

Political Leadership, Parties and Citizens

The personalisation of leadership

**Jean Blondel and Jean-Louis Thiébault
with Katarzyna Czernicka,
Takashi Inoguchi, Ukrist Pathmanand
and Fulvio Venturino**



Routledge Research in Comparative Politics

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Social structure may historically have been of primary importance in accounting for the attitudes and behaviour of many citizens, but now changes in social structure have diminished the role played by class and religious affiliation, whilst the significance of personality in political leadership has increased.

This volume explores, both theoretically and empirically, the increasingly important role played by the personalisation of leadership. Acknowledging the part played by social cleavages, it focuses on the personal relationships and psychological dimension between citizens and political leaders. It begins by examining the changes which have taken place in the relationship among citizens, the parties which they support and the leaders of these parties in a European context. The authors then assess how far the phenomena of 'personalised leadership' differ from country to country, and the forms which these differences take. The book includes comparative case studies on Britain and Northern Ireland, France, Italy, Poland, Japan and Thailand; it concentrates on eleven prominent leaders epitomising personalised political leadership: Thatcher, Blair, Mitterand, Chirac, Le Pen, Berlusconi, Bossi, Wałęsa, Lepper, Koizumi and Thaksin.

This book will be of interest to students and scholars of political science, comparative politics and political leadership.

Jean Blondel was Professor and is now Professorial Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at European University Institute, Italy. He founded the Department of Government at the University of Essex in 1964 and co-founded the European Consortium of Political Research. His many publications include (as co-editor) *The Nature of Party Government: a comparative European perspective*; *Cabinets in Eastern Europe*; and (as co-author) *Political Cultures in Asia and Europe* (also published by Routledge). **Jean-Louis Thiébaud** is Professor Emeritus and former director of the Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Lille, France. He is a member of the editorial board of the *European Journal of Political Research*. His many publications include (as co-editor with Jean Blondel) *The Profession of Government Minister in Western Europe*.

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Preface

This book is the product of a close academic collaboration between the two of us over a decade, a collaboration which also extended to members of the Centre d'études politiques sur l'Europe du nord (CEPEN) at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques, in Lille, in particular to its current director, Michel Hastings, to Katarzyna Czernicka, whose chapter on Poland appears in this volume, to Elise Feron and to Guillaume Duseigneur, whose contributions to the general structure of the volume and more specifically to the broad methodological problems which this study raises were critically important. We are most grateful for their participation and for the many suggestions they made in the course of the preparatory phase of this work.

The basic *raison d'être* of this study emerged from the unease and at times even irritation which we both felt about the fact that, in our opinion most surprisingly, there had been little interest within European scholarly electoral behaviour literature, up to the early years of the twenty-first century, in the 'personalised' part played by political leaders, both in their parties and among the citizenship at large. While it was almost certainly the case that such a part was small, at any rate in most Western European countries, in the decades immediately following the Second World War, it seemed on the contrary that there were subsequently many examples of 'personalisation of leadership' and that these examples warranted a systematic analysis of the phenomenon. Moreover, it seemed rather strange that the Western European patterns of leadership in political parties should be so completely different from those which were observed in other parts of the world; it seemed indeed peculiar that there should be no attempt to move towards a broad worldwide theory of party development and in particular of party leadership patterns while the 'personalisation of party leadership' seemed to prevail very widely, including in the United States. The general aim of this book has therefore been to attempt to examine how far this type of personalisation has also been taking place in Europe from the last decades of the twentieth century.

Yet we were anxious not to succumb to the opposite danger of exaggeration and in particular to assume that the extent of personalisation of party leadership in Europe was as widespread as the media were prone to conclude. As a matter of fact, the difficulty which had to be faced in this respect was due in large part

to a manifest deficiency of political science training in Western Europe, but not in the United States, as there is almost no opportunity in the course of this training to acquire and discuss the tools of psychological investigation. Parodying an expression which was fashionable in the later part of the twentieth century about the need to re-emphasise the role of the State, we felt that what was needed to render European political science truly realistic was 'to bring psychology back in'. While this book cannot of course pretend to have achieved such a goal, we hope at least to make it abundantly clear that an emphasis on psychological analysis is an essential and therefore urgent requirement.

Meanwhile, as part of the preliminary presentation of personalised party leadership, it seemed imperative to provide some examples beyond the general analysis for which we were mainly responsible. Alongside those of Britain and France which we undertook ourselves, we were fortunate in being able to convince four scholars to participate in this volume, all four of whom wrote about their own country, Fulvio Venturino on Italy, Katarzyna Czernicka on Poland, Takashi Inoguchi on Japan and Ukrist Pathmanand on Thailand. Fulvio Venturino also undertook to assess the 'state of the art' in the delicate area of the methodology which will increasingly be needed as the systematic study of personalised party leadership develops.

The elaboration of this volume was rather slow, in part because of the seriousness of the problems which had to be tackled but also in part because of the very low level of funding at our disposal. Not only was there no opportunity to convene large expert conferences, on basic methodological problems in particular, but we had only at our disposal a very limited amount of travel funds in order to exchange views about the structure of chapters and the collection of evidence. Yet, without this limited amount, the research would not have been possible at all: we therefore thank most warmly the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Lille, and in particular its Centre d'études politiques sur l'Europe du nord for the support which was given to us in the course of this research. We also wish to thank Ms Bagtazo and Ms Dunne of Routledge for the support which was given to this work while it was in progress. We hope that this volume will indeed provide significant evidence for the two main conclusions to which we have come, namely that the 'personalisation of party leadership' in early twenty-first century Europe needs to be seriously considered, indeed systematically analysed, and that such an analysis requires giving to psychological approaches a place in European political science which it has not occupied so far.

Florence, London and Lille, May 2009
J. Blondel and J.-L. Thiébault

1 Introduction

Taking the psychological dimension into account

From the last decades of the twentieth century, the ‘classical’ explanation put forward to account for the relationship between parties and citizens in Western Europe began to experience serious problems, although that explanation had seemed so realistic in the 1950s and 1960s. A central position had been given to parties, but that central position came to be in question, for parties were no longer as solidly anchored in the society as they had been in previous decades. This was in turn because ‘social cleavages’ such as class, religious or regional *appartenance*, which tied citizens to parties, no longer had the same hold over the European population as had been the case previously. At a minimum, there was some loosening of the links between citizens and the political system which had prevailed for a generation and even more, at least in the countries which had escaped the political turmoil of the 1920s and 1930s.

Was it that one should go further and adopt a new configuration of the relations between citizens and the political elite? There was considerable reluctance to go in that direction, perhaps understandably, since the changes which were taking place were slow and gradual and occurred in some countries more markedly than in others. Thus, to this day, most political scientists concerned with these questions have found it difficult to accept that a new model, perhaps a new paradigm, needed to be elaborated.

The aim of this work is not to go so far, but to put forward the view that the model which had privileged ‘social cleavages’ as *the key* was rather ‘unbalanced’. It is true that ‘modernisation’ had led to a kind of nationalisation of politics in Western Europe and that ‘mass’ party organisations, possibly as a result, had been for a while the instrument par excellence of the nationalisation process. It was certainly exaggerated, however, to seem to conclude that that process had had the effect of replacing altogether the more individualised and personalised forms of relationship which had previously prevailed at local level and were indeed still very apparent among the members of the political elite. As a matter of fact, while the process of ‘modernisation’ continued throughout the twentieth century, its effect was no longer to reinforce the social character of the relationships between citizens and the political system, but, on the contrary, to reduce the weight of the social structure on the population as a whole: with the spread of education, reactions of citizens were becoming more independent from the

social groups to which they had been attached, especially if class was viewed as the main 'cleavage', but even where other cleavages, such as those based on religious or regional *appartenance*, had a prominent place. Individuals seemed to count rather more, with all their characteristics and not merely with those characteristics binding them to a group often, perhaps typically, not even of their own choosing.

To be empirically sustainable, however, a balanced approach including personal relationships alongside the impact of the social structure implied taking two steps. First, *personal influence* must have a significant part to play in accounting for the way in which links between citizens and the elite and in particular the party elite emerge and develop. Second, *psychological characteristics* must have a place alongside the sociological or socio-economic relationships which the 'classical' interpretation of the role of parties in Europe in effect privileged. As a matter of fact, these two aspects have to be viewed as part of a combined approach to the analysis of political relationships: the questions posed by the need to take into account personal influence and by the need to give a place to psychological analysis are two elements of a single, but differently focused way of looking at the relationship between citizens and the key actors in the political process.

If both personal influence and, more generally, a psychological approach are to be taken into account alongside social structural analysis, a serious practical question has to be overcome. These areas are in almost all aspects terra incognita at any rate in (Western) Europe: European political scientists are not accustomed to deal with psychological concepts in the way they have been accustomed to do so, almost from the first day of their undergraduate career, with sociological concepts. Similar difficulties arise when one is examining the possible influence of personalities on citizens (and even more so when one wants to look at the converse type of influence). Such handicaps cannot be expected to be fully overcome unless a major change occurs in patterns of training and research in political science. This book can therefore constitute only a preliminary presentation of the part played by personal influence in political behaviour, and especially in electoral behaviour, within the general context of a major part having to be given to the psychological relationships circumscribing the contours of that personal influence.

To be convincing, however, such a presentation must first show that there is a prima facie case for moving in the direction which has been presented so far. This means examining in some detail the difficulties which the 'sociological' analysis of political behaviour has had to face in Western Europe from the last decades of the twentieth century: this examination is the subject of the coming chapter. Meanwhile, at least some evidence must be provided showing that personal influence has increased in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century *and* that the examination of psychological variables becomes imperative in such a context: it is to these points that we are now turning.

Decline of very well-established parties and increased influence, since the 1980s, of personalised leaders: three different aspects

If one is to look for the decline of well-established parties and the apparent increased influence, in the last decades of the twentieth century, of the role of what will be referred to herein as ‘personalised’ leaders, three sets of cases clearly provide at least some preliminary evidence. The first set concerns the fact that the party systems of the three Scandinavian countries became gradually internally weaker, with major splits and the emergence of new parties, in Denmark first, in Norway second, and, third, still with some limitations, in Sweden, while, in the 1950s, party systems in the three Scandinavian countries were ‘rock-solid’ (and, therefore, perhaps not surprisingly, a Norwegian scholar developed the ‘social cleavages’ model). The second set of cases relates to the emergence of personalised leaders at the border, so to speak, and typically at the right-wing border, of political life in a number of countries, namely France (but such a development could be regarded as not being truly ‘exceptional’ in that country), Italy, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Norway. The third set of cases concerns the emergence of personalised leaders at the top of large parties, in an unprecedented manner, especially since the 1980s, in Spain, Britain and Italy.

New parties and decline of large dominant parties in Scandinavia

We will examine in the next chapter the general problem posed by the decline of what can be described as the ‘traditional’ large parties throughout Western Europe in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century. The case of the Scandinavian countries is most peculiar, however, since these were the countries where parties were regarded as particularly solid and where the ‘social cleavage’ theory seemed to be most directly applicable to political parties: the Labour or Social-Democratic parties had indeed obtained, at a number of elections since 1945, a dominant 40 per cent of the votes. Projected membership of the European Community was the direct cause of the decline of the Social Democratic or Labour parties in Denmark, first, and in Norway, second; but this occasion provided an opportunity for the fringe parties of the Right (rather than of the Left), to make inroads on the electoral scene.

Perhaps the most interesting case is that of Sweden, however: the country escaped the trauma due to the prospective membership of the EC in the 1970s as it remained ‘neutral’ at the time; it even escaped, possibly as a result, the ‘dilution’ of the party system which characterised Denmark and Norway in the subsequent decade: but that ‘dilution’ began to occur in the 1990s in Sweden as well. From then on the Social democratic party ceased to be the wholly dominant force it had been for decades, including even when it had to endure a stint of opposition, as between 1976 and 1982. The party appeared to be suffering from the same symptoms of decline as those of the other two Scandinavian

countries. The paradoxical result of that evolution in Scandinavia is that, as a result, the truly strong party systems are no longer in the North of Europe, but in Spain, Portugal and Greece.

Personalised leaders in fringe parties, typically of the Right

Since the mid-1970s, but since then only, a crop of fringe right-wing party leaders emerged in such diverse countries as France, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, where new parties were set up, and in Austria and Switzerland, where small parties were entirely ‘renovated’; except in France¹ and to a more limited extent in Italy, these cases were unprecedented, and they can be regarded as having been exceptional in the Netherlands and the Scandinavian countries. The very ‘creation’ or ‘renovation’ of these parties was due to leaders who were truly central to their parties and therefore deserve entirely their description as personalised leaders; this was so, although, in some cases, there were changes among these leaders, but also of parties in the process. Except in France and Italy, there were no previous examples of such parties in the first quarter of century after the Second World War.

Personalised leaders in ruling large parties

Italy, with Silvio Berlusconi, is the clearest direct example of the emergence of the case of a personalised leader who created a large, indeed a ruling party; it is also the only such case since the Second World War except for France, in 1958, as a result of the political debacle provoked by the Algerian war: but, as was pointed out in Note 1, France was also the only Western European country at the time which lacked a ‘well-organised’ party system and had experienced such a lack at least since the First World War. In this sense, French politics was markedly different from the politics of Western Europe.

In Italy, the case of Silvio Berlusconi as a personalised leader of a party at his devotion is so obvious that there seems no need to examine it at any length; it must be noted, however, that the founder of the Christian Democratic party, after the fall of Mussolini, De Gasperi, had failed by the early 1950s to create a party in which a personalised leader would dominate political life; successive prime ministers, for instance Fanfani or Craxi, did effectively failed as well in this respect.

There are two other Western European countries, however, Britain and Spain, where personalised leadership did prevail from the late 1970s and the early 1980s. In Spain, Felipe Gonzalez proved that the democratic party system could be successful in the country if it was ruled, not by manipulating politicians, as was the case from Franco’s death to 1982, but by a leader around whom key decisions were taken, who attracted a large number of ‘advisers’ at his devotion and who sought strong support among the population, that is to say was a personalised leader.

The British case, with Mrs Thatcher and Tony Blair, needs to be examined in somewhat greater detail: in twenty-eight years, between 1979 and 2007, the

country was ruled by three prime ministers only, two of whom, Mrs Thatcher and Tony Blair, were in power continuously for ten years: this was unprecedented in the twentieth century. Winston Churchill did hold the position for nine years, but in two different occasions; Harold Wilson was eight years in office, but in two successive cases as well. No British prime minister from Asquith to Mrs Thatcher was in office continuously for more than six years; in the first twenty-eight years after the Second World War, from 1945 to 1973, seven prime ministers ruled the country, not three.

Yet the peculiarity of the cases of Mrs Thatcher and Tony Blair is not primarily duration in office; what is more peculiar is that these two prime ministers were the only ones in the post-Second World War decades who could be described as having been truly personalised leaders. However personalised was Churchill's leadership, it was not only exercised during an extraordinary period, but it was brutally broken as a result of the British electorate not allowing the wartime leader of the country to be the leader of the post-war reconstruction. The only other prime minister of the period to have probably approached personalised leadership was Harold Macmillan, who was prime minister between 1957 and 1963: but, although he appears to have exercised some influence on the electorate in 1957, he did not change, nor did he wish to, the character of British political life. Mrs Thatcher and Tony Blair did, and they did so at a time when their parties, respectively Conservative and Labour, needed to experience a major refurbishing, so to speak, if these parties were to hold to their dominant position. The case of these two leaders is thus unprecedented in the second half of the twentieth century, indeed since 1918.

The role of personalised leaders and the need for a systematic psychological interpretation of political behaviour

While the examples which have just been given provide evidence, but not a demonstration, that personalised leaders tend by and large to have emerged since the 1980s after a long period of party dominance, such cases can be meaningfully analysed only if a different model is used from the one which had been adopted to account for the development of the 'traditional' parties in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The impact of leadership personalisation on the citizenry (and vice versa) cannot be assessed and even begin to be discussed unless the framework of the study is also psychological and not exclusively sociological. The very notion of personalisation of leadership makes sense only if one takes into account, indeed one gives a major emphasis to, a rapport between leaders and citizens based on such feelings as the appreciation of qualities and defects of the persons concerned, including the ability on the part of the leaders to transmit messages which are emotionally loaded and not merely tapping a 'rational' chord.

