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This past year offered many opportunities to examine both successes and failures in the realm of leadership. Following the failed response to Hurricane Katrina, many people sought to understand the concept and practice of leadership as it impacts their lives. We at the Hess Center for Leadership and Service maintain that leadership is dynamic and is constantly being reinterpreted in an effort to better understand the events unfolding around us. As such, the Compass endeavors to capture the ever-changing notions of leadership as examined through the lenses of various academic disciplines. This year’s edition moves beyond abstract theories of leadership to the application of such ideas in real-life situations.

The collection of essays featured in this compilation challenges traditional models of leadership, offers new insights into existing theories, and analyzes the emergence of leadership in unlikely people and places. Webb Lyons’ paper, Lessons from Katrina: A Reevaluation of Crisis Leadership, offers a revised model for understanding crisis leadership. Thomas Allord’s historical academic study, The Risks of Delegated Authority: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Formosa Crises of 1954–1955, explores the relationship between the President and his Secretary of State and their impact on American foreign policy. Corporate Moguls: An Intimate Portrait, by Mary Page Wilson, critically evaluates two contemporary leadership theories, while From the Osprey to Environmental Defense: Exploring the Limits of Citizen Leadership by Adam Israel depicts the evolving leadership styles in a grassroots environmental movement. In the realm of gender studies, Meredith Hanson’s essay, Gabriela Mistral: An Enigma in Female Leadership, captures the unique influence of a nontraditional leader on women in Chile. Charles Hamilton Houston: The Man Who Killed Jim Crow, by Scottie Stone, showcases the contributions of a relatively unknown yet extremely significant individual in the Civil Rights Movement. This year’s journal concludes with an inspirational piece, On Servant Leadership, contributed by Dr. Neal Berte, the current Chancellor and former President of Birmingham-Southern College. Dr. Berte discusses first-hand experiences with servant leadership during a trip to Calcutta, India, and encourages students to actively participate in the Service-Learning program at BSC.

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Lessons from Katrina: A Reevaluation of Crisis Leadership

Webb Lyons

“September 4: Katrina was the anti-9/11. On Sept. 11, Rudy Giuliani took control. Last week in New Orleans, nobody took control. Authority was diffuse and action was ineffective. The rich escaped while the poor were abandoned. Partisans squabbled while the nation was ashamed.”1

“September 5: Neither the death of the chief justice nor the frantic efforts of panicked White House political advisers can conceal the magnitude of the president’s failure of leadership last week. The catastrophe in New Orleans billowed up like the howling winds of hell and was carried live and in color on television screens across the U.S. and around the world.”2

On Monday, August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Gulf coast of Mississippi and Louisiana. After the storm hit, part of the levee system in New Orleans collapsed, and within hours the city was underwater. The result was a death toll of over 1,300, over one million people displaced, and estimated damages of close to ninety billion dollars – the worst natural disaster in recent American history (“Hurricane Katrina” 1). Editorialists across the nation and the world, the television media, and the residents of New Orleans were in almost unified agreement about one thing – the failure of leadership.

Certainly leadership did fail, but the point of this paper is to go beyond laying blame on the federal, state, and local governments, criticizing relief agencies, and judging the ways in which leaders responded. Rather, this paper seeks to use Hurricane Katrina to reevaluate contemporary understanding of crisis leadership. Hurricane Katrina offers critical lessons, and it is important to use those lessons not simply to offer a descriptive analysis of Katrina, but also to develop a model for thinking about crisis leadership that can be applied to future crises. Such a model should show more clearly what happens in a crisis situation and thus how leaders might respond.

Scholars, authors, and journalists have written about crisis leadership, arguing that it is a high-stakes, high-stress situation where a special leader must emerge, a leader who can “take control of the moment,” who can use innovation and improvisation to accomplish the goal, who has the necessary traits to make urgent, smart, important decisions (Leonard 289). In his book The Leadership Moment, Michael Useem, Director of the Wharton School’s Center for Leadership at the University of Pennsylvania, states:

[My book’s] focus is on exceptionally difficult decisions – those fateful moments when our goals are at stake and it is uncertain if we will achieve them[…]. The more extraordinary the stakes, the more profound the outcome, the more searing the stress, the more such events stand out (4).

Useem tells several stories of crisis leaders who were forced to make a decision at a critical moment. When an explosion ripped through the Apollo 13 spacecraft, flight director Eugene Kranz had to convince his
pessimistic crew that failure was not an option. He overcame his own stress, developed a plan, gave the crew their responsibilities, and led Apollo 13 safely home (88). Another example Useem uses is the story of Arlene Blum, who led an expedition to the top of the Himalayan mountain of Annapurna. When an avalanche struck, Blum single-handedly decided on the plan the climbing team would use to reach the summit. She later stated that she became a strong, decisive leader (114). Most leadership theorists believe that leadership in crises such as these requires that type of command-and-control, militaristic style. Psychologist Daniel Goleman, who coined the term EQ, or emotional intelligence, believes that coercive leadership is always appropriate during a genuine emergency, like a hurricane and flood. Coercive leadership is characterized by the leader's extreme top-down decision making (83).

One could argue that Hurricane Katrina reinforced the idea that times of crisis call for a strong and innovative leader. However, it seems that Katrina has given us a much more important lesson, one that challenges traditional ways of thinking about crisis leadership, and one that, quite possibly, can apply to all crisis situations: crisis leadership is not simply about one leadership moment, but rather multiple leadership moments. This idea does not invalidate the standard thinking, but rather adds to the narrow framework often used to understand crisis leadership. It is not just the moment of crisis, but the moments before and after that matter as well. Crisis leadership exists in phases, and the leadership in one phase directly affects the others.

A close examination of Katrina points to four separate phases. Most simply, Phase One is the preparatory phase - that time of leadership before the crisis occurs. Phase Two is during the crisis itself, which can last anywhere from a few seconds to a few days. Phase Three is recovery, after the situation has stabilized, but while the outcome is still uncertain. Finally, Phase Four can be termed “normalcy,” the long-term aftermath of the crisis, bearing in mind that individuals and societies are almost always transformed by crises and may never return to their original state. It is important to note that these phases are not completely distinct, that they bleed into one another, and, depending on the crisis, last different amounts of time.

Phase Two is the traditional frame for thinking about crisis leadership; it is that time Useem would label the “leadership moment.” Because it is critical to understand the nature of a crisis itself, Phase Two seems an appropriate starting point in developing the crisis leadership model. For natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina, this phase begins when the disaster strikes and typically lasts for three days. According to New York Times columnist Paul Krugman, experts say that the first seventy-two hours are that crucial window when prompt action can save lives. But, of course, the time frame for Phase Two leadership is flexible. In the example of Arlene Blum it was short-lived – those few hours from when the avalanche struck until the climbers reached the summit.

So what is the appropriate way to define a crisis? In the Encyclopedia of Leadership, Herman Leonard, a professor of public management at Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, states that the word crisis is often used to cover a wide range of situations. However, he makes an important distinction among three types of situations: routine high-stake circumstances, routine emergencies, and true crises (289). In a routine high-stakes circumstance, the problem is usually well-defined, and the approach has been carefully engineered. In a routine emergency, along with high stakes, the situation requires the added element of urgency. But true crises go further, as they involve “high-stakes, high variability, high contingency, urgency, and unplanned or accidental or unforeseeable elements” (290). His definitions seem to point to a continuum. On one end are routine high-stake circumstances, routine emergencies are in the middle, and true crises are at the far end. The degree of the crisis clearly calls for different crisis leadership responses.

To understand these leadership responses, it is important to understand what determines the level of the crisis, what determines where situations fall on this continuum. Hurricane Katrina points to a few answers, one of which is very clearly the stakes involved, and for New Orleans, the stakes were people’s lives. More than 1,300 were killed, and so many more were at risk of dying. The American public saw the clips and the pictures on television; they had a clear image of what CNN correspondent Adaora Udoji described when she said on September 1st:

The situation is getting more desperate by the minute. Thousands are still stranded in misery [...]. They are marching in search of food, water and relief. They’re surrounded by a crumbling city and dead bodies. Infants have no formula, the children no food, nothing for adults, no medical help. They’re burning with frustration, and sure they have been forgotten.
Udoji’s description offers a second factor that determines the extent of the crisis – access to resources. Access to resources separates a case like Katrina from other kinds of moments that might be termed crises. In Phase Two, the people of New Orleans needed food, water, shelter, and medicines. They needed access to transportation and a way to evacuate the city. Closely connected to resources is knowledge – how to make the city safe, how to get rid of the water, how to put families in touch with one another. Both access to resources and knowledge, along with the stakes involved, determine the type of crisis, which, in turn, determines who the crisis leaders are.

If there is knowledge and access to resources, leaders in the immediate context – those who are close to the situation – can address the crisis. However, Katrina called on those who were farther away, for they were the ones with the capabilities to respond. In a September 5 New York Times editorial, Paul Krugman referred to the “lethal ineptitude of federal officials” (par. 1). He went on to write, “I’m not letting state and local officials off the hook, but federal officials had access to resources that could have made all the difference, but were never mobilized” (par. 1). In New Orleans, the stakes could not have been higher, as people’s lives were on the line; the situation called for those at the highest level, with the most resources and supposedly the most knowledge, to become leaders. Undoubtedly, Hurricane Katrina was at the true crisis end of the crisis continuum.

After determining how to distinguish the degree of the crisis, it seems necessary to examine Phase One, the preparatory phase. Certainly, the question could be asked, “What do events before the crisis have to do with crisis leadership?” The answer is simply this: leadership in Phase One can have an effect on Phase Two. Preparatory leadership must be considered in the equation of crisis leadership since what is done before a crisis changes the kind of crisis that occurs. Katrina illustrates this point perfectly. The hurricane itself was a terrible storm, but, unquestionably, the breach in the levees and subsequent flood led to a much more devastating disaster. Phase One leadership, that leadership that occurred before Katrina made landfall, must be considered in order to explore whether or not a crisis of this magnitude could have been prevented.

The Institute for Public Accuracy, whose purpose is to offer well-documented analysis of current events, found at least nine articles in the New Orleans Times-Picayune about the unavailability of federal money for flood control projects. One was a five-part series on the threat of a major hurricane titled, “Washing Away” (Raspberry). Furthermore, on July 23, 2004, thirteen months before Hurricane Katrina, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) conducted an exercise to assess the consequences of a theoretical Category 3 hurricane. Katrina was a Category 4 when it made landfall, so FEMA’s hypothetical situation was even less damaging. Nevertheless, it found that a Category 3 storm would force Lake Pontchartrain’s waters over the tops of the levees and, through a gap in the levee system, would flood major portions of the city. Officials predicted that eighty-seven percent of the city’s homes would be damaged, and half of the city’s residents would be trapped in attics, on rooftops, and in makeshift shelters for days (“In Case of Emergency”). William Raspberry was absolutely correct when he wrote in a September 6, Washington Post editorial, “While no one could have predicted the ferocity of Katrina – a storm of unprecedented fury – it was known that New Orleans was in jeopardy from deteriorating levees” (par. 5). The decision not to address the levees and not to invest in flood control projects was a leadership decision, a choice made by political leaders. The money and resources which could have gone to the levees went somewhere else, serving some other public function. That political decision was part of crisis leadership, because it directly affected the magnitude of Katrina’s damage and the kind of crisis that occurred in Phase Two. Different Phase One crisis leadership could have reduced the situation in New Orleans to a routine high-stakes emergency or a routine high-stakes circumstance, rather than the true crisis that it was.

It seems clear that Phase One leadership affects Phase Two, but one could argue that the connection between the phases extends even further. For instance, the preparation in Phase One and the ease with which resources and knowledge are made available during Phase Two influence the length of both Phase Two and Phase Three. If there had only been a hurricane and not a flood, Phase Two would have passed quickly, and New Orleans would have moved on to Phase Three, the recovery – calling in extra power companies and being swarmed with contractors who could rebuild. This recovery is what happened in many communities where flooding did not occur. Yet, while some communities had moved on to Phase Three, New Orleans was left trying to cope with a prolonged Phase Two.

Similarly, the connection between the phases extends to Phase Four. As Rebecca Solnit, author of several books and staff writer for Harper’s magazine, writes, “Disaster threatens not only bodies, but also the status quo. Disaster is not just a rescue of the needy, but also a scramble for power” (35). In the aftermath
of Katrina, there was the potential for some type of social movement. Hurricane Katrina exposed the injustices of our society in a powerful way – the country witnessed a nation still plagued by racial problems and prejudices, the increasing degradation of an unstable environment, and the growing number of Americans trapped in the never-ending wretchedness of poverty. If these problems are ever to be addressed in Phase Four – and one can only hope that they will be – it may well be through a more cooperative, inclusive, non-hierarchical style of leadership, not the coercive style mentioned earlier. This is a very different kind of crisis leadership, and one that necessitates not only a different style, but possibly a different set of leaders in order to be effective. Just as the leadership moments inform one another in each of the four phases of a crisis, so too may the leadership styles and players.

It is important to examine not only the relationships between the phases, but also the relationship of each phase to the whole. It is essential to recognize that crisis leadership does not occur in a vacuum. In all four phases of a crisis, the leaders who respond, whether local for a small-scale crisis or from the outside for a large-scale disaster like Katrina, do not represent some form of abstract leadership. Rather, they are real people with real stories, histories, and experiences. Thomas Wren and Marc Swatez, Professors at the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond, suggest a model that recognizes the importance of context. They argue that, along with the immediate context of leadership, it is necessary to consider the “larger, more ‘macro’ factors” (246). Wren and Swatez offer the historical context and the contemporary context, both of which are critical to understanding crisis leadership.

This contemporary (or social) context is clearly relevant when considering the crisis leaders of Hurricane Katrina. President Bush is, most assuredly, a telling example. When Hurricane Katrina struck, the President was making a speech in Arizona, trying to garner support for his Medicare prescription drug benefit. Five days after Katrina made landfall, Chief Justice of the United States William Rehnquist died, and the President had to begin thinking about his new appointment. Finally, and most important, President Bush was facing the growing difficulty of a violent and unstable occupation in Iraq, and an American citizenry becoming increasingly disgusted with the war, highlighted by Cindy Sheehan’s extended protests outside the Bush ranch. President Bush’s response to Katrina, Governor Blanco’s response, Mayor Nagin’s response – in essence, their crisis leadership – was affected by other events.

