had? Question 4: Is Wilson really an Outlier?

The Road to the White House

Woodrow Wilson is surely one of the most fascinating personalities ever to inhabit the White House, so much so that Sigmund Freud was inspired to write a remarkably hostile psycho-biography of him.⁴⁶⁸ The only former college professor ever to become President, Wilson had perhaps the least experience in politics of any person ever elected to the White House. When he began his campaign for the Presidency in 1911 he had spent less than two years in elected office. Before that he had been a lawyer, professor of political science, and President of Princeton. While at Princeton he transformed the educational experience there by vastly improving academics and the strength of the faculty. His far-reaching ambitions and refusal to compromise, however, split the Princeton community and destroyed his presidency. The national press portrayed his reform efforts as a stand against the power of principled elites, making him a national figure and giving him a platform he was able to convert into first the governorship and then the Presidency of the United States, putting him at the center of world events when the First World War broke out in Europe.

⁴⁶⁸ Sigmund Freud and William Christian Bullitt, *Thomas Woodrow Wilson, Twenty-Eighth President of the United States; a Psychological Study* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1967).

Political Scientist, University President, and Governor

From Princeton Student to Princeton President to Governor of New Jersey

Thomas Woodrow Wilson was born on December 28, 1856 in Staunton, Virginia, the third child and first son of Reverend Joseph Wilson, a prominent local minister. He entered Davidson College in 1873 and spent a year there before returning home and studying for a year. He then entered Princeton in 1875 where he was popular but academically undistinguished. His senior year, however, his essay “Cabinet Government in the United States” was published in *International Review*, a major national journal then edited by his future enemy Henry Cabot Lodge. He entered the University of Virginia’s law school and eventually moved to Atlanta to open a law office in 1882. Wilson hated practicing as an attorney, however, and abandoned the law to enter graduate school in political science at Johns Hopkins. There he wrote his first book, *Congressional Government*, garnering rave reviews despite the fact that he never even visited Washington to observe Congress. He decided against pursuing a doctorate and instead went to Bryn Mawr to teach. In 1888 he moved to Wesleyan and in 1890 returned to Princeton as a professor. There the students voted him the most popular professor in the school six years running. He received an offer to become the President of the University of Virginia in 1898, but declined to remain at Princeton. Over this entire period he evinced little interest in practical, as opposed to academic, politics. His only significant political activity was a speech at a Democratic meeting in Baltimore in 1896 where he met another future enemy, Theodore Roosevelt.⁴⁶⁹

Princeton’s 100th anniversary in 1896 prompted a general expectation that it would ratchet up academic standards and the quality of the faculty. Francis Patton, then President of Princeton, was viewed as the chief obstacle to this goal. Wilson was a prime advocate of reform and in 1902 he conspired with a group of Princeton’s trustees to remove Patton. Patton, realizing what was occurring, resigned, and the trustees unanimously chose Wilson to replace him. Wilson launched into his

⁴⁶⁹ John Milton Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson: A Biography* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009), 12, 25, 26, 30-31, 33, 38-40, 44, 47-51, 53, 61, 62, 67, 73.

campaign of improvements with characteristic zeal and energy. In his first few years in office he strengthened the faculty, reformed the curriculum, and made a series of speeches to Princeton alumni to garner their support.⁴⁷⁰

As Wilson spent more time in office, however, he began to alienate many at Princeton. Observers at Princeton noted a tendency to surround himself with sycophants and to deal harshly with dissent. One Professor, William B. Scott, said that ““When opposed, or annoyed, he grew arrogant and sarcastic...He occasionally spoke to me in a way that I would not have tolerated from anyone else.”” He began to harshly attack those he disagreed with in faculty meetings. When another professor, Mark Baldwin, left Princeton to escape him, Wilson told him in their last meeting that Baldwin “would live to regret having suggested he [Wilson] was wrong!”⁴⁷¹

Wilson also began to suffer from the cardiovascular problems that would eventually ruin his health. In 1896 he lost feeling in his right hand, which may have been the product of a small stroke.⁴⁷² In 1906 a blood vessel in his left eye burst, permanently depriving him of most vision in it. He was told by his doctors that he could never work again. Wilson – not for the last time – defied their advice and continued with an ever-more strenuous and stressful career. This deterioration of his health, however, may already have begun to affect and impair his judgment through both their direct psychological effects and the isolation they sometimes imposed upon him.⁴⁷³

⁴⁷⁰ Henry W. Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1967), 269-270, 275-304, Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 77-78, 83, George and George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*, 34-35.

⁴⁷¹ George and George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*, 35, W. Barksdale Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency* (New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2008), 75.

⁴⁷² Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 71, Edwin A. Weinstein, *Woodrow Wilson: A Medical and Psychological Biography, Supplementary Volumes to the Papers of Woodrow Wilson* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981), 141.

⁴⁷³ Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 126-127, Weinstein, *Woodrow Wilson*, 165-168, 176-177.

The Quad Plan

1906 also saw Wilson begin the first of a series of battles that ended with the collapse of his career at Princeton. Continuing his project to improve academic standards at Princeton and inspired by the University of Virginia and Oxford, Wilson proposed reorganizing the social life of the university in what came to be known as the “Quad Plan.” He wanted to establish residential quadrangles in which all four classes would live together with some junior faculty members. This, however, would have been an enormous change for the school. Princeton students competed to join “eating clubs” for their junior and senior years. These clubs had come to dominate the college’s social life. Unfortunate undergraduates who failed to be accepted by a club often left Princeton entirely. Their influence was a clear impediment to Wilson’s goal to improve academic standards at his school. Moving students to quadrangles would destroy the clubs. Any plan with such a consequence would be sure to generate enormous opposition from current students and, more importantly, alumni.⁴⁷⁴

Wilson consulted with no one in advance, perhaps because of the lingering effects of his stroke. He presented his plan to the trustees and received a decisive 24-1 vote in favor of his proposal. He had done nothing to alert the alumni of his idea. Perhaps most importantly, he had not informed the influential Dean Andrew West. West believed that Wilson had promised him that the next reform would be the establishment of a Graduate College and that Wilson had lied to and betrayed him.⁴⁷⁵

These mistakes rapidly came to haunt Wilson. He won a vote of the faculty supporting the Quad Plan. Behind his back, however, alumni, West, and other opponents were lobbying the trustees against

⁴⁷⁴ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 317-318, George and George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*, 90-94.

⁴⁷⁵ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 319-321, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 137-138.

him. The trustees voted on the plan again, and this time the result was precisely the opposite. Every trustee save one voted against him, and they further voted to ban future debate on the subject.⁴⁷⁶

In a face-saving gesture for Wilson, however, the trustees gave him permission to talk about the plan to the alumni. He made a series of speeches to Princeton alumni across the country, in which he harshly condemned his opponents and rejected any compromise. His continued campaign had no success, but it did have three major effects. First, it permanently damaged his relationship with Princeton. Both his allies and his opponents found his absolute refusal to compromise utterly confounding. He even rejected, for example, proposals for the construction of a single test quadrangle or phasing in Quadrangles over a five year period. Wilson repeatedly castigated Princeton's elitism and snobbery, permanently damaging its reputation and making it ever more difficult to heal the wounds in the Princeton community. He repeatedly rejected appeals from his own allies to be civil in his public and private communications, instead ramping up his attacks on his enemies. Second, it brought him to national attention for the first time, as the popular press focused on Wilson's apparent battle against the privileged elite to portray him in an exceptionally favorable light. Third, it began the process of shifting Wilson's leftwards as his stance against the privileged interests the clubs represented began to shift his innate conservatism. The combination meant that Democratic Party bosses in New Jersey began to pay attention to Wilson, discussing him as a potential candidate for the Senate or even the presidency.⁴⁷⁷

The Battle of Princeton

The failure of the Quad Plan did not stem Wilson's efforts to reform Princeton. In 1902 West had submitted a report to the trustees calling for the construction of a Graduate College on campus.

⁴⁷⁶ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 324-326, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 153.

⁴⁷⁷ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 326-341, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 155, 168-170.

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Wilson and the trustees had approved the report, but taken no action. West was, by all accounts, a man of great personal warmth and charm. This would be of great advantage to him in the coming struggle, particularly in contrast to Wilson who, now more than ever, was described as having “the art of making people angry.” In the spring of 1906, before the struggle over the Quad Plan fully ignited, Wilson suggested to the Trustees that the Grad College be constructed adjacent to the campus at Bayles Farm in order to integrate it closely with the social life of the undergraduates. West instead came out in favor of placing the Grad College approximately half a mile away from campus. In October West received an offer to become President of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In a meeting of the Board of Trustees West produced a long list of ways in which he felt Wilson had treated him unfairly. Wilson, in response, offered a resolution pledging his support to West as the head of the Graduate College, which prompted West to stay at Princeton. In 1908 a \$250,000 bequest to the school to build a residence for graduate students stipulated that it be built on campus, which seemed to decide the matter in Wilson’s favor, and the trustees agreed to build the College on campus in a location called Prospect.⁴⁷⁸

This seemingly amicable resolution to the dispute collapsed in May 1909 when the controversy that came to be known as the “Battle of Princeton” burst into flame. West told Wilson that an alumnus was willing to donate \$500,000 to Princeton towards the building of the Graduate College, but only on condition that Princeton raise another \$500,000 and that he approve its location. He had already deemed Prospect unacceptable. He was eventually persuaded to accept a site on the golf links, but Wilson thought this location was too far away from the main campus. The Trustees again overruled Wilson. He responded with an ultimatum. Wilson said that he could not accept the decision and suggested splitting the two gifts by erecting a Quadrangle at Prospect using the first donation and a

⁴⁷⁸ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 354, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 181, Weinstein, *Woodrow Wilson*, 195-201.

Graduate College on the golf links using the second. Although his supporters among the faculty were buoyed by this gesture, uncommitted Trustees were alienated.⁴⁷⁹

Events reached a breaking point at the January 1910 meeting of the Board of Trustees. The donor agreed to Wilson's proposal to split the two gifts. Wilson then stunned the attendees by declaring that he was indifferent to the location of the Graduate College because the real issue was who had control of the University, thus putting himself in the position of opposing his own suggestion. This sudden reversal destroyed any remaining credibility he had with many members of the Board. Even his allies could not understand Wilson's apparent duplicity and refusal to compromise.⁴⁸⁰

Wilson then escalated matters. In response to an article in *The New York Herald* that was favorable to his opponents, Wilson approved an editorial in the *New York Times* supporting him and describing the struggle as a battle between the privileged and the people. The editorial argued that the struggle over the Graduate College was really about if endowed universities were "to direct their energies away from the production of men trained to hard, accurate thought, masters in their professions...and to bend and degrade them into fostering mutually exclusive social cliques, stolid groups of wealth and fashion, devoted to non-essentials and the smatterings of culture."⁴⁸¹

Bringing the fight into the open further eroded his standing with the alumni and the Princeton community. The last straw was a speech to Princeton alumni in Pittsburgh in which he simply lost all control of his temper, attacking his opponents as representatives of wealth and privilege, attacking the Protestant Churches as servants of elites instead of the people, and saying that the fate of the nation itself rested on the outcome of the struggle over the location of the Graduate College. His gleeful enemies published the transcript as *That Pittsburgh Speech*. When Isaac Wyman, a wealthy Princeton

⁴⁷⁹ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 361-368.

⁴⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 366-370, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 207-208, 216-208.

⁴⁸¹ Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 370-372, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 219-221.

alumnus, died and left his fortune to Princeton to build a Graduate College, naming West as a trustee, Wilson knew the jig was up. He had wagered his Presidency on victory and he had lost decisively.⁴⁸²

From President to Governor

Wilson's positioning of himself as the tribune of the people may have cost him with the alumni, but it paid dividends in his public standing. His wife noted that however unpopular he was at Princeton: "This thing has strengthened you *immensely* throughout the whole country, it is said that there have been hundreds upon hundreds of editorials and all *wholly* on your side."⁴⁸³ He was now popular with Progressives nationwide even as his history of political conservatism made him acceptable to New Jersey party bosses. With the collapse of his Princeton presidency, he needed a new career.

James Smith, a former Senator, was virtually the caricature of a political boss and the chief leader of the New Jersey Democratic Party. George Harvey, a conservative Democrat who edited *Harper's Weekly*, had long believed Wilson was a political talent and had worked with Wilson on one of his books, *History of the American People*. Wilson's few contacts with Democratic politics had been fostered by Harvey, who had spent years trying to interest Smith in Wilson. Now Smith decided that Wilson presented an opportunity for New Jersey Democrats to beat back the Republican dominance of the state and take the Governor's Mansion. National Republicans were split by a struggle between progressives and the Taft Administration, a split mirrored at the state level in New Jersey. Smith found the idea of running a candidate for governor who was nationally respected and could take advantage of this split in the opposition quite appealing. Once Wilson assured Smith that he would not interfere with the operations of the state Democratic Party, Smith arranged for Wilson's nomination over the furious opposition of progressives who were angry that party bosses were handpicking a candidate.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² Bragdon, *Woodrow Wilson: The Academic Years*, 376-378, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 219-221, 228-230.

⁴⁸³ Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*.

⁴⁸⁴ Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 120-122.

Wilson had no practical political experience of any sort. Even as an academic he had paid little attention to state politics. He had barely even traveled much within New Jersey. For such a neophyte to win the New Jersey governorship would be nothing short of a “political miracle.”⁴⁸⁵ The party bosses believed that they could control him despite a triumphant acceptance speech in which Wilson swore that he had made “absolutely no pledge of any kind to prevent me from serving the people of the State with singleness of purpose.” Delegates in the auditorium were so moved by Wilson’s speech that they wept. Wilson backed up his speech, however, by publishing a letter to *George Record*, a Republican leader in New Jersey, in which he promised to fight the Democratic Party machine, be a crusader for reformist ideals, destroy the party boss system, and stated that he was already in the process of reforming the Democratic Party along those lines. The letter was, of course, a disavowal of Wilson’s promises of only a few months earlier, but its appeal to progressives was so strong that it essentially guaranteed his victory in the gubernatorial election. On November 8, 1910 Wilson won overwhelmingly, receiving 233,682 votes to 184,626 for his Republican opponent.⁴⁸⁶

Wilson began to shake up New Jersey’s Democratic Party even before he was sworn in. Having been handpicked by conservatives, he now cut himself off from this base of support, instead aligning himself with the progressive faction of the party without any guarantee that they would reciprocate.⁴⁸⁷ Democrats had captured the state assembly along with the governorship, giving them the opportunity to elect a Senator. James Smith wished to return to the Senate. Wilson had initially said that the non-binding Democratic primary for the Senate had been a “farce” and thus that he need not support James Martine, its winner. He soon changed his mind, however, stating that he felt obliged to respect the results of the primary and rallied support for Martine, even declaring in a speech to a rally in Jersey City that opposing Smith – who had, after all, been responsible for his nomination in the first place – was

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 120, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 243.

⁴⁸⁶ Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 122-126.

⁴⁸⁷ George and George, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A Personality Study*, 71.

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equivalent to “cut[ting] off a wart....” Martine was elected overwhelmingly, while Smith’s hold on the state party was shattered.⁴⁸⁸

On taking office in January 1911 Wilson launched a blizzard of reforms, much as he had in his early days at Princeton. He won victories on reforms of primaries and elections, corrupt campaign practices, public utilities and workmen’s compensation. By the end of that session of the legislature in April 1911 there was already national talk of Wilson as a presidential candidate. Wilson attributed his successes to his firmness and unwillingness to compromise and, as at Princeton, made bitter political enemies and was remarked upon as intolerant of any criticism.⁴⁸⁹

Wilson would have no other significant achievements as Governor. Smith’s career was broken, but his allies, enraged by Wilson’s betrayal, attacked him, weakening the party’s chances in the legislative elections of 1911. Wilson barnstormed the state in support of his favored candidates, but Smith’s allies deliberately suppressed turnout in Newark, throwing control of the assembly back the Republicans. Wilson responded in 1912 with a much more modest legislative agenda but New Jersey Republicans, seeing that Wilson was a potential Presidential candidate, passed none of it. Wilson made no significant efforts to work or compromise with his Republican opponents and by the end of the legislative session the Republicans were repeatedly able to override his vetoes. Wilson shifted his attention from the governorship to the 1912 presidential election.⁴⁹⁰

The Election of 1912

The election of 1912 was among the most dramatic in American history. It featured a four-way race with three credible candidates: William Howard Taft, the incumbent President, Theodore Roosevelt, his predecessor as President leading an insurgent Progressive (“Bull Moose”) Party, and

⁴⁸⁸ Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 125-128.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 132-135, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 253.

⁴⁹⁰ Chace, *1912*, 127-128, Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 136-139, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*.

Woodrow Wilson seeking to be the first Democrat to take the White House since Grover Cleveland's second victory in 1892. The contrast in experience between the candidates has surely never in American history been more pronounced, with two Presidents facing a first-term Governor who had never before held an elected office. The bitter divide of the Republican Party between Taft and the charismatic Roosevelt – former close friends turned bitter enemies – opened the door for a Democratic triumph in an era of Republican dominance.

The Presidents

The stage for the election was set in 1904 when Theodore Roosevelt won reelection to the Presidency in a landslide. On the spur of the moment immediately after the election he promised not to run again in 1908, a promise which he immediately regretted but felt honor-bound to keep.⁴⁹¹ Without the option of running for a third term in 1908, Roosevelt had to find a successor who would continue his policies. He chose William Howard Taft, who had ably served him as Governor-General of the Philippines and as Secretary of War.

Taft had no desire to be President and had never run for office. Roosevelt's popularity and influence over the Republican Party were so great, however, that his choice of successor was able to comfortably win first the nomination and then the Presidency, defeating William Jennings Bryan in the third of his three campaigns. Roosevelt, meanwhile, departed for a mammoth safari in Africa.⁴⁹²

In many ways Taft attempted to follow Roosevelt's reformist path. During his one term, for example, he brought more actions against the trusts under the Sherman Anti-Trust Act than Roosevelt had in his two.⁴⁹³ Taft, however, never had the same appeal to progressives that Roosevelt did, and was more sympathetic to big business and conservatives than his mentor. The first break between the two

⁴⁹¹ John Milton Cooper Jr., *The Warrior and the Priest: Woodrow Wilson and Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1983), 79, Kathleen Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2002), 267-268.

⁴⁹² Chace, *1912*, 6, 23, 32, Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life*, 338, 347-359, Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001), 458, 463.

⁴⁹³ Chace, *1912*, 95.



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came when he fired Gifford Pinchot, a Roosevelt appointee and close friend who served as Chief Forrester, for insubordination. Pinchot wrote to Roosevelt accusing Taft of abandoning Roosevelt's commitment to conservation. He then went to Africa to meet Roosevelt and brought with him letters from Roosevelt allies attacking Taft, which began the process of alienating Roosevelt from his protégé.⁴⁹⁴

When Roosevelt first returned from Africa he made no public criticisms of Taft. In October 1911, however, Taft made a critical mistake when his

Administration launched an anti-trust suit against U.S. Steel. In the indictment the attorney general charged that U.S. Steel had misled Roosevelt when it got his permission to purchase the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company. Roosevelt had allowed the merger to take place during the Panic of 1907 because he was told that U.S. Steel would derive no business benefits. It would simply stabilize the market. During the trial, however, the chairman of U.S. Steel testified that this was simply untrue. Roosevelt was enraged at having been revealed as a dupe and published an article arguing that his decision had been correct. Roosevelt considered this his opening salvo in a campaign to wrest the Republican nomination from Taft.⁴⁹⁵

Roosevelt's only obstacle to the nomination, other than Taft, was the progressive Robert LaFollette from Wisconsin. LaFollette, however, removed himself from the race by delivering a two-and-a-half hour speech to the magazine publishers of Philadelphia in which he personally attacked them and

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 14-18.

⁴⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 93-100, Lewis L. Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring: The 1912 Election and the Birth of Modern American Politics, American Presidential Elections* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2008), 50-53.

repeated whole sections, eventually lapsing into virtual incoherence and collapsing. Eight days later, seven Republican state governors asked Roosevelt to run for the nomination. In late February of 1912 Roosevelt released the letter to the press along with his answer: he was in the race.⁴⁹⁶

Taft, meanwhile, was devastated by the need to battle his longtime friend and mentor. In May 1910 he had written Roosevelt, telling him "I do not know that I have had harder luck than other presidents but I do know that thus far I have succeeded far less than have others. I have been conscientiously trying to carry out your policies, but my method for doing so has not worked smoothly. . . ." When Roosevelt returned from Africa in 1910, already disaffected with Taft, he went on a tour of the western states in an attempt to unite the Republican Party. He had not communicated with Taft at all, and this so disturbed Taft that he said to an aide, "'If only I knew what [Roosevelt] wanted. . . I would do it, but you know he has held himself so aloof that I am absolutely in the dark. I am deeply wounded, and he gives me no chance to explain my attitude or learn his.'" ⁴⁹⁷

Once Roosevelt had launched into his campaign, however, Taft was determined to keep his hold on the White House, or at least the Republican nomination. When news of Roosevelt entering the race arrived, Taft initially expected to lose the nomination to him. As Roosevelt scrambled to put together a national campaign organization without the benefit of the institutional resources of the Party and the White House, however, Taft skillfully used his position to assemble a campaign organization and seize control of the convention delegates in states without direct primaries, particularly those in the South.⁴⁹⁸

Roosevelt's organization struck back by changing the rules of how states selected their delegations from conventions to direct primaries while Roosevelt himself crisscrossed the country attacking Taft. Taft initially refrained from criticizing Roosevelt but finally responded, decrying Roosevelt's "false accusations" and telling a Boston audience that "Mr. Roosevelt does not understand

⁴⁹⁶ Chace, *1912*, 100-106, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 54.

⁴⁹⁷ Chace, *1912*, 11-12, 56.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 107-110.

the rule of fair dealing.” Then he went to the waiting train and cradled his head in his hands. When a reporter came to see him, Taft looked up, said “Roosevelt was my closest friend” and wept.⁴⁹⁹

As 1912 wound on the race became a seesaw affair. Taft dominated March, while Roosevelt won the Illinois primary in a landslide in April, then took Pennsylvania. Taft won Massachusetts, while Roosevelt won Maryland, California, and decisively in Taft’s home state of Ohio. Overall Roosevelt won 1,164,765 primary votes while 768,202 went to Taft.⁵⁰⁰ The battle, however, was far from over. There would be 1078 delegates at the convention. Just before the convention delegate counts in the press gave Roosevelt 411 delegates, Taft 201, and LaFollette 36. There were 166 uncommitted delegates, most of whom supported Taft, and 254 disputed delegates.⁵⁰¹

At the Convention, however, Taft’s advantages, particularly his greater support from Republican Party elites, played a dominant role. The Republican National Committee had to decide whom to award the contested delegates to, and it was controlled by Taft supporters. It gave 235 to Taft and 19 to Roosevelt, putting Taft into the lead.⁵⁰² LaFollette, angry at Roosevelt for undercutting his claim to be leader of progressive Republicans, supported Taft’s candidate for convention chair. The combination guaranteed Taft the victory. Had LaFollette instead favored a supporter of his fellow progressive, Roosevelt would likely have captured the nomination.⁵⁰³

Roosevelt responded by bolting the Republican Party entirely. He and his delegates left the convention and announced the foundation of the Progressive Party with Roosevelt as its nominee. The Progressives had an enormous challenge, lacking as they did the infrastructure of an established major

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 110-111.

⁵⁰⁰ Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 64-65.

⁵⁰¹ Chace, *1912*, 109, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 66.

⁵⁰² Chace, *1912*, 116, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 66-67.

⁵⁰³ Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 71-72.

party. They also had the enormous advantage of a popular and charismatic leader in Roosevelt. The split in Republican votes, however, meant that the door was wide open for a Democratic victory.⁵⁰⁴

The Democrats

The favorite in the race for the Democratic nomination was Champ Clark, an uninspiring orator who had nevertheless proven an effective Speaker of the House. Oscar Underwood, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and Judson Harmon, the Governor of Ohio, were also possibilities. If the convention deadlocked William Jennings Bryan, already a three-time nominee, was a distinct possibility. All four men had records in public office that dwarfed Wilson's.⁵⁰⁵

Wilson had some advantages. Between his record at Princeton and his early successes in New Jersey he had a national reputation and strong support from progressives. His eloquence and appeal to progressives made him the closest match for Roosevelt among the contenders, his southern heritage and strength in the Northeast gave him national appeal, he had easy access to the New York-based national press, and he had a head start over his rivals, particularly Clark, who had to fulfill his duties in Washington. He took advantage of this by beginning a campaign swing through the South to lock up support there, and managed to secure a powerful base of delegates in Texas, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.⁵⁰⁶

James Beauchamp "Champ" Clark, the Speaker of the House, was born in Kentucky in 1850. He had been elected to Congress in 1892, defeated in 1894, and returned to Congress in 1896, staying there until he became Speaker of the House in 1911. He had a vast network of friends and political contacts and had skillfully kept House Democrats united to lower the tariff during the 1911 Congressional session. Politically he had always been a loyal supporter of Bryan, who was expected to endorse him.

⁵⁰⁴ Chace, *1912*, 122-125.

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 125, Arthur Stanley Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson, and Other Essays* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971), 216.

⁵⁰⁶ Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 77-80.

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Clark was probably the presidential candidate most representative of the Democratic Party's middle ground. He was handicapped by doubts among insiders about his competence and character and by his lack of charisma and speaking skill. His case for the nomination was further boosted by the split in the Republican Party and Taft's re-nomination, as these made it less important for the Democrats to nominate someone like Wilson who had the oratorical firepower to go toe-to-toe with Roosevelt.⁵⁰⁷

Wilson's campaign, meanwhile, was hammered by revelations from his past writings. In 1907 a far more conservative Wilson had written a letter in which he wished "that we could do something at once dignified and effective to knock Mr. Bryan once and for all into a cocked hat." The *New York Sun* gleefully published it. Luckily for Wilson, Bryan was visiting a Wilson supporter when this happened who was able to calm Bryan down until Wilson was able to meet him, deliver a speech praising Bryan, and win his forgiveness. Additionally, although the white supremacist attitudes that would mark his time in the Presidency were not yet widely known, Wilson had written in *History of the American People* that "there came multitudes of men of the lowest class from the south of Italy and men of the meaner sort out of Hungary and Poland, men out of the ranks where there was neither skill nor energy nor any initiative of quick intelligence; and they came in numbers which increased from year to year...." Wilson's opponents rejoiced in this impolitic statement, and his entirely specious claims that the quotes were taken out of context did little to help. He assured the leaders of pro-immigrant groups that these words did not reflect his true opinions and finally chose to issue a new edition of the book with the offending words deleted, but the damage was done.⁵⁰⁸

Wilson's campaign stumbled badly in the wake of these missteps. He campaigned extensively in Illinois, hoping to win the primary there, while Clark stayed in Washington. Despite this Wilson was crushed, winning only 75,257 votes to Clark's 218,483. Clark similarly won California overwhelmingly.

⁵⁰⁷ Chace, 1912, 143, Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 149, 152, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 81-84, Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson, and Other Essays*, 218.

⁵⁰⁸ Chace, 1912, 43, 131-132, 135-137, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 84.

He went into the Democratic National Convention in Baltimore with 400-500 delegates while Wilson had 248 confirmed and another 75 leaning towards him. 224 votes were controlled by party bosses, most of whom would support Clark. This made Clark the overwhelming favorite, as Wilson himself acknowledged, writing to Mary Peck, a woman with whom he was probably having an affair, "I have not the least idea of being nominated..." Bryan, however, had still not endorsed Clark, perhaps in the hope that a deadlocked convention would nominate him instead of any of the official candidates.⁵⁰⁹

The convention began on June 25, 1912. The first ballot was taken on Friday, June 28th. Clark received 440 ½ votes, to 324 for Wilson, 148 for Harmon of Ohio and 117 ½ to Underwood. 57 more votes were scattered among various minor candidates. Clark and Wilson each gained a few votes over the next eight ballots. On the tenth, New York's 90 votes went to Clark, giving him a majority of the delegates. The Democrats required a nominee to have two-thirds of the delegates, but since 1844 every single candidate who received a majority had received the nomination. Most expected the delegates to stampede towards Clark. They did not, but Wilson appeared to be finished anyways, so much so that he wrote a message to his campaign manager releasing his delegates and drafted a telegram congratulating Clark on his victory. Before the message could go through, however, another aide intervened and convinced Wilson to countermand that instruction. The convention went on.⁵¹⁰

The tide turned on the fourteenth ballot. Bryan, implacably opposed to New York's Tammany Hall machine and probably maneuvering to deadlock the convention in the hope that it will nominate him, had Nebraska switch its votes from Clark to Wilson. The 26th ballot was completed Saturday night, with Wilson gaining 83 ½ votes but still 56 votes behind Clark. Sunday was a day off. Wilson declared that he would make no deals even as his campaign team frantically negotiated for additional votes. On

⁵⁰⁹ Chace, 1912, 142, Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 151, 154, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 86-88, Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson, and Other Essays*, 235-236.

⁵¹⁰ Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 155-156, Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson, and Other Essays*, 229-233.

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Monday July 1 Indiana switched from Marshall to Wilson while 14 of Iowa's delegates swung from Clark to Wilson, giving him the lead, but still short of a majority, and well below the necessary two-thirds.⁵¹¹

On July 2 the Illinois delegation caucused and voted to support Wilson. This gave him an additional 58 votes and, for the first time, a majority. Virginia followed with another 24, as did West Virginia, which still left Wilson short of two-thirds. The deadlock continued until the forty-fifth ballot. Sullivan, the leader of the Illinois delegation, informed Bankhead, the leader of Alabama's delegation and a chief supporter of Underwood, that he planned on switching his support to Clark after the forty-fifth, despite earlier promises to support both Wilson and Underwood. Bankhead realized that Underwood could not possibly win and announced Underwood's withdrawal. This finally triggered a stampede to the frontrunner, as Missouri's leader released his delegates and Massachusetts swung to Wilson. Harmon then withdrew as well and this drove Wilson's count up to 990, giving him the nomination. Wilson's nomination was so surprising that even ten years later Clark's wife described herself as at a loss to explain how it could have happened. Once again Wilson had been elected by the masters of backroom maneuvering and machine politics whose power he was attempting to destroy.⁵¹²

The General Election

After the dramatic struggles for the nomination the general election was, in some ways, an anti-climax. Given Roosevelt's decision to split the Republican Party, Wilson's victory was virtually a foregone conclusion. Taft knew that he had no chance and was running largely to prevent Roosevelt from becoming President once again, a prospect that the party's conservatives feared even more than a Democratic victory.⁵¹³ Thus the race for first place was between Roosevelt and Wilson, and Wilson had the enormous advantages of a unified party and institutional structure behind him.

⁵¹¹ Chace, 1912, 156, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 93.

⁵¹² Chace, 1912, 157-158, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 76, 93, Link, *The Higher Realism of Woodrow Wilson, and Other Essays*, 241-242.

⁵¹³ Chace, 1912, 191, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 124-125, 155.



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Wilson was, ironically given his racist views, able to gain significant African-American support. He had maintained segregation at Princeton and, given his southern heritage, was viewed with suspicion by most African-Americans. Racial issues had not, however, played a significant role during his brief tenure as Governor of New Jersey. Thus he was able to get the endorsement of several

prominent African-American leaders, including W.E.B. DuBois, who stated that Wilson “will not advance the cause of the oligarchy in the South, he will not seek further means of ‘Jim Crow’ insult, he will not dismiss black men from office...” These hopes were to be cruelly disappointed during his Presidency.⁵¹⁴

The wild card was the impact of Roosevelt’s enormous personal popularity and charisma. As Wilson himself wrote, Roosevelt caught people’s imaginations, while “I do not. He is a real, vivid person . . . I am a vague, conjectural personality, more made up of opinions and academic prepossessions than of human traits and red corpuscles.”⁵¹⁵ Roosevelt, making a similar assessment, rejected an attempt to insert Wilson’s probable extra-marital affair into the campaign. When he was presented with a set of letters from Wilson to his mistress he commented that “those letters would be entirely unconvincing. Nothing, no evidence would ever make the American people believe that a man like Woodrow Wilson, cast so perfectly as the apothecary’s clerk, could ever play Romeo!”⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁴ Chace, 1912, 213, Cooper Jr., *Woodrow Wilson*, 170-171.

⁵¹⁵ Chace, 1912, 3.

⁵¹⁶ Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 162.

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The most dramatic incident of the election, one that revealed the extent to which Roosevelt's sheer force of personality and will made conventional political calculations useless, occurred in Milwaukee on October 14. There, while standing in a car waving to a cheering crowd on his way to a speech, he was shot in the chest by a madman obsessed with stopping him from winning a third term. The attempted assassin was immediately captured and, at Roosevelt's request, brought before him. While the crowd attempted to break through the police cordon to lynch him, Roosevelt turned to them and waved them away, ordering them not to hurt him and to turn him over to the police. He then unbuttoned his overcoat to reveal that his chest was bleeding.⁵¹⁷

Declaring "I will deliver this speech or die, one or the other," Roosevelt overruled his doctors and ordered himself taken to the meeting. There the crowd was informed that he had just been shot and that the severity of his injury was unknown. Roosevelt stepped to the stage, showed the crowd his bloody shirt and thundered to the cheering audience, "I do not know whether you fully understand that I have just been shot. But it takes more than that to kill a Bull Moose." He then spoke for almost an hour before finally allowing his doctors to take him to the hospital, where an X-Ray revealed that the bullet had fractured a rib and was less than an inch from his heart. The public's surge of sympathy made it seem possible that he might gain the White House once again.⁵¹⁸

Taft and Wilson suspended their campaigns until Roosevelt had recovered enough to conduct his own. By October 30 Roosevelt could deliver a speech in Madison Square Garden before a crowd of sixteen thousand so enamored of him that they cheered for forty-five minutes before allowing him to speak. The next day Wilson delivered his own much less effective speech in the same place.⁵¹⁹

In the end none of it mattered. The divide in the Republican Party was simply too much for even Roosevelt to overcome. Wilson won decisively, taking 6,293,454 votes to Roosevelt's 4,119,538 and

⁵¹⁷ Chace, *1912*, 230-232, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 170-171.

⁵¹⁸ Chace, *1912*, 231-233.

⁵¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 234-238.

Taft's 3,484,980. He won forty states, while Roosevelt took six and Taft two. Wilson received 435 electoral votes to Roosevelt's 88. Democrats also took the Senate. Taft and Roosevelt together, however, decisively outpolled Wilson, with 50.5 percent of the popular vote to his 42 percent.⁵²⁰

Assessment

Based on this record, Woodrow Wilson stands as perhaps the least filtered President. Wilson's national popularity initially stemmed from a public image he acquired based on his reform battles at Princeton. His speeches had, however, cast administrative disputes as issues of national import in a way that most of those close to the situation found implausible, and his decision to frame the arguments that way resulted in his defeat. When Wilson resigned the Princeton Presidency his reforms of the curriculum and faculty remained in place and paid dividends for decades, but his more ambitious efforts to create residential quadrangles and a graduate college on the main campus of the school had failed completely, never to be revived. Even more strikingly, these failures were unnecessary and largely self-inflicted. They stemmed from a profound inability to work with opponents, a skill that is crucial to a political career.

Wilson then entered politics for the first time. He was chosen as the Democratic candidate by Democratic machine bosses despite his complete absence of any political record. He promptly turned on them, destroying the career of his most important backer before he was even sworn in as governor. He had a single successful legislative session before members of his own party were so eager to weaken him that they actively threw the 1911 legislative elections to the Republicans. Once he was faced with a strong opposition his term foundered to a halt as he once again showed little interest or ability in working with a strong opposition. Had this weakness been revealed by more time in office it might have hindered his quest for the Presidency, but given his abbreviated career it was easily missed. Similarly,

⁵²⁰ *Ibid.*, 238-239.

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his antipathy for African-Americans did not come to the surface during his short time as Governor, which allowed him to garner valuable endorsements from African-American leaders.

His race for the Democratic nomination was aided by the artifact of the Democrats' two-thirds rule, without which Clark would have easily claimed the nomination; and by Bryan's unsuccessful maneuvering to create a deadlock. Had Bryan chosen to endorse his long-time loyal supporter instead of aiming for a fourth go-around as the Democrats' nominee, it is difficult to see how Clark could have lost. Yet neither is a tribute to any particular skill or achievement of Wilson's.

Wilson's victory in the general election was at least partly a product of Roosevelt's decision to split the Republican Party. Had Roosevelt simply met with his old friend, who had never wanted to be President, it is likely that he could have convinced Taft to step aside in his favor. Had Roosevelt been the candidate of a united Republican Party, he likely would have won. Had Roosevelt chosen not to run, he almost certainly would have been the Republican nominee in 1916, as all expected him to be in 1920 until his death in 1919.⁵²¹ Here again, Wilson's path was paved by a fluke combination of circumstances.

Finally, his time at Princeton in particular showed that he was prone to severe and recurring cardiovascular problems that were quite possibly already affecting his temperament and judgment. Any or all of these would have hindered him in a tighter filtration process, but the combination of the looseness of the American system and a rare combination of circumstances allowed Wilson to take the Presidency two years before the outbreak of the First World War.

The first four questions posed at the beginning of this chapter can thus be clearly answered. Wilson was not filtered thoroughly at all. His rise to power was supremely unlikely when compared to rivals like Roosevelt, Taft, and Clark, each of whom qualifies as a Modal alternative. Woodrow Wilson should thus clearly be classed as a Potential Outlier.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7, 23, 115, 261, Gould, *Four Hats in the Ring*, 41.

The Ratification Struggle

Woodrow Wilson returned from Paris with the Treaty of Versailles on July 8, 1919. He presented it to Congress with a major speech before a joint session. He meant to use his normal oratorical abilities to generate a wave of support for the Treaty and the League of Nations. Instead the speech was a failure, marked by repeated faltering in its delivery and filled primarily with vague platitudes instead of the sharp arguments in favor of the Treaty that its supporters had expected. Wilson's normally considerable political skills may already have been eroding due to his deteriorating cardiovascular health. Republican control of the Senate meant that Wilson's skills would be crucial to passage of the Treaty.⁵²²

Nevertheless, the Senate was seemingly promising ground. There were 47 Democrats and 49 Republicans there. The *Chicago Tribune* had determined that 40 were in favor of the League outright and forty-three were in favor of the League with reservations attached to the treaty. Twelve of those 43 senators were in favor of weak reservations and known as the "mild reservationists," the other 31 in favor of strong reservations. Five were undecided, and only eight were entirely opposed. Those eight would come to be referred to as the "Irreconcilables." Wilson also knew that he was solidly backed by public opinion as everything from polls to editorials to mass meetings showed overwhelming support for the League, something Henry Cabot Lodge, the Republican Senator who would lead the opposition to it, acknowledged. Finally, the Senate had never before rejected a peace treaty.⁵²³ The confidence of Wilson and the pro-League forces' seemed well-justified.

Wilson's attitude towards compromise, however, was already throwing a wrench into the works. Ratifying a treaty required two-thirds of the Senate to vote in its favor. With only 40 senators in

⁵²² John Milton Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World: Woodrow Wilson and the Fight for the League of Nations* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 117, 119-121.

⁵²³ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace*, 10-11, 53, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 112, Henry Cabot Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations* (New York: C. Scribner's sons, 1925), 146-147.

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favor of the League without reservations, ratification required winning over more than twenty other senators. The last words that Colonel House, Wilson's long-time political advisor whom Wilson had broken with after the Treaty negotiations in Paris, ever spoke to Wilson were to urge him to conciliate the Senate. Wilson had already made this more difficult by breaking with precedent and refusing to appoint any senators or any prominent Republicans to the commission which went to Paris to negotiate the treaty. Wilson was not willing to listen to such advice from any source, however. Virginia's Senator Martin, then leader of Senate Democrats, had told Wilson he was unsure he could muster the necessary two-thirds vote. Wilson replied, "'Martin! Anyone who opposes me in that, I'll crush!'"⁵²⁴

The next major step was a meeting between Wilson and the members of the Lodge-chaired Senate Foreign Relations Committee on August 19. There Wilson told the senators that he had no objection to reservations as long as they were not part of the instrument of ratification itself, as he feared that such reservations would prompt other signatories to do the same, delaying its enactment. Opponents of the treaty and those in favor of approval with reservations generally left the meeting unimpressed. Wilson had initially expressed his openness to compromise to one of his aides, and in a meeting on August 7 he had expressed his interest in communicating with those senators in favor of "mild" reservations. By August 11, however, he was rejecting any compromise and on August 15 he authorized Senator Hitchcock, the new Senate Minority Leader, to say that at that time he had no interest in compromise. Wilson seemed unable or unwilling to understand just how deeply felt the opposition of many senators was to an unaltered version of the treaty.⁵²⁵

The mild reservationists were the crucial faction in the Senate. Wilson could rely on 43 Democrats to support the Treaty in almost any form. Twelve Republicans were also in favor of the Treaty with only minor reservations. Although 55 Senators was not enough to ratify the Treaty, it was enough to give its proponents control of the parliamentary debates and to put enormous pressure on

⁵²⁴ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace*, 13, 49-50, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 34-35.

⁵²⁵ Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 140-147, 149, 154-145.

the treaty's remaining opponents. With 55 senators, for example, Wilson could have had purely cosmetic reservations added and forced the Republicans to face the choice of either conceding defeat or killing outright an extremely popular treaty. By rebuffing the mild reservationists, however, Wilson forced them into an alliance with Lodge instead.⁵²⁶

Lodge's strategy was relatively simple. An early proponent of some sort of League of Nations, he was nevertheless committed to maintaining American sovereignty and denying Wilson a major political victory. He preferred the passage of a Treaty with strong reservations to no Treaty at all, but he preferred no Treaty to passage without reservations. He also wanted to ensure that if the Treaty failed, Wilson and the Democrats would get the blame.⁵²⁷ He used his chairmanship of the Foreign Relations Committee to greatly slow consideration of the Treaty, giving its opponents time to organize and cooling the public fervor in its favor. Lodge thus argued for reservations that he said would make the Treaty acceptable and the League safe to join.⁵²⁸

An additional barrier to compromise was the enmity between Wilson and Lodge, who openly loathed one another. Wilson's feelings were so well known that when an irreconcilable Senator expressed a concern to Lodge that Wilson would suddenly accept reservations that Lodge had proposed, Lodge assured him that Wilson's hatred of him was "as strong as any cable with its strands wired and twisted together" and made this impossible.⁵²⁹ Lodge's posthumously published book *The Senate and The League of Nations* concludes with a nine-page attack on Wilson's character, abilities, and motivations, including his belief that Wilson was not a true scholar because he had only once used a classical allusion in his public addresses, and that once it was mistaken. Knowing the enormous pride Wilson took in his authorship of the Covenant of the League of Nations, he seems to have deliberately

⁵²⁶ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace*, 57-58.

⁵²⁷ Thomas Andrew Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1945), 67-68, Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Lost Peace*, 188, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 12-13, Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations*, 129-135.

⁵²⁸ Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 134-135.

⁵²⁹ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 70, 197-198.

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set out to provoke Wilson by saying that “As an English production it [the Covenant] does not rank high...It might get by at Princeton but certainly not at Harvard.”⁵³⁰

After the failed meeting with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Wilson invited twenty Republican Senators to meet with him one-on-one to discuss the Treaty. One told him that the only way to pass it was to accept it with the Lodge reservations. Wilson replied, “Accept the Treaty with the *Lodge* reservations? Never! Never! I’ll never consent to adopt any policy with which that impossible name is so prominently identified.”⁵³¹

Faced with an opposition in Washington with which he was completely unwilling to compromise, Wilson fell back on a strategy that he had used at Princeton. He decided to make a speaking tour of the country, appealing to the population to put pressure on the Senate, just as he had spoken to alumni to urge them to put pressure on Princeton’s Board of Trustees. He left Washington on September 3 with a brutal schedule ahead. He planned on making forty speeches over twenty-one days. He began by heading west from Washington. The speeches contained only the vaguest hints of reaching out to his Republican opposition. Instead they featured repeated attacks on the Senate that further alienated many senators. Although some of his supporters felt that the speeches began to have some effect, his opponents felt otherwise. Even his own Secretary of War felt that they had no influence upon the Senate, while a week into his tour Lodge described it as a “failure.”⁵³²

Wilson had set himself a virtually impossible task. He hoped to force the Senate to accede to his views on the Treaty. Senators’ six-year terms, however, made them far less vulnerable to public pressure than most other politicians. Most senators expected that the public would have long forgotten the League issue by the time they came up for reelection, even if that happened in 1920. This was even more the case if the Senator’s term did not end until 1922 or 1924. Furthermore, the Republican

⁵³⁰ Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations*, 184-185, 218-126.

⁵³¹ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 76.

⁵³² *Ibid.*, 117, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 152, 159, 163, 190.

consensus against ratification without reservations was so overwhelming that even if Wilson had succeeded in defeating every single Republican senator facing reelection in 1920, he still could not have gotten a two-thirds vote in the Senate. He could succeed only if he aroused the public so completely that senators still feared the consequences of going against him in 1922 or 1924. Perhaps Theodore Roosevelt could have roused such a wave of feeling among the population, but Wilson, a scholar before he was a politician, seemed unlikely to be able to do so. Meanwhile his tour took him out of Washington and away from any chance to negotiate with the Senators there.⁵³³

The last, and perhaps most pressing, argument against the tour was the brutal physical demands it imposed on Wilson. Many of his friends, including his physician, told him that it was "suicide" for a sixty-three year old man of uncertain health to throw himself into such an ordeal.⁵³⁴ These predictions were tragically borne out when Wilson was struck down by a major stroke on October 2. Although he initially wished to continue the tour, his obvious and complete inability to function led his doctors, staff, and his wife Edith to overrule him and bring him back to the White House. Edith Wilson and his doctor conspired to hide the extent of Wilson's illness. His doctor reported to the Cabinet that he "was suffering from 'a nervous breakdown, indigestion, and a depleted nervous system.'"⁵³⁵ Even his access to information was sharply limited as his wife filtered his mail. House, for example, wrote three letters to Wilson urging him to compromise with Lodge, but it seems likely that Edith Wilson, who disliked House, ensured that Wilson never received them.⁵³⁶ Furthermore, the stroke, both directly, through its psychological and physiological effects, and indirectly, through his isolation, crippled Wilson's ability to make good political decisions.⁵³⁷ Wilson was thus abruptly and virtually completely removed from the ratification struggle even as Lodge was cementing his advantage.

⁵³³ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 93-97.

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, 99-101.

⁵³⁵ Weinstein, *Woodrow Wilson*, 355-361.

⁵³⁶ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 146.

⁵³⁷ Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 264.

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Treaty supporters wanted Wilson to accede to reservations. The major public pressure group behind the Treaty was the League to Enforce Peace. Its chief lobbyist, Talcott Williams, and Abbott Lawrence Lowell, a member of its Executive Committee and also President of Harvard, were strongly in favor of passing the Treaty with reservations. At a League meeting their opinions, along with the similar opinion of ex-President Taft, convinced the League to publicly support a compromise.⁵³⁸

Wilson was unyielding. His health was slowly improving, so Hitchcock was finally able to meet him twice, first on November 7 and again on November 17. He told Wilson, "it might be wise to compromise with Lodge on this point." Wilson replied, "Let Lodge compromise." Hitchcock continued, "Well, of course, he must compromise also, but we might well hold out the olive branch." Wilson, unmoved, said "Let Lodge hold out the olive branch." Wilson's weak condition precluded any further discussion. At the meeting on the 17th Wilson told Hitchcock that he believed Lodge's reservations were a "nullification" of the treaty, and that his preferred strategy was that the Senate deadlock so that senators would face pressure from their constituents to ratify the Treaty.⁵³⁹

While Wilson was recuperating in the White House, the treaty moved from the Foreign Relations Committee to the Senate floor. Treaty opponents proposed a series of amendments, all of which were defeated by a combination of Democratic senators and the mild reservationists. This suggests that an alliance with the mild reservationists to pass the Treaty was still possible. Lodge introduced fourteen reservations to the Treaty; the similarity to Wilson's "Fourteen Points" was surely not accidental. Most of these reservations had minimal effects on the Treaty and League. In fact, in August Wilson had confidentially drafted four proposed reservations to the Treaty and given them to Hitchcock, the Democrats' Minority Leader. Wilson's proposed reservations were "not substantially

⁵³⁸ *Ibid.*, 247-249.

