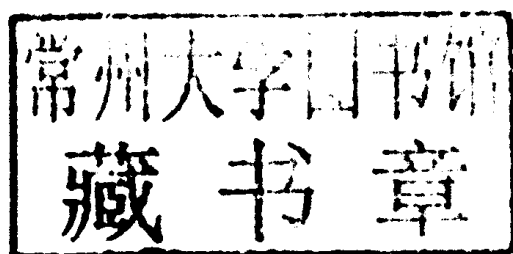


Political Leadership, Nations and Charisma

Edited by
Vivian Ibrahim and Margit Wunsch

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Political Leadership, Nations and Charisma

This ground-breaking and innovative book examines the influence of charisma on power, authority and nationalism. The authors both apply and challenge Max Weber's concept of 'charisma' and integrate it into a broader discussion of other theoretical models. Using an interdisciplinary approach, leading international scholars draw on a diverse range of cases to analyse charisma in benign and malignant leaderships, as well as the relationship between the cult of the leader, the adulation of the masses and the extension of individual authority beyond sheer power. They discuss idiosyncratic authority and oratory, and they address how political, social and regional variations help explain concepts and policies which helped forge and reformulate nations, national identities and movements. The chapters on particular charismatic leaders cover Abraham Lincoln, Kemal Atatürk, Adolf Hitler, Benito Mussolini, Gamal Nasser, Jörg Haider and Nelson Mandela.

Political Leadership, Nations and Charisma will appeal to readers who are interested in, history, sociology political communication and nationalism studies.

Vivian Ibrahim is Croft Assistant Professor of History and International Studies and holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

Margit Wunsch is currently a PhD Candidate at the London School of Economics.

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Contributors

Editors

Vivian Ibrahim is Croft Assistant Professor of History and International Studies at the University of Mississippi. She completed her PhD on the History of the Modern Middle East at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, where she was also a Senior Teaching Fellow and is currently a Research Associate. She also holds degrees from the London School of Economics and King's College London. Ibrahim regularly commentates on the BBC and Al-Jazeera on issues relating to the Middle East. She is the author of *The Copts of Egypt: Challenges of Modernisation and Identity*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010.

Margit Wunsch is a doctoral candidate in the Department of International History at the London School of Economics and a scholar of the *Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation*. Her thesis examines the German media coverage of the Bosnia and Kosovo wars in the 1990s. Her research interests include Balkan history, political communications, international relations, historical commemoration and memory, as well as German foreign policy. Wunsch is an Executive Board Member and the former Chair of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN), as well as a member of the editorial board for the journal *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* (SEN).

Contributors

Hedva Ben-Israel was born and raised in Jerusalem. After obtaining her Master's degree at the Hebrew University and her PhD at the University of Cambridge, she is now a Professor in the History Department at the Hebrew University and incumbent of the Ben-Eliezer Chair for the Study of Nationalism. Her research interests include historiography, history of ideas, the two World Wars, nationalism and Zionism. Ben-Israel has been both Visiting Professor and Fellow at the National Humanities Center, North Carolina; Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut; the Australian

National University, Canberra; UCLA and the University of Munich, Germany. Her book *English Historians on the French Revolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1968 (paperback 2002) won the Betty Miller Prize in the UK. Her most recent book, *In the Name of the Nation*, Ben Gurion University Press, 2004, published in Hebrew, is a collection of studies on nationalism and Zionism.

Elleke Boehmer is Professor of World Literature in English at the University of Oxford and Consultant Editor of the Oxford Studies in Postcolonial Literatures Series. She is the author of *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995 and 2005, of the non-fiction studies *Empire, the National and the Postcolonial, 1890–1920*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002; *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Postcolonial Nation*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005; and *Nelson Mandela: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. She has published four novels: *Screens against the Sky*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990 (short-listed for the David Higham Prize); *An Immaculate Figure*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1993; *Bloodline*, Glosderry: David Philip Publishers, 2000 (short-listed for the Sanlam Prize); and *Nile Baby*, Banbury: Ayebia Clarke Publishing, 2008; and edited, among others, *Robert Baden-Powell's Scouting for Boys*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004; and *Empire Writing*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. *Sharmilla and Other Portraits*, her first short story collection, was out in 2010, as was *The Indian Postcolonial* (co-edited with Rosinka Chaudhuri).