Even those agencies whose specific purposes are to respond to crises do not respond in a vacuum. The Red Cross, the agency that, one month after Katrina struck had received almost three-quarters of the one billion dollars Americans donated, is a good example. Many criticized the Red Cross for not responding effectively. As Stephanie Strom reported in *The New York Times*, “Many people became upset with the way the Red Cross handled donations for their Sept. 11 fund” (par. 14), and this in turn influenced how the public viewed them following Katrina. For the Red Cross, the response to Katrina was affected by their action in the aftermath of 9/11. Again, crisis leadership is a larger moment than Phase Two.

Those who respond – in this case at national levels – come with a history that influences how they can respond along with how those in need and those watching the news interpret the leader’s response to a crisis. One final example in the case of Katrina is FEMA, an organization that was practically unknown to the majority of the public. Now, however, after the universal condemnation of FEMA’s response, it is almost certain that the public will be distrustful the next time the organization is responsible for leading in the aftermath of a disaster.

And thus exists a crisis leadership cycle, where Phase Four has become Phase One, where the aftermath of Katrina has become the preparation for another crisis. No longer can crisis leadership be thought of as a moment, but rather as a collection or series of moments, as four different phases that affect one another and future crises to come. The crisis leadership in these phases, along with the larger context in which the leader responds, must all be considered in the crisis leadership equation. Great Britain’s *The Financial Times* told our leaders to “Fix this damn crisis” (Gronnevet par. 3). Certainly, no model can fix a crisis, but the model Katrina provides can lead to better understanding, an understanding that crisis leadership is not only about the moment, but the moments.

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Endnotes


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Many intellectuals today predict China’s future emergence as one of the world’s great powers. Should this occur, the United States will be forced to reckon with some of the issues that continue to create tension between it and this Asian nation. One of the most problematic issues in Sino-American relations involves the question of Taiwan. The PRC maintains that Taiwan is an integral part of China which is in the hands of a rebel group, and views Taiwan as an internal issue in which no other nation has the right to interfere. The United States, on the other hand, has developed a policy in which Taiwan is viewed as a separate and sovereign state.

The roots of the “two Chinas” policy can be traced back to the Eisenhower administration. During the first part of Eisenhower’s presidency, the People’s Republic of China launched assaults on the outposts of Formosa, forcing the United States to develop policies to ensure the defense of the Nationalists. Rather than defuse the situation, the State Department, under the control of John Foster Dulles, took steps which further involved the U.S. in the fate of Formosa and fueled the fires of Chinese Communist aggressiveness. Due to Dwight D. Eisenhower’s delegation of almost total control to John Foster Dulles in the creation of foreign policy, Dulles’ strategy of deterrence came close to involving the United States in a war with the world’s most populous nation during the Formosa Straits Crisis of 1954-55. After 50 years, these precedents of deterrence have produced a lasting legacy, leading many to believe that Taiwan’s independence could still produce an open and armed conflict.

Prior to his inauguration in January 1953, Eisenhower seems to have held some conflicting views regarding John Foster Dulles. On one hand, Eisenhower appears to have possessed a tremendous amount of respect for the senior politician who had life-long experience in foreign affairs. According to one account, he was impressed with Dulles’ ability to comprehend and develop proposed policies, such as how the United States should respond to a Soviet invasion of Europe.1 Despite this, several factors contributed to Eisenhower appearing hesitant to appoint Dulles to his Cabinet. This uncertainty is evidenced by Sherman Adams’ recollection of the pre-inaugural meeting of the president’s cabinet in New York during December 1952. When listing those people who would fill positions in the Cabinet, Dulles’ name does not seem to be included.2 This, however, does not mean that he was not present or that Eisenhower was not already considering appointing Dulles. Adams also relates how Dulles appears to have made contributions to the foreign policy content in the inaugural address.3

The apparent delay in appointing Dulles stemmed from two sources. One dealt with the expected character of the people Eisenhower desired to appoint to high level government positions. Eisenhower believed that appointments to these posts should not rely upon politics or patronage;
instead, they should go to those people who would have to make sacrifices in order to serve their country. Otherwise, these officials would conduct their duties in a merely self-serving manner rather than acting in the best interests of the country. Eisenhower's goal was to bring a group of principled individuals of diverse opinions into the cabinet in order to address future problems which the country would face.

Also, Eisenhower seems to have been reluctant to appoint John Foster Dulles due to the latter's hard-line view on how to deal with communism across the globe. An event illustrating this reluctance occurred during the Presidential campaign in the fall of 1952. When giving a speech on the "liberation of countries that had fallen under Communist tyranny," Eisenhower stated that this goal should be pursued through peaceful means. Only a few days afterwards, Dulles was campaigning on behalf of Eisenhower and gave a speech on the same subject. The difference, however, was that Dulles had chosen to omit any mention of peaceful means in his speech. This occurrence demonstrates why Eisenhower might have been hesitant to appoint this staunch Republican, who could potentially bring the country perilously close to yet another war against the Communists. Despite these misgivings, Dulles was ultimately appointed as Secretary of State, as the President viewed him as the most qualified person for the position.

Apparently recognizing the President's misgivings, Dulles worked hard during his remaining years to establish a strong and intimate connection with him. According to Adams, "throughout his period as Secretary of State, Dulles never forgot that his relationship to the President was the absolute first priority: the vital lifeline." In order to develop and maintain this relationship, Dulles kept Eisenhower up to date on the evolution of international affairs by meticulously drafting papers and memos for the President to read each day, as well as proposing courses of action for specific situations. In doing so, he would often barge into the Oval Office to discuss such matters with the President for lengths of time that Eisenhower could not afford in his busy schedule. If Dulles was not capable of visiting the President in person, he would call Eisenhower up to four times a day to discuss the direction of U.S. foreign policy. As a result of these efforts, Eisenhower was moved "to a steady growth of confidence and respect" for the Secretary of State.6

In his administration, Eisenhower relied heavily upon the advice of his cabinet members when developing both broad and specific policies. Only after considering the different points of view discussed in the Cabinet meetings would Eisenhower come to a conclusion. As a result of this leadership style, "the Cabinet, as well as the Security Council, became under Eisenhower a force in the determination of government policy that it never had been in previous administrations." This fact greatly contributed to the amount of influence that Dulles would come to wield.

According to Adams, "[Dulles] was in the White House more than any other Cabinet member and he was the only government official who frequently spoke with the President on the telephone." Due to Dulles' attempts to please and impress his superior, the pair formed an extraordinarily close working relationship. Eventually, Eisenhower would give "Dulles more trust and confidence than any President in modern times had bestowed on a Cabinet member." The result was that Dulles was given a tremendous amount of leeway in running the State Department and developing his own personal foreign policy. When reflecting back upon the administration, Sherman Adams would make the statement that "the hard and uncompromising line that the United States government took toward Soviet Russia and Red China between 1953 and the early months of 1959 was more a Dulles line than an Eisenhower one." Thus, Dulles came to use his close relationship with Eisenhower as a way to single-handedly run the State Department, directing foreign policy as he desired.

Townsend Hoopes analyzes the extent to which Dulles executed his duties, saying that "in his view there could be only one advisor on foreign policy, and he was extremely sensitive to the slightest threat of intrusion from any quarter, defending his turf with an aggressive, guileful, absolute single-mindedness that brooked no opposition." Dulles' inherent self-righteousness allowed him to believe that he alone had all of the answers pertaining to the direction of American foreign policy. Whenever another government official would attempt to encroach on his domain by advising the President, Dulles would immediately act to retain his influence. One example of this attitude actually concerns the presidential advisors that Eisenhower specifically appointed to work in coordination with Dulles and the State Department. These men were "expeditors and coordinators, but they were also men capable of creating new approaches to the solution of problems which divided the world." Even though Dulles approved the appointment of these individuals, he kept a close eye on them to make sure they did not overstep what he considered to be their boundaries.

According to Sherman Adams, it seems that there were numerous instances in which Dulles did not approve of these advisors and other government officials who stood in the way of his ability to maintain a
close personal connection with the President for the advancement of his own policies. When this happened, Dulles would broach the subject with Eisenhower, and, as stated by Adams, “in every instance where Dulles decided the situation was intolerable, he insisted on a change, and the President without exception went along with his wishes.” This type of behavior seems to have been a prominent part of Dulles’ personality throughout his life. Even when he was in the hospital, and it was apparent that he would not be returning to his position as Secretary of State, it is reported that he questioned whether or not some of the President’s advisors were too forthright in their efforts to develop foreign policy.

Along with Dulles’ tight grip on foreign policy, there is at least one example where he acted on behalf of the President without Eisenhower’s prior knowledge. This incident dealt with Dulles’ order to General Handy in Europe to cease the delivery of military supplies to Yugoslavia. In his diary, Eisenhower simply remarks that Wilson- from the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS)- came to him to inquire about this order, but Eisenhower had no knowledge that such an order had been given. This is only one incident, but it portrays a willingness on Dulles’ part, as early as October of 1953, to bypass the President in order to exercise his own personal style of foreign policy. Such a warning sign should have made it evident to Eisenhower that, in the future, he would need to keep a closer watch on his Secretary of State.

During the early years of the first Eisenhower administration, several developments shifted the United States’ military strategy in response to international crises. These changes produced significant effects for years to come in how all of the military, defense, and foreign policy establishments reacted to various situations around the globe. One of the first transformations in military strategy was embodied in the NSC-162/2 paper which “approved the planning assumption that nuclear weapons would be used in limited war situations.” While the President would retain ultimate authority in the use of the new so-called “tactical” nuclear weapons, this paper seems to have created a shift in policy, allowing the Joint Chiefs of Staff to include the use of nuclear weapons as a standard response to future situations of war.

Another important development that correlated with the NSC paper was the creation of the “New Look” policy. This policy “was the product of two compelling impulses of the new administration: to save money, and to regain control of an American policy that was perceived to have become largely a reflex reaction to Communist initiative.” Rather than rely upon American forces scattered across the globe to respond to localized Communist actions, U.S. forces would be consolidated into strong reserve bases. As a result, the United States could rely upon their threat of strong retaliatory power to discourage Communist offensives. According to Townsend, “Dulles, who fully shared both the budgetary and strategic impulses, had been a persuasive force in the development of Eisenhower’s outlook.” These “strategic impulses” nicely correlated with Dulles’ desire for the politically strategic use of deterrence in foreign affairs. In a speech presented in San Francisco in 1958, Dulles discussed the theory behind his use of deterrence. He said that “it is our policy to check the Communist use or threat of force by having retaliatory power, and the will to use it, so that the Communist use of force would obviously be unprofitable to them.” This theory relied upon the idea that the United States possessed enough retaliatory power to instill fear into its enemies and prevent any aggressive acts on their part. Quite naturally, some would argue that this retaliatory power could be found in nuclear weapons.

When it came to John Foster Dulles’ personal interpretation of his mission, he believed that with the Secretary of State came the responsibility of combating “godless” communism wherever possible. As summed up by Foster Rhea Dulles, “the Secretary of State felt that he was acting as the conscience of the Western World in his unwavering stand for freedom against all the forces of Communist imperialism.” Dulles seemed to believe that the Western capitalist countries were engaged in a life or death struggle with communism for the fate of humanity. While he believed that communism should be fought wherever possible, he traced the origin of Marxism-Leninism in various countries to one source: Soviet Russia. In regard to his views of the Far East, he stated as early as 1950 that, “in the vast areas of Asia and the Pacific we have no adequate policy, largely because China, always until now our friendly partner, has been taken over by the allies of Soviet Communism.”

Dulles interpreted the introduction of soldiers from the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) into Korea as only a small part of the struggle occurring in the Far East. He assumed that the United States would need to draw a defensive line against the PRC from the 38th parallel in Korea all the way down to Indochina. Logically, Taiwan would be included in this broad strategic arena since it was both geographically viable and ruled by a government reliant upon the United States for survival in its conflict with the Chinese Communists. These assumptions led Dulles to form policies concerning Formosa and the offshore islands.
which did not address the realities of the crisis in 1954-1955. He presumed that he could simply convince the PLA to back down through deterrence. He thought that with the show of massive force, Moscow would tell Mao Tse-tung to abandon his efforts of conquering Taiwan. Dulles did not realize that the PRC was operating independently of the Soviet Union in its attempts to restore an island considered to be an inherent part of Chinese territory.

In regard to the totalitarian government of Mao Tse-tung, Dulles believed it inevitable that this regime would crumble. In *War or Peace*, he theorized that “in China, the Communist rulers will not be able to solve the economic and social problems of the country or to realize the hopes which their propaganda has aroused.” Following this logic, it would merely be a matter of time until the Chinese population would grow discontented with an oppressive government which failed to recognize its promises to its own citizens. Therefore, Dulles stated that “our tasks will be to keep hope alive and to show, wherever we have the opportunity, the advantages of a free society.”

Ironically, this so-called model of a free society for all of Asia turned out to be the dictatorial regime of Chiang Kai-shek. Yet, John Foster Dulles did not merely leave time to run its course on what he believed would be the eventual fall of the PRC due to internal forces. Instead, “Dulles would continue to believe that somehow, sometime, China would be restored to the rightful control of the Nationalists, and he stubbornly refused to acknowledge the Communist triumph as definitive.” Dulles adamantly believed that with the aid of the United States, the Nationalist army would be able to launch an invasion of the mainland and reconquer the country. Therefore, it followed that as Dulles attempted “to assure the political isolation of the Chinese People’s Republic and to build-up the Nationalist regime on Formosa as the legitimate government of all China, the Eisenhower-Dulles policy would make no concessions.” This hard-line posture would bring the United States close to war in the months from August of 1954 to April of 1955.