⁵³⁹ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 178-179.

different from the corresponding Lodge reservations....”⁵⁴⁰ Yet Wilson was adamantly unwilling to accept reservations when Lodge was the one introducing them.

Wilson made his next move on November 18 by sending a letter to Hitchcock with his instructions to Senate Democrats. He minced no words on the question of the Lodge reservations: “I can not hesitate, for, in my opinion, the resolution in that form [with the Lodge reservations] does not provide for ratification but, rather, for the *nullification* of the treaty. I sincerely hope that the friends and supporters of the treaty will vote against the Lodge resolution of ratification...I trust that all *true friends* of the treaty will refuse to support the Lodge resolution.” A more direct and pointed slap at the mild reservationists is hard to imagine. Wilson was committing himself to a deadlock in the hopes of a later, more favorable, compromise. Most Democratic senators would have preferred to pass the treaty with reservations, but party discipline held them in check. Wilson’s stand forced Democratic senators to vote against the treaty with the Lodge reservations even if that was the only way it could be ratified.⁵⁴¹

This round of the struggle came to a climax in the middle of November. Lodge’s proposed reservations were approved on a long series of mostly partly-line votes. On November 19 the Senate finally voted on the Treaty. First up was the resolution of ratification with the Lodge reservations. That was defeated 39 to 55, with 35 votes in favor coming from Republicans, while the 55 votes against came from 40 Democrats and 15 Irreconcilables. Lodge then gave the Democrats the chance to vote on the Treaty without reservations. It was defeated 38 to 53, with 37 Democrats and 1 Republican voting in favor.⁵⁴² The Treaty had been decisively defeated. It lost because Wilson ordered his own party to vote against his greatest creation. Had he, even at the last minute, allowed the Democrats to vote in favor, it would surely have passed.⁵⁴³ But the decision was not yet final.

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 153-166, 171-172, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 224.

⁵⁴¹ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 183-185.

⁵⁴² Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 226-269.

⁵⁴³ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 199.

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Wilson and Lodge would both have preferred to leave the situation as it stood and let the upcoming elections determine what would happen next. Some Democrats and mild reservationist Republicans in the Senate, however, still hoped to revive the Treaty. Just as these started to gain traction Wilson issued a letter to a Jackson Day gathering of Democrats which bitterly attacked his opponents and called for a national referendum on the Treaty. This did not completely prevent Senatorial efforts at compromise, but it clearly made them more difficult. Efforts at compromise received a boost when Viscount Grey, who had been Britain's Foreign Minister, published a letter declaring that Britain would have accepted American reservations without renegotiating the Treaty. This removed one of the strongest arguments against reservations.⁵⁴⁴

Lodge agreed to a series of bipartisan meetings of a group of 10 senators to see if a compromise could be reached. Wilson again released a letter to the Senate reaffirming his position on reservations, which weakened the effort, and further sabotaged it when he told a Senator who was visiting him that he would pocket the treaty (that is, essentially, veto it) if it were passed with the Lodge reservations. At one point these meetings appeared to have reached a breakthrough compromise, but it collapsed, if it ever existed, under pressure from Irreconcilables and Republicans in favor of strong reservations. The Senate eventually again approved most of the Lodge reservations in late February and early March.⁵⁴⁵

As a final vote neared, public opinion turned against the President. His intransigence, along with a series of mistakes on other matters, had eroded much of his support. He still, however, had great influence over Senators who were unwilling to turn on their party leader, and he continued to reiterate his absolute opposition to reservations. On March 19, 1920 the Senate voted on the Treaty for the final time. On the day of the final vote two members of the Cabinet were seen lobbying wavering Senators. The final vote was 49 in favor of the Treaty with reservations, 35 opposed. The Treaty was defeated

⁵⁴⁴ Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 283-298.

⁵⁴⁵ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 244-245, 254-256, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 303.

only seven votes shy of the necessary two-thirds majority. Twenty-three Democrats who favored the Treaty followed Wilson's instructions and voted against its last hope of ratification. Hitchcock wrote Wilson after the vote that it had required extreme efforts on his part to prevent Democrats from defecting and voting in favor of the Treaty. The best description of the defeat came from a conversation between Lodge and Senator Brandegee, one of the Irreconcilables. After the vote Brandegee said to Lodge, "We can always depend on Mr. Wilson. He never has failed us. He has used all his powers to defeat the Treaty, because we would not ratify it in just the form which he desired." Lodge replied, "That is quite true. Without his efforts the Treaty would have been accepted by the Senate today."⁵⁴⁶

Assessment

Any assessment of Wilson's behavior and Impact on the Treaty ratification struggle must cope with the effects of his deteriorating cardiovascular health and his devastating stroke. Most of those surrounding Wilson felt that his behavior began to deteriorate after an illness he suffered during the Treaty negotiations in Paris.⁵⁴⁷ He may have had his first minor stroke as early as 1896, or even 1891.⁵⁴⁸ For the purposes of examining LFT, however, the question of who the "real" Wilson was, unaffected by his cardiovascular problems, is irrelevant. The real Wilson is the one who won the 1912 election.

It is useful to look separately at Wilson's behavior before and after his major stroke in 1919. Clearly, a President who is isolated, whose information is filtered through his wife and advisors, and who is dealing with the crippling physiological and psychological implications of a major stroke cannot be expected to perform normally, or adequately, particularly in dealing with an issue as fraught and complex as the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and entry into the League of Nations.

⁵⁴⁶ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 265-271, Cooper Jr., *Breaking the Heart of the World*, 352-362, Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations*, 214.

⁵⁴⁷ McDermott, *Presidential Leadership, Illness, and Decision Making*, 71-73.

⁵⁴⁸ Weinstein, *Woodrow Wilson*, 141.

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When Wilson returned from Paris with the Treaty of Versailles and the League Covenant he began campaigning for their ratification but was immediately faced by united Republican opposition to adopting the Treaty without reservations. He responded to warnings that he lacked the votes for ratification with undisguised hostility. Rather than engaging with his Republican opponents in an attempt to find some common ground, he removed himself from negotiations in Washington and launched a speaking tour of the country meant to put pressure on Lodge and his allies. This speaking tour, *even if it had succeeded in generating public pressure on the Senate*, could not have defeated enough Republican senators to allow the Treaty to be ratified without reservations. Furthermore the speeches he delivered before his stroke give no reason to believe that the tour would have been successful in generating the level of public pressure he needed to bend the Senate to his will.

If Wilson had not suffered his stroke it is possible that he would have returned to Washington in a mood to compromise. The story of his political and pre-political career, however, makes this seem very unlikely. At Princeton he had destroyed his presidency rather than work with those who had opposed him on the Quad Plan and the location of the Graduate College. During his very brief period as Governor of New Jersey he displayed neither an interest nor an aptitude for working with his Republican opposition. As his health slowly recovered from the stroke in 1920 he was no more interested in compromise than he had been earlier. It is possible that he would have compromised, "but there is nothing to support such a view in his public utterances, in his private papers, or in his character."⁵⁴⁹

Wilson's stroke changed everything. Wilson's decisions after the stroke unquestionably led directly to the defeat of the Treaty. Treaty advocates were almost uniformly in favor of compromise, and there were enough weak reservationists in the Senate that accepting the Lodge reservations would almost certainly have guaranteed passage and American involvement in the League of Nations.

⁵⁴⁹ Bailey, *Woodrow Wilson and the Great Betrayal*, 173.

Wilson's stroke, however, was not a random event, nor were its effects. Wilson's doctor warned him that his speaking tour would be catastrophic for his health. Wilson had a history of health problems interfering with his work that more thorough filtration might have detected. Beyond that, the changes the stroke caused in his behavior were outgrowths of his underlying personality:

[I]f Wilson's original personality had been different, the outcome of the events surrounding the ratification of the league might have shifted. In other words, although Wilson would still have been affected in memory, judgment, and other mental processes, his social interactions might have produced a different outcome. If his premorbid personality had been one of withdrawal in the face of conflict or one that sought cooperation, these characteristics might have been the ones to exert themselves more strongly in the wake of physical compromise secondary to dementia, delirium, or both. Yet it is precisely the self-defeating nature of his earlier personality characteristics that led to his downfall, as they became exacerbated by serious cognitive compromise. In this sense, Wilson fell victim to that greatest of tragedies: his own inherent character flaws.⁵⁵⁰

Wilson's stroke may have prevented the United States from joining the League of Nations. It is impossible to know with certainty how he would have behaved had it not occurred. The question of how his behavior was affected by his chronic cardiovascular problems inserts even more uncertainty into the question. The way in which his time as President of the United States echoes his time as President of Princeton, however, is so pronounced that it is impossible to ignore. He began in both positions with a run of extraordinary triumphs, only to founder at the end as he became less and less willing to listen to advice, cut off supporters over relatively small disagreements, vituperatively attacked his opposition, and preferred an attempt to overwhelm and destroy his opponents to trying to find a compromise solution. These tendencies would likely have been noted had he had a prolonged career in politics. As it was, however, he rose to the White House based on a college presidency that few in the political system knew much about or had any ability to judge and a few months during which the Democrats controlled the New Jersey legislature.

⁵⁵⁰ McDermott, *Presidential Leadership, Illness, and Decision Making*, 82.

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It is now possible to answer the second set of four questions from the beginning of this chapter. Did Wilson have out of the ordinary Characteristics that might have blocked him from succeeding in a tighter filtration process? He assuredly did. Did Wilson's Characteristics lead to different policy outcomes? If Wilson had acted as almost everyone urged him to, the United States would have joined the League of Nations. Did Wilson's behavior result in an Impact that other leaders would not have had? If almost any other person had been President in 1919 and 1920 the United States would have joined the League of Nations. While the consequences of American membership in the League of Nations are impossible to predict, it seems plausible that, at the least, it would have led the United States to have been more engaged in European politics during the 1920s and 1930s than it was.

Conclusion

Wilson's contemporaries recognized that he was simply unlike most politicians in profound and important ways. Perhaps the most telling assessment of the peculiarities of his character comes from Lodge, his mortal enemy, who "felt convinced that President Wilson would prevent the acceptance of the treaty with reservations if he possibly could. [Lodge] based this opinion on...Mr. Wilson's temperament, intentions, and purposes."⁵⁵¹ There is no need to share Lodge's hatred of Wilson to agree that most politicians are unlikely to be so easily manipulated, so committed to self-destructive behaviors, or so unyielding in their refusal to work with adversaries. At the end of the day, both Lodge and Wilson wanted the Treaty to pass. Lodge simply preferred that Wilson take the blame for its failure than that it passed without reservations and he was able to manipulate Wilson into giving him exactly that.

⁵⁵¹ Lodge, *The Senate and the League of Nations*, 212.

LFT predicts that that unfiltered leaders will be particularly prone to false optimism, risk-taking, and poor managerial performance. Wilson demonstrated a remarkable tendency for all three. Whether as President of Princeton or the United States he was consistently falsely optimistic about his ability to overcome opposition, gambled his career in the pursuit of maximalist goals, and showed a striking inability to maneuver within the system.

This chapter skips over Wilson's remarkable successes as President of Princeton, Governor, and President of the United States, focusing as it must on a single event or decision of overwhelming importance. Yet a record of remarkable success followed by equally spectacular failures is precisely what LFT predicts for Outliers. Pursuing maximalist goals and refusing to compromise on them in the face of opposition can lead to extraordinary triumphs. Wilson himself attributed his initial successes at Princeton and in New Jersey to "'standing fast.'"⁵⁵²

Wilson's stance while President at Princeton as an opponent of wealth and privilege – however poorly that narrative fit the reality of the struggle over the location of the Graduate College – catapulted him into the national spotlight. His rhetorical stance raised the stakes of the conflict exponentially. He lost at Princeton but won the larger gamble for his future career. Even before he was sworn in as Governor he cut loose from the party bosses who had nominated him. By doing so he positioned himself for his national rise, but risked his success in New Jersey. Had his longshot bid for the Presidency failed, Wilson would have returned to New Jersey to a Republican-controlled legislature and bitter opposition in his own party. When faced with powerful opposition to the United States joining the League of Nations without reservations instead of seeking a mutually acceptable compromise he escalated the stakes in precisely the same way, trying to "crush" his opponents. Had he succeeded it would have been

⁵⁵² Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, 253.

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among the most extraordinary exercises of Presidential power in American history, but by aiming for such a goal he created the possibility of a total failure.

The final outcome of Wilson's choices was surely worse than he ever imagined. The United States refused to enter the League under any conditions and his own body was broken by the strains he put upon it in his futile efforts to rally the public. His fall was every bit as meteoric as his rise. Wilson's story, in fact, is tragic in the classical sense of the term. The characteristics that enabled his triumphs were those that made his final failure inevitable. No normal politician would have allowed the Treaty to fail over small differences in the wording of reservations. But no normal politician would have gone from President of Princeton to President of the United States in virtually the blink of an eye either.

Thomas Woodrow Wilson, 28th President of the United States, was a paradigmatic Outlier. Wilson did things other politicians would not have done; he acted in ways other politicians would not have acted.⁵⁵³ He dared greatly, succeeded greatly, and failed greatly.

⁵⁵³ Greenstein, *Personality and Politics: Problems of Evidence, Inference, and Conceptualization*, 46.

CHAPTER 8 - "CRASHED INTO RUINS": CHAMBERLAIN AND APPEASEMENT

Great Britain's mechanism for choosing Prime Ministers is very different from that the United States uses to choose Presidents. Prime Ministers, since they are chosen by Parliament, are nearly always members of the majority, or at least the plurality, party. Without an independent legislature that can sometimes be controlled by the opposition, they generally have significantly more freedom from domestic constraints than American Presidents. Even the electorate has less ability to bring the Prime Minister to heel, as voters are never given the opportunity to vote directly on who will become head of government. British Prime Ministers are generally older and significantly more experienced than Presidents of the United States.⁵⁵⁴ Prime Ministers are far more thoroughly filtered than Presidents, and thus a lower proportion of them will be Outliers.

The modern British political system dates to the Reform Act of 1832.⁵⁵⁵ An examination of the pre-Prime Ministerial career of every Prime Minister since the Act reveals that the greater experience of British Prime Ministers is more than just an average property. Every single British Prime Minister since 1830 has had more than eight years as a Member of Parliament (MP) before becoming Prime Minister. The least experienced Prime Minister, John Major, with 11 years as an MP when he replaced Margaret Thatcher, had more experience in significant political offices – defined in this case as being an MP - than the *majority* of American Presidents (Table 14).

⁵⁵⁴ Dennis Kavanagh, *Crisis, Charisma, and British Political Leadership: Winston Churchill as the Outsider*, Sage Professional Papers in Contemporary Political Sociology (London, UK: Sage Publications, 1974), 26-27, Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience*.

⁵⁵⁵ John A. Phillips and Charles Wetherell, "The Great Reform Act of 1832 and the Political Modernization of England," *The American Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (1995).

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Table 14: British Prime Ministers			
Prime Minister	Takes Office	Leaves Office	Time as MP
Charles Grey	11/22/1830	7/9/1834	44
William Lamb	7/16/1834	11/14/1834	28
Arthur Wellesley	11/14/1834	12/10/1834	28
Robert Peel	12/10/1834	4/8/1835	25
William Lamb	4/18/1835	11/30/1841	28
Robert Peel	8/30/1841	6/29/1846	25
John Russell	6/30/1846	2/21/1852	33
Edward Smith-Stanley	2/23/1852	12/17/1852	32
George Hamilton-Gordon	12/19/1852	1/30/1855	46
Henry John Temple (Palmerston)	2/6/1855	2/19/1858	48
Edward Smith-Stanley	2/20/1858	6/11/1859	32
Henry John Temple (Palmerston)	6/12/1859	10/18/1865	48
John Russell	10/29/1865	6/26/1866	33
Edward Smith-Stanley	6/28/1866	2/25/1868	32
Benjamin Disraeli	2/27/1868	12/1/1868	31
William Gladstone	12/3/1868	2/17/1874	36
Benjamin Disraeli	2/20/1874	4/21/1880	31
William Gladstone	4/23/1880	6/9/1885	36
Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Salisbury)	6/23/1885	1/28/1886	32
William Gladstone	2/1/1886	7/20/1886	36
Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Salisbury)	7/25/1886	8/11/1892	32
William Gladstone	8/15/1892	3/2/1894	36
Archibald Primrose	3/5/1894	6/22/1895	26
Robert Gascoyne-Cecil (Salisbury)	6/25/1895	7/11/1902	32
Arthur Balfour	7/11/1902	12/5/1905	28
Henry Campbell-Bannerman	12/5/1905	4/7/1908	37
Herbert Asquith	4/7/1908	12/7/1916	22
David Lloyd George	12/7/1916	10/19/1922	26
Andrew Bonar Law	10/23/1922	5/20/1923	22
Stanley Baldwin	5/23/1923	1/16/1924	15
Ramsay MacDonald	1/22/1924	11/4/1924	14
Stanley Baldwin	11/4/1924	6/5/1929	15
Ramsay MacDonald	6/5/1929	8/24/1931	14
Ramsay MacDonald	8/24/1931	6/7/1935	14
Stanley Baldwin	6/7/1935	5/28/1937	15
Neville Chamberlain	5/28/1937	5/10/1940	19
Winston Churchill	5/10/1940	7/26/1945	38
Clement Attlee	7/26/1945	10/26/1951	23
Winston Churchill	10/26/1951	4/7/1955	38
Anthony Eden	4/7/1955	1/10/1957	32
Harold MacMillan	1/10/1957	10/19/1963	26
Alec Douglas-Home	10/19/1963	10/16/1964	20
Harold Wilson	10/16/1964	6/19/1970	19
Edward Heath	6/19/1970	3/4/1974	20
Harold Wilson	3/4/1974	4/5/1976	19
James Callaghan	4/5/1976	5/4/1979	31
Margaret Thatcher	5/4/1979	11/28/1990	20
John Major	11/28/1990	5/2/1997	11
Tony Blair	5/2/1997	6/27/2007	14
Gordon Brown	6/27/2007	5/11/2010	24
Average			27.72

On its face this suggests that there might be no Unfiltered British Prime Ministers, particularly because the British system lacks paths past filtration equivalent to Vice Presidential succession. There is, however, one other way an Unfiltered candidate can rise to power. As described in Chapter 3, if some major exogenous shock eliminates all the other potential candidates for leadership, a candidate who would otherwise be considered completely unsuitable – one who has, essentially, already been filtered out – can come to power. This is closely echoes the conventional story of how Churchill became Prime Minister in 1940:

...[A]ccidents may upset the pattern [of thoroughly evaluated and generally acceptable Prime Ministers]. Winston Churchill was such an accident. Member of Parliament since 1900 and the holder of more Ministerial posts than any politician in English history, he was richly qualified for the highest office. But he had been a maverick for most of his political life....He was most often at odds with his party on great matters of state policy....Nothing less than a crisis great enough to turn his party liabilities into national assets could have elevated him to the highest office....Uncontaminated by office, he was also untamed, indeed untamable. But the events required to raise him to the Prime Ministership, by virtue of their exceptional quality cause the normal practice to stand out with greater clarity. Accidents do occur, but it takes great crises to produce them. To pull someone from outside the normal line of succession is not easily done.⁵⁵⁶

If Churchill was an Unfiltered British Prime Minister, this creates the potential for an ideal most-similar case comparison. Neville Chamberlain, his predecessor, is as reviled in the popular imagination as Churchill is revered. He is conventionally remembered as Hitler's dupe. R.A.C. Parker, although more forgiving than the first wave of post-war historians, nevertheless concluded that "Chamberlain's powerful, obstinate personality and his skill in debate probably stifled serious chances of preventing the Second World War."⁵⁵⁷ Chamberlain's most famous opponent was, of course, Churchill himself. Their dueling approaches to Nazi Germany thus provide an excellent test of LFT. Chamberlain's government, headed by a Filtered leader, should have chosen policies largely similar to those that would have been

⁵⁵⁶ Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience*, 54.

⁵⁵⁷ Frank McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, Appeasement and the British Road to War, New Frontiers in History* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998), 1, Robert Alexander Clarke Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement: British Policy and the Coming of the Second World War, The Making of the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 347.

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adopted had likely alternatives been in power. Churchill's government, on the other hand, should have made decisions that were attributable to Churchill's unique characteristics and substantially different from those that would have been made by the most likely alternative. The questions a study of Chamberlain's rise to power and his time in office must answer follow the template established in Chapter 3 (Table 15).

Table 15: Questions for Chamberlain Case Study	
Section 1	Question 1: How thoroughly was Chamberlain filtered? Question 2: How likely was Chamberlain's rise to power relative to other potential leaders? Question 3: Who are the chief Modal alternatives to Chamberlain? Question 4: Should Chamberlain be classified as Filtered or Unfiltered?
Section 2	Question 1: Did Chamberlain have relevant out of the ordinary Characteristics that affected policy? Question 2: Did Chamberlain make policy choices significantly different from those his Modal alternatives would have made? Question 3: Did Chamberlain have an Impact that his Modal alternatives would not have had? Question 4: Is Chamberlain really a Modal, low-impact leader?

Chamberlain was exceptionally thoroughly filtered before becoming Prime Minister. He served in multiple senior Cabinet positions and was the dominant figure in the Cabinet and Prime Minister-in-waiting for several years. Once he became Prime Minister he was in tighter control of the Cabinet than most Prime Ministers, and he was far more committed to the policy of appeasement than most of his colleagues. During the early part of the long road to World War II, however, Chamberlain's policy preferences were indistinguishable from those of most Conservative Party elites. During and after the Munich crisis Chamberlain remained committed to appeasement even as it was abandoned by his colleagues, most importantly Lord Halifax, the most likely Modal alternative Prime Minister. As his

views diverged from the consensus, however, he began to defer to his Cabinet colleagues and British policy followed their views, not his. Overall Chamberlain's impact on British policy was quite low, just as Leader Filtration Theory predicts.

The Path to the Premiership

From Business to Government

Neville Chamberlain was born in Birmingham on March 18, 1869. He was the son of the second wife of Joseph Chamberlain, a prominent area businessman, and the younger half-brother of Austen Chamberlain, who would also have a successful political career. He went to Rugby, a prestigious public (meaning private in the United States) school, for two years but was academically undistinguished there. He then studied metallurgy and engineering at Mason College, a Birmingham technical school, from 1887 to 1889. He became the only university-educated Prime Minister not to graduate from either Oxford or Cambridge. After graduating he was apprenticed to a firm of accountants for one year. His father expected him to go into business to maintain the family fortune while Austen entered politics.⁵⁵⁸

After that year his father sent him to manage a plantation in the Bahamas. Chamberlain worked hard but without any apparent originality or innovation there. He was handicapped by a plunge in the price of the crops he was raising and fundamental misunderstandings of what was required both to manage the plantation and to sell its product successfully. After five years the plantation failed completely; its collapse significantly weakened the Chamberlain family's financial position. When he returned to Birmingham he used his family connections to secure a directorship at Elliott's Metal Company. He then purchased Hoskins & Sons, an engineering firm, with a loan from his father. He

⁵⁵⁸ Nick Smart, *Neville Chamberlain* (London, UK: Routledge, 2010), 1-7, Graham Stewart, *Burying Caesar: The Churchill-Chamberlain Rivalry* (New York, NY: The Overlook Press, 2001), 31-33.

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managed Hoskins for 17 years with great success, focusing his energies almost entirely on business. He did contribute to his father's efforts to create the University of Birmingham.⁵⁵⁹

In 1911 Chamberlain, taking advantage of his family's dominance of local politics, was elected to the Birmingham City Council. His major campaign issue was improving town planning. The outbreak of the First World War was an enormous boon to his company and he made a fortune off the profits from government contracts. In 1915 he became Birmingham's Lord Mayor. He devoted much of his time in office to the creation of a municipal savings bank. Although his efforts received significant praise from the press they had little or no lasting effect.⁵⁶⁰

In 1916 David Lloyd George led a revolt against H.H. Asquith over his leadership of the war effort and replaced him as Prime Minister. The Chamberlain family had always been hostile to Lloyd George, but Chamberlain supported him in his leadership challenge. Lloyd George rewarded him by making him the Director of National Service in December 1916. Chamberlain served in the position for only eight months and hated it the entire time, being one of many people who found Lloyd George impossible to work for. After resigning he ran for Parliament and won in 1918. Lloyd George assembled a National Government during the war that was succeeded by a coalition between the Liberal and Conservative parties. This might have ended Chamberlain's career but in 1922 younger Conservatives revolted against the coalition. Bonar Law replaced Lloyd George but served less than a year before being diagnosed with inoperable throat cancer. He was replaced by Stanley Baldwin. This leadership change gave Chamberlain the opportunity to shoot up the political ranks. In rapid succession he was appointed Postmaster General, then Minister for Health, and then briefly Chancellor of the Exchequer. In 1923 Baldwin called a general election and lost, throwing himself and Chamberlain into the Opposition.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁹ Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 9-38.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 52-65.

⁵⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 87, 96-98, 103, 105-106, 108-110, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 31-33.

Chamberlain in Opposition was a brutally effective questioner of the Labour government. His sarcastic and contemptuous style, however, made him perhaps the single most-hated Conservative figure among Labour MPs. In late 1924 an overwhelming Conservative triumph in a general election put Baldwin back into Number 10 Downing Street and restored Chamberlain to the Cabinet. Baldwin offered Chamberlain the chance to return to the Exchequer, but he turned it down, saying that he could not support Baldwin's position in favor of free trade. Instead he returned to the Ministry of Health, where he stayed for the next four and a half years. Churchill became Chancellor.⁵⁶²

Baldwin's hands off leadership style gave his ministers considerable freedom to pursue their own initiatives. Chamberlain was quite effective as Minister of Health. He pioneered legislation extending pensions to widows and providing social support to orphans. He took the lead in lowering the retirement age from 70 to 65. He reformed the Victorian-era Poor Law. He also supported cutting back on aid to the poor in order to maintain fiscal discipline and backed a failed attempt to construct prefabricated housing to relieve the housing shortage in Britain. He and Churchill fought over tax cuts - he opposed them while Churchill was in favor - and Churchill won. In 1929 the Conservatives were once again defeated, returning Chamberlain to Opposition.⁵⁶³

While the Conservatives were in Opposition and Chamberlain was on a tour of Africa Churchill split with Baldwin over India policy, only to be handily defeated. This split will be covered in more detail in the next chapter, but its effect on Chamberlain was to essentially eliminate his only meaningful rival for the position of Baldwin's logical successor from any foreseeable shot at becoming Prime Minister. Chamberlain became Baldwin's unofficial deputy.⁵⁶⁴

In 1931 Labour's Ramsay MacDonald won an enormous victory in the general election as the head of a coalition "National Government." Although MacDonald became Prime Minister, his

⁵⁶² Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 122-127, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 34-35.

⁵⁶³ Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 130-143.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 146-147, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 71.

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government was dominated by Conservatives. Chamberlain again became Chancellor of the Exchequer. While Chancellor Chamberlain negotiated an end to German reparations and the British economy rapidly recovered from the Great Depression. MacDonald's faculties were in rapid decline, so by 1934 Chamberlain was the dominant figure in the Cabinet. Baldwin again became Prime Minister in 1935.⁵⁶⁵

The Government ran for re-election in November 1935 in a campaign dominated by foreign affairs. Chamberlain was the chief strategist of the National Government's campaign. Its foreign policy emphasized support of the League of Nations and a commitment to collective security. One of Labour's chief lines of attack was to hammer the National Government as warmongers who were under the thumb of arms manufacturers, going so far as to feature a campaign poster of a baby in a gas mask as the consequence of the National Government's preference for higher arms spending. The National Government won a victory so overwhelming that Baldwin had no need to placate the Conservatives' right wing by including Churchill, its champion, in the Cabinet. Chamberlain had firmly cemented his position as Baldwin's successor whenever the 68-year-old Prime Minister chose to retire.⁵⁶⁶ The size of the National Government's victory means that potential alternative Prime Ministers could only be found among the leaders of the Conservative Party. No Labour or Liberal leader had any shot at becoming Prime Minister through any realistic combination of events.

Baldwin's eventual departure from power was triggered by the crisis over Edward VIII's desire to marry the American divorcée Wallace Warfield Simpson. Baldwin informed the King that the people simply would not accept Simpson as Queen under any circumstances. Although Churchill scrambled to find a way out of the constitutional crisis – further discrediting himself in the eyes of Conservative Party leadership – Baldwin forced the King to choose between marrying Simpson and the throne. He chose to abdicate, passing the throne to his younger brother, George VI. Baldwin, riding a wave of popularity

⁵⁶⁵ Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 160-162, 175, 187-168, 199, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 113-114, 130, 137-139.

⁵⁶⁶ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 224-227, 231-232.

because of his handling of the affair, decided that it was time to step down and pass the reins of government to Chamberlain. On May 28, 1937 Neville Chamberlain replaced him as Prime Minister.⁵⁶⁷

Assessment

Other than his late start and his non-Oxbridge education, Chamberlain's political career presents an almost prototypical example of how a British Prime Minister reaches the "top of the greasy pole." A successful businessman before entering politics, he served with at least moderate success in two different major Cabinet offices, including an extended period as Chancellor of the Exchequer, a position second in importance only to the Prime Minister. While a member of the Cabinet he was Prime Minister-in-waiting for a multi-year period. Baldwin, his peers in the Cabinet, and backbench MPs all had ample opportunity to evaluate his potential to be Prime Minister. No Filtered alternatives come up in the story largely because he was the most important figure in the Cabinet for an extended period of time. As will be shown in the next section, however, as his Premiership continued Filtered alternatives emerged, providing the potential leaders necessary to test LFT. Given the career that led him to the Premiership, Chamberlain should clearly be classified as a Filtered, and likely Modal, Prime Minister.

Chamberlain and Appeasement

When Neville Chamberlain entered Number 10 Downing Street there was little doubt that his greatest task would be to deal with Nazi Germany. From the time he took office until Britain's declaration of war, Chamberlain faced four major crises: Germany's absorption of Austria, Hitler's demand for the Sudetenland, the annexation of Czechoslovakia, and the invasion of Poland. Chamberlain's consistent desire was to take an extremely conciliatory position. As the situation

⁵⁶⁷ Charles Lewis Broad, *The Abdication: Twenty-Five Years after, a Re-Appraisal* (London, UK: Muller, 1961), Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 264-266, 270-271, A. Susan Williams, *The People's King: The True Story of the Abdication* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 2003).

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deteriorated, however, Chamberlain began to lose the support of his Cabinet. When the Cabinet, particularly Halifax, his Foreign Minister for the latter half of this period, preferred a different course British policy followed the Cabinet, not Chamberlain.

Adolf Hitler became Chancellor of Germany on January 20, 1933. He launched a Nazification program to solidify his hold on power and remove any domestic restraints on his wishes. He took over a country that was diplomatically isolated, militarily insignificant, and in economic chaos. In 1934 Hitler made his first move by arranging the assassination of Austrian Chancellor Dolfuss and an attempted coup in Vienna in the hope that this would allow him to unify the two countries. He stumbled badly, as Austrian government forces rapidly regained control. He also tripled the strength of the German Army and announced a draft, breaching the constraints imposed by the Treaty of Versailles. In order to allay British suspicions, Hitler agreed to a naval treaty in June 1935 that limited Germany to 35% of British naval strength although such an agreement was, again, a violation of Versailles. Another requirement of the post-World War I settlement had been the demilitarization of the Rhineland, an area of Germany that bordered on France. In March 1936 Hitler ordered German troops to re-occupy the area. This made it much more difficult for Britain and France to protect Eastern Europe by threatening Western Germany, but they did nothing in response. Britain's primary goal during the crisis, as articulated by Anthony Eden, then Foreign Secretary, was to restrain France from acting and jeopardizing a chance at a rapprochement with Germany. Hitler accompanied this move with an announcement of his desire for peace with Britain and France. Hitler's fellow Fascist, the Italian dictator Benito Mussolini, was similarly stretching his muscles by invading Abyssinia in May 1936. In October of that same year Hitler and Mussolini signed an agreement to coordinate their foreign policy, establishing the "Axis" powers.⁵⁶⁸

Hitler's irreplaceable ally was the feeling among elites in Britain and France that many of Germany's complaints about Versailles were justified. The two countries had imposed a settlement on

⁵⁶⁸ McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 74-75, William L. Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany* (New York, NY: MJF Books, 1990), 187-230, 279-298.

Germany after the war that included a staggering reparations bill, stripping her of all her colonies, mandating that she keep within strict limits on her military power, and left significant ethnic German populations outside her borders. In 1925 – eight years before Hitler became Chancellor – Austen Chamberlain, Neville’s older half-brother who was then Foreign Secretary, told King George V that his principle aim in foreign policy “was ‘to make the new position of Germany tolerable to the German people in the hope that, as they gain prosperity under it, they may in time become reconciled to it, and unwilling to put their fortunes again to the desperate hazard of war.’” This sentiment was strengthened by the horror of war left by the carnage of the First World War that was symbolized by the Kellogg-Briand Pact of the late 1920s in which more than forty nations renounced warfare as an instrument of state policy. Even though the appeasers recognized that Hitler was in no way an ordinary statesman, they believed it better to give him and Germany the benefit of the doubt in the hope that it would mollify him and peacefully integrate him into the European system.⁵⁶⁹

After Chamberlain replaced Baldwin his first chance to assess Hitler came second-hand, via a visit to Germany by Edward Lindley Wood, the Earl of Halifax, in November 1937. Halifax, a devout Anglo-Catholic, was one of the most respected British statesmen of his generation. He had served on the front lines during the First World War despite a crippled left arm and missing left hand. He was renowned for his integrity and conscience. He had been Under-Secretary of the Colonies, Minister of Education, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of War, and Governor-General of India. He was serving at the time as both Chancellor of Oxford and in the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal. His visit was supported by the rest of the Cabinet, with the possible exception of Anthony Eden, who was not present when the decision to send him was made. On arriving in Germany he initially mistook Hitler for the footman and nearly handed him his hat. After this inauspicious beginning, however, he and Hitler had a very friendly conversation, including a discussion of their favorite movies. When Halifax returned he informed the

⁵⁶⁹ Martin Gilbert and Richard Gott, *The Appeasers* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1963), 9, 32, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 18-19.

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Cabinet that he believed that the Germans would resolutely press their claims in Central Europe, but they would not do so soon or in a way likely to make Britain intervene to oppose them.⁵⁷⁰

British policy towards Germany was conducted in the shadow of military weakness. Germany had a larger population and economy and had begun rearming far earlier. A Chiefs of Staff report presented to the Cabinet stated that “our Naval, Military and Air Forces, in their present stage of development, are still far from sufficient to meet our defensive commitments...We cannot therefore, exaggerate the importance...of any political or international action that can be taken to reduce the numbers of our potential enemies or gain the support of potential allies.”⁵⁷¹

The first significant Cabinet member to break with Chamberlain did so not over the issue of Hitler’s Germany but over Mussolini’s Italy. Chamberlain wished to appease Italy, at least in part in the hope that it would prove a helpful counterweight to Germany. Sir Anthony Eden, his Foreign Minister, believed Mussolini to be entirely untrustworthy and so opposed Chamberlain’s efforts. Their differences became so pronounced that during a meeting with Italy’s Ambassador the two ended up in a heated argument. Chamberlain continued with his plan to appease Italy and Eden resigned on February 20. Every single member of the Cabinet supported Chamberlain. Halifax became Foreign Minister, an office he filled for the rest of Chamberlain’s premiership.⁵⁷²

Although Eden’s resignation was sometimes thought of as the result of disputes over appeasement – an image Eden cultivated after the war – this is simply not the case. Eden had worked with Chamberlain to oust Sir Robert Vansittart, the most anti-German senior Foreign Office official. Like Chamberlain, Eden was in favor of returning Germany her colonies in the hope that would conciliate her

⁵⁷⁰ John Charmley, *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1989), 11-20, Ian Goodhope Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet: How the Meetings in 10 Downing Street, 1937-9, Led to the Second World War; Told for the First Time from the Cabinet Papers* (London, UK: Gollancz, 1971), 50-51, 55, Gilbert and Gott, *The Appeasers*, 73-76, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 50-51, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 171.

⁵⁷¹ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 63-64.

⁵⁷² Charmley, *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*, 46-50, Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 97, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 53-54, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 119-123.

and favored giving Germany a free hand in Eastern Europe after she absorbed Austria. Even apart from the fact that the proximate cause of Eden's resignation was a disagreement over Italy, not Germany, their dispute was rooted in Eden and Chamberlain's differing conceptions of the relationship between the Foreign and Prime Ministers, not in substantive differences. Chamberlain wished to handle many parts of foreign policy directly, through his own agents, bypassing the Foreign Minister. Chamberlain had wanted to conduct his meeting with the Italian Ambassador alone, for example, only for Eden to insist that he attend. There is simply "no indication in the Cabinet Minutes that a clear disagreement was admitted at this time between Chamberlain and Eden over the main policy towards Germany of playing for time and a settlement."⁵⁷³ With Eden gone the Chamberlain Cabinet had to face its first great crisis.

The Anschluss

Even before he became Prime Minister Chamberlain had stated that one of Hitler's primary objections to the Treaty of Versailles was the independence of Austria. During 1937 Austrian Nazis, supported by Germany, used a string of bombings to weaken the Austrian Government. In February 1938 Hitler had demanded that Kurt von Schuschnigg, the Austrian Chancellor, come to see him in Germany. On February 12, 1938 they met in Berchtesgaden. There Hitler demanded that Austria make concessions that would functionally end her independence and gave Schuschnigg four days to comply. He did. On February 24 Schuschnigg declared that Austria had conceded as much as he was willing to give up. Austrian Nazis responded with violence throughout the country. On March 10 Hitler decided to invade Austria. As Austrian Nazis gained control of the streets of Vienna, Schuschnigg resigned. On

⁵⁷³ Charmley, *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*, 46-49, Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 97, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 54-55, Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 230-232.

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March 11 German troops began to move, unopposed, into Austria. On March 13 the new Austrian Chancellor signed a declaration announcing the *Anschluss*. Austria was now a part of the Third Reich.⁵⁷⁴

The British response to Hitler's actions was essentially non-existent. The Cabinet met on March 14 to discuss Britain's response. Chamberlain was certainly not pleased by the *Anschluss*, writing on March 13 that "it is perfectly evident... that force is the only argument that Germany understands, and that collective security cannot offer any prospect of preventing such events until it can show a visible force of overwhelming strength, backed by determination to use it." Despite this, when the Cabinet met the next day both Chamberlain and Halifax felt that it was necessary only to issue a statement condemning Germany's methods. This met no significant opposition within the Cabinet.⁵⁷⁵ There was essentially no discussion of doing anything to prevent or reverse the absorption of Austria.

Instead the Cabinet focused on the question of how to deter Hitler's next steps. There was a consensus that Czechoslovakia, with its significant German population, would be his next target. The Cabinet Foreign Affairs Committee met soon and was dominated by discussion of how to avoid getting dragged into a war by France, which had a mutual-defense treaty with Czechoslovakia. Halifax argued that closer ties to France and the Soviet Union would simply make the Germans believe that Britain was plotting to encircle them. He believed that Germany's goals were simply limited to dominating Central Europe and that Hitler did not have a "lust for conquest on a Napoleonic scale."⁵⁷⁶

Halifax felt Britain had two choices. She could fully mobilize against Germany or she could do everything possible to restrain France in order to prevent a European war. Chamberlain argued that defending Czechoslovakia against a German attack would be militarily impossible given German strength and Czechoslovakia's isolation from potential allies, an argument that was reinforced by a report from the Chiefs of Staff. The Cabinet concluded that Britain should make no explicit guarantee of either

⁵⁷⁴ Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 74-75, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 322-347.

⁵⁷⁵ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 106, 109-117, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 134.

⁵⁷⁶ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 109-114, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 135-138.

France or Czechoslovakia, again with little or no dissent. Only Duff Cooper, the First Lord of the Admiralty, argued against Chamberlain and Halifax, and he was completely mollified by revising Chamberlain's proposed statement to the Parliament to make it more sympathetic to France.⁵⁷⁷

All of this shows that Britain's response to the *Anschluss* was a product of virtual unanimity within the Cabinet. There was essentially no discussion of attempting to reverse it and little pressure in favor of taking a more active stance on behalf of Hitler's probable next target, Czechoslovakia. Churchill, harshly criticizing the Government from the Conservative backbenches, proposed a "Grand Alliance" between Britain, France, and the Eastern European countries, but this idea was considered and dismissed by Chamberlain and Halifax. The Chiefs of Staff had again reported that Britain was unprepared for war. Even if Britain and France were willing to fight to protect Czechoslovakia, victory would require a long and painful struggle against an enemy with a massive initial advantage. No such Grand Alliance was possible. Instead Chamberlain, Halifax, and the rest of the Cabinet preferred to make a peaceful settlement.⁵⁷⁸ Unwise as this decision looks in retrospect, there was essentially no support in the Cabinet for any more resolute position. Chamberlain may have dominated the Cabinet's decisions at this point, but he did so because all of its members were in agreement.

The Sudetenland Crisis

Czechoslovakia had been created in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles. Its President, Eduard Beneš, had been its Foreign Minister since its inception and succeeded to the presidency in 1935. The country was an ethnic *mélange*, with more than a million ethnic Hungarians and more than three million Germans in a total population of fifteen million, ten million of them either Czech or Slovak. The three million Germans were concentrated in the Sudetenland, a part of Czechoslovakia bordering the newly-

⁵⁷⁷ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 109-114, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 135-138.

⁵⁷⁸ Charmley, *Chamberlain and the Lost Peace*, 59, 64, 66, Keith Eubank, *Munich* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 35-36, Martin Gilbert, *Churchill: A Life*, 1st Owl Book ed. (New York, NY: H. Holt, 1992), 591, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 137-138.

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annexed Austria. Czechoslovakia was a wealthy democracy, although there remained significant ethnic tensions and complaints of poor treatments by ethnic minorities. The Czech army was large and well-equipped, and the Skoda arms works was one of the largest arms manufacturing facilities in Europe. France and the Soviet Union were both committed to defending Czechoslovakia if it was attacked, but the Soviet commitment was dependent on France acting first.⁵⁷⁹

Sudeten Germans generally supported the Sudeten German Party, which was heavily subsidized by the German Foreign Office and led by Konrad Henlein, who was eager to take orders from Hitler. On March 28 Henlein secretly met with Hitler and received his instructions. He was to make a series of demands on the Czech government which were designed to be unacceptable to create a pretext for German intervention. Tensions between Czechoslovakia and Germany rapidly escalated in April and May. Britain and France, fearing being drawn into war, put pressure on the Czech government to grant concessions. Those concessions were met with escalation by Henlein, who eventually demanded an autonomous territory within the Czech state and official support for Nazi ideology.⁵⁸⁰

The outlines of British policy towards Czechoslovakia were set after the *Anschluss*. Churchill and Halifax believed that Czechoslovakia was not worth fighting for and that war could not, in any case, save it. Given the French commitment to Czechoslovakia and the British imperative to stand by France, Britain's policy focused on pressuring the Czechs to make concessions. At Anglo-French meetings in late April, Édouard Daladier, the French Prime Minister, made his case that Hitler was bent on dominating Europe and would turn against France and Britain after it had seized Czechoslovakia and Romania. Chamberlain and Halifax, however, responded that war could not save Czechoslovakia and that they did not believe that this was Germany's goal. Instead they believed that Germany was attempting to

⁵⁷⁹ Kissinger, *Diplomacy*, 311, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 358-359.

⁵⁸⁰ Eubank, *Munich*, 43-44, 44-46, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 359-361.

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prevent its encirclement by hostile powers. The French, unable and unwilling to fight without British support, had no choice but to follow Britain's lead.⁵⁸¹

Events first came to a head in late May as rumors reached Britain of a German plan to invade Czechoslovakia. The Czechs effectively mobilized to defend themselves, making the German General Staff realize that a war would need more advance planning than they had anticipated. Hitler issued secret orders to invade Czechoslovakia on October 1. Britain responded by putting pressure on Czechoslovakia to make more concessions. The Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet had already met in April to study ethnic maps of Czechoslovakia in preparation for dividing the country. Seeking to gather more information on the complaints of the Sudeten Germans and put additional pressure on the Czechs to compromise, the Cabinet appointed Lord Walter Runciman to visit the Sudetenland and investigate. Runciman reached Prague on August 3. There he met almost entirely with Nazi supporters and, inevitably, concluded that the Sudetens' complaints were justified.⁵⁸²

As August advanced British intelligence detected clear signs of German preparations for a full-scale mobilization. The Cabinet met on August. Halifax argued that the only way to deter Hitler was an explicit British guarantee of Czechoslovakia. He believed that such a guarantee might, however, embolden the Czech government. He was also concerned that Britain did not have the military capacity to fulfill such a guarantee. Halifax was unsure "whether it was justifiable to fight a certain war now in order to forestall a possible war later." Instead he suggested that Britain maintain its policy of ambiguity in the hope of keeping Hitler "guessing." Chamberlain, unsurprisingly, agreed with Halifax. Once again Duff Cooper was the only Cabinet member to disagree, and his protest was sufficiently weak that Chamberlain's summation of the meeting concluded that the Cabinet was "unanimous" in deciding not to threaten Hitler with war if he attacked Czechoslovakia. All of the most important members of the

⁵⁸¹ Eubank, *Munich*, 50, 55, 78-81, 101-102, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 143, 149-151.

⁵⁸² Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 129-132, Eubank, *Munich*, 59-69, 78-81, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 361-.

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Cabinet supported Chamberlain. Even apart from Halifax, the Home Secretary, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Lord Chancellor backed him strongly. At a second Cabinet meeting on September 12 Halifax said that despite his belief that Hitler was “possibly or even probably mad” their chances of giving him “a sane outlook” would be destroyed by publicly forcing him to back down.⁵⁸³

At the height of the crisis Chamberlain conceived of a bold stroke which he called, melodramatically, “Plan Z.” Without consulting with the Cabinet or the French he sent a message to Hitler offering to fly to Germany for face-to-face negotiations. No Prime Minister had ever done such a thing. It would even be Chamberlain’s first long airplane flight. The Cabinet was told on September 14, after Hitler had accepted the offer, and was unanimously enthusiastic. On September 15 Chamberlain arrived at Hitler’s mountain retreat near the German city of Berchtesgaden. There he told Hitler that he was indifferent as to the status of the Sudetenland but wanted very much to avoid war. In return Hitler demanded that Germany receive every Czech district where more than 50 percent of the population spoke German. Hitler agreed to wait for Chamberlain to return home and consult with the Cabinet before he took action against Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain’s immortal statement about Hitler was “that here was a man who could be relied upon when he had given his word.”⁵⁸⁴ This judgment, although easily lampooned now, was little different from Halifax’s assessment of Hitler when they met.

Chamberlain then got French agreement on a joint Anglo-French message to the Czechs telling them to transfer the Sudetenland to Germany in the interests of peace. The Cabinet met to go over the results of his efforts. Halifax told them that if the Czechs did not agree to Hitler’s terms they should be left to defend themselves on their own. Again only Duff Cooper objected strongly, and again he was overwhelmingly outvoted. The Cabinet did agree to guarantee the remnants of the Czech state. The French arrived the next day and largely acceded to Chamberlain’s proposals. On September 19

⁵⁸³ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 141-145, Eubank, *Munich*, 118-119, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 296-297.