The key difficulty, as was pointed out at the outset in this Introduction, stems from the fact that the conceptual and even more empirical instruments at the disposal of political scientists in relation to psychological analysis are at best

deficient, if not in fact non-existent, largely because modern political science, at any rate in Western Europe, has been typically closed to psychological interpretations. Indeed even the conception of what is regarded as psychological, in the area of electoral behaviour in particular, is typically merely the recognition that interviewees in opinion polls or in focus groups have ‘likes’ and ‘dislikes’ and that these have to be assessed. Yet the fact of noting that citizens have likes or dislikes is not in itself a psychological investigation; it is merely the starting point of such an investigation. After all, people may have likes or dislikes because of certain social characteristics, for instance when they feel that a given party includes too many members of a particular social class. This does not mean that these likes and dislikes should not be examined – especially to discover what can be described as the *temperature* and the *specific object* of these sentiments. The examination of the temperature reveals the extent to which the individuals concerned are involved in the sentiments which they express: in many, perhaps in the large majority of the cases, especially those concerned national political activities, the temperature is likely to be low.² The determination of what was just referred to as the ‘specific object’ is also important. The sentiments which are expressed may indeed concern the substance of the problem; in many cases, however, the persons at the origin (or, more precisely, felt to be at the origin) of the policy or of the proposal may be the real objects of the reaction. Likes and dislikes, love and hatred may be – are often – as much related to those who suggest a course of action as to the course of action itself.

The analysis becomes truly psychological only when the reasons for these sentiments are examined. The categorisation of the reasons for attitudes is undertaken commonly, indeed daily, in ‘informal’ discussions about expected outcomes. These discussions typically raise a number of ‘personality traits’, such as the energy, intelligence, or ability to get on with others, of the individuals concerned; indeed these points are often raised at the same time as the social characteristics of these individuals. ‘Personality traits’ need therefore to be regarded as ‘facts’ in a psychological analysis in the same way as are taken as ‘facts’ in a sociological framework the class background, the religiosity or the regional origins of these individuals. So long as inquiries into personality characteristics are not undertaken, however, the analysis of political relationships will remain partial, since we shall not be able to discover what are the real ties between citizens and the political elite.

It is worth remembering the points made several decades ago by F.W. Greenstein about the need to place at the same level psychological and sociological (or socio-economic) explanations (Greenstein 1987). As we noted, political scientists have a basic knowledge of sociological and of economic concepts, at least in the sense that they can use, almost automatically and instinctively, the key concepts of these disciplines. In the large majority of cases and, in Western Europe, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the same does not apply to key psychological concepts. It is not surprising that these scholars should rarely look for psychological explanations, or that they should do so only after the explanatory power of sociological or socio-economic explanations has been ‘exhausted’:

psychological explanations acquire as a result a 'residual' character instead of being examined alongside other types of explanation (Greenstein 1987).

As a matter of fact, since it is rare for sociological explanations to account more for a limited part of the overall explanation, the case for entering into the psychological field could almost automatically be regarded as enormous. Moreover, given that sociological explanations often have an ideological character (for instance in terms of the definition of social class), it should be recognised that one is in effect entering the psychological domain and therefore that political relationships include, even if admittedly to a variable extent, elements of a social and elements of a psychological character.

Analyses of a psychological character should not therefore be regarded as 'residual', but be treated on a level equivalent to that of other types of explanation. Moreover, a psychological explanation cannot be just based on the recognition that any human activity includes subjective elements and, consequently, that this is the case in the political realm. One must examine why this or that individual took the stand which he or she took: specifically, if these individuals happen to 'like' a given social or economic policy, one must look at the reasons why this stand has been taken. These reasons surely have to do with the personality characteristics as well as with the social characteristics of these individuals.

The difficulties which are faced by political scientists, primarily in Europe, if not so much in the United States, and which were alluded to earlier become truly serious at this point. What is missing is an automatic ability to recall the concepts developed in psychology in order to be able to understand how individuals react to various situations. European political scientists simply do not have the habit of distinguishing empirically among 'personality traits', in the way they are habituated to distinguish among the different elements constituting 'objective' social class or to distinguish among different levels of 'religiosity'. This state of affairs is a further reason why psychological explanations tend to be left aside: it is not only difficult, but indeed impossible for European political scientists to use psychological variables and, therefore, it is simpler for them to return to what is well known, or at least is regarded as being of much easier access, namely social characterisations.

The long-term answer must therefore be to associate psychologists to European political science training and research. There have to be temporary solutions, however: these refer particularly to the single most important element of the analysis to which the present study is concerned, namely leadership. While leadership has typically not been regarded in Europe as 'making a large difference', it has been generally believed in the United States to deserve serious analysis because of the crucial part ostensibly played by the President in the political process. Thus a number of major studies have been devoted to the subject and these have come (probably inevitably) to consider psychological variables. Most of these are concerned with cases of individual presidents; some have had a psychoanalytical character. Perhaps the most important ones were those devoted to Woodrow Wilson, to F.D. Roosevelt and to Eisenhower (George and George 1994; Burns 1970; F.I. Greenstein 1994). Comparative studies have also been

undertaken: presidents have thus been classified in terms of psychological attributes. J.D. Barber came to a four-fold categorisation in terms of 'active' or 'passive' and 'positive' or 'negative' presidents (Barber 1976). Even if such a classification can be regarded as somewhat 'introductory', it constitutes a first step: it shows that psychological interpretations are possible and provide a preliminary basis for classifications.

Moreover, personalisation of leadership is too often regarded as being of one piece, as if there was merely a dichotomous distinction between leaders who are characterised by a personalised mode of behaviour in office and those who are not. Even a rapid examination of a number of cases of European personalised leadership shows, on the contrary, that there are major variations in the form which that personalised leadership has taken in the last decades of the twentieth century: the characteristics of the leadership of Mrs Thatcher are very different from those of the leadership of Tony Blair, for instance. By examining thoroughly and thus classifying forms of personalised leadership one will come gradually closer to a comprehensive classification of types of personalised leadership, at any rate in the context of the democratic forms which prevail currently in Europe.

Distinctions relating to leaders are likely to provide elements leading to the discovery of relevant psychological distinctions at the level of citizens as well. Although it was not possible in this volume to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the reactions of citizens to leaders on the basis of the instruments currently at the disposal of political scientists in the psychological field, the examination of the reactions of citizens to their leaders is likely to provide an entry, however partial, to psychological characteristics.

The decision to study political behaviour on the basis of the psychological dimension of the relationship between citizens and the elite constitutes a major move. This move is indeed unavoidable as soon as one recognises that citizens and leaders 'relate' to each other; but it is also a logical step to take if political behaviour, especially electoral behaviour, is not to go into a downward spiral of negative conclusions resulting from the fact that the analysis of political parties, embedded in the 'social cleavages' approach, has ceased to be able to provide truly important new insights.

This book is devoted mainly to Europe, as it is in Europe and primarily in (Western) Europe that most efforts have been made to develop a theory of the links between parties and citizens in the course of the twentieth century. This is indeed the area where political parties tended to be most institutionalised; but there is typically little reference to leaders in this context, although there have been variations, especially among analyses concerned with the setting up of parties in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. In general, however, the literature on parties as they were known in the middle of the twentieth century does not pay much attention, if any, to leaders. The part played by leaders in political life may indeed be stronger in Eastern Europe, in Latin America, and, outside Japan, in East and Southeast Asia: but this has tended to be explained, in

the context of the classical interpretation of party development, as being due to the fact that, in these areas, pluralistic party politics are often a new development and political parties are on the whole rather weak organisations while non-party leaders often play a significant part during the transition process toward democracy. The mass media also have there a significant impact on the *personalisation* of voting patterns: television is pervasive and powerful in view of its 'modern' character in contrast to more traditional forms of electoral campaigning.

This study goes beyond Europe in two ways, however. First, it examines in some detail the way political leaders, parties and citizens have come to relate to each other in two countries of East and Southeast Asia, Japan and Thailand: party developments in these last two countries have echoed, especially since the late 1990s, party developments in Western Europe at about the same time. Second, while considering the role of leaders in their parties and in the electorate at large in Western Europe, this work also explores the characteristic links which are found to prevail in that region: this raises the question as to whether those characteristics are genuinely different from those which are found in other parts of the world. It is hoped in this way to be able to move more easily in the direction of a world-wide theory of the relationship among leaders, parties and citizens.

The structure of this work

This work is divided into two parts. Part I considers the theoretical problems raised by the analysis of the personalisation of leaders in the context of political parties, while Part II is devoted to six country case studies. A final chapter draws an overall conclusion about the relationship between personalisation, parties and citizens.

The five chapters which compose Part I are concerned successively with the problems encountered by the 'classical' approach since the last decades of the twentieth century (Chapter 2), with the nature and the components of personalised leadership (Chapter 3), with an examination of the psychological bases of the relationship between citizens, parties and party leadership (Chapter 4), with a survey of the extent to which there are appear to be personalised leaders, in Europe, both in pre-existing parties and in new parties (Chapter 5) and with the methodological problems posed by the analysis of the possible impact of personalised leaders on the citizens, both directly and through the parties to which they belong (Chapter 6).

Chapter 2 looks at the reasons why, at any rate in Europe, leadership personalisation has not been regarded as being any longer very important in the democratic politics of most of the twentieth century. It then examines the extent to which the 'social cleavages' approach ceased to be as capable of providing a comprehensive explanatory framework in the last decades of the twentieth century. It also details the different ways in which some modifications have been introduced, without apparent great success, to the 'classical' model in order to

attempt to meet some of the problems that this model was encountering. Finally, it reconsidered the concept of 'modernity' in relation to political parties.

Chapter 3 circumscribes the object of the volume by distinguishing 'personalised' political leadership from other forms of political leadership. It does so by focusing on three types of characteristics, the kind of 'discourses' used by the leaders, the ways in which the leaders endeavour to obtain support from the citizens and the reactions of the citizens to the leaders. In the process, a number of well-known concepts commonly associated with personalised leadership are being examined, specifically populism, as one of the types of discourses used by personalised leadership, clientelism, patronage and 'media dominance', as key ways in which personalised leaders relate directly to citizens, and notoriety, popularity and charisma as being the main forms which characterise the reactions of citizens to personalised leaders. The chapter is concerned with a description of the components of personalised leadership: it does not therefore examine the methodological tools which might help to account for the existence of and hopefully to measure personalised leadership in particular situations, a matter which is analysed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4 examines the psychological bases of the relationship between citizens and parties as well as the part which personalised leaders may play in this process. The chapter suggests that the links between citizens and parties appear to be based, not just on a number of important social groups, but also on attitudes towards personalities and in particular towards leaders. The chapter further suggests that changes in the characteristics of Western European societies in the course of the twentieth century appear to have resulted in a decline in the extent to which social groups provide these links and in a corresponding increase, in many cases at least, of the part played by personalities in this context.

Chapter 5 analyses the relationship between personalised leaders and the parties of which they are the heads. That relationship has two elements, the power which these leaders hold within their party, in particular to alter the ideological and programmatic line of the party, and the ability of these leaders to strengthen their party in the nation. The question is then analysed in the context of the two different types of situations in which personalised leaders relate to the party to which they belong, those of pre-existing parties in which these leaders come to hold power and those of new parties created by these leaders. While the examination of Western European party development since 1945 shows that new parties which were led by a personalised leader and which reached a substantial size have emerged throughout the period, such a development has occurred more frequently in the final decades of the twentieth century.

Chapter 6 is devoted to a comprehensive analysis of the methodological difficulties posed by the assessment of the part played by personalised leaders in the attitudes which citizens have towards the party of their choice and in the way in which these citizens behave at elections: the combination of the power which personalised leaders are likely to have within their party and of the direct influence of these leaders on the citizens has indeed often the result of rendering it particularly difficult to determine what the overall impact of leaders on citizens

can be. The chapter analyses the possible measurement of the direct relationship between leaders and citizens and the reactions of citizens; it also considers how one might assess the three aspects of personalised leadership identified in Chapter 3, namely the discourses of the personalised leaders, the instruments which these use to put across their message and the reactions of the citizens.

Part II is entirely devoted, in Chapters 7 to 13, to the examination of the part played by some of the more prominent recent personalised party leaders in Britain, France, Italy, Poland, Japan, and Thailand. In order to achieve genuine comparability, however, these chapters have been drafted on the basis of a three-part identical framework relating to the career of the leaders studied, to the extent to which they had an indirect influence on the electorate through the changes which they brought about in their respective parties and to the extent of their direct influence on the electors. The aim was to be able as a result to identify, through the findings of the six case studies of Part II, a number of general points relating to the relationship between personalisation of leadership, parties and citizens. These points are then examined comparatively in the concluding chapter of the volume.

Notes

- 1 France was the exception: its party system, especially on the Right, was never structured around big mass parties before the advent of the Fifth Republic in 1958. The point is mentioned again later in relation to the development of right-wing parties.
- 2 It is indeed at least arguable as to whether ordinary citizens are truly concerned, in the strong sense of the word, with national politics. There is more involvement, more genuine activism, at the level of politics in the bodies in which citizens are members, such as the family, the village or local neighbourhood or the firm. Unfortunately 'micro' political activity has not so far been studied systematically, if at all, by political scientists, whereas 'micro-economics' is the object of countless analyses.

Part I

**Personalisation of leaders
and citizens–party
relationships**

2 The problems posed by the ‘social cleavages’ analysis of parties

For about half a century, in Western Europe, the links between parties and citizens have been based on two general premises. First, these links had been sharply modified as parties became more ‘national’ in the course of the second half of the nineteenth century and in the first decades of the twentieth century in particular; in the process this meant that ‘localism’ declined – and consequently the role of ‘local notables’ also declined – to give way to what came to be typically described as ‘mass parties’, an expression which is somewhat ambiguous, as it refers to the anonymity of the link between supporters and party as much as and perhaps even more than the numerical extent of the support. (Duverger 1951). This development seemed to suggest that, in becoming more ‘modern’, political systems were moving from a situation in which personalities played a critical part to one in which the societal structure and ideology were tending to prevail. Second, in these ‘mass’ parties, the link with the electorate was taking place through social cleavages of which Lipset and Rokkan gave a detailed description in a well-known 1967 article (Lipset and Rokkan 1967: 1–64): what tied electors to ‘their’ parties were sentiments of belonging to key social groupings, essentially cultural-ethnic, rural or urban, religious, and, increasingly, class-based.

These views were not fundamentally challenged during the twentieth century, although the concept of the ‘mass’ party came to be questioned, as it was apparent that the proportion of electors who ‘belonged’ to parties in a formal sense tended to decline (Katz and Mair 1994: 4–5): yet the expression ‘mass party’ continued to be regarded as corresponding broadly to the reality. Meanwhile, the notion that a number of key traditional social cleavages accounted for the way Western Europeans were attached to political parties was not truly challenged either. Yet there was a degree of persistent unease in the scholarly literature, from the 1980s onwards, about the extent to which the ‘classical’ social cleavages did continue to account for party attachment. This unease was due in large part to the fact that studies of electoral behaviour were repeatedly showing that the role of such social cleavages as class and religion was often tenuous in accounting for why electors voted (Wolinetz 1988; Inglehart 1977; Nieuwbeerta 1995; Oskarson 2005: 84–105). On this score at least, the interpretation given to the Western European panorama was sharply different from the one which had

emerged or was emerging in the rest of the world. The only countries in which social cleavages were regarded as playing a large part were those of the Old Commonwealth, the United States, though increasingly less convincingly, as well as perhaps Japan and Israel: elsewhere, such an interpretation of the basis of parties simply did not seem valid, even in pluralistic party systems of the Third World.

The fact that the social structural basis of Western European parties was regarded as different, indeed fundamentally different, from that of parties in the rest of the world, at any rate of the non-Western world, was not regarded as a major problem. It was probably assumed that such a difference was in the nature of things and simply indicated that Third World party systems were less 'mature' than Western European party systems. Yet the matter does need consideration, as Third World party systems do not typically have the character of what might be referred to as wholly 'traditional' party systems: they are not usually based, or they have ceased to be based, on local notables. They are at least very likely to have acquired a national, perhaps a 'mass' character, even if they are not based on social cleavages. This means that the two 'fundamental' characteristics of Western European parties are truly distinct and should therefore be kept distinct; this also means that some reflection is needed as to why one of what we termed the two premises of party development seems to be truly universal while the other perhaps, indeed probably, is not.