The first action of the Eisenhower administration in foreign policy towards Formosa and the Chinese Communists occurred during the first State of the Union address on February 2, 1953. During this speech, Eisenhower rescinded the order given to the U.S. Seventh Fleet by Harry Truman on June 20, 1950 after the beginning of the Korean War. The Seventh Fleet had been ordered to position itself between Formosa and the mainland with the explicit intention of preventing hostilities in the strait which could possibly escalate the Korean War, thus broadening the war in the Far East. The provisions of this order not only stated that the fleet would protect the Nationalists from Communist attacks, but would also prevent the army at Formosa from making any aggressive moves against the mainland. Despite the clarity of this order, it remained ambiguous regarding one issue which would later assume a level of importance that had not been predicted: the order did not address the Nationalist forces still based on the offshore islands of Quemoy, the Matsus, and the Taechens. The units on these islands both remained outside of the American defensive perimeter established by Truman and Acheson and were not subject to the same restrictions as the army on Taiwan. Meanwhile, the status quo in the straits was enforced by the Seventh Fleet until the presidency was passed from the Democrats to the Republicans.

The rescinding of Truman’s order in Eisenhower’s State of the Union address was dubbed as the “unleashing” of Chiang Kai-shek. While the Seventh Fleet maintained its presence in the strait to protect the Nationalists from the PLA, Chiang Kai-shek was now permitted to conduct military operations against the mainland. The justifications for this policy shift were two-fold. As recalled by Sherman Adams, in order to “put pressure on China to end the Korean War, Dulles suggested that Eisenhower’s first State of the Union address should announce a revocation of the order.” Also, there was agreement among the administration that there was no longer any sense in upholding an order which protected the Communists, who were the same people killing United Nations soldiers in Korea. Similar to the order of June 20, 1950, the State of the Union address was ambiguous regarding the Nationalist’s positions on the offshore islands. While “an attack on Formosa or the Pescadores would plainly result in American counter-action, no one knew whether the same consequences would result from an attack on the offshore islands.”

There was at least one more development which affected how the Communist government viewed the evolving relationship between the United States and the Nationalists. Coinciding with the “unleashing” of Chiang Kai-shek, “responsibilities of the U.S. military advisory group on Taiwan were extended to the training and equipping of 75,000 Nationalist troops on Quemoy, the Matsus, and the Taechens.” Therefore, “the support of American military officials for a more aggressive Nationalist posture toward the mainland had grown considerably by mid-1953, with encouragement from Dulles.” As a result of these developments, the PRC increasingly identified the United States as an enemy who was attempting to prevent
the return of all Chinese territory to the control of the regime in Peking. Soon after, Mao and the other Communist leaders made bold efforts to test U.S. resolve on the still ill-defined status of the offshore islands.

In the early part of August 1954, Chou En-lai issued a statement which reasserted the right of the Communists to control Taiwan and promised that the PLA would undertake efforts to liberate the island. At a press conference held on August 17th, the press corps asked Eisenhower how he received this statement and what the United States would do if the Communists launched an invasion of Formosa and the Pescadores. The President flatly declared that any such attempts on the part of the People’s Republic of China would first have to “run over the Seventh Fleet.” Yet again, this statement was made only in regards to Formosa and the Pescadores; it did not include the offshore islands. At this point, these islands were still occupied with roughly 75,000 Nationalist troops: 50,000 on Quemoy, 9,000 on Matsu, and 15,000 on the Taechen islands. On August 23rd, undaunted by Eisenhower’s statement, over forty soldiers of the People’s Liberation Army staged a raid on Quemoy, capturing one Nationalist soldier.

It has been speculated that this marked the beginning of Communist attempts to put pressure on the United States to determine its commitment to the defense of the islands. While the military importance of the islands was negligible in material terms, it was perceived that they held a certain psychological significance. To Chiang Kai-shek, “their loss would have seriously undermined Nationalist confidence in an eventual reconquest of the mainland.” In the eyes of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, by “winning control of them, the Communists would have felt they were that much further in liberating Formosa itself.”

While the occurrence on August 23rd marked the technical beginning of the crisis, many historians view the actions of September 3rd as the initial outburst in the Formosa Crisis of 1954-1955. On this day, the Communists commenced a heavy artillery bombardment against Quemoy that lasted for over five hours. As described by Hoopes Townsend, this “was the beginning of a crisis that would last for eight months and gravely strain United States relations with its allies, as well as the nerves of humanity everywhere.” On September 6th, the Joint Chiefs of Staff voted three-to-one on a course of action that was then presented to the President. They recommended that Eisenhower “authorize Chiang to bomb inland China.” If this produced a significant Communist response, they believed that the president should subsequently order U.S. aircraft to become involved. However, Eisenhower, reluctant to take any course of action that could lead to U.S. military involvement in yet another war in Asia, dismissed the proposal. Chiang Kai-shek, frustrated at not being allowed to expand the scope of the conflict and bomb inland China, vented his anger by acting within the constraints that had been forced upon him by the United States. He therefore ordered the bombing of coastal ports, shipping, and Communist islands which surrounded Quemoy. Meanwhile, the Communists continued and even expanded their assault, launching aerial bombardments against the Taechen islands.

With the deepening crisis in the straits, the JCS began to “call for a hardening of our policy to the extent of supporting Chiang in rugged retaliation. Among them were those who even advocated a full-scale attack with atomic weapons.” While Dulles was, at the very least, sympathetic to the prevalent attitude of the JCS, he suggested to Eisenhower that the issue should be presented to the United Nations General Assembly. One of John Foster Dulles’ goals in taking the Formosa issue in front of the United Nations was to force the Chinese Communists into accepting a cease-fire which would have maintained Nationalist control of the islands. The other was a ploy to focus the blame of the conflict on the PRC, turning world opinion against the Communists and helping Dulles in his efforts to prevent the entry of the PRC into the United Nations. In order to bring the issue in front of the General Assembly, the United States secretly requested that New Zealand propose the resolution. Dulles formulated this approach to avoid accusations from the Communists that the U.S. was trying to manipulate the United Nations in the pursuit of their own agenda. However, the efforts to attain a resolution from the General Assembly yielded no results. While it was expected that the Communists would characteristically object to the resolution, Chiang Kai-shek was the first to launch complaints against it.

Chiang Kai-shek objected to a cease-fire because he still harbored the belief that, at some point in the future, he would be able to launch an invasion of the mainland. He also feared what would happen if the issue was brought in front of the General Assembly. Doing so would have inevitably led to inquiries that “would scrutinize his shaky legal claims to mainland China and thus to the offshore islands.” Unable to rely upon a cease-fire to protect the Nationalist-controlled islands, Dulles began to consider other options. He and Eisenhower decided to sign a security treaty with Formosa. This bi-lateral treaty was signed by John Foster Dulles and the Nationalist Foreign Minister, George Yeh, on December 2nd in Washington.
In broad strategic terms, the Mutual Security Treaty was merely a single part of a larger line of defense created by the United States to encircle China. As explained by Dulles in a report to the President, “this treaty represent[ed] another link in the chain of collective defense arrangements in the West Pacific which [bound] the nations of the free world together in their common determination to resist further encroachments by the forces of communism.” In more specific terms, this treaty was created as an attempt to defuse the crisis in the straits of Formosa. By signing this treaty, Dulles said that “we give the world notice which, we are entitled to hope, will prevent hostile miscalculations and thus contribute to the peace and security of the area.” By signing this treaty, John Foster Dulles wanted to use the strategy of deterrence to force a settlement of the crisis. However, this did not reach fruition as a result of the vague stipulations of the treaty.

In articles II and V of the treaty, the United States and the Republic of China committed to the mutual defense of one another against any armed attack from external enemies. Article VI described the geographical area to which this treaty would be applicable. In regards to the Republic of China, it included the island of Taiwan and the Pescadores. It went on, however, to include, “such other territories as may be determined by mutual agreement.” While Dulles could not include the offshore islands by name due to the reluctance of Eisenhower and the disapproval of allies, such as the British, he wanted to leave this article ambiguous so that the United States had the option of including these islands if it so desired. Therefore, this treaty resulted in two significant problems. Once again, it left the offshore islands in a compromising position that the Communists would use to measure the resolve of the United States. Also, Chiang Kai-shek saw this as a promise of protection by the U.S., putting him in a position of strength to launch assaults against the mainland. Hoopes Townsend sums up the results of the treaty by saying that “Eisenhower’s acceptance of it forfeited a major opportunity to force Chiang’s retreat from a provocative forward position and thus to stabilize the situation in the Formosa Strait.” Thus, the crisis would continue unabated without any clear progression to its resolution.

On December 3rd, Nationalist Premier O.K. Yui stated that the treaty actually placed them in an advantageous position which they would exploit in an assault on the mainland. Belatedly, Eisenhower realized the potential of the treaty to involve the United States in the defense of the offshore islands, and lead to increased involvement in the Chinese Civil War. He therefore ordered John Foster Dulles to force George Yeh into treaty supplements, which would, in effect, “re-leash” Chiang Kai-shek. On December 10th, Dulles and Yeh agreed that “in view of the obligations of the two Parties under the said Treaty, and of the fact that the use of force from either of these areas by either of the Parties affects the other, it is agreed that such use of force will be a matter of joint agreement.” Thus, the Nationalists would have to ask for U.S. permission to attack the mainland, since any such action would inevitably invoke a Communist response. This stipulation was virtually ignored, however, as a result of its informal nature, as well as the fact that it would remain secret until the treaty was presented in front of Congress in January. This is evidenced by the fact that on December 19th, “Foreign Minister Yeh asserted that the treaty contained no commitment not to attack the mainland.” On the last day of that year, Chiang Kai-shek reasserted his belief that the treaty had the effect of making the Nationalists more capable of launching an invasion against the mainland.

As if the bellicose indifference of the Nationalists to Eisenhower’s concerns were not enough of a problem, the response from the PRC would ensure the continuation of the conflict. In a statement made over Peking radio, Chou En-lai declared that “the so-called Mutual Security Treaty, concluded between the U.S. Government and the traitorous Chiang Kai-shek Clique, has further heightened this tension and is seriously threatening peace in the Far East.” He concluded that the United States was to blame for intensifying the conflict through its provocative military and diplomatic actions. Chou reasserted the PRC’s position towards the conflict by saying, “Taiwan is an inalienable part of China’s Territory. The Liberation of Taiwan is a matter of China’s Sovereignty and internal affairs. No outside interference is allowed.” According to the Communists, the only possible solution to the conflict was for the Chinese people to liberate Taiwan and for the United States to remove all armed forces from the area while ceasing to meddle in Chinese affairs. To support these words, the Communists launched a massive aerial bombardment of the Taechen islands on January 10, 1955. Eight days later, 4,000 PLA soldiers defeated all of the 1,000 Nationalist soldiers on the island of Ichiang, located on the edge of the Taechen island chain. As the situation became more unstable, the Eisenhower administration began searching for other options that could force the PRC into backing down in the Formosan Straits.

By the end of January 1955, Eisenhower and Dulles were able to push a resolution through Congress with the intention of strengthening the Mutual Security Treaty. In what became known as the Formosa
Resolution, Congress reaffirmed Eisenhower’s constitutional right to disperse United States armed forces in the Strait of Formosa as he saw fit in order to deter Communist aggression. In a statement sent to Congress, Eisenhower related that a situation was developing in the Straits which posed a danger to U.S. security. He stated, “In unfriendly hands, Formosa and the Pescadores would seriously dislocate the existing, even if unstable, balance of moral, economic and military forces upon which the peace of the Pacific depends.”

If the communists conquered Formosa then it would create a significant gap in the line of security treaties that the United States had signed with other nations in the Western Pacific.

Interestingly, by this point Eisenhower seems to have reversed his position on the status of the offshore islands. Instead of marginalizing the importance of these islands, “the thrust of the Formosa Resolution moved in the opposite direction – toward a great American readiness to defend Quemoy-Matsu.”

Eisenhower was no longer in doubt about the intention of the Communists in their assaults on Quemoy, Matsu, and the Taechens. He declared that “the Chinese Communists themselves assert that these attacks are a prelude to the conquest of Formosa.” Equating the defense of Formosa with that of the islands was a dangerous step towards the threshold of a widespread Asian war; yet Eisenhower now saw this as a necessity. While hoping he could avoid committing any U.S. forces beyond the defense of Formosa, he realized that “the danger of armed attack directed against that area compels us to take into account closely related localities and actions which, under current conditions, might determine the failure or the success of such an attack.”

Eisenhower now realized that the Communists viewed the islands merely as stepping stones to an assault on Formosa itself.

Therefore, the Formosa Resolution was yet another way in which Dulles and Eisenhower hoped to deter the Communists from their aggressive actions. In regard to the ends for which they were striving, it was hoped that: “it [the Formosa Resolution] would make clear the unified and serious intentions of our Government, our Congress and our people. Thus it will reduce the possibility that the Chinese Communists, by miscalculation, might precipitate a major crisis which even they would neither anticipate nor desire.”

This vein of thought, which closely resembled Dulles’ approach to deterrence, advocated taking a hard-line approach and making it explicitly clear to the Chinese Communists that the United States would not tolerate any aggressive actions toward the islands. Supposedly, this approach would force the PLA to cease its operations. Dulles claimed that, if this intent was not expressed to the PRC, then there would be grave repercussions. He stated that failing to pass the resolution would “involve a chain of sequences, the end of which would be either a general war with China under conditions far more adverse than those that prevail today or else an abandonment of the entire Western Pacific position.”

From the way in which some officials were presenting the situation, it appeared to be a distinct possibility that the United States would shortly be fighting the People’s Liberation Army. Beginning in September of 1954, there were those in the military establishment who had proposed actions which included the use of the nuclear bomb. This was partially due to the bellicose nature of these individuals, as well as the NSC 162/2 paper which recommended the inclusion of nuclear weapons in planning for this type of war. Later, however, the call for nuclear weapons use began to infiltrate the civilian branch of the government as well. One of the leaders of this group, which sided with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was John Foster Dulles. Convinced that the offshore islands were important to the morale of the Nationalist soldiers, he believed that the United States should do everything in its power to provide for their defense. He was thus convinced by Admiral Radford that the United States had developed “new and powerful weapons of precision which [could] utterly destroy military targets without endangering unrelated civilian centers,” and that those weapons should be used against the Communist airbases surrounding Quemoy.