⁵⁸⁴ Gilbert and Gott, *The Appeasers*, 143, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 63-64, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 162-163, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 299-300.

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Chamberlain presented the final results of his negotiations to the Cabinet which agreed unanimously, with even Cooper saying that any war would be so horrible that putting it off was the right choice.⁵⁸⁵

The Cabinet did give Chamberlain guidelines for his next visit to Germany. Most importantly, they told him that if Hitler would not accept a settlement that included Czechoslovakia's non-German minorities he should return to Britain to consult. Chamberlain returned to Germany on September 22, this time meeting Hitler at Bad Godesberg. To Chamberlain's shock Hitler rejected his offer, instead further escalating his demands. That evening Hitler insisted that there could be no delay in the settlement and that if his demands were not met by October 1 he would invade Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain told Hitler that his new demands were unacceptable. He briefed Halifax by telephone that night and in more detail the next morning. Halifax told him that public opinion in Britain was beginning to rally behind the Czechs and that he needed to warn Hitler explicitly against going to war.⁵⁸⁶

On the morning of the 23rd Chamberlain wrote a conciliatory letter to Hitler in which he suggested a compromise by which the Sudeten Germans would have responsibility for maintaining order in their territory until it was turned over to Germany. Hitler again rejected this proposal. Chamberlain came to meet him again at 10:30 that evening and they continued negotiating into the following morning. When Hitler further escalated his demands and insisted that the full handover be accomplished by September 28 Chamberlain announced that he would end the negotiations. At this Hitler moved his deadline back to October 1. He further promised that he would not attack Czechoslovakia if his demands were not met. Chamberlain, somewhat mollified, returned to Britain.⁵⁸⁷

Immediately upon his return on September 24 Chamberlain met with his close circle of advisers – the “Inner Cabinet.” The most senior members of the British government were there, including Halifax, Sir John Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary, and

⁵⁸⁵ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 156-160, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 164-165.

⁵⁸⁶ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 161, Gilbert and Gott, *The Appeasers*, 155-156, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 167-169, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 302.

⁵⁸⁷ Eubank, *Munich*, 193-194, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 393-395.

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even Vansittart, the senior Foreign Office official who had been sidelined by Eden and Chamberlain because of his anti-German views. Chamberlain told them that “he had established some degree of personal influence over Herr Hitler” and that once Hitler gave his word he would stick to it. Striking a deal with Germany now had the potential to permanently transform Anglo-German relations. All of this meant that Britain should accept Hitler’s demands. Not one disagreed.⁵⁸⁸

At 7:30 that evening Chamberlain met with the full Cabinet with the same message. He told the Cabinet that “In his view, Herr Hitler had certain standards. Herr Hitler had a narrow mind and was violently prejudiced on certain subjects: but he would not deliberately deceive a man whom he respected and with whom he had been in negotiation, and he was sure that Herr Hitler had some respect for him.” Chamberlain reiterated his belief that once a deal was struck, Hitler would go no further and the two countries could resolve all their differences. Once more only Cooper protested, arguing instead for a full mobilization. Once again he was overruled, with the rest of the Cabinet voting to postpone a decision on his proposal.⁵⁸⁹ Appeasement seemed to have carried the day again, and again by almost unanimous consent among the senior members of Britain’s ruling Conservative Party.

The next morning the Cabinet met again and suddenly everything changed. Halifax, with no advance warning to Chamberlain, announced that he had shifted his position and could no longer support further concessions to Hitler. Speaking emotionally he told the Cabinet that “[s]o long as Nazism lasted, peace would be uncertain.” If Nazism was the root problem then Britain should not force the Czechs to accept German demands. Halifax thought it preferable to fight than accept Hitler’s Godesberg demands. Other ministers supported Chamberlain but for the first time a major member of the Cabinet – in fact perhaps the most powerful and respected member of the Cabinet besides

⁵⁸⁸ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 162, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 168-169.

⁵⁸⁹ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 162-163.

Chamberlain himself – had split with the Prime Minister. A shocked Chamberlain sent a note to Halifax that night describing his new position as “a horrible blow.”⁵⁹⁰

The French then informed the British that they would reject Hitler’s new demands. The Cabinet met again and, over Chamberlain’s objections, refused to concede to Hitler. It decided, however, at Chamberlain’s suggestion, to send a message to Hitler carried by Sir Horace Wilson, a senior adviser to the Cabinet, stating that the French government had informed the British that if Germany attacked Czechoslovakia, the French would fulfill their guarantee and Britain would find it necessary to support the French.⁵⁹¹ Despite the divide in the Cabinet this was a rather weak message, containing as it did a British statement that they would act only if France did and a secondhand statement from France instead of a direct affirmation of its commitment to the beleaguered Czechs.

Wilson delivered his message on September 27. Hitler replied that there would be war in six days. Germany would destroy Czechoslovakia but would not attack France. This meant that Britain and France would have to attack Germany from the West, not simply defend themselves. Hitler had put the British into an impossible position. Chamberlain and Halifax, along with many others, felt that Hitler’s demand to add the Sudetenland to the Reich was essentially a just one. The difference between Hitler’s terms at Berchtesgaden and those at Godesberg were a matter of only a few days and the legalities of the handover. How many Britons would be willing to reenact the worst horrors of the First World War, the assaults on fortified German positions, over such a seemingly small question?⁵⁹²

The fear of war swept Europe. The Czech government refused to accept the Godesberg demands. A state of emergency was declared in London. All leaves were cancelled for the Royal Air Force. The British fleet mobilized and gas masks were issued to the population. Jews fled from Czechoslovak towns that were near the German border. On September 27 Chamberlain telegraphed

⁵⁹⁰ Ibid., 163-165, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 170-171.

⁵⁹¹ Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 172-174.

⁵⁹² Eubank, *Munich*, 179-181, 190-191.

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Beneš that there was no way to save Czechoslovakia save accepting German demands. On his own initiative, without consulting the Cabinet, Chamberlain telegraphed Hitler that he could get everything he wanted without war if only he agreed to another meeting. He proposed that Britain and France guarantee Czech fulfillment of any promises made in negotiations along with a slightly less harsh version of Hitler's Godesberg terms. The French, equally desperate to avoid war, suggested a plan that was even more accommodating. Halifax instructed the Czechs not to object for fear of making Chamberlain's attempts at negotiating a peaceful settlement even more difficult.⁵⁹³

That evening the British received a somewhat more conciliatory letter from Hitler in which he stated his willingness to give a formal guarantee of the independence of the remnants of Czechoslovakia if his demands were met. Chamberlain, sensing a chance for peace, spoke to the country that night. He told the public "[h]ow horrible, fantastic, incredible it is that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas masks here because of a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing. It seems still more impossible that a quarrel which has already been settled in principle should be the subject of war." He stated his willingness to visit Germany again and said that despite his sympathy for Czechoslovakia, the Government was not willing to fight for Czech independence.⁵⁹⁴

September 28 saw perhaps the most dramatic scene in the history of the House of Commons. Remarkably, it was not orchestrated. War seemed certain. Pictures in the Louvre were being moved into storage. German and Czech forces were already skirmishing as German forces crossed the disputed border. That morning Chamberlain had sent another message to Hitler offering to meet him in Berlin with Czech, Italian, and French representatives. At 2:55 pm Chamberlain began to speak to the House. He began: "Today we are faced with a situation which has no parallel since 1914." He then continued with a description of the deadlock and British efforts to avoid war. He told the House that Hitler "means what he says" and read them his message to Hitler and Mussolini. While he was speaking Halifax,

⁵⁹³ Ibid., 190-191, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 69, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 177.

⁵⁹⁴ Eubank, *Munich*, 193-195.

watching from the gallery, received a note. This was passed to Sir John Simon, who finally got Chamberlain's attention. Chamberlain paused his speech and told the House: "I have now been informed by Herr Hitler that he invites me to meet him at Munich tomorrow morning. He has also invited Signor Mussolini and M. Daladier. Signor Mussolini has accepted and I have no doubt M. Daladier will also accept. I need not say what my answer will be." A voice from the crowd cried out "Thank God for the Prime Minister." The Members of Parliament leapt to their feet and applauded. The Leader of the Opposition, Clement Attlee, wished Godspeed. Eden remained seated.⁵⁹⁵

The four leaders met on September 29. All four governments were committed to accepting Hitler's terms even before the meeting. No one of any power in either the British or French governments supported fighting for Czechoslovakia. Hitler had little to lose. Using Mussolini as a front he proposed spreading the occupation of the Sudetenland out from October 1-10, that a commission of British, French, Italian, German, and Czech representatives be appointed to oversee plebiscites which would determine the precise extent of the ceded territory, and that individuals should have the right to choose whether they wished to remain in the Sudetenland. The French and British essentially agreed to all these demands. The British and French added an annex to the formal agreement in which they stated that they would guarantee the rump of Czechoslovakia against "unprovoked aggression." Czechoslovakia's government was not consulted.⁵⁹⁶

The Czechs were informed of the partition of their country. When they objected they were bluntly informed that if they did not accept the terms the British and French would abandon them to face the Germans alone. They reluctantly accepted the next day after determining that no country would support them. After the devastated Czechs left, Chamberlain asked Hitler for a private meeting. The two met at 1 A.M. Friday, September 30 in Hitler's private apartment. Chamberlain brought up a

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid., 197-199, 202-193, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 69, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 179.

⁵⁹⁶ Eubank, *Munich*, 206, 213-214, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 179-181.

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number of European issues which Hitler, having already gotten what he wanted, dismissed.

Chamberlain then produced a proposed joint statement that read in part:

We regard the agreement signed last night and the Anglo-German Naval Agreement as symbolic of the desire of our two peoples never to go to war with one another again.

We are resolved that the method of consultation shall be the method adopted to deal with any other questions that may concern our two countries, and we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe.

Hitler signed immediately. Chamberlain had managed to get Hitler to forswear the use of violence to resolve his future territorial disputes.⁵⁹⁷

It was this document that inspired Chamberlain, when he returned to Britain that day, to stand at an open window of No. 10 Downing Street and tell the cheering crowd: "My good friends, this is the second time in our history that there has come back from Germany to Downing Street, peace with honor. I believe it is peace for our time." The crowd outside applauded wildly. Chamberlain was at that moment quite possibly more popular than any other British Prime Minister in history.⁵⁹⁸

The Cabinet met once again at 7:30 that night. It did not yet have a copy of the official Munich Agreement. Simon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressed "profound admiration and pride in the Prime Minister" on behalf of the entire Cabinet. He spoke too soon. Duff Cooper had finally had enough and told the Prime Minister that although the Munich Agreement appeared to be considerably more acceptable than he had expected it to be and he would wait on his final decision until he had seen its details, he expected to resign in protest. Cooper resigned over the weekend and denounced the Agreement to Parliament the following Monday. When the Cabinet met that day without him there were other skeptics who, although they did not oppose the agreement, felt that Britain's military weakness had made it necessary and that the country must immediately commit itself to intensive

⁵⁹⁷ Eubank, *Munich*, 218-221, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 179-181.

⁵⁹⁸ Eubank, *Munich*, 227, Stuart Hodgson, *The Man Who Made the Peace: Neville Chamberlain* (New York, NY: E. P. Dutton & co., inc., 1938), 110, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 70, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 181.

rearmament. Halifax supported this position. Chamberlain, on the other hand, felt that the Munich Agreement genuinely had guaranteed European peace. Given the expense of an intensified rearmament program, he thought the current buildup, which he had long supported, should be continued but not intensified. Other than the now-absent Cooper, no major member of the Cabinet opposed the Agreement and only one other, the Minister of Mines, even considered resigning.⁵⁹⁹

Although Cooper's willingness to resign in protest might have been a sign of a swelling revolt against the Government's policy of appeasement, in practice it had the opposite effect. He left after Munich had already been agreed to, so his resignation could not prevent it. By leaving the Cabinet he removed the voice within it most skeptical of appeasement and thus denied himself the ability to oppose further such gestures by the Government. As no other Minister followed him his decision simply confirmed the irrelevance of Chamberlain's opponents to government policy.⁶⁰⁰ Almost no one in government in either France or Britain was willing to fight Germany in defense of Czechoslovakia.⁶⁰¹

The crisis leading to the Munich Agreement and the cession of the Sudetenland to Germany revealed considerably more diversity of opinion within the Cabinet than did the *Anschluss*. On the key point, however, of if Britain was willing to fight to maintain Czechoslovakia's territorial integrity, there was virtually complete consensus. Except for Cooper no Minister was willing to fight and even Cooper only resigned after it was too late to affect the outcome. When Chamberlain spoke in Parliament on the results of Munich only five Conservative MPs did not join in the standing ovation he received. Churchill responded with one of the finest speeches of his career. His declaration "we have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat" generated an angry storm of protest. His Cassandra-like conclusion: "And do not suppose that this is the end. This is only the beginning of the reckoning. This is only the first sip, the first foretaste of a bitter cup which will be proffered to us year by year unless by a supreme recovery of

⁵⁹⁹ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 169-171, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 327-328.

⁶⁰⁰ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 326.

⁶⁰¹ Eubank, *Munich*, 286.

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moral health and martial vigour, we rise again and take our stand for freedom as in olden time” was met by silence. The whole speech was condemned by most newspapers.⁶⁰²

Chamberlain, unlike the rest of the Cabinet, was willing to accept Hitler’s demands at Godesberg. Crucially, however, when Chamberlain saw that Halifax and the rest of the Cabinet found those terms unacceptable he acceded to their wishes and negotiated a new deal that even Cooper thought close to the original terms which every Minister had found acceptable. Chamberlain did differ with his colleagues but it is hard to describe a difference of only a few days in when Hitler would gain the Sudetenland as of much significance and, in any case, that difference did not affect British policy.

The Invasion of Czechoslovakia

Ten days after he signed the Munich Agreement Hitler sent a message to his generals to begin preparing for the invasion of the remnants of Czechoslovakia. Even as he made his preparations, Hitler unleashed his thugs on the Jewish population of Nazi Germany in the pogrom known as *Kristallnacht* on November 9th and 10th. When the savage violence ended almost one hundred Jews had been murdered and tens of thousands were in concentration camps. Polls of the British public afterwards revealed that most believed that the Nazi persecution of Jews was a major obstacle to the relationship between the two countries. This steadily building hostility to Germany would aid Halifax and the other members of the Cabinet who were far more skeptical of Germany than was Chamberlain.⁶⁰³

Some opposition to Chamberlain within the Conservative Party had begun to make itself felt. Its leadership, though, was divided between Eden and Churchill. Questions about Churchill’s temperament

⁶⁰² Robert Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and William Roger Louis (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 260, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 328-331.

⁶⁰³ McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 74, 128-129, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 430-434, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 339.

made it difficult for him to lead the opposition just as they made Chamberlain unwilling to include him in the Cabinet. Only two Conservative MPs consistently supported Churchill.⁶⁰⁴

Eden was more influential and headed a group of about twenty-five MPs who were joined by Cooper when he resigned. None of these MPs were of any great significance, however, and they were only a tiny fraction of the almost 400 Conservative MPs who gave Chamberlain his overwhelming majority in Parliament. Additionally Eden still believed he had a good chance of being included in the Cabinet soon and preferred working with the Party leadership to directly confronting them.⁶⁰⁵

Many opponents of Munich, including Churchill, even faced significant challenges in their home constituencies. Churchill eventually broke with the Government over its approach to rearmament but when he did so he was joined by only two Conservative MPs and even Duff Cooper spoke against him.⁶⁰⁶

All of this meant that the anti-appeasers had little or no ability to influence policy. This was exacerbated by a Cabinet reshuffle in January 1939 during which Chamberlain brought in more Appeasement supporters. Nonetheless, the weakness of opposition outside the Government meant that the battle to curtail the policy of appeasement would have to be fought within the Cabinet. Halifax, having finally broken with Chamberlain, would take the lead.⁶⁰⁷

The remnants of Czechoslovakia provided the trigger. Since Munich the Germans had been sponsoring ethnic separatist movements in what was left of the country, culminating in Slovakia declaring its independence. On March 14 the new and elderly President of Czechoslovakia, Émil Hácha, was ordered to Berlin by Hitler. He met Hitler at 1:15 A.M. on March 15 where he was ordered to surrender Czechoslovakia immediately. Hácha, who had a heart condition, collapsed after the meeting

⁶⁰⁴ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 261-262, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 108-109, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 333-334, 336-338, 340-344.

⁶⁰⁵ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 261-262, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 108-109, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 333-334, 336-338, 340-344.

⁶⁰⁶ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 261-262, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 108-109, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 333-334, 336-338, 340-344.

⁶⁰⁷ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 261-262, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 108-109, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 333-334, 336-338, 340-344.

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and was revived by an injection from Hitler's personal physician. He then called the Czech Cabinet and advised them not to resist before signing a surrender document at 4:00 A.M. Two hours later German soldiers poured across the Czech border. The next day Slovakia too was absorbed by the Reich.⁶⁰⁸

Although British intelligence had given Chamberlain some advance warning of the invasion of Czechoslovakia he was nonetheless surprised when it occurred. Neither he nor any other member of the Cabinet had any interest in fulfilling the guarantee to Czechoslovakia made at Munich. Helping Czechoslovakia would have required a military force large enough to attack western Germany to divert its forces from Czechoslovakia. This force would have to be primarily French and the French military, committed as it was to a strategic defensive based on the Maginot Line, could not even begin to muster it. Britain had little land-based military power to contribute. After the invasion the British decided to create a thirty-two division expeditionary force which could operate on the continent. This force was, ironically, about the same size as the Czech Army that had been functionally dissolved at Munich.⁶⁰⁹

The Cabinet met on March 15 to discuss Czechoslovakia. Chamberlain told them that Czechoslovakia had essentially dissolved on its own, obviating the British guarantee. He and Halifax decided that the best way to explain the situation was to blame Slovak secession for the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. In his statement to Parliament Chamberlain seemed to remain committed to the policy of appeasement, arguing that "the object that we have in mind [European peace] is of too great significance to the happiness of mankind for us lightly to give it up." This was met with a storm of public outrage and opposition from the press. Even papers which had previously been pro-appeasement now favored a strong stand against Hitler.⁶¹⁰

Parliamentary opposition to Chamberlain's statement was so strong as to potentially weaken his hold on power. Halifax now came to his rescue by urging him to take a much stronger public stance.

⁶⁰⁸ Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 437-450.

⁶⁰⁹ Eubank, *Munich*, 281-283.

⁶¹⁰ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 186, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 79.

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Chamberlain himself wrote in his diary that “As soon as I had time to think, I saw it was impossible to deal with Hitler after he had thrown his own assurances to the winds.” On March 17 in his old home town of Birmingham he, somewhat tentatively, threw down the gauntlet for the first time. He began by defending the Munich Agreement, arguing that it had preserved the “peace of Europe” and that no alternative to the Agreement existed. Then his tone changed:

Who can fail to feel his heart go out in sympathy to the proud, brave people who have suddenly been subjected to this invasion...the events which have taken place this week... must cause us all to be asking ourselves, “Is this the end of an old adventure, or is it the beginning of a new?...Is this, in fact, a step in the direction of an attempt to dominate the world by force?”...I do not believe there is anyone who will question my sincerity when I say there is hardly anything I would not sacrifice for peace. But there is one thing that I must except, and that is the liberty that we have enjoyed for hundreds of years and which we will never surrender...only six weeks ago...I pointed out that any demand to dominate the world by force was one which the democracies must resist...while I am not prepared to engage this country by new unspecified commitments operating under conditions which cannot now be foreseen, yet no greater mistake could be made than to suppose that, because it believes war to be a senseless and cruel thing, this nation has so lost its fibre that it will not take part to the utmost of its power in resisting such a challenge if it ever were made.⁶¹¹

This was a somewhat limited challenge to Hitler. Chamberlain made no statements about what Britain’s next action would be and specifically refused to make new commitments. Nonetheless, this marked a dramatic shift. His earlier statements had expressed no sympathy for the abandoned Czechs and been devoted almost entirely to signaling his willingness to meet Germany’s demands. Now, for the first time, he declared Britain’s willingness to fight.

In Cabinet the next day Chamberlain reiterated his new position, saying that it was now impossible to take anything Hitler said on faith. There was no disagreement and the discussion moved to what should be done to prevent further German expansion. Halifax suggested pursuing alliances with France, Poland, Turkey, and the USSR. Communications with Poland revealed, however, that the Poles were reluctant to pursue an alliance with the Soviet Union. They feared that Soviet troops that arrived

⁶¹¹ Neville Chamberlain, *Speech by the Prime Minister at Birmingham on March 17, 1939* (WWII Archives Foundation, August 2 2010); available from http://wwiarchives.net/servlet/doc/Bbb_9, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain, 79*, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 354-355.

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on their soil to defend them from German attacks would never leave. The Cabinet Foreign Policy Committee met on March 27 and Halifax suggested that in the wake of Poland's attitude, Britain should pursue other diplomatic options, including a joint declaration of mutual support between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union and a secret agreement between Britain and Poland. It was now clear to everyone that the next crisis, if it came, would be over Poland.⁶¹²

British reaction to the invasion of Czechoslovakia thus displays a similar pattern to that leading up to and immediately following the Munich Agreement. Nowhere in the Government was there any significant willingness to go to war. Chamberlain's initial reaction to the invasion was considerably more measured than public opinion found acceptable. In the face of general outrage, however, and given time to re-evaluate his position he trimmed his sails, taking a confrontational posture towards Germany for the first time. Here too he faced little or no opposition from within the Government. Next he and his Cabinet colleagues faced the crisis that began the Second World War.

The Invasion of Poland and the Outbreak of War

Defending Poland presented the same geographic problems as defending Czechoslovakia. Britain and France had no useful way to support Poland unless they were willing to launch an assault into western Germany, and this they were both unwilling and unable to do. Chamberlain and his Ministers were thus faced with the questions of if they should commit Britain to the defense of Poland and how, given their limited capabilities, to make such a commitment meaningful.

Chamberlain and the Cabinet had to move quickly. On March 30, barely two weeks after the fall of Czechoslovakia, they received intelligence reports that Germany was preparing to invade Poland. Halifax made a passionate argument to the Cabinet for an unconditional guarantee of Poland. Despite Britain's military weakness there was surprisingly little discussion of the wisdom making an explicit guarantee. The Chiefs of Staff suggested that Germany would be able to overrun Poland in weeks, but

⁶¹² Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 187-189, 191-192.

would take significant casualties doing so, and this meant that if war was inevitable it was better to have Poland as an ally. No Minister objected to the guarantee, so the Cabinet authorized informing France and Poland of the decision. This forceful action restored Chamberlain's political standing and his grip on the Conservative Party. When it was announced to Parliament there was little opposition. Labour and Liberal leaders supported Chamberlain even as Churchill and Eden expressed their agreement.⁶¹³

Having issued a guarantee to Poland, the Cabinet then had to decide how to enforce it. On April 18 the Soviet Union proposed a mutual assistance pact between the USSR, Britain, and France. In it all three committed not to making a separate peace. The pact applied only, however, to defending Poland against Germany. The Cabinet Committee on Foreign Policy met the next day. The Chiefs of Staff reported that they believed the Soviets would be unable to contribute much military strength because of the aftereffects of Stalin's purges. At both that meeting of the Foreign Policy Committee and one a week later Chamberlain and Halifax were suspicious of the Soviet Union and reluctant to ally with it. Chamberlain felt that such an alliance would have significant political costs while Halifax thought that an alliance with the USSR would confirm German fears of encirclement and weaken any anti-Nazi movements inside Germany. At the second meeting, however, the Chiefs of Staff reported that despite the Soviet Union's military weakness an alliance with it would bring substantial strategic advantages. As time passed Chamberlain was not reconciled, going so far in May as to privately comment that he would rather resign than ally with the Soviets and lamenting that the Cabinet was swinging in the other direction. Halifax, similarly, remained opposed. In late May, however, Halifax and the rest of the Cabinet swung in favor of an alliance, forcing Chamberlain to agree to negotiations.⁶¹⁴

Little progress was made by June. The Poles were vehemently opposed to any alliance with the USSR, while Chamberlain and Halifax's skepticism of the Soviets and doubts of what they could bring to

⁶¹³ Ibid., 196-197, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 80-81, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 214-219, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 358-359.

⁶¹⁴ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 201-204, 211-212, 215, McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 82-84, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 230-231.

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a partnership meant that the British negotiations moved desultorily at best. The Soviets wished to include several Eastern European countries in the pact whether or not they wished to be defended by the USSR, essentially giving them British and French sanction for acting against any of their neighbors. This was a major obstacle to any agreement. Halifax believed that the Soviets were looking for an excuse to end the negotiations. Only three Cabinet members pushed to quickly accept Soviet proposals. By this time, unbeknownst to the British, Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister, had contacted Germany's ambassador in Moscow to explore ways to improve relations between the two countries. Their rapprochement intensified during June.⁶¹⁵

Even as the British slowly but steadily agreed to Soviet demands Molotov escalated his requests. He insisted that Eastern European states would have to receive guarantees whether they wished them or not, making it clear that the Soviet Union intended to force its help on those states if it thought it necessary. The British, at French urging, eventually agreed. On July 1 Molotov demanded that states in Western Europe no longer be included in the mutual-defense pact and that "indirect aggression" like the Czech surrender also make it come into force. This made Chamberlain and Halifax give up on any hope of obtaining a Soviet guarantee of Poland, but they were overruled by the Cabinet and forced to continue the negotiations. The Polish government, however, was unmoved in its unwillingness to consent to the Red Army entering Poland.⁶¹⁶

On August 21 the four-month-long process ended dramatically. A radio broadcast announced that Joachim von Ribbentrop, the Nazi Foreign Minister, was flying to Moscow to negotiate a non-aggression pact. There was little doubt about what would happen next. Parliament, at Chamberlain's request, immediately passed an Emergency Powers Act to prepare for war. A formal Anglo-Polish military alliance was signed on August 25. Hitler sent a letter demanding Polish territorial concessions

⁶¹⁵ Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 227, 237, Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 258.

⁶¹⁶ Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 224, 232, 237-228, 243.

and Chamberlain replied with a suggestion for German-Polish talks and a refusal to put any pressure on Poland. On September 1 German troops stormed across the Polish border.⁶¹⁷

The Cabinet met at 11:30 A.M. Chamberlain declared that they were meeting “under the gravest possible circumstances. The events against which we have fought so long and so earnestly have come upon us. But our consciences are clear and there should be no possible question where our duty lies.” Nonetheless he refused to miss any chance of averting war between Britain and Germany. He announced to the House of Commons that day “that unless the German Government are prepared to give...assurances that [it has] ... suspended all aggressive action against Poland and are prepared promptly to withdraw their forces from Polish territory, His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom will without hesitation fulfill their obligations to Poland.” Despite a question from the floor of the House, Chamberlain gave no time limit by which Hitler had to respond.⁶¹⁸

Hitler made no response. The Cabinet met again the next day. Halifax reported that Mussolini had suggested a Conference of Germany, France, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Great Britain and that the French wished to delay any final ultimatum for 48 hours. Despite this the Cabinet was overwhelmingly in favor of an ultimatum that expired by midnight. In the light of French pressure it was agreed to make another statement in the House at 7:30 p.m. but not to impose a time limit. In this speech Chamberlain declared that Britain would not engage in any negotiations while Poland was under attack and that the government was consulting with the French as to a time limit by which the Germans must withdraw.⁶¹⁹

This apparent attempt to take one last step to avert war nearly ended Chamberlain’s Premiership. The House interpreted the refusal to give a time limit as an attempt by the French to

⁶¹⁷ McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 86-87, Parker, *Chamberlain and Appeasement*, 244.

⁶¹⁸ Neville Chamberlain, *Speech by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on September 1, 1939* (WWII Archives Foundation, August 3 2010)); available from http://wwiarchives.net/servlet/doc/Bbb_105, Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 245, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 380.

⁶¹⁹ Neville Chamberlain, *Speech by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on September 2, 1939* (WWII Archives Foundation, August 3 2010)); available from http://wwiarchives.net/servlet/doc/Bbb_116, Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 248-251.

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escape their responsibilities to Poland that was being abetted by Chamberlain. While he was changing for dinner Halifax was called to meet the shaken Prime Minister, who told him that unless this confusion was resolved the Government would fall the next day. Halifax immediately called the French government and urged them to agree to an ultimatum which expired by 11 A.M. on September 3, but they demurred, saying this was still too soon. Chamberlain himself called Daladier and told him that if the deadline was delayed his Government was likely to fall. At a Cabinet meeting at 11:30 P.M. that night Chamberlain was advised that he had to be able to present the results of an ultimatum to Parliament when next it met at noon on September 3rd. The Cabinet decided the British Ambassador in Berlin should present an ultimatum at 9 A.M. that day which would expire two hours later.⁶²⁰

Chamberlain spoke to Parliament and the nation at 11:15 A.M. on September 3rd. He read the ultimatum which had been delivered that morning and said, simply, that as no reply had been received, “this country is at war with Germany.” He concluded, in a speech whose tragic tone can surely have been matched by few leaders of a nation just catapulted into war:

This is a sad day for all of us, and to none is it sadder than to me. Everything that I have worked for, everything that I have hoped for, everything that I have believed in during my public life, has crashed into ruins. There is only one thing left for me to do; that is, to devote what strength and powers I have to forwarding the victory of the cause for which we have to sacrifice so much. I cannot tell what part I may be allowed to play for myself; I trust I may live to see the day when Hitlerism has been destroyed and a liberated Europe has been re-established.⁶²¹

Even this last hope would be denied him. Replaced by Churchill in May 1940, he died of cancer on November 9 that same year.⁶²²

This fourth major crisis of the Chamberlain Premiership breaks down into two decisions. The first was the guarantee of Poland. Here there was no debate. Inside and outside the Cabinet there was

⁶²⁰ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 251-253.

⁶²¹ Neville Chamberlain, *Speech by the Prime Minister in the House of Commons on September 3, 1939* (WWII Archives Foundation, August 3 2010); available from http://wwiarchives.net/servlet/doc/Bbb_120, Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*.

⁶²² Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 445.

virtually universal support for the guarantee. Chamberlain himself was more than willing to issue it, if for no other reason than to secure his hold on power. The question of Chamberlain's impact on a potential alliance with the Soviet Union is more complicated. Chamberlain was clearly exceptionally reluctant to ally with the USSR even given Britain's desperate strategic situation. This delay may well have caused Stalin to turn to Hitler instead. Had a different Prime Minister pursued the alliance aggressively, it is possible that a deal could have been struck and the Nazi-Soviet alliance averted.

That being said, on the whole this outcome seems unlikely. Halifax, the most likely alternative Prime Minister, was little more willing to embrace Stalin than was Chamberlain himself. It is difficult to see what acceptable deal could have been struck given Poland's refusal to give the Red Army permission to cross its borders. The Soviet demand for, essentially, *carte blanche* to intervene against their neighbors was one at which any British Prime Minister would likely have balked. Hitler, at the end of the day, was willing to give Stalin a free hand in the Baltics and eastern Poland.⁶²³ This was a better deal than any Stalin was likely to get from a British Prime Minister who was, after all, negotiating with the Soviet Union in an attempt to *prevent* the conquest of Eastern Europe.

Assessment

The major crises faced by Chamberlain from the time he took office until the British declaration of war allow the second set of four questions in Table 15 to be answered. Chamberlain kept tighter control of the Cabinet than most Prime Ministers. He certainly held information closely and made key decisions with a small handful of his closest advisers. By doing so he turned the Cabinet from an advisory body to one that simply had to ratify decisions that, most often, had already been made.⁶²⁴ In the end, though, it is hard to see how these tendencies had any impact on outcomes. The Cabinet was given an opportunity to protest and it rarely did so. Eden resigned in protest, but he resigned not over

⁶²³ Geoffrey Roberts, *Stalin's Wars: From World War to Cold War, 1939-1953* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006), 30-32.

⁶²⁴ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 166-167.

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policy but because his conception of the role of the Foreign Minister differed from Chamberlain's. Cooper resigned in protest over appeasement, but only long after the key decisions had been made; his resignation garnered essentially no support inside or outside the Government. In the end Hoare's summation of the Cabinet's role in policymaking is precisely correct: "If nine times out of ten he [Chamberlain] had his way, it was because it was also the Cabinet's way."⁶²⁵

Once appeasement collapsed, Chamberlain was essentially the last to abandon it. When the Cabinet and the public turned against him, however, and particularly when Halifax did so, he consistently yielded to their pressure and took a firmer line against Germany. There was simply no constituency in Britain to save Austria. Those who wanted to save Czechoslovakia had no chance to gain power and no constituency within the Government. When Halifax and the rest of the Cabinet objected to Hitler's new demands at the height of the crisis, though, Chamberlain went back and successfully negotiated a compromise that every member of the Cabinet save Cooper found acceptable. His ability to face off with Hitler and extract some concessions, even small ones, in an incredibly short span of time and under brutal pressure was impressive.⁶²⁶

A politician of Chamberlain's experience, though, should be expected to negotiate skillfully and Chamberlain, like Halifax, was unable to use their face-to-face meeting to penetrate Hitler's façade. Chamberlain's rigidity and refusal to abandon appeasement were real, but in the end they mattered little. Halifax, the most likely alternative Prime Minister by the time of Munich, would have made roughly the same choices. Other policy options existed. Major British political figures, ranging from Churchill to leaders of the Labour Party, supported them in Parliament with skill and vigor. But the strength of the National Government majority and its unity behind Chamberlain meant that their advocates had no plausible path to power.⁶²⁷ The Conservatives would have to have split for that to

⁶²⁵ McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 157.

⁶²⁶ Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 241.

⁶²⁷ Colvin, *The Chamberlain Cabinet*, 324-327.

happen, and nowhere in the record is there even a hint of this occurring until the end. Had Chamberlain never been Prime Minister it seems likely that British foreign policy during the late 1930s would have changed little from the policy that was enacted, and this confirms LFT's central prediction.

Conclusion

Neville Chamberlain's reputation has recovered somewhat from its post-war nadir. Revisionist historians argue that he was a strong and capable leader who pursued, in appeasement, a realistic and popular foreign policy.⁶²⁸ Judging the wisdom of appeasement is beyond the scope of this dissertation, although it is hard to imagine any successful foreign policy leaving Britain in a situation as precarious as the one that will be described in the next chapter.

It is possible, though, to assess Chamberlain's performance. On a purely tactical level there is little to criticize. If nothing he did was particularly inspired, he clearly made few significant mistakes in executing his chosen policies. Chamberlain was far from the hapless dupe of Hitler he was caricatured as after the war. But once Hitler's duplicity was unmistakable, his rigidity and reluctance to accelerate rearmament did him no credit. Chamberlain was faced with an adversary for whom nothing had prepared him. That makes his initial misunderstandings of Hitler's intentions understandable, but it does not excuse his prolonged unwillingness to see the truth, even long after the rest of his Cabinet had done so. It nevertheless seems likely that no plausible alternative would have done much better.

Chamberlain had room for maneuver, even if he chose not to use it. Had he been the member of the Cabinet most skeptical of Hitler's intentions, instead of least, Britain might not have ended up in the desperate straits in which she would soon find herself. Chamberlain was a low impact Prime Minister. That does not make him any less of a failure. He was confronted with an occasion that called for extraordinary leadership and he was unable to rise to it.

⁶²⁸ McDonough, *Neville Chamberlain*, 4-5.

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It is nonetheless true that however great his failure, he failed in an honorable cause. Churchill, in his eulogy of his long-time rival, said it best:

It fell to Neville Chamberlain in one of the supreme crises of the world to be contradicted by events, to be disappointed in his hopes, and to be deceived and cheated by a wicked man. But what were these hopes in which he was disappointed? What were these wishes in which he was frustrated? What was that faith that was abused? They were surely among the most noble and benevolent instincts of the human heart - the love of peace, the toil for peace, the strife for peace, the pursuit of peace, even at great peril and certainly to the utter disdain of popularity or clamour. Whatever else history may or may not say about these terrible, tremendous years, we can be sure that Neville Chamberlain acted with perfect sincerity according to his lights and strove to the utmost of his capacity and authority, which were powerful, to save the world from this awful, devastating struggle in which we are now engaged. This alone will stand him in good stead as far as what is called the verdict of history is concerned.⁶²⁹

To a very great extent Neville Chamberlain died "unwept, unhonored, and unsung."⁶³⁰ So be it.

Chamberlain eagerly sought and strove for power and once he had it he never blanched at its use. His ignominy seems a fitting price for failure. He failed, however, not from venality or cowardice or incompetence. His failure was the product of his greatest virtue. Neville Chamberlain was absolutely dedicated to the cause of peace. How many leaders of great nations who died in triumph and glory could honestly say the same?

⁶²⁹ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 448.

⁶³⁰ Sir Walter Scott and Margaret Loring Andrews Allen, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel: A Poem, in Six Cantos* (Boston, MA: Ginn and Co., 1897), 117.

CHAPTER 9 - "WE SHALL NEVER SURRENDER": CHURCHILL AND THE CHOICE TO FIGHT

War hero. Nobel Prize-winning author. Internationally acclaimed war correspondent. Home Secretary. First Lord of the Admiralty. Chancellor of the Exchequer. Ringing voice in the wilderness warning against the dangers of Hitler. The Prime Minister who led Britain to victory and whose wartime eloquence defined a cause and rallied a nation at its moment of greatest peril. Few people have led lives as accomplished or can boast of such talents in such an array of fields as Winston Churchill.

Yet, if Churchill had died in 1939 or if Hitler had never come to power he would be remembered as a failed right-wing politician who squandered a potentially brilliant career. His calls for rearmament, eloquent though they were, had little effect.⁶³¹ Even when all his prophecies of impending disaster were proven true he was only reluctantly brought into the Cabinet and it took a string of catastrophes to make him Prime Minister. Why was such a promethean figure, one seemingly ideally suited to guide Britain in its supreme crisis, so entirely marginalized until the last, most desperate, hour?

Churchill's vast experience before becoming Prime Minister poses a particularly difficult test for Leadership Filtration Theory. Few men have been more thoroughly evaluated by a political system than Churchill, who held more ministerial offices than any other person in British history and was first elected to Parliament 40 years before he became Prime Minister. Normally this would be a description of a supremely Filtered leader, and thus one likely to have a low impact. A closer examination of Churchill's career, however, reveals that the British LFP evaluated Churchill and filtered him out. Churchill was not discredited because of his prescient stand against Hitler. His warnings about Nazi Germany were

⁶³¹ Robert Rhodes James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939* (New York, NY: The World Publishing Company, 1970), 310, 385.

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ignored in part because his stands on India and the Abdication Crisis ensured that few gave credence to his opinions. The effects of this political self-immolation were so powerful that even in May 1940 every major player in the British political system wanted the Premiership to go to Halifax instead of him.

The last chapter, focusing on Chamberlain, showed his hold on power and how he ignored Churchill's warnings about Germany. There is no need to retell that story from Churchill's perspective. Instead this chapter breaks from the format established in earlier chapters. It focuses first on Churchill's career before his struggle with Chamberlain to understand why a politician with such gifts and such a long record in office was so powerless; second on how Churchill replaced Chamberlain as Prime Minister in May 1940 and who the most likely potential alternative Prime Ministers were; and third on the first crucial days of Churchill's Premiership as French resistance collapsed and Britain had to choose whether to fight alone against the German juggernaut or open negotiations in the hope of making the best terms it could. The first section will establish how thoroughly Churchill was evaluated by the LFP, if he really was filtered out by it, and why this occurred. The second will establish if Churchill's path to the Premiership bypassed the LFP enough to justify terming him an Outlier. The third will test his choices against those of potential alternate Prime Ministers to see if Churchill's presence as Prime Minister had a large impact.

Overall this case, like the earlier ones, provides strong support for Leader Filtration Theory. Had Halifax wished to become Prime Minister he would certainly have done so, which both makes Churchill's rise improbable and clearly establishes Halifax as the Filtered alternative Prime Minister. Once in office Churchill and Halifax's preferences over whether to open negotiations with Hitler were sharply radically different, with Churchill refusing to negotiate and Halifax willing to make the attempt. Churchill's position as Prime Minister most likely had a large impact on British policy. Furthermore the hostility to Indian self-rule that had earlier resulted in Churchill's marginalization within British politics continued once he was in office and had tragic effects during the Second World War, suggesting that the British

system was correct in filtering him out absent the unique circumstances of the desperate struggle against Hitler.

A Meteoric Rise

From Great Success to a Sudden Setback

Churchill, like Chamberlain, was the son of a prominent politician. His father, Lord Randolph Churchill, had been a Conservative Chancellor of the Exchequer in the 1880s and built a reputation as a sometimes brilliant but often erratic and unreliable member of the Conservative Party. His mother was the daughter of an American millionaire. Churchill was born on November 30, 1874 in Blenheim Palace, the home awarded to his distant ancestor, John Churchill, the Duke of Marlborough, for his victories during the War of the Spanish Succession. He was sent to boarding school before he turned eight and entered Harrow, the prestigious public school, in April 1888. A year ahead of him there was Leo Amery, who played a crucial role in his career. In July 1893 after two unsuccessful attempts Churchill passed the entrance exam for the British military academy of Sandhurst. Having not previously shown much academic distinction, he did well there, graduating eighth in his class of 150.⁶³²

Churchill entered the Army in 1895. He took time away from his regiment to visit Cuba and begin his lucrative career as a journalist. In 1896 his regiment was dispatched to India. He took advantage of the accelerated promotions available there and in 1897 was promoted to Brigade Major. In September 1897 he went to Afghanistan along with a British force and his letters from the front were published by the *Daily Telegraph* after his mother used her influence to persuade the newspaper to do so. He served gallantly in the fighting and was mentioned in dispatches for his "courage and resolution." In 1898 he published *The Story of the Malakand Field Force* and was paid generously when it sold well.

⁶³² Gilbert, *Churchill*, 1-18, 37, Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: A Biography* (New York, NY: Plume, 2001), 1-21, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 11-13.

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In August 1898 he went to the Sudan where a British force was fighting against the Dervishes. He participated in a cavalry charge and again earned significant fees as a writer.⁶³³

In July 1899 Churchill made his first foray into politics, running for Parliament from Oldham as a Conservative. He campaigned well but lost. In August he went to South Africa to report on the Boer War. A train on which he was traveling on was derailed by a Boer ambush. Churchill heroically organized the defense of the train but was captured during the fighting. Taken to a Boer prison camp he escaped alone and made his way back to British lines. The dramatic story, combined with the success of his articles about the experience, made him a national celebrity. In October 1900 he ran from Oldham once again and managed a narrow victory and became a Member of Parliament (MP). He was 26.⁶³⁴

Churchill made his maiden speech to rave reviews. Even with this first speech, though, he displayed a tendency that would mark his career by offending some members of his own Party, saying "If I were a Boer I hope I should be fighting in the field," praising the men in the Boer armies even as he condemned the cause for which they fought. Over the next few years Churchill steadily alienated himself from the Conservative mainstream on issues ranging from its refusal to find a settlement of the Boer War to its opposition to progressive social policies to its refusal to cut military spending. The most important was Churchill's passionate commitment to Free Trade. He appealed to the Liberal Party for support and this stopped Balfour, the Conservative Prime Minister, from offering him a position in the Government. Churchill's steadily increasing isolation came to a head in 1904 when he needlessly insulted Balfour by criticizing him for showing insufficient respect for Parliament when Balfour got up to leave as Churchill began a speech. In response all senior Conservative party members and most backbenchers immediately stood up and left. His own constituency party association decided they could no longer support him as a Conservative. Churchill accepted an invitation from Manchester Liberals to run for Parliament there as a Free Trade candidate. In May 1904 the Conservative Government

⁶³³ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 59, 62-53, 68, 75-59, 86, 91-101, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 22-24.

⁶³⁴ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 107, 112, 117-109, 131, 135, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 45-50, 65.

introduced an Aliens Bill meant to curb Jewish immigration into Britain. Churchill, appalled, attacked it in Parliament and formally joined the Liberal Party.⁶³⁵

Churchill's abandonment of the Conservatives shaped his career for decades. It initially paid great dividends. Liberal governments remained in power until the middle of the First World War. Many Conservatives, however, never forgave him, particularly given his vitriolic attacks on the Balfour Government after he crossed the aisle. He acquired a reputation as someone whose ambition overwhelmed his principles. Austen Chamberlain, for example, a Conservative and Neville's half-brother, believed that "his conversion to Radicalism coincided with his personal interests."⁶³⁶

The newly-minted Liberal promptly became one of the most strident opponents of the Conservative Party. After a Liberal landslide in the election of 1906 Henry Campbell-Bannerman formed a Liberal government and Churchill was offered the position of Financial Secretary of the Treasury, generally considered a sure path to higher office. Churchill, however, requested that he be made Under-Secretary of the Colonies, a more junior position, but one he found more interesting. In 1906 he ran from Manchester as a Liberal. When his previous statements attacking the Liberals were used against him he replied "I said a lot of stupid things when I was in the Conservative party, and I left it because I did not want to go on saying stupid things." Although typically witty, this hardly assuaged Conservative hostility, a problem he further aggravated while Colonial Under-Secretary.⁶³⁷

In 1908 Campbell-Bannerman stepped down due to ill health and was replaced by H.H. Asquith. He elevated Churchill to President of the Board of Trade, a position that gave him the opportunity to pursue his interest in social reform. At the time members of the Cabinet had to run for re-election in their districts. Churchill did, and lost, but moved to Dundee and won handily. In the Cabinet he took a leading role in favor of increases in social spending and taxes and against increases in naval

⁶³⁵ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 139, 146-147, 153-154, 157-165, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 86, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 18-19.

⁶³⁶ James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 22-23.

⁶³⁷ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 168, 173-179, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 104, 109, 120.

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expenditures. In 1909 the Conservative-dominated House of Lords rejected a budget based on these principles, triggering a constitutional crisis and a general election. Churchill, the grandson of a Duke, took a leading role in the Liberals' campaign against the Lords under the slogan "The Peers versus the People." The Liberals eeked out a narrow victory and Asquith made Churchill the second youngest ever Home Secretary.⁶³⁸ The Home Secretary is technically the most senior member of the Cabinet and is usually behind only the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Foreign Minister in importance in the Government. Few have ever risen so far, so fast.

Several incidents while he was Home Secretary, however, made his colleagues question his judgment and feel that he tended to let his combativeness overwhelm his wisdom. Most spectacularly he insisted on personally observing a raid by the Scots Guards on a heavily-armed band of Latvian jewel thieves. The raid went wrong and although Churchill had not taken command of the affair his presence had clearly not been helpful. This image was further reinforced when British police (which were under Churchill's purview as Home Secretary) broke up a mining strike in ways that were generally seen as over-aggressive, and when Churchill dispatched armed troops across the country to handle a railroad strike on his own initiative despite British rules that such an action could be taken only when local governments requested assistance. Members of the Labour party were particularly outraged.⁶³⁹

Churchill's attention was already shifting to foreign affairs. He lobbied Asquith for, and in October 1911 received, a move to First Lord of the Admiralty, normally a demotion within the Cabinet. In March 1912 Churchill announced that Britain would build two battleships for every one constructed by Germany but also proposed a naval construction freeze in order to prevent an arms race. When Germany ignored his offer Churchill decided that war was inevitable and focused on preparing for it. He pushed through a series of successful naval reforms, alienating many Royal Navy officers in the process.

⁶³⁸ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 193-195, 201-202, 210-211, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 130, 152, 169-170.

⁶³⁹ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 212, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 42-43, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 194-195, 198-199.

In March 1914, however, he further angered Conservatives by ordering the Home Fleet to Lamlash, a port in Scotland, in the hope of intimidating advocates of Irish independence. The Conservatives felt that Churchill and the Liberals were seeking a confrontation as a means of cementing their hold on power.⁶⁴⁰ A few months later the First World War began.