John Breuilly is the Professor of Nationalism and Ethnicity in the Government Department at the London School of Economics. Prior to that, Breuilly was Professor of Modern History at the University of Birmingham and Lecturer at the University of Manchester. He has also held Visiting Professorships at the universities of Hamburg and Bielefeld, as well as a Research Fellowship at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. Among other books, Breuilly is author of *The Formation of the First German Nation State, 1800–71* and *Nineteenth-century Germany: Politics, Culture and Society, 1780–1918*. His research interests include nationalism and ethnicity, modern German history, comparative European history with special interests in labour movements and the bourgeoisie, urban cultural history in nineteenth-century Europe and modern liberalism.

Don H. Doyle is McCausland Professor of History at the University of South Carolina and director of ARENA, the Association for Research on Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Americas. He has published several books and essays, including *Nations Divided: America, Italy, and the Southern Question*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002, and has edited *Secession as an International Phenomenon*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010 and, with Marco Pamplona, *Nationalism in the New World*, Athens:

University of Georgia Press, 2006. He is currently writing a book on the American Civil War in its international context.

Emo Gotsbachner has been teaching discourse analysis since 1998 in the Political Science Department of Vienna University, where he also received his PhD. Gotsbachner's research has explored various aspects of the connections between social structures of meaning and the distribution of power and social control. This includes research projects on informal legal mechanisms and their interferences with state law; normalised forms of xenophobia; and on discursive-rhetorical strategies of right-wing populist parties. Currently, Gotsbachner is overseeing a research project on interpretive frames and how audience groups of different social and political backgrounds make sense of televised political debates.

MacGregor Knox is Stevenson Professor of International History Emeritus at the London School of Economics, and was educated at Harvard College, the US Army Infantry School and Yale University. His other works include *Mussolini Unleashed, 1939–1941*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; *Common Destiny: Dictatorship, Foreign Policy, and War in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; *Hitler's Italian Allies: Royal Armed Forces, Fascist Regime, and the War of 1940–1943*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; and *To the Threshold of Power 1922/33: Origins and Dynamics of the Fascist and National Socialist Dictatorships*, vol. 1, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

David Martin was born in 1929 and is a Fellow of the British Academy and an Emeritus Professor of Sociology at the London School of Economics. He has held posts at Boston University and Southern Methodist University. His principal contributions have been in criticising and in formulating a general theory of secularisation, in charting its historical genesis and cross-cultural variations, as well as in providing the initial overviews and continuing analysis of the spread of Pentecostalism.

Lucy Riall is Professor of History at Birkbeck College, University of London, and has held visiting positions at the École Normale Supérieure, Paris, the Free University, Berlin, and the University of Freiburg. Her publications include *Sicily and the Unification of Italy, 1859–1866: Liberal Policy and Local Power*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; *Garibaldi. Invention of a Hero*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007; and *Risorgimento: The History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation State*. London: Palgrave, 2009.

Anthony D. Smith is an Emeritus Professor of Ethnicity and Nationalism at the London School of Economics. Having published widely on ethnicity, nationalism and the nation, he advocates an approach to nationalism he terms ethnosymbolism, which is a synthesis of modernist

and traditional views on the subject. Smith is President of the Association for the Study of Ethnicity and Nationalism (ASEN) as well as Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Nations and Nationalism*.