We shall need to return to this question as what can be regarded as the 'definition' of a 'modern' party. Indeed what is being raised in this way is more than a question of definition: what is also being raised is whether one should consider the matter of the social structure of parties as being so fundamental that some party systems, in this context Western European party systems, are truly undergoing an evolution which is peculiar; it would appear to follow from this interpretation that these party systems should be treated separately from party systems elsewhere in the world, with only a small number of exceptions, the evolution of the United States party system suggesting that that country does not quite belong or belong any longer to the same 'group' as that which is primarily composed of Western European countries. Before examining this matter, we need to look more closely at the Western European 'case': that there has been a decline of the 'weight' of 'social cleavages' in the structure of parties in that area in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century is not being genuinely in question any longer, as we shall see in the first section of this chapter. We need to note in the second section, however, that that 'decline' is being interpreted in a variety of ways. We will then return in the last section to the question of the nature of the 'modern' party to see whether Western European parties would cease to be 'modern' if social cleavages also ceased to be one of their central characteristics, as seems to be implied, not merely by those who put forward the view that social cleavages are crucial, but by those who seem to believe that, without a social cleavage basis, Western European parties are in a terminal decline.

I

The decline of 'social cleavages' as a key element of the basic structure of Western European parties

The decline in the strength of the link between traditional parties and citizens

There has been no denying of the fact that the strength of social cleavages in the basic structure of parties has been reduced in Western Europe in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century. Such a movement has been rather widely investigated in the scholarly literature, with three sets of developments having occurred at elections, namely greater volatility, gradual decline and even, in some cases, collapse. While, in the late 1950s and the first part of the 1960s, parties seemed to be like rocks in the Western European landscape, France being the only exception, such an image became subsequently increasingly unrealistic.¹

The first sign that all was not right was provided by increases in volatility, as the well-known 1979 Pedersen article showed: volatility meant that electors moved from one party to another; it also meant that they moved in and out of abstention which was also generally on the increase. While the Pedersen article showed that there were variations in the extent of volatility among countries, the article referred to a movement that had already begun to take place to a substantial extent by the 1970s: it increased since.

Then comes decline: parties which had dominated the scene have lost their superior position, partly as a result of splits, partly as a result of sheer erosion by minor parties. The Danish and Norwegian Labour parties were thus affected by major splits resulting from the proposal which was made that these countries should join the European Community; the decline of the two parties was such that they never again enjoyed the dominant position which they held previously. The Italian Christian Democratic Party suffered from a slow, but gradual decline in the forty years during which it was permanently in government after the Second World War. In the Netherlands, three parties divided among themselves the Christian (Catholic and Protestant) vote in the early post-Second World War decades; the decline was such that these parties felt they had to merge to form subsequently a single Christian Democratic party; yet that party then proceeded to decline as well. Traditionally large parties also declined in other countries: from almost monopolising jointly the results in 1950, the two major British parties only garnered little more than two-thirds of the vote by the 1980s.

Finally, there was collapse, notably in Italy, but elsewhere as well. Admittedly, there had been the earlier collapse of the French Christian Democrat party, the MRP, in the 1950s and of the Spanish UCD in the early 1980s, but, in both cases, it could at least be plausibly argued that these organisations had not had sufficient time to build a truly loyal popular support. This surely was not the case of Italian Christian Democracy, of the Italian Socialists or of the Japanese

Socialists, this last party not having recovered from its alliance with the Liberal Democrats, which did, on the other hand, perhaps surprisingly, survive almost unscathed up to 2009. Key ‘pillars’ of the panorama of politics were thus seemingly suddenly at risk.

These developments were sufficiently pronounced and sufficiently widespread to result in some keen observers of the Western European party scene feeling markedly worried. Thus, in two occasions in the early part of their work on party organisations, Katz and Mair raised openly the problem of party ‘survival’. They felt that a solution, perhaps the only one, was for the state to come to the rescue (presumably rather than the people) to sustain parties. They pointed out that “the State has become unquestionably important for the survival of political parties” (p. 8) and by doing so they suggested that “... the parties can thus be seen as helping to lay the basis for their own survival” (p. 11) (Katz and Mair 1994).

Something deeply troublesome thus seemed to be occurring in the relationship between people and parties in Western Europe. Yet it is rather difficult to believe that a genuine solution to the problem should be for the parties to protect themselves with the help of the state: ‘adjustments’ of this kind may succeed for a while, but do not seem likely to constitute a true alternative to what the ‘classical’ model proposed when it referred to cleavages as the bases for parties. At best, these ‘remedies’ may slow down decline and perhaps avoid total collapse; but they do not indicate whether and in what ways the existing parties might recover the support which they once had or whether other parties with a different base would obtain the kind of support which their predecessors had obtained in the past.

The problem may be felt to lie with the fact that, over time, the cleavages identified by Lipset and Rokkan had been losing some of their appeal in the electorate at large: it could therefore be that one was merely witnessing a move from one set of cleavages to another and that there was so to speak a ‘lull’ between the supremacy of ‘older’ (perhaps more materialist) cleavages and the arrival of ‘newer’ (perhaps more post-materialist) cleavages. As a matter of fact, the four sets of cleavage structures which were mentioned had been ‘frozen’ from the 1920s well into the 1960s (p. 50), but Lipset and Rokkan never assumed that they would remain permanently frozen. Indeed, at the end of their paper, while discussing the future, the authors pointed to troubles among Labour parties to conclude that “[i]t is still too early to say what kinds of politics this will engender” (p. 56). It may be that class, religion, rural-urban or centre-periphery distinctions are no longer sufficiently potent in Western Europe to sustain large parties. It may be, to quote Lipset and Rokkan again, that a new “hierarchy of cleavages” (p. 6) is about to take shape but that it takes time for such a development to occur (Lipset and Rokkan 1967).

One overriding difficulty with the view that new social cleavages were about to replace the old ones was that, as a matter of fact, little seemed to occur in Western Europe to provide any evidence in this direction. New parties did emerge, sometimes to put forward new issues, such as the Greens, but often as a

result of a split among existing parties, partly in connection with what seemed to be personalised conflicts, as in the Netherlands, Denmark or Norway. These new parties did in any case lead to greater fragmentation and thus to a loosening of the ties of citizens with both new and old bodies; they were not the consequence of the emergence of new cleavages. Second, many of the larger parties became closer to each other ideologically and programmatically, as Downs had suggested in the 1950s and as Kirchheimer had begun to detail in the 1960s. These developments occurred in large part at the instigation of the leadership, as in the case of the German SPD in the 1950s, of the Spanish PSOE in the 1970s, of the French Socialist party in the 1980s and of the British Labour party in the 1980s and 1990s: the distinction between the parties often seemed to centre around 'new' leaders who claimed to have a more modern vision of what society needed. Third, as a number of parties collapsed, leaders at the fringe of classical politics came to build organisations, some of which played only a limited ephemeral part, but several of which structured themselves, apparently at least for long periods in the political landscape, as in Norway, Denmark, France, Austria or Italy. Moreover, as we just saw, admittedly in very few cases only, such parties based on personalities gained even a central position in the party system: this had been the case, on and off, of the Gaullist party as early as the 1950s and this came to be the case of Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* from the 1990s, while, in Catalonia, Pujol's party has been central to the politics of that 'autonomy'. It is therefore difficult to escape the overall impression that what was occurring was a marked decline of the role of classical cleavages throughout the whole of Western European parties.

Overall, while little was done to integrate developments in other pluralistic polities into a world-wide theory of party support, some effort was made in relation to Eastern Europe to examine whether support for the parties which emerged in that area in the 1990s could be accounted for in terms of a cleavage theory. It is indeed the part of the world in which the Lipset-Rokkan model is quoted most regularly by scholars analysing party developments (Evans and Whitefield 1993; Kitschelt *et al.* 1999). Yet it is questionable as to whether all the developments which occurred since 1990 in the area indicated that the links between parties and supporters were indeed generally based on social cleavages: volatility is often exceptionally high and new parties have emerged in which leaders have played a crucial part, while leadership has also played a critical part in the more 'established' parties as well.²

The question of the 'modern' party system in America

It is valuable at this point to make a little detour in order to consider currently prevailing views on the subject in the United States. Broadly speaking, social cleavages no longer play much of a part in the analysis of the relationship between people and parties in the scholarly literature of that country: the parties are simply 'different', as, in 1985, in an APSR article entitled "The New American Party", Schlesinger stated when he remarked that American parties were

“alive and well” contrary to what had been claimed for some time (Schlesinger 1985). Moreover and very pointedly, in the 1980s, Sorauf made what amounted to a ‘profession of faith’ in a new model:

The American electorate thus found the candidate-centred party better tailored to their preferences than the party dominated, integrated, and unified by a party organization.... [P]arties reflect the political-psychological needs of voters. The rise of personalism in political campaigning is a case in point.... Behind the personalism is the need of many citizens for personal leadership, for flesh-and-blood embodiment of distant government, even for the vicarious ego strength of a confident public figure.

(Sorauf 1988: 504–5)

Of course, American parties had been at least partly based on social cleavages, for instance ethnic cleavages, and these links have not wholly disappeared, but their part had become limited: they were in the background, while candidates and leaders occupied the front of the stage. It is as if, contrary to what has so often been claimed, the opening up of the party nominations which had resulted from the primaries had had the effect, not of destroying parties, but of rendering these almost ‘sacred’ in the American political process, at the very moment when European parties were liable to decline and even disappear. Admittedly, the two classical US parties do not go entirely unchallenged: third parties have periodically emerged and, at times, have played a significant part in presidential elections. Yet these parties, too, have been based on leaders, sometimes almost exclusively. They have often also been described (or have described themselves) as ‘populist’, a label which is probably as vague in these cases as when it is applied to Western European or even Latin American parties. A distinct American party ‘theory’ thus emerged: it emerged because it appeared better able than the ‘classical’ theory to account for the way American parties had fared in the second half of the twentieth century, although there is a lack of interest for cross-national analysis and for the examination of the general conditions under which developments such as those which took place among American parties would be likely to occur.

II

How the changes which occurred have tended to be interpreted

There is thus a prima facie case for suggesting that major changes have occurred in Western Europe in the nature of the basic links between citizens and parties. Yet the scholarly interpretation continues to be sceptical about the extent to which these changes require a major revision of the classical approach. This view was put forward in the most forceful manner by J. Curtice and S. Holmberg in their analysis of the extent to which personalisation plays a part in Western European party systems (2005: 235–53). On the basis of what is a partial and

indeed rather biased selection of a few Western European countries, the authors concluded that:

In this chapter we have looked at the last link in the chain of influences on voting that we have been examining in this book. If modernisation theory is correct, then leader evaluations are just the kind of short-term influence that should have become more important over the last two or three decades. Yet, however, we have examined the proposition and found scant evidence in support for it. Voters' evaluations of party leaders appear to be as important or unimportant now as they were when they were first measured by the series of surveys we have been analysing. Nothing much seems to have changed.

(Curtrice and Holmberg 2005: 251–2)³

It is difficult to be more categorical on the subject.

As a matter of fact, there have been essentially five types of reactions, in the last years of the twentieth century, to what seemed ostensibly to be profound changes to the basis of support of parties. The first of these types of reactions relates to studies of electoral behaviour, where some questioning of the role of traditional cleavages appears to be taking place. As a matter of fact, election studies had often tended to avoid the issue altogether, in part because these studies tend to concentrate on providing an account of one particular election. At most, changes had been discussed on the basis of a comparison between the election which is studied and the previous one which took place. Thus the fundamental question of an overall change over time did not need to – and indeed probably could not – be raised. As Schmitt-Beck, Weick and Christoph point out: “Distributions of partisanship as registered by cross-sectional surveys tend to overestimate the extent to which parties are firmly rooted among citizens” (2006: 599).⁴ A change may be gradually taking place, however. Indeed, some earlier studies already suggested that changes were taking place over a longer period, as the title of the Sarlvik and Crewe analysis of the 1979 election, *Decade of Dealignment* clearly indicates (1983: 333–8).

Moreover, more recently, inquiries into the bases of party support among voters have begun to suggest that, in Europe as in America, the emphasis on cleavages may no longer be sufficient. There are appreciable differences in this respect between specialists of electoral behaviour and party specialists. Electoral behaviour specialists are now interested in types of elections, local or national, and in the electoral system. They also consider the constraints of the electoral ‘supply’, the image of candidates, the electoral stakes and the preoccupations of voters. They examine electoral campaigns and, in this context, the impact of television and the role of opinion polls. The voters' choice is viewed as being the result of a process where structural variables, short- and long-term influences, political and socio-cultural factors jointly play a part.

Second, meanwhile, party specialists have tended not to call into question the impact of social cleavages and structural variables to explain the birth and the

development of parties. The formation and subsequent development of many political parties is viewed as being the result of such structural factors as class or religion. Perhaps something of a Marxist approach continues to prevail in this respect; there is also, in many cases, an emphasis on specifically national analyses, typically concentrated on Western countries. Thus studies concentrating on the parties have been less ready to recognise that a change has been occurring.⁵ One type of reaction which focuses on parties consists in claiming that there has been no or very little change. Those who have taken this line have tended to concentrate on what is an altogether different issue, namely whether parties, in general, were in decline. Peter Mair is perhaps the most forceful representative of such a standpoint. He thus states that, despite the fact that there were problems about the 'survival' of some parties, there was overall little to worry about in terms of the future of parties, as the very title of his 1992 Stein Rokkan Lecture indicated: "Myths of electoral change and the survival of traditional parties" (1993: 121–33). That remark made by the author about Ireland seems to summarise his overall viewpoint: "Massive social change has [therefore – that is to say in the case of Ireland] been accompanied by aggregate electoral stability" (*ibid.*: 129). Admittedly, the line was somewhat softened subsequently, first by means of the introduction of the idea of 'cartel party' arrangements – such arrangements being designed to protect 'declining' parties – and, second, by the recognition that new parties were coming on the scene and were "Challenges to the Cartel Party", these new parties attesting in fact the vitality of parties in general if not necessarily of 'old parties' in particular (Katz and Mair 1995: 5–28, especially at pp. 23–5). By concentrating on the question of the general decline of parties, Katz and Mair in effect avoided taking a stand on the key question of the part which cleavages did or did not play in European parties at the end of the twentieth century, but the repeated reference to Rokkan in the articles of these authors on the subject more than suggests that the underlying claim is that there is nothing wrong with 'classical' cleavage theory.

The third type of reaction, also concerned with parties, principally represented by Hans-Peter Kriesi, has consisted in stressing that cleavages continued to be important, but that their scope had to be broadened in order to encompass new aspects of society and in particular values alongside social forces (Kriesi 1998). Also in a Stein Rokkan Lecture, this time in 1997, Kriesi stated that there are "... three aspects of the notion of 'cleavage'", a structural aspect, but "two more elements: the groups must be conscious of their collective identity... Moreover, a cleavage must be expressed in organisational terms" (p. 167). Kriesi thus links himself to an extent with the interpretation given three years earlier by Knutsen and Scarbrough, who bluntly stated: "In place of the notion of cleavages as deep-seated socio-structural conflicts with political significance, our concept of cleavage encompasses three distinct but intertwined phenomena" (1995: 494). The authors proceed then to state that these three elements are "a relatively persistent social division", "some set of values common to the group" and institutionalisation "in some form of organisation" (*ibid.*). The trouble with this kind of broad-

ening is not only, as Kriesi says himself, that the "threefold notion of what constitutes a 'cleavage' makes the analysis of 'cleavage politics' tremendously difficult" (1998: 167), but that it ceases to give to the concept any kind of rigorous meaning. At the limit, a cleavage is almost anything which links electors to parties. The strength of the Lipset-Rokkan conception is that it was clear and meaningful: by stretching the concept to include values and/or organisation, the authors make it impossible to validate or falsify the claim that cleavages account for electoral behaviour. The word 'cleavage' is kept, as it is part of the 'classical tradition', but at the expense of changing its meaning so much that it does not cover any longer any clear-cut reality.

The fourth approach to the problem is different. It is not concerned so much with parties in general, but with the phenomenon, said to be particularly characteristic of contemporary politics, of the growth of 'populist' parties, one of the characteristics of these parties being the part played by leaders. Taggart is perhaps the author who has first analysed the problem systematically (1996). In this type of party, personalities are said to play a large part, but the analysis of populism and of populist parties tends to be undertaken separately from and almost without any reference to the general analysis of parties, although, somewhat exceptionally, such a link is made by Mény and Surel in their 2000 work on populism (2000: 107). Thus the examination of populism does not help the understanding of what is taking place in parties in general and, in particular, possibly because the role of personalities is often viewed negatively, the analysis of populism does not really lead to a desire to revise profoundly the question of the overall linkage between parties and the electorate.