Two of his initiatives combined to nearly end his career. The first was his whirlwind visit to Antwerp in October 1914 to help organize the city's defenses against German attacks and integrate British reinforcements with the Belgian forces. Churchill, who was after all a trained soldier, telegraphed Asquith offering to resign from the Cabinet if he were to be given command of the British forces defending Antwerp and given a commission in the Army high enough to allow him independence and authority in the field. When Asquith presented Churchill's idea to the Cabinet it was met with "a Homeric laugh." The British forces were eventually withdrawn in defeat and the whole affair greatly damaged his reputation with both his colleagues and the press.⁶⁴¹

In order to improve management of the war effort Asquith created a War Council with only five members, including both Churchill and Lloyd George. Churchill became a passionate advocate of a plan to launch an attack on the Dardanelles, the strait connecting the Aegean Sea to the Sea of Marmara. He hoped that such an attack would knock the Ottoman Empire from the war and allow the Allies to get supplies to the beleaguered Russians. It took him until January 1915 to convince the rest of the government and once the campaign was launched control passed out of Churchill's hands. Unfortunately a series of mistakes in execution, some avoidable, some not, converted the Dardanelles offensive from a hopeful project to a complete catastrophe. Churchill was certainly not entirely at fault

⁶⁴⁰ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 237-238, 243-244, Michael Howard, "Churchill and the First World War," in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and Wm. Roger Louis (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 130, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 52-55, 59-60, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 205, 211.

⁶⁴¹ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 283-284, Howard, "Churchill and the First World War," 132-134.

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for the fiasco, but his control over the Royal Navy and the general feeling that the campaign would never have been attempted if it were not for him shattered his public standing.⁶⁴²

The problem was exacerbated when Sir Jacky Fisher, the brilliant but erratic and temperamental Admiral whom he had brought out of retirement to serve as head of the Royal Navy (profiled in Chapter 10), resigned in protest and refused to work with Churchill. Meanwhile his constant interference with issues outside the purview of his department and his abrasive style with other members of the Cabinet had eroded his position. Asquith himself told his wife in March 1915 "that Churchill was 'by far the most disliked man in the cabinet by his colleagues,' and indicated that his own patience was becoming overstretched: 'He is intolerable! Noisy, long-winded and full of perorations...'" In April Asquith decided to form a coalition with the Conservatives for the duration of the war. Conservative leaders informed him that they would not cooperate on any issues under any circumstances until Churchill was removed from the Admiralty. On May 4 Asquith told him that he would have to leave the Admiralty.⁶⁴³

From the Trenches to the Chancellorship

Churchill was convinced that his political career was over, and few would have disagreed. He was kept on in the Cabinet but had no authority and finally resigned in November to join his regiment fighting in France as a major. Although Churchill was certainly not entirely responsible for the twin debacles of Antwerp and the Dardanelles:

...[H]e cannot be fully exonerated for his part in them. These points may be fairly made: he overestimated his own knowledge and capacities; once enamored by an idea and a plan, his total concentration on it and devotion to it hindered him from a cooler appreciation of the facilities available for its execution and the probable hazards that it would face; he made insufficient use of the professional advice and experience that was available to him, and too often beat down criticism by argument rather than heeding it and utilizing it.⁶⁴⁴

⁶⁴² Gilbert, *Churchill*, 289-320, Howard, "Churchill and the First World War," 137-138, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 246-274.

⁶⁴³ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 289-320, Howard, "Churchill and the First World War," 137-138, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 246-274.

⁶⁴⁴ Howard, "Churchill and the First World War," 138, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 98-99.

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Churchill spent five and a half months in the Army. He was never treated as a normal major. He dined with Sir John French, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force, on his first night in France. But he was able to overcome the reservations of his fellow officers and men at having a political celebrity abruptly join them in battle and eventually became immensely popular with the men under his command. He returned to Britain for a few weeks during which he made a speech in Parliament that, astonishingly, urged the Government to reappoint Fisher. His suggestion was unsurprisingly treated with contempt by both press and Parliament. Believing that he could do more good in Parliament he asked to be relieved of command and told Asquith that he had "many 'ardent supporters' who looked to him for leadership." Asquith replied, "At the moment you have none who count at all." He returned to France for several weeks and continued to serve with his typical bravery, but in May his battalion was amalgamated with another, removing him from command. He left the Army and returned to Britain.⁶⁴⁵

In November 1915 Lloyd George, the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Andrew Bonar Law, the leader of the Conservative Party, challenged Asquith over his ineffective war leadership. Churchill remained so marginalized that he knew nothing about this or how it played out. Lloyd George emerged from the struggle as Prime Minister. This was a huge boon to Churchill, as they were friends and Lloyd George fully recognized his talents. In March 1916 Churchill's position was further improved by publication of the report of the Dardanelles Commission, which absolved him of blame for the disaster. Conservative hostility remained intense, however, so it took until July 1917 for Lloyd George to return him to the Government, making him Minister of Munitions.⁶⁴⁶

Although his tendency to address issues outside his area of Ministerial responsibility again aggravated other members of the Government, Churchill did well, skillfully resolving a labor dispute that was handicapping production and completely reorganizing the department to significantly increase its

⁶⁴⁵ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 354-361, Howard, "Churchill and the First World War," 138, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 289-309.

⁶⁴⁶ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 368-374.

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effectiveness. He also took an active role in improving tank design – a particularly appropriate use of his talents, as he had commissioned the construction of the first tanks while First Lord of the Admiralty. In November 1918 the war finally ended.⁶⁴⁷

Lloyd George, who had led Britain to victory, stood astride British politics like a Colossus. His Liberal Coalition scored a massive victory in the General Election of December 1918, giving him the freedom to override Conservative objections and keep Churchill in harness. He moved Churchill to the War Office, where he was immediately confronted by disaffection in the Army over demobilization schedules which tended to send those men who had spent the shortest amount of time in uniform home first. He swiftly moved to develop and implement a fairer plan. Churchill spent most of his time and energy while in the War Office supporting the British intervention in Russia against the Bolsheviks. Although Lloyd George preferred to minimize British involvement, Churchill managed to persuade the Cabinet to commit considerable British supplies and resources to the anti-Bolshevik forces. He also took a leading role in supporting the intervention in public. When the intervention failed it simply reinforced the common perception that he tended to rush boldly into situations which he understood poorly and let his emotions overcome his judgment. The disaster permanently damaged the relationship between Churchill and Lloyd George and further increased Labour's skepticism of him.⁶⁴⁸

Churchill did have one shining moment while at the War Office. Given India's role in his later career, it needs to be mentioned. In April 1919 an Englishwoman in the city of Amritsar in India was attacked by an Indian mob. Although she was rescued by other Indians the British Army commander in the city, Brigadier General Reginald Dyer, was enraged. A few days later a peaceful crowd of Indians gathered in the Jalianwallah Bagh in Amritsar, a narrow public area bounded on all sides by homes with only a few narrow entrances. Dyer marched his soldiers to the entrance and, without issuing any

⁶⁴⁷ Ibid., 375-402.

⁶⁴⁸ Ibid., 404-405, John Grigg, "Churchill and Lloyd George," in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and William Roger Louis (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 104-105, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 123-137, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 341, 348, 351.

warnings, ordered them to open fire. He initially directed their fire at the center of the crowd and then, when people fled to the edges of the Bagh, directed it at the sides. The shooting continued until Dyer's soldiers ran out of ammunition. The official count reported 379 dead and over 1,500 wounded although the actual number of casualties was certainly far higher. Bodies inside the enclosure were stacked 10 feet deep. To cap things off Dyer ordered that any Indian on the street where the British woman was attacked could use it only by crawling on his hands and knees and set up whipping posts where any Indian who refused would be flogged. Many were, including an entire wedding party. Dyer reported to headquarters that he had taught "a moral lesson to the Punjab."⁶⁴⁹

As outrage swept India the Government decided to contain the damage by promoting Dyer to Major General but removing him from active duty. Dyer's actions, however, made him a hero to millions of British. He was commended by the House of Lords and a £2,500 public subscription was raised in his honor. Conservative pressure on the Government became so strong that Lloyd George was forced to authorize a full debate in July 1920. The Government's case began disastrously when its first speaker, a Jewish MP named Edwin Montagu, was shouted down by a storm of anti-semitic insults. The response was so strong that many MPs who had initially planned on supporting the Government flipped to backing Dyer. The Government was suddenly in jeopardy of defeat. Bonar Law was acting as leader of the House in Lloyd George's absence. Despite his personal enmity towards Churchill he knew that only Churchill's rhetorical firepower could rescue the situation and called on him to speak.⁶⁵⁰

Churchill, as he would later prove, was far from sympathetic towards India or Indians. His sense of justice, however, was outraged by the details of the massacre. He began his speech by appealing for calm. He described the massacre as "an extraordinary event, a monstrous event, an event which stands in singular isolation" and noted that the number of Indians killed was roughly the same as the number of

⁶⁴⁹ Arthur Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill: The Epic Rivalry That Destroyed an Empire and Forged Our Age* (New York, NY: Bantam Books, 2008), 242-243, William Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1983), 692.

⁶⁵⁰ Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 255, Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill*, 693.

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MPs who were then sitting in Parliament. He said that while he had been serving in World War I he and other British officers had made great efforts and taken great risks to aid the wounded, while Dyer had simply left the scene. Skillfully using the Conservatives' own belief in the righteousness of the British Empire against them he declared: "Frightfulness is not a remedy known to the British pharmacopoeia." The British Empire's "reign in India, or anywhere else, has never stood on the basis of physical force alone...The British way of doing things...has always meant and implied close and effectual cooperation with the people." His speech shifted the sentiment of the House back in the Government's favor and it won the vote decisively. Churchill had proven that he was able to swing Parliament by his eloquence, burnishing his already building reputation as a skilled parliamentarian. Furthermore, for the first time he had staked his career on an unpopular but worthy cause and, at least this once, triumphed.⁶⁵¹

Despite his stand on Amritsar Churchill had been steadily shifting from the center-left to the right wing of British politics. Paired with the failure of his efforts in Russia and his disillusionment with British commitments in several areas, this made him ask for a change and Lloyd George transferred him to the Colonial Office. There he committed himself to reducing British expenditures in the Middle East but was unable to do so. He spent most of his time focusing on Ireland where, perhaps inevitably, he met with little success in quelling unrest. Additionally, when Turkish troops advanced on the village of Chanak in the Dardanelles, which was garrisoned by a small number of British troops, Churchill urged Lloyd George to go to war to prevent the Turks from seizing the Gallipoli peninsula. The Cabinet ordered the British general on the scene to issue an ultimatum to the Turks but he used his initiative to prevent it from being delivered and met with Ataturk to peacefully resolve the crisis. The Conservatives, learning that Churchill had been chiefly responsible for very nearly taking Britain back into an entirely unnecessary war, were horrified and united in opposition to the Government.⁶⁵²

⁶⁵¹ Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 257, Manchester, *The Last Lion: Winston Spencer Churchill*, 693-694.

⁶⁵² Gilbert, *Churchill*, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 144-149, 156-161, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 368.

In October 1922, while Churchill was in the hospital recovering from the removal of his appendix, Conservative backbenchers revolted against their leadership's continued alliance with Lloyd George, triggering his resignation and a general election. Weakened by the operation and perhaps confused by an increasingly fragmented political landscape, Churchill suffered a crushing defeat in his own constituency, throwing him out of Parliament for the first time since 1900. The Liberal party, divided between Lloyd George and Asquith, for the first time dropped below Labour in its representation in Parliament. Stanley Baldwin, a Conservative, became Prime Minister.⁶⁵³

Churchill was out of Parliament, but not for long. Baldwin called a general election in 1923. Churchill decided to run from Leicester, a city that was remarkably unfavorable territory for a Liberal Free Trader and was punished for this misjudgment by a resounding defeat. Nationally, however, the election resulted in dramatic losses for the Conservatives and a hung Parliament. In January 1924 an alliance between Labour and the Liberals made Ramsay MacDonald the first Labour Prime Minister. Churchill, always enormously hostile to anything he perceived as socialism, described the new Labour government as "this socialist monstrosity..." Having already moved considerably to the right from his earlier positions and with the Liberal Party clearly a spent force in British politics, he ran for Parliament from a district in Westminster itself, right outside Parliament. With Baldwin's blessing he ran as an "Independent anti-socialist" but was handicapped by residual Conservative hostility and, once again, defeated. In the process, however, he completed his move to the political right and abandoned the Liberals. Conservative leaders, realizing their opportunity, gave him the opportunity to run from Epping, a safe seat in the London suburbs. When the Labour Government fell in October 1924 he was elected from Epping as a "Constitutionalist" with the explicit endorsement of senior Conservatives. He held Epping for the rest of his life and soon formally joined the Conservatives.⁶⁵⁴

⁶⁵³ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 370-376, 379-380.

⁶⁵⁴ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 459-463, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 384-392.

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Baldwin led the Conservatives to a landslide victory in the 1924 elections. After Chamberlain declined the position of Chancellor of the Exchequer – normally the pre-eminent position in the Cabinet – Baldwin stunned nearly everyone, including Churchill, by offering it to Churchill, who was enormously pleased to occupy the office once held by his father. While Chancellor Churchill took the lead in cutting back naval expenditures, pushed through increases in pensions for widows and orphans and was forced by political pressure to return Britain to the gold standard. Inevitably, despite his opposition to the policy he used the announcement of the return to make himself the center of attention in British politics once again. Thus when John Maynard Keynes wrote a pamphlet criticizing the return to gold as an economic disaster he titled it *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill*, echoing his famous *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*.⁶⁵⁵ Churchill's Chancellorship thus combined a major success with a catastrophic failure that was not really his fault, although few realized that at the time. When the Conservatives lost the 1929 general election he went once more into opposition. He would not return to the government for the next 10 years.

In the Wilderness

When Churchill entered Opposition he was superbly placed to return to office in the next Conservative Government. Still relatively young and having just completed five years as Chancellor of the Exchequer he was on any short list of future Conservative Prime Ministers. He was the leader of the Liberal wing of the Conservative party. He went from that enviable position to being isolated on the Conservative Party's right-wing fringe; so discredited that even Britain's disastrous reverses in the opening stages of World War II were barely sufficient to return him to power.⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁵ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 393-417, John Maynard Keynes, *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill* (London, UK: L. and V. Woolf, 1925), Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 36-37.

⁶⁵⁶ Brian Gardner, *Churchill in His Time: A Study in a Reputation 1939-1945* (London, UK: Methuen, 1968), 1.

Churchill's time outside of government was dominated by three themes. The first was his fight against the attempts by both Labour and Conservative leaders to move India towards self-government. The second was his brief, but extraordinarily unpopular, foray into the crisis caused by Edward VIII's desire to marry the American divorcée Wallace Warfield Simpson. And the third was his long and fruitless struggle to spur British rearmament and oppose appeasement. The last of those stories was told – from Chamberlain's perspective – in the previous chapter. The first two, however, are crucial to understanding why Churchill, for all his gifts, was so thoroughly filtered out by the British political system and why Chamberlain, not Churchill, was the dominant player in British politics until May 1940.

Sounding the alarm against a “malevolent fanatic”: The India Debate

The Parliamentary struggle over Britain's India policy was triggered by the rising strength of the Gandhi-led independence movement. In 1929 Gandhi convinced the Indian National Congress, the most important Indian nationalist group, to adopt a demand for Dominion status in the Empire (functionally a form of independence) within one year. Lord Irwin (he later took the title Viscount Halifax and played a prominent role in the previous chapter), the British Viceroy in India, took advantage of the election of a Labour Government to try to negotiate with Gandhi and his followers. In October 1929 he declared that British policy was to move India towards Dominion status, something which only white colonies had previously achieved within the Empire. Baldwin announced his support for the new policy. Many Conservatives, and even some Liberals, were appalled. Churchill was far more than that. When he attended the first House of Commons debate on India on November 8, having already agreed to take the lead in opposing the new policy, he was described as “demented with fury.” He would spend the next five years desperately fighting to reverse the decision.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁷ Martin Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1982), 26, Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 315-316, 319-321.

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Churchill's understanding of India was crippled by his brief time there in the 1890s. He was unable to free himself from the image he acquired then of Britain engaged in "her high mission to rule these primitive but agreeable races for their welfare and our own." His devotion to the cause of maintaining the British Empire in India was absolute and, paired with his hostility towards India and Indians, often seemed to overwhelm his judgment, so much so that in 1944 Leo Amery, his old friend and India Secretary, was "by no means sure whether on this subject of India he is really quite sane...." His attitude, even by the standards of the British upper classes of his era, was remarkable. He once told Amery: "I hate Indians. They are a beastly people with a beastly religion." During the struggle over India policy one of his favored after-dinner jokes was "that Gandhi should be bound hand and foot at the gates of Delhi and trampled on by an enormous elephant ridden on by the Viceroy." Churchill was further handicapped by the simple fact that he knew little about India and had nothing to offer other than the status quo, something that led to his repeated humiliation in Parliament. He nevertheless told Baldwin that the Indian issue was more important to him than any other. The stakes were high for Baldwin as well. Once he had committed himself to the India Bill, Churchill's continued opposition was seen as an attempt by the right wing of the Party to overthrow him and seize control.⁶⁵⁸

On November 16 Churchill declared war, publishing an article describing the new India policy as a "criminally mischievous plan." Gandhi, like most Indians, gave little credence to British promises after the Amritsar massacre, and so launched a massive civil disobedience campaign to heighten pressure on the British. He was arrested and imprisoned, but Irwin sent a steady stream of visitors to attempt to negotiate with him. The news enraged Churchill, who described Gandhi as a "malevolent fanatic." In December 1930 he was the keynote speaker at a mass meeting of the India Empire Society, which was dedicated to preserving British rule. He predicted that Indian independence would be followed by

⁶⁵⁸ L. S. Amery, John Barnes, and David Nicholson, *The Empire at Bay: The Leo Amery Diaries 1929-1945* (London: Hutchinson, 1988), 832, 993, Sarvepalli Gopal, "Churchill and India," in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and William Roger Louis (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 457, 459, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 223, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 434-435.

Gandhi establishing a brutal tyranny over Muslims and lower-caste Hindus and declared that Britain should arrest and deport the leaders of the Indian independence movement, break up mass meetings protesting the Raj, and unilaterally reverse those steps that had already been taken towards Indian autonomy. Such sentiments appealed to the right wing of the Conservative Party, which was further inflamed when Irwin had Gandhi released from prison and began face-to-face negotiations with him.⁶⁵⁹

In January 1931 news of the negotiations made Churchill erupt in a speech before Parliament that – much like Dyer’s supporters – used the supposed threat to British women and children as an argument for repressive measures in India. He raised his prestige with Conservative backbenchers by launching a devastating attack on Ramsay MacDonald, famously describing him as “The Boneless Wonder.” His strength against Baldwin steadily improved. In February he declared:

It is alarming and also nauseating to see Mr. Gandhi, a seditious Middle Temple lawyer now posing as a fakir of a type well-known in the East, striding half-naked up the steps of the Vice-regal palace, while he is still organizing and conducting a campaign of civil disobedience, to parley on equal terms with the representative of the King-Emperor. Such a spectacle can only increase the unrest in India and the danger to which white people there are exposed.

Gandhi, typically, was amused by Churchill’s description, enough so that he mentioned it in a letter he sent Churchill many years later. In March, however, it was announced that Irwin and Gandhi had struck a deal. Irwin agreed to release all political prisoners while Gandhi, among other concessions, ended the civil disobedience campaign.⁶⁶⁰

The announcement shifted the advantage back to Baldwin. The two faced off in a debate on March 12 with many of Baldwin’s allies fearing that Churchill would succeed in wresting control of the party. Churchill delivered what was, by all accounts, a powerful attack on Baldwin’s India policy. Baldwin replied with perhaps the best speech of his life. He declared that India’s desire for independence was a product of the Western ideals that Britain herself had “impregnated” there and

⁶⁵⁹ Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 323-324, 343-354.

⁶⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 354-360, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 68.

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then, lethally, quoted Churchill's speech on Amritsar without naming him. MPs laughed in recognition. Baldwin challenged his Party by declaring that if they were unwilling to embrace Indian self-government they should find another leader and pointedly stared at Churchill while doing so. Put this starkly few Conservatives were willing to support a former Liberal of erratic judgment.⁶⁶¹

A by-election in which Duff Cooper was running for Parliament became a proxy battle for control over the Conservative Party. Campaigning for Cooper, Baldwin turned his fire on the tabloids published by Lords Rothermere and Beaverbrook, known as the "Press Barons," which had been steadily seeking to undermine his leadership:

They are engines of propaganda for constantly changing policies, desires, personal wishes, personal likes and dislikes of two men. What are their methods? Their methods are direct falsehood, misrepresentation, half-truths, the alteration of the speaker's meaning by publishing a sentence apart from context...What the proprietorship of these papers is aiming at is power, and power without responsibility – the prerogative of the harlot throughout the ages.

Churchill made the critical mistake of attacking Baldwin at a massive meeting of the India Defence League just before the election. This made it seem that he had allied himself with the Barons and made most Conservatives feel that the whole battle had really been an attempt to depose Baldwin, not a principled stand. Cooper won the by-election handily, cementing Baldwin's leadership.⁶⁶²

Churchill had been defeated but, characteristically, he did not give up. He continued to fight for four more years. The main effect of his continued struggle was to complete his marginalization on the right-most fringe of the Conservative Party. The Government created a Joint Committee to craft an India Bill which would incorporate Irwin's proposals. Churchill gave evidence before the Committee; under close questioning his ignorance of India was made humiliatingly clear. He believed – correctly, it became clear decades later – that two Government Ministers had pressured witnesses before the Committee to alter their testimony. An investigation, however, cleared the Government completely,

⁶⁶¹ Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 34-35, Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 360-363, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 225, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 439.

⁶⁶² James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 225-226.

declaring that even if the pressure had been exerted, such Committees were not judicial bodies and so doing so was not a crime. Amery struck the final blow. Following Churchill in a Parliamentary debate on the issue, and knowing from their days at school together Churchill's weakness at Latin, Amery said that Churchill "wishes to be true to his chosen motto, *Fiat justitia ruat caelum* [Let justice be done though the heavens fall]." Churchill, unwisely, asked for a translation. With a smile Amery replied "If I can trip up Sam [one of the accused Ministers] the Government's bust." Churchill's case collapsed in gales of laughter. When the final vote was taken barely 50 Conservative MPs supported him.⁶⁶³

The damage to Churchill's career from the entire misbegotten endeavor was nearly incalculable. He had no chance of joining the next Conservative Government. He had permanently alienated Baldwin and most other leaders of the Party. His opposition to Indian democracy forced him into positions that would weaken his moral authority. He wrote in a public letter, for example:

Elections, even in the most educated democracies, are regarded as a misfortune and as a disturbance of social, moral, and economic progress, even as a danger to international peace. Why at this moment should we force upon the untutored races of India that very system, the inconveniences of which are now felt even in the most highly developed nations, the United States, Germany, France, and in England itself?

This became a problem so severe that some of his critics believed he wished to be "an English Mussolini." He marginalized himself on the extreme right wing of the Conservative Party; the section of the Party, to compound the damage, that turned out to be most sympathetic to Nazism. He destroyed his credibility in foreign policy by describing the leaders of the Indian nationalist movement "as 'evil and malignant Brahmins' with their 'itching fingers stretching and scratching at the vast pillage of a derelict Empire'...." He became known as an implacable foe of "appeasement;" but he began using the word in 1930 as a condemnation of government policy towards India and Gandhi, not Germany and Hitler. Churchill made his first speech calling for rearmament in 1934, but he did not make his last speech against the India Bill until June 1935. By then few were willing to listen. That last speech was answered

⁶⁶³ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 527-528, Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 65-67, 74-76, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 455-463, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 175-179.

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by an MP who stingingly declared “When [Churchill] speaks in this Debate, or other Debates, the House always crowds in to hear him. It listens and admires. It laughs when he would have it laugh, and it trembles when he would have it tremble – which is very frequently in these days; but it remains unconvinced, and in the end it votes against him.” Years later, when Baldwin was asked why Churchill had been kept out of office for so long, he simply replied “India.”⁶⁶⁴

“You won’t be satisfied until you’ve broken him!”: The Abdication Crisis

With the struggle over India over, Churchill began the long road of re-establishing his political standing. In 1931 Baldwin had led the Conservatives into a coalition with Labour under Ramsay MacDonald. In June 1935, as MacDonald’s health failed, he became Prime Minister in a Conservative-dominated Government. Despite their battle Baldwin recognized his talents and invited him to become a member of the Air Defense Research Sub-Committee, which gave him crucial access to classified information. Churchill hoped to be included in the next Conservative Government as a way of placating the right wing, but in November 1935 Baldwin won a landslide victory in a General Election. He was so strong he had no need of Churchill’s support and was able to shut him out of the Government.⁶⁶⁵

Nonetheless, Churchill’s constant attacks on British unpreparedness for war began to find their mark and his influence was starting to rebound, so much so that Baldwin told his assistant that he hoped to one day say in Parliament “that when Winston was born lots of fairies swooped down on his cradle with gifts – imagination, eloquence, industry, ability – and then came a fairy who swooped down who said ‘No one person has a right to so many gifts’, picked him up and gave him such a shake and twist that...he was denied judgment and wisdom. And that is why while we delight to listen to him in this House we do not take his advice.”⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 418-419, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 235-237, 255, 273, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 457, 480.

⁶⁶⁵ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 544, 547.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 555-556, Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 155.

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Baldwin was aware of Churchill's abilities. He refused to put Churchill in the Cabinet, at least in part because once there he would inevitably challenge for the Premiership when Baldwin stepped down, and Baldwin wished to ensure that Neville Chamberlain would replace him. When Churchill was proposed for a Cabinet seat he received no support from those who were already members.⁶⁶⁷

Churchill's building momentum was abruptly arrested by Edward VIII's wish to marry Wallace Warfield Simpson. The two had been carrying on an affair for years; this was widely known in Churchill's social circle. The King's position as head of the Church of England, however, made an open marriage to a divorcée (in fact Simpson was still married to someone else when the King informed Baldwin of his intentions) unacceptable to Baldwin and nearly everyone else in Britain. When the King told Baldwin of his desire, Baldwin replied that he could do so only if he chose to abdicate the throne. The King asked Baldwin for permission to consult an independent political figure and, when Baldwin acceded, chose Churchill. The two were already friends and Churchill had a profoundly romantic view of the monarchy, so much so that his private secretary declared that "[f]ealty to the monarchy was a religion with [Churchill]." Churchill and the King dined alone on Friday, December 4 1936. Churchill later said that the King was under so much stress that he twice suffered from blackouts during the meal. Churchill urged the King to make no swift decisions.⁶⁶⁸

On Sunday, December 6, Churchill issued a press statement in which he came very close to suggesting that the Government should resign rather than advise the King's abdication. He further argued that there was no need for a swift decision, as the earliest the King could possibly marry Simpson was April. Several of his allies instantly wrote him to tell him that his proposal was absurd as he was

⁶⁶⁷ Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 251.

⁶⁶⁸ Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 169-170, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 498-501, Philip Ziegler, "Churchill and the Monarchy," in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and William Roger Louis (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 187.

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proposing a Constitutional theory with no historical precedent and the country was in such ferment that continuing the situation for four months was impossible. Churchill ignored their warnings.⁶⁶⁹

The next day Churchill got up to speak in Parliament. He meant to ask Baldwin to promise that no decision would be made until a full statement was made to the House. He hoped to secure the King a month to make up his mind. Instead as soon as he began the speech he was shouted down by a Parliament convinced that Churchill was using the crisis to weaken Baldwin. For perhaps the first time in his career he was unable to make himself heard over the catcalls from the floor. Finally he simply left the Chamber, turning to Baldwin as he walked out and angrily asking, "You won't be satisfied until you've broken him [the King], will you?" Churchill's humiliation was so complete that the London *Times* called it "the most striking rebuff in modern Parliamentary history." Harold Nicolson, an MP and friend of Churchill's declared that "[h]e had undone in five minutes the patient reconstruction work of two years." Even Bob Boothby, his longtime loyal supporter and former Parliamentary Private Secretary, wrote him an angry letter (which he later regretted) in which he declared that "[w]hat happened this afternoon makes me feel it is almost impossible for those who are most devoted to you personally to follow you blindly....Because they cannot be sure where the hell they are going to be landed next."⁶⁷⁰

Churchill's defeat was complete. He had been entirely outmaneuvered and was again an outcast. Churchill himself later wrote:

The Prime Minister [Baldwin] proved himself to be a shrewd judge of British national feeling. Undoubtedly he perceived and expressed the profound will of the nation. His deft and skillful handling of the abdication issue raised him in a fortnight from the depths to a pinnacle. There were several moments when I seemed to be entirely alone against a wrathful House of Commons. I am not, when in action, unduly affected by hostile currents of feeling; but it was on more than one occasion almost physically impossible to make myself heard. All the forces I had gathered together [to push for rearmament and collective security] were estranged or dissolved, and I was myself so

⁶⁶⁹ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 501-502.

⁶⁷⁰ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 568-569, Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 170-171, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 297-304, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 502, Lynne Olson, *Troublesome Young Men: The Rebels Who Brought Churchill to Power in 1940 and Helped to Save Britain* (London, UK: Bloomsbury, 2007), 81-82.

smitten in public opinion that it was the almost universal view that my political life was at last ended.⁶⁷¹

Baldwin, buoyed on a wave of popularity, resigned a few months later and was succeeded by Chamberlain. It was from this position, discredited, stripped of allies, and without office, that Churchill had to re-launch his long crusade to force Britain to deal with the Nazi threat.

Assessment

Given Churchill's position in the British political system at the end of 1936, it is perhaps more surprising that he was brought into the Government two years and nine months later than that he was ignored before that. Over the course of his career he had been responsible, in whole or in part, for, among other failures: the Gallipoli disaster, the British intervention in Russia, nearly getting Britain into a needless war with Turkey, and Britain's return to the gold standard. He had switched parties not once but twice. He had led a long and vitriolic crusade from the back benches against an India Bill supported by both the Government *and* the Opposition. Finally he had vainly tried to save Edward VIII. His talents were recognized by everyone in the political sphere, but his judgment was respected by few. The fact that he was on one side of an argument was, for many, a good reason to be on the other.⁶⁷²

The problem was not that his abilities were unrecognized. Indeed his prodigious gifts and energy were, in some ways, a handicap to his inclusion in the Government. When Leslie Hoare-Belisha, Chamberlain's Secretary of War, urged him to include Churchill in the Cabinet, Chamberlain replied: "If I take him into the Cabinet he will dominate it. He won't give others the chance of even talking." His pugnacity and rigidity made him exceptionally difficult to work with. His eloquence, interest in a variety

⁶⁷¹ Winston Spencer Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, vol. 1, *The Second World War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), 218-219, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 306, A.J.P. Taylor, "The Statesman," in *Churchill Revised: A Critical Assessment* (New York, NY: The Dial Press, 1969), 32-33.

⁶⁷² Michael Howard, "Review: The End of Churchillmania? Reappraising the Legend," *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 4 (1993): 145.

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of issues, and boundless energy could wear down his Cabinet colleagues and make even a Prime Minister with Chamberlain's control over the Cabinet reluctant to include him.⁶⁷³

Perhaps worst of all, the impulses that led him to his previous mistakes were the same ones that led him to his warnings against Hitler. Even Martin Gilbert, among his most sympathetic biographers, noted: "A single theme linked Churchill's dislike and opposition to the Government's India and defence policies. This was his belief that they represented a weakening of British resolve." Even his rhetoric compounded the problem. Churchill's declaration, long before the Second World War, that "Hitler-ism and all it stands for will, sooner or later, have to be grappled with and finally crushed. It is no use trying to satisfy a tiger by feeding it on cat's meat," seems an insightful critique of appeasement and an accurate assessment of Hitler. Unfortunately, he never said this. What he actually said, on December 12, 1930, was that "*Gandhi-ism* and all it stands for will, sooner or later, have to be grappled with and finally crushed...." When he used such rhetoric about the pacifist leaders of the Indian National Congress, it is hardly surprising that his similar warnings about Hitler and the Nazi Party were discarded as the rantings of an anachronism. The system had filtered Churchill out.⁶⁷⁴

On September 1, 1939 Germany invaded Poland. Churchill's patient rebuilding had left him still politically isolated, but largely restored in the public's eyes. His trenchant critiques of Government policy had been dramatically substantiated. Two days later Chamberlain asked him to rejoin the War Cabinet and become First Lord of the Admiralty once again. The stone that the system had been rejected would become the cornerstone of its defense. The message "Winston is back" went out to every ship in the Fleet. He was, but Neville Chamberlain remained Prime Minister.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁷³ Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 259, Kavanagh, *Crisis, Charisma, and British Political Leadership: Winston Churchill as the Outsider*, 8-9, 30.

⁶⁷⁴ Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 77, James, *Churchill: A Study in Failure, 1900-1939*, 219-220.

⁶⁷⁵ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 409-410, Gilbert, *Churchill*, 623-624, Gilbert, *Winston Churchill: The Wilderness Years*, 245, 267, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 551-552.

From the Admiralty to Number 10

“Winston is back”: First Lord Once Again

Churchill burst upon the scene at the Admiralty with energy and focus. He visited naval installations, sent a barrage of memoranda to various officers, and routinely worked late into the night. Chamberlain’s resistance to rearmament had left the Royal Navy unprepared for war. Churchill did much to make it ready for battle. Britain’s strategy was to plan on a long war and put the economic squeeze on Germany in the hopes that this would cause the downfall of the Nazi regime. This strategy could succeed only if the Royal Navy could protect British lines of communication and successfully blockade Germany. It had only barely been able to do both in the First World War. It would have to do at least as well in the Second.⁶⁷⁶

Germany’s invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 was followed on 17 September by a Soviet invasion as well. By 6 October the Germans and Soviets had gained full control of the country. Three days earlier Lloyd George had urged in Parliament that Britain open negotiations with Germany. When Duff Cooper angrily accused him of giving the Germans an enormous propaganda victory, Lloyd George had a cutting reply. “People call me a defeatist,” he said, “But what I say to them is: ‘Tell me how we can win.’” His critique was fair. Britain had no strategy other than waiting, so the war settled into the quiet period which came to be known as the “Phony War.”⁶⁷⁷

Churchill, of course, was far from inactive during the Phony War. He initially pushed for moving a fleet into the Baltic to cut off German access to Scandinavian resources, but was forced to give up this plan when U-boat pressure on supply routes made it impossible to spare the necessary number of ships. He switched to urging mining the Norwegian port of Narvik to achieve the same goal, but Halifax and the

⁶⁷⁶ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 559-561, Mukunda, “We Cannot Go On: Disruptive Innovation and the First World War Royal Navy.”, David Reynolds, “Churchill in 1940: The Worst and Finest Hour,” in *Churchill*, ed. Robert Blake and William Roger Louis (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993).

⁶⁷⁷ Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 258.

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Foreign Office vetoed this on the grounds that it would interfere with neutral shipping. When the Soviets invaded Finland on November 30 there was a storm of popular support for the Finns in Britain. Churchill was swept up in the ferment. He proposed resupplying them via Norway and Sweden. This would have violated the neutrality of both countries and permanently alienated Stalin, who, despite his alliance with Germany, remained officially neutral. Halifax, determined to minimize the number of Britain's enemies, convinced Chamberlain to veto this idea as well.⁶⁷⁸

Churchill felt no need to confine his attention to his own department and thus often offended his Cabinet colleagues. His biggest misstep came when, during one of a series of speeches meant to rally the public, he described neutral countries as "each hoping the German crocodile would eat his neighbor in the hope of devouring him last." This drew predictably outraged responses. Halifax, enraged, wrote in his diary: "It is incredible that a man in his position could make such gaffes." Churchill was able to repair their relationship with his typical charm, sending Halifax a note in which he said "[a]sking me not to make a speech is like asking a centipede to get along and not put a foot on the ground." But it and similar episodes simply reinforced his image of having questionable judgment.⁶⁷⁹

"In the Name of God, go!": The Fall of Chamberlain

Disaffection with the war effort was quietly building. Churchill's pressure to do something about the supplies Germany was getting from Scandinavia finally bore fruit on March 28 when Chamberlain agreed to mine Norwegian waters. On April 4 Chamberlain declared that Britain's defenses had been vastly strengthened since the beginning of the war, so much so that Hitler had wasted his early advantage and that "one thing is certain: he [Hitler] missed the bus." He would rue that remark.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁸ Martin Kitchen, "Winston Churchill and the Soviet Union During the Second World War," *The Historical Journal* 30, no. 2 (1987): 416, Reynolds, "Churchill in 1940: The Worst and Finest Hour," 244, Andrew Roberts, *The Holy Fox: A Biography of Lord Halifax* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1991), 190-191.

⁶⁷⁹ Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 265, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 189.

⁶⁸⁰ Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 584-585, Gilbert, *Churchill*, 635, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 274-276. Various sources give the date as either April 2, 4, or 5. April 4 is the most commonly cited date.

- THE PATHS OF GLORY -

On April 8 the British began to mine Norwegian waters. The next day Germany invaded Norway and Denmark. German air superiority over Norway made it difficult for the British and French to successfully intervene. Both the British and German navies suffered heavy casualties fighting in Norwegian waters. Allied forces landed in Norway in mid-April but had no clear plans or strategic concept. The Government initially claimed that the fighting was going well but on May 2 Chamberlain had to reveal to the House that British troops in Norway were in retreat and being evacuated and that they were largely outmatched by their German adversaries. The shock was so severe that the Parliament scheduled a debate on Norway for May 7 and 8. The debate would be concluded by a motion to adjourn, and such motions could be used to discuss almost any issue. Normally they passed without a vote, but if one was called for it would become, essentially, a vote of confidence in the Government. Conservatives unhappy with Chamberlain decided to use this motion to attack the Government and reached out to Liberal and Labour leaders for support. The debate would become one of the most dramatic in British history.⁶⁸¹

Churchill, as First Lord of the Admiralty, was the responsible minister for the Norwegian debacle. He came under heavy criticism on the first day. He could have deflected much of this by pointing out, truthfully, that he had been advocating action in Norway for months, only to be delayed time and again by Chamberlain. Having been accepted into the Cabinet, however, his loyalty was absolute, so much so that when one of his children made a joke about Chamberlain at lunch “he scowled at the offender and barked: ‘If you are going to make offensive remarks about my chief, you will have to leave the table. We are united in a great and common cause, and I am not prepared to tolerate such language about the Prime Minister.’” He was scheduled to close out the Government’s case.⁶⁸²

Chamberlain opened it. Entering Parliament at 4 p.m. on May 7 to cries of “Missed the bus!” from the Opposition, he claimed that Britain had inflicted significant losses on Germany. His speech fell

⁶⁸¹ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 573-576, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 277-287.

⁶⁸² Gilbert, *Churchill*, 638, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 268.

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flat and was constantly interrupted by jeers. Late in the evening Amery, who had so embarrassed Churchill during the debates on India, re-entered the picture. Not normally considered a gifted Parliamentary speaker he was nonetheless respected by all, and his opinions were given particular weight because of his long friendship with Chamberlain. He began with a strong critique of Chamberlain's claims of German casualties and declared "We cannot go on as we are. There must be a change." Furthermore, he argued, the Government needed new men in charge, because the qualities that served well in peace were very different from those that led to success in war. "Somehow or other," Amery said, "we must get into the Government men who can match our enemies in fighting spirit, in daring, in resolution and in thirst for victory...." He closed by quoting Oliver Cromwell. Looking straight at the members of the Cabinet he proclaimed, "You have sat too long here for any good you have been doing! Depart, I say, and let us have done with you! In the name of God, go!"⁶⁸³

Amery's speech electrified the House. Rarely had a sitting Prime Minister been subject to such an assault, particularly from his own party. Chamberlain and his supporters were reeling, and their situation became worse when Labour began the debate on the afternoon of the 8th by calling for a vote on the motion of adjournment. Chamberlain, stunned by this attack from an old friend, made a critical mistake. Leaping to his feet as soon as the request for a vote was over he raged:

I do not seek to evade criticism. But I say to my friends in the House [a Parliamentary euphemism for members of his party] – and I *have* friends in the House – that no Government can prosecute a war efficiently unless it has public and parliamentary support. I accept this challenge. I welcome it indeed. At least I shall see who is with us and who is against us, and I call on my friends to support us in the Lobby [the term for a Parliamentary vote] tonight.

Chamberlain's outburst was an irreparable error. Instead of calling for national unity he was, by requesting support from his "friends," treating the debate as a matter of partisan politics.⁶⁸⁴

⁶⁸³ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 578-579, William Roger Louis, *In the Name of God, Go!: Leo Amery and the British Empire in the Age of Churchill* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1992), 121-122, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 290-295.

⁶⁸⁴ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 579, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 296-297.

Lloyd George, who had hated Chamberlain for decades, seized the long-awaited opportunity with the last great speech of his career. After dismissing Chamberlain's appeal to his friends, he proclaimed "the Prime Minister should give an example of sacrifice, because there is nothing which can contribute more to victory in this war than that he should sacrifice the seal of office." He also demonstrated the lightning wit that had helped him dominate the House of Commons as few ever had twenty years earlier. Like others attacking Chamberlain he wished to spare Churchill from the fallout. In part of his speech he tried to exonerate Churchill from blame for the Norwegian defeat and when Churchill rose to insist on accepting responsibility, he flashed back: "[Churchill] must not allow himself to be converted into an air-raid shelter to keep the splinters from hitting his colleagues."⁶⁸⁵

Churchill rose to speak just after 10 p.m. and continued until 11:00. Although he gave a powerful address it was too little too late, and interrupted towards its end by drunken MPs from both parties. The House then voted. Four hundred eighty-six of the six-hundred fifteen MPs voted. Sixty Conservatives deliberately abstained and another forty-one supported Labour against the Government. Chamberlain's margin, normally 213, fell to 81. In peacetime this would have been more than enough. At that moment of crisis it was a devastating rebuke. A pale Chamberlain left the Chamber. That night he invited Churchill to visit him and said that he did not think he would be able to continue as Prime Minister. Although he attempted to remain in office, the only real questions that remained were who would replace him and how long it would take.⁶⁸⁶

The Question of Succession

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom is usually the leader of the largest party in the House of Commons. There was, however, no legal requirement that this be the case. When Lloyd George, a Liberal, became Prime Minister during the First World War, Asquith remained the leader of the Liberal

⁶⁸⁵ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 579-581, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 296-297.

⁶⁸⁶ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 581-582, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 299-304, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 197, Smart, *Neville Chamberlain*, 276-277.

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Party. The overwhelming dominance of the Conservatives in the House, however, meant that the Prime Minister had to be one of the leaders of the Conservative Party. After his devastating rebuff by the House of Commons, Chamberlain had four choices. He could have simply carried on as if nothing had happened, but this was inconceivable under the circumstances. He could have held a General Election, but all parties had agreed not to do so during wartime, even suspending the legal requirement to hold one every five years. His only two real options were, therefore, to attempt to reassemble his Government as a coalition with the Opposition parties, the course Asquith had taken in 1915 that resulted in Churchill's removal from the Admiralty; or he could resign and be replaced by a new Prime Minister. If he resigned the question of the identity of the new Prime Minister would devolve upon King George VI. The Conservative Party at that time had no formal electoral rules, so the King could invite whomever he chose to form a new Government.⁶⁸⁷

In their meeting late at night on May 8 Churchill, loyal to the end, had urged Chamberlain to attempt to remain in office. Even as Conservative dissidents gathered to assure his downfall Chamberlain tried to form a new coalition. On May 9 he reached out to wavering MPs and offered to remove the foremost advocates of appeasement from his Cabinet. He may have offered Amery his pick of Cabinet offices, although Amery's diary includes only a mention of rumors that Chamberlain's advisors were making such an offer. Amery and other Conservative rebels against Chamberlain met and decided that either Halifax or Churchill must replace Chamberlain. The King, most of Labour, many of Chamberlain's other opponents, and virtually all of Chamberlain's supporters preferred Halifax, as their concerns about Churchill's judgment had only been aggravated by Norway. Halifax had a closer relationship with the King than any other significant British politician, something which gave him a major

⁶⁸⁷ Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 263-264.

advantage should he want the job. Halifax was clearly the more likely candidate and the one favored by a majority of Conservatives.⁶⁸⁸

Halifax and Chamberlain met at 10:15 a.m. on May 9. Chamberlain knew that it was highly unlikely that Labour would agree to join a Government that he headed and so told Halifax that he would be willing to serve under him. Halifax, however, was enormously reluctant to become Prime Minister. He told Chamberlain that it would be very difficult to be an effective Prime Minister without a seat in the House of Commons (Halifax, as Viscount Halifax, was seated in the House of Lords and forbidden from joining the Commons). This objection was largely specious. Had Halifax wished to become Prime Minister it would have been a trivial exercise to pass an Act allowing him to speak in the Commons. Under the circumstances there would have been few objections. Halifax did not entirely reject the possibility of becoming Prime Minister. He told Chamberlain that if Labour would only consent to serve under him – a distinct possibility given Labour’s antipathy for both Chamberlain and Churchill – he would reconsider. He wrote in his diary, however, that the prospect of becoming Prime Minister “left me with a bad stomach ache.” After the meeting he told R.A.B. Butler, a Foreign Office official, that while he was certain he could do the job, he thought Churchill needed someone to restrain him, and that he could do that more effectively as Foreign Minister than as Prime Minister.⁶⁸⁹

Churchill, Halifax, and Chamberlain met that afternoon David Margesson, the Conservative Party’s Chief Whip, was also in attendance. Beyond Churchill and Halifax no other candidates had been considered for the Premiership. Halifax entered the meeting knowing that all he had to do to become Prime Minister was say he was willing. Instead he reiterated his desire to stay Foreign Secretary. His motivations are difficult to discern. He was probably driven at least in part by his feeling that Churchill

⁶⁸⁸ Amery, Barnes, and Nicholson, *The Empire at Bay*, 610-613, Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 264-265, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 306-310, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 201-202.

⁶⁸⁹ Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 265-266, Charles McMoran Wilson Baron Moran, *Churchill, Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran: The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), 346-347, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 198-199.

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was far better-suited to being a wartime leader than he was, and that he could exert more control as the power behind the throne. He may also have considered the very real likelihood of a Churchill government quickly collapsing in disarray, a generally accepted possibility. If this had occurred Halifax could almost certainly have stepped into the Premiership without a powerful rival like Churchill in his Cabinet jostling for control. Halifax suggested that Chamberlain recommend Churchill for the position. Churchill agreed that he was more suited to the job.⁶⁹⁰

In Churchill's version of the meeting he describes Chamberlain saying that Churchill's passionate defense of him during the preceding two days' debate might have made Labour unwilling to serve in a Churchill Government. Churchill describes remaining silent in response and that after a prolonged pause in the conversation Halifax spoke to remove himself from consideration for the Premiership. This most uncharacteristic silence may have determined the identity of the next Prime Minister. The night before Brendan Bracken, his longtime supporter, had heard that Churchill had agreed to serve as Halifax's second. He searched London for Churchill and, finally finding him at one in the morning, extracted a promise not to speak first during that day's meeting. Had Churchill who, by his own admission, was rarely anything but loquacious, revealed his willingness to defer to Halifax Chamberlain might well have made one more attempt to persuade Halifax.⁶⁹¹

Chamberlain had not quite given up hope of remaining Prime Minister. After the discussion of the choice between Churchill and Halifax was concluded, Clement Attlee and Arthur Greenwood, the two most important leaders of the Labour Party, joined the meeting. Chamberlain asked them if they would be willing to serve in a coalition Cabinet, either under him or under Halifax or Churchill,

⁶⁹⁰ Churchill erroneously dates the meeting to May 10 and forgets Margesson's attendance in *The Gathering Storm*. Churchill's description of the meeting was written six years after it actually occurred and is substantially more dramatic than Halifax's contemporaneous account.

Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 266, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 584-585, John Lukacs, *Blood, Toil, Tears and Sweat: The Dire Warning* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2008), 39, Olson, *Troublesome Young Men*, 309-310, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 203-207.

⁶⁹¹ Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 267-268, Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 661-662, Moran, *Churchill, Taken from the Diaries of Lord Moran: The Struggle for Survival, 1940-1965*, 346-347.

depending on the preference of the Conservative Party. They replied that they thought it unlikely that Labour would be willing to serve under Chamberlain but they could not say for certain until they had met with the Party's Executive Committee, which was then meeting at Bournemouth.⁶⁹²

Hitler invaded Belgium and the Netherlands the next morning. Chamberlain's initial reaction was to postpone his resignation until the crisis had passed. He still commanded a large majority in the House of Commons and it was not clear that resigning at such a moment was appropriate. At this point, however, the other members of the War Cabinet said that he could not continue. At 5:00 p.m., during the War Cabinet's third meeting of the day, news arrived from Bournemouth that Labour would join a coalition government under either Halifax or Churchill, but not one headed by Chamberlain. Chamberlain told the War Cabinet that he would resign and went to see the King. The King accepted his resignation and suggested that Halifax replace him, but Chamberlain told him that Halifax "was not enthusiastic" and the King, despite his disappointment at this news, realized that Churchill was the only remaining option. He asked Churchill to form a Government at 6 p.m.⁶⁹³

At no point was Churchill the consensus choice. It is doubtful that any of the major players wanted him to become Prime Minister. If Chamberlain had to go, Labour, the King, and most Conservatives preferred Halifax. Even Halifax, whose self-abnegation made Churchill's rise possible, wrote a few days later: "I don't think WSC [Winston Spencer Churchill] will be a very good PM though I think the country will think he gives them a fillip." Churchill gained the Premiership by "default," against the preferences of his own party, because every other available candidate had been discredited or removed themselves and Chamberlain had so mismanaged Parliament that he could no longer continue. Had any number of events turned out differently – from Amery making a less effective speech, to Chamberlain maintaining his equanimity, to Halifax choosing to take command, to Labour refusing to

⁶⁹² Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 266-267, Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 661-662, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 585-586.

⁶⁹³ Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 268-270, Churchill, *The Gathering Storm*, 665, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 586-588.

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serve under its old and bitter adversary – the mistakes that marked Churchill's career would have ensured he never occupied No. 10. He had been filtered out, only to be thrust into the Premiership by a combination of national catastrophe and fluke circumstance at Britain's greatest moment of crisis.⁶⁹⁴

The Moment of Decision: May 1940

Churchill was Prime Minister, but his hold on power was weak. He spent the next two days assembling his Government. Of thirty-six ministerial posts, twenty-one remained unchanged from the Chamberlain Government. On May 13 he made his first speech as Prime Minister to the Parliament. He presented the MPs with no hopeful illusions:

I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat. We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and of suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I can say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us; to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: It is victory, victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.

Churchill had put his stake in the ground. The choice of policy, however, was not solely up to him. His hold on the Conservative Party was uncertain; most Conservatives remained silent and in their seats after his speech even though Labour and Liberal MPs applauded. His War Cabinet included Chamberlain, Halifax, Attlee, and Greenwood. All five would help determine British policy. The key decisions were made in meetings of the War Cabinet on the 26, 27, and 28 of May. In understanding those meetings it is crucial to remember that records of them come from minutes taken by civil servants who minimize the appearance of conflict. The meetings were, almost certainly, heated affairs.⁶⁹⁵

⁶⁹⁴ Blake, "How Churchill Became Prime Minister," 270, 273, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 199, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 421.

⁶⁹⁵ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 646, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 590-591, Ian Kershaw, *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions That Changed the World, 1940-1941* (New York, NY: Penguin Press, 2007), 24, Lukacs, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*, 42-44, John

May 15-25: Prelude

On May 15 the telephone at Churchill's bedside rang just after 7 A.M. On the line was Paul Reynaud, the Prime Minister of France. His first four words conveyed his message: "We have been defeated." He continued, "We are beaten; we have lost the battle." Churchill promised to visit Paris the next day. Later that same day he sent a message to Franklin Roosevelt asking for the loan of 50-60 destroyers. Churchill left for France on the 16th and returned to Britain the next day. While he was there Roosevelt declined, saying that he could not get Congressional approval for such a transfer and it would, in any case, take several weeks to arrange. By May 17 German Army was more than halfway to the English Channel and the French had been effectively defeated.⁶⁹⁶

Three days later Churchill sent another message to Roosevelt. He told Roosevelt that he and his Cabinet would go down fighting under any circumstances but that he could make no promises which would bind his successors if Britain were defeated. Any successor government would have no choice but to make the best deal it could, and such a deal would likely include offering the Royal Navy to Germany as a bargaining chip. This stark warning of the consequences of a British defeat, however, produced no fruitful results from a United States still committed to isolating itself from European wars. By May 21 Sir Alexander Cadogan, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, was writing in his diary that "[a] miracle may save us, otherwise we're done."⁶⁹⁷

On May 22 Churchill flew again to Paris. There he saw that the French Army had already dissolved and the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) was in retreat. Even before his departure orders had already gone out to prepare small boats for a desperate attempt to evacuate it. On May 24 Hitler

Lukacs, *The Duel: Hitler Vs. Churchill: 10 May-31 July 1940* (London, UK: Bodley Head, 1990), 61, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 224.

⁶⁹⁶ Lukacs, *The Duel*, 62-66, 75-76.

⁶⁹⁷ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 648, Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 26, Lukacs, *Blood, Toil, Tears, and Sweat*, 84, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 76, John Lukacs, *Five Days in London: May 1940* (New Haven, CT: Yale Nota Bene, 2001), 73.

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ordered the German forces pursuing the BEF to halt. His motives remain uncertain, but this crucial mistake opened Britain a narrow window through which to evacuate her men.⁶⁹⁸

On May 25 Halifax asked the Italian Ambassador, Giuseppe Bastianini, for a meeting. Halifax raised the possibility of negotiations to settle any outstanding disputes between Italy and the Allies. Bastianini asked if Britain would be interested in expanding the discussions to include “other countries,” meaning, of course, Germany. Halifax replied that Britain “would never be unwilling to consider any proposal made with authority that gave the promise of the establishment of a secure and peaceful Europe.” The British Army along with some remnants of the French Army continued their retreat towards the English Channel, slowly closing on the port of Dunkirk.⁶⁹⁹

May 26-28: The Decision

May 26

Sunday, May 26 began with a War Cabinet meeting at 9 A.M. The early meeting was prompted by the news that Reynaud was making a surprise visit to London that day. Churchill informed the Cabinet that Belgium was about to surrender, that the French were collapsing, and that Britain’s primary goal was now to extricate the BEF from France. He then informed them of the results of a report he had asked the Chiefs of Staff to put together several days earlier on what would happen if France dropped out of the war. The Chiefs had concluded that if the Royal Air Force and Royal Navy could remain in control of the skies over Britain and if the United States increased its support of Britain and eventually entered the war – both very far from certain, or even likely, prospects – Britain could hold on even after France’s surrender.⁷⁰⁰

Halifax spoke next. He informed the Cabinet of the results of his meeting with Bastianini. Churchill countered that Britain should and could never allow Germany to dominate Europe. This was

⁶⁹⁸ Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 39-49, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 728-729.

⁶⁹⁹ Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 92-95, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 212.

⁷⁰⁰ Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 105-108, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 216.

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the first sign of a split between Halifax, who was willing to open negotiations with Hitler in order to salvage something from the wreckage and Churchill, who thought even beginning such negotiations would be disastrous. The debates between the two would form the hinge of Britain's decision. Churchill then met Reynaud for lunch. Reynaud emphasized the hopelessness of France's military situation.⁷⁰¹

The War Cabinet reconvened at 2 P.M. This time the split between Churchill and Halifax came to the fore. As far back as December Halifax had believed that if France surrendered, Britain would be unable to carry on alone. Now he wanted to force Churchill to commit himself. He declared that it was time "to face the fact that it was not so much now a question of imposing a complete defeat upon Germany but of safeguarding the independence of our Empire...." Was Churchill "prepared to discuss terms" if he could be certain that Britain would maintain its independence in any settlement?⁷⁰²

Churchill could not categorically say no. Instead he said he would be happy to escape from the war on such terms, and would even be willing to sacrifice territory to do so. He did not, however, think that the odds of this happening were significant. Chamberlain remained largely silent. They then met with Reynaud. Reynaud's proposal was simple: Britain and France should ask Mussolini to mediate.⁷⁰³

Chamberlain occupied the key middle ground in the War Cabinet. Although he did not know it yet, he was already dying of cancer. But he remained the leader of the Conservative Party and was far more popular with Conservatives than Churchill. When Chamberlain had entered the House of Commons on May 13, after his resignation, he had been greeted by exuberant cheers by the Conservatives even while Churchill, the new Prime Minister, was cheered thinly and mainly by Labour and Liberal MPs. If Chamberlain allied himself with Halifax and both resigned, Churchill's Government would almost certainly have fallen. Replacing it would have been exceptionally difficult, as Attlee, Greenwood, and the Liberals would be unlikely to be willing to serve under one of the men who had just

⁷⁰¹ Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 108-112, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 216.

⁷⁰² Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 33, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 92, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 112-113.

⁷⁰³ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 602, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 92-93, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 113.

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overthrown Churchill. Churchill had already taken steps to improve his relationship with Chamberlain. He had suggested that Chamberlain become leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer until Labour threatened to revolt. He even suggested that Chamberlain and his wife remain in residence in No. 10 Downing Street, an offer which they gratefully accepted.⁷⁰⁴

The War Cabinet met again – for the third time that day – after Reynaud departed. Strikingly the first fifteen minutes of that meeting are not recorded in the minutes, apparently because the discussions were so secret that even the Cabinet Secretary was not allowed to be present. Once the Secretary entered the meeting, Churchill argued that Britain was in a better position than France and that if France could no longer fight, she should surrender on her own instead of dragging Britain into a settlement along with her. Halifax replied that he thought it remained a good idea to allow the French to explore the possibility of a negotiated settlement as Hitler might not offer unacceptable terms. Chamberlain, although still undecided, was leaning towards Halifax. Churchill proposed doing nothing until they knew the results of the attempt to evacuate the British Expeditionary Force from France. Halifax, however, did not allow himself to be diverted. He argued that “if we got to the point of discussing the terms of a general settlement and found that we could obtain terms which did not postulate the destruction of our independence, we would be *foolish* if we did not accept them.”⁷⁰⁵

Churchill apparently did not feel that his hold on the Cabinet was strong enough to reject Halifax’s suggestion outright and agreed that some approach to Mussolini could be made. The War Cabinet asked Halifax to prepare a draft of how they should approach Italy. Churchill also decided to add Archibald Sinclair as a representative of the Liberal Party. This was a sign of just how near-run a thing the discussion was. Sinclair had been Churchill’s second-in-command in France during the First World War and would provide the Prime Minister with a badly needed loyal supporter. That night the news that Belgium would soon surrender arrived in Britain and Hitler ordered his army to once again

⁷⁰⁴ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 587-588, 590-591, 602, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 120-122, Stewart, *Burying Caesar*, 421.

⁷⁰⁵ Lukacs, *The Duel*, 93-94, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 113-117.

advance on the beleaguered BEF, now clustered around Dunkirk. Just before 7:00 that evening the order was issued to begin Operation Dynamo, the desperate plan to use every available vessel, including civilian fishing boats, to bring the men back to Britain.⁷⁰⁶

May 27

The siege of Dunkirk began in the morning as German artillery began to shell ships arriving at the port. The War Cabinet held its first meeting of the day at 11:30 A.M. They began by discussing the situation at Dunkirk, what to tell the rest of the British Empire, and the possibility of American support and sending a asking Roosevelt to address Hitler directly, a message they decided not to send. The Cabinet then broke for lunch and reconvened that afternoon at 4:30.⁷⁰⁷

This second meeting saw Halifax and Churchill's most direct confrontation. It began with a discussion of Halifax's memo detailing his suggestion of how to approach Mussolini. Churchill, supported by Sinclair, argued that any approach was futile. Sinclair argued that if the public learned that the Government was willing to cede British territory in exchange for peace its morale would collapse, and was echoed by Attlee and Greenwood. When Halifax referred again to his discussions with Bastianini, Churchill drew his line in the sand:

[H]e was increasingly oppressed with the futility of the suggested approach to Signor Mussolini, which the latter would certainly regard with contempt...the approach would ruin the integrity of our fighting position in this country...At the moment our prestige in Europe was very low. The only way we could get it back was by showing the world that Germany had not beaten us. If, after two or three months, we could show that we were still unbeaten, our prestige would return. Even if we were beaten, we should be no worse off than we should be if we were now to abandon the struggle. Let us therefore avoid beign dragged down the slippery slope with France...The approach proposed was not only futile, but involved us in a deadly danger.

The heated quality of the discussion is clear even through the filter of the minutes. Chamberlain tried to calm the waters, suggesting that although an approach to Mussolini was unlikely to succeed, they

⁷⁰⁶ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 601-602, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 94, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 116-118, 130, 132, 136-137.

⁷⁰⁷ Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 136-145.

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should continue with it to keep up the hopes of the French, but not make any concrete moves until Roosevelt contacted Mussolini. Churchill replied with one of his characteristically romantic arguments: "If the worst came to the worst, it would not be a bad thing for this country to go down fighting for other countries which had been overcome by the Nazi tyranny."⁷⁰⁸

The problem with such sentiments was that there was no man less likely to be moved by them than Halifax. After protesting that his position was being mischaracterized, he stated that he had "profound differences of view" with Churchill. A day ago Churchill had said he was willing to negotiate if Britain's independence could be assured. Now Churchill seemed to be saying no negotiations under any circumstances. Although Halifax was also skeptical that negotiations would succeed:

[H]e...doubted if he would be able to accept the view now put forward by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister had said that two or three months would show whether we were able to stand up against the air risk. This meant that the future of the country turned on whether the enemy's bombs happened to hit our aircraft factories. He was prepared to take that risk if our independence was at stake; but if it was not at stake he would think it right to accept an offer which would save the country from avoidable disaster.

This was a perfectly accurate summation of Churchill's proposal for delay. The Chiefs of Staff had been explicit that Britain's independence could not be maintained if the Germans were able to gain air superiority, which they would quickly do if their bombing succeeded in destroying British aircraft factories. No one in Europe at the time had any experience with just how difficult it was to destroy an enemy country's industry from the air.⁷⁰⁹

Churchill tried to paper over the argument. He agreed that "[i]f Herr Hitler were willing to make peace on the terms of the restoration of the German colonies and the overlordship of Central Europe, that was one thing. But it was quite unlikely that he would make such an offer." He urged the War Cabinet not to waste its time on a contingency that was likely to never come up. Halifax, however, would not be deterred. Everyone in the War Cabinet knew that the French were on the point of

⁷⁰⁸ Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 38-39, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 146-149.

⁷⁰⁹ Lukacs, *The Duel*, 96, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 149-150, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 220-221.

collapse. Once this happened, he pressed Churchill, “[s]uppose Herr Hitler, being anxious to end the war through knowledge of his own internal weaknesses, offered terms to France and England, would the Prime Minister be prepared to discuss them?” Halifax had escalated their disagreement. There was no more mention of a proxy conversation with Mussolini. Now he wanted to know if there were any circumstances under which Churchill would negotiate. Churchill acknowledged that there were. He was not willing to ask for terms, but if they were offered, he would listen. The Halifax-Churchill seesaw was tipping in Halifax’s favor.⁷¹⁰

The two were very near a critical break. Halifax told Cadogan after the meeting “I can’t work with Winston any longer.” Halifax then asked Churchill to walk with him privately in the garden outside. There is no record of their conversation. Whatever Churchill said, it was not nearly enough to assuage Halifax, who wrote in his diary that night, “I thought Winston talked the most frightful rot, also Greenwood, and after bearing it some time I said exactly what I thought of them, adding that, if that was really their view, and if it came to that point, our ways must separate. . . . I despair when [Churchill] works himself up to a passion of emotion when he ought to make his brain think and reason.” Churchill’s hold on power was far too weak for him to be able to lose Halifax at this moment of crisis. A Halifax resignation threat was supremely dangerous to his Government. The War Cabinet met again at 10:00 that evening, but its discussions focused on the consequences of Belgium’s surrender. As May 27 drew to a close, Halifax seemed to be closer to carrying the Cabinet than Churchill was.⁷¹¹

May 28

Hope for the evacuation of Dunkirk remained slim on the morning of May 28. Cadogan, who attended the morning’s War Cabinet meeting, wrote in his diary that “[p]rospects of the B.E.F. [are] blacker than ever. Awful days!” Most estimates were that no more than 50,000 of the more than

⁷¹⁰ Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 40, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 97, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 151, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 221.

⁷¹¹ Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 41, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 97, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 153-156, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 221-222.

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250,000 soldiers under siege in the French port could possibly be evacuated, perhaps even fewer. Churchill sent a stern memo to senior members of the Government urging them to maintain “a high morale” and show “confidence in our ability and inflexible resolve to continue the war till we have broken the will of the enemy to bring all Europe under his domination.” That morning’s Cabinet meeting again focused on the consequences of Belgium’s surrender.⁷¹²

The War Cabinet reconvened at 4:00 in the afternoon. They knew at this point that Roosevelt, instead of promising assistance, had suggested that if Britain were on the point of surrender it should dispatch the Royal Navy to Canada so it could not be claimed by Germany. Halifax and Churchill were soon at loggerheads once again. Halifax’s argument now was simple and, even in retrospect, has a powerful logic. He urged the War Cabinet “not [to] ignore the fact that we might get better terms before France went out of the war and our aircraft factories were bombed, than in three months time.” Churchill countered that if they began negotiations they would find the terms unacceptable and rejecting them would shatter British morale. Any terms Germany offered would include an end to British rearmament, leaving them at Hitler’s mercy. Britain’s situation might improve, but even if it deteriorated, the terms could be no worse than they would be now. Halifax replied that he “did not see what there was in the French suggestion of trying out the possibilities of mediation which the Prime Minister felt so wrong.” Chamberlain now chimed in to support Halifax. He did not think Britain had anything to lose by saying it would consider reasonable terms, although “the alternative to fighting on nevertheless involved a considerable gamble.” Churchill’s response was perfectly – there is no other word for it – Churchilian: “[N]ations which went down fighting rose again, but those which surrendered tamely were finished.” Greenwood and Attlee then chimed in that they thought the news of negotiations might greatly harm British morale.⁷¹³

⁷¹² Kershaw, *Fateful Choices*, 28, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 174-177.

⁷¹³ Jenkins, *Churchill*, 606, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 98-99, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 180-183, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 224-225.

No decision had been made, but an alliance between Chamberlain and Halifax, particularly if Halifax was willing to resign if he did not get his way, would have been exceptionally difficult to overcome. The meeting broke up so that Churchill could inform the rest of the Cabinet of their discussions. The War Cabinet would reconvene as soon as he was finished.⁷¹⁴

Churchill told the full Cabinet that he had thought carefully over the last two days as to whether Britain should enter negotiations with Hitler. He believed that the Germans would demand that Britain become a “slave state” ruled by Nazi sympathizers. He offered the Cabinet no illusions about Britain’s desperate straits. He believed, however, that she still had “immense reserves and advantages” which had yet to be tapped. He concluded: “If this long island story of ours is to end at last, let it end only when each one of us lies choking in his own blood upon the ground.” Given the gravity of the situation it is hardly surprising that few were left unmoved. The Cabinet erupted in cheers with many of its members running up to Churchill, shouting and patting him on the back. Churchill himself wrote that “[t]here was no doubt that had I at this juncture faltered at all in leading the nation I should have been hurled out of office. I am sure that every Minister was ready to be killed quite soon, and have all his family and possessions destroyed, rather than give in.” It is not necessary to share Churchill’s certainty to believe that *his* belief in their resolve was a crucial factor in the decisions made in the next hour.⁷¹⁵

It is unclear if Churchill planned the results of his address but there is no doubt he was re-energized and knew how use them. The War Cabinet reconvened less than an hour later. He told the other members that the Cabinet “had expressed the greatest satisfaction when he told them there was no chance of our giving up the struggle. He did not remember having ever before heard a gathering of

⁷¹⁴ Roberts argues that at this point Halifax had already been defeated; but his argument is implausible at best, and does not comport with Churchill’s actions in addressing the full Cabinet. Jenkins’ and Lukacs’ interpretation is clearly superior. The exact hour at which it was made is, of course, irrelevant in terms of testing LFT. Jenkins, *Churchill*, 607, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 99, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 183, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 224-225.

⁷¹⁵ Churchill’s exact words are unrecorded – the phrase is from the contemporaneous notes of an attendee. To my ear, at least, it sounds over-the-top enough to be perfectly Churchillian.

Winston Spencer Churchill, *Their Finest Hour*, vol. 2, *The Second World War* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), 99-100, Gilbert, *Churchill*, 651, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 607-608, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 1-5.

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persons occupying high places in political life express themselves so emphatically.” Chamberlain at last rallied firmly to his side. Halifax had no choice but to accede. He briefly raised the possibility of asking Roosevelt to intervene with Mussolini but once this was dismissed by Churchill he acquiesced to the decision of the full Cabinet. Britain would not negotiate with Hitler.⁷¹⁶

May 29-June 4: Aftermath

The next day, May 29, the news from Dunkirk was finally good. Over the course of the day 47,000 men were evacuated. The stream of rescued soldiers would continue, with 53,800 on May 31, 68,000 on May 31, and 64,400 on June 1. After that, by Churchill’s direct order, French troops were also pulled out. By June 4 338,226 soldiers had been rescued including more than 125,000 French ones. The Cabinet, and all of Britain, was buoyed by what was, by any standard, nothing short of a miracle. A week earlier the schedule had been set for Churchill to report to the House of Commons on June 4. The Parliament did not know – no one would know until many years later – that the ringing declaration he made to them could very easily have been very different. He told them that he had “feared it would be my lot to announce the greatest military disaster in our long history.” He warned them not to confuse what happened at Dunkirk with a victory, for “[w]ars are not won by evacuations.” For all this, his peroration would, by itself, forever secure his reputation as a great orator:

Even though large tracts of Europe and many old and famous States have fallen or may fall into the grip of the Gestapo and all the odious apparatus of Nazi rule, we shall not flag or fail.

We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and strength in the air, we shall defend our island, whatever the cost may be.

We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.

And even if, which I do not for a moment believe, this island or a large part of it were subjugated and starving, the Empire beyond the seas, armed and guarded by the British

⁷¹⁶ Gilbert, *Churchill*, 651-652, Jenkins, *Churchill*, 609, Lukacs, *The Duel*, 100, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 185-186, Roberts, *The Holy Fox*, 225-226.

Fleet, would carry on the struggle until, in God's good time, the New World, with all its power and might, steps forth to the rescue and the liberation of the Old.

Conclusion

It may seem initially odd to deem Winston Churchill, who could plausibly be described as the most experienced Prime Minister in British history, as an Unfiltered Potential Outlier. A close examination of his career, however, reveals that this is exactly the case. The British system had examined Churchill and decided that it did not want him to become Prime Minister. It took perhaps the most extraordinary crisis in British history to reverse that decision and, even then, he could very easily have been nothing more than Halifax's second-in-command.

It also seems clear that the reasons for keeping Churchill out of power were good ones. He did make critical mistakes as First Lord of the Admiralty, as War Minister, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer, among others. He did switch parties twice, both times in a way easily interpreted as favoring personal ambition over principle. He did, while in the wilderness, make mistake after mistake in judgment and use tactics in opposition so vicious that they alienated almost every other Member of Parliament. A politician with less than his extraordinary talent, energy, and determination could not have recovered from any one of those missteps, much less the combination of all of them.

Furthermore, the qualities that had almost prevented him from becoming Prime Minister did not vanish once he was in power and, sometimes, could do enormous harm. Perhaps the most striking example of this comes in his reaction to the Bengal Famine while he was Prime Minister. His hostility towards India and Indians nearly consigned him forever to the backbenches, and it had grave consequences once he was in power.

In 1943 a famine broke out in the state of Bengal in north-east India. It was caused by a combination of a cyclone, torrential rain, and a fungus disease. The Japanese occupation of Burma also cut off rice imports. This drop in supply led to a massive increase in the price of food, one which was

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greatly aggravated by the massive inflationary pressures put on the Indian economy by Britain's wartime demands. The resulting famine cost at least the lives of 3-4 million people in the state of Bengal (or more than one hundred times the number of Londoners killed during the Blitz.)⁷¹⁷

India's British rulers were not wholly unaware of their responsibility to bring in food to alleviate the suffering that, after all, they had helped cause. Churchill had made Amery Secretary of State for India and Burma. When Amery asked Churchill to release food stocks to India to relieve the famine his response was a telegram inquiring why Gandhi had not yet died. He asked Roosevelt for help tentatively, with great reluctance, and after long delay. Lord Louis Mountbatten, who was in command of British forces in South-East Asia, committed 10% of his available shipping to bringing food relief to India on his own initiative. Churchill ordered him to stop and reduced the shipping allocated to his command by 10%. In September 1943 when Amery begged the Cabinet to send food to India he instead allocated it to Greece because "the starvation of anyhow under-fed Bengalis is less serious than sturdy Greeks, at any rate from the war point of view...." In November he said there was no point in sending additional assistance when "Indians are breeding like rabbits." All in all his behavior was so horrendous that Amery – his longtime friend and the man more responsible than any other for making him Prime Minister – told him "that [Amery] didn't see much difference between his outlook and Hitler's...." Certainly ships and supplies were desperately needed for the war effort, but this cannot begin to justify Churchill's behavior. His actions are generally glossed over by his biographers – the famine is not even mentioned by Jenkins or Gilbert in their one-volume biographies – but surely are a stain on his, and Britain's, honor of enormous magnitude. Churchill did not cause the famine, but he did much to impede efforts to end it and seems to have felt no desire at all to relieve the suffering.⁷¹⁸

⁷¹⁷ Amartya Sen, *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlement and Deprivation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1982), 52-85.

⁷¹⁸ Amery, Barnes, and Nicholson, *The Empire at Bay*, 943, 950, 993, Gopal, "Churchill and India," 465-466, Herman, *Gandhi & Churchill*, 513, Pankaj Mishra, "Exit Wounds: The Legacy of Indian Partition," *The New Yorker*, August 13 2007.

Yet Churchill's place in history is secure against any revision. Had Halifax become Prime Minister in 1940, or Chamberlain managed to stay on the job, it seems likely that Britain would have opened negotiations to end the war. Halifax's arguments, after all, even with the benefit of hindsight, seem far more rational than Churchill's. Germany had absorbed Austria and Czechoslovakia and crushed Poland, Denmark, Norway, and France with ease. Italy and the Soviet Union were her allies. The United States refused to involve itself. Britain stood alone. Exploring the possibility of an acceptable settlement with Hitler in 1940 – years before the extent of his evil and madness had been revealed – would have seemed eminently advisable to most people.

The consequences, had Britain done so, cannot be known for certain; it nevertheless seems probable that they would have been severe. Once negotiations had begun they could not easily have been ended. They certainly could not have been kept secret. The morale of the British public could hardly be expected to simply shrug off the news that a path to ending the war had been opened and then closed. At the least such negotiations would have been an enormous wild card and presented Hitler with an opportunity for yet another of his diplomatic coups, an opportunity well-lubricated by the dramatically demonstrated capabilities of German arms. The consequences of a British decision to exit the war in 1940, on whatever terms, can hardly have been anything but dire.⁷¹⁹

Churchill's status as an Outlier is apparent to even the most superficial examination. His energy, his talents, his indomitable courage, his rhetorical abilities, his occasional rigidity and inflexibility, all of them are enormously unlike the vast majority of politicians. The fact that he is Unfiltered, and his very high Impact once in office, are strong support for Leader Filtration Theory.

Even more strikingly, there seems little doubt that many of the *same* qualities that impeded his rise allowed him to rise to the moment. The stubborn refusal to negotiate under pressure that made him reject negotiations with Gandhi made him reject them with Hitler as well. The willingness to buck

⁷¹⁹ P. M. H. Bell, *A Certain Eventuality: Britain and the Fall of France* (London, UK: Saxon House, 1974), 48, Lukacs, *Five Days in London*, 152-153.

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mass opinion he showed during the Abdication crisis also sustained him during his long struggle to persuade Britain to rearm and abandon appeasement. The seemingly infinite energy and interference in every department of the government that so alienated his Cabinet colleagues served him well as a wartime Prime Minister.⁷²⁰ The grandiloquent rhetoric that seemed ludicrous when applied to the India Bill rallied the British people at their moment of greatest danger as nothing else could have. Winston Churchill did nothing by halves. It is therefore not surprising that his failures were every bit as epic as his triumphs. His signal achievement was not simply proclaiming that Britain “shall never surrender.” It was, at the moment of crisis, making that proclamation stick. There may have been no other man in Britain who could have done so. For being that one man, Winston Churchill deserves his glory.

⁷²⁰ Cohen, *Supreme Command*, 95-132.

CHAPTER 10 – LEADER FILTRATION THEORY IN A BROADER WORLD

The previous chapters developed Leader Filtration Theory (LFT) and demonstrated its power in democratic politics. LFT's applicability, however, should extend much further. The dynamics it identifies should act, to a greater or lesser extent, in any situation in which choices must be made among several options with uncertain outcomes that can be subjected to varying levels of scrutiny. This chapter explores LFT's power in a variety of contexts by examining an array of leaders generally believed to have had very large impacts. It finds support for LFT in a variety of circumstances. Dictators, soldiers, corporate chief executives, and even scientists all experience dynamics very similar to those described by LFT. When someone in any of those roles finds a way to bypass filtration they can have an extraordinarily large impact. They can revolutionize scientific theories, save or destroy a company, transform a military, or even change the history of the world.

The chapter begins by examining the rise to power of four of history's most consequential political leaders: Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and Mao. Demonstrating that their particular individual characteristics had a large impact on history is superfluous. Few would argue otherwise. This suggests that their path to becoming head of government should show a very low degree of filtration.

It will then examine a military leader: Sir Jackie Fisher, who was First Sea Lord of the Royal Navy before and during the first years of the First World War. Fisher is generally credited with transforming naval warfare through a wave of innovations he pioneered.

It then profiles two modern business leaders: Jamie Dimon of JPMorganChase and Albert Dunlap of Sunbeam. Each was brought in from outside by a board of directors looking to transform the performance of their company. Both did so, but with dramatically opposite effects. One made his company the world's preeminent financial company while the other destroyed it.

Finally, the chapter examines the implications of LFT for scientific research. It will look at the problem of how science deals with unconventional ideas by focusing on cancer research and the Boston surgeon Judah Folkman, who revolutionized the understanding of tumors despite the rejection of his ideas by the cancer research establishment.

The Dictators: Napoleon, Hitler, Stalin, and Mao

Democratic leaders can, under the right circumstances, have an enormous impact on history. Their ability to do so is at least somewhat constrained, however, precisely by the fact that they lead democracies. Most states, however, have been governed by single individuals who came to power in a variety of ways, from inheritance to coups to rising through bureaucracies to leading revolutionary movements. Profiled below are four examples of such men, all of whom have had an influence on history so titanic that demonstrating that their individual characteristics had a high impact is pointless. Their eras cannot be understood without recourse to their biographies. The profiles focus not on their impact once in power but on the extent to which they were filtered as they sought it. All four should be classified as Unfiltered and therefore Potential Outliers.

Napoleon

Napoleon Bonaparte may be the most extreme Outlier in history. Perhaps the easiest way to describe his impact is to point out that Will and Ariel Durant's legendary 11-volume series, *The Story of Civilization*, concludes with a volume entitled, simply, *The Age of Napoleon*.⁷²¹ The Second World War is unimaginable without Hitler, but it does not bear his name. The world-spanning series of conflicts that ushered in the nineteenth century are known, simply, as the Napoleonic Wars. Of his military abilities, the assessment of Sir Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, the commander who finally defeated him at

⁷²¹ Will Durant and Ariel Durant, *The Age of Napoleon: A History of European Civilization from 1789 to 1815*, 11 vols., vol. 11, *The Story of Civilization* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1975).

Waterloo says it best. When he was asked to identify the greatest soldier of his time, Wellington replied: "In this age, in past ages, in any age, Napoleon. [emphasis in original]"⁷²²

Describing Napoleon's rise to power as meteoric vastly understates both its speed and its brilliance. He was born on August 15, 1769 in Corsica, a year after the island had been transferred to French control. Before his tenth birthday he was sent to attend a school for military cadets at Brienne, France. He hoped to enter the navy but had not spent enough time at Brienne to meet the entrance requirements. Instead he opted for the artillery, the only other branch of the French military in which promotions were based on merit. In 1784 he entered the *École Militaire* in Paris. He graduated in 1785 and was commissioned a *sous-lieutenant* of artillery. He spent the next two years on leave in Corsica. On July 14, 1789 the French Revolution began and opened his path to power.⁷²³

In 1791 Napoleon was promoted and he, and the rest of the Army, for the first time swore allegiance to the National Assembly instead of the King. In 1792 he was promoted to captain of artillery. He was only twenty-two and had not yet seen any action in the field. In 1793 he was dispatched to Toulon. Soon after he arrived the city was handed over to the British by supporters of the French Royal Family. Napoleon was appointed to command the French artillery besieging the city. The siege took months but ended in victory for the French revolutionary forces, and although he had officially been only an artillery advisor to a series of French commanders, Napoleon was given credit as the architect of the victory and was promoted to brigadier general in 1794.⁷²⁴

Napoleon began to develop plans to expel Austrian forces from Italy. He proposed them to the Committee of Public Safety, which had taken control of France after the Revolution. In the process he

⁷²² Roberts, *Napoleon & Wellington*, 272.

Wellington, a man of no small ego, left unstated the logical question: If Napoleon was the greatest soldier of all time, what did that say about the man who beat him?

⁷²³ David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon: The Mind and Method of History's Greatest General* (New York, NY: Scribner, 1966), 4-11, Philip G. Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 1-52, Roberts, *Napoleon & Wellington*, xvi.

⁷²⁴ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 15-24, Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 80-81, 97-98, 133-145, Roberts, *Napoleon & Wellington*, xvi, xviii.

Leader Filtration Theory in a Broader World

became affiliated with the most radical wing of the Committee, which was led by Maximillian Robespierre, the head of the Committee. When Robespierre was overthrown Napoleon was briefly arrested, but released after two weeks. In September 1795 shifts within the Committee led to Napoleon's being relieved of command. His career was rescued by a rebellion in Paris. Napoleon was recalled to command troops protecting the government and used artillery to smash a rioting crowd, killing at least 200 people. He was promoted by the thankful government. By the end of October he was commander in chief of the Army of the Interior, the most influential post in the French army.⁷²⁵

In March 1796 Napoleon convinced the Committee to put him in charge of the French Army in Italy. Its members agreed in part due to their belief that Napoleon had no political interests. He had never before commanded even a division in battle. He had never led an army. He had, in fact, graduated from the *École Militaire* only ten years earlier. Yet when he arrived in Italy in March 1796 he assumed command of a French force that had been essentially stalemated and led them to a dazzling series of victories. By October of 1797 he had won eight major battles against the Austrian forces, taken Milan and Venice, and extracted a peace treaty from the Austrians that made France the dominant power in Italy. Napoleon, by virtue of his victories, was now one of the most important men in Revolutionary France.⁷²⁶

Napoleon's Italian campaign left Britain as the only nation still at war with France. When he returned to Paris he was appointed to command the Army of England, which was meant to invade Britain. Napoleon, however, believed that such a campaign was impractical and instead suggested a French invasion of Egypt. Napoleon landed his army in Egypt and took Alexandria and Cairo. The British Admiral Horatio Nelson, however, won the first of his dazzling naval victories in the battle of Aboukir Bay. He smashed the French Fleet that was supporting Napoleon's campaign and cut off his

⁷²⁵ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 29-40, Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 145-155, 171-177.

⁷²⁶ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 41-130, Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 178-183, 196-316.

communications with Paris. In May Napoleon abandoned his campaign and in August he abandoned his army, returning to France October 1799 without even asking for permission from his government.⁷²⁷

Despite the Egyptian fiasco, Napoleon's return to France was met by spontaneous demonstrations of joy from the population. He found a country at war with most of Europe and a government that had lost all its standing with the people. Coups were already being plotted and his family had played an active role in preparing the way for Napoleon while he was in Egypt. The coup was launched – with Napoleon as its principal member – less than a month after he returned from Egypt. Napoleon made sure that the military played the leading role in the coup, quickly eclipsing the civilian plotters. He had 7,000 soldiers in the city who were devoted to him and this gave him a powerbase that none of them could match. Napoleon was named First Consul. He was the most powerful man in France, and one of the most powerful in the world. He was only thirty.⁷²⁸

Napoleon's first significant command was in 1796 in Italy. He spent most of his time after that in either Italy or the Middle East, largely depriving French elites of the chance to evaluate him based on personal contact. Three years after he took command in Italy he was the ruler of France. He gained power in a country whose government had been thrown into chaos by not just one but multiple regime changes in only a few years. It is difficult to imagine how Napoleon could have been any less filtered than he was. His unparalleled importance to European history for the next sixteen years – surely no individual has ever played so dominant a role for so long a time – thus stands as strong supporting evidence for Leader Filtration Theory.

Adolf Hitler

Arguing for the particular role of Adolf Hitler's individual peculiarities in history is, of course, a needless exercise. The beliefs and psychological disorders of a single individual have surely never played

⁷²⁷ Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon*, 205-249, Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 335-446, Edgar Vincent, *Nelson: Love & Fame* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 259-276.

⁷²⁸ Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power*, 449-504.

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a larger role than they did in Germany from 1933 to 1945. The very magnitude of his madness however, makes his case particularly interesting from the perspective of LFT. Surely few Germans, whatever their opinions on the Holocaust, would have chosen a leader who cast them into a simultaneous war against Britain, the Soviet Union, *and* the United States, and whose military mismanagement helped destroy whatever hope of victory Germany might have had against such overwhelming odds. Yet, at least in retrospect, Hitler's pathologies seem so comprehensive that it is hard to believe that they could have been missed. Some of this may simply be the product of the natural tendency to use knowledge of how events actually turned out to interpret historical data. Nassim Taleb pointed out that William Shirer's *Berlin Diary* shows that even *after* Hitler became Chancellor, an observer as acute as Shirer had little inkling of the impending catastrophe.⁷²⁹ A brief examination of Hitler's rise to power shows that Hitler, just as LFT predicts, was exposed to little filtration before taking power.

Hitler was born on April 20, 1889 in Austria-Hungary, the fourth of six children. His father was an illegitimate Austrian farmer named Alois Schicklgruber who changed his name, thirteen years before his son's birth, to Hitler. He attended Catholic school as a child, then a technical high school where his father sent him despite his desire to become an artist. He generally did quite poorly in every school he attended. His father died in 1903, leaving Hitler's family with a comfortable income. In 1905 he left school and spent the next two years being supported by his mother in relative luxury with no job and no clear ambitions. In 1907 he applied to the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts and was rejected. Soon afterwards his mother died. He returned to Vienna and remained there until 1913, supporting himself on his scanty earnings as a painter. In 1913 he received his full inheritance from his father's estate and moved to Munich, where he lived for fifteen months, again supporting himself as a painter.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁹ Taleb, *The Black Swan*.

⁷³⁰ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936: Hubris* (London, UK: Allen Lane, 1998), 1-69, 81-87, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 3-28.

When the First World War began Hitler volunteered to serve in the Bavarian Army and eventually became a corporal. He was fanatically dedicated to the German cause, was wounded once by artillery and once by mustard gas, and received the Iron Cross, First Class, a distinction rarely awarded to a soldier with his low rank. Germany's defeat and the subsequent dissolution of its monarchy were devastating to him but, without a career or potential for one, he was able to avoid being demobilized until March 1920. He returned to Munich when the war ended and began to get involved in politics. He joined the German Workers Party in 1919 and discovered that in the political ferment of post-war Munich he could electrify beerhalls with his speeches. He quickly became the public face of the party and its only member who could draw crowds. In July 1921 he became *Führer* of the renamed National Socialist (Nazi) German Workers' Party.⁷³¹

Over the next three years Hitler became one of the major figures in the Munich political scene. In 1924 he launched the Munich "Beer Hall Putsch," an abortive attempt to overthrow the Bavarian government. The police easily put down the insurrection. Hitler was arrested and put on trial for treason. The presiding judge was enormously sympathetic to him and his speeches during his trial made him a popular national figure. He was sentenced to five years in prison, but was given every possible privilege while in jail, where he wrote much of his autobiography, *Mein Kampf*. He spent only thirteen months in prison and was released in December 1925.⁷³²

Starting with his imprisonment and for the four years after he was released, Hitler solidified his control over his party and made himself the leader of the German radical right. Although his and the Nazi Party's popularity increased steadily – with more than 100,000 Germans joining the Party by late 1928 – he remained largely peripheral to German politics until October 1929. In that month two critical

⁷³¹ Robert Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler: The Age of Social Catastrophe* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 91-101, Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 89-165, R. J. Overy, *The Dictators: Hitler's Germany and Stalin's Russia* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., 2004), 15-16, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 29-51.

⁷³² Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler*, 110-123, Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 185-239, Overy, *The Dictators*, 2-3, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 52-90.

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events paved the way for Hitler's rise to power. First, Gustav Streseman, the most respected politician in Germany, died of a heart attack. Three weeks later the New York stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression. The combination created a crisis of legitimacy for the German regime that would eventually allow Hitler to destroy it.⁷³³

The German government was deadlocked leading into the election of 1930. The Nazi Party capitalized on this by portraying itself as above sectional interests. In the 1928 elections for the Reichstag, the German Parliament, it had gotten only 2.6 percent of the vote. In 1930 it won 18.3 percent and was suddenly the second largest party in the Reichstag.⁷³⁴

In 1932 Hitler ran against Paul von Hindenburg, the incumbent President, in the Presidential elections. The Presidency of the Weimar Republic was a largely but not entirely ceremonial position whose most important power was the ability to choose which party leader should become Chancellor, the head of government. Hindenburg was Germany's foremost hero of the First World War and widely regarded as being above politics. Hitler did not expect to win. The election had two rounds. He won 30 percent of the vote in the first round, coming in second, and 37 percent in the second. Hindenburg was comfortably re-elected, but Hitler ratified his position as Germany's second-most popular politician. Nazi paramilitaries were, at this point, engaging in open fighting with Communists. Later in 1932 the Nazis scored a limited victory in another set of Reichstag elections, picking up 37.4 percent of the vote and becoming the largest party in the Reichstag. This was, however, something of a setback, as they had not significantly improved their performance from the Presidential election. Hitler demanded that he be made Chancellor as head of the largest party in the Reichstag. Hindenburg, however, categorically refused to make Hitler Chancellor.⁷³⁵

⁷³³ Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 259-311, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 117-135.

⁷³⁴ Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 333-334.

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*, 360-374, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 152-164.

Yet another round of elections was set for November 6. These would be the last fully free elections held in Germany until after the Second World War, and they were a significant setback for Hitler. Turnout plunged and the Nazi share of the vote dropped to 33.1 percent. Hindenburg again refused to make Hitler Chancellor. The Reichstag was so badly divided, however, that it proved impossible to form a government without Nazi participation, and Hitler refused to participate unless he were made Chancellor. Leading conservative members of the Reichstag agreed that they would be willing to serve in a government under Hitler so long as most other major posts were filled by non-Nazis, believing that this would keep him under control. Given this, the increasingly weak Hindenburg finally consented. Hitler was sworn in on January 30, 1933. One year earlier no one outside the most dedicated ranks of the Nazi party would have considered it even a possibility.⁷³⁶

The term Unfiltered seems grossly insufficient to describe Hitler's path to power. Far from having a significant career in political office before becoming Chancellor, Hitler *was not even a German citizen* until 1932.⁷³⁷ This extremely telegraphic summary of his pre-Chancellor career cannot begin to cover all of the different ways in which his rise might have been derailed, but they include a real prison sentence after his attempted coup in Munich or the other parties in the Reichstag deciding to form a coalition in order to keep the Nazis from power, both obvious possibilities. Many German elites – as Hindenburg's repeated refusals to elevate Hitler make clear – considered him someone whose opinions and actions made him completely unacceptable as a national leader. Given the chaos overtaking the Weimar Republic, it does not seem entirely unreasonable for them to have convinced themselves that he could be contained by a buffer of more reasonable German ministers, particularly as the last elections of 1932 seemed to signal that his popularity was slipping. They had no opportunity to observe how he would handle the power of the government. He had only even been a major figure in German politics for three years. He had never held a political office. Had they known him better, it seems at

⁷³⁶ Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 386-423, Shirer, *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, 164-187.

⁷³⁷ Kershaw, *Hitler: 1889-1936*, 362.

least plausible that they would have realized the true depth of his madness and filtered him out of the system. Instead, desperate to form a government, they turned to the Unfiltered Outlier and, unknowing, cast Europe into the abyss.

Joseph Stalin

The man born Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhughashvili, who would name himself Stalin, ruled the largest nation on Earth in peace and war for 29 years. Robert Conquest, the historian who first realized the extent of the massacres he unleashed on the Soviet Union, concluded that his regime killed *at least* 15 million of its own citizens.⁷³⁸ In the twentieth century only two other people – the men profiled immediately before and after him in this chapter – can claim responsibility for murder on such a scale. Like them, he was an Unfiltered leader whose unique traits made an indelible mark on history.

Stalin was born in December of either 1878 or 1879 in the town of Gori, Georgia. His father was a cobbler and almost certainly abused his son. He first attended a church school where he received good grades but took six years to finish a four-year course of study. He contracted smallpox as a child, leaving his face permanently scarred, and his left arm was crippled by blood poisoning. He left Gori in July 1894 and attended the Tiflis Theological Seminary, the costs for which were partly defrayed by a stipend he won. The Seminary was the foremost academic institution in Georgia. By 1896 or 1897 he was describing himself as a Marxist. In 1899 he was expelled for failing to take his exams, something he may have done to allow himself to exit the Seminary and begin life as a Marxist revolutionary.⁷³⁹

Stalin joined the Tiflis Social Democrats but alienated them enough that by the end of 1901 they had expelled him from the Party. He moved to the Georgian city of Batun and continued to agitate against the government. In April 1902 he was arrested, held in prison for eighteen months, then

⁷³⁸ Robert Conquest, *The Great Terror: A Reassessment* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008), xvi.

⁷³⁹ The exact date of Stalin's birth, and even the year, is a matter of considerable dispute.