Lured by the false information that was fed to him, John Foster Dulles began to make public statements about the use of these “tactical” weapons, and made efforts to convince the President that their use would be unavoidable. On March 14, 1955, Eisenhower remarked in his diary on “how effective could be our cooperation without the use of the atomic bomb if it [became] necessary for U.S. forces to actively defend Formosa.” As related by Hoopes Townsend, Robert Bowie, one of the President’s personal assistants who worked with Dulles, was concerned about the increasing number of surfacing statements concerning the use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, Bowie was moved to ask the CIA for an independent estimate of civilian casualties in the heavily populated mainland area opposite Quemoy, if tactical nuclear weapons were used against airfields and artillery concentrations. The answer was on the order of 12 to 14 million people. Not only were there officials in the United States government advocating direct U.S. involvement, but others called for a course
of action that could have killed millions of human beings. Fortunately, developments prevented this catastrophe from occurring.

One cause for hope in this bleak array of options surfaced on January 19th. When John Foster Dulles met with George Yeh on this day, Dulles reported that "he spoke [...] about possible help in evacuating forces in the Taechen Islands." This was the chance for which Eisenhower had been waiting. He wanted to avoid the necessity of protecting the offshore islands, which were provocatively close to the mainland and were lacking a realistic legal claim on the part of the Nationalists. Yet Eisenhower had been reluctant to force the Nationalists to withdraw, partially as a result of fearing a backlash by the China Block in Congress, but also because of the claim that the islands were important to the morale of the Nationalist cause. Now that the Nationalists were taking the initiative to remove troops from these islands, the possibility of Communist victories would not have significant ramifications, both militarily and psychologically; thus, the necessity of using U.S. forces in their defense was diminished.

The most important event which marked the reduction of tension did not result from any action on the part of the United States or the Nationalists; instead, it came from the Chinese Communists. The Bandung Conference was an Afro-Asian conference held in Bandung, Indonesia, where the participating countries discussed relevant issues, such as economics, trade, and relations. On April 23, 1955, the last day of the conference, Chou En-lai unexpectedly announced the PRC's desire to ease tensions in the strait. He stated, "China and the United States should sit down and enter into negotiations to settle the question of relaxing and eliminating the tension in the Taiwan area." However, he immediately followed this statement by saying that this did not mean the PRC would give up their claims to Taiwan or their desire to rejoin it with the mainland. While the issue of the offshore islands and Formosa was by no means settled, the conflicting parties were able to enjoy a reprieve, as the conflict would not flare up again until three years later in 1958.

Several historians attribute this temporary respite to Eisenhower's patience and evenhandedness in managing the situation. They maintain that it was Eisenhower's insistence on reducing Nationalist strength on the islands and his conciliatory gestures towards the Communist world that eventually culminated in the positive results of the Bandung Conference. However, there are several problems with these arguments. First of all, while Eisenhower did want to work towards a rapprochement with the Soviet Union following the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953, this still begs the question of how much influence the Soviets had over the Chinese Communists. Next, it is doubtful that the PRC would have halted its efforts as a result of the evacuation of Nationalist troops from the offshore islands. Rather, it seems logical that the PLA would have only increased its efforts in reclaiming these islands. And finally, one is left wondering to what extent Eisenhower was actually involved in the decision making process, and therefore how much credit he should receive.

Sherman Adams portrays a President who was very attentive and engaged in the progression of events, quoting Eisenhower as stating that, "Foster and I are living twenty-four hours a day with the question of what to do if something happens in Quemoy and Matsu." However, an entry into Eisenhower's diary casts a different light on this situation. As late as March 26, 1955, he claimed, "I believe hostilities are not so imminent as is indicated by the foreboding of a number of my associates."

This statement creates the image of a president who was not cognizant of the reality of the situation or the very real possibility of a war, which other intellectuals and government officials believed could break out at any moment. Also, there was the fact that Dulles seems to have been the helmsman controlling the direction of American foreign policy; Dulles does not seem to have ever made a decision or advocated positions that would have produced promising results leading to the conclusion of the crisis. Therefore, it seems that other possibilities need to be explored that could explain why Chou En-lai so suddenly changed his attitude towards the situation in the straits.

One more viewpoint advocated by historians is the belief that the Peking regime made the statement at Bandung in response to the attitude of the countries that were in attendance. The Communists perhaps complied with the wishes of other Asian nations for the halting of violence and the restoration of peace to the Western Pacific. This explanation is unconvincing, however, because the PRC had expressly stated that the Taiwan issue was an internal matter in which no other nation had the right to interfere. One possibility which still needs to be studied involves the internal circumstances and dynamics existing within Communist China during the 1950s. Could the Communists have backed down because they were distracted by more pressing internal concerns? While the Great Leap Forward did not begin until 1958, and the chaos of the Cultural Revolution was still a decade away, during this period China was preoccupied with the
consolidation of a new government and rebuilding from the destruction created both by World War II and the Chinese Civil War. It seems as if these factors would offer the best explanation of the Communists’ actions at the Bandung Conference.

Without regard to the fact that the Chinese Communists initiated efforts to ease tension in late April of 1955, it seems certain that fundamental mistakes were made in the Eisenhower Administration which served to heighten the possibility of a war breaking out with the PRC. Dulles lacked a fundamental understanding of the motives of Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai. He believed that communism in China had been imposed by outside forces rather than essentially beginning as a grassroots movement in the country and had a distinctly different ideology than that of the Soviet Union. Dulles also failed to recognize Chinese claims that Taiwan was both legally and historically a part of the mainland. These claims naturally implied that the PRC would never back down from its desire to gain control of the island. In addition, Dulles relied on a policy of deterrence in which he was willing to step to the brink of war just to achieve his goals.

With Eisenhower, it seemed a basic strategy of his leadership style to delegate significant amounts of authority to members of his Cabinet. This is not a style of leadership which always yields poor results, but it was dangerous in the specific circumstances involving John Foster Dulles. Given this amount of power and leeway, he seems to have disregarded alternative options in order to execute foreign policy in a way that he believed was best. These factors were only made more volatile with the introduction of factors such as the “New Look” policy and the new military strategies characterized by the NSC 162/2 paper. When combined, all of these factors resulted in the United States nearly going to war with the most populous nation on earth. Ultimately, the legacy of these events continues to affect the course of the United States’ foreign policy today.

Endnotes

3 Ibid., 66.
5 Ibid., 138.
8 Ibid., 90.
9 Ibid., 39.
10 Ibid., 87.
11 Townsend Hoopes. *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*. 133.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid., 91.
16 Townsend Hoopes. *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*. 196.
17 Ibid., 191.
18 Ibid.
22 Ibid., 230.
23 Ibid., 231.
25 Ibid., 138.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., 267.
31 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 151.
34 Hoopes Townsend. *The Devil and John Foster Dulles*. 265.
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Imagine it. A swanky, downtown hotel packed with overly caffeinated, “highly trained” corporate machines in business suits as pretentious as their attitudes. Each handshake is accompanied with a smug grin because each has been taught how to play the game. Ah, the corporate convention—a magical place where executives learn how to keep the power and professionals learn why this is okay. Among the literature distributed at our little convention are pieces by Peter M. Senge and Marshall Sashkin.

Sashkin speaks to the CEO’s, the executives, the leaders about the importance of creating and maintaining a common “vision” throughout a leadership situation. Senge, on the other hand, speaks to the professionals, the ones working at the command of the executives. He suggests progressive and empowering ideas about a “shared vision,” breaking away from traditional visionary leadership theory to give professionals a sense of democratic power. This results in more productivity within the company, and both parties are satisfied. The professionals think they have finally gained some of the power, while the executives still have it all. All acquire dynamic ideas that they believe will create a real change in the work place; however, the only thing that will change is the consciousness of each player in this corporate game. Examining Senge and Sashkin offers a look at the conversations that actually take place within the “system.” These conversations only affirm what Paulo Friere argues in Pedagogy of the Oppressed with his “banking concept,” where a superior figure simply “deposits” information into subordinates, and expose the “professional ideology,” or instilled attitudes that cause dangerous professional conservatism, which Jeff Schmidt warns of in his book Disciplined Minds.

Sashkin nicely packages four “cognitive skills” that executives need in order to create and implement the “vision”: expressing, explaining, extending, and expanding (the nifty alliteration allows for quick memorization, so each skill can be easily retrieved and used at the right moment). First, by “expressing” the vision, Sashkin means “behaving in a way that advances the goal of the vision” (404). In order to advance the goal, Schmidt recognizes that successful professionals, even those without the proper credentials, must exude the right “attitude.” The professional has to “internalize the assigned ideology, or at least act convincingly as if he has done so” (Schmidt 148). Schmidt is addressing the professional here, the subordinates of the executives; however, even the executives are subordinate to a much larger “system” that defines their correct “attitude.” Sashkin helps define this executive attitude in his claims that only the leader who behaves confidently and self-assuredly in the vision she has created will be able to successfully implement the vision. Sashkin recognizes that even if people do not agree with the leader, as long as the leader stands firm in her “vision,” people will continue to adhere
to it (407). As long as the executive keeps the right attitude, her power will never be relinquished and the system will never be changed.

Sashkin’s “explaining” involves making the vision clear to all those who work toward it (404). This is a good communication skill for leaders to have. It is important for everyone involved to know how they can support this vision in order to better conform, right? This “explaining” is exactly the “banking education” that Friere warns is transforming subordinates (employees in this case) into “mechanistic receptacles.” Banking education, Friere explains, embodies the concept of top-down power with an all-knowing superior “depositing” information to an inferior (77).

“Explaining” appears progressive because it at least encourages leaders to keep people informed about the direction the group is moving. However, the vision remains static because its direction is and will remain top-down. Sashkin has now given executives the tool to make employees feel that their opinion matters—they are respected enough to know what is going on, after all. In reality, though, this skill does nothing but let executives keep the power of “banking” their vision into the eager little professionals.

The “extending” skill requires the application of the vision to “a variety of situations so that [it] can be implemented in several ways and places” (Sashkin 405). Once again, this skill is simply giving the executive the tool she needs to blind employees with hope of a dynamic vision that can be altered depending on the situation. What the employees do not know is that the vision, even the various “applications” of it, is still the same vision and is still at the discretion of the elite executive. Also, this skill allows the defined vision to be adequately spread throughout the group. Schmidt discusses how the professional, though under the impression that he has “creative freedom,” only thinks creatively within the confines of the higher ideology—or "vision" (13). This executive skill gives professionals the belief that they still have freedom—their individual goals can still align with the vision of the group because the group’s vision is so "adaptable." Making the group’s ideology seemingly versatile only makes it easier for everyone to submit to it.

The last skill Sashkin articulates, “expanding,” is most vital to the life of the vision (405). The first part of expanding involves the creation of an “explicit organizational philosophy” which should be “developed by the leader and her key subordinates” (406). Schmidt, in his exposé of the “system,” reveals a mythical “ideology” in the professional world. This ideology is what unconsciously “justifies actions” and provides a framework for the “disciplined minds” that it creates (Schmidt 15). It is almost absurd to believe that the leaders of professional institutions are “brainwashing” employees to keep the hierarchal system, both in the workplace and society, intact. However, executives read and converse amongst each other about authors like Sashkin who encourage a leader-developed “philosophy.” Schmidt is not just a whiney employee pushing his “pessimistic” ideas—he is stating what should be explicit to everyone! This “philosophy” or “vision” is the ideology. It is not a myth or even an accident. Sashkin clearly demonstrates that executives not only know that they are creating an ideology, but are actively learning how to create it.

The second feature of “expanding” the vision is identifying an “informal network of cultural players” (Sashkin 406). These “gossips” are those people who work closely with the executive and informally infiltrate the group to keep people in line with the vision. Schmidt recognizes these gossips as “cooling out agents” and acknowledges that these voices are an “integral part of the game” (195). These presumed “neutral voices” are in place to perpetuate the ideology and ultimately the oppressing system in which they are trapped. If an employee gets angry about a decision the boss made or the direction the vision is leading the group, he will talk amongst his colleagues. There, around the water fountain, an executive’s advocate will “cool out” the enraged employee. “Look,” the advocate might say, “there is nothing you can do about it, this is the way the company is headed. We really need you on board with this.” Because this executive wingman is “neutral” and not one of the elite, the angry colleague backs down, accepting his defeat as fair. What could have been a much-needed challenge of the vision is silenced. The executive keeps her power, the gossip gets a raise, and the astute colleague returns to working toward the vision. Everyone is happy, and the system remains unchanged.

A floor below the conference executives’ “Blue Royal Conference Suite,” the professionals meet in “The Brown Room.” A packet by none other than Peter M. Senge, corporate guru extraordinaire, is distributed amongst the professionals. The ardent professionals read with excitement as Senge presents his innovative Shared Vision. Senge uses empowering language like “personal vision” and “our company.” He notes that Shared Vision is not an idea, “but a force in peoples’ hearts” (Senge 35). He even draws excellent circuit diagrams (for those who are too excited to read through the entire manual) that warn of professional actions
that, as professionals, they have to submit to; rather, it is something that they instead call for.

professionals are also learning that good executives and a good vision do not call for compliance; they reading Senge and learning that only bad employees refuse to comply with the “vision.” The Senge-reading silenced] serve the hierarchy respectfully and not sabotage it” (196). It is a good thing that professionals are at one time, eventually becomes just another way to quietly maintain the status quo within the professional discourse that could impede the company's morale and its productivity. A shared vision, even if truly shared minds.