Finally, the fifth approach constitutes a radical re-assessment of the relationship between parties and society. On the basis of the analyses conducted within the framework of the Manifesto Studies which he initiated, Ian Budge came to view parties as bodies 'in orbit' in society and therefore existing independently from the reasons which individual electors may have to sustain them, reasons which he considers to be 'micro' characteristics (Budge *et al.* 1976; Budge and Farlie 1977; Budge and Keman 1990). Parties should be examined at the 'macro' level, on the contrary: what then becomes important is not where parties come from or even the policies which they support, but their position on the Left-Right dimension, a position which can and does change, in part as a result of the 'factions' which come temporarily to be in control of the parties.

In such a perspective, what counts is, first, the fact that some parties have lasted for a hundred years or more and, consequently, are above the vagaries of short-term political events and, second, that the characteristics of these parties vary periodically. Thus the formation and subsequent development of such parties may be explained in terms of changes in the social structure, such as the decline of agriculture, the rise and subsequent decline of the industrial working class, the increase of the middle class, dechristianisation. In this context, the social cleavages around which these parties were organised did weaken, without wholly disappearing. Meanwhile, some 'dealignment' of voters does take place and the parties have therefore to adapt.

They adapt in various ways, ranging from changing the name of the party (many Christian democrat parties abandoned the term Christian, many communist parties became socialist or social-democratic or simply ‘Left’ parties) to adopting a new ideology, new programmes, a new strategy. These moves were often proposed by a party leader or by a team around the leader, who may succeed, but who may also fail; but a Blair, a Gonzalez, a Mitterrand, a Koizumi seemed required if these ideological or strategic shifts were to be approved and implemented. An approach based on the personalisation of leadership makes it possible to understand the reasons for both the successes and for the failures.

Such developments have tended to result in internal divisions within the parties and even to splits, with new parties emerging, of the Right or Left, seeking to defend the traditional values of the old organisations: personalities typically play a part in the context of these splits. New issues also lead to the emergence of new parties, as has occurred over the environment, regionalism, migration, or taxation. Personalities (Le Pen, Pim Fortijn, Bossi, Blocher, Haider, Leveque, Pujol) appear to be a key factor in the development of regionalist or autonomist parties or in the rise of xenophobic or extreme-Right parties, though not in the context of Green parties which have, as a matter of principle, rejected the idea of the personalisation of leadership within their organisation and have appointed their leaders on the basis of rotation or collegiality.

New leaders can also be ‘outsiders’, businessmen, entrepreneurs, members of the military, for instance, who launch a party to facilitate their own integration in the ‘political class’. This has occurred to an extent with the leaders of the democratic transition in Eastern Europe, as with Wałęsa or Havel, but also elsewhere, when they control a large part of the media (Thaksin, Berlusconi) or have built a following by taking part in movies (Reagan, Schwarzenegger), while wealth also provides an entry (Perot, Blomberg). New political practices favouring the build-up of individual popularity outside parties, such as primaries and personal advertising, help markedly in this respect.

All these developments take place independently from social cleavages, whether in the context of pre-existing parties or in the context of new ones. They can be accommodated in the framework of Ian Budge’s analysis, though, in the opinion of this author, personalisation remains a temporary phenomenon and, therefore, is expected to remain of secondary importance in the life of political parties. Indeed, to be assessed, that personal appeal would have to be examined by way of a ‘micro’ analysis of the relationship between party and electors, an analysis which, as was pointed out, Ian Budge does downplay.

III

Is a social cleavages structure part of the definition of a ‘modern’ party?

Strong attempts were thus made to minimise the problem posed by changes in the basis of support of political parties in Western Europe. As a matter of fact,

the only marked effort undertaken to provide a truly different interpretation to what was occurring in the relationship between parties and citizens in the region was made by Ronald Inglehart who argued forcefully from the late 1970s that Western societies were moving from a situation in which 'materialist' class-based values prevailed to one in which these were replaced by 'post-materialist' values (1977). The extent to which such a change is actually taking place appears limited; thus perhaps the greatest value of the Inglehart model is it raises the question of what is meant by 'modernity' (in the purely non-ideological sense of 'contemporaneity'); as a result, the place of Western European parties in relation to parties in other areas is also being indirectly discussed.

As was pointed out at the outset in this chapter, the general notion was that, by becoming 'modern', Western European parties had acquired two characteristics: they had become 'national' rather than local and they were closely linked to – perhaps in some cases wholly dependent on – social cleavages, class basis being probably the most important of these cleavages. The 'nationalisation' of the party system meant that local 'notables' lost much if not all of the influence they had had in traditional parties. From this followed the feeling that 'progress' had been achieved in party systems in that the influence of personalities had diminished: political life would become more 'sensible' and indeed more meaningful as a result since it could be expected to be more policy-oriented.

The question which this situation poses is whether the two elements had to co-exist for parties to be regarded as 'modern'. There is little doubt that parties in which neither of these could be found did not qualify: but did parties need both to be present? Would one of either of these characteristics be sufficient? Indeed was one of these more 'fundamental' than the other and therefore the only one which was needed for a party to be 'modern'? Chronologically, in the course of the nineteenth century, in Western Europe, the two aspects emerged at the same time; on an overall comparative basis, however, the problem is that parties based on local notabilities did also disappear elsewhere and were replaced by 'national' parties, while the dependence on social cleavages could rarely be found outside Western Europe and some 'Westernised' countries.

This debate would be purely academic if it was not for the fact that the end of the 'traditional' type of party is typically associated with the end of the role being played by local personalities and, by extension, with the end of the part played by personalities altogether: 'modern' parties are thus viewed as those organisations which eschewed the rather 'demeaning' influence of persons and are devoted to the promotion of 'ideas'. Of course, parties based on social cleavages were bound to have leaders at the national level, but it was expected that these leaders would be acting on behalf of the ideas which they were promoting rather than, as was the case – or was regarded as being the case with 'local notables' – acting purely for their own, rather 'petty', interests. That contrast may appear to be unduly sharpened, but it is none the less at the root of the difficulty: it is believed (and such a belief is deeply engrained) that the 'traditional' system based on personalities is incapable of producing parties which can develop and pursue actively a clear-cut policy.

The refusal to view personalities as playing a positive part in party life, at any rate if they hold key decision-making positions, may well have also another origin, although that origin has nothing at all to do with the conclusion that parties in which personalities play a key part end up in ineffective bickering or worse. This origin has to do with the role of strong, indeed virulently strong leaders who could be said to have perverted the notion of leadership since the First World War in Europe, under both fascist and communist regimes. The 'personality cults' which had prevailed as a result had such tragic consequences that it was natural that one would want to brush aside these developments and, at least, to treat them as aberrations, not as a characteristic of 'modern' parties. Yet the point is that they did occur in parties which were 'modern', not just because these parties emerged chronologically after the liberal-democratic mass parties in Western Europe, but in the sense that these parties had unquestionably a 'mass' character; indeed this qualification applied to them perhaps even more than to liberal-democratic parties.

As a matter of fact, it could not even be claimed that parties based on the 'cult of personality' were a parenthesis which was closed with the victory of liberal democracies in 1945. To begin with, the Soviet Union was associated with that victory and the cult of personality was to prevail at least as much in Stalin's regime as in Nazi Germany or fascist Italy. There were to be more examples in the decades following the Second World War, not only because Eastern Europe broadly adopted the Soviet model, but because, possibly following the Soviet model, many, probably the majority, of Third World countries emerging from colonialism adopted party arrangements in which leaders were dominant, even if these leaders were rarely as brutal as those who were being imitated. Third world parties which were based on that kind of model were also not only modern in the chronological sense: they were 'modern' in that they were rejecting the 'local notabilities' model – indeed they sometimes emerged after having destroyed 'traditional' parties based on notabilities – precisely because these earlier systems were not putting forward the kind of development policies which were regarded by the leaders of the new parties as necessary if there was to be progress.

As a matter of fact, the number of countries which adopted such a model was so large that there were, at one end of the continuum, ruthless leaders resembling the European dictators while, at the other end, there were those who ran political systems of a liberal democratic or at least semi-pluralistic character, although the parties were not based on clear-cut conflicts which had emerged and were dependent on 'social cleavages'. The outstanding case was that of India, especially under Nehru, which had both a strong leader and a pluralistic party system, dominated at the time by the 'developmentalist' Congress: social cleavages in the classical Western European sense had little to do with the structural base of that party system. Even if such 'liberal-democratic' regimes were a minority in the Third World, their existence makes it difficult to conclude that 'modern' parties require the existence of parties of a national 'mass' character which are also organised around social cleavages. While it seems that 'modern' parties

tend to be national and not to give much influence to local notables, it is not at all obvious that they do have also to be based on such cleavages; it is on the contrary fairly obvious that they have and are sometimes wholly dependent on key personalities.

Given that this is the case, it has also to be recognised that, if we are to have a vision of 'modern' parties which is not confined almost exclusively to Western Europe, those social cleavages linked to such parties are not part of the definition. Moreover, whether these cleavages pay an important part in sustaining the party system or not, the role of national leaders can be important, indeed perhaps very important, in 'modern' parties, while that of 'traditional' local notables is weak or non-existent. Thus a party system can be described as 'modern' only by reference to the fact that it is based on organisations which are 'nationalised' in terms of their decision-making structure.

This interpretation has not only the advantage of ensuring that Western European party systems are not exceptional in the contemporary world in terms of their basic social structure, it has also the advantage of allowing for the fact that the personalisation of leadership, in Europe or elsewhere, does not need to constitute an obstacle. Such a state of affairs is valuable in the Western European case; but it is even more valuable in connection with the United States, a country with a party system in which social cleavages have ceased to have almost any relevance while the personalisation of leadership plays a major part. The reasons why the personalisation of leadership is an important factor in a country can therefore be explored without having to conclude that the growth of such a leadership means a decline of the 'modern' character of the party system, although it is probably true that the growth of the personalisation of leadership is likely to coincide with a decline of the part played by social cleavages where they had previously been profoundly relevant.

It is not suggested that the role of personalisation in political parties and, through them, at elections, is necessarily paramount. Indeed, while one manifestly cannot deny the role of personalities in twentieth century authoritarian and totalitarian parties, it could be argued, although the point has not been made, to our knowledge, that the characteristics of liberal-democratic polities are such that the levels of personalisation in parties and in the political system as a whole are more limited. The institutional structures of liberal democratic systems constrain leaders in many ways through constitutional and customary arrangements: these leaders are therefore less likely to be provided with opportunities to exercise the kind of full personal power which one finds commonly in authoritarian or totalitarian ones. Yet, even if this point is granted, it does not follow that leaders of liberal democratic regimes can exercise no or even only very little direct personal or indirect personal appeal on the population at large. What is apparently more likely to be the case is that the extent of that personal appeal of leaders of liberal democratic regimes does vary along a substantial range from almost non-existent to a sizeable level even if it is not likely to be overwhelming. Moreover, the point is so important for the understanding of political life that empirical inquiries must be undertaken widely across Western countries, as,

so long as the evidence is based on a relatively small number of cases, the (rather implicit) conclusion is that personalisation counts little in terms of the electoral appeal of liberal-democratic leaders.

The time has therefore come to consider whether it is realistic to continue with the view that social cleavages are the paramount, indeed *the* explanatory factor accounting for the relationship between ('modern') parties and their supporters or whether one should examine closely the extent to which personal ties also play a part, not just 'exceptionally', but almost routinely, alongside these cleavages. If such an inquiry is needed, one also needs to determine the precise characteristics of the personal ties which are found to exist in 'modern' Western (European) parties. As Dalton points out, (although surprisingly not mentioning personalisation):

The new style of citizen politics, therefore, should include a more fluid and volatile pattern of party alignments. Political coalitions and voting patterns lack the permanence of past class and religious cleavages.... [V]oting decisions will become more dependent on the individual beliefs and values of each citizen.

(Dalton 2002: 170)

Notes

- 1 The case of France has manifestly been markedly exceptional during the Third (1870–1940) and Fourth Republics (1945–1958). Never, up to the return of De Gaulle to power in 1958, have the parties of the Right in that country been well-structured, with large numbers of members and characterised by a high level of discipline in Parliament.
- 2 Even outside the Balkans, personalisation of leadership with the parties and through the parties appears to have been substantial in Poland (Wałęsa), Hungary (Antall), the Czech Republic (Klaus) and Slovakia (Mečiar).
- 3 The countries covered by that study are only Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany and the United Kingdom; moreover, in the Danish case, the Progress and Danish People's parties are not considered. The analysis covers the period 1956 to 2001. There is not even an acknowledgement that there may have been other European countries, such as Italy, in which the 'personalisation' of parties could have played a major part.
- 4 This is indeed the object of an analysis undertaken by Schmitt-Beck, Weick and Christoph of the extent to which the attachment of electors to parties has become 'shaky' over the period between 1984 and 2001 in West Germany, one of the countries in which the role of personalities is not particularly strong.

Parties can safely count only on their long-time adherents, not on those with more fleeting attachments.... When comparing birth cohorts, the generation of those born between 1940 and 1949, whose socialisation took place during the early years of the Federal Republic of Germany which were characterised by a consolidating party system and rising affluence, emerges as the one least likely to become independent, while party switching is a rather common event among the younger cohorts.

(Schmitt-Beck *et al.* 2006: 599)

- 5 It is somewhat surprising in this context that, in the volume edited by A. King, *Leaders' Personalities and the Outcomes of Democratic Elections*, published in 2002, the question of the 'indirect' effects of leaders on their parties should be summarily dismissed, without any grounds being given for such a dismissal. It is merely said "This is not what this book is about" (p. 6) and "The case for focusing on direct rather than indirect effects is a straightforward one: they are the ones that almost everyone has in mind when they talk about leaders' and candidates' electoral importance" (p. 7). The authors do not appear to want to consider whether 'almost everyone' may be wrong or have a somewhat restricted approach in having in mind direct influence only!

3 Types of personal relationships among leaders, their parties and the citizens of these parties

This work is concerned with personalised leadership and with the impact of personalised leaders on their parties as well as on the electorate of these parties. It is therefore essential to determine at the outset what constitutes personalised leadership and in what ways it differs from other forms of leadership. Yet the whole concept remains rather vague, in part because, despite the fact that “leadership is as old as mankind” and that it is “universal and inescapable”, as was pointed out in the late twentieth century by one of the authors of the present volume (Blondel 1987: 1), leadership is “relatively neglected”, a point which was made by Stogdill in the mid-1970s (Stogdill 1974: 5).

In a sense, the notion of leadership remains somewhat imprecise because “the contours of the concept emerged gradually in the English language alongside other words describing various forms of rule. It is not irrelevant to note that the word ‘leader’ is difficult to translate” (Blondel 1987: 12). In particular, the concept relates to behavioural patterns as well as to the position which an individual may hold in the group at the head of which he or she happens to be.

Leadership and power

Yet there are at least some clues as to what constitutes leadership and attempts at definition have been undertaken (Nye 2008). To begin with, leadership is a phenomenon of power, though not of any kind of power. Power is usually referred to as a process in which the one who holds power can make those who are subjected to that power do things that they would not otherwise do. In some cases, the relationship can be reciprocal, as A may have power over B but, in other situations, B may have power over A: this can occur, for instance, if A is a well-known authority in a given field and B is a well-known authority in another. In general, however, and specifically in the context of leadership, power is exercised from the top down: the leader is ‘above’ the group which he or she ‘leads’. Power does not have a reciprocal character in the context of leadership. Moreover, the power of a leader over the members of the group which that leader heads is likely to be exercised over a large number of persons, at the limit over a whole nation, and, often, for substantial periods of time. This is indeed why the power exercised by leaders can be vast, perhaps immense: this is also why it is

frequently considered as dangerous. Consequently, more efforts have been made to find out how the ‘beast’ could be tamed than to examine what precisely constitutes the power of leaders.

Perhaps the most systematic effort undertaken to analyse leadership is constituted by J. McGregor Burns’ major study on the subject under the general title of *Leadership* (1978). Having begun the volume by comments on the ‘crisis’ of leadership, the author examines, in the first chapter, the ‘power of leadership’ (1978: 9–28). At the end of the introduction to that chapter, the author states:

We must analyse power – and leadership – as not things but as relationships [underlined in the original]. We must analyze power in a context of human motives and physical constraints. If we can come to grips with these aspects of power, we can hope to comprehend the true nature of leadership – a venture far more intellectually daunting than the study of naked power.