Robert Conquest, *Stalin: Breaker of Nations* (New York, NY: Viking, 1991), 2-26, Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler*, 131-133, Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (New York, NY: Knopf, 2004), 25-28.

sentenced to three years in Siberia. He escaped in January 1904, however, and returned to Tiflis. He soon became relatively well known in Georgian Social Democrat circles, but his constant rudeness and crudity offended many of his peers. Nevertheless, in December 1905 he was a delegate to a significant party meeting for the first time, and in April 1906 attended the Fourth Party Congress in Stockholm as a Bolshevik delegate. In 1907 he was again expelled by the Social Democrats, this time for his involvement in “expropriations” – the party term for armed robberies. He moved to Baku in Azerbaijan where he organized a Bolshevik committee. In 1908 he was arrested once again and sentenced to two years exile in the Vologda Province. He escaped in June 1909 and returned to Baku, only to be re-arrested in 1910. In December of that year he wrote a letter to Lenin which got his attention. Stalin was released in June 1911, but was soon re-arrested and exiled to Vologda once again in December 1911. In January 1912 Lenin organized a Bolshevik Central Committee and named Stalin to it.⁷⁴⁰

Stalin escaped from prison yet again in March 1912 and made his way to St. Petersburg, where he became a significant figure among the Bolsheviks there by virtue of his membership on the Central Committee. He was re-arrested in May 1912 and sentenced to three years exile in Siberia. He escaped that summer. That winter he crossed the border into Austria and met Lenin for the first time. In May 1913 he was arrested *again* and exiled once again to Siberia. When the Czar was overthrown in February 1917, however, he left Siberia once again.⁷⁴¹

Stalin arrived in the city of Petrograd in March. The Bolsheviks Russian Bureau was assembled there and controlling the Party. Stalin, despite his position as a member of the Central Committee, was given only a consultative vote, “in view of certain personal characteristics.” Despite his senior position in the party, those in a position to know Stalin clearly did not trust him with power, even in the midst of the Russian Revolution. This suggests there were “very strong reservations among the Bolsheviks about

⁷⁴⁰ Conquest, *Stalin*, 27-30, 35-46, Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler*, 136-137.

Czarist prison camps in Siberia were generally loosely guarded at best and rarely punished those who attempted to escape, explaining Stalin’s multiple escapes and returns. Stalin’s prison camps were not so humane.

⁷⁴¹ Conquest, *Stalin*, 47-57.

him and his attitudes, methods and intentions.” A day later, however, this decision was reversed and Stalin took a position as a full member of the Russian Bureau.⁷⁴²

The Seventh Party Conference met in April. Stalin for the first time took the role of one of Lenin’s chief lieutenants and was elected to the new Central Committee. The Provisional Government which had replaced the Czars cracked down on the Bolsheviks, forcing many to go into hiding and leaving Stalin as the leading figure on the party’s political side. In October the Bolsheviks seized power but Stalin – for reasons that remain unclear – was largely uninvolved. When Lenin announced the creation of the Soviet government, Stalin’s only office was as People’s Commissar for Nationalities, the fifteenth and last office in Lenin’s list. In March, as German forces threatened the city of Petrograd, the capital was transferred to Moscow. Lenin, however, forced the Central Committee to accept German peace terms, stripping Russia of much of its western territories, but leaving the Bolsheviks in control of much of the country. Opponents of the Bolsheviks coalesced under the rubric “White Russians” and fought them for control of Russia.⁷⁴³

In June 1918 Stalin was made Director General of Food Supplies in the south of Russia, where he was sent to deal with the food shortages caused by the Bolsheviks’ “War Communism.” While he was there White Russian forces approached his area. Stalin attempted to take control of the regional war effort, explicitly superseding the authority of Leon Trotsky, whom Lenin had placed in command. He exceeded his authority so completely that Lenin recalled him to Moscow, but he did impress Lenin by showing himself capable of decisive independent action. In 1919 and 1920 he played a significant, but in no way a leading, part in the Bolshevik’s war effort, and in April 1920 he was relieved, at his own request, from military duties.⁷⁴⁴

⁷⁴² *Ibid.*, 58-59.

⁷⁴³ *Ibid.*, 64-75.

⁷⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 77-91, Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin*, 32-34.

Despite his mixed record, Stalin remained in Lenin's inner circle at least in part because Lenin had very few effective administrators available. The upper ranks of the Bolsheviks were remarkably thin of managerial talent. Only a few years earlier they had been a tiny Russian sect with no political prospects. They had been abruptly elevated to control over the largest nation in the world, were engaged in a desperate civil war, and were attempting to impose socialism on the population as a whole, even though as late as 1920 there were no more than 300,000 Party members. Despite all these handicaps the Bolsheviks defeated the White Russians by November 1920.⁷⁴⁵

Stalin and Lenin drew steadily closer from 1921 to 1923, with Trotsky as Stalin's main rival for the position of Lenin's successor. In April 1922 Lenin appointed Stalin General Secretary of the Central Committee. Lenin had his first stroke a month later. Lenin and Stalin differed on the autonomy they wished to grant the non-Russian republics in the USSR. Lenin wished to display sensitivity to the minority nationalities while Stalin wished to subordinate them entirely to Russia. When Lenin, weakened by more strokes, wrote a letter to Trotsky congratulating him on a diplomatic victory, Stalin called Lenin's wife, Krupskaya, and abused her crudely, including apparently calling her a "syphilitic whore." A few days later Lenin dictated his "Testament" in which he expressed his thoughts on the future leadership of the Party, strongly praising Trotsky and expressing reservations about Stalin. In January he added a postscript in which he suggested removing Stalin from his position as General Secretary because of his character defects. The Testament was given to Krupskaya in a sealed envelope to be opened only upon his death. In March Lenin learned of Stalin's abuse of Krupskaya and wrote him a letter demanding that he apologize. Before anything could come of this, however, Lenin had his final, and completely incapacitating, stroke. There is little doubt that, had it not been for this final stroke, Lenin would have removed Stalin from power.⁷⁴⁶

⁷⁴⁵ Conquest, *Stalin*, 89-91.

⁷⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 94-104, Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler*, 145-153, Overy, *The Dictators*, 1-2, Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin*, 35-36.

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The Twelfth Party Congress convened in April 1923 to choose Lenin's successor. Trotsky, with Lenin's explicit endorsement, should have been the leading candidate, although there was the possibility of all the other candidates uniting against him. Stalin allied himself with two others – Zinoviev and Kamenev – to prevent Trotsky from taking power and spent the next year making himself seem moderate compared to his allies. Nothing was resolved, but Stalin was able to subtly improve his position. The struggle continued at the Thirteenth Party Congress in January 1924. Stalin was able to rig the membership of the delegations attending it and turn it into a mass criticism of Trotsky. Lenin died on January 21, 1924, surprising most observers. Trotsky was out of Moscow at the time and Stalin tricked him into missing the funeral, further weakening his position.⁷⁴⁷

Lenin's death freed Krupskaya to release his Testament. When the Central Committee met to consider it, however, Zinoviev and Kamenev supported Stalin and helped him suppress it. In June 1924 seven men were elected to the Politburo. Stalin eventually killed the other six. His alliance with Zinoviev and Kamenev, however, was clearly the leading power bloc in the Politburo. Zinoviev and Kamenev's relations with Trotsky deteriorated to the point that they attempted to remove him from the Central Committee in 1925. Stalin's compromise proposal that he merely be removed as War Commissar was accepted instead. While these debates continued, Stalin used his position as General Secretary to steadily strengthen his power base and the apparatus supporting it.⁷⁴⁸

Stalin's greatest advantage in pursuing the leadership was the political incompetence of most of his opponents. Trotsky had no skill or interest in intra-party disputes. Most Bolsheviks had no real experience with politics before taking power. Stalin, however, was enormously skilled at such backroom maneuvering and was able to use that advantage to steadily improve his position, eliminating rivals one after another. Trotsky was largely defeated by the middle of 1924. Zinoviev and Kamenev did not realize the threat Stalin posed until late 1924, by which time it was simply too late. In December 1925

⁷⁴⁷ Conquest, *Stalin*, 105-110.

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 111-130, Gellately, *Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler*, 153-155.

Kamenev launched a full attack on Stalin at the Fourteenth Party Congress but was shouted down by the delegates. In April 1926 the two reached out to Trotsky in an attempt to form an anti-Stalin alliance, even telling him that they believed Stalin wished to kill them. In June Stalin attacked them openly and had so solidified his authority that he was able to remove Trotsky and Kamenev from the Politburo. By this point their battle to stop Stalin had been long lost. By November Stalin was able to expel Trotsky from the Party and deport him to Siberia. Although Stalin would make further moves to crush Kamenev and Zinoviev, there was no real doubt by this point that he was the clear leader of the Soviet Union.⁷⁴⁹

Stalin presents a somewhat mixed case for Leader Filtration Theory. It was just under seven years from the Communist takeover in October 1917 to Stalin's securing his hold on power. During that time senior Communists clearly discerned, not once but several times, that there were profound problems with Stalin's personality and behavior that made allowing him to gain control of the Soviet Union a very unwise decision. The system clearly tried to filter him out on several occasions, most spectacularly in the case of Lenin's Testament. Had Lenin's health held up for even a few more years it seems highly likely that he would have removed Stalin from power and ensured Trotsky's position as his successor. Similarly, had Trotsky or other Bolshevik leaders been more politically adept they could certainly have aligned against Stalin instead of spending their efforts on conflicts that would – literally – end in their deaths. This case lends some support to Leites' thesis on the operational code of Communist leaders.⁷⁵⁰ Every contender for power in the Soviet Union showed no hesitation about using wholesale violence to achieve their ends. Even by that standard, however, fellow Bolsheviks clearly considered Stalin's behavior to be exceptional and disturbing.

Stalin's own characteristics made him particularly difficult to filter out. He slipped and revealed his underlying pathologies on occasion. Trotsky relates that when asked to describe what they most liked, Stalin said that "[t]he sweetest thing in life is to mark a victim, prepare the blow carefully, strike

⁷⁴⁹ Conquest, *Stalin*, 131-148, Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin*, 36.

⁷⁵⁰ Leites, *The Operational Code of the Politburo*, Leites, *A Study of Bolshevism*.

hard, and then go to bed and sleep peacefully.” The anecdote may be exaggerated, but it reveals a central element of his personality. Nevertheless his overall affect was so dull that his early nickname was “Comrade filing cabinet.” He often said little or nothing in meetings and conveyed the image of being dull, or even stupid. Stalin was simply enormously skilled at deceiving those around him and used that skill to great effect in the internecine political battles that decided control of the Soviet Union.⁷⁵¹

An additional, and crucial, factor was the low number of skilled executives available to the Bolsheviks. When Lenin was choosing Bolsheviks to whom he should give senior positions he generally did not have a choice between Stalin and a competent alternative without his personal defects. The Bolsheviks were simply too small and too new to power to have developed a sufficient cadre of such alternatives, and this allowed Stalin to pass through filters that would otherwise have eliminated him. All in all, this suggests that Stalin should be classified as an Unfiltered Outlier.

Mao Zedong

Mao was born on December 26, 1893 to the wealthiest peasant family in the village of Shaoshan. When a Han revolution broke out in 1911 Mao, then a student, joined the Revolutionary Army, leaving in 1912 to return to school. He received his teaching diploma in 1918. He became a Marxist in 1920. He worked as a labor leader and intellectual until joining the Party full time in 1923. In 1925 he founded a branch of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in his village and instructed his followers to lead an effort by peasants to force landlords to sell their grain locally and more cheaply. This earned him a death sentence from the local government and ended his time as a peasant organizer. Mao managed to collect significant positions in the Guomindang (GMD), the major opposition to the Imperial Government, but remained a minor figure in the CCP. He focused his efforts on building

⁷⁵¹ Overy, *The Dictators*, 9-10.

support for the CCP among the peasants and in 1926 finally received his first significant CCP office as Secretary of the CCP Central Committee's Peasant Movement Committee.⁷⁵²

Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of the GMD, turned against the CCP in 1927. The CCP's reorganization following Chiang's strike against their power removed Mao from his position as Secretary of the Peasant Movement Committee and left him still outside the Central Committee. He was still ranked only thirtieth in the Party's hierarchy. He became a Politburo alternate later that year, but remained outside the inner circle of the Party. In September he launched the "Autumn Harvest Uprising" in the city of Changsha, but it was smashed by the provincial government and most of his forces were destroyed. Mao himself was briefly captured but escaped. He and his surviving forces retreated to the mountains where he reorganized his army and consolidated his power.⁷⁵³

During 1928 Mao won several military victories, formulated his revolutionary strategy, and begun to improve his political standing within the CCP. By 1930 the Red Army's capacities had improved enough, in large part due to Mao's efforts, that it was able to begin shifting to mobile warfare against the GMD. Mao was given a virtually free hand to dictate the Army's tactics. By the middle of 1931, however, a major offensive under the command of Chiang Kai-Shek had nearly destroyed Mao's forces, only to be ended when Chiang Kai-Shek's rivals formed their own government in southern government, forcing him to withdraw to deal with the new threat.⁷⁵⁴

In late 1930 Mao took control of Jianxi, the district surrounding his mountain base. He established the Chinese Soviet Republic there in 1931 with himself as Head of Government and Head of State. Mao launched a brutal purge in Jianxi that stretched into 1932 that used torture and mass executions to destroy his enemies and resulted in the death of tens of thousands of CCP members. In late 1932 he was sidelined by the Central leadership of the CCP from military decision-making, but

⁷⁵² Philip Short, *Mao: A Life*, Paperback ed. (New York, NY: Owl Books, 1999), 19-21, 39-51, 78, 111-113, 154-155, 162-163, 167-168.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*, 179-185, 199-200, 208-209, 211-215.

⁷⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 216-223, 254-262.

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retained his control over Jianxi. Chiang renewed his offensive and by late 1934 Mao was forced to retreat from Jianxi – in the southeast of China – all the way to Shaanxi in the Northwest, abandoning his base and, in the process, his son. This epic retreat became known as the “Long March.”⁷⁵⁵

During the Long March Mao gained a preeminent position within the CCP. Up until the Long March Mao had not even been the dominant party figure within the Army. Instead the leading figures were Bo Gu, the acting Party Leader who had been sent to take control by the Comintern, Zhou Enlai, the General Political Commissar of the Red Army, and Otto Braun, a German who had been sent by the Comintern as a military advisor. During 1934, however, while they had led the CCP’s military efforts, Chiang had won a devastating series of victories. Bo and Braun were largely discredited by this, leaving the struggle for control of the CCP largely between Mao and Zhou. Zhou, however, as the individual with final approval over the disastrous military strategies of the last two years, was so weakened that he was forced to ally with Mao instead of opposing him. Mao rapidly consolidated his power and, although he would not get the formal title of Chairman of the CCP until 1943, he remained the dominant figure in the Party until his death.⁷⁵⁶

Mao thus went from first joining the party full-time in 1923 to its head in January 1935, a little more than eleven years. He first gained a senior position in the Party in 1927 and gained both military and civilian power in 1930, although he lost most of his military power from 1932 to 1934. Even beginning in 1927 – although 1930 seems a more reasonable starting date – he had at most seven years of filtration. Starting from 1930 he had only four. Much of this period was spent on campaign or isolated from most other powerful members of the CCP. All of it was spent conducting a guerrilla campaign against the GMD, a circumstance that has few similarities with being in government.

None of this includes Mao’s long struggle as leader of the CCP against both Chiang and the Japanese, culminating in the creation of the People’s Republic of China in 1947. The revolutionary

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid., 266-281, 294-298, 313-320.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid., 1-14, 321.

struggle likely had some filtration elements. At the least it ensured that Mao's leadership of the CCP did not *prevent* it from defeating the GMD, and might well have played a key role in the CCP's victory. Similarly, the qualities likely to contribute to an insurgent group's victory in a civil war seem likely to cover only a small fraction of those qualities which determine behavior while in office. Mao, like Stalin, should be classified as Unfiltered, but in a different way than an Unfiltered Democratic leader. Leading a revolutionary movement clearly has some filtration effects. Those effects, however, are likely to be noticeably incomplete, allowing for enormous variation among revolutionary leaders.

Assessment

Richard Overy's assessment of Hitler and Stalin serves strikingly well, with some small modifications, for all four leaders profiled here:

Hitler and Stalin were neither of them normal. They were not, as far as can be judged, mentally unbalanced in any clinical sense, however tempting it has been to assume that monstrous acts and madness should go hand-in-hand. They were men with exceptional personalities and an extraordinary political energy...Both were underestimated by colleagues and rivals, who failed to see that personalities so unobtrusive and modest when at rest disguised a hard core of ambition, political ruthlessness, and amoral disregard for others when engaged in the work of politics. The singleness of purpose and powerful will displayed by both men in the 1920s did not automatically bring them to the position of unrestricted authority each enjoyed by the 1930s. Dictatorship was not preordained.⁷⁵⁷

Napoleon, of course, did not have an unobtrusive or modest personality. He was, however, able to successfully fake a disinterest in politics until he had placed himself in a position to seize power, a skillful dissimulation that had much the same effect. All four dictators share a striking degree of abnormality, even if they share little else. Indeed classing Napoleon with the other three is, to a great extent, quite unfair. Like them, however, he was a single individual who used a revolution to assume absolute power over one of the most important nations on earth and from that position put an indelible stamp on history. Unlike the other three the question of whether his overall impact was for good or ill is at least

⁷⁵⁷ Overy, *The Dictators*, 22.

debatable, but the magnitude of his impact is not. Each of these men was radically different from potential alternative leaders; each slipped through filtration processes that could easily have blocked their path to power and that, given more information, time, or options, would likely have done so. Each thus serves as additional support to Leader Filtration Theory.

The Admiral: Sir Jacky Fisher and the Royal Navy

Modern militaries are bureaucracies with strict rank delineations and processes to choose commanders. Napoleon's rapid rise is inconceivable in an industrial age military. This raises the question of how an Unfiltered military leader can come to power. The most likely candidate is civilian intervention in promotion processes. Civilian control over the military usually takes the form that Samuel Huntington described as "objective civilian control" in which civilian interference in a military's internal processes is kept to a minimum.⁷⁵⁸ Civilians, however, sometimes intervene in the military's internal processes to shape its behavior, particularly as a way of spurring innovation.⁷⁵⁹ Such civilian intervention seems a perfect example of bypassing a normal LFP, so officers promoted in this fashion should be particularly likely to be Outliers.

Not all civilian interventions bypass filtration. At the outbreak of World War I, for example, Churchill, then First Lord of the Admiralty, forced Admiral Sir George Callaghan, then Commander-in-Chief of the British Grand Fleet, into retirement. Churchill did this so that Sir John Jellicoe would become Commander-in-Chief. Jellicoe was not Unfiltered. Jellicoe was widely considered the finest officer in the Royal Navy and expected to replace Callaghan. Churchill simply accelerated the

⁷⁵⁸ Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations*.

⁷⁵⁹ Posen, *The Sources of Military Doctrine*.

timeline.⁷⁶⁰ Jellicoe was a perfect Modal leader. Civilian intervention produces an unfiltered commander only when it results in someone who would not otherwise have gained command.

Sir John Arbuthnot “Jacky” Fisher, 1st Baron Fisher of Kilverstone, who twice served as First Sea Lord (the highest ranking officer) of the Royal Navy, may be the most renowned Admiral never to win a battle. Fisher is perhaps most famous for the construction of the H.M.S. *Dreadnought*, the first all-big gun battleship. The *Dreadnought*, which gave its name to all ships of similar design, revolutionized naval warfare. Fisher, however, did not rise to First Sea Lord through the normal process. Instead British politicians promoted him because of their belief that only Fisher could produce the cuts in Naval budgets that they wanted. In doing so they brought to power a man who forever changed naval warfare.

Fisher was born in Sri Lanka on January 25, 1841. He was sent to England to live with his grandfather at the age of six and joined the Royal Navy as a cadet at the age of 13. He was promoted to Midshipman in 1856. He served with distinction in the Opium War and was promoted again in January 1860 and again in March 1860. In March 1863 he was made Gunnery Lieutenant of the elite frigate H.M. S. *Warrior*, the most desirable position for an officer of his rank in the Royal Navy. In 1868 he was one of the first British officers to recognize the potential of the torpedo and published a short treatise on the new weapon. By the early 1880s he was recognized as one of the Royal Navy’s rising stars.⁷⁶¹

In 1881 Fisher was made Captain of the *Inflexible*, the Royal Navy’s newest ship and the most powerful ship in the world. In 1883 he was brought back to shore. He spent most of the next fourteen years working on the Navy’s equipment and doctrine. His constant push for naval reform and aggressive approach to doing so began to alienate many officers. He was made Captain of the *Excellent*, a ship that had become the Royal Navy’s Gunnery School, and greatly improved training there. In 1886 he became

⁷⁶⁰ Robert K. Massie, *Castles of Steel: Britain, Germany, and the Winning of the Great War at Sea* (New York, NY: Random House, 2003), 65-71.

⁷⁶¹ Richard Alexander Hough, *First Sea Lord: An Authorized Biography of Admiral Lord Fisher* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 6-58, Ruddock F. Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1-170.

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Director of Naval Ordnance and took the lead in substantially improving the Royal Navy's weaponry. In 1892 he was appointed Third Naval Lord and comptroller of the Navy. He remained there for the next five and a half years. He continued to both modernize the Royal Navy and alienate many of its officers. This last tendency began to cost him. In 1896 Fisher went back to sea as commander of a squadron stationed in the West Indies. This was a clear sign that his career was in decline. The West Indies squadron was usually assigned to Admirals who had been passed over for truly important commands.⁷⁶²

In 1899, however, his career was resurrected by George Goschen, the First Lord of the Admiralty (the civilian head of the Royal Navy). Goschen picked Fisher to be the British naval delegate to The Hague Peace Conference. During it Fisher presciently predicted that targeting civilians, poison gas, and submarines would play major parts in the wars of the twentieth century and that submarines would target merchant shipping in wartime. Goschen also made Fisher commander of the British Mediterranean Fleet, the premier post in the Royal Navy. As Fisher had no reputation as a fleet commander and several more senior Admirals who did were passed over this was a particularly surprising appointment. Fisher's path to becoming First Naval Lord – the most senior officer in the Royal Navy – remained blocked, however. He was already fifty-eight. The term of office for a First Naval Lord was five years which meant he would be sixty-three at his next opportunity. The retirement age for officers was sixty-five. For all his extraordinary gifts, he had made so many enemies that it was unlikely he would be able to rise further. Fisher therefore decided to go outside the normal naval processes. From his position as commander of the Mediterranean Fleet he would attempt to expose the Royal Navy's poor readiness for battle and force his further promotion.⁷⁶³

⁷⁶² Hough, *First Sea Lord*, 62-119, Nicholas A. Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, ed. William N. Still Jr., *Studies in Maritime History* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 74, Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, 171-215.

⁷⁶³ Hough, *First Sea Lord*, 119-120, Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, 74-75, Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, 216-225.

Fisher began a long correspondence with his friends in the press conveying his opinions on the poor state of the Royal Navy. In 1900 the Earl of Selborne became First Lord of the Admiralty. Recognizing Fisher's abilities, Selborne invited Fisher to write him privately. Fisher seized the opportunity, bombarding the First Lord with letters on the weaknesses of the Fleet. By 1901 the stream of newspaper articles inspired by Fisher criticizing the Royal Navy had made him such an embarrassment that he was rebuked by the First Naval Lord and his career was under threat. Selborne, however, protected him and in June 1902 made him Second Naval Lord, the position with responsibility for Royal Navy personnel. In order to give Fisher this position Selborne had to overrule his own First Naval Lord, whom Fisher had thoroughly alienated. The friction between the two became so severe that Fisher left his position as Second Naval Lord in 1903 to become commander-in-chief of Portsmouth.⁷⁶⁴

Selborne was normally unwilling to challenge Naval opinion, and Naval opinion was not fond of Fisher. Fisher and the First Naval Lord were openly rude to each other. Fisher's peers generally distrusted and disliked him. Selborne's problem, however, was that the cost of constantly increasing the size of the Royal Navy to maintain its margin of superiority over other European fleets had become far more than the government was willing to pay, a problem that was made even more severe by the expense of the Boer War. The Cabinet was putting him under intense pressure to reduce naval expenditures and Fisher was the only senior admiral who would do it. Fisher was further aided by the ascension to the throne of King Edward VII, who was intensely interested in the Royal Navy and a strong supporter of Fisher. He became First Naval Lord in October 1904. At his own request he took office on the 99th anniversary of Trafalgar, England's greatest naval victory. His first act was to change the name of the position to the older, and more romantic, title of First Sea Lord.⁷⁶⁵

⁷⁶⁴ Hough, *First Sea Lord*, 127-146, Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, 80, 91, Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, 243-285.

⁷⁶⁵ Charles H. Fairbanks, Jr., "The Origins of the Dreadnought Revolution: A Historiographical Essay," *The International History Review* 13, no. 2 (1991): 258, 262, Hough, *First Sea Lord*, 143-144, 178, Lambert, *Sir John*

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Despite his long career in the Royal Navy, the story of his rise clearly marks Fisher as Unfiltered. His career was not once but twice rescued by civilian intervention. The reasons for the first rescue are unclear. The second, however, was clearly motivated by the civilians' need to find a leader in the Royal Navy who would do what no other Admiral would. Fisher's willingness to buck the normal practices of the Royal Navy made it impossible for him to become First Naval Lord conventionally. It took the Navy's civilian masters' need for an Admiral who was very different from all of his peers – one who had been filtered out – to elevate Fisher to the summit of the Royal Navy.

The list of Fisher's innovations while he was First Sea Lord could – and has – fill many books. Fisher scrapped obsolete ships so that the personnel manning them could be used more effectively. He concentrated the Royal Navy near Britain, substantially decreasing the overall expense of maintaining it. He is most famous, however, for the construction of "Dreadnought" battleships – heavily armored ships whose main armament was a uniform arsenal of large-caliber guns capable of engaging enemy ships at long range. Such ships played such an important role in his legacy that when Fisher was elevated to the Peerage he wittily chose as his family motto "Fear God and Dread nought."⁷⁶⁶

When the First World War began 47 percent of the Royal Navy's budget was devoted to such ships.⁷⁶⁷ Strikingly, however, the traditional conception of Fisher as a brilliant naval innovator who foresaw the dominance of such ships in naval combat has been largely overturned by recent research. Fisher's vision for the Royal Navy was radically different. The ships that dominated the Royal Navy's line of battle at Jutland, the climactic naval battle of the First World War, were the product of a compromise between Fisher and the Royal Navy bureaucracy.⁷⁶⁸

Fisher's Naval Revolution, 18-36, 90-91, 97, 109-110, Mackay, *Fisher of Kilverstone*, 285, 295-297, 305-310, Jon Tetsuro Sumida, *In Defense of Naval Supremacy* (London: Routledge, 1993), 18-28.

⁷⁶⁶ Hough, *First Sea Lord*, 196-206, 234, Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, 97-106.

⁷⁶⁷ Geoffrey Till, "Review of Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution by Nicholas Lambert," *The Journal of Military History* 64, no. 1 (2000): 217.

⁷⁶⁸ Nicholas A. Lambert, "Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defense, 1904-1909," *The Journal of Military History* 59, no. 4 (1995): 641-642, Sumida, *In Defense of Naval Supremacy*, 37-61, Jon Tetsuro Sumida, "Sir

Fisher saw the future of the Royal Navy as dominated not by battleships but by *battlecruisers*. Both types carry a primary armament of large caliber long-range guns. Battleships are heavily armored and, as a consequence, relatively slow. Battlecruisers, on the other hand, are relatively thinly-armored and use the savings in weight to carry powerful engines. They are fast for their size. The *Dreadnought* was designed and built while Fisher was First Sea Lord, but he was actually opposed to further construction of new battleships. Instead he wanted to build ships along the style of the H.M.S. *Invincible*, which shared the *Dreadnought's* armament but was lightly armored and far faster. He conceived of the *Dreadnought* as a transitional model between the old Royal Navy and his new one. Fisher, who was also a proponent of a sophisticated new fire control system for the Royal Navy, believed that such ships could use their speed and the long range of their guns to engage enemy forces from beyond the range at which they could strike back.⁷⁶⁹

Battlecruisers were actually more expensive to build than their battleship brethren and Fisher had been explicitly instructed to do everything possible to minimize naval expenditure, but he was nonetheless enthralled by their potential. He very nearly convinced the Royal Navy to go along with his vision for the future of warfare. Fisher wished to change not just the Royal Navy's materiel, but also its doctrine. Most of his peers were committed to a concept of naval battles dominated by "battle lines" – lines of the most heavily armed and armored ships in each fleet which attempted to batter each other into submission. In such a battle the fleet with the most heavily armed and armored ships would, almost invariably, be the victor. Battlecruisers would be easy meat for their heavier siblings in such an engagement. Fisher, however, envisaged splitting the Royal Navy into two fleets. One would consist of swift battle cruisers that could quickly travel around the globe to protect Britain's imperial interests. The other would be a force of submarines and torpedo boats which would protect Britain from invasion

John Fisher and the Dreadnought: The Sources of Naval Mythology," *The Journal of Military History* 59, no. 4 (1995): 620.

⁷⁶⁹ Fairbanks, "The Origins of the Dreadnought Revolution: A Historiographical Essay," 269-270, Lambert, "Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defense, 1904-1909," 642-643.

by sinking the troop transports any invasion force would use. Even after Fisher's retirement in 1909 his influence remained. In 1911, for example, he persuaded Churchill to propose cancelling the battleships Britain was planning on building in 1912 and 1913 in favor of battlecruisers.⁷⁷⁰

The other Sea Lords, however, were unwilling to take such a radical step and insisted that Royal Navy construction be dominated by battleships. They felt that Fisher's conception of future warfare was implausible and that the British needed to retain a core of heavily armored battleships capable of defeating a German battle-line. Indeed, when Churchill made his suggestion he discovered that senior naval officers were almost unanimously opposed to the concept and that his First Sea Lord actually wished to abandon battlecruisers entirely. They eventually compromised by developing the new *Queen Elizabeth* class of fast battleships. These extremely expensive dreadnoughts had the armor of a battleship but the engines of a battlecruiser. Fisher was enraged by Churchill's willingness to compromise, but his retirement meant that the decision to build the fast battleships carried the day.⁷⁷¹

Assessment

Fisher unquestionably had an enormous impact on the Royal Navy. Although he did not get entirely his own way, his beloved battlecruisers had a prominent position in its order of battle in the First World War. The dreadnought battleships that descended from the *Dreadnought* ended up, along with the submarines which he also supported, as the dominant naval weapons of the war. Strikingly, however, the wisdom of many of his proposed reforms can be questioned. When the Battle of Jutland – the only large naval battle of World War I – was fought, Fisher's battlecruisers suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the German Fleet. Their thin armor was not enough to protect them from enemy fire,

⁷⁷⁰ Lambert, "Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defense, 1904-1909," 246, Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, 116-126.

⁷⁷¹ Lambert, "Admiral Sir John Fisher and the Concept of Flotilla Defense, 1904-1909," 644-645, Lambert, *Sir John Fisher's Naval Revolution*, 247-249.

just as his opponents had predicted.⁷⁷² Fisher's defenders could fairly say that the battlecruisers were not used in the way he intended. Jellicoe, however, the Commander-in-Chief of the British Fleet during that battle, was Fisher's long-time protégé. Fisher himself described Jellicoe as having "all Nelson's attributes except Lady Hamilton [Nelson's infamous mistress]." If even the supremely competent Jellicoe could not use battlecruisers effectively, it seems plausible that no one could. The *Queen Elizabeths* that Fisher despised, by contrast, performed exceptionally well.⁷⁷³

This is not an argument that Fisher was a poor First Sea Lord. The synthesis of Fisher's innovation with the conservative instincts of the Royal Navy was better than either alone. Without the impetus of Fisher and his ideas the Royal Navy would have been far less quick to develop dreadnought-type ships. Fisher's career suggests that Outlier leaders may be most effective when they lead institutions that have the capacity to modify or block their worst ideas while building on their best ones.

The Executives: Al Dunlap and Jamie Dimon

The board of directors of even a very successful company is faced with a challenging task when it chooses a new CEO. The better a company has performed in the past, the better it must continue to do in order to justify the valuations placed on its stock in anticipation of future growth. The larger a company is, the more difficult its task becomes of maintaining high percentage growth. In pursuit of such ever-improving results, boards may sometimes turn to an outside CEO. When doing so, however, they often know surprisingly little about the candidates they end up hiring, for:

True knowledge of another person is the culmination of a slow process of mutual revelation. It requires the gradual setting aside of interview etiquette and the incremental building of trust, leading to the exchange of personal disclosures. It cannot be rushed. Choosing CEOs from inside the firm used to enable directors to get to know the candidates in this way...Yet when the internal succession process is rejected, the

⁷⁷² Nicholas A. Lambert, "'Our Bloody Ships' Or 'Our Bloody System'? Jutland and the Loss of the Battle Cruisers, 1916," *The Journal of Military History* 62, no. 1 (1998).

⁷⁷³ Hough, *First Sea Lord*, 78, 311, 314.

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increased pressure to choose a CEO reduces the amount of time available and results in charismatic succession...directors rely on the exaggerated reputations of certain individuals without putting these reputations into a more specific context.⁷⁷⁴

Bringing in an outside CEO is a way to bypass a company's LFP. Such an outsider is likely to be Unfiltered and have a high probability of being an Outlier. The stories of two prominent outsider CEOs who took their companies in very different directions suggests that this is exactly the case.

Al Dunlap

Before the scandals that accompanied the bursting of the internet bubble, Albert J. Dunlap may have been the most reviled corporate executive in America. He presided over the bankruptcy of Sunbeam, a more than 90-year old company, in a wave of accounting scandals. Before his downfall, however, Dunlap was one of the nation's most admired businessmen. His book *Mean Business* was a national bestseller.⁷⁷⁵ The news that a company had hired him resulted in a major boost to its stock price. Under his management Scott Paper tripled its value in less than two years. When he sold it Dunlap's personal take was \$100 million.⁷⁷⁶ Dunlap's spectacular rise and fall provides a perfect illustration of the potential pitfalls of hiring an Unfiltered CEO.

A rise through the paper industry

Dunlap graduated from West Point in 1960 ranked 537th out of his graduating class of 550. After three years in the Army he joined Kimberly-Clark, a company most famous for manufacturing Kleenex. After four years he became general manager of Sterling Pulp & Paper, a Kimberly-Clark supplier. Sterling was sold in 1975 and Dunlap joined American Can Company. He spent seven years there as the general manager of two divisions and made a remarkable number of enemies while doing so. His divisions greatly increased their profits through his commitment to ruthless and all-encompassing cost-cutting,

⁷⁷⁴ Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, 181.

⁷⁷⁵ Albert J. Dunlap and Bob Andelman, *Mean Business: How I Save Bad Companies and Make Good Companies Great* (New York, NY: Times Business, 1996).

⁷⁷⁶ David Plotz, *Al Dunlap: The Chainsaw Capitalist* (Slate Magazine, August 31 1997 [cited September 15 2010]); available from <http://www.slate.com/id/1830/>.

but the managers who succeeded him often found it difficult to rebuild the businesses that he had stripped to the bone. Styling himself as a troubleshooter who went from company to company, Dunlap went to the Manville Corporation in 1982 and then to Lily-Tulip nine months later, where he was a CEO for the first time. In three years Lily went from losing more than \$10 million in 1982 to almost \$23 million in profits in 1984. He moved through a series of other troubled companies, culminating in his turnaround of the Australian billionaire Kerry Packer's media empire. Dunlap had a five-year contract but returned to the United States in 1993 after only two years, most probably because of a dispute with Packer. He was paid \$40 million for his work.⁷⁷⁷

Dunlap went into semi-retirement for eleven months before being recruited to take the helm of the Philadelphia-based Scott Paper Company. Scott had annual revenues of over \$5 billion per year but its performance had declined severely. Dunlap rapidly laid-off more than a third of Scott's employees, including 71 percent of the headquarters staff and 50 percent of management. He also cut research and development spending in half, delayed all plant maintenance for a year, and eliminated all corporate charitable giving. His entire strategy was clearly meant to maximize the company's short-term profitability in order to prepare it for sale even though he had promised upon being hired that he would manage Scott for the long term. Dunlap also maintained a very high public profile in which he aggressively defended his managerial approach. Kimberly-Clark bought Scott in 1995 for \$9.4 billion, more than three times what Scott was worth when he was hired. After the merger, however, Kimberly-Clark discovered that it had massively overpaid for Scott and would have to reverse many of Dunlap's changes to turn it into a company that was profitable over the long term.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁷ Byrne, *Chainsaw*, 20-24, 98-99.

⁷⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 24-33, Robert F. Hartley, *Management Mistakes and Successes* (New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 57-61, Plotz, *Al Dunlap*.

Sunbeam

Despite his wealth, Dunlap hoped to lead another company after Scott. His high profile meant that few companies were willing to bring him onboard. The two largest shareholders of Sunbeam, however, were Michael Price and Michael Steinhardt, investment managers uninterested in public relations problems as long as the price of their holdings improved. Sunbeam was a deeply troubled company that retained great potential and they were eager to find someone who could help them profit from their investment. Steinhardt's representative on the Sunbeam board, Shimon Topor, first learned of Dunlap in a magazine article. He had a four-hour meeting with Dunlap and left convinced that Dunlap was the right person to turn Sunbeam around. This led to a lunch meeting with some of Price's representatives. Price himself only met Dunlap briefly once over breakfast, but left impressed. Price and Steinhardt's representatives quickly negotiated an extraordinarily generous deal with Dunlap that guaranteed him a free hand to manage the company as he pleased. The rest of the board of directors was only informed of the deal – and even that Dunlap was under consideration for the CEO slot - after he had already been hired.⁷⁷⁹

Most members of Sunbeam's board of directors never even had an opportunity to meet Dunlap before he was hired. They made their decision based largely on their knowledge of his performance at other companies. They did not closely investigate his behavior there. Instead they simply accepted that the superficial evidence of his managerial ability – the consistent enormous increases in the valuation of companies he ran – indicated his true ability. An outside CEO whose background has been so scantily investigated clearly qualifies as an Unfiltered leader.

Price and Steinhardt knew everything about Dunlap's record described above. They did not know about another part of his background. Two crucial pieces of information did not emerge until 2001. That year a *New York Times* article revealed that between Sterling and American Can, Dunlap had

⁷⁷⁹ Byrne, *Chainsaw*, 33-37, 70-92.

worked for two other companies and been fired both times. In 1973 he had joined Max Phillips & Son, only to be fired after seven weeks for neglecting his duties and disparaging his boss. In May 1974 Dunlap had been made president of Nitec, another company in the paper industry. Nitec was mildly profitable in 1974 and 1975 and did spectacularly well in 1976, expecting to post profits of almost \$5 million. Dunlap received much of the credit. Despite this his management style so alienated the company's owners that they fired him in August of that year. Only a few weeks after he was fired Nitec's auditors discovered pervasive accounting fraud at the company. The expected profit turned into a loss of \$5.5 million. In testimony during the ensuing court cases Nitec's financial vice president stated that Dunlap had explicitly ordered him to falsify the company's books. Dunlap claimed that his weak financial background meant that he had no responsibility for the misstatements. Nitec's suit against Dunlap ended when it went into bankruptcy.⁷⁸⁰

Such a checkered past could have ended Dunlap's career long before he took over Scott, much less Sunbeam. By moving from company to company and failing to mention his previous experience to his new employers, however, Dunlap was able to avoid repercussions for his behavior. A more perfect example of the pitfalls of a loose filtration process would be hard to find. Sunbeam would soon learn exactly whom they had hired.

Dunlap began by staffing senior positions at Sunbeam with people personally loyal to him and removing those who showed any signs of challenging his approach, including on the board of directors. In November, less than four months after he was hired, Dunlap revealed his plan. He would lay off half of Sunbeam's employees, get rid of 87 percent of its products, and shrink its operations in almost every dimension. He predicted these cuts would result in \$225 million in savings per year. He also promised

⁷⁸⁰ Floyd Norris, "The Incomplete Résumé: A Special Report.' an Executive's Missing Years: Papering over Past Problems," *The New York Times*, July 16 2001.

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that the company would introduce at least thirty products a year and grow incredibly fast, predicting that its revenue would more than double by 1999. The board unanimously approved his proposal.⁷⁸¹

Dunlap's downsizing cut so deep into Sunbeam, and so often seemed to lack any economic logic beyond playing to short-term headlines, that resistance began to build within the company. His skills at charming market analysts remained strong, however. Andrew Shore, a highly skeptical analyst who had publicly expressed doubts about Dunlap's approach, visited Sunbeam and, despite his belief that Dunlap's promised revolutionary future products were absurd, stated that "Dunlap is not a CEO you want to bet against." By the end of 1997 senior executives began to realize that there were no prospective acquirers for Sunbeam, that the new products Dunlap had promised had been so starved of research and development resources that they were not even close to being ready to market, and that the first quarter of 1998 was likely to be disastrous. Under pressure from Dunlap to meet the promises he had made of continually higher growth, Sunbeam's managers began to engage in shortcuts like refusing to pay suppliers and highly questionable accounting practices. These could create the illusion of a profitable company for one or two quarters but would make the final reckoning far worse. By the end of 1997 these accounting practices accounted for more of Sunbeam's profits than any of its products.⁷⁸²

Dunlap's hopes for a sale were foundering on Sunbeam's high stock valuation and its poor underlying performance. So he went on a desperate search for a company he could buy. An acquisition would let him to camouflage Sunbeam's deteriorating financial position. In late February 1998 he bought Coleman, a camping equipment manufacturer, First Alert smoke detectors, and Mr. Coffee, announcing all three on the same day. The combination drove Sunbeam's stock to new heights.⁷⁸³

Dunlap chose to issue corporate bonds to finance the acquisitions. Doing so required his investment bankers to investigate the company, a process known as due diligence. They discovered that

⁷⁸¹ Byrne, *Chainsaw*, 42-69.

⁷⁸² *Ibid.*, 127-170.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, 187-207, Hartley, *Management Mistakes and Successes*, 61-62.

Sunbeam's real performance was poor and likely to get worse. Many of the tricks that Sunbeam had used to improve its short-term performance involved persuading retailers to buy its products early at a steep discount. Now the retailers had enormous stockpiles of Sunbeam products and no interest in buying more. Sales had plunged by more than half. Dunlap was forced to announce that Sunbeam's first quarter results would not match his predictions. Sunbeam stock began to plunge in response, but Dunlap's credibility with the market minimized the damage.⁷⁸⁴

Dunlap's house of cards began to collapse in 1998. In the first quarter Sunbeam's revenues dropped and the company posted a loss of more than \$44 million. Dunlap's temper was taking a toll on his management team with one after another leaving Sunbeam. In April Shore downgraded the company's stock, which began to plunge. For the first time the media began to criticize Dunlap, with *Forbes* running a story accusing him of questionable accounting practices. For the first time Michael Price's confidence in Dunlap began to erode. In June Dunlap learned that the second quarter of 1998 would be even worse than the first. A few days later *Barron's*, an influential financial magazine, published an article declaring that all of Sunbeam's supposed improvements under Dunlap were the product of questionable accounting. The article triggered the final collapse.⁷⁸⁵

By June 9 shares in Sunbeam had dropped 60 percent from their peak in March. That day Dunlap met with Sunbeam's board of directors to discuss the accusations in *Barron's*. When the board asked him about Sunbeam's financial performance in the second quarter Dunlap ducked the question. He then told the board that Ronald Perelman – a major Sunbeam shareholder – was engaged in a conspiracy to drive down the price of Sunbeam stock and threatened to resign if the board did not support him. The board, understandably, could not imagine why a major stockholder would want to lower the value of his holdings. Dunlap stormed out of the meeting. The next day David Fannin, Sunbeam's chief counsel, told the board that the numbers for the quarter were actually disastrous. At

⁷⁸⁴ Byrne, *Chainsaw*, 208-222.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 234-291, Hartley, *Management Mistakes and Successes*, 62-63.

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the board's request he investigated Sunbeam's numbers more closely and began to discover the extent of the fraudulent accounting. On June 13 he met with the board – without Dunlap's knowledge – appraised them of what he had learned and urged that Dunlap be fired. The board agreed. It called Dunlap – who was, amazingly, about to leave for London to promote his book in the midst of the crisis – and fired him. It continued to investigate and by the end of the day realized that Sunbeam's earnings shortfall was so great that it was courting bankruptcy. The company staggered on until 2001 when it did go bankrupt. It is now a subsidiary of the Jarden Corporation, an American conglomerate. In 2002 Dunlap agreed to a settlement with the SEC in which he paid a \$500,000 fine and agreed never to serve as the officer or director of a public company. The SEC stated that Kimberly-Clark had also used deceptive accounting while Dunlap was in charge.⁷⁸⁶

The roots of Dunlap's short term success were relatively simple. He used a remarkable degree of intimidation to impose his will on a company. For example, soon after he joined Sunbeam he ordered James Wilson, the head of human resources, to come to his office. When Wilson entered Dunlap threw a chair at him, swore at him in an extended tirade, cut him off every time he tried to speak, and finally threw him out of the office. Dozens of the members of Wilson's department were standing outside to hear the confrontation. Once any possible opposition had been squelched Dunlap produced spectacular short-term numbers using tactics that most corporate executives would have found dubious at best. Then he arranged an exit before the collapse.⁷⁸⁷

Dunlap's story is an almost too-perfect encapsulation of the potential downfalls of choosing an Unfiltered leader. His successes were based on short-term moves that would have been exposed had they been examined over longer periods of time. Key pieces of information about his managerial skills and approach that would, had they been known, prevented him from gaining power were left

⁷⁸⁶ Byrne, *Chainsaw*, 290-327, Floyd Norris, "Will Justice Department Go after Dunlap?," *The New York Times* 2002.

⁷⁸⁷ Byrne, *Chainsaw*, 94-95, 352.

undiscovered. Once in power he used his authority over Sunbeam to very nearly destroy it, and did destroy it as an independent entity.

Jamie Dimon

Jamie Dimon is the CEO and Chairman of the Board of JPMorgan Chase, the world's largest financial services corporation when measured by market capitalization. He is arguably the most powerful single individual in the financial sector not employed by a government. He occupies this position of prominence despite having been fired from Citigroup, the company he had helped create, in 1998. Soon thereafter Dimon became the CEO of BankOne. He arranged its sale to JPMorgan Chase and soon thereafter became the CEO of the combined company. The job search that resulted in Dimon's hiring was superbly described and analyzed by Rakesh Khurana in *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, providing a unique window into the LFP of a modern company. Dimon's leadership was put to a rigorous test by the financial crisis of 2008, allowing his impact on the bank to be closely evaluated.

A Meteoric – but briefly interrupted – rise

Dimon is the son and grandson of bankers. He graduated *summa cum laude* from Tufts in 1978, worked at a small consulting firm for two years, then entered Harvard Business School. He graduated in the top 5 percent of his class. He was hired by Sandy Weill, chairman of the executive committee of American Express and a friend of his father, to work as his assistant. Weill lost a bureaucratic battle and resigned in 1985. Dimon followed him. Weill became CEO of Commercial Credit, the poorly-run consumer finance division of a company named Control Data, and arranged its spin-off into an independent company. Dimon played a key role in researching and crafting the deal.⁷⁸⁸

⁷⁸⁸ Monica Langley, *Tearing Down the Walls: How Sandy Weill Fought His Way to the Top of the Financial World--and Then Nearly Lost It All*, *A Wall Street Journal Book* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 2003), 74, 87-92, 109-122, McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 1-16, 24-35, Amey Stone and Michael Brewster, *King of Capital: Sandy Weill and the Making of Citigroup* (New York, NY: Wiley, 2002), 144-145, 148-151, 171-176.

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Weill and Dimon transformed Commercial Credit. Dimon earned a reputation for an unconventional mixture of charm, ambition, and a hair-trigger temper. After the stock market crash of 1987 cut the prices of most financial services companies Weill began a series of acquisitions, including a merger with Primerica, another budding financial services conglomerate, which gave the new company its name. Dimon took senior roles at several of the companies but was initially known in the industry largely as Weill's detail man. That changed in 1991 when Weill made Dimon, still only 35, President of Primerica. In that position he built a formidable reputation as a manager and quick decision-maker.⁷⁸⁹

In 1992 Primerica made a major investment in Travelers Insurance. In 1993 Weill and Dimon negotiated the purchase of Shearson, a major brokerage, from American Express. As the company grew, Dimon continually increased his authority and independence. Further mergers, including a merger with Travelers, which gave its name to the new company, followed in rapid succession. The relationship between Weill and Dimon began to fray as the media gave more attention to Dimon and his growing independence made him increasingly willing to challenge his mentor. The conflict was further aggravated when Weill's daughter, who was reporting to Dimon, left the company, at least in part out of a belief that she was not being promoted fast enough.⁷⁹⁰

Weill played a prominent role in encouraging the 1998 repeal of Glass-Steagall, a Depression-era law that separated commercial and investment banking. Under Weill and Dimon Travelers had climbed to new highs in terms of profitability and become so large that it approached Citicorp, one of the world's largest and most prestigious banks, in size. John Reed, the CEO of Citicorp, agreed to a merger in which the new company would have the name Citigroup. Weill and Reed became co-CEOs. Weill, however, decided that Dimon would not have a seat on the new company's Board of Directors, an unambiguous signal that he had decided Dimon would never become CEO of Citigroup. The new company became the

⁷⁸⁹ Langley, *Tearing Down the Walls*, 125-191, McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 36-57, Stone and Brewster, *King of Capital*, 177-188.