Erik-Jan Zürcher was born in Leiden in 1953 and studied Turkish (with Arabic, Persian and Modern History as minors) at the University of Leiden, where he also obtained his PhD in 1984. His key publications are *The Unionist Factor*, Leiden: Brill, 1984; *Political Opposition in the Early Turkish Republic*, Leiden: Brill, 1991; and *Turkey. A Modern History*, London: I.B. Tauris, 1993, which has been translated into Dutch, Turkish, Italian, Greek, Arabic, Indonesian and Hebrew. Monographs and textbooks apart, Zürcher has edited or co-edited six collections on the social and political history of the late Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey. His latest book is a collection entitled *The Young Turk Legacy and Nation Building*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2010. Zürcher has held the chair of Turkish Studies at the University of Leiden since 1997 and was appointed General Director of the International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam) and was elected a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2008.

Abbreviations

ANC	African National Congress [South Africa]
CUP	Committee of Union and Progress [Ottoman political movement and party]
DP	Democratic Party of Turkey
EU	European Union
FPÖ	<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i> , Freedom Party of Austria
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
JDP	Justice and Development Party [Turkey]
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> , National Socialist Workers' Party [Nazi Germany]
ÖVP	<i>Österreichische Volkspartei</i> , Austrian People's Party
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PNF	Partito Nazionale Fascista [Italy]
SA	<i>Sturmabteilung</i>
SPÖ	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs</i> , Social Democratic Party of Austria
SS	<i>Schutzstaffel</i>
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organization
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations

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Vivian Ibrahim and Margit Wunsch
August 2011
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1 Introduction

Weber's concept of charismatic domination

John Breuilly

Understandably, in a book on nations and charisma, there are many references to Max Weber and his ideas about charismatic leadership. Here, I consider the different ways in which the term charisma is used by different contributors, relate these to Weber's arguments and suggest that a number of distinctions be introduced into the use of the concept. This is not intended as an exercise in establishing 'correct' usage or what Weber 'really' meant, but rather to clarify the range of meanings the concept can bear and what useful analytical work it can do.¹

Weber defined charisma as one type of legitimate domination.² By legitimate, he meant some quality of authority extending beyond sheer power. Power he defined as the capacity of A to issue commands to B which were routinely obeyed. This might rest on coercive, economic or ideological power that B felt unable to resist or it might be that B obeyed out of habit or inertia. However, legitimate authority referred to cases where B acted as if A had the *right* to issue such commands, not merely the *power* to punish disobedience. Weber identified three ideal types of legitimate authority: traditional, legal-rational and charismatic.

Weber formulated these ideal types as part of what he called the 'sociology of domination' (*Herrschaftssoziologie*). The relationship of A to B was a social relationship. It is important to see what this excludes or marginalises. Legitimacy was not defined in terms of beliefs except in the vacuous sense that regarding, say, traditional authority as legitimate entails a belief in the authority of tradition. Nor was it defined in psychological terms except in a similarly minimal sense. We can never know much about the beliefs or psychology of a courtier in the Versailles of Louis XIV or an official in a modern bureaucracy or a member of the Nazi party, although we can expect there to be great variety between individuals.³ However, we do know a lot about how a courtier or official or party member was expected to behave in their respective roles and the sanctions that would apply if they failed to do so. As Weber phrased it, such followers acted 'as if' they believed in the right of the king or departmental head or Hitler to issue commands to them. MacGregor Knox stresses in his chapter that it is the *actions* of Nazi followers that mattered and that constituted Hitler's charisma, not some separate effect of

propaganda (belief) or indoctrination (psychology), even if that was also involved. It was the 'success' of these organised forms of action that established and sustained authority.

Such authority refers to the social relationships between the leader (whether office holder or extraordinary individual) and the members of the movements or institutions that implement the leader's commands. (Weber referred variously to the 'following', 'staff' and 'administrative apparatus'.) As for the generality of the population, whether as support mobilised by an oppositional movement or subjects ruled by a state, it is impossible to identify any specific and determinate social relationship between them and the leader. Notions of legitimate domination applied to this larger population take on a different and necessarily broader form. Many accounts of charismatic domination are about this subject, usually focusing on how images of the leader are projected and their presumed effects on the beliefs or psychology of mass audiences. It is important not to confuse these two aspects of charisma and, henceforth, I will refer to relational and projected charisma to make the distinction clear.