(Burns 1978: 11)

Having remarked that power is critical to analyse leadership, Burns also notes that this power has two essential components, motives and resources. He can then turn to a definition: “Leadership over human beings is exercised when persons with certain motives and purposes mobilise, in competition or conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse, engage and satisfy the motives of followers” (1978: 18) [underlined in the original]. He further states that “leaders are a particular kind of power holder. Like power, leadership is relational, collective and purposeful. But the reach and domain of leadership are, in the short range at least, more limited than those of power.... Leaders do not obliterate followers’ motives... They lead other creatures, not things” (ibid.). Burns then comes to the distinction between what he calls “power-wielders” and leaders and states: “Leadership, unlike naked ‘power-wielding’, is thus inseparable from followers’ needs and goals. The essence of the leader-follower relation is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivations and of power potential” (1978: 19). He then introduces what will be the key distinction analysed throughout his work, that between *transactional* and *transforming* leadership. There is no need to examine here the precise character of that distinction or to assess whether its dichotomous nature is fully valid, even if it might perhaps be felt more realistic to view these two types as being the poles of a continuum rather than constituting the basis of a clear-cut division between forms of leadership power.

Personalised leadership

The purpose of this volume is not to examine the nature of leadership in general, however, but to concentrate on the notion of personalised leadership and, specifically, on personalised leadership in and through parties. As we just noted, Burns states that leadership entails the mobilisation of a variety of resources in order to achieve power. About the “personalismo” in Latin America, Burns said:

The politics of personalismo has embraced the organization of political opinion around compelling and colourful personalities; the subordination of political parties and platforms to a leader's personal organization, which offers them unswerving and uncritical support; and, if the leader wins office, the establishment in government of a personalized structure with essentially a 'patron' relationship between leaders and followers. Political personalism is promising strategy for dynamic, charismatic relationship; its great weakness for those interested in realizing political goals and achieving real social change is that the movement rises and falls with the success of a less than immortal leader. Hence it is no substitute for transforming leadership.

(Burns 1978: 266–7)

We can use the categorisation presented by Burns to determine what constitutes personalised leadership by opposition to leadership in general. With personalised leadership we are concerned primarily with the mobilisation of psychological resources, even if other resources may of course play a part in the background. We need therefore to examine the types of psychological bonds which emerge between leaders and followers, bonds which relate both to the characteristics of the leader's personality and to the characteristics of the personality of those citizens who are attracted (but probably also of those who are repelled) by the leader.

Among other resources which may play a part in the background, some elements come from the general definition of leadership given by Burns. Leadership entails having political ideas and projects for home or foreign affairs, having the passion of power, having succeeded in creating or renewing a political party as a result of struggles within the party, having a discourse which is more or less technocratic or managerial, more or less populist, in order to mobilize voters to support them and their party. Some physical traits can also inspire trust and a further quality is to appear able to govern. Some political scientists have shown that citizens vote on the basis of factors which are not exclusively rational. Psycho-emotional resources (Braud 1991), symbols, passions (Ansart 1983), and emotions (Braud 1996) induce more and more voters to find normal and natural that such and such a personality should be a candidate for the government.

The definition of personalised leadership entails also other elements. First, the leader must have a personal and undisputed rule in his political party, despite some rebellions. The leader must also play a personal and decisive part in the elaboration of party and legislative programmes and in the selection of parliamentary candidates. Second, if the leader wins a general election, he must enjoy a personal and undisputed authority in Cabinet and in the parliamentary party. The leader cannot be a *primus inter pares*. He can also have a political or administrative office. The position of president or of head of the government gives the holder appointment powers, which can be described as patronage. Third, the leader must be able to control who speaks for the party in the media, and above all on television, since the media, and particularly television, have a key role in

personalised leadership. Television has in effect transformed political communication: the audience of news bulletins, the debates between political leaders or the interviews with journalists imply the existence of a strong personalisation of the leader. Even if there is sometimes a desire to diversify, the party leaders and the other well-known politicians (Cabinet ministers or parliamentarians) are those who appear most on television.

Fortunately, these characteristics can be identified by referring to three types of relationships between personalised leaders and the citizens, typically through the parties to which these leaders belong. The first type of relationship relates to the 'discourses' which these leaders develop, presumably in order to attract citizens to support them and to support their parties. One of these discourses, the populist discourse, has been particularly studied as it is often regarded as the discourse of personalised leaders par excellence: a variety of 'words' and 'expressions' are thus regarded as characterising 'populist' leaders, even if the boundaries of what constitutes a 'populist' discourse remain somewhat imprecise despite numerous empirical analyses on the subject. Yet the 'populist' discourse is not the only form of discourse which personalised leaders might adopt.

The second type of relationship concerns the type of direct rapport which personalised leaders have with citizens and in particular with their supporters. The three concepts which help to analyse such bonds are clientelism, patronage and media dominance. Clientelism is typically regarded as characteristic of traditional societies. Patronage is viewed as being more prevalent in 'modern' industrialised societies. Media dominance is particularly prevalent in contemporary societies, indeed both in those which are regarded as very advanced as well in those which are somewhat less advanced. The relationship covered by means of these concepts is 'socio-psychological', in that it is concerned with the mechanisms by which leaders succeed in attaching followers to themselves. In the first two of these cases, the link is truly personal, while it is manifestly less so in the context of media dominance, although it remains socio-psychological.

The third type of relationship is related to the reaction of citizens to personalised leaders. Here, too, three concepts, notoriety, popularity and charisma, refer to the forms which these reactions to the leaders take. As a matter of fact, these concepts provide a gradation in the extent to which citizens are 'affected' by the leaders. Notoriety is at the bottom: it is based almost exclusively on the ability of the citizen to 'recognise' a given leader. Popularity is somewhat stronger as it indicates that a given leader enjoys, not just recognition, but a degree of support. 'Charisma' refers to the most powerful link between citizen and leader, although there have substantial variations in the interpretation given to that concept, ranging from a total religious 'embrace', so to speak, which was the position adopted by Weber originally, to a rather less exceptional form of influence of the leader on the mind of the citizen (1968). In the first interpretation, charisma was very powerful but rare; in the more widespread meaning given in much of the literature since then, the impact is somewhat diminished, yet remains strong.

This chapter is thus devoted to the examination of the ways in which these three types of relationships help to circumscribe the ways in which leadership

becomes 'personalised'. Admittedly, another concept, 'presidentialisation', has also come to be considered in what might seem *prima facie* to constitute an attempt at describing a particular form of personalised leadership. Yet the concept has a different scope: it is 'institutional' since it attempts to assess whether prime ministers in parliamentary systems are becoming similar to presidents in presidential systems (Poguntke and Webb 2005). As a result, the concept does not provide an alternative means of assessing the nature of personalised leadership; it does not give a picture of a different psychological bond between leader and citizen. It relates exclusively to the way in which a particular type of governmental arrangement is (or may be) modified¹. Indeed, the components which have been described earlier would need to be taken into account if one were to attempt to assess the extent to which there is or not presidentialisation. The present chapter will therefore be concerned exclusively with the analysis of the possible impact of these three types of components on the character of personalised leadership.

I

The discourses of personalised leaders

Certain types of discourses are developed by party leaders to induce citizens to support them and their parties. These discourses enable them to give their vision of the kind of society, political party or political system, which they would like to find in their country. An ideology is also embedded in them, whether this is consciously done or not. To begin with, let us distinguish between the discourses of those party leaders who wish to change the society or the political system and of those who tend to maintain the society or the political system as they are; most party leaders occupy an intermediate position, however.

The discourse of preservation

Some party leaders deliver a conservative discourse. At the limit their only goal is to remain in power. Occasionally, they may wish to introduce some changes, but in order to preserve the status quo better. Whether this type of conservative discourse is linked to the personalisation of leadership is a moot point. Right-wing political parties of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were not characterised by leaders having a unified conservative discourse or a specific form of political organisation. There is a substantial difference between the discourses and programmes of conservative and liberal parties, while there is more similarity with respect to political organisation, as these earlier large parties tended to be primarily based on the power of notables.

As long as traditional conservative parties were structured around notables, their leadership had limited authority on the party and a reduced impact on the electorate, although there were exceptions, for instance in Britain under Disraeli. More recently, the personalisation of leadership has been strengthened as a result

of the role of the mass media in particular. Some conservative leaders fall in this category, for example Cameron in the United Kingdom, Diefenbaker in Canada, perhaps even Erhard in Germany.

The discourse of change

Some party leaders wish to change society or the political system. They want to see some events occur which might modify the status quo to some extent. These leaders can be labelled as “transformers” (Blondel 1987: 88), in the sense that they strongly change the basis on which the society or the political system is organized. They deliver discourses of change. A first group is constituted by the ‘saviours’ (Blondel 1987: 88), that is to say party leaders who were able to solve a major problem facing the political system when in government: Churchill, De Gaulle and Adenauer fall in this category. They strengthened a political system that was collapsing or had collapsed. Examples of this rhetoric can be found in radio or televised addresses. The link between personalization of leadership and “saviours” is strong. These have authority in the party and influence on the electorate, having obtained their status as leaders by having imposed themselves on their party. A more ‘radical’ type of discourse of change is that of ‘revolutionary transformers’ who wish to alter the whole of the basis on which their society is organized: their moves go hand in hand with personalization phenomena; indeed these leaders are often charismatic: perhaps the clearest example is that of Mao Zedong, but Lenin and Castro come very close (Blondel 1987: 88).

Intermediate discourses

Many leaders stand at some intermediate position, depending on the amount of change they wish to introduce in the society or the political system. Among these are the policy-makers (Blondel 1987: 93), these being concerned with the introduction or maintenance of sets of arrangements relating to an aspect of the life of the polity, such as international relations, economic policy, welfare policy, education. They are potentially concerned in their discourses with other subjects, but they tend to concentrate their efforts on one aspect or at most a few aspects of the social or the political system. They differ from the ‘great’ leaders in that they do not have a large popular following. Yet some policy-makers may be concerned with a rather narrow sector within a policy field, while others may be concerned with a broad area, covering for instance all aspects of foreign policy, economic policy or social welfare. There are therefore many types of intermediate discourses.

At one end of the scale, the first type of discourse of policy-makers should be described as that of the ‘managers’ or ‘technocrats’ (Blondel 1987: 95): the personalisation of leadership is then limited. ‘Managers’ or ‘technocrats’ are sometimes able to build or control powerful political parties which become tools to attract support in the electorate. These leaders do not appeal to the people, Chirac being a good example. At the other end of the scale are those who initiate

a large number of entirely new policies and who are therefore potentially able to change the nature of the political, economic or social landscape within the area of government with which they are mostly concerned. They use the political parties which they have created or changed. This second type of party leaders can be called ‘innovators’ (Blondel 1987: 95): Thatcher, Blair, Berlusconi and Mitterrand, but also Thaksin and Koizumi are examples of this second type, some of whom do appeal to the people.

The discourses of these ‘policy-makers’ are aimed at the social categories which support them. They promise to defend the interests of their voters. They refer to the party programme and underline its positive aspects. Yet these discourses do not only refer to economic and social interests; they also refer to values, bourgeois or Christian values on the one hand, alternative values based on the idea of a republic or on ‘secular ideals’ on the other. Despite the decrease in religious practice in many western countries, a reference to Christian values remains embedded in appeals to voters from conservative or Christian-democrat party leaders; the republican “discourse” refers to principles of freedom and equality, fraternity and solidarity, to the defence of human rights, but also to the defence of secular values against the ascendancy of religion. This first type of discourse is particularly common in southern European countries, where the influence of the Catholic Church is large, together with that of conservative or Christian-democrat parties, the second is present in some liberal, ‘radical’ and socialist parties.

These last two types of discourses were dominant for a long time, but, more recently, the ‘technocratic discourse’ gained ground, with leaders wishing to demonstrate that they were able to manage efficiently the polity. To govern entails now placing greater emphasis on rationality in the determination of choices: a technocratic discourse seems better adapted. Meanwhile, however, the development of mass communication techniques changed the nature of the political discourse. The vocabulary becomes different; sentences have to be shorter. Television obliges party leaders not only to reinforce their electoral base, but to speak to less politicised, more apathetic and even hostile viewers. The influence and weight of leaders becomes crucial and personalisation of leadership is a requirement.

The populist discourse

Among leaders who deliver discourses which fall between those who want to maintain society as it is and those who wish to introduce change are those of populist leaders; these leaders direct their discourse not just to party sympathisers, but to all voters, to the whole people. The populist discourse has been adopted primarily by leaders of small extreme-right or extreme-left parties (Mudde 2007; Van der Brug and Mughan 2007; Mudde 2004; Betz and Immerfall 1998; Taggart 1996; Betz 1994; Taguieff 2004), but it can also be found in the expressions used by some leaders of large conservative, liberal and socialist parties. Such a discourse is delivered by personalised leaders of small parties, as it can be viewed by many as unrealistic: greater realism in the political discourse is necessary in the

context of large parties which can hope to run the government. The word 'populism' is typically used to describe some political parties and movements, as well as traditions of political thought or a type of political discourse (Jagers and Walgrave 2007). The meaning of this concept has been diluted by the fact that it is widely used, especially since the beginning the 1980s; it has also come to be associated with demagoguery, nationalism, or xenophobia.

Despite numerous attempts to conceptualise populism and in particular to view it as a specific ideology or political discourse (see the collection of articles in Ionescu and Gellner 1969; and also Hermet 2001; Canovan 1981), the question of the personalisation of leadership had traditionally rarely been given a central position. There is some change currently, although the point is rarely included in the definition itself. Thus Mény and Surel (2000: 102–17) draw a strong link between personalisation of leadership and populism: they see the question of leadership to constitute a link between different forms of populism, especially between authoritarian populism (Vargas, Perón, Nasser) and western protest populism (Le Pen, Haider, Bossi). In this interpretation, the populist leader embodies both the supreme authority in the party and the values of the people. He has gained his status of leader not through a gradual ascent in the party, as is the case in traditional political parties, but by imposing himself in a party previously characterised by the weakness of its structures. Mény and Surel also locate the strong personalisation of populist leadership mainly during the first phase of party development, called the identification phase, while the importance of leadership is regarded as being diluted during the two subsequent phases of party development, those of organisation and stabilisation (see also Harmel and Sväsand 1993). Taggart (1995) does go further: he uses personalisation of leadership as a criteria in the definition of the concept; he distinguishes populist parties from other types of political parties on the basis of the type of their leadership, insofar as charismatic leadership bypasses the traditional intraparty rules and leads to a new type of internal party relationships, whereby leaders rise and impose themselves without necessarily abiding to regular procedures. Populist and charismatic types of leadership are equated, but without the problem of the exact definition of charisma being resolved.

Personalisation of leadership as a criterion for the definition of populism is only valid for small parties, however. The impression of convergence between populism and personalisation of leadership is reinforced by two factors. On the one hand, the ideologies promoted by most western political parties are increasingly including an element of populism and the appeal to the people is now a widespread feature: numerous political discourses are characterised by a repeated and strong emphasis on the themes of the direct links achieved through them with the people, as well as on the need to 'regenerate democracy'. The spread of populist themes can be linked to a general dissatisfaction with representative democracy pictured as too distant from popular expectations and wishes, to corruption, to an impression of a loss of power of democratic institutions, especially in political parties and parliaments, to the benefit of decentralised non-elected bodies, of supranational institutions or of courts. These trends have fostered a

degree of estrangement among citizens and above all the belief that democracy needed to be 'renewed'.

Meanwhile, there has been an increase in the personalisation of leadership even in countries or ideological traditions which had ignored it so far (Blondel 1998). This can be explained by complex factors, such as the evolution of electoral systems and rules, and the emergence of a so-called 'media democracy'. Traditional political parties have undergone rapid changes leading to their professionalisation and to their adaptation to ever-increasing media pressure. Leaders have been more and more induced to bypass party rules and structures and to blur their ideological references to appeal to more voters. In some countries, the ability to attract a large part of the electorate is more important than loyalty to an ideological line or to a party structure.