⁷⁹⁰ McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 57-85, Stone and Brewster, *King of Capital*, 194-209.

United States' first universal bank since the Great Depression and the largest financial institution in the world. Its formation triggered a wave of similar mergers.⁷⁹¹

The relationship between Weill and Dimon reached its breaking point at a corporate retreat thrown to celebrate the merger at the Greenbrier estate in October 1998. During a black tie dance Steve Black, one of Dimon's loyalists, offered to dance with the wife of Deryk Maughan, a supporter of Weill and Reed, as an attempt to heal the breach between the two factions. Maughan, however, did not reciprocate the gesture, leaving Black's wife alone and embarrassed on the dance floor. She broke down in tears. Black first went to escort his wife off the floor then confronted Maughan over his behavior, swearing at him. Maughan's wife then accosted Black. Dimon pulled Black away, then confronted Maughan, demanding an explanation for his behavior. When Maughan refused to respond and turned his back on Dimon, Dimon grabbed him hard enough to tear a button off his shirt. Maughan's wife began screaming that Dimon was attacking her husband. The two were finally separated, but Maughan rebuffed Dimon's attempts to patch up the quarrel the next day. Citigroup's executives were, needless to say, abuzz over the incident. Over the next few days Weill and Reed decided to force Dimon to resign. At forty-two, Dimon was unemployed for the first time in his life. Given the relative performance of Citigroup and the companies run by Dimon since his firing, Richard Bookstaber, author of *Demon of Our Own Design*, estimated that this single decision might have cost the shareholders of Citigroup \$200-300 billion.⁷⁹²

Dimon spent more than a year outside the financial industry. In 1999, however, the Chicago-based Bank One was running into difficulties and needed to replace its CEO. Bank One's Board of Directors identified five potential candidates to become the new CEO. The two leading ones were Verne Istock, a longtime Bank One insider, and Dimon. In February 2000 the Board met with Dimon. He gave

⁷⁹¹ Langley, *Tearing Down the Walls*, 272-311, McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 86-104, Stone and Brewster, *King of Capital*, 222-236.

⁷⁹² Langley, *Tearing Down the Walls*, 311-323, McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 104-130, Stone and Brewster, *King of Capital*, 236-241.

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them a two-hour presentation that so impressed the Board that he instantly became the leading candidate. Although there was still support for Istock, Dimon was quickly hired. Bank One stock had an initial bounce, but soon fell back to its previous levels. Dimon moved quickly to solidify his control over Bank One by shrinking the Board of Directors and adding his allies to it and replacing senior executives with people he had worked with at Citigroup.⁷⁹³

Dimon began a rigorous program of cost-cutting at Bank One. He also made it a priority to increase capital reserves to protect against unanticipated losses. In 2003 he began negotiations for Bank One to be acquired by JPMorgan Chase, a universal bank created in the wake of the Citigroup merger that had struggled in the early years of the 2000s in the wake of the dot-com crash and the Enron scandal. William B. Harrison Jr., the CEO of JPMorgan Chase (JPMC), targeted Bank One in part to secure Dimon as his successor. The merger was announced on January 14, 2004. The new JPMorgan Chase was the second largest bank in the United States in terms of assets, trailing only Citigroup. Strikingly, the deal involved JPMorgan Chase paying a relatively small price premium for Bank One of 14%, compared to, for example, a 20% premium when Wachovia purchased South Trust a few months later. The deal stipulated that Dimon would be Harrison's second in command for two years before becoming CEO of the merged company. The terms spurred accusations that Dimon had underpriced his company to secure his path to the top. The latter accusations gain some credibility from the fact that Dimon never explored the possibility of getting a higher price from any other potential buyer.⁷⁹⁴

Dimon ended up replacing Harrison six months early. He took much the same approach at JPMC he did at Bank One. He staffed the senior ranks with loyalists and began a rigorous program of cost-

⁷⁹³ Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, 1-19, 26-27, McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 145-150, 155.

⁷⁹⁴ Daniel Gross, *The \$7 Billion Ego* (The Washington Post Company, July 7, 2004 2004 [cited September 9 2010]); available from <http://www.slate.com/id/2103543/>, McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 154-160, 171-178.

cutting, improving management performance, and integrating the still largely unconnected systems and processes of the various components of the cobbled-together bank.⁷⁹⁵

The search that produced Dimon focused on finding a leader who demonstrated great “charisma.”⁷⁹⁶ The Board of Directors chose among a very small pool of candidates. They did little to assess whether candidates had skills that matched the particular requirements of the job of CEO of Bank One. Instead they looked for someone who had “leadership” qualities and most Board members had only a very brief interaction with Dimon before he was hired. The Board knew little about Dimon before entrusting him with its company.⁷⁹⁷

Every one of Dimon’s considerable achievements came while he worked with Sandy Weill, a legendary figure on Wall Street, and Weill had always been the dominant figure in their partnership. After they had worked together for fifteen years Weill fired him, with the full concurrence of John Reed, one of the most respected people in finance. He was hired to become the CEO of Bank One over a respected internal candidate through a process that had little rational evaluation of his fit with the specific needs of the company. Dimon, like most outsider CEOs, was Unfiltered and so had a high probability of being an Outlier.

Triumph among the Ruins - Dimon in the 2008 Financial Crisis

Under Dimon’s leadership JPMorgan Chase was an active player in the mortgage securitization market. Dimon, however, had an abiding concern with preparing for a potential downturn, repeating that “[y]ou don’t run a business hoping you don’t have a recession.” He insisted that his team prepare the bank for the consequences of a downturn so severe the unemployment rate reached 10 percent.

⁷⁹⁵ McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 181-204, Shawn Tully, *In This Corner! The Contender* (Fortune Magazine, March 29 2006 [cited September 8 2010]); available from http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2006/04/03/8373068/.

⁷⁹⁶ On a personal note, I have met Dimon and was amazed by the force of his personality in a one-on-one setting. The extent of his personal magnetism is difficult to convey and matched by only a few other people I have ever encountered.

⁷⁹⁷ Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, 23, 27, 69, 160-161, 181.

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For the first two years of his tenure Dimon's leadership came under increasing fire as the share prices of rival firms outperformed that of his. As other firms boosted their profits by plunging more and more deeply into the mortgage market, Dimon ordered his own company to scale back. In 2006 JPMorgan Chase was ranked nineteenth among Wall Street firms for its issuance of asset-backed Collateralized Debt Obligations (CDOs), the financial instruments that would play a key role in the coming crisis. This lowly standing provoked still more criticism.⁷⁹⁸

Worse was to come. In October 2006 Dimon learned that subprime loans made by JPMorgan Chase were beginning to default much more often. He had his team sell more than \$12 billion of subprime mortgages it had originated and further curtail its exposure to the subprime market. At least in part because of these moves JPMC's investment banking profits declined by 0.1 percent in 2006 even as its rivals boomed. Even as Dimon was cutting back on JPMC's exposure risk, Chuck Prince, who had replaced Weill as the CEO of Citigroup, was explaining that he had chosen not to do so because "[a]s long as the music is playing, you've got to get up and dance." Dimon's magic touch seemed to have faded, although the bank's results rebounded in 2007.⁷⁹⁹

In 2008, however, as the financial system spun towards collapse, Dimon's previously-criticized conservatism left him and his company in a position of unique strength. Less leveraged than competitors and with far less tendency to use the sophisticated accounting gimmicks that proved disastrous during the crisis (again at Dimon's direct order), JPMC was left with, in Dimon's words, a "fortress balance sheet." He explained that the CEOs of other companies "feel a tremendous pressure to grow. Well, sometimes you can't grow. Sometimes you don't want to grow. In certain businesses, growth means you either take on bad clients, excessive risk, or too much leverage." Dimon was almost

⁷⁹⁸ McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 204-214.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 214-221, 228.

uniquely willing to zig when his competitors were zagging. Now he and his bank were perfectly positioned to seize opportunities that their competitors were far too overstretched to even consider.⁸⁰⁰

The first arrived in March. Dimon was contacted by Alan Schwarz, the CEO of Bear Stearns, a major investment bank. Schwarz told Dimon that his company had run out of cash and was on the point of collapse. The U.S. Treasury and the Federal Reserve decided to prevent Bear Stearns from collapsing, but Dimon led the only bank strong enough to take over the troubled investment bank, putting him in an enviable bargaining position. As his team scrambled over only a few days to analyze Bear Stearns \$500 billion balance sheet, he twice told Timothy Geithner, then head of the New York Federal Reserve and the coordinator of the government's rescue efforts, that he preferred not to do the deal. In the end he was able to force the government to agree to cover any losses JPMC suffered by buying Bear Stearns that were more than \$1 billion and less than \$29 billion, an enormous decrease in its potential risk. He struck again in September 2008. Dimon had long identified Washington Mutual (WaMu), a Seattle-based bank, as his number one takeover target. When subprime mortgage losses made WaMu desperate for additional capital and eventually on the point of bankruptcy, JPMC was able to buy only its assets for less than \$2 billion, leaving the federal government to cover its liabilities. JPMC paid only a small fraction of what the bank was worth, a noted contrast to other banks that made similar purchases. The deal made JPMC the largest bank in the United States when measured by total assets. Although JPMC, like every financial firm, took significant losses over the course of 2008, it was able to weather the storm in considerably better shape than most of its competitors.⁸⁰¹

JPMC took heavy losses during the financial crisis and Dimon and his team made a variety of costly mistakes. At the end of 2008, however, JPMC's investment bank was the top bank in each of the four categories that rank investment banks by their ability to raise capital for customers. While

⁸⁰⁰ Ibid., 227, 231, Andrew Ross Sorkin, *Too Big to Fail*, First Paperback ed. (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2010), 76-77.

⁸⁰¹ McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 244-300, Sorkin, *Too Big to Fail*, 77-78.

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Citigroup, the firm that fired him, spent the year staggering on the brink of bankruptcy with its stock price dropping to \$1 a share, JPMC cemented its position as the dominant bank in the United States. Dimon himself became perhaps the most powerful and respected person in the financial sector. His management of JPMC was singled out for praise by President Obama. By May 2009 JPMC had even supplanted Goldman Sachs as the bank at which college students would most like to work.⁸⁰²

Overall Dimon presents perhaps the best case for choosing an Unfiltered CEO. His conservatism, cost-cutting, and canny dealmaking left his company in far better shape than most of its competitors. Strikingly these qualities appear to have played little role in Bank One's Board of Directors' decision to hire him. It seems unlikely, however, that any member of that Board regrets their decision. Dimon's consistent willingness to take JPMC in a substantially different direction from that of its rivals – most strikingly Citigroup, the company which, in an alternate universe, he would have led – has served its shareholders and employees and, not incidentally, himself, remarkably well.

Assessment

The quest to choose the very best leader took Sunbeam and Bank One (which would eventually become JP Morgan Chase) in two very different directions. Dunlap destroyed Sunbeam while Dimon steered JPMC through the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression. Dunlap's story reaffirms Khurana's finding that in choosing outsider CEOs, "boards of directors generally ignore, or seriously underestimate, the risks that outside succession entails...hiring an outside CEO can, in some instances, actually threaten the survival of the organization itself."⁸⁰³ The incomplete information available to boards evaluating outsiders means they cannot filtering them the way they would insiders.

Dimon's story, however, modifies that finding somewhat. Boards hope that an outside CEO will entirely transform their business is not entirely illusory. He was filtered out at Citigroup, but Bank One's

⁸⁰² McDonald, *Last Man Standing*, 302-317.

⁸⁰³ Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, 188-190.

resurrection his career made him exactly the right person, in the right place, at the right time. Had the crisis not occurred – and nowhere in Dimon’s path to the CEO position is there even a hint that anyone involved expected one – he probably would not be considered a truly extraordinary leader, although it seems likely that he would have been much better than average. Attempts to choose great Unfiltered CEOs *can* succeed, but they involve taking the terrible risk of choosing a catastrophic one instead. Such a choice may sometimes be wise, but it should only be made with eyes wide open.

Science: Judah Folkman and the problems of “normal science”

In his seminal *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn introduced the concept of “normal science.” Normal science is conducted within the framework of an existing paradigm. It is a necessary part of the scientific project. Normal science experiments are, in their conception and execution, conservative and likely to meet with the approval of adherents to the dominant paradigm.⁸⁰⁴

Paradigms can only be overthrown by non-normal science. This consists of theories and experiments that show that some of a paradigm’s crucial assumptions or findings are incorrect. The number of such experiments that *could* be conducted is practically infinite. Most of them, however, will fail. Paradigms, particularly modern ones built on centuries of research, almost always have great explanatory power. When scientific experiments need approval before they can be conducted this can make non-normal science difficult to conduct. This occurs in the United States today when such experiments require support from grant-making institutions. Such institutions naturally do not want to support experiments and experimenters that are unlikely to be productive. Therefore they subject requests for support to peer review. Most peer reviewers are part of the dominant paradigm. They will believe that experiments which challenge that paradigm are likely – indeed, almost certain – to fail, and that they are therefore not worth funding. *Almost all of the time their belief will be correct.*

⁸⁰⁴ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

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Occasionally, however, research that would have led to a revolution in understanding will not be conducted. Review processes are thus likely to increase the average quality of research even as they eliminate the worst and best experiments. This is similar to Leader Filtration Processes, with scientists filtered instead of organizational leaders.

The problems created by eliminating Outlier scientists and experiments are thrown into particularly stark relief in the world of cancer research. Since Richard Nixon declared the “War on Cancer” in 1971 the National Cancer Institute (NCI) has spent more than \$105 billion against the disease, yet the death rate from cancer has dropped only slightly. Cancer researchers agree that the way the NCI’s reviewers award grants has become a significant obstacle to research, because it tends to support research that is likely to make incremental progress instead of potentially revolutionary proposals. The NCI’s reviewers work this way:

[B]ecause with too little money to finance most proposals, they are timid about taking chances on ones that might not succeed. The problem...is that projects that could make a major difference in cancer prevention and treatment are all too often crowded out because they are too uncertain...it has become lore among cancer researchers that some game-changing discoveries involved projects deemed too unlikely to succeed and were therefore denied federal grants...

There have been some efforts to change this system, including the creation of “challenge grants” meant to fund potentially groundbreaking research. Such programs, however, have more than 100 applicants for each grant that will be awarded. Strikingly, programs that use long-term incentives, instead of examining every experiment and avenue of research and grants that tolerate early failures and allow researchers flexibility are significantly more productive than the normal type of research support.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰⁵ Pierre Azoulay, Joshua S. Graff Zivin, and Gustavo Manso, "Incentives and Creativity: Evidence from the Academic Life Sciences," in *NBER Working Paper* (Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2009), Gina Kolata, "Grant System Leads Cancer Researchers to Play It Safe," *The New York Times*, June 28 2009, Josh Lerner and Julie Wulf, "Innovation and Incentives: Evidence from Corporate R&D," *Review of Economics & Statistics* 89 (2007).

It takes an extraordinarily gifted and determined Outlier scientist to break through such filtration. Judah Folkman is an example of one such scientist.⁸⁰⁶ Folkman was an Unfiltered entrant into the world of cancer research in every way, from his training to his sources of funding. He was thus able to pursue an avenue of research rejected by the mainstream cancer research community and make a significant contribution to the understanding of tumors.

Although Folkman is most known for his cancer research, he began his career as a surgeon. He went to Ohio State University as an undergraduate, drawn there by the opportunity to work in the surgical lab of a highly accomplished surgeon and researcher who taught there. He published his first academic paper at nineteen describing a system to cool the liver of patients during an operation that he had invented. Soon afterwards he became the first Ohio State graduate to attend Harvard Medical School. He was so young the minimum age requirement had to be waived. While he was at Harvard Medical School he invented the first implantable pacemaker. He did not patent it and his design became the basis for the first commercially-available implantable pacemakers eventually sold by 3M.⁸⁰⁷

Folkman graduated from Harvard Medical School in 1957 and became an intern at Massachusetts General Hospital, where he also had his surgical residency. In 1960 he was drafted into the Navy, which assigned him to do medical research. The Navy assigned him to examine the possibility of developing whole blood substitutes that could be used in transfusions. As part of his experiments he needed tissues that would grow outside of the body which could be used to test potential substitutes. Folkman decided to use cancer cells. He noticed that tumors fed on the blood substitute he and his partner had developed stopped growing as soon as they reached one millimeter in diameter. When transplanted into living animals, however, the tumor cells reproduced with no problems. Folkman believed that the tumors were not growing because they had no contact with the circulatory system.

⁸⁰⁶ Again on a personal note, I met Folkman shortly before his death. He remains perhaps the single most inspiring individual I have ever met, combining an extraordinary intellect with remarkable personal warmth and generosity.

⁸⁰⁷ Robert Cooke and M. Judah Folkman, *Dr. Folkman's War: Angiogenesis and the Struggle to Defeat Cancer* (New York, NY: Random House, 2001), 17-37.

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Large tumors in animals, by contrast, were normally filled with capillaries. Folkman was unsure of what this meant, but he was sure it was significant. His attention to blood vessels was highly unusual. Virtually all cancer research was concentrated on identifying chemicals which could kill cancer cells. The physiology and behavior of blood vessels was a topic of almost no interest. By 1965 Folkman believed that cancers in the body were expressing a factor – which he could not identify – that caused capillaries to grow towards them and that blocking this factor might stop tumors from growing.⁸⁰⁸

Folkman returned to Boston from the Navy in 1962. He was one of two surgical residents chosen to spend an extra year at Massachusetts General as chief resident in surgery – an enormously prestigious position given the hospital’s status as one of the finest in the world. In 1965 he completed his tenure as chief resident and joined Boston City Hospital as a surgeon, a position that included an instructorship at Harvard Medical School. In 1967, still only thirty-four, he was appointed chief of surgery at Boston Children’s Hospital, the best such hospital in the world, a position that carried with it an immediate appointment as a tenured full professor at Harvard Medical School.⁸⁰⁹

Folkman took advantage of his newfound status to continue his research on the role of blood vessel formation in tumor growth. He discovered that there had been virtually no previous research on the topic, forcing him to essentially invent an entirely new field. He dubbed both the field and the process it studied “angiogenesis.” He and his students engaged in a series of experiments that demonstrated, to his satisfaction, that his hypothesized capillary growth-stimulating factor did exist. He was unable to identify it, however, and his data convinced few others. These more conventional researchers were the ones who had to approve his grant requests and papers for publication. By 1966 only one journal had published an article by Folkman on angiogenesis. He also received one miniscule

⁸⁰⁸ Ibid., 38-69, Jocelyn Selim, *Folkman's Foresight* (American Association for Cancer Research, 2008 [cited September 10 2010]); available from <http://www.crmagazine.org/archive/fall2008/Pages/FolkmansForesight.aspx>.

⁸⁰⁹ Cooke and Folkman, *Dr. Folkman's War*, 58-64, 70-71.

grant from the National Institutes of Health. A document that was mistakenly forwarded to him included the telling marginalia: "This is the limit. We do not want Folkman to build an empire."⁸¹⁰

Folkman began to be attacked by mainstream cancer researchers and even by his colleagues at Children's Hospital who felt that his cancer research was irrelevant to his job as a surgeon. By 1972 only two of his papers on angiogenesis had been accepted for publication and animosity among cancer researchers who felt that Folkman, as a surgeon, was unqualified to engage in cancer research was building in intensity. Folkman himself said that his idea "was met with almost universal hostility and ridicule and disbelief by other scientists."⁸¹¹

Most worryingly, the rejection of Folkman's theories by mainstream cancer research meant that it was extremely difficult for him to fund his research through conventional channels. In response he turned to a unique outside resource. Instead of relying on government funding, Folkman persuaded Monsanto to support his efforts in 1974. In the process he created the first-ever partnership between a corporation and a university for biomedical research.⁸¹²

In 1977 the cancer establishment's rejection of Folkman and his theory reached a climax. The announcement of the agreement with Monsanto led to a *Science* magazine investigation. The article quoted anonymous sources, including grant reviewers, who doubted the value of the angiogenesis research. When he applied for grants he continued to be declined, with one member of a grant committee asking: "Haven't we supported Folkman long enough on this hopeless search?" His applications were given "special" scrutiny, with a member of a review committee that had turned him down visiting his lab and saying his "work was nonsense and that something so far out should not be supported." The hostility became so pronounced that once when Folkman got up to speak at a conference for experimental biologists 100 members of the audience left. He even found it difficult to

⁸¹⁰ Ibid., 78-90.

⁸¹¹ Ibid., 119-124, M. Judah Folkman, *Foundations for Cancer Therapy* (Academy of Achievement, November 15, 2007 1999 [cited September 10 2010]); available from <http://www.achievement.org/autodoc/page/foI0int-1>.

⁸¹² Cooke and Folkman, *Dr. Folkman's War*.

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recruit people to work in his lab, as promising students were warned that working with him would be a dead end for their careers. Twenty-five years later Harold Varmus, the Nobel laureate director of the National Institutes of Health, introduced him by saying “[t]he first time I ever heard of Judah Folkman, he was described as this guy in a hair shirt working on an island in Boston Harbor.”⁸¹³

Outside criticism of Folkman became so severe that Children’s Hospital turned against him. As chief surgeon he was a prominent representative of the hospital and many felt that his work was discrediting all research done there. His colleagues demanded an outside investigation of his work while the hospital’s Board of Trustees became hostile to him. The outside review concluded that Folkman’s research “was unlikely to be of great relevance,” a conclusion that was supported by most of his peers. In 1979 Children’s gave him the choice of either stepping down as chief of surgery or abandoning his research in angiogenesis. Folkman considered leaving Harvard, but believed that doing so would cripple the nascent field. He abandoned surgery forever.⁸¹⁴

Ironically, Children’s moved against him just as his ideas were gaining traction. In 1978 Folkman recruited Bruce Zetter, a young vascular biologist, to join his lab despite opposition from Zetter’s mentors. They conducted an experiment that proved Folkman’s hypothesized growth-promoting factor was real, even if they could not identify it. In 1979 the results were published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, boosting the credibility of Folkman’s ideas. In 1980 Zetter and other members of Folkman’s lab showed that it was possible to block angiogenesis. Suddenly Folkman’s ideas were accepted. In 1989 researchers working for Genentech, a biotechnology company, identified the growth-promoting factor Folkman had first hypothesized twenty-four years earlier. In 1998 *The New England Journal of Medicine* published the first report of a patient whose cancer was put into complete remission by use of an angiogenesis inhibitor. The first drug used in the treatment of cancer that targets angiogenesis, Avastin, was approved by the FDA in 2004. When Folkman died of a heart attack on

⁸¹³ *Ibid.*, 181-183.

⁸¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 183-187.

January 14, 2008, more than ten drugs based on his ideas were on the market and more than 1.2 million patients were receiving anti-angiogenic treatments.⁸¹⁵

From the perspective of cancer research, Folkman was an Unfiltered Outlier. He was not formally trained in oncology. The filtration processes meant to assess research rejected him and forced him to seek unconventional sources of support. Folkman believed that his background was crucial to his willingness to stick with his theory because as a surgeon he observed tumors bleeding, while the scientists who were criticizing him only saw tumors after they had been removed from the body and drained of blood. Folkman's tale is a success, but it is remembered because he was a success. Most ideas rejected by the scientific community are false. Most who wager their career on the chance idea that the preeminent figures in their field are wrong will lose. Folkman, though, was right and without him angiogenesis' crucial role in tumors – and in a variety of other processes – would have taken much longer to discover. His most abnormal science made him an extraordinarily successful Outlier.⁸¹⁶

Conclusion

All eight cases in this chapter support the idea that the central dynamics of Leader Filtration Theory have power in a wide variety of situations and circumstances. Taken together they display many of the characteristics expected of Outlier leaders, from charisma to personality disorders to short-term thinking to risk acceptance and over-optimism. All eight were relatively unfiltered in their rise to power. Napoleon and Mao overthrew governments. Stalin participated in a revolutionary movement and took power soon after its founder died. Hitler held no offices of any authority before becoming Chancellor.

⁸¹⁵ Catherine Arnst, *Inside Judah Folkman's Lab* (BusinessWeek, June 6 2005 [cited September 11 2010]); available from http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_23/b3936016.htm, Cooke and Folkman, *Dr. Folkman's War*, 188-198, *Remembering Judah Folkman: A Bright Light*, (Children's Hospital, 2008 [cited September 10 2010]); available from http://www.childrenshospital.org/cfapps/research/data_admin/Site2580/mainpageS2580P0.html, Selim, *Folkman's Foresight, Timeline: Highlights of Angiogenesis Research in the Folkman Lab*, (Children's Hospital, 2008 [cited September 10 2010]); available from http://www.childrenshospital.org/cfapps/research/data_admin/Site2580/mainpageS2580P5.html.

⁸¹⁶ Cooke and Folkman, *Dr. Folkman's War*, 5-6, Folkman, *Foundations for Cancer Therapy*.

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Fisher was promoted over the heads of his peers by civilian intervention. Dunlap and Dimon were brought into their companies from outside after superficial examinations. And Folkman was not trained as a cancer researcher and got the support for his research from unprecedented sources.

None of these cases go into enough depth to prove the applicability of LFT to the situation they examine. Taken together, however, the fact that all eight show characteristics predicted by LFT suggests that it does, in fact, apply across the political realm and far outside of it. Decision-makers with a role in the selection of leaders, or even of avenues of research, should take LFT into account. They will be faced with two questions. First, how willing should they be to select Unfiltered, and therefore likely Outlier, leaders? Second, how can they maximize the chances of getting successful Outliers? Some answers to those two questions are the topic of the final chapter.

CHAPTER 11: THE TRAGEDY - AND TRIUMPH - OF LEADERSHIP

Organizations inevitably wish to choose leaders who will maximize their performance.

Leadership Filtration Theory (LFT) suggests that there are two questions they must answer when trying to do so. The first is what an organization's situation and characteristics say about the desirable tightness of the Leader Filtration Process (LFP). The second is how, if at all possible, to ensure that the effects of Outlier leaders are positive. The answer to the first question depends on the organization's ability to tolerate poor leader performance and the distribution of its potential outcomes. The answer to the second depends on properly understanding what is meant by good or best leaders and what qualities they are likely to have.

When organizations are vulnerable to low-probability catastrophic losses they should ensure they have a tight LFP. When they have the potential for low-probability large magnitude gains, on the other hand, they should be willing to gamble on Outliers. Similarly, organizations facing disaster should be willing to turn to an Outlier while those in a strong position should stick with Modals. Finally, those outside the organization who have the power to influence the tightness of the LFP should favor looser LFPs the greater their ability to capture the benefits from positive Outliers and mitigate the downsides of negative ones.

Increasing the odds of selecting beneficial Outliers is a difficult task. Those tasked with choosing leaders can improve their odds in a variety of ways, however. They should try to avoid Outliers with unearned advantages in their previous career like inherited wealth or family connections as these advantages can give the appearance of competence where none exists. They should evaluate Outliers' characteristics carefully to see if they match the particular circumstance in the organization because an Outlier who would be a great success in one situation could be a disastrous failure in another. This

means they should also be willing and able to remove Outlier leaders when circumstances change. They should not expect Outliers with undesirable beliefs to moderate in power. In fact they should expect the opposite and so should be diligent in preventing any such candidates from taking power. They should attempt, where possible, to choose Outliers from among candidates who have been Modal successes in other organizations or contexts. Finally, however, they should acknowledge that truly great leaders are likely to be different in kind, not just in degree, and look for the rare combination of supreme self-confidence and humility that marks those rare Outliers likely to be capable of greatness without a corresponding risk of failure.

Leader Filtration Processes in Context

Choosing a single leader can involve simply picking an individual, but over the long term organizations of any type must create institutions that choose leaders.⁸¹⁷ These institutions make up an organization's LFP. Three key features of the organization's context determine an LFP's ideal level of filtration: 1) The shape of the distribution of organizational outcomes, particularly the distance of the positive and negative tails from the mode; 2) The current competitive position of the organization; and 3) The objectives of the organization beyond simple survival and the ability of the organization's creators to capture the benefits from positive Outliers and minimize the costs from negatives ones.

Possible Organizational Outcomes

Most organizations exist in a fat-tailed world. There are many things that can happen to them and the probability of these events occurring is described by a distribution that stretches very far from the most likely outcome. Such organizations can experience low-probability high-consequence events – events with a very large magnitude that can, by themselves, determine their fate. Nassim Taleb, in two

⁸¹⁷ Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 126.

enormously influential books, dubbed such events “Black Swans.”⁸¹⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 3, extreme Outlier leaders can be thought of as “Black Swan” leaders; they are leaders whose probability of gaining power is low but who have a very high impact when they do. The ends of both tails, however, need not stretch equally far from the mean. Some organizations are well-placed to benefit from positive Black Swan leaders but insulated from negative ones. These organizations should have a high degree of tolerance for Unfiltered leaders. Other organizations are in the opposite situation and should thus expose all candidates to extremely high levels of filtration.

Institutions that support scientific research or venture capital funds are examples of the first class of organization. The worst case scenario for any individual grant is that the experiment or experimenter it supports does not pan out. A venture capitalist making an investment can lose no more than the amount of money invested. Losses are strictly limited while gains can approach infinity. The more unexpected the result from a scientific experiment is, the larger its implications are. Only a surprising result can overturn accepted theories. The more surprising the result is, the more firmly-established is the theory being contradicted, and the larger the implications if it is overthrown. Similarly, when a venture capitalist makes an investment they are buying a portion of the company. The share of the company they receive depends on the size of their investment and on the value of the company. The company’s value depends upon its probability of success. The lower the probability of success is, the lower the value of the company. Thus the most profitable investments are those in which a company that was viewed as very likely to fail actually succeeds, allowing those who bought in when it had a very low valuation to make outside profits. Both institutions should craft LFPs that produce a relatively high rate of Unfiltered leaders, as a single extraordinary success can more than compensate for a large number of limited failures.

⁸¹⁸ Taleb, *The Black Swan*, Taleb, *Foiled by Randomness*.

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Most states and large corporations, on the other hand, are in the opposite position. The harm that can be done by a single catastrophic Outlier is vast. For some states in some situations a single sufficiently poor leader could impoverish or immiserate the population, end the state's existence as an independent entity, or even engage in genocide. A large and established corporation can be destroyed by the decisions made by a single untrammelled Outlier. Under all but the most exceptional circumstances, however, the good that a state leader can do is limited. The economy can grow only so fast. Other states will counter his or her moves. Similarly, a large corporation's potential for growth is limited both by virtue of its size and by the existence of competitors who will imitate even its most extraordinary innovations. Such organizations should establish tight LFPs that minimize the chance of choosing a negative Outlier. Popper suggested that political institutions should be arranged so as to prevent the worst leaders from doing great damage.⁸¹⁹ LFT suggests the additional, or alternative, approach of attempting to ensure they never get power in the first place.

Competitive Position of the Organization

Organizations on the brink of catastrophe face different incentives than those at the height of their success. Leaders, when faced with great defeats, may gamble to recoup their losses in the hope of retaining power. This "gambling for resurrection" can greatly increase the total costs borne by the state they lead.⁸²⁰ When an organization is on the brink of catastrophe, however, such gambling can be an optimal strategy. Its old leaders and LFP have nearly destroyed it. If the odds are already against its survival even the worst leader cannot produce a worse outcome. Picking an Outlier who might transform the situation could be the best option.

It is important to note, however, that this does not mean that organizations that are simply facing difficulties should turn to an Outlier. A bad situation can become a worse one. Small, medium-

⁸¹⁹ Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 121.

⁸²⁰ Downs and Rocke, "Conflict, Agency, and Gambling for Resurrection: The Principal-Agent Problem Goes to War."

sized, or even large losses are infinitely preferable to catastrophic defeats. Desperation, not discomfort, should be the signal of the need to gamble on an Outlier.

Organizational Objectives

Organizations are means, not ends. Companies attempt to ensure their survival, but they were created by their founders to generate wealth, not to survive. The legal framework in which they operate was crafted by a government seeking to maximize economic output, not simply to allow corporations to profit. Governments themselves are agents – ideally the agents of the population of a state as a whole, sometimes the agents of elites or even a single individual, but agents just the same. Thus the interests of the creators or beneficiaries of the organization may diverge from those of the organization itself and this divergence has implications for how the organization's LFP should be structured.

The best- and worst-performing organizations will tend to have loose LFPs and Outlier leaders. Thus the ability of organizations' creators to capture the gains from beneficial Outliers and minimize the losses from failed ones should influence their willingness to accept Outlier leaders. The more organizations that can be created and the more quickly the resources of failed organizations can be redistributed to successful ones, the looser LFPs should be.

Imagine, for example, a state influencing how loose or tight LFPs should be for all domestic corporations above a certain size. This could be accomplished by changing laws on corporate governance. That state adopts laws that encourage loose LFPs and Outlier CEOs. If the state's economy is large and diverse enough then some of its corporations will be headed by successful Outliers. If it has also limited barriers to entry and prevented managers from maintaining control of their companies when it is not in their shareholders' interest, the resources of failed companies might be rapidly redistributed to successful ones. In that case the benefits from successful Outliers are likely to outweigh the costs of failed ones – particularly if those successful Outliers have further success in competition with companies in other markets that do not allow as wide a variance in behavior and performance.

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A small economy or one lacking in diversity, however, is likely to face a very different set of incentives. There fostering Outliers may mean that no companies have a successful Outlier, leaving some of an economy's largest companies crippled by bad leadership with no countervailing benefits. In this situation the costs of loose LFPs are likely to far outstrip their benefits.

Picking Successful Outliers

LFT suggests that organizations attempting to choose the very best leaders are faced with a quandary. They also wish to avoid choosing very poor leaders so they examine all candidates carefully and put them through a long testing period. This should eliminate candidates who will be catastrophic failures. It also eliminates the very best leaders, those who challenge the premises and approaches of the current system. Intense filtration may improve the average quality of leaders, but, as Popper pointed out, it "is bound to select mediocrities." This suggests that the task of choosing the very best leaders may be "beyond what can be reasonably demanded from a mere institution..."⁸²¹ Nevertheless, five tentative approaches towards choosing good leaders in general, and positive Outliers in particular, can be drawn from LFT. They are: 1) Avoiding false signals; 2) Matching leaders to situation and removing them from power when the situation changes; 3) Taking seriously statements of intention made by Unfiltered leaders before they take power; 4) Choosing Unfiltered leaders who have been successful Filtered leaders in other contexts; and 5) Carefully evaluating the characteristics of potential Unfiltered leaders.

Avoiding False Signals

Leadership Filtration systems can be bypassed, allowing Unfiltered leaders to come to power, in a variety of ways. Significant personal achievements in a short period may be due to luck or qualities

⁸²¹ Khurana, *Searching for a Corporate Savior*, 210, Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, 126, 134-125.

unrelated to performance in government (or the CEO's office, etc.) but they nonetheless are an indicator of capability, if not a very reliable one. Other filter-bypassing qualities, however, provide no such useful information. Family wealth and connections, for example, suggest, if anything, that the candidate who possesses them is *less* capable than their record would make them appear. Just as they make it easier to attain high office, they make each achievement gained before that easier to achieve. Thus they degrade the informational value of a candidate's entire career. Candidates with such unearned advantages are particularly likely to be negative Outliers. A similar role can be played by offices with impressive titles but little power or responsibility.

Matching Leaders to Situations

Part of the difficulty inherent in attempting to choose the "best" leader is a product of confusion over what the "best" leader means. This might seem obvious. The best leader is the one who would, if chosen, take the organization to more success than any other. This simple answer founders, however, on the uncertainty of the future. It is clear from the thirteen leaders profiled in the previous chapters that the *very same characteristics* that lead to success in one situation can lead to failure in another. Winston Churchill was exactly the right man to face Hitler, but he was exactly the wrong one to deal with Gandhi. Fisher's innovations transformed the Royal Navy but might, in a less conservative institution, have steered it in the wrong direction. If the circumstances that determine whether a leader succeeds or fails cannot be known at the time he or she is chosen, the best leaders are those whose characteristics exactly match the situation, and those same characteristics can in different circumstances lead to disaster, the very concept of choosing a "best" leader seems to be something that has meaning only retrospectively.

Sometimes, however, the right set of characteristics may be clear. Abandoning the generic concept of the right leader in favor of the right leader *in a particular situation* may help in choosing the right Outlier. This means, equally, that when the situation changes, the person who was the right

Outlier can become the wrong one. Churchill's defeat in a general election almost as soon as Germany surrendered suggests that the British public might well have understood this in 1945. Matching leaders to situations implies more than just choosing the right person. It means removing leaders – even very successful ones – as soon as they no longer have the right characteristics for the job. Given the difficulty of removing successful leaders this suggests that Outliers, in particular, should be chosen only in combination with limits on their term in office.

Evaluating Pre-leadership Behavior and Intent

A fourth implication of LFT is that it is possible to learn something about leaders' behavior in power from their behavior before they gain it. There is ample psychological evidence, however, that acquiring power tends to change people's behavior, and that it does so in consistent ways. Groups usually give power to those who display empathy and social skills. Once power is gained those who have it tend to act more impulsively and less empathetically. People with power are "more likely to act like sociopaths" and dehumanize those who lack it.⁸²² One of the advantages of a tight filtration process is that people can be evaluated *after* they have already gained significant power and thus after at least some of these personality changes have already occurred. If most leaders have historically been Modals then the shift between their behavior before and after becoming leader is likely to have been relatively small. This may cause people to misjudge the extent of the shift in behavior an Unfiltered leader will display once he or she is given power. Modals will usually have had significant power before they finally become leader of the entire organization, so the shift in their behavior is likely to be relatively small. Unfiltered leaders, however, may have never had significant power before becoming leader and so may shift dramatically.

⁸²² Dacher Keltner, "The Power Paradox," *Greater Good*, Winter 2007-2008, Joris Lammers and Diederik A. Stapel, "Power Increases Dehumanization," *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 14, no. 1 (2011).

This suggests that Unfiltered leaders, far from being moderated by power, are likely to see any underlying personality defects exaggerated by it, and exaggerated far more than many observers will anticipate. Thus their earlier behavior, ideology, and preferences should be examined carefully. Any signs of radical ideologies or personality disorders should be reason to disqualify them from leadership, even when that evidence that would be dismissed in reference to a Modal leader.

Choosing from among successful Modals

Consistently choosing the “best” leader may be impossible. Increasing the odds of choosing a good leader who might be great and who will not be a disaster might not be. Of the leaders profiled here, at least three of the Outliers seem to have had high upsides but limited downsides. Those three are Lincoln, Dimon, and Folkman. Absent the Civil War it is unlikely that Lincoln would have been remembered as a great President. There is nothing in his character or actions, however, to suggest that he would have been anything less than a good one under any circumstances. Without the financial crisis it is unlikely that Dimon would have been considered a great CEO. Even without the crisis, however, nothing in his record suggests that he would have been a bad one. At worst it seems likely he would have been above average. Finally, Folkman’s career demonstrated, over and over again, that his insights, no matter how unorthodox, were genuinely superior to those of most other scientists.

Dimon and Folkman share the interesting characteristic that even though they were Unfiltered in one context (Bank One and cancer research, respectively) they were supremely high-performing Modals in another (Citigroup and surgery). The contrast between Dunlap and Dimon’s careers before they became Outliers is particularly revealing. Dunlap moved from organization to organization. His tactics never changed, but he always left the consequences of them behind. Dimon worked with Sandy Weill from the moment he left business school until the day he was forced out of Citigroup. Such a long period of success in a single organization does not guarantee brilliance, but it does seem a likely guarantee of competence. Similarly, Folkman’s remarkable success as a surgeon and researcher

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suggested that his ideas, even if wrong, were unlikely to be entirely ill-founded. He had proven his ability to have extraordinary insights. It may not have translated to cancer research, but the underlying competence likely did. Even Lincoln's rise from a poor farming family to a figure of national prominence indicated that he had substantial underlying gifts.

All of this suggests that Outliers should be chosen from those who were Modal successes in other contexts. Making the choice from that pool seems likely to minimize the risk of choosing an Outlier whose incompetence, personality disorders, or other issues render them incapable of success. It is striking that the catastrophic Outliers profiled here – Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Dunlap – seem to have had *no* successes in any field other than the ones which made them famous. Even Dunlap's success at the companies he led before Sunbeam was revealed to be largely illusory, while the other three either had no significant non-revolutionary career or failed entirely when they attempted one. Given their pathologies it is difficult to see how they could have been successful in any other context. Requiring that Unfiltered candidates for leadership have demonstrated their ability to be a Modal success in a different setting seems likely to have substantial benefits and few downsides.

Personal Characteristics – The Combination of Opposites

The Outlier leader does what others would not do, even when others advise him or her not to do so. To make this sort of choice when the stakes are high takes enormous confidence. Imagine being Lincoln, just thrust into the Presidency and advised to cede Fort Sumter, and deciding not to based only on his own reading of the situation. Sometimes, however, the Outlier's advisers will be right. When that is true, the *great* Outlier leader will have the humility to defer to their judgment.

Good leaders undoubtedly have any number of qualities, ranging from intelligence to empathy, which have been the subject of enormous amounts of research. LFT suggests, however, that the difference between good leaders and great leaders is not one of degree but one of kind. Great leaders may have all of those qualities. What they also have, however, is an almost-impossible combination of

supreme confidence and supreme humility. Of the thirteen people profiled in this dissertation, two seem to embody this combination: Judah Folkman and Abraham Lincoln.

Folkman certainly did not lack for confidence. He spent years challenging the cancer research establishment despite untold harsh reviews and rebuffs, despite even the unwilling and premature end of his career as a surgeon. At the same time, however, he had the humility to know that he might have been wrong. Folkman acknowledged that “[t]here’s a fine line between persistence and obstinacy, and you never know when you’ve crossed it.” Despite this acknowledgement he spent more than a decade searching for results that verified his theory of tumor behavior. He knew: “If your idea succeeds everybody says you’re persistent. If it doesn’t succeed, you’re stubborn.”⁸²³

Even more than Folkman, Lincoln embodies this combination. This is best expressed in his rhetorical masterpiece, his Second Inaugural Address. Lincoln worked carefully to craft the speech but, unlike his First Inaugural, he does not seem to have sought advice or comments on the text before delivering it.⁸²⁴ Every word of his speech is fraught with meaning. It followed four years of a war far more terrible than any the United States has seen, before or since. The war was winding its way towards a victorious ending, but the fighting was not yet over. He concluded:

Fondly do we hope – fervently do we pray – that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue, until all the wealth piled by the bond-man’s two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash, shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said “the judgments of the Lord, are true and righteous altogether.”

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation’s wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan – to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.⁸²⁵

⁸²³ Cooke and Folkman, *Dr. Folkman's War*, 5-6, Folkman, *Foundations for Cancer Therapy*.

⁸²⁴ White Jr., *Lincoln's Greatest Speech*, 48-51.

⁸²⁵ Fehrenbacher, ed., *Abraham Lincoln: Speeches and Writings 1859-1865*, 687.

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The beginning and ending of this speech are an eloquent plea for peace. They are the words of a leader who wishes nothing more than to restore harmony.

In the midst of that call for peace, however, is the stern call of the most implacable war leader. “Until every drop of blood drawn with the lash; shall be paid by another drawn with the sword...” This is a call to war, and to ruthless, terrible war, the likes of which few American Presidents have ever uttered.

The duality is perfectly captured in a single clause. Lincoln calls for “firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right...” The first of these is a proclamation of terrible resolution, a determination to see things through whatever the cost or the consequences. The second is a statement of utter humility, the acknowledgement by a man who had plunged his nation into a conflict that cost tens of thousands of lives that he might have been wrong. It is possible to imagine George W. Bush saying the first part, but not the second. It is possible to imagine Jimmy Carter saying the second part, but not the first. Lincoln had many qualities associated with a great leader, but it is his ability to combine these two directly opposed traits into an integrated whole that made him the most positive of Outliers. F. Scott Fitzgerald famously said that “[t]he test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.” Roger L. Martin suggested that the best leaders are those who have this capacity and who, because they do, are able to reject a false choice and create a new option.⁸²⁶

Leadership Filtration Theory comes to a subtly different conclusion. Great leaders are not just able to hold two opposed ideas in mind simultaneously. They mix two profoundly opposed character traits – the most extreme self-confidence and the most profound humility – into a single individual. They are resolved enough to reject advice and uncertain enough to take it and, somehow, they know

⁸²⁶ Roger Martin, “Barack Obama's Integrative Brain,” in *Roger Martin* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review, 2010), Roger L. Martin, *The Opposable Mind: How Successful Leaders Win through Integrative Thinking* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 2007).

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when they should be each. The paradox of leadership is thus that great leaders must somehow contain, within themselves, these two fundamentally opposed principles.

The quest for great leaders thus requires the resolution of a paradox and, because it does, that quest must usually end in tragedy. LFT shows that trying to find the best leaders will result, almost inevitably, in choosing the worst ones as well. Most of the time those failed leaders will do far more harm than the best ones could ever repair. Even abandoning the quest for great leaders cannot avert the tragedy. An organization with a Modal leader facing a new situation that its normal processes are not prepared for, or one facing a hostile organization with an exceptionally capable Outlier leader, is one at a severe disadvantage, and likely to be visited by the tragedy in a different guise.

The escape – the potential triumph of leadership – lies in the discovery or creation of leaders who can resolve the paradox; who can be both confident and humble as the situation requires. Holding leaders to such an impossible standard is, by any measure, unfair. In today's world, however, when decisions of unimaginable complexity and importance face leaders, when choices whose consequences can be measured in billions of dollars or untold lives are made every day, holding them to any lesser standard is unthinkable. In 1751 Thomas Gray wrote:

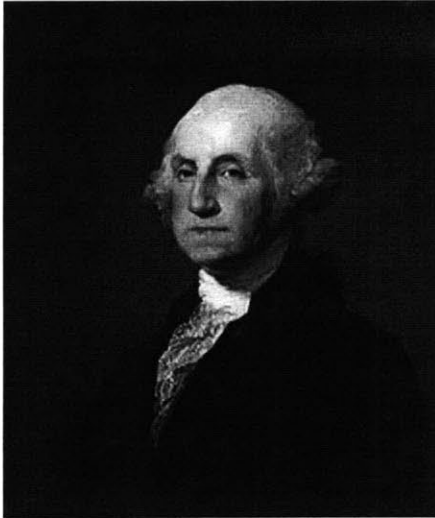
The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, / And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er
gave, / Awaits alike th'inevitable hour: - / The paths of glory lead but to the grave.⁸²⁷

That was true then and it is true now, but there is no option but to ask leaders of all types and circumstances to walk those paths and find the triumph of leadership somewhere along them.

⁸²⁷ Gray, *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*.