Weber's three ideal types do not refer to values, interests or groups. He rejected the idea of defining legitimacy on the basis of a rhetoric of class or nation or god. The many forms that such a rhetoric could take mean they could not provide the basis for a parsimonious typology developed to enable comparative analysis of a large number of cases.⁴ Furthermore, a sociology of domination would still have to translate such rhetoric into social relationships. Appeals to sacred values, groups or deities are framed as beliefs, not social relationships, and it is difficult, indeed arguably impossible, to equate the success of such appeals with distinct social relations. (That is what believers do and precisely what detached analysts must avoid doing.) In any case, that is not necessary; one can subsume such appeals within the Weberian framework. The rhetoric (and possibly genuine belief) attached to the authority of a traditional monarchy includes appeals to beliefs, e.g. concerning divine right monarchy or a 'great chain of being'. Legal-rational authority is justified by appeals to liberal and democratic values, arguing for example that one needs rules and procedures to maximise individual freedom, or to treat individuals as equal or to enable effective participation by all citizens. Modern charismatic leaders always claim to embody some valued quality such as national character, religious piety or insight into Marxist-Leninist doctrine. It is *how* the belief is deployed that defines charismatic leadership, not *what* the belief is about.

However, there is a particular problem concerning the relationship between charisma and nationalism. Nationalism, more than any other modern ideological-political movement, appears to be associated with charismatic leadership, both in opposition and in power. There are modern charismatic leaders of religious and socialist movements, but they are more often than not bearers of what Weber called the 'charisma of office' (e.g. as Pope or Ayatollah or General Secretary of the Party) rather than unique individuals who claim to

embody the national. Is there something about modern nationalist movements and regimes that especially favours charismatic leadership?

To help deal with both the general subject of modern charismatic leadership and this particular problem, I propose a modification of Weber's typology. His three ideal types consist of different combinations of two pairs of concepts, as outlined in Table 1.1.⁵

Weber treated charismatic authority as both extraordinary and embodied in an individual. He also assumed that a charismatic leader must *be* extraordinary. I contend that neither of these points is essential to the use of the concept, and indeed they undermine its use as Weber envisaged. If the central concern is with social relationships, what matters is how the following behave in relation to the leader and not, in the first instance, any individual qualities that individual might possess. As we can see with the notion of 'charisma of office', it is possible to project charisma on to an individual in relation to the extraordinary authority that attaches to an institution such as the Catholic Church or the Communist Party. The Pope as Vicar of Christ or the Communist leader as the fount of Marxist-Leninist insight is the *organizational*, rather than the *personal*, embodiment of this charismatic authority.⁶ As we can see from Table 1.1, in principle, one could construct a fourth type of legitimate domination, which I will call impersonal charisma. I suggest that, in terms of a sociology of domination, almost all modern charismatic leadership takes this form, with the very important exception of certain kinds of modern nationalism, which are, however, highly unstable and short-lived. In contrast, the broader projection to and reception by mass audiences of leadership images as charismatic has become a standard feature of modern rule. I will tentatively conclude by suggesting a close relationship between the decline of personal relational charisma and the rise of personal projected charisma.

In terms of relational charisma, it is important to focus on the various ways in which this is handled by the contributors to this book. I begin with charismatic leadership in opposition movements, and move on to charismatic leadership in regimes. In relation to opposition, one must distinguish between charismatic movements that take and those that fail to take state power. In relation to regimes, it is also necessary to explore the differences between cases where charisma had played a central role in the taking of power and those where it had not.

I identify two uses of the concept of projected charisma, mainly in relation to nationalist regimes. First, there is the historical-mythical use of posthumous

Table 1.1 Re-interpreting Weber's typology of leadership

	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Impersonal</i>
Ordinary	Traditional	Legal-rational
Extraordinary	Charismatic	?