In this perspective, populism thus implies the strong personalisation of a leader who acts as the heart and brain of the party, but also has strong links with the people, which he or she seeks to embody. A question still arises about the nature of the link between personalisation of leadership and populism: are populist parties characterised by a specific form of personalisation? Although populism entails a particular relationship between political leader and masses, that relationship is ambiguous, insofar as it promotes anti-elite feelings and an anti-elite type of discourse. This discourse claims to put forward a leader who would embody the people as such, not one who emanates from the elite or a 'technocrat'. In symbolic terms, the personalisation of leadership in populist parties and movements claims to be nothing more than the glorification of the people itself: the leader is the incarnation of the people, while representation or delegation processes are forms of perversion. In practice, populist parties cannot avoid delegation or representation mechanisms, but the belief exists that there can be such an organic type of leadership.

II

The means used by personalised leaders use to link with supporters and citizens; Political leadership and clientelism, patronage and the media

The three concepts which help to analyse the type of direct relationship which party leaders have with citizens and in particular with their supporters are clientelism, patronage and the media. Clientelism is typically regarded as characteristic of traditional societies. Patronage is viewed as being more prevalent in modern industrialised societies.

The personal relations between patron and client in traditional societies

Clientelism seems important in the context of the personalisation of leadership. It is typically viewed as characterising traditional societies (Gellner and Water-

bury 1977), as it is based on an exclusively personal use of power at the local level. Clientelism has been used to analyse social relations based on exchange and reciprocity between two persons who come to know each other (Médard 1976; Graziano 1976). Political scientists have especially used the concept to study the impact of these social relations on voting at local or national elections in southern Europe and Latin America (Gellner and Waterbury 1977; Leca 1977).

Yet the impact of these personal relations on the vote has been analysed at a moment when the political parties were weak and were controlled by notables. This meant a high dose of personalisation of politics at the local level, but not at the national level. Clientelist practices are especially linked to majoritarian electoral systems, which lead to the personalisation of candidates and elected politicians; the vote for a candidate because of his personal qualities and for what he is susceptible to provide concretely removes all meaning from party affiliations. The election of the candidate by voters depends, not on his party membership or his political commitment, but on his personal qualities or functions. The choice of party matters very little (Cain *et al.* 1987; Carey and Shugart 1995).

Clientelism has also been used to refer to the actions and the presence of notables who take advantage of their large social influence at the local level. Universal suffrage did not abolish that influence: the election appeared to be a means of ratifying personal influence. The 'system' of notables was neither limited to the direct relations between a notable and his voters, nor circumscribed to an election campaign; it covered an undifferentiated set of social and political activities. The electoral success of notables was explained by different factors, such as 'personal sympathy', generosity and disponibility. Clientelist expenditures included the remuneration of electoral agents and charitable expenditures. The resources of notables were used for the process of conquering votes.

As elections became progressively more competitive, there was slow erosion and sometimes collapse of the local domination of notables, but the electoral 'transaction' remained personalised, often because of a uninominal ballot. Changes in the exercise of personal influence began to occur: candidates with fewer clientelistic resources entered the electoral arena; high personalisation of politics at the local level remained, but not at the national level.

Practices of clientelism gradually gained ground in political parties, particularly in the European parties of notables, especially in rural areas (Weingrod 1968). Parties which were constituted at the beginning as parties of notables tended to turn into political machines dominated by a patron or a boss, especially in urban environment, as was shown by US city machines (Gosnell 1937; Banfield and Wilson 1965). Some countries are often cited as clientelist, two examples being Italy and Japan. In Italy (Allum 1973; Caciagli 1977; Chubb 1982; Graziano 1973, 1976, 1984), clientelism was based on the systematic use of the public resources controlled by the Christian democrat party which was the key government party. The diffusion of clientelism outside the Mezzogiorno constituted a generalisation of new technologies of management of political power through the political machines and the factions. In contemporary Japan (Bouis-sou 1998; Johnson 1988), the 'koenkai' are the basic structure of political

participation. Many voters would have been members of one of these machines, whereas the parties have few real members. Every parliamentarian has a 'koenkai' and relies on it for a part of his votes. Only exceptionally can one be elected without the organisational support of a machine of this type. The vote in the context of the games of a clientelist exchange organised by the 'koenkai' is an essential element of the political arrangement which has assured the perennity of the LDP in power since its creation.

The development of patronage

In industrialised countries, personal relations between political leaders and citizens tend to take the form of patronage or by means of personal networks of friends or followers, as networks call for a more limited public than patronage. The appeal to voters by means of patronage is made to several thousands of citizens, while personal networks extend only to some hundreds of people selected by the leader, according to their political or social notoriety or to the political positions they hold. These networks include CEOs of public or private enterprises, trade union leaders, higher civil servants, parliamentarians, local or regional elected politicians, association leaders: these constitute opinion leaders rather than voters. The objective of patronage is to obtain a majority for the leader by winning votes from a large number of citizens. The objective of the network is to help the leader to develop his personal influence not only among voters, but also among the elite.

The gradual professionalisation of political life has diminished the influence of notables and of amateurs. According to Weber (1968), professionals of politics replaced notables; alternatively notables borrowed the methods of professionals of politics. Patronage and networks of relations are also built in conjunction with the development of personalised leadership, but there has been a change in the resources used: one moved from a network based on private resources to one based on public resources.

Media dominance

Media play a key part in the personalisation of leadership, and especially television. Those party leaders in power intervene on television to present and to defend decisions made by the governments they lead or by the coalitions to which they belong. Opposition leaders intervene on television to comment and criticise government decisions.

The role of television has profoundly modified the nature of politics (Norris 2000). There is no longer a direct contact between party leaders and voters; the relationship takes place indirectly by means of television. The party press no longer exists and has been replaced by private and public television, which can be characterised by varying levels of neutrality towards government. The impact of television led to a strong personalisation of leadership, although it is stronger in semi-presidential or presidential systems than in parliamentary systems, but, it

occurs even in the latter, as some refer to the presidentialisation of parliamentary governments (Crewe and King 1994; Kaase 1994). The dynamics of parliamentary elections have become more presidential in the sense that the leaders of major parties now figure prominently in the media coverage of election campaigns (Mughan 2000). Yet personalisation helps to circumscribe better the impact of television. It is the frequent presence on television which can give notoriety and popularity. Personalised leaders use television to develop their programme or to acquire an image in the public at large. Meanwhile, television networks also benefit from the popularity of party leaders to increase their audience.

The relations between party leaders and television are complex. To respect pluralism and the equality between the different parties and the different candidates, rules were adopted in most liberal democratic countries to establish the public financing of election campaigns or of political parties and to achieve a fair distribution of speech times on radio and television. These rules apply particularly stringently in countries where public television networks are dominant, while they are more difficult to apply where television networks are private. An extreme case is that of Berlusconi, and of his several private television networks in Italy. As a matter of fact, the public character of networks does not prevent controversies, above all between government and opposition. Television may not perhaps make the election, but it reinforces the notoriety and popularity of party leaders.

Politics is affected increasingly by the world of communication. Political leaders, as well as parties, resort to communication services and to advertising and to marketing firms. They have communication advisers at their disposal. These advisers prepare televised broadcasts and press releases and keep up relations with television networks. They prepare also the words and the formulas susceptible to attract the attention of listeners or of television viewers. Advertisers are now the emblematic figures of professionalised political communication.

Election campaigns become campaigns of political communication (Farrell and Webb 2000; Swanson and Mancini 1996). This evolution is wholly understandable in a presidential system, but somewhat less in parliamentary systems. In the US, after the primaries and the conventions, parties and programmes take second place behind party leaders. Communication advisers develop messages which replace party programmes. They develop images designed to attract floating voters. They write a few lines which will be hammered incessantly during the election campaign. Then the leader takes the relay. The final result takes into account his or her performance, the image projected and the sympathy he or she aroused. Televised advertising illustrates the choices made by the communication advisers, although the leader occupies the front of the stage.

III

The reactions of citizens to personalised leaders: notoriety, popularity and charisma

Political notoriety

Political notoriety merely means that political actors (politicians, but also political party elites, interest group leaders) are known by citizens on a given territory (local, national or international). These actors are known because they participate regularly in a variety of events, for instance election campaigns, or radio or television broadcasts. In the past, notoriety resulted from the fact that someone was a notable: one had notoriety locally as a result of the social position occupied in the local society. With the end of the parties of notables, notoriety has come to result from the professionalisation of politics, on the assumption, which Weber (1968) put forward, that professionals have taken the place of notables. Social notoriety remains the necessary first step to achieve a political career, however: someone's electoral success depends on the social position occupied, on financial support, on party organisation, on constituency knowledge and on services rendered to the population. To win an election presupposes the ability to carry the electoral struggle on the political ground, but also depends on setting up of personal links with the voters.

Political popularity

Popularity constitutes the next step. A party leader becomes popular from the moment when his or her political action is regarded by citizens as successful. Popularity entails that there be some satisfaction among the population and that those satisfied be more numerous (indeed appreciably more numerous) than those dissatisfied. Yet political popularity is transient. If a party leader fails, the level of that leader's popularity will suffer. On the whole, government leaders lose their popular appeal more rapidly than opposition leaders, as party leaders in power are at the mercy of delays in elaboration or of failures in implementation of policies, while opposition leaders suffer merely from errors of judgment or the exaggerated harshness of their criticisms towards the government. Yet the level of political popularity can be restored, especially if the leader resigns, as resignation gives an opportunity to achieve some distance from events and to restructure or even renew the policies proposed. Meanwhile, opposition leaders may benefit electorally from their acquired popularity against the government, but their victory at the polls may not be large enough to provide them with a clear majority: such leaders may wish to remain at the head of the party while reinforcing their popularity in the hope that they will be more successful at the next election.

Opinion polls measure popularity; from these measurements curves of popularity of different politicians are elaborated and it is then possible to compare the

fluctuations of these popularity contests among the different political leaders of a country. The curves also provide an opportunity to observe the extent to which a government benefits from a 'honeymoon period', although such honeymoon periods seem more likely to occur in presidential and semi-presidential systems, especially when the election to the legislature takes place shortly after the presidential election (Shugart and Carey 1992).

Charisma

Charisma is not an attribute of leaders; it is a quality which characterises the relationship between leaders and their followers. The domination existing in the relationship between a charismatic leader and his followers results from the perception and the analysis of the leader's qualities and merits by the followers. That relationship is not one of routine exchange. According to Max Weber, charisma is "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is considered extraordinary and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional forces or qualities" (Weber 1968: 214). He says also of charisma that it rests on "devotion to the specific sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person and the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him" (Weber 1968: 215). Weber gives some examples. He lays much emphasis on prophets and other religious leaders, but he also mentions other rulers, including some of his contemporaries such as Theodore Roosevelt or Kurt Eisner. Jean Charlot remarks that it is evident that De Gaulle's authority was of charismatic nature (Charlot 1971).

The notion of charismatic power is relatively precise in Max Weber's work; it is less precise in the use which is now commonly made of the concept. Charisma can help to analyse personalised leadership, but it has to be distinguished from popularity: yet the distinction is not always clear. Media presence has deeply altered political communication and election campaigns and influenced the citizens' political choice. Television, which creates a new type of relationship, more recurrent, more direct and more personalised, between politicians and citizens, has transformed charisma into a quality which every ambitious politician has to have, to a certain amount at least, in his possession. Politicians do not have to fulfil all the elements which form part of the characteristics of the Weberian charismatic leader, but they have to have a personal appeal able to 'charm' voters. Demagogic or emotional communication appears more relevant than programmatic reflection and proposals of pragmatic policies. The impact of such a dynamic for the staffs of the main political leaders is large: the role and even the place within the official organisation of elections' specialists are more and more crucial. With Turner (2003) we can mention that "charisma was technicized and professionalized", given that television presence is a key basis of modern political ambition.

It is most unlikely that charismatic leadership can be found at all, or at any rate more than very exceptionally, in the original, religious-based definition which Weber gave to it. The definition has to be broader. The narrow (and more

extreme) definition of charisma, which results in a kind of mass ‘bewitchment’ by the national hero, is manifestly very rare. Thus Weber himself came to adopt a broader definition when he started to refer to the notion of ‘routinisation of charisma’: the introduction of the idea of routinisation makes it possible to consider as charismatic some party leaders who do not have a religious or mystical authority over their supporters (Weber 1968). This is so not just in liberal democratic regimes, but also in semi-authoritarian polities, as in these, too, popular support is required. The source of power of many political leaders is therefore not merely legalistic, but both charismatic and legalistic.

Yet a difficulty remains as to how party leaders endowed with charismatic authority come to emerge. Madsen and Snow (1991) emphasised the effect of the political context to account for the development of charismatic authority. They regard political crises as starting elements for the charismatic appeal of leaders among the people. This viewpoint suggests that charismatic support for a leader is linked to a feeling of uncertainty and of fear. According to these authors, in “normal periods”, in “non-crisis times”, citizens develop a feeling of “self-efficacy”. This sensation produces a personal belief widely shared among the people that they can deal effectively with the various challenges and difficulties of their social environment. A context of crisis markedly damages this sentiment. Anxiety about personal and social difficulties initiates a desire for security which is embodied in the action of a hypothetical charismatic leader.

The charismatic impact is often related to the direct appeal to voters of extreme right-wing leaders. Four elements intervene which underpin the charismatic basis of the electoral success of right-wing populist leaders and their parties. First, charisma is often used precisely in order to account for the electoral success of right-wing populist parties. In this regard, studies typically show that those who vote for populist parties want leadership; they want politicians who know (rather than listen to) the people and who make their wishes come true. They do not want to be bothered with politics all the time; they do not put much value on actually participating themselves in political life. They want more leadership and less participation (Mudde 2007: 558). What populist supporters want is to see that the problems of the ‘common man’ are resolved. They accept that this will have to be done by a remarkable leader. It is in the context of the exceptional character of the leaders of some populist movements that charismatic leadership plays a part (Mudde 2007: 560). Right-wing populist party support is said to have two distinctive characteristics, first, that it is a protest vote and, second, that the voters are thought to be swayed by the appeal of ‘charismatic leaders’. Charisma has indeed often been seen as an important factor in the rise of right-wing populist parties (Eatwell 2006). Yet all populist party leaders are not charismatic. Most modern leaders often quoted as being charismatic (Le Pen, Haider, even Bossi, for instance) reveal little evidence of an emotional bond between the citizens and the leaders which would be mostly unconcerned with rational economic issues.

Second, charismatic leaders are regarded as having disproportionate direct electoral effects: their direct electoral influence is regarded as being stronger

than that of the leaders of the long-established, formal-rational and bureaucratic parties. When right-wing parties enjoy electoral successes, their leaders are pronounced to be highly charismatic. Implicit in this linkage is the notion that populist parties are different from their established counterparts in which leadership is less personalised and more bureaucratic and institutionalised. Van der Brug and Mughan (2007) showed, however, that populist party leaders do not have disproportionate electoral effects and that they are not charismatic: they are only important political players. For example, in the Netherlands, without Pim Fortijn, there would not have been a *List Pim Fortijn*. There can be little doubt that that leader was very popular with many Dutch voters; it is therefore little wonder that analysts and commentators often fell back on the notion of charisma to describe the relationship which that party leader had with his followers. Yet, if, following Weber, charisma is conceptualised as an intimate and direct bond between leader and followers, the charismatic leadership hypothesis is not a convincing explanation of the electoral success of the *List Pim Fortijn*. Pim Fortijn's contribution to Dutch politics would seem better understood in terms of the success of the policies he advocated in reshaping the country's political agenda and party system. The analysis of Van der Brug and Mughan (2007) adds to a growing body of knowledge that rejects the view that voters for right-wing populist parties are vessels for a diffuse sense of dissatisfaction and protest that is mobilised by charismatic leaders. The leader effects in the context of right-wing populist party leaders are no different in magnitude from those which can be found in the context of established party leaders (Van der Brug and Mughan 2007: 44–5).

Third, charisma is often attributed to populist party leaders after the event, i.e. after their parties have had electoral success in the polls. The problem here is that the perception of charisma may derive from that very success so that the leader's contribution to the phenomenon remains hypothetical and, more seriously, cannot be disproved. To define charisma in terms of its electoral effects avoids the tautology as it specifies the direction of the causal relationship between them; at the same time, however, even if populist leaders are found to have an electoral impact, it cannot be definitively concluded that a charismatic relationship has been at work. The attraction of the leader might lie in his possession of some personality characteristics, such as competence or responsiveness (Mughan 2000). Conversely, one may not qualify a party leader as uncharismatic because no personal effect on the votes has been found.

Fourth, leaders may also influence their parties' fortunes more indirectly by, for example, energising party activists to work especially hard to get out the vote. They may also be able to have good rapport with the media. Their attractiveness in the media means that they might be able to exercise an appeal on voters in a manner or to an extent which would not otherwise have occurred (Van der Brug and Mughan 2007: 31–2).