APPENDIX: CODINGS OF U.S. PRESIDENTS

George Washington: *Unfiltered*



Washington is, in some ways, the most difficult of all the Presidents to classify, and in some ways the easiest. He was appointed to command the Continental Army on July 3, 1775 and resigned his commission on December 23, 1783, giving him a time in office as a General Officer of approximately 8.5 years.⁸²⁸ Apart from extremely brief periods as a representative in the Continental Congress, this was his only time in a position equivalent to a “filtering position” before his election to the Presidency in 1789. The Presidency was, of course, shaped around the Framers’ appraisal of Washington and their knowledge that he would be the first to fill the office.⁸²⁹ He had already willingly given up power once, something which makes him unique among leaders of violent revolutions to this day. In some ways, no person has ever been more thoroughly evaluated before they occupy the Presidency. He had, however, little significant experience in elected office. His contemporaries’ view of him as an heroic figure is without equivalent – indeed, virtually unimaginable – in today’s world, which made his ascension to power a certainty as soon as he decided that he wished it.⁸³⁰ As the first holder of the Presidency, he could not be measured against the known requirements of the office. The combination of his limited experience in political (as opposed to military) office, his position as a

⁸²⁸ Robert Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1977), 347-348.

⁸²⁹ Bowen, *Miracle at Philadelphia: The Story of the Constitutional Convention, May to September, 1787*, Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington*.

⁸³⁰ Brookhiser, *Founding Father: Rediscovering George Washington*.

national hero, and the newness of the American regime, however, makes him not just an Outlier, but an extreme one. Washington simply has little or nothing in common with his contemporaries, successors, or the founding leaders of other regimes. In my opinion he is *sui generis*, a figure so unique that theorizing about him is virtually impossible, but using the lens of LFT, he remains Unfiltered.

John Adams: *Filtered*



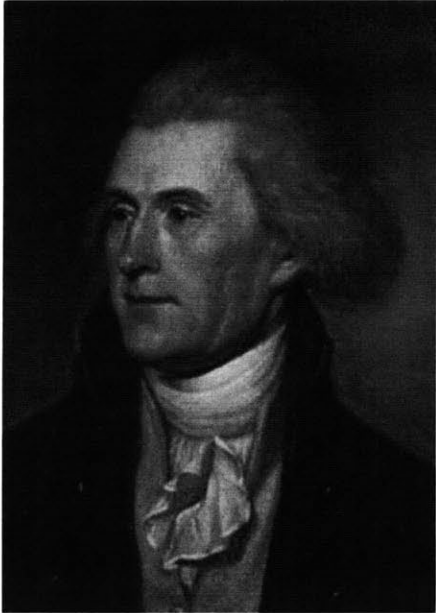
Adams may be the most experienced man ever to be elected to the Presidency, making him clearly the first Filtered President.

He was elected a delegate to the 1st Continental Congress in September 1774, a delegate to the 2nd Continental Congress in May 1775 (where he nominated Washington for Commander in Chief of the Continental Army), was Commissioner to France from 1778 to 1780, was minister to Holland from 1780 to 1785, minister to England from 1785 to 1788, and Vice President from

1789 to 1797.⁸³¹ Given the special circumstances of the Revolution, the enormous authority delegated to him as the American representative to various European countries in an era when rapid communications were impossible, and the scrutiny placed on his efforts there, his Revolutionary-era appointments are unquestionably filtering positions. This gives him a total time in filtering offices of 23 years, making him perhaps the most Filtered of Filtered Presidents.

⁸³¹ McCullough, *John Adams*, Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 5-6.

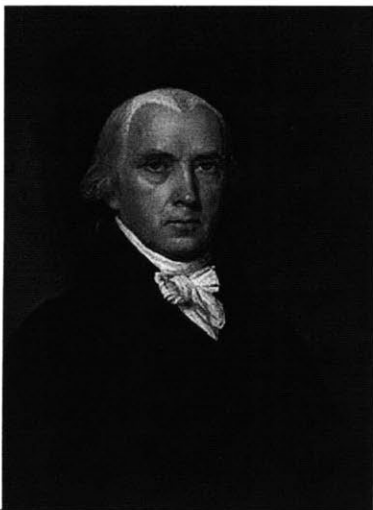
Thomas Jefferson: *Filtered*



Jefferson too had a remarkable level of experience before his election to the Presidency. Despite his formidable, and well-deserved, reputation as an intellectual, however, he actually wrote only one book, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. He was a delegate to the Second Continental Congress from June 1775 to September 1776, was Governor of Virginia from 1779 to 1781, a Congressman under the Articles of Confederation from November 1783 to May 1784, was Minister Plenipotentiary to France – effectively the Secretary of State, given the importance

of the Colonies' relationship with France – from 1784 to 1789, Secretary of State from 1790 until January 1, 1794, and Vice President from 1797 to 1801.⁸³² This gives him a total time in filtering offices of 16 years, clearly making him *Filtered* despite his extraordinary talents and reputation.

James Madison: *Filtered*



Madison, like his predecessors, was remarkably well-prepared for his election to the Presidency. Even apart from his role as chief architect of the Constitution, he had been a member of the Continental Congress from 1780 to 1783 and 1786 to 1788, was a member of Congress from 1789 to 1797, and was Secretary of State from 1801 to

⁸³² Ellis, *American Sphinx: The Character of Thomas Jefferson*, Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 189-190.

1809.⁸³³ This gave him a total of 19 years in filtering offices before his election to the Presidency, making him clearly as Filtered.

James Monroe: *Filtered*

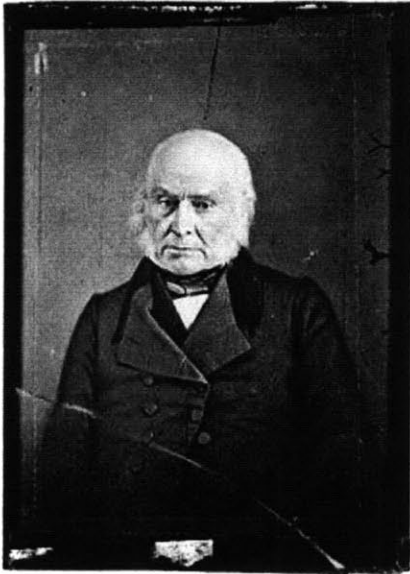


Monroe continues the early American theme of remarkably experienced Presidents. He was in the Continental Congress from 1783 to 1786, was a Senator from November 1790 to May 1794, Governor of Virginia from 1799 to 1802, Secretary of State from 1811 to 1817 and simultaneously Secretary of War in 1813 and 1814. Monroe comes in second only to Washington in his dominance in the Electoral College, having captured all but one Electoral Vote in both his elections.⁸³⁴ This gives him a total of 14 years in filtering offices before his election to the Presidency, an election that was virtually guaranteed by the collapse of the Federalists. Nevertheless, 14 years followed by a normal election is enough to clearly make him Filtered.

⁸³³ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 239-240, Wills, *James Madison*.

⁸³⁴ Gary Hart, *James Monroe, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2005), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 257.

John Quincy Adams: *Filtered*



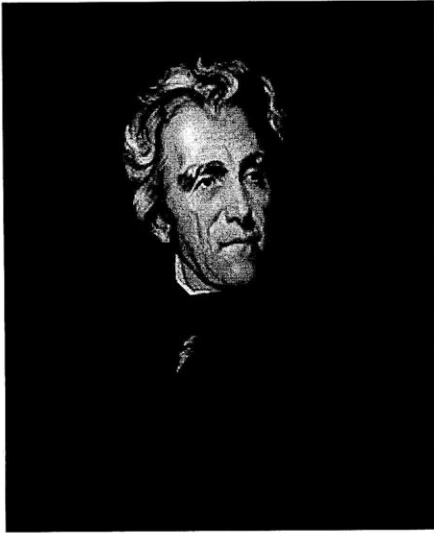
John Quincy Adams, like his predecessors, was extraordinarily prepared for the Presidency. He was a Senator from 1803 to 1808 and Secretary of State from 1817 to 1825, giving him a total of 13 years in filtering offices before the Presidency.⁸³⁵ His election was somewhat disputed as it was the second, and last, of the two Presidential elections to be settled by the House of Representatives, and he was “the first president who failed to obtain a plurality either of the electoral or popular vote.”⁸³⁶

Quincy Adams was also, of course, the first President to gain his prominence at least in part because of his family’s political success. Both of these factors would normally suggest a position as an outlier, but given that the fact that he did win the Presidency through established, though seldom-used, Constitutional procedures and his extraordinary experience – he filled a variety of other significant offices before becoming Senator and Secretary of State which, even if they are not normally considered filtering offices nevertheless have some evaluative weight – he belong squarely in the camp of Filtered Presidents.

⁸³⁵ Robert Vincent Remini, *John Quincy Adams, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2002), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 6-7.

⁸³⁶ Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 63.

Andrew Jackson: *Filtered*



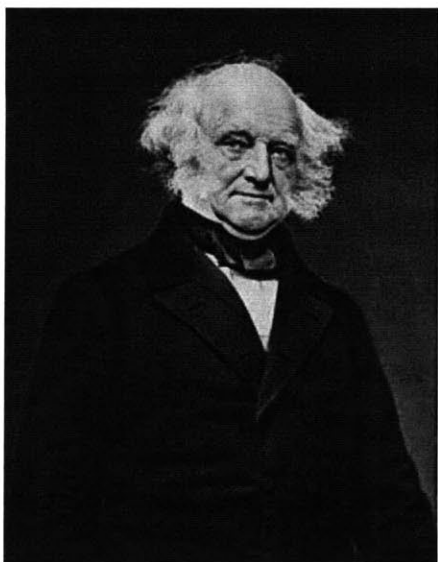
Jackson is probably the most debatable coding among all 40 Presidents, and I would be comfortable putting him in either category. Like Washington, his most important pre-Presidential office was military and he was elected in part on his status as a national hero – in his case, as the victor of the Battle of New Orleans. Unlike Washington, he also had significant experience in elected offices and he certainly did not enjoy Washington’s level of public adulation.⁸³⁷ He was a Member of Congress from

December 1796 to March 1797 and a Senator from March 1797 to April 1798. Although not included as a filtering office, Jackson was also elected as a judge to Tennessee’s Supreme Court and served from 1798 to 1804. He was a Major General in Tennessee’s Volunteer Infantry from 1812 to 1814, made a Brigadier General in the Regular Army in 1814 and a Major General in 1816. He served as Governor of Florida in 1821 and returned to the Senate from 1823 to 1825. He was defeated for the Presidency in 1824 by John Quincy Adams despite receiving a plurality of electoral votes, then victorious in the election of 1828.⁸³⁸ Not counting his time on the Tennessee Supreme Court, this gives him a period of 8 years in filtering offices, less than any of his predecessors and many of his successors, but much more than extreme outliers like Lincoln or Wilson. Given his service in both military and political positions, however, and the fact that his national hero status, although important, was not enough to eliminate significant electoral opposition, as it was with Washington, I coded him as Filtered. Moving him to Unfiltered would probably strengthen the evidence for the theory.

⁸³⁷ Jon Meacham, *American Lion: Andrew Jackson in the White House* (New York: Random House, 2008).

⁸³⁸ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977, 185-186.*

Martin Van Buren: *Filtered*

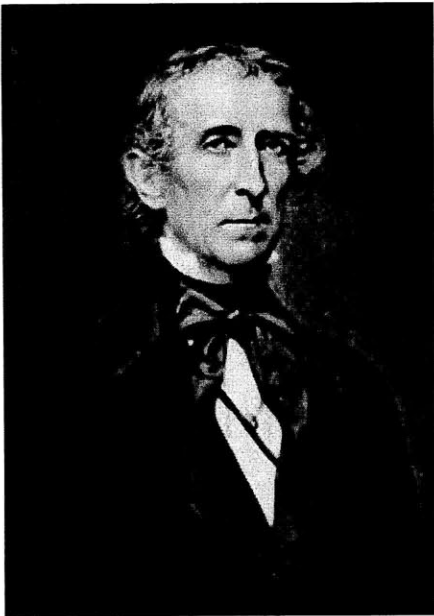


Van Buren marks a return to the clearly Modal Presidents who had preceded Jackson. He was a Senator from March 1821 to December 1828, Governor of New York for two months in 1829, Secretary of State from 1829 to 1831, and Vice President from 1833 to 1837, before being elected to the Presidency to succeed Jackson. Van Buren was, in fact, the first Vice President selected under the Democratic Party's "two-thirds rule," which required two-thirds of the delegates at the convention to nominate either a President or a Vice President, which would

persist until 1936.⁸³⁹ This makes a total of 14 years in filtering offices, putting him well into the range of Filtered Presidents.

⁸³⁹ Ibid., 339-340, Edward L. Widmer, *Martin Van Buren, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2005).

John Tyler: *Unfiltered*



John Tyler had a considerable history in public office before becoming President – had he gained the office normally, he would be classified as Filtered. He succeeded William Henry Harrison, who famously delivered an interminable Inaugural Address in freezing weather without winter clothing and promptly caught pneumonia, which killed him less than a month later.⁸⁴⁰ Tyler had been a Democrat until he broke with Andrew Jackson and was chosen as the Vice Presidential nominee by the Whigs in a largely fruitless attempt to gain Southern support.

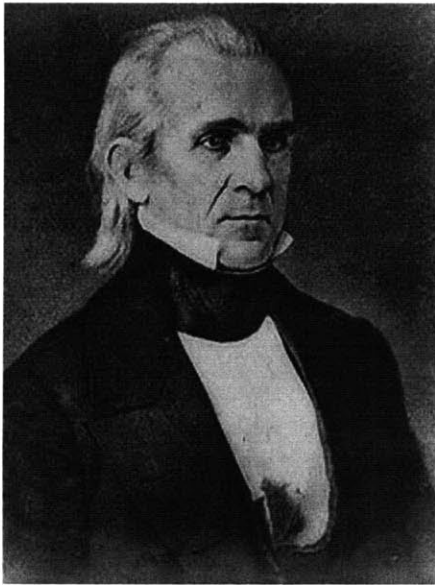
He would be expelled by the Whigs in 1842.⁸⁴¹ Tyler is the first President who should be judged a Potential Outlier because of the peculiar circumstances of how he gained the office, instead of because of his pre-Presidential career. Tyler had no significant constituency among either the Whigs or the Democrats –the mocking title of “His Accidency” his opponents accorded to him had a great of truth to it.⁸⁴² As he represented no major wing of his own party and was elevated to the Presidency by the actions of a humble bacterium or virus, he is clearly Unfiltered.

⁸⁴⁰ Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 89.

⁸⁴¹ William Lee Miller, *Arguing About Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress* (New York, NY: A.A. Knopf, 1996), 385, Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 88, 90, 92.

⁸⁴² Gary May, *John Tyler, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books/Henry Holt and Co., 2008).

James Polk: *Unfiltered*



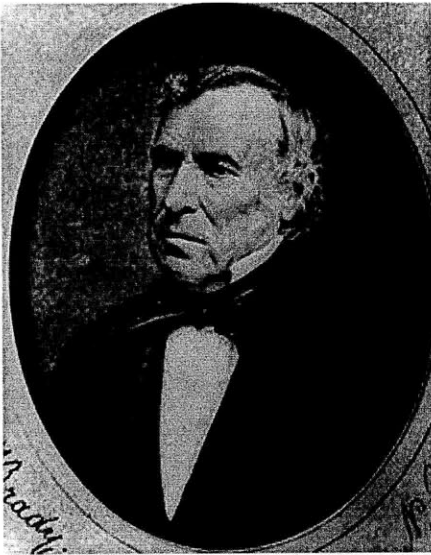
Polk was the first “Dark Horse” – he received his first vote for the Presidential nomination on the *eighth* ballot of the Democratic National Convention, and had in fact been aiming at the Vice Presidency.⁸⁴³ This status qualifies him as Unfiltered immediately, despite his extensive record in prior public service. He was a member of Congress from 1825 until 1839, and was Governor from 1839 to 1841, for a total of 16 years in filtering offices.⁸⁴⁴ Polk’s coding as Unfiltered is, however, more ambiguous than this first seems because of the peculiar

circumstances of the Democratic Party’s internal politics and convention rules. His extensive experience in government, views in the mainstream of his own party, and support from Andrew Jackson all made him a far more likely nominee than it would appear from his absence from early ballots. For the purposes of statistical analysis and to avoid the possibility of bias I have chosen to go with relatively simple and unambiguous coding rules which classify him as a Potential Outlier, but he could easily be marked as Filtered.

⁸⁴³ John Seigenthaler, *James K. Polk, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2004), Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*.

⁸⁴⁴ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 277-278.

Zachary Taylor: *Filtered*



Taylor was promoted to Brigadier General in August 1832, and remained in the Army until January or 1849, when he resigned to take up the Presidency, giving him 17 years in filtering offices.⁸⁴⁵ Taylor maintained an enormous level of ambiguity about his political positions before being elected to office, even stating that he had never voted. He was propelled to the Presidency largely on the basis of his victories in the Mexican War.⁸⁴⁶ The combination of these two issues would normally make him a Potential Outlier, making him in some ways the mirror image of his predecessor. Given his extended time as a General, however, coding rules dictate that he be chosen as Filtered.

Millard Fillmore: *Unfiltered*



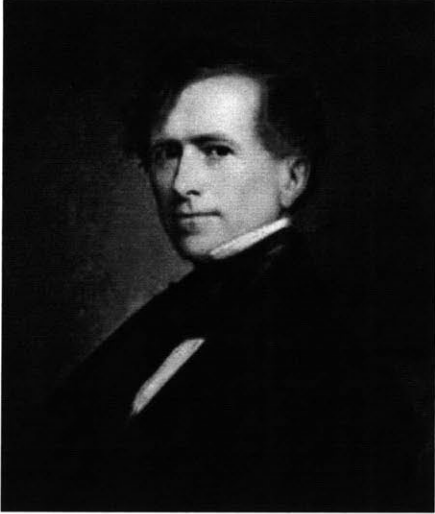
Fillmore was the second Vice President to ascend to the Presidency after the death of the President. He was a New Yorker selected for the ticket to provide geographic balance.⁸⁴⁷ As a Vice President who gained no support for the Presidency at his party's convention, Fillmore is automatically Unfiltered.

⁸⁴⁵ Ibid., 328.

⁸⁴⁶ John S. D. Eisenhower, *Zachary Taylor, American Presidents* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2008), Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 103-104.

⁸⁴⁷ Robert J. Scarry, *Millard Fillmore* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2001), Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 104, 110-105.

Franklin Pierce: *Unfiltered*



Pierce was a member of Congress from 1833 to 1837, a Senator from March 1837 to February 1842, and a Brigadier General in the Army during the Mexican War from March 1847 to March 1848.⁸⁴⁸ This gives him a total of ten years in filtering offices before his election as President, which would normally mark him as Filtered. Pierce, however, was perhaps the ultimate Dark Horse contender for the Presidency, receiving no support at the Democratic National Convention until the 35th ballot

because it had deadlocked between the four major contenders, Stephen Douglas, William Marcy, James Buchanan, and Lewis Cass.⁸⁴⁹ This position as a Dark Horse makes him automatically as Unfiltered.

James Buchanan: *Filtered*



Buchanan was among the most experienced men to occupy the Presidency. He was a Congressman from 1821 to 1831, a Senator from 1835 to 1845, and Secretary of State from 1845 to 1849, giving him 24 years in filtering offices.⁸⁵⁰ Although he was not nominated until the seventeenth ballot of the Democratic Convention, he was the frontrunner from the beginning.⁸⁵¹ Such a record marks him clearly as Filtered.

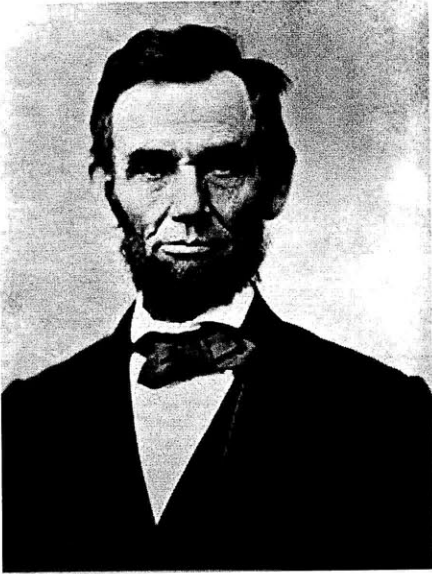
⁸⁴⁸ Larry Gara, *The Presidency of Franklin Pierce, American Presidency Series* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1991), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*.

⁸⁴⁹ Gara, *The Presidency of Franklin Pierce*.

⁸⁵⁰ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 44-45.

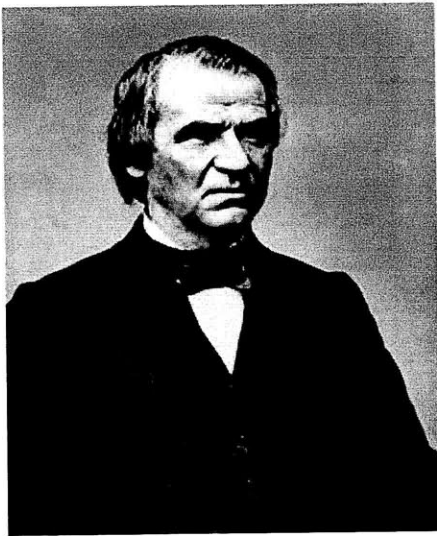
⁸⁵¹ Jean H. Baker, *James Buchanan, The American Presidents* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2004).

Abraham Lincoln: *Unfiltered*



Lincoln may be the easiest to code of all the Presidents. He had an exceptionally short record in filtering offices, serving in Congress from 1847 to 1849, for a total of only two years. Even his nomination marks him as a Potential Outlier – he trailed far behind Seward and Chase in the initial ballots of the Republican Convention before gaining the nomination.⁸⁵² Such a record makes him virtually the Platonic ideal of the Unfiltered President.

Andrew Johnson: *Unfiltered*



Andrew Johnson ascended to the Presidency on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in April 1865. He had been added to the ticket in order to help gain some Democratic support – as a pro-war Southern Democrat he was ideally suited for this role.⁸⁵³ He was certainly never considered for the Presidency, thus his unanticipated accession to that position marks him as clearly Unfiltered, despite his considerable experience in public life before his nomination for the Vice

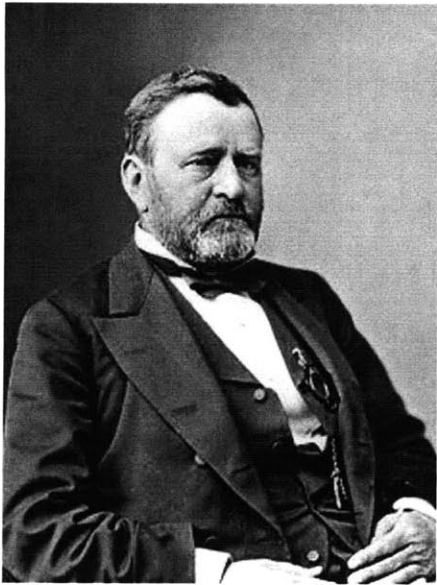
Presidency.⁸⁵⁴

⁸⁵² Donald, *Lincoln, Goodwin, Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, Harris, *Lincoln's Rise to the Presidency*.

⁸⁵³ Hans Louis Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York, NY: Norton, 1989).

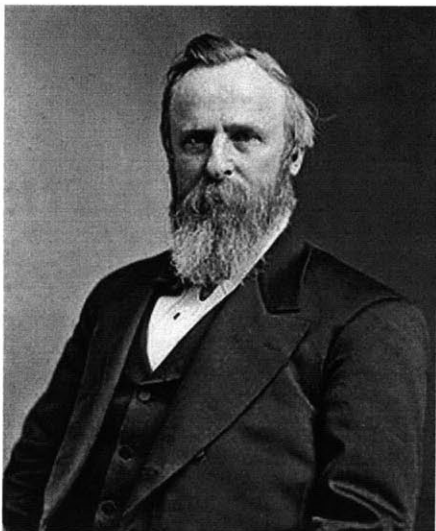
⁸⁵⁴ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 191-192.

Ulysses Grant: *Unfiltered*



Grant was, of course, the preeminent Northern hero of the Civil War and rode that prestige to an overwhelming victory in the Presidential election of 1868. He was promoted to Brigadier General of Volunteers in May 1861 and would remain in the Army until he was appointed Secretary of War in August 1867, a role he filled until January 1868.⁸⁵⁵ This gives him seven years in filtering offices which, combined with his clear status as a national hero, makes him Unfiltered.

Rutherford Hayes: *Filtered*



Hayes became President through his victory in the Disputed Election of 1876, in which a special commission awarded electoral votes to the Republican candidate in every single disputed case on a strict party line vote. Despite this the “true” winner of the race is at this point essentially unknowable, given the extensive suppression of the African-American vote engaged in by Democrats in most Southern states.⁸⁵⁶ Hayes served in the Army during the Civil War – in fact he was the only

President wounded in action during the war – and was promoted to Brigadier General in December 1862 and served in the Army until June 1865. He was a Congressman from 1865 to 1867 and Governor

⁸⁵⁵ Ibid., 142.

⁸⁵⁶ Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 152-154, Hans Louis Trefousse, *Rutherford B. Hayes, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2002).

of Ohio from 1868 to 1872 and 1876 to 1877.⁸⁵⁷ This gives him 10 years in filtering offices, marking him as Filtered.

Chester Arthur: *Unfiltered*

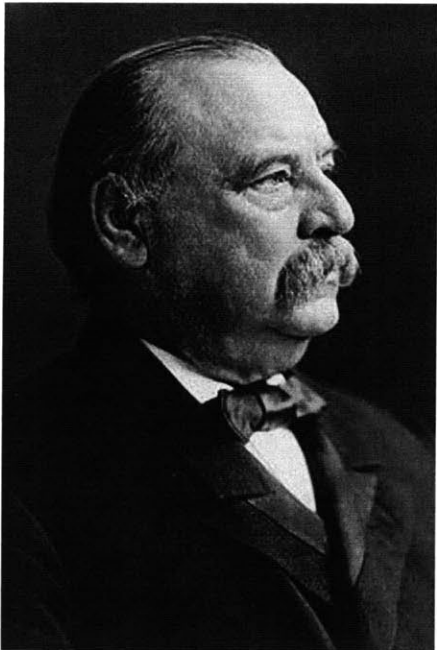


Arthur ascended to the Presidency upon the assassination of James Garfield in 1881. He was chosen as Garfield's Vice President because of his position as a "Stalwart" in the New York Republican Party – that is, that faction of the party most opposed to civil service reform. He garnered no significant support at the Republican National Convention, which had deadlocked between Grant and Speaker of the House James G. Blaine, before turning to the Dark Horse Garfield after 36 ballots. Arthur was then chosen in an attempt to placate the Stalwarts. This remarkable path to the Presidency – Arthur's most important public position before the Vice Presidency was probably as Collector of the Port of New York, a position from which he was removed by Hayes, and Arthur himself appears to have been stunned when he was asked if he would accept the Vice Presidential nomination – marks him clearly as Unfiltered.⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁷ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 162.

⁸⁵⁸ Zachary Karabell, *Chester Alan Arthur, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2004).

Grover Cleveland: *Unfiltered*



Cleveland completes the string of impressively facial-haired Presidents who followed Lincoln, and is otherwise remembered largely because he remains the sole President to serve two non-consecutive terms in office and because of accusations that he fathered an illegitimate child before becoming President, a scandal for which Republicans taunted him with the cry “Ma, Ma, where’s my Pa?” After his victory, Democrats responded with “Gone to the White House, ha ha ha!”⁸⁵⁹ Cleveland became Governor of New York in 1883 and served until January 1885 when he resigned to enter the White House. He did

precede his time as Governor with terms as Sheriff of Erie County and Mayor of Buffalo.⁸⁶⁰

Nonetheless this short period – only two years – in filtering office clearly marks him as Unfiltered.

⁸⁵⁹ Henry F. Graff, *Grover Cleveland, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2002).

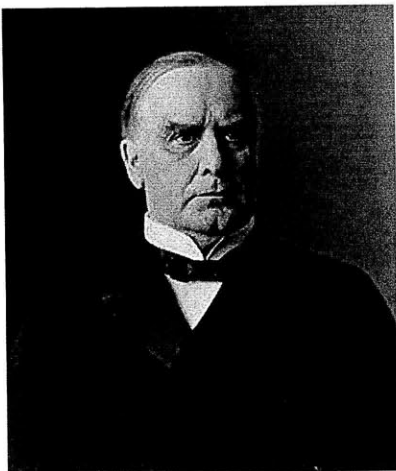
⁸⁶⁰ Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 62-63.

Benjamin Harrison: *Unfiltered*



The grandson of William Henry Harrison, Benjamin Harrison filled the one term between Cleveland's two and never actually succeeded in gaining a majority, or even a plurality, of the popular vote. He was promoted to Brigadier General in 1865, a rank he held for only a few months before mustering out of the Army. He also served in the Senate for six years, from 1881 to 1887. At the 1888 Republican National Convention he actually placed fourth on the first ballot, but eventually received the nomination when supporters of James G. Blaine rallied to his cause.⁸⁶¹ This gives him a little over six years in filtering offices, making him Filtered.

William McKinley: *Filtered*



McKinley served as a Congressman from 1877 to 1883 and 1885 to 1891 and as Governor of Ohio from 1892 to 1896. He decisively won both the Republican nomination and the election in 1896.⁸⁶² This gives him a total of 16 years in filtering offices, making him clearly Filtered.

⁸⁶¹ Charles W. Calhoun, *Benjamin Harrison, American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2005), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 158-159.

⁸⁶² Kevin Phillips, *William Mckinley, The American Presidents* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2003), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 234-235.

Theodore Roosevelt: *Unfiltered*



Theodore Roosevelt is the youngest person ever to become President and the first Vice President who became President to win re-election in his own right.⁸⁶³ In these, and in countless other ways, he exemplifies the concept of the outlier leader. Already a figure of national renown due to his service as Assistant Secretary of the Navy, his time on the U.S. Civil Service Commission, and his role as Police Commissioner of New York City, and his heroism in the Battle of San Juan Hill during the Spanish-American War, he also served as Governor of New York

in 1899 and 1900. He was selected as Vice President by McKinley, at least in part because of pressure from the New York Republican machine which he had attacked so effectively that it sought to end his interference by moving him into the Vice Presidency.⁸⁶⁴ Despite his national prominence, his time in elected office was remarkably brief – only two years – and he posed no challenge to McKinley’s nomination at the convention of 1900, making his ascension to the Presidency an extraordinarily random event. The combination marks him clearly as Unfiltered.

⁸⁶³ Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life*, Edmund Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt* (New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 1980), Morris, *Theodore Rex*, Skidmore, *Presidential Performance*, 182-183.

⁸⁶⁴ Dalton, *Theodore Roosevelt: A Strenuous Life*, Morris, *The Rise of Theodore Roosevelt*, Morris, *Theodore Rex*, Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 291-292.

William Howard Taft: *Filtered*



Although Taft is now chiefly remembered for his enormous size, the equivalently-scaled bathtub he had installed in the White House, and his position as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court after his Presidency, he was Theodore Roosevelt's handpicked successor for the Presidency, although Roosevelt turned on him and guaranteed his defeat when he ran for reelection in 1912. Although Taft himself had little desire to be President, he arrived in the office with considerable experience. He was Solicitor General from 1890 to 1892, a circuit court judge from 1892 to 1900, president of the Philippine Commission from 1900 to 1904, and Secretary of War from 1904 to 1908.⁸⁶⁵ Although only the term as Secretary of War would normally be counted as a filtering position, his position as Solicitor General and his term as head of the Philippine Commission had levels of responsibility and scrutiny easily equal to those faced by, for example, most members of Congress, and thus should be included in a count of his time in filtering offices. This gives him a total of ten years in office, making him Filtered.

⁸⁶⁵ Paolo Enrico Coletta, *The Presidency of William Howard Taft, American Presidency Series* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1973), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 325-326.

Woodrow Wilson: *Unfiltered*

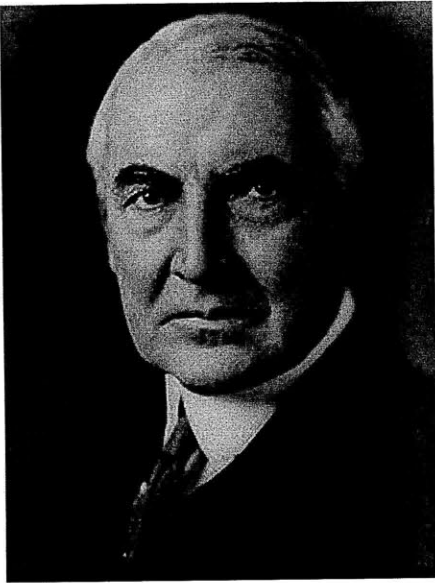


Wilson was the first, and is still the only, professor to become President of the United States, a fact which Arthur Schlesinger Jr. suggested might explain the generally favorable opinion historians have of him. He remains among the least-experienced men ever to be elected to the Presidency. He was sworn in as Governor of New Jersey in January 1911 and elected President in November 1912, giving him less than two years of political experience at the time. He also won the election at least in part because Taft and Theodore Roosevelt split the vote opposed to him.⁸⁶⁶ The combination makes him one of the

most Unfiltered Presidents.

⁸⁶⁶ Brands, *Woodrow Wilson*, Maynard, *Woodrow Wilson: Princeton to the Presidency*, Schlesinger, "Rating the Presidents: Washington to Clinton.", Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 363.

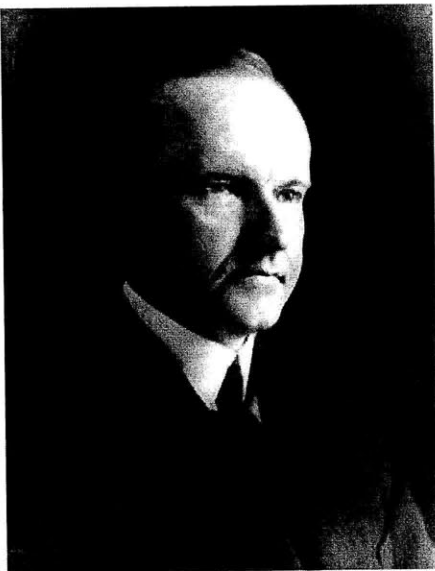
Warren Harding: *Unfiltered*



Warren Harding famously was elected to the Presidency in large part because he looked almost like the caricature of a President, an effect so pronounced that Malcolm Gladwell termed the human tendency to make mistaken attributions about a person's capabilities based on their appearance the "Warren Harding Error."⁸⁶⁷ Harding served as a Senator from March 1915 to January 1921, giving him less than 6 years in filtering offices before he was elected to the Presidency with more than 60% of the vote, the largest majority in the popular vote gained

by any President up to that time.⁸⁶⁸ This short time in office makes him Unfiltered.

Calvin Coolidge: *Unfiltered*



Coolidge ascended to the Presidency upon Harding's death less than two years into his term. He had been inaugurated as Governor of Massachusetts in January 1919, and was nominated for the Vice Presidency at the Republican National Convention in 1920. Although he had received a little support for the Presidential nomination itself at the convention, Coolidge had never been a leading candidate.⁸⁶⁹ His combination of less than two years in filtering offices and elevation to the Presidency upon

⁸⁶⁷ Malcolm Gladwell, *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Co., 2005), 72-76.

⁸⁶⁸ John W. Dean, *Warren G. Harding, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2004), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 154-155.

the death of his predecessor mark him as clearly Unfiltered.

Herbert Hoover: *Filtered*



Hoover was among the most respected men in the world when he was elected President in 1932, largely because of his enormously successful work as head of the Commission for Relief in Belgium from 1915 to 1919. Hoover had also served as U.S. food administrator from April 1917 to July 1919 before being appointed Secretary of Commerce, in which position he served from 1921 to 1928.⁸⁷⁰ Although the positions of U.S. Food Administrator and head of the Commission for Relief have

no contemporary equivalent, they unquestionably involved a level of responsibility, authority, and scrutiny equivalent to that of a member of Congress or most members of the Cabinet. As such they should be counted in Hoover's time in filtering offices, giving him a total of 13 years in such positions and marking him as Filtered.

⁸⁶⁹ David Greenberg, *Calvin Coolidge, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2007), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 73.

⁸⁷⁰ William Edward Leuchtenburg, *Herbert Hoover, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2009), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 173.

Franklin Roosevelt: *Unfiltered*



Franklin Roosevelt is, of course, the only President ever to be elected more than twice. He is also the only President whose wife kept her maiden name although this might have been made easier by the fact that Eleanor Roosevelt's maiden name was, in fact, Roosevelt. Franklin Roosevelt was elected Governor of New York in 1928 and reelected in 1930, giving him less than four years in his only filtering office before his election to the Presidency in the fall of 1932.⁸⁷¹ This relatively short career

marks him as clearly Unfiltered.

Harry Truman: *Filtered*



Truman succeeded to the Presidency in 1945 upon the death of Franklin Roosevelt. Although this would normally automatically qualify him as a Potential Outlier, the situation here is complicated by the fact that Roosevelt's declining health was widely known among Democratic Party elites, so much so that they expected Roosevelt's Vice President to become the next President and organized to remove Henry Wallace from the ticket and replace him with Truman.⁸⁷² Because Truman was

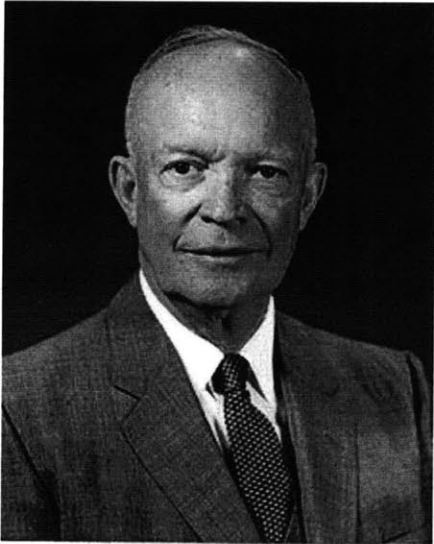
expected to become President by those who chose him for the Vice Presidency, his earlier career should be considered in judging his status as a Potential Outlier. Despite his common image as a failed haberdasher from Missouri, Truman actually came to the Vice Presidency with considerable experience

⁸⁷¹ Jean Edward Smith, *FDR* (New York, NY: Random House, 2007), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 291.

⁸⁷² David G. McCullough, *Truman* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 293-295.

in politics, serving as a Senator from 1935 to 1945 after considerable time as a judge. This gives him 10 years in filtering offices.⁸⁷³ Truman is thus classified as Filtered despite his unorthodox route to the Presidency.

Dwight Eisenhower: *Unfiltered*



Dwight David Eisenhower was the first, but not the last, former cheerleader to become President. It is possible, however, that he was more famous for his role as the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe during World War II, a role which made him unquestionably the most popular man in America when he ran for President against Adlai Stevenson in 1952. Eisenhower was promoted to Brigadier General in October 1941 and remained a General Officer in the Army until his retirement in February 1948. He also served as Supreme Commander of NATO for all of 1951 and the first few months of 1952.⁸⁷⁴ This gives him a total of a little over seven years in filtering offices, which would normally place him on the borderline between Modal and Potential Outlier. His status as an overwhelming national hero – perhaps the most widely respected American since Washington – pushes him clearly into the category of Unfiltered.

⁸⁷³ Ibid, Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 335.

⁸⁷⁴ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Eisenhower: Soldier and President*, First Touchstone ed. (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1990), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 104-105.

John Kennedy: *Filtered*



John Kennedy is the youngest man ever elected to the Presidency – I imagine that Theodore Roosevelt will remain the youngest President until the end of time. Despite this fact, he actually had considerable governmental experience before his election. Even without counting his heroic, if relatively low-level, experience in the Second World War, he served in the Congress from 1947 to 1953, and in the Senate from 1953 until his election as President.⁸⁷⁵ This gives him a total of 13 years in

filtering offices and thus makes him clearly Filtered.

Lyndon Johnson: *Filtered*



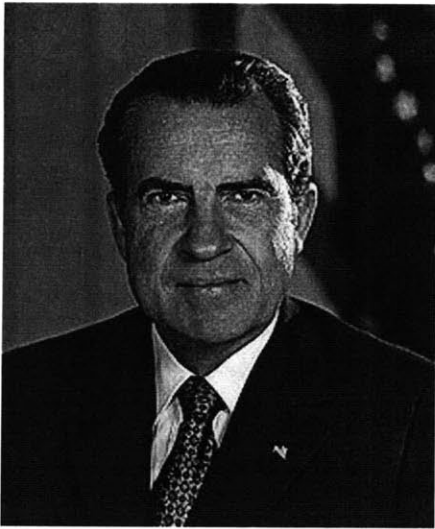
If Woodrow Wilson was the first and only college professor to become President, Lyndon Johnson remains the first and only high school teacher to do so, beginning a career which he spent entirely as a government employee. Johnson of course gained the Presidency because of the assassination of Kennedy.

Johnson, however, was Kennedy's chief rival for the nomination at the Democratic National Convention of 1960, which means that he should be judged as if he gained the Presidency by normal procedures. He served in Congress from 1937 until the

end of 1948, and in the Senate from 1949 until January of 1961.⁸⁷⁶ This gives him 22 years in filtering offices, marking him squarely as Filtered.

⁸⁷⁵ Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life: John F. Kennedy, 1917-1963* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Co., 2003), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 200-201.

Richard Nixon: *Filtered*



More strongly, perhaps, than any other President, Nixon presents the puzzle of how to code years spent in the Vice Presidency. Most other Vice Presidents who were later elected President had so much other experience that their time in that office makes little difference to how they are classified. Others had much more significant roles in the government during their time as Vice President. Nixon, however, was largely marginalized by Eisenhower during his Vice Presidency, and one

can ask whether the personal weaknesses that devastated his Presidency would have been revealed earlier had he faced more pressure, authority, or scrutiny while he was Vice President. Nevertheless, a Vice President is clearly far more in the public eye than most Congressmen, or even most Senators, so it seems consistent to include those years. Nixon served in the House of Representatives from January 1947 to November 1950, and in the Senate from 1951 to 1953. He then served as Vice President from 1953 to 1961.⁸⁷⁷ This gives him a total of almost 15 years in filtering offices before he was elected to the Presidency, albeit with an eight year gap between his time as Vice President and his election to the Presidency in 1968. This total puts him in the Filtered category.

⁸⁷⁶ Robert Dallek, *Lyndon B. Johnson: Portrait of a President* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 193-194.

⁸⁷⁷ Conrad Black, *Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2007), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 265-266.

Gerald Ford: *Filtered*



Gerald Ford may well have been the most athletic man to occupy the Presidency – Washington is probably his only rival for the title – and thus his reputation as being accident-prone, a reputation solidified by Chevy Chase’s devastating impression on Saturday Night Live, is particularly undeserved. Ford’s accession to the Presidency via the Vice Presidency would normally make him an outlier, but Ford, like Truman, was forced on the President by party elites well aware that the Vice President would soon become President. Like Truman, he should thus be evaluated as if he had come to power

conventionally. Ford was first elected to the Congress in 1949 and served there until he became Vice President.⁸⁷⁸ This gives him 24 years in filtering offices, the highest total of any President, and makes him clearly Filtered.

⁸⁷⁸ Douglas Brinkley, *Gerald R. Ford, The American Presidents* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2007), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 119-120.

Jimmy Carter: *Unfiltered*



Carter is the only graduate of the Naval Academy ever to become President, and only the second (after Hoover) to be trained as an engineer. After reaching the rank of Lieutenant Commander in the Navy he resigned from the Navy to run his family peanut farm. After a career in state-level Democratic politics he was elected Governor in 1970 and served until 1974, at which point he began campaigning for the Democratic nomination, which he gained in 1976 before narrowly defeating Gerald Ford in the 1976 Presidential election.⁸⁷⁹

This relatively brief – only 4 year – term in filtering office makes him clearly Unfiltered.

Ronald Reagan: *Filtered*



Ronald Reagan is the oldest man to be elected President, the only divorced man to gain the office, and the only union head ever to do so. Before becoming President he served two terms as Governor of California, from 1967 to 1975. He also launched a powerful challenge to Gerald Ford for the Republican nomination in 1976, failing, but critically weakening Ford's reelection effort. Eight years in filtering offices, his continued political prominence after leaving office, his almost-successful challenge of Gerald

Ford, and the maturity of the American political system at this point all combine to make Reagan Filtered.

⁸⁷⁹ Burton Ira Kaufman and Scott Kaufman, *The Presidency of James Earl Carter, Jr, American Presidency Series* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006), Sobel, *Biographical Directory of the United States Executive Branch, 1774-1977*, 53-54.

George H.W. Bush: *Filtered*



George H.W. Bush was captain of the Yale baseball team. A natural left-hander, he nonetheless hit right-handed and fielded left-handed, giving up the advantage baseball yields to left-handed hitters. This surely says something about his personality, although I have no idea what. When he ran for President in 1992 few men in the modern era have ever been so thoroughly prepared for the Presidency. Even apart from his time as Chairman of the Republican National Committee, United States Ambassador to the United Nations, and Chief of the U.S. Liaison Office to the People's Republic of China, Bush had already served in Congress for four years from 1967 to 1971, as Director of the CIA from 1976 to 1977, and as Vice President from 1981 to 1989.⁸⁸⁰ This gives him thirteen years in filtering offices, putting him clearly into the Filtered category.

⁸⁸⁰ Richard Ben Cramer, *What It Takes: The Way to the White House* (New York, NY: Random House, 1992), Timothy J. Naftali, *George H.W. Bush, The American Presidents Series* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2007).

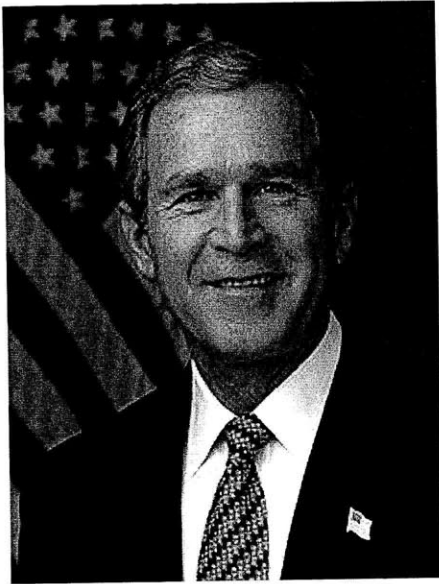
Bill Clinton: *Filtered*



Despite his youth – Clinton was only 46 when he was inaugurated, a year younger than Barack Obama – Clinton, like Kennedy, brought a remarkable length of time in elected office to the Presidency. He won election as Governor of Arkansas in 1978, was defeated when he ran for reelection in 1980, then won again in 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, and 1990, giving him 12 years in filtering offices before he became President.⁸⁸¹ This makes him clearly Filtered.

⁸⁸¹ David Maraniss, *First in His Class: A Biography of Bill Clinton* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995).

George W. Bush: *Unfiltered*



George W. Bush, when compared to his father, sometimes seems like a living example of regression to the mean. H.W. Bush was a successful wildcat oil driller, his son a failed one. H.W. Bush was captain of the Yale baseball team. His son was a Yale cheerleader. Whatever the import of this, the most pointed difference between the two from the perspective of LFT is the radical difference in level of filtration they brought to the White House. When George W. Bush was elected to the Presidency in November 2000 he had been Governor of Texas, his only filtering office, for less than six years. By itself this would classify him as a Potential Outlier, but this is aggravated by the limited institutional powers of the Texas Governor. In many ways the Lieutenant Governorship is a more powerful position meaning that the filtering effects of the Governor's office are far less pronounced in Texas than they would be in most other states.⁸⁸² The combination makes him clearly Unfiltered.

⁸⁸² Brian McCall, *The Power of the Texas Governor: Connally to Bush* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), Jacob Weisberg, *The Bush Tragedy* (New York, NY: Random House, 2008).

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