Minds

but it also comes dangerously close to Schmidt’s presumed professional “ideology” presented in Disciplined Minds. A requirement of a shared vision is that professionals cannot dissent from it. Noncompliance causes discourse that could impede the company’s morale and its productivity. A shared vision, even if truly shared at one time, eventually becomes just another way to quietly maintain the status quo within the professional world and ultimately, society. Schmidt states, “it is vital for the system that the ‘losers’ [whose opinions are silenced] serve the hierarchy respectfully and not sabotage it” (196). It is a good thing that professionals are reading Senge and learning that only bad employees refuse to comply with the “vision.” The Senge-reading professionals are also learning that good executives and a good vision do not call for compliance; they instead call for commitment (Senge 36). This idea propagandizes the belief that the vision is not something that, as professionals, they have to submit to; rather, it is something that they want. Schmidt would argue that this encourages professionals to subconsciously discard their initial political agendas to make room for the “vision,” which ultimately turns “politically independent thinkers into politically subordinate clones” (4).

Schmidt also talks about “the false promises” that American socioeconomic systems (much like New York street hustlers) are making (195). Based on this premise, Senge is just another advocate of the system making another false promise. He gives professionals hope of a team-formulated shared vision, which is exactly what the executives want professionals to think. Just like Sashkin’s advice to the executives, Senge also covers the possibility of professionals who refuse to commit to the vision. He explains that sometimes executives and “productive” employees have to settle for mere compliance. Just as Sashkin teaches executives how to mold some employees into an “informal network of cultural players” Senge teaches professionals how to be good little employees and create this same network. Senge even gives a sample dialogue for a future “wingman” in the situation of a non-committed fellow employee. According to him, one could say: “I know you may not agree wholeheartedly with the new direction, but at this juncture it is where the management team is committed to heading. I need your support to help make it happen” (Senge 52). With these words from a supposedly unbiased fellow employee, the unfavorable non-committal one is successfully “cooled out.” Even though this disgruntled employee may not “commit” to the vision, he has complied, which is all that is needed to perpetuate the present system.

Senge’s stance is once again challenged by Friere when he states that “the interest of the oppressors lie in changing the consciousness of the oppressed, not the situation which oppresses them” (74). Senge’s “vision”
makes employees feel that their opinion matters, and Sashkin suggests to executives that this vision is the most effective way to lead. In reality, the “vision” is so good at changing employees’ and executives’ consciousness that no one notices that the situation remains unchanged. Sure, the Shared Vision enhances productivity, “compels courage,” and “fosters risk taking and experimentation” (Senge 39) but only within the frame of the groups’ hidden ideology—I mean “vision.” Visionary leadership enables leaders to effectively “pull people” toward the direction of the company (Sashkin 407), but the leader solely dictates this direction. Shared Vision only enhances the productivity within the confines of the company’s framework and only “fosters experimentation” as long as it is in line with the status quo. Under Sashkin’s “vision” there is no room for a professional who may “pull” in a different direction. In fact, Senge is the ultimate “cooling out agent” for Sashkin and executives everywhere as he tells professionals to commit to groups’ directions no matter what. If there is dissatisfaction with the “game,” both Senge and Sashkin encourage everyone in the system to simply change the rules—but never the game.

The convention has come to a close, and wiser executives and professionals are released back into the corporate world. Sashkin has taught the executives how to create and implement an “ideology,” and Senge’s innovative Shared Vision becomes just another deposit into the good receptacles that employees have learned to be. The professional feels empowered with the idea that he can make a difference, and the executive has been assured that a difference will never be made. Sashkin and Senge have done their jobs to silence annoying critics like Friere and Schmidt and keep the system the way it is. Nothing is challenged, nothing is changed, and all the CEO’s, the executives, the leaders, can sleep in peace.

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From the Osprey to Environmental Defense: Exploring the Limits of Citizen Leadership

Adam Israel

Developing fair and effective environmental policy is one of the most important functions of the United States government. When developing policy, legislators must find a delicate balance between ensuring the health of their citizens by limiting or banning certain harmful substances, and ensuring the health of the United States economy. Lawmakers must be cognizant of firms’ abilities to reduce emissions, yet still produce goods for public consumption; any imbalance can result in significant damages to all parties involved. If environmental policy is too aggressive, firms might find that production is too costly and exit the market. The repercussions of a significant industrial exodus from the market would affect not only industry, but also consumers. On the other hand, if a policy is not aggressive enough, the health of all Americans, as well as the ecological health of the United States, would be at a greater risk.

As a result of the potentially negative consequences, it is important for policy makers to be as informed as possible about the potential ramifications of proposed legislation. Information regarding environmental legislation, however, is costly. Often, interest groups on all sides of issues help provide policy makers with information on which to base their policy decisions. Industry lobbyists communicate industrial marginal abatement costs—the cost incurred by firms when reducing emissions by one additional unit—to lawmakers. Both environmental groups and citizen action groups help provide legislators with an idea of the marginal damages—costs born by specific individuals, communities, or society as a whole—associated with certain pollutants. While beneficial, assimilating this added information into the policy making process can be cumbersome for lawmakers, who typically are not experienced economists or environmental engineers. Therefore, the role of nonpartisan experts who positively evaluate proposed policies and make educated recommendations has become increasingly beneficial to all parties involved.

Since 1967, Environmental Defense has attempted to fill this key role. According to its mission statement, Environmental Defense links “science, economics and law to create innovative, equitable and cost-effective solutions to society’s most urgent environmental problems” (Mission 1). Environmental Defense is a leader in the field of economically viable environmental policy, and analysis of its internal leadership yields important insight into the group’s success. This paper provides a discussion of Environmental Defense’s development within the framework of Citizen Leadership—a leadership theory developed by Richard Couto, Professor of Leadership Studies in the Leadership and Change Ph.D. program at Antioch University. It seems, however, that as Environmental Defense has grown as an organization and its institutional focus has

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“This paper served as the final project for Dr. Kathleen Greer Rossman’s Environmental Economics class. The organization and leadership style of Environmental Defense fascinated me from the beginning, but I have been most impressed by their real-world solutions to environmental problems. I believe considering both environmental and economic ramifications when creating governmental guidelines results in the most viable policy decisions, and Environmental Defense is actively working toward such policies.”

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shifted from policy opposition to policy collaboration, Citizen Leadership no longer best serves Environmental Defense; therefore, it is also important to address the characteristics of the organization that lead to this assertion and evaluate the organization's current style of leadership.

The Environmental Defense Fund began, as many grassroots movements do, as a small group of concerned citizens. Four scientists in the New York area – Dennis Puleston, Charles Wurster, Arthur Cooley and Robert Smolker – observed that dichlorodiphenyl trichloroethane (DDT), a long-lasting industrial pesticide, was thinning the eggshells of the osprey (Origin 1). In their 1966 lawsuit against the Suffolk County Mosquito Control Commission, they attributed this decline to reproductive problems associated with the industrial pesticide DDT, and by 1972 their victory led to a national ban on DDT. This case not only set valuable precedent allowing citizens to sue on behalf of the environment, but it also led to the birth of the Environmental Defense Fund, a nonpartisan environmental policy organization. Additionally, the court decision established the field of Environmental Law as a viable legal field.

Environmental Defense, formerly known as The Environmental Defense Fund, began as a direct outgrowth of what Richard Couto characterizes as Citizen Leadership. In attempting to define Citizen Leadership, Richard Couto recounts a luncheon conversation as the moment he first conceived his theory (Cuoto 11). Couto was dining with the search committee from the Jepson School of Leadership Studies at the University of Richmond. Among the members of this committee was James MacGregor Burns, the father of leadership studies. As Couto picked at his food, Burns began to “lament the dearth of leadership in contemporary America” (Cuoto 11). Couto immediately took issue with Burns’ assertion and pointed out that it all depended on where you looked. He argued that “leadership at the community level is abundant and of extraordinarily high quality” (Cuoto 11).

This lunchtime assertion of Couto’s is at the core of Citizen Leadership. When Couto talks about leadership at the community level, he is referring to leadership that is not political in terms of holding elective office: often, Citizen Leadership at the community level is not necessarily sought out (Cuoto 13). Wren notes that citizen leaders reluctantly leave their private lives as they know them, in order to work for change which they feel is necessary. Their motives tend to be pure, “taking sustained action to bring about change that [permitted],” and in Dennis Puleston and Charles Wurster’s case, increased environmental “well-being” (Cuoto 12).

Dennis Puleston had studied ospreys each year since the end of World War II on an island in Gardiners Bay, near the eastern coast of Long Island (Dennis 1). A keen ornithologist trained at the University of London, Puleston began his study of the large osprey colony in Gardiners Bay in 1948. In 1966, he discovered that the birth rate of osprey chicks was dropping dramatically. Concerned with the drop, he took unhatched eggs to Dr. Charles Wurster at Stony Brook University for analysis. They found high levels of DDT. Until this discovery, both Puleston and Wurster had been private citizens, content with doing what they loved outside of the spotlight; however, this discovery propelled them into the role of Citizen Leaders.

In a 1966 lawsuit, Puleston, Wurster, and two other scientists alleged that the pesticide being sprayed by the Suffolk County Mosquito Control Commission contained a high concentration of DDT, which led to the endangerment of the osprey and other species of migratory birds. These four men acted not out of selfish motives, but instead were compelled by what Couto says is a need “to pass on to the next generation a society less tolerant of human and environmental degradation” (Cuoto 15). Their lawsuit set a valuable precedent which allowed private citizens to sue on behalf of the environment, regardless of whether the plaintiffs or their property suffered any injury.

Couto points out that Citizen Leaders “constantly [press] the static boundaries of our political system to broaden, to incorporate new issues,” and this is certainly true of these four men (Cuoto 16). Within five years of their victory in Suffolk County, New York, the Environmental Protection Agency nationally banned DDT (Origin 1). Couto also points out that, initially, Citizen Leaders take action in order to produce their desired change and quickly return to their private lives; however, somewhere along the way, these leaders often establish formal organizations to further their cause. As a result of their victory in 1967, those four scientists did just that, and formed The Environmental Defense Fund.

Although Environmental Defense has its roots in Citizen Leadership, it began to move away from this style in the early 1970s. The organization changed its name from the Environmental Defense Fund to simply Environmental Defense, and shifted focus from direct legal opposition to policy development (Origin 1). Environmental Defense maintains that it still litigates when necessary; however, it now seeks to deal with the stakeholders in environmental policy development on a more direct basis. Rather than assuming its
former role of what Couto terms a “parallel government” – “carrying out changes before political leaders are prepared to do the same” - Environmental Defense moved toward appealing directly to industry leaders and working with government leaders to shape environmental policy (Cuoto 16).

For example, much of Environmental Defense’s early work concentrated on energy conservation (Firor 1). In the early 1970s, it developed an economic model of large power plants that showed that an increase in efficiency would mitigate the need for additional power plant facilities. This model called for a buy-back of electricity generated as part of a heat producing process (Firor 2). It also called for peak pricing of electricity, which would “move some users off of the peak hours [of electricity consumption] and thus lessen the need for additional generating capacity” (Firor 1). This collaborative relationship between Environmental Defense and industry leaders is a departure from Couto’s model of Citizen Leadership, which implies the necessity of conflict (Cuoto 13). Couto generally speaks in terms of a struggle against institutionalized injustice. In the case of Environmental Defense, energy producers readily accepted the electricity model, first applied in California, as a cost-effective abatement method (Firor 2). In this instance there seemed to be relatively little conflict at all.

In 1990 Environmental Defense moved even further away from its original method of direct opposition to “ill-conceived” policy. In a 1986 Wall Street Journal piece Fred Krup, president of Environmental Defense, pointed out the need for “a new generation of environmental advocates who carefully consider the impact of regulation on industry, taking into account everything from economic growth and jobs to taxpayer and stockholder interests” (Engle 2). Environmental Defense’s role in the creation and passage of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments is an example of the type of collaboration for which Krup called. The Amendments established a cap-and-trade system for sulfur dioxide emissions. While this system was unfamiliar to many, Environmental Defense believed it to be the most effective because this type of policy would yield the largest cut in emissions at the least cost to industry. Environmental Defense employees wrote and edited the report that laid the framework for the Clean Air Act Amendments entitled “Project 88: Harnessing Market Forces to Protect Our Environment” (Engle 2).

The Amendments allowed industries to emit a certain level of pollutants, such as sulfur dioxide (Engle 3). Any abatement past the mandated cap on emissions a firm could achieve would allow them to accrue bankable pollution credits. These credits could be held for future production expansions, or could be traded for profit. Departing from earlier pollution control policies, the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments allowed the regulated industries the freedom to choose their abatement technology. The cap-and-trade policy gave incentives to industries to abate further when it is cost effective, in order to be able to sell permits for a profit. As of 1993, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) had doled out “5.3 million emissions permits to the 110 worst polluters” (National 142). The Amendments, designed to cut utility emissions of sulfur dioxide in half (based on 1980 emissions of 18 million tons), set the emissions cap at 9.5 million tons by the year 2000. Furthermore, the legislation gave polluters five years to achieve an initial abatement level; after 1995 those companies emitting more than the amount allowed by their permits would be subject to large federal fines.

While the idea of tradable permits came under attack from environmentalists in 1990, the collaborative effort Fred Krup called for seems to have paid off for both environmentalists, who have received a 50% cut in sulfur dioxide emissions, and for industry, who gained $21 million in added profits in 1993 alone due to permit trading (National 142). Environmental Defense serves as an example of citizen leadership in action, and in addition to the idea of tradable permits, the organization continues to work toward economically viable environmental policy.

Fifteen years after its success in applying market based controls on sulfur dioxide emissions; Environmental Defense now seeks to have the same cap-and-trade system present in the Clean Air Act Amendments applied to US greenhouse gas emissions. Consequently, Environmental Defense launched a new project called Global Warming: Undo It (Global 1). According to the official website, its “number one objective is passage of the McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act, which would dramatically cut polluting emissions” (Global 1). Environmental Defense has taken a much more public approach to Global Warming: Undo It than it did when first entertaining the idea of tradable emissions permits in 1990. Rather than secret meetings with lawmakers, Environmental Defense seeks to rally public support for this “critical issue” (Global 1). Citizens can express their support for the bill by signing a petition which already has nearly half a million signatures.