The aim of this chapter was to analyse the three types of relationships between personalised leaders and the citizens, typically through the parties to which these

leaders belong, as well as the possible impact of these three types of relationships on the characteristics of personalised leadership. The first type of relationship relates to the 'discourses' which these leaders develop in order to attract citizens and to seek their support. A major distinction exists between the discourses of party leaders who wish to change society or the political system and those of party leaders who aim at maintaining society or the political system as they are. Yet most party leaders adopt an intermediate position: they are the 'policy-makers', many of whom have a 'discourse of managers'. They are concerned with the taking of decisions as problems arise while ensuring that there are few difficulties either in the public bureaucracy or in the society. These 'managers' are sometimes able to build or control powerful political parties as instruments designed to attract support from citizens; yet this does not by itself constitute a basis on which to establish that there is personalisation of leadership. Some policymakers adopt a discourse of 'innovation', while putting forward and implementing new policies which are potentially able to change the nature of the political, economic or social landscape. They use political parties which they have created or altered. There is then personalisation of leadership.

Other leaders occupy another type of intermediate position: these are the populist leaders who do not merely address themselves to party activists or to party members, but also to all voters, in which the personalisation of leadership plays a large part. The populist discourse is adopted primarily by leaders of small extreme-right or extreme-left parties, but it is also used to an extent by some leaders of large conservative, liberal and socialist parties. As a matter of fact, some leaders adopt different sets of discourses at the same time: an 'innovator' may include 'expressions' which are regarded as populist, if they state that they have direct links with the people and that there is a need to renew democratic institutions.

The second type of direct rapport which personalised leaders have with citizens or party members relates to the instruments which these leaders use to obtain the support of citizens: there are three types of such instruments, clientelism, patronage and the media. Clientelism is typically regarded as characteristic of traditional societies; yet it continues to prevail in some modern societies, for instance in Italy and Japan. Patronage is different from clientelism and it is regarded as widespread in modern societies, largely because it does not entail a personal relationship between the 'patron' and the 'client', but is more anonymous: the appeal to citizens or party members is achieved by means of favours which are distributed generally to certain groups. Party leaders dispose of systems of patronage and of networks based on friends and followers which make it possible for these favours to be widely extended across the society. Up to a point, the personalisation of politics resulting from patronage has been the product of changes in modes of behaviour in advanced democracies, for instance through what is sometimes described as the presidentialisation of the office of government leader; personalisation of politics has also become more prevalent as a result of the part which television does ostensibly play.

The third type of relationship is concerned with the reaction of citizens to personalised leaders. Three concepts, notoriety, popularity and charisma, refer to

the forms which these reactions of citizens can take. Notoriety applies to all party leaders: after a while at least, these become known to all or at least to a very large majority of citizens. Popularity is different: it indicates that a given leader enjoys, not just recognition, but a degree of support. Charisma poses problems, in view of the substantial variations in the interpretation given to that concept. The original position adopted by Max Weber, which gives a profoundly religious characteristic to the phenomenon, occurs too rarely to be really useful: the basis has had to be widened. Charisma has thus come to be related to an emotional appeal (any emotional appeal) which a leader may evoke among the followers. Clearly, when seen in this manner, charisma does help analyses of personalised leadership.

The strength of the charismatic leaders varies appreciably, including over time in the case of each leader. As the curve of popularity, the curve of the 'charismatic appeal' of the leaders is affected by political developments. Moreover, television has created a new type of relationship, more direct and more personalised, between party leaders and citizens: as a result, it has had the effect of transforming charisma into a quality which, to an extent at least, every ambitious politician could (and possibly should) enjoy. Charisma is often regarded as playing a particularly large part in the case of right-wing populist parties, in part since it seems that those who vote for populist parties look for and admire truly exceptional party leaders who know (rather than listen to) the people and who can ensure that their wishes come true.

These three types of the relationships between personalised leaders and citizens have therefore a major impact. They need to be studied carefully if one is to develop a truly empirical analysis of the extent to which modern political systems, not just in the West, but generally across the world, have a greater propensity than more traditional systems, or indeed even 'classical' bureaucratic-legalistic systems, as they were described by Weber, to be characterised by personalised leadership. After having examined the reasons why it does indeed seem that personalised party leadership is on the increase, at any rate in the West, in Chapters 4 and 5, Chapter 6 will therefore return to the three elements of personalised leadership which have been described here in order to determine how these elements can best provide an rigorous empirical basis for the analysis of personalised leadership.

Note

- 1 The concept of 'presidentialisation' has been studied in particular by T. Poguntke and P. Webb in *The Presidentialization of Politics* (2005). One of the serious problems with the analysis which is provided in that volume is that it starts from an interpretation of the nature and characteristics of 'presidential systems' which is, currently at least, more mythical than real, especially when one considers the evolution of the role of the American president with respect to the departments and the Cabinet in general from the second half of the twentieth century and in particular since Nixon. It is in reality highly unrealistic to assume that American presidents are 'all-powerful', so to speak, in relation to the government. This is not the case, not just in the American context, but also, seemingly, in other presidential systems, where studies are beginning to be undertaken

on the subject. In the United States, there is by now substantial evidence suggesting that the heads of the various departments are rather autonomous and that they depend on Congress rather than on the President in many cases for the development of the bodies of which they are in charge. The point has been made increasingly since the 1970s. See in particular E.S. Griffiths (1976), R. Rose (1980) and T.Y. Cronin (1980). Decades later, in 2005, S. Fabbrini (2005: 313–35) in a chapter of the Poguntke and Webb volume, points to the serious limitations of the American president with respect to the departments of the government, a matter which was to be empirically illustrated in detail by A.M. Bertelli and C.R. Grose in “Agreeable Administrators? Analysing the Public Positions of Cabinets and Presidents” (2007: 228–47). Some of these matters were already indicated, admittedly in a much less ‘dramatic’ manner, by the standard text on American government, R.E. Fenno’s *The President’s Cabinet* (1959). By far the most careful detailed analysis of the historical development of the relationship between President, White House office and Cabinet since Nixon is that of S.A. Warsaw, *Power-sharing: White House-Cabinet Relations in the Modern Presidency*, (1996).

4 The psychological bases of the relationship between citizens and parties and the role of leaders

An apparent and somewhat surprising limitation of the classical interpretation of the relationship between citizens and parties lies in the fact that no room at all is provided for the personal reactions of citizens or, for that matter, of leaders. For some, such a situation indicates that there is little interest, in many quarters of academic social science, in a psychological approach. “The emotional dimensions of political life are to-day broadly speaking ignored as objects of research in the social sciences. Such a state of affairs should be regarded as surprising” says P. Braud in what appears to be an understatement on his part (my translation) (1996: 7). The present study is not the place to attempt to discover why the reactions of citizens or the part played by leaders should not have been considered worthy of much consideration in the context of the linkage between citizens and parties. It suffices to note that the absence of such a dimension in the analysis renders the traditional interpretation unable to account for many situations, largely because the underlying psychological ties among citizens, leaders and parties are not explored at all.

Admittedly, to an extent at least, especially in the studies which have been influenced by the ‘Michigan school’ of electoral behaviour, the reactions of individual voters have been taken into account and even introduced in the general model of the analysis of the voting decision. This was done specifically by means of the notion of a ‘funnel of causality’ which was elaborated to describe the way in which voters’ decisions come to be gradually more precise as the date of the election becomes closer (Campbell *et al.* 1960; Miller and Shanks 1996). Yet the aim of that model was not to attempt to account for the psychological processes taking place in the *voters’ minds*, but merely to sort out the relative part played by ‘party identification’ and by various other influences exercised on the voters, from early socialisation to the latest campaigning developments. At no point are the ‘personality characteristics’ of voters as such being considered. Indeed, the ‘personal’ elements which are considered are ‘social’ in character, not psychological: in *Party Identification and Beyond*, a figure representing graphically the ‘Interrelationships between voting choice, party identification and short-term partisan attitudes’ indicates as original elements of the process ‘social group memberships’ (Budge *et al.* 1976: 6). Thus, while Lipset and Rokkan (1967) concentrated on the origins and development of parties within

the countries which they analysed and did not examine the personal reactions of electors at all, the literature which was more specifically concerned with voting behaviour did consider other influences exercised on citizens, but it did not consider either the part which the 'personality' of these citizens might play in this process. Indeed, the model which was elaborated by Miller and Shanks in the 1996 volume starts by discussing what are described as 'stable social and economic characteristics' (Miller and Shanks 1996: 190); the other influences appear to be regarded as modifying these characteristics and they all are presented as various kinds of exogenous influences on the voter. In no case is the voter's particular 'psyche' being mentioned at all. It is therefore not unreasonable to conclude that, not just for Lipset and Rokkan, but for the Michigan school as well, social 'cleavages' are fundamental.

As a matter of fact, it may rightly seem unfair to criticise the 'social cleavages' approach presented by Lipset and Rokkan since such a criticism can justifiably be regarded as amounting to misunderstanding the basic character of that approach: the purpose of these authors was not to attempt to examine the motivations of individuals in supporting a given party. The aim was entirely at the macro-societal level: it was to account for the ways in which given parties had emerged on the scene in Western Europe at the end of the nineteenth and in the early part of the twentieth centuries. Indeed, if what is proposed is an explanatory model of the birth of parties, it seems highly justified to state, for instance, that social-democratic parties emerged out of the development of a class cleavage among the populations of industrialised countries. Admittedly, even in that context, the role of leaders cannot purely and simply be ignored; moreover, the model ceases to be as powerful when splits within parties occur and, as a result, when the same type of 'social cleavage' has to account for the existence of more than one party. However, even in this case and in broad terms, the model can provide a general picture of party systems, as it seems that, globally, certain social groups have been at the root of the development of certain types of political parties.

The question which arises with the persistent decline of many traditional parties, with the substantial number of splits and with the emergence of new, ostensibly more 'populist', parties is whether it is any longer permissible to remain exclusively at the global 'sociological' level or at that of 'socio-political history' and whether it does not become necessary, on the contrary, to touch at least on some of the psychological reactions of the mass of citizens. It seems indeed that one has to move in that direction if one wishes to explore the extent to which personalities play a part, perhaps an increasing one, in citizen-party relationships in Western Europe during the later part of the twentieth century.

Even if such a move is to be made, however, it remains none the less the case that considerable care must be taken, as it would almost certainly be an immense undertaking to attempt to discover the 'true' motivations of individual citizens and even of leaders. Coming across at this point is one of the difficulties mentioned in Chapter 1 in relation to psychological approaches in general. To be comprehensive about such a psychological analysis, one must naturally examine

the motivations of citizens which account for the ways in which these assess leaders and the parties of the leaders and not merely list the likes and dislikes of these citizens. Such an inquiry implies an ability to assess personality characteristics and their origins: such an inquiry, at any rate for the moment, implies also going beyond the normal training of political scientists. Thus, in a first analysis of the relationship between citizens and parties and between citizens and the parties of these leaders it is more prudent not to endeavour to discover deeper aspects of the reactions of citizens to parties and to political leaders, but to confine the examination of the reactions of citizens to whether the extent of support given by citizens to leaders constitutes a significant element of the relationship between citizens and parties; an inquiry of this kind does already mean going appreciably beyond what is currently under examination.

This chapter thus investigates that relationship on the basis of two broad sets of observations. The first section of the chapter examines the manner in which citizens, leaders and parties relate to each other in general, as well as the part played by groups in this context. The second section is concerned with the extent to which there may have been changes in these relationships in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century: such changes may have had the effect of reducing citizens' perceptions of the links between parties and the groups on which these parties were traditionally based and, consequently, of reducing also the part played by these groups among the supporters of these parties. The next chapter will then look at the electoral evidence indicating how far personalised leadership may have spread in and around Western European political parties in the course of the last decades of the twentieth and the early part of the twenty-first centuries.

I

The general characteristics of the relationship among citizens, leaders and parties

As a fully developed psychological analysis of the relationship between citizens and parties would entail moving from the 'macro' plane on which 'social cleavages' are typically discussed to the 'micro' plane of individual motivations, it must be taken for granted that the 'social cleavages' approach did not suggest that the reason *why* citizens came to support a given political party was 'because' they translated their support from a given 'parent-group' to a party. As was suggested in the introduction to this chapter, a more reasonable interpretation consists in stating that parties came into existence out of such 'parent-groups' as, for instance, religious or class-based bodies, at any rate in the context of the Western European socio-economic developments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. On the other hand, since the object of the present inquiry is to determine how far, alongside social cleavages, the personal appeal of certain leaders may induce (some) citizens to support political parties, one needs to look at the problem more generally: specifically, one must examine what part leaders and

indeed the citizens themselves may well play. To explore these matters, the most sensible move consists in examining first situations in which there are no parties at all: this will make it possible to identify what can be regarded as the basic ways in which leaders and citizens relate to each other. It will then become easier to contrast the characteristics of that situation with what is regarded as the 'more normal' case, that in which there are parties.

The relationship between citizens and leaders in the absence of parties

It may seem surprising that one should first consider cases in which leaders and citizens relate to each other without parties and therefore directly. It may seem particularly surprising to do so in the contemporary world as parties are prominent in the large majority of political systems and specifically in those which are typically regarded as the most 'developed'. Yet leaders have existed long before parties emerged: they must therefore have had links with citizens, even if these links between them and the ruled were not then, unquestionably in most cases at least, 'democratic' in character. Thus, in a certain sense, one might even argue that what is to be explained is not so much the existence of personalisation as the fact that personalisation is to an extent limited and is perhaps limited in particular by political parties (and by other political institutions). As was pointed out by L. Hamon:

...one should ask oneself how and why an 'embodiment' ['incarnation' in French] which corresponds so much to man's natural tendency did not occur always as strongly; which means that one must study in detail the 'counter-forces' of embodiment and the evolution of these forces

(my translation) (Hamon and Mabileau 1964: 458)

Moreover, although parties have manifestly come to play a crucial part in the life of modern democracies, there are still some public bodies, for instance smaller local authorities, in which parties do not exist. It is also worth remembering that, although we are concentrating here on public bodies, political activity does not take place merely within public bodies but within private and semi-private organisations as well, as was noted in Chapter 1. Yet it has been noticed regularly that party systems do not tend to develop in these bodies, even in trade unions, as the classic study of S.M. Lipset, M.A. Trow and J.S. Coleman on the International Typographical Union clearly showed *a contrario* (Lipset *et al.* 1962).

It is therefore far from unrealistic to examine the relationship between leaders and led when there are no parties: meanwhile, there are also conceptual advantages in first reflecting on leader-citizen relationships when parties are not involved. As these situations provide a clear indication of the manner in which relationships tend to occur when parties are not part of the process, it would be surprising if no trace remained of these relationships when that relationship is mediated by political parties.

The first point to note when there are no parties is that one cannot deny that these at least are situations in which leaders have an effect on the ways in which citizens think and behave while, albeit perhaps less obviously, the converse also obtains. Indeed, patterns of influence also develop to an extent 'horizontally' among citizens and among the leaders. Thus whatever may happen to these patterns of influence once parties are in the picture, it is manifestly wholly unrealistic to hold the view that there is no or even very little influence from leaders to citizens and reciprocally, although it is not claimed that there is reciprocal influence everywhere, at every point, or that the 'amount' of that influence is the same in both directions.

Admittedly, the psychological mechanisms by which these influences develop may be unclear; to be studied fully, what would be required, as was noted earlier, would be to move much deeper in psychological analyses than seems realistic at this stage. Let us merely recognise that the existence of these influences has to be assumed, since one would have otherwise to postulate that leaders and citizens operate in wholly different compartments and that, when there are no parties, imposition is the only weapon which leaders have at their disposal to implement their decisions. Even if it were true that there is possibly more imposition in such cases than in pluralistic party-based democracies, it would seem unrealistic to claim that there is *only* imposition in decision processes when there are no parties.

Assuming therefore that there is reciprocal influence, let us explore the character of the relationship between citizens and leaders in the absence of parties. First, that influence relates to 'substantive' matters, specifically to the problems of the society. As a matter of fact, the objects of these relationships are not the problems themselves, but the perceptions which leaders and citizens have of these problems. What needs also to be noted is that the 'objects' under consideration can be specific and definite policies, or, on the contrary, be broad and vague, although one way in which that 'vagueness' may be (partly) overcome is by placing the specific problems together within the broader framework of an ideology.