The McCain-Lieberman Climate Stewardship Act was introduced in 2003; however, it was defeated by a vote of 43-55 (Spotlight 1). Speaking about the outcome in 2003, Environmental Defense President Fred
Krup stated, “We got way more votes than we would have expected to get when we started this campaign. Senators on both sides of the aisle support action now” (Spotlight 1). As expected, the measure was reintroduced in the Senate on February 10, 2005 (no action in the Senate has taken place in reference to this bill).

The Act calls for large reductions in several greenhouse gasses including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride (United States 5). The mechanisms present in the Climate Stewardship Act are nearly identical to the standards governing sulfur dioxide emissions set forth in the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments. For example, the Climate Stewardship Act creates a cap-and-trade system for greenhouse gasses (United States 1). Also like the Clean Air Act Amendments, the Climate Stewardship Act establishes a technology standard required for monitoring greenhouse emissions (United States 22). The bill states:

Affected industries must use a continuous emissions monitoring system, or another system of measuring or estimating emissions that is determined by the Secretary [of Commerce] to provide information with precision, reliability, accessibility, and timeliness similar to that provided by a continuous emissions monitoring system where technologically feasible” (United States 22).

Unlike the Clean Air Act Amendments, however, the Climate Stewardship Act allows firms to use permits issued by other nations, with some limitations. The Climate Stewardship Act also allows firms to “borrow against future reductions” in greenhouse emissions (United States 26). Firms may obtain an emissions credit from the EPA rather than having to hold an actual permit, provided they ensure that they reduce emissions by the number of credits received in the five years following the issuance of said credit.

Environmental Defense cites a 2003 study titled “Emissions Trading to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions in the United States: The McCain-Lieberman Proposal” to justify its support of the Climate Stewardship Act. The econometric study done by researchers at MIT shows that welfare loss associated with the Climate Stewardship Act will be relatively low (Ellerman et al 27). The study asserts that the welfare loss associated with the 2010 level of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions will range from .07% to .25%. According to Denny Ellerman and his associates, if the legislation is enacted properly “the average cost [of the proposal] per household remains below $20 per year” (Ellerman et al 27). Ellerman also asserts that the credit provision of the act could significantly lower costs associated with the policy.

Although the bill has had no activity in the Senate since its introduction, the bipartisan effort to establish the United States’ version of the Kyoto Protocol has gained support from many environmental groups. In addition to Environmental Defense (the main proponents of the bill), six “environmental” product brands (including Silk, Stonyfield Farm, Organic Valley, Clif Bar, Trinity, and Odwalla) have begun actively recruiting support for the Climate Stewardship Act from their customers (Global 1).

In 2000 Environmental Defense furthered its legacy of leadership by partnering with seven leading corporations that pledged to voluntarily cut greenhouse emissions, and this recent greenhouse victory gives Environmental Defense great hope for the Climate Stewardship Act (Voluntary 4). These corporations, including DuPout, BP, and Shell, agreed to a fifteen percent cut in greenhouse emissions by the year 2010, the year that the proposed Climate Stewardship Act would take effect. It was unclear at the time of the agreement as to whether or not firms would receive credit for reductions before the legislation passed; however, the Climate Stewardship Act does contain incentives to accelerate reductions in emissions (United States 32).

Despite these positive steps as leaders in policy making, can Environmental Defense still be considered primarily a Citizen Leadership organization? Environmental Defense now seems to be farther from its origin of Citizen Leadership than ever. Rather than merely four concerned scientists, a thirty-six person board including both Sam R. Walton and Teresa Heinz-Kerry manages Environmental Defense (Annual 28). While his motives for leading the organization may be pure, Fred Krup’s salary of $315,932 makes his position a very desirable one within the non-profit arena (Form 4). Thus, it becomes hard to determine whether the executives and board members of Environmental Defense are of the reluctant yet convicted mindset of the traditional Citizen Leader, or if they do, in fact, seek leadership because of the handsome compensation and status, respectively.

The question now is, “If Environmental Defense has shifted away from Citizen Leadership, then what style of leadership has it shifted towards?” It does not seem as though Environmental Defense has necessarily shifted towards any specific style of leadership outlined previously; rather it seems to have drawn from many styles to create a type of visionary expert-collaborative leadership. This amorphous style seems
to take on some aspects of Visionary Leadership while retaining the moral convictions of Citizen Leadership. This style also incorporates the use of expert power to foster legitimate change in the environmental policy arena.

According to Marshall Sashkin, professor of leadership studies at George Washington University, Visionary Leadership “consists of constructing a vision, creating an ideal image of the organization and its culture” (Sashkin 403). It also encompasses “defining an organizational philosophy that succinctly states the vision and developing programs and policies that put the philosophy into practice within the organization’s unique context and culture” (Wren 403). Sashkin asserts that the ability to conceive an organizational vision must stretch beyond the present and look down the road for a period of years. As Environmental Defense evolved, its mission developed into a long-term statement. Environmental Defense asserts that it is “dedicated to protecting the environmental rights of all people, including future generations,” but it also works “to create solutions that win lasting economic and social support because they are nonpartisan, cost-effective and fair” (Mission 1). Its programs, such as the development of the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, fulfill this vision by attempting to find common ground between industry and environmentalists through market-based incentives to prevent pollution.

Visionary Leadership, however, does not accurately characterize organizations such as Environmental Defense because it does not address how the vision should look. Visionary Leadership seems more applicable, as a whole, to profit-driven organizations. Therefore, non-profits like Environmental Defense, for whom mission rather than profit is the most important consideration, seem to retain certain attributes of Citizen Leadership, which is deeply concerned about justice and personal and environmental degradation. Couto describes the motives of Citizen Leadership as seeking to make “a political, economic, and social system accountable for whom it serves and fails to serve” (Wren 15). Although its approach may have changed, Environmental Defense has always maintained battling environmental injustice as one of its core tenants.

Environmental Defense has a rich history of environmental leadership. Rather than simply opposing pollution, Environmental Defense has helped to produce effective environmental policy. In 1990 when framing the Clean Air Act Amendments, and again in 2003 and 2005 when supporting the Climate Control Act, Environmental Defense remained true to its mission of linking “science, economics, and law to create innovative, equitable and cost effective solutions to society’s most urgent environmental problems” (Mission 1). This fidelity to environmental justice coupled with the fact that the organization is keenly aware of the need for public awareness and economically viable policies ensures that Environmental Defense will maintain a seat at the environmental policy table for years to come.

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Gabriela Mistral: An Enigma in Female Leadership

Meredith Hanson

Somos locos, y locos sin excusa, al hablar de la “superioridad” de un sexo sobre el otro, como si pudiesen compararse cual cosas similares. Cada uno de ellos tiene lo que el otro no tiene; cada uno completa al otro y es completado por él; no son nada iguales, y la felicidad y perfección de ambos depende de que cada cual pida y reciba del otro lo que solo el otro puede darle (Mistral 18).

[We are lunatics, and lunatics without excuse, to speak of the ‘superiority’ of one sex over the other, as if they could be compared in similar ways. Each one of them has what the other does not have; each one completes the other and is completed by the other; they are in no way equal, and the happiness and perfection of both depends (on that) each ask and receive of the other what alone the other can give (Mistral trans. Hanson).]

These are the words of the first Latin-American to ever win the Nobel Prize for literature. They are the words of a diplomat who helped to found UNICEF. These are the words of a leader whose death in 1957 stopped deliberations in the United Nations and caused three days of mourning to be declared in Chile, where 200,000 people attended the funeral. This great leader was counted among the major universalists and even compared to Gandhi (Gies 14). These are the words of the leader Gabriela Mistral in her book, Lecturas Para Mujeres. Her words were an inspiration to a nation.

She goes on to write:

[Now well, the distinctive characteristics are, all in all, the following: the power of the man is active, progressive, defensive. He is the actor, the creator, the discoverer, the defender. His intellect is oriented toward the speculation and the invention; his energy toward the adventure, the war and the conquest, wherever that the war is just, wherever that the conquest is necessary. But the power of the woman is . . . not for the battle, and her intelligence is not for the invention or creation, but to stand up for the good order, arrangement and decision. She sees the qualities of the things, their demands [.] and the places that they should occupy. Her great function is fame; she does not enter combats, but judges infallibly the crown of the battle. By her mission and by her position she will be protected against every danger and every temptation (Mistral trans. Hanson).]

In Mistral’s time women were barely recognized as viable citizens, much less as public leaders; however, Mistral emerged in this environment to become both a powerful leader and a symbol for female leadership. She was born on April 6, 1889 in Vicuna, Chile (Castleman 2), and eventually became a teacher, transferring from one remote rural school to another. Later she took the position of headmistress at a prestigious private girls’ school. Mistral cared deeply about teaching and committed her life to education (Castleman 10). Jose Vasconcelos, the Mexican Minister of
Education, chose Mistral in 1922 to help him reform his country’s educational system. In Mexico she helped organize programs in rural areas, oversee the introduction of mobile libraries, and establish home schools for women (Castleman 38). After working in the Mexican government to achieve educational reform, she joined the Chilean diplomatic service and spent the rest of her career as a consul in Spain, Italy, Portugal, Brazil, Mexico, and the United States. Mistral’s image has lasted for decades, and she will always be the symbol of a mother for Chile because her words and writings were so strong when she was alive.

Mistral is a perplexing and important female leader and role model for women all over the world, but she has been and continues to be a special role model for Chilean women. In order to discuss Mistral’s style of leadership, it is necessary to analyze how female leaders are seen by society, what factors make them successful, and how to move toward supporting leaders in terms of their genders. Mistral serves as an example of a successful female leader, and analysis of the ways in which she does or does not fit into contemporary constructs of female leadership is a helpful tool in understanding this aspect of leadership.

Female leadership is truly an enigma in our society; many scholars have theories about it, but no one is sure what makes women successful or how to ensure increased success for greater numbers of women. Although there is no definitive way to identify which characteristics or circumstances might help women to be more successful leaders, the ways in which genders are socialized, the breaking down of structural barriers, and an acceptance of many different approaches to leadership are worthy of examination.

First, an understanding of the ways in which our society defines women is critical. In her essay, “Women and Leadership,” Julie Indvik insightfully defines the terms our society uses to describe women and men. She comments that sex and gender are inarguably two separate descriptors. Indvik asserts: Sex refers to biological differences including anatomy, physiology, and hormones, although some theorists argue that even sex is a continuum rather that a simple bipolar set of categories. The biological characteristics of males and females imply nothing, in and of themselves, about the cognitive, emotional, or interpersonal abilities relevant to the workplace and leadership (215).

So, if this is the case, why do women have such difficulty becoming leaders? Indvik suggests that the reason lies with the ways in which cultures have assigned stereotypes to the biological status of male and female. She says that “Gender refers to the way in which meaning and evaluations are associated with sex by members of a culture” (216). There are many problems with using such polarized descriptors as male and female or masculine and feminine. To begin with, these descriptors allow societies to take on an “either-or” mentality (Indvik 216): individuals are either masculine or feminine. This stereotyping is often completely inaccurate—most people fall somewhere on a continuum between these poles. These polarized terms also allow a society to attach a basic set of characteristics to each term, and after doing so, assume that all the people associated with that term must inherently possess that basic set of characteristics (Indvik 216). To reiterate, these categories imply that everyone within each category is the same. Lastly, Indvik thoughtfully points out that another problem with these bipolar categories is that they easily allow people to view one category as being superior to another (216). Before one can begin to talk about leadership, one must understand the ways in which sex and gender define individuals in society’s eyes.

In her book, The Difference “Difference” Makes: Women and Leadership, Deborah L. Rhode argues that, “In virtually every society, gender is a fundamental aspect of human identity, and gender stereotypes influence beliefs, behaviors, and self-concepts at both conscious and unconscious levels” (7). Rhode suggests that women need to push for institutional changes that will help equalize leadership opportunities and promote socially responsible exercises of leadership. Female leaders should mentor young female leaders and support female networks, women’s causes, and women candidates (Rhode 33). She states, “The greatest challenge lies in adapting sufficiently to succeed within an organization without losing the capacity or commitment to change it” (Rhode 33).

How does all this discussion of gendered leadership connect to Mistral personally? Mistral is an important female leader to examine because she was so successful in the male world. Her leadership is ironic because she did not encourage women to seek the same success she had obtained. Jamie Quezada, a scholar who has studied Mistral in detail, said that “Mistral is a legend and a myth. She is a part of our national patrimony, and everyone thinks that they know her. But the paradox is that only now are we beginning to have a direct and truthful relationship with her work” (qtd. in Rhoter 1).

The most interesting aspects of Mistral as a female leader are the ways in which she advocated for women. Although it is imperative to keep in mind the completely oppressive time and culture in which Mistral lived, Elizabeth Marchant suggests in The Professional Outsider: Gabriela Mistral on Motherhood
and Nation, that “The Lecturas” [or her writings] appear to uphold patriarchal notions of family and reproduction, representing women as homemakers and suggesting that women’s greatest role is as mother and caretaker” (49). She goes on to argue that “[Mistral’s] position implicitly critiques the absence of women in discourses of nationalism while simultaneously suggesting that women maintain traditionally inscribed gender roles” (Marchant 50). Mistral insisted that motherhood was the main purpose in women’s lives, which has commonly been seen as an attempt to preserve the patriarchal order. Marchant notes that, “in fact, given her career as a diplomat and teacher, her life bears little resemblance to the one she prescribes for the readers of the Lecturas” (57). In fact, Mistral never married or had children, and many critics believe that she was a homosexual, although many Chileans would assert that there is no proof of that fact. Marchant concludes: She [Mistral] advises women to remain in the private sphere of the domestic as giver and nurturer of life. . . . She herself operated throughout the public sphere for most of her life. The discontinuity of her practices and her theories reveals the alienation of women from that sphere. They are fully excluded from the roles that might directly alter this male-dominated space (63).

Licia Fiol-Matta, author of “Race Woman: Reproducing the Nation in Gabriela Mistral,” is one of the definitive scholars who believes that Mistral was not only a homosexual, but a hypocrite. She states: “In the state project that Mistral helped articulate, reproduction meant not only maximizing women’s bodies to produce fit laborers and manage productive, patriarchal, heterosexual families but also establishing and enforcing the parameters of who belonged, racially speaking, in the nation” (492). Fiol-Matta continues:

But how could a woman who bore no biological children for the race, who was always coupled with women, become the lasting symbol of the national mother? Her lived sexuality did not coincide with the national prescription, but was her queerness the linchpin of her national pose? Had she chosen to emphasize her variance publicly—her masculinity, her choice of intimate arrangements, her failure to marry and have children—without engaging the play of identification on a national and transnational scale, the state, with its ample resources, would have crushed her ambitions (492-493).

Mistral portrayed herself as being “married to the state.” Considering these disparities between Mistral’s personal life and the life she advocated for women, her style seems to extend beyond traditional female leadership. Therefore, a look at some of the modern approaches to female leadership and their bearing on understanding Mistral’s style is beneficial.

Debra E. Meyerson and Robin J. Ely suggest that there are three approaches to help more women become successful leaders in their article “Using Difference to Make a Difference.” The first approach is: fix the women. They claim women are not as successful as leaders because societal constructions of gender have produced in them attitudes and behaviors which render them less skilled than men. This idea suggests that women should be educated and trained to minimize these gender differences, and eventually results in women behaving just like men in leadership positions in an effort to be successful. These women are not feminists; they have succeeded by conforming to, rather than changing, the systems within which they operate (Meyerson and Ely 130).

At first glance, Mistral fits most easily under this approach since she became successful in a male-dominated society by using a masculine leadership style. However, her style does not perfectly coincide with this approach because she advocated that women embrace their roles as mothers and leaders specifically within the home. Mistral did not want women to shed their femininity, but to celebrate it and draw from it.

Meyerson and Ely’s second approach is to create equal opportunities: instead of fixing the women, fix the policies and practices that have blocked women’s advancement. They propose that problems are structural, and some examples of these include hiring, evaluation, and promotion processes that reflect sexist attitudes, social and professional networks that grant men greater access to information and support, and the isolation of women from such networks. This approach suggests policy changes such as fairer procedures, affirmative action programs to bring more women into leadership positions, and programs that eliminate the aforementioned structural barriers (Meyerson and Ely 131). This second approach is not easily applicable to Mistral’s leadership because her thoughts about policy changes dealt with subjects like educational reform, and not policies that specifically targeted women’s advancement. In addition, as some critics argue, she seems to have actually supported the patriarchal structure that was in place at the time.

The third approach outlined by Meyerson and Ely is to celebrate the feminine by emphasizing the differences in women’s style of leadership. It argues that women leaders should act differently and be more relationship-oriented. However, critics claim this approach reinforces sex stereotypes and the power
imbalance between women and men. Meyerson and Ely state: “In addition, feminist theories of gender have pointed out that the attempt within this approach to preserve ‘women’s difference’ is also problematic because it does so at the expense of women’s transformation and liberation from the oppressive conventions of femininity” (135). Though Mistral’s life and personal leadership style do not adhere to this approach, the empowerment that she advocated for women does. Obviously, Mistral’s position on women’s strength within the home would suggest that she believed women needed to depend on their femininity in order to be successful.

I challenge the rigidity of these three approaches because I believe they are still forcing women to either choose to embrace their “natural” femininity or to reject it in order to be successful. Since Mistral arguably continues to be a leader through her existence as a symbol to a nation, what then does she truly symbolize? What type of female leader does she represent? Should Mistral be studied for the masculine leadership style she embraced and used in order to be effective, or by the ways she advocated that women embrace a stereotypically feminine approach to leadership within their homes? I believe both aspects of Mistral’s leadership must be considered. Mistral illustrates that women and their genders are not easily compartmentalized, and I believe we need to focus less on how we should change or adapt women and more on how we view gender.

In my opinion, Mistral helps us to see how the stereotypes of gender, sex, and societal norms influence and constrain a leader. Mistral was arguably only successful because her leadership style was acceptable to the culture at the time; however, I don’t necessarily feel as disappointed in Mistral as I did in the beginning. I believe the ways in which I initially perceived Mistral and her leadership style demonstrate the ways in which society often views female leaders. I first believed that Mistral was a female leader, who due to the times and culture, shed her femininity and embraced a masculine leadership approach in order to be successful. This proved frustrating because she advocated for women to be leaders and to be powerful only within the home. I believe that her thoughts and ideas about the roles and appropriate behaviors of women still strongly influence gender inequality in Chile today.

However, after reading the details about her personal life, personality, and nature, I began to believe that Mistral used and adapted her own leadership style, and it was coincidentally accepted by the culture of the time. It is not fair to assume that Mistral shed her femininity in order to be successful because this requires defining her by the stereotypes of her sex and gender. Instead, I believe she was probably just being herself, and she just naturally possessed more masculine traits. In addition, I believe that she advocated to the best of her ability the rights of women at the time. In retrospect, it is obvious how progressive her thoughts about women truly were for her time and culture.

After examining Mistral’s leadership, I believe we as a society have to change not only the way we see female leaders, but also the ways in which we see leaders in general. We must make structural changes that allow for gender-based barriers to be eradicated, but we must also support an array of leadership styles. Men who lead in a more relationship-oriented manner must receive acknowledgement and acceptance, and society must also learn to be comfortable with authoritative female leaders, and vice-versa. It is almost impossible to define or pick out leaders by a single set of traits, therefore we must accept that leaders too can exist and be successful on a continuum of different styles and traits. Ultimately, Mistral’s leadership reminds us that, “We are lunatics, and lunatics without excuse, to speak of the ‘superiority’ of one sex over the other.”

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“His name may be little known, but the results of his efforts were profound.”

Charles Hamilton Houston was a visionary leader who wanted to use the law as a tool for social change, to better society, and to eliminate injustices against African Americans. He dedicated his life to improving the plight of his people in every facet of Jim Crow America. Decades before the Civil Rights Movement evolved into the mass movement of the 1960s, Houston developed and implemented a long-range legal strategy that resulted in the celebrated Supreme Court cases of the 1950s. The first part of Houston’s strategy called for the training and development of a generation of black lawyers who would later serve as laborers in the Civil Rights Legal Campaign. His transformation of Howard University Law School marked the beginning of a monumental career which would change American constitutional jurisprudence. Over the course of his lifetime, he deeply impacted the practice of law in the United States, perhaps more so than anyone else in the twentieth century. Approaching the law from a sociological perspective, Houston applied the law in a unique manner that focused on its direct impact on everyday life, and his intellect, determination, and organizational skill equipped him to become a leader in the Civil Rights Movement.

**Early Years and Education**

Houston was born September 3, 1895, in Washington D.C. to William and Mary Ethel Houston. Merely fifteen days after Houston’s birth, the nation’s leading black voice, Booker T. Washington, advised African Americans in his famous Atlanta Exposition speech to be less aggressive regarding social equality and to accept second-class citizenship while working for economic footing. Eight months later, the Supreme Court handed down the landmark *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, which formalized the doctrine of “separate but equal.”

By the standards of his day, Charles grew up in an affluent black family. His father owned a successful law firm in Washington, and his mother worked as a seamstress and hairdresser. From his earliest days, Charlie’s parents stressed the importance of knowledge and ensured that he would have access to the highest quality education available. His personal intellect quickly became evident during his years at the M Street High School, where, at the age of fifteen, Charles graduated as the valedictorian of his class and entered Amherst College. Four years later, Houston graduated magna cum laude and valedictorian of the Amherst class of 1915.

By this point in his life, Houston had clearly demonstrated his intellectual capacity but lacked any deep drive to work for social equality. In 1916, U.S. Court of Appeals Judge and Houston’s cousin and colleague, William Hastie, wrote:

Scottie received his Bachelor of Arts in political science from Birmingham-Southern College in May 2005. As an undergraduate, Scottie was active in both the Leadership Studies and Service Learning programs and held membership in Mortar Board and Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society. He served as a Resident Advisor and an officer in the Student Government Association, and was an active member of the BSC Ultimate Frisbee team. Scottie currently resides in Montgomery, Alabama, where he works as a political strategist and consultant.
Charles was a rather spoiled and self-centered child, living a rather comfortable and somewhat secluded life and not very acutely or painfully disturbed by American racism. If he was not pleased with the status of the Negro, he was not greatly moved by it and had no passionate concern to change it. All of that was changed by World War I. He went to France and there suffered all of the indignities, humiliations and crass injustices that the American Command and white ‘comrades in arms’ heaped upon black officers and enlisted men. His comfortable and protected upbringing made him less prepared for this experience than were most black soldiers. It seared him to be treated as a despised inferior by whites to whom he was vastly superior by any measure. The mark of that branding and its pain would ever remain with him...He came out...wiser and tougher...with a hatred for American racism that he...would always retain as a motivating force.  

Fueled by his military experiences, Houston focused his energies on confronting more than just the injustices he was exposed to in France during World War I. He began to formulate his driving principle: the elimination of racial injustice in every aspect of American society. Soon after arriving home, Houston was accepted to Harvard Law School. As before, Charlie excelled in the classroom and earned the prestigious position of editor of the Harvard Law Review. Houston was the first African American to hold this position, and his work impressed many on the Harvard faculty, including future Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter. In 1922, Houston graduated cum laude from Harvard and traveled to Spain, where he earned a doctorate in civil law from the University of Madrid. He returned to the United States in 1924, was admitted to the Washington D.C. Bar Association, and subsequently began to work at his father’s law firm and teach at Howard Law School.

When Charles Houston joined the Howard faculty, Howard was the only law school in the country serving significant numbers of African American students, and was badly in need of reform. The need for highly skilled black lawyers was going woefully unfulfilled. The black community had come to rely heavily on sympathetic white lawyers, but such sympathy was in short supply and would never be fully able to combat racial injustice. Often, the quality of legal services provided by African American lawyers was inferior to that provided by their white counterparts. If black lawyers were ever going to be successful, they would need a better education and legal preparation than was currently available. As a result, the president of Howard University, Mordecai Johnson, began searching for the ideal leader to transform the law school. He wanted a man of the highest academic quality, a strong leader with sterling character, integrity, and the ability to command respect from faculty and students alike. Johnson wanted a man with the drive and discipline to turn a vision into reality. He did not have to look far.

Reform of Howard Law School

When Houston was appointed the Dean of Howard Law School in 1929, he was commissioned to transform the unaccredited, fifth-rate night school into a first-class law school. Both Houston and Mordecai Johnson knew that the night program had to be eliminated, because only a full-time day school could produce the results they desired. Houston immediately began to purge the inadequate professors and adjuncts who did not meet his elevated standards. He also raised admission requirements and strengthened the law school curriculum. Together, these moves dramatically cut enrollment. Night students who could not financially afford to be full time students were told to work, save, and reapply when they could afford a full-time education. Alumni, students, and local press all decried this “Harvardization” of Howard. The closing of the night school prompted fears that an elitist element was high-jacking the only option many African Americans had for earning a law degree. Pressure began to build against Houston, but he continued undaunted. He held fast to his belief that a smaller, more rigorous law school would produce better results.

Houston also intentionally recruited the nation’s top black lawyers to teach at Howard. Distinguished legal minds such as Bill Hastie, Leon Ronson, and James Nabrit quickly elevated the staff of law professors into a top-tier faculty, but Houston’s recruitment did not stop there; he also brought the best and brightest students to Howard Law School. Early products of Houston’s reformed program include such notable graduates as Thurgood Marshall, Oliver Hill, and Edward Lovett. Marshall recalls:

There must have been thirty of us in that class when we started, and no more than eight or ten of us finished up. He was so tough we used to call him ‘Iron Shoes’ and ‘Cement Pants’ and a few other names that don’t bear repeating. But he was a sweet man once you saw what he was to us. He was absolutely fair, and the door to his office was always open. He made it clear to all of us that when we were done, we were supposed to go out and do something with our lives.
Houston’s goal for these changes was to develop lawyers who, in all their future work, would consider using the law as a means of solving the country’s most important social problem: the degradation of African Americans. Under Houston’s leadership, this vision became an integral component of the program of study at Howard Law School, and he shaped the curriculum to ensure that the professors taught law with precisely such an emphasis. Students were to be thoroughly versed in the inequality of segregated America and the resulting constitutional implications. Houston taught that there were two sets of laws in the country: one set of laws governed white America, while the second governed the lives of black Americans. Every course emphasized the differences between the laws as they were written versus the laws as they applied to African Americans. According to author Richard Kluger, Howard Law School became a “living laboratory where civil-rights law was invented by teamwork.” The law school began teaching the country’s first civil rights classes, and began cultivating an atmosphere that would later make it a central hub of the civil rights legal campaign. In 1931, the law school earned full accreditation from the American Bar Association and was elected into the Association of American Law Schools “without qualification.” In just two years, Houston’s leadership and vision had successfully transformed Howard Law School into a thriving and spirited institution.

From the very beginning of his career as dean, Houston wanted to instill in Howard students the idea that the only role for a lawyer was that of a “social engineer,” someone who understood the Constitution and how it could be used to better the living conditions of underprivileged citizens. He was known to often recite to his students his adage, “Lawyers are social engineers or parasites.” Houston was convinced that only through the courts could justice be obtained for his people, and, in his view, the Howard lawyer should view racial discrimination as the root of many societal evils.

Even before his tenure as dean of the law school, Houston began to conceive of a plan to push for racial equality. After witnessing countless acts of injustice, Houston realized early in his career that legislative and political avenues were not viable options for racial progress, and concluded that the best hope was to aim his intellect and energies at the Constitution. Houston believed that it was possible to develop legal theories that could persuade the courts to hear cases and act on behalf of African Americans. Mapping, planning, and implementing such an attack on negative racial practices would expose the nation’s moral contradictions and begin to bring the country’s promises and practices closer together.

In 1933 Nathan Margold, a white lawyer working for the NAACP, published a document that outlined a legal strategy to gradually challenge the constitutionality of ‘separate but equal.’ Although the majority of the Margold Report was adopted, Houston thought Margold’s strategy lacked focus. Building on the Margold Report, Houston addressed this weakness and decided that the NAACP’s cause would be best served by first focusing on graduate and professional schools. Instead of litigating cases that focused on the inequality of black secondary schools, Houston wanted to focus on cases where graduate schools were not merely unequal for African American students, but non-existent. Houston’s hope was to begin where integration seemed to pose the smallest threat and therefore face the lightest resistance. Two years later, in June 1935, Houston’s formal administration at the law school ended when he took a leave of absence and moved to New York to serve as special counsel to the NAACP. With the transformation of Howard Law School complete, Houston began the second phase of his vision. As chief council for the NAACP, Houston could begin the direct implementation of his aforementioned legal strategy.

Though he would not live to see the conclusion, Houston first set his sights on overturning the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision because his interpretation of the Constitution and understanding of the Civil War Amendments were in direct contradiction with what the Supreme Court had ruled in the case. The jurisprudence of *Plessy,* according to Houston, amounted to a new form of slavery, and if it were not vigorously contested, oppression would continue to plague African Americans. Therefore, he conceived of a strategy that would, in a series of cases, challenge the legitimacy of the “separate but equal” doctrine and the restraints placed on the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. This strategy quickly became known as Houstonian Jurisprudence.

**Houstonian Jurisprudence**

Houstonian jurisprudence uses the law and litigation as a means to an end. The goal is to change some aspect of society or culture not through a gradual means of assimilation or legislative progress, but through absolute, sometimes dramatic judicial mandates. For this reason, Houstonian jurisprudence is often confrontational. Far from apologetic, Houston was convinced that his way was the only practical means to
achieve his goal in the face of staunch opposition. As he liked to say, “We have got to look in the face of facts and realize what we are up against.”

The first scholar to reflect upon the impact of Charles Houston was Dr. J. Clay Smith Jr. in 1971. At that time, the work of Houston had yet to be recognized in any formal jurisprudence scholarship, and so Clay was the first person to coin the phrase “Houstonian Jurisprudence.” Houston’s school of thought was very similar to the sociological school of jurisprudence founded by author and philosopher Baron Charles Louis de Montesquieu and developed further by professor Eugene Ehrlich. Ehrlich’s philosophy of law concentrated on law as a practice of society and focused on the everyday workings of the law. Ehrlich’s philosophy had a direct influence on Charles Houston, and the term “social engineer” has its origins in Ehrlich’s work. In addition to Ehrlich, Houston’s jurisprudence professor at Harvard Law, Roscoe Pound, substantially influenced Houston’s work. Pound once summarized his philosophy on law, stating, “I am content to think of the law as a social institution to satisfy social wants—the claims and demands and expectations involved in the existence of civilized society...in short, a continually more efficacious social engineering.”

Houston eventually began to apply this sociological approach he learned at Harvard and further devoted himself to the plight of African Americans, adapting moral principles to the sociological perspective of jurisprudence. To Houston, the “law and constituted authority were supreme only as they covered the most humble and forgotten citizen;” all human beings were “each entitled to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” and, in a good society, the system of government “guarantees justice and freedom without prejudice or bias operating against them.” Another Houstonian principle is the recognition that ignorance is itself a state of slavery and that the process of learning and practicing one’s rights is essential to freedom.

Houston’s visions for both Howard Law School and the nation combined with his inherent traits to form a unique brand of leader. In contemporary leadership literature, the idea that an individual’s success or failure as a leader can be explained based on the possession or absence of certain personal characteristics is called trait theory. Authors Kirkpatrick and Locke offer the following list of qualities that summarize the trait theory literature: drive, leadership motivation, honesty and integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business.

In terms of drive, Houston was exceptionally motivated in everything he did. He excelled as a student, scholar, lawyer, lobbyist, and administrator. He possessed great personal energy and was known to work seven days a week, often putting in sixteen or eighteen hour days. Everything he did was focused on the greater goal of eradicating racial injustice, and he wasted little time or energy on frivolous concerns. As a result he sometimes came across as cold or impersonal, but those who knew him best say he was a warm man with a serious demeanor. Secondly, Houston displayed leadership motivation in the form of what Kirkpatrick and Locke call socialized power motive, which they describe as the motivation for a leader who uses power as a tool to achieve goals or a vision, network, and build coalitions. Such a leader is less concerned with personal reward and tends to think long-term, an apt description of Houston.

The third quality outlined by Kirkpatrick and Locke is honesty. Intensive research yields not a single published instance where Houston’s honesty or integrity was questioned. Houston recognized that any dishonesty or lapse of judgment would lend his opposition the ammunition needed to smear his reputation, discredit his work, and destroy his ability to bring about change, so he was extremely conscientious in his actions. At the same time, however, Houston possessed the fourth trait of a great leader: self-confidence. When Houston’s plans for restructuring Howard Law School came under fire, he displayed the steady self-confidence that would characterize his entire career, and this confidence was well placed. Houston trusted his abilities and knew that the quality of his mind was not based on the color of his skin; successes in
academics and litigation only reinforced his confidence. In addition to these traits, Richard Kluger paints Houston as a man of exceeding intellect. In his work, *Simple Justice*, Kluger writes: From the start, it was evident that he had a mind ideally contoured for a career at law. He relished the kind of abstract thinking needed to shape the building blocks of the law. He had clarity of thought and grace of phraseology, a retentive brain, doggedness for research, and a drive within him that few of his colleagues could match or understand.

Houston also met the requirements for the sixth and final trait—being knowledgeable about one’s endeavor. By all accounts, Houston was a first rate lawyer who received an excellent education at Harvard and continued to sharpen his skills after graduation. He understood how the law worked and how best to position himself for a strategic advantage; as a litigator, he was in an elite class. Though he was the first African American to win a case before the Supreme Court, perhaps the greatest testimony to Houston’s ability was the attendance of five Supreme Court justices at his funeral in 1950.

Though these traits were excellent indicators of Houston’s leadership capabilities, trait theory alone does not adequately address all of the facets of Houston’s leadership style. Charles Houston also fits very well within the visionary leadership model. Visionary leaders develop a vision and are able to effectively inspire others toward the attainment of that vision. Visionary leaders must have more than just the characteristics exemplified by trait theories of leadership. Leadership theory scholar Marshall Sashkin outlines three essential aspects of visionary leadership: first, visionary leaders must be able to construct a vision and define the culture within the organization they desire to impact; second, a vision is nothing if the leader is unable to transfer the vision to followers through the articulation of an organizational philosophy and specific policies; and third, the leader must be able to actively engage his or her followers and lead by example in order to cultivate support for the vision.

In effect, there are certain additional traits that are crucial for visionary leadership. Essential to conceiving a vision is the cognitive ability to think not just within a framework of the immediate circumstances, but in the scope of years, perhaps even decades. However, there is a distinction between intelligence and foresight—being smart does not automatically translate into a long-term sense of vision and purpose. Visionary leaders must have the personal conviction that what they are doing will really make a difference; otherwise, they are merely going through the motions. As evidenced by his dedication to his cause and vision, Houston was a model of conviction.

Consistency is a trait also mentioned in visionary leadership literature. Followers will perform more effectively if they know the leader will exhibit a consistent pattern of behavior. Reliability builds trust and credibility because followers know that their leader means what he or she says and will deliver on the promises made. Because a leader’s reputation and success is tied up in the ability to promote his or her vision, a visionary leader must be dependable and self-confident. However, consistent personal efforts are not enough unless the leader can transfer the vision to followers in an empowering way. The followers must want to carry out the vision, and this was certainly the case with Houston’s followers. After he relinquished the helm of the legal campaign, many of his former students—the most prominent being Thurgood Marshall—continued to push for the realization of Houston’s vision.

Ultimately, the legal struggle for civil rights could not have been carried out by Houston alone, but his unique traits and visionary leadership were indispensable. He identified the task, developed a strategy, and systemically set out to accomplish his goal. He effectively marshaled the only institutional resources that were available: Howard University and the NAACP. He laid the foundation with the development of social engineers at Howard before moving on to the NAACP to manage the implementation of his plan. His leadership, vision, and determined administration at Howard Law School, his skilled litigation at NAACP, and his overall dedication to the struggle for equality arguably make him the most consequential contributor to the legal dimension of the Civil Rights Movement. Several legal victories, such as the NAACP’s 1954 victory in *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, would not have occurred without the vision and organizational skills that Houston brought to bear. One would be hard pressed to study any aspect of the legal activities undertaken during the Civil Rights Movement and not find Charlie Houston’s fingerprints; many scholars argue that Houston’s transformation of American jurisprudence is one of the most significant achievements in the legal history of the twentieth century.

Charles Hamilton Houston will forever be one of the most unrecognized heroes of the twentieth century. His work was his life, and he knew of only one way to live it. After a heart attack in 1949 and against his doctor’s wishes, Houston continued to devote his life to the legal battle for equality; however, years of
releventless struggle and unceasing work eventually took their toll. On April 22, 1950, Charles Hamilton Houston died at the age of 54 after literally working himself to death. Four years later, on May 17, 1954, the Supreme Court overturned the doctrine of “separate but equal,” just as Houston had imagined and due, largely, to his work. William Hastie summarizes Houston’s legal contributions best in the Journal of Negro History. He writes: He guided us through the legal wilderness of second-class citizenship. He was truly the Moses of that journey. He lived to see close to the promised land of full equality under the law, closer than even he dared hope when he set out on that journey and so much closer than would have been possible without his genius and his leadership.26

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On Servant Leadership

Dr. Neal Berte

Often it seems that we get so caught up in examining the various faith perspectives in the world around us that we neglect the “good works” required if any faith is to have true meaning. We know that it takes both faith and good works for us to be the Christians that we are called upon by Jesus to be. In Matthew Chapter 23, Jesus is seen condemning the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses for focusing on being seen and being recognized rather than truly serving their communities. We know that the author was concerned about the leadership that existed during the time of Jesus. Matthew underscores words he wants us to remember, and serving others is central to that message.

Robert Greenleaf, founder of the Center for Applied Ethics in Indianapolis and author of several books on servant leadership, phrases Matthew’s message in a different way:

“The productive, necessary kind of leader in today’s world is one who is first of all a servant to others. He or she is a servant in the sense that more is given to others than is taken away. The leader serves others’ needs as opposed to being self-serving.”

According to Greenleaf, the best test to apply to those presuming to serve others is: Do those being served grow as persons? Do they become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous while being served?

Author M. Scott Peck takes Greenleaf’s idea a step further and argues that all leadership should include an element of servanthood: “Servant-Leadership is more than a concept. It is a fact. Any great leader will see herself or himself as a servant of any group and will act accordingly.” However, at a conference on Leadership Synergy, Peck noted that “Servant-Leadership can be learned only by doing, and sustained by practice.” Therefore, Servant Leadership contains an experiential component that moves beyond theory.

During my tenure as president of Birmingham-Southern College, I had two opportunities to go with a number of our students, faculty, and staff to Calcutta, India. While there, we worked with the poorest of the poor as a part of the ministry of Mother Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity. The pollution and poverty in Calcutta is mind-boggling. There was no unleaded gas, and I recall walking with some students one Friday night when the smoke and pollution were so bad that we could not even see the fingers on our hands. No wonder Calcutta has one of the lowest life expectancies of any city in the world! You may recall that the first effort of Mother Teresa was in the Home for the Dying, Kaligat, in the poorest section of Calcutta. A number of us worked in Kaligat each of the years we went, and it was an incredible experience to assist the poor and neglected people brought in off the street by the Missionaries of Charity. Many times we merely enabled them to have some dignity in death, particularly after they had been abandoned by their families; for others, Kaligat was a place where
they could be fed and cared for before going back out into the world.

I vividly recall the first day that we were there. I was working with a student and one of the nuns to feed and care for a man who was obviously in very bad shape after being brought in off the street. The next day we learned that the man had died in the night, and to see his body in the make-shift morgue sent a powerful message, mainly because of what the nuns represented in the service to the poorest of the poor and those most neglected. The nuns showed such love and genuine care for these people in spite of the horrific conditions, and they celebrated even the short time they had to ease this dying man's pain. Mother Teresa reminds us that the greatest form of love is service to others.

And yet, we must remember that we do not earn our way into the Kingdom. Our faith makes a difference, as do our good works, but God's grace is there for all of us, regardless of who we are and what we have done. More importantly, our faithful actions are not what God says we have to do, but what we get to do because of His grace available to all of us. As we so often hear in the Scriptures, there is nothing that can separate any of us from Christ's love, and that is a blessing that represents the heart of Christian faith.

Particularly relevant for students who are currently attending BSC is the idea that, as your religious understanding grows, your faith perspectives will likely continue to evolve, and perhaps broaden. However, it is important for all of us to keep service as a part of our faith commitment. If you have found a place to serve, I would encourage you to continue what you are doing to serve others, knowing that when we serve others we diminish the focus on ourselves and yet, paradoxically, often continue to grow in the process. If for some reason you have not found your service home, BSC's office of Service-Learning offers many ways to serve, ranging from tutoring elementary children in the neighborhood at Woodrow Wilson School, or delivering meals to those in need through the Meals on Wheels program, or helping to build a school in Mozambique, or spending the night in a homeless shelter in Birmingham, among many other options.

It is my hope that students will start their life of service during their four years here at Birmingham-Southern. That service may change as they get older, but it is important to maintain a service commitment through life. Part of our primary mission as an educational institution is to embolden our students to engage in acts of service to others. A good friend, who was an active and successful Senior Minister for many years, retired a few years ago and took an endowed chair as a teacher in a prestigious seminary. After two years as a faculty member, what he saw was too much analysis and talk, which he called “analysis-paralysis,” and not enough focus on doing, on acting on one's faith. We need both to make our faith what it should be. An attitude of service needs to permeate all that we do. We know that as we serve others, we genuinely grow in the process. In the words of the poet, Edwin Markham:

There is a destiny that makes us all brothers.
None goes his way alone.
All that we send into the life of another,
Comes back into our own.

What comes back into our lives is not a selfish benefit if our service is true to what it should be; rather, it is an opportunity to make a difference in a positive way in someone else's life. More importantly, our service is a way to show our gratitude to God for the grace and blessings given to each of us, and to remember that what really counts in life is what we do for others.