There is a second aspect to the relationship, however, which is constituted by the way the persons concerned 'appear' to others, and especially leaders to the citizens. This 'appearance' may be viewed positively or negatively; it may also be 'non-existent', as occurs in the case of those citizens who have no views about the leaders. When the appearance is very positive, the notion of 'charisma' is often used, however imprecise that concept may be, at any rate when one moves away from the tight 'religious' definition which Weber (first) adopted. Whatever may be thought of the 'worth' of 'appearance' as part of the influence of leaders, appearance does count, not just from leaders to citizens, but more generally among the leaders and among the citizens themselves: people are drawn towards some others because of 'what they are' and not merely because of what they propose to do. The relationship between citizens and leaders is thus based on a combination of two types of links, those based on 'substance' and those based on 'appearance'.

When the relationship is not ‘mediated’ by parties, influences are therefore found to occur vertically and reciprocally between leaders and citizens as well as horizontally among leaders and among citizens. Moreover, these influences take place simultaneously on two planes, a plane of ‘substance’ which can concern specific objects as well as broader standpoints and a plane of ‘appearance’ on which there is a range from very positive to very negative, unless there is no impression at all.

The decision made by a citizen to support a particular leader is based on a combination of reactions on these two planes as well as between these two planes: the precise determination of the way in which such a combination takes place is obviously complex. It could be unravelled only if one were also to discover the detailed motivations of all those who are involved. As was suggested earlier, a first move in this direction must consist in identifying broad types of classifications likely to provide guidelines as to what kind of leaders citizens with particular characteristics are likely to support. As a matter of fact, such ‘calculations’ are made routinely among politicians and among citizens: one might merely regret that not more has been done within the context of academic political science so far to attempt to become somewhat more precise, or at any rate less vague, about the nature of the relationships among ‘classes’ of citizens in relation to types of leaders.¹ Yet, despite the absence of even the less precise of these ‘calculations’, the distinction between the two planes of substance and appearance provides already a basis for the analysis of leader-citizen relationships, as the distinction is likely to structure what has to be taken account when one comes to consider the impact of parties in the process.

How parties affect the relationship between citizens and leaders

Let us now examine how the relationship is altered when parties become intermediaries between leaders and citizens. It is of course in this context that the ‘classical’ interpretation has been developed, according to which the links between citizens and parties take place, at any rate in Western Europe and in other ‘Western’ countries, by means of ‘social cleavages’.

As was suggested earlier, the question here does not consist in challenging the view that political parties, as organisations, did emerge from social groups which, so to speak, placed them ‘in orbit’. The questions which need to be explored are of two kinds, however: perhaps the more fundamental of the two concerns the mechanism by which *individual* citizens come to relate to these parties; the other is whether social groups are the *only* mechanism on the basis of which parties are placed ‘in orbit’ and whether, on the contrary, leaders might not be also an important instrument in this respect, either in conjunction with social groups or, indeed, on their own. Let us therefore examine successively these points by considering, first, how individuals come to relate to (existing) parties, second, whether leaders do or do not become associated with social groups in the development of parties and, third, whether leaders may not in some circumstances become on their own the means by which a party is placed ‘in orbit’.

1. THE NEED FOR PARTIES (AND INDEED GROUPS) TO BE 'RECOGNISED'
IF SUPPORT IS TO TAKE PLACE.

Without questioning the point, manifestly correct historically in the context of many Western parties, that these parties were set up on the basis of existing social groups, what needs to be clarified is the process by which individuals come to choose to associate themselves to these parties. This association cannot be 'automatic': it has to take place by means of what can best be described as the 'recognition' of the party by these individuals. That recognition is based on two successive steps: the first step consists in discovering that the party exists and the second in determining that the party in question is the one which the individual concerned wishes to support.

Thus, to begin with, there cannot be support for a party among citizens if that party is not first 'recognised' by the citizens concerned. People do not relate to parties 'immediately' from the moment they come to consider the world around them: something has to occur in the minds of the citizens to render these aware of the fact that there are parties, that these fulfil certain functions and that these functions can be of some use. Such a process of gradual 'acculturation' to the notion of parties has to occur universally. It is not a process which takes place merely in countries where parties are scarcely known or are very new; it occurs also, and indeed for each individual, where parties have played a major part in social and political life for long periods.

A link therefore exists between individuals and parties only if there has been a learning process, a learning process which may be spread over a substantial period and which will be the result of a variety of influences. Indeed, as is well-known, even in those polities in which parties have long been part of the socio-political panorama, not all citizens are conscious of the significance of parties and some may not even have any 'recognition' at all of the fact that parties exist. We do not need to be concerned here with either the time that learning process takes or with the many ways in which this process develops, although such an examination surely needs to be undertaken on its own, as it will reveal much about how parties are 'discovered' and subsequently 'recognised'. It is none the less sufficient at this stage to note that there has to be such a learning process, that this process takes time and that many kinds of agents are likely to be involved, for instance members of the family, friends, various kinds of acquaintances, but also the media and, through the media, the parties themselves. In the process, a sense of what the party represents will develop in the minds of the citizens.

Moreover, given that the 'social cleavages' interpretation of the origins of parties suggests that groups 'precede' parties, which is no doubt historically correct, especially in Western Europe, it must also follow that, in parallel, citizens become conscious of parties only after they have become conscious of groups.² As a matter of fact, what has just been pointed out about parties must have occurred previously about groups as well, since groups have also to be 'recognised' by the citizens and, therefore, a learning process has to take place in the

context of groups as well as of parties. Without entering in this case either into the question of the nature of the ‘mediating agents’ who induce citizens to ‘recognise’ groups around them, these mediating agents have had to exist to enable the process of ‘group acculturation’ to take place. It should be remembered that the groups which give rise to parties are abstract entities which are often remote from the experiences of citizens, as is the case with the urban-rural, cultural, religious or class divide. While it appears true that, in the Western European context, groups did give rise to parties, it is also the case that, in the minds of citizens, the notion that such groups ‘exist’ has to be acquired gradually and probably, in many cases, with difficulty.

Second, citizens come to support a given party if and when they also ‘recognise’ that that party is ‘good for them’. Such a recognition is also the result of a process of ‘acculturation’ during which the citizens determine what ‘is good for them’, while also finding out what the party in question ‘is for’. Needless to say, such a process can be rapid in cases in which, for instance, the individual belongs to a ‘highly politicised family’ or works in an environment where the party looms large. Yet this situation is obviously not universal; even if the process is rapid, it is never ‘instantaneous’.

It is somewhat surprising that the question of the way in which individuals came to ‘recognise’ and ‘support’ parties should not have been raised, not only by Lipset and Rokkan but by those who have been concerned subsequently with the question of the link between parties and their supporters. This may be because, as Braud suggests, there have been “solid sociological traditions” which appear to have militated against the idea of introducing psychological variables in the field of politics, but this does not mean that these ‘solid traditions’ are correct. Political science needs on the contrary a ‘true theoretical pluralism’ (Braud 1996: 10–11). As a matter of fact, the introduction of such psychological characteristics in no way contradicts the ‘social cleavages’ interpretation of the development of parties. That interpretation could have also been concerned with these psychological characteristics at the level of the allegiance of individuals.

Moreover, we find here again something akin to the notion of ‘appearance’ which was identified with respect to the direct links between individuals and leaders, but, in this case, the ‘appearance’ concerns the party itself (and it concerns also the group from which the party originates). Sentiments of loyalty, respect, love, or, on the contrary, dislike and even hatred with respect to groups which individuals may experience must be taken into account, as they relate to the question of the nature of the link between individuals and parties and not to the question as to why specific parties happen to have come into existence. Since such sentiments are known to play a part in everyday life (people may like or dislike families, churches, business organisations, trade unions), it is only natural that the same should be expected to apply to parties. This does not mean that such personal feelings have to exist with respect to all the relationships which citizens have with the groups to which they are connected; it means simply that they *may* have personal feelings with respect to the groups to which they belong – and, therefore, that the case of the link with parties is in no way different. In

the end, what is meant by the existence of such 'potential' personal feelings with respect to parties is that, in a number of cases, the attractiveness of the groups or of the party will be increased (or on the contrary decreased) because of the sentiments which the individual may have about the group. It is in this way that 'appearance' also plays a part in the relationship between citizens and the parties which they support alongside the view which the citizens are likely to have about whether the party which they support is 'good for them' in policy terms.

2. WHY SUPPORT FOR PARTIES CAN BE BASED ON FEELINGS FOR PERSONALITIES ALONGSIDE FEELINGS ABOUT GROUPS

It is of course usually not claimed that leaders play no part whatsoever in the support which citizens have for parties: but it is also usually claimed that that part is small and, seemingly, that it is therefore not really necessary to bother very much about attempting to describe and explain it. That this view should be held is somewhat surprising; as a matter of fact, it is perhaps even more surprising that the question of the allegiance of citizens to leaders and to personalities in general should not have been raised – or should have been raised purely as an aside – not only by Lipset and Rokkan but by those who have been concerned subsequently with the question of the link between parties and their supporters. For instance, Kirchheimer did mention the possible role of leaders, but only in a limited manner and almost incidentally (Kirchheimer 1966: 193, 198).

On the other hand, it is most surprising that Lipset and Rokkan should not mention them at all, given the very detailed historical analysis which these authors conducted. Even if the aim was ultimately to dismiss the 'true importance' of the founders of socialist parties in Western Europe in the emergence and marked success of these parties, these founders should have been mentioned and their possible role discussed. Given that, from Marx onwards, major splits occurred and fights among these leaders were frequent, with serious consequences for the development of socialist parties, it seems truly bizarre that these founders should not have been considered at all: it may be that ideological reasons were at the origin of some of these splits, but the effects on the parties of these splits are due to problems related to personality clashes, often very serious. One is therefore tempted to consider that Michels' analysis is more realistic, except that, in this case, the view about the role of leaders is so extreme that it must have contributed to the fact that it has not been given much credence in relation to the development of parties (Michels 1962).³

The part played by leaders in the nineteenth century extended, seemingly at least, much beyond socialist parties to conservative and liberal party leaders in Western European countries. While it may be the case, though this point would have to be examined systematically, that individual leadership played a larger part than is typically recognised in the build-up of parties at the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first, there is at least enough impressionistic evidence to suggest that there was substantial leadership presence earlier, on both Right and Left. The role of leaders can therefore be

regarded as having been critical in the setting up and development of Western European parties as well as being critical more recently.

The point is not to claim that leaders played an overwhelming part in setting up the major parties which have existed in Western Europe: it is merely to claim that the role of leaders in the process is to be considered alongside that of 'parent-groups'. Indeed it is also to consider that a part is also played by leaders once the party has emerged and here one comes closer to what interested Michels, even if, in this case, the part played by leaders led to the development of a highly exaggerated thesis, at least inasmuch as it was claimed to be immense and, seemingly at least, universal.

It is in reality markedly more realistic to claim that parties are likely to depend *both* on the allegiance which citizens have to some groups – by way of a 'transfer' of allegiance of which the notion of 'cleavage' constitutes a short-cut expression – *and* on the allegiance or loyalty to some personalities than to claim that they depend exclusively on 'cleavages'. Admittedly, the specific character of that combination of the two elements is difficult to determine in concrete situations. Robust indicators need first to be devised: these cannot be devised, however, so long as it is believed that the role of personalities in the build-up of parties among the population is non-existent, episodic, exceptional or, perhaps even worse, occurring only in the 'unacceptable' circumstances of dictatorship.

The view that there is allegiance both to a 'parent-group' and to personalities does not mean that the nature and characteristics of that allegiance are the same. Allegiance to a parent group may be, so to speak, more 'basic', as groups (may) remain influential for much longer periods than individuals (although the allegiance to some leaders can last beyond the death of these leaders, as the Perón case amply demonstrates); since allegiance to a group is more 'basic', it probably fluctuates less. This may indeed be one of the reasons why the 'classical' theory stressed exclusively the role of social cleavages in building links between parties and their supporters: these links may be modified only slowly, while allegiance to personalities may oscillate more rapidly and with greater amplitude. Such a conclusion, if valid, clearly does not affect the overall proposition that loyalty to personalities has to be taken into account alongside loyalty to groups. Indeed, even if it is more volatile, loyalty to personalities is not axiomatically less important than loyalty to groups. It should be noted in this respect that 'appearance' should be considered alongside 'substance', since the attractiveness of leaders, as was pointed out in relations to the direct link between citizens and leaders, is unquestionably based to a very large extent on appearance, if it is also on substance.

3. THE EMERGENCE OF PARTIES AS A RESULT OF (ALMOST) EXCLUSIVE LEADERS' ACTIONS

It may well be the case, historically, that the major parties which emerged in nineteenth century Western Europe did succeed as a result of the citizens' attachment to social groups and only to an extent to leaders. It is difficult to claim on the basis of general empirical evidence that this has been the case universally,

however. At times, even in Western Europe, parties have been set up apparently on the basis of leadership alone. For instance, it is difficult to account for the emergence of extreme-right parties after the First World War without taking into account what seems to be the overwhelming part played by their leaders: it might be claimed that there were 'underlying forces' associated with the development of these parties, but these 'underlying forces' were not 'groups' in the sense which has been given to them in the 'social cleavages' analysis. They were indeed 'forces' which the leaders did exploit, probably precisely because the 'social groups' which existed and were prevalent could not or would not use these 'forces' to strengthen their popular support.

The case for the build up of parties on the (almost exclusive) basis of leaders is manifestly much larger when one considers the rest of the world. As a matter of fact, one of the reasons why the analysis of political parties has tended to be rather 'parochial' is because the 'social cleavage' basis of parties, while perhaps prominent in Western Europe and in some Westernised countries outside Europe, was very difficult to apply beyond these countries. The case is so obvious in Latin America that several party systems in the area have been described as 'inchoate' and said to include a large dose of 'populism' instead of being 'institutionalised' (Mainwaring and Scully 1995: 22 *et seq.*). It may be that Western European parties and party systems are 'special'; but it seems difficult to argue that they are so 'special' that they never were and perhaps more importantly that there will never be parties initiated and supported by their leaders. It is not claimed that such parties should be 'normal' or that they should often become large. It is merely claimed that the question should be investigated in order to see if, alongside the part which leaders may play in some of the more 'traditional' parties, there should not be some space, even in Western Europe, for 'leader-based' parties.

If there is such a case, it must be because some conditions obtain which render it more difficult for parties based on social cleavages to dominate the scene in the way they may well have done from the latter part of the nineteenth century in Western Europe. While not attempting here to examine the reasons why some rather 'unusual' parties emerged in the interwar period on the Continent, some of the changes which occurred from the last decades of the twentieth century do suggest that there may be grounds for such 'unusual' parties to emerge: this is the object of the coming section of this chapter.

II

The effect on the relationship among leaders, parties and citizens of the changes in societal conditions in Western Europe towards the end of the twentieth century

The role of 'preoccupations' in the support of citizens for parties

The analysis has been based so far on the assumption that the attachment of citizens to parties was, for all intents and purposes, 'all of one piece', as if the

support given by citizens to parties, whether very strong or rather weak, was either given entirely to one party or not given at all. The notion that citizens are related to parties by means of social cleavages does indeed lead rather naturally to that kind of conclusion.

This, of course, is rarely the case in practice: it seems indeed to be less and less the case in the European context. Analyses now suggest that *issues* play a significant part in voting patterns and that these have come to constitute an alternative to 'broad' support in the context of electors' decisions.⁴ Support for the party of one's choice may no longer extend as widely over the whole range of policies which that party puts forward, but depend in part at least on the views which the citizen may have on particular problems. There is a degree of 'independence' from the parties and 'independence' means in turn that the citizens 'pick and choose'. Admittedly, many electors may in the end vote for the party for which they had previously voted, but, in the process, that vote has become conditional, for instance on other parties not putting forward policies which might be preferred. Such 'independence' means that the nature of the bond which relates citizens to parties comes to be altered and the strength of this bond reduced.

The strength of support has indeed declined, as is shown by opinion polls and election studies, in which the proportion of 'very strong' 'identifiers' has sharply declined in many countries (Schmitt *et al.* 2005: 106–24). In Britain, for instance, the proportion of interviewees in this category fell from 48 per cent in 1964 to 23 per cent in 1987 (Heath *et al.* 1991: 13), a finding which corroborates the one which Sarlvik and Crewe mentioned for the period from 1964 to 1979 (1983: 337). This does more than indicate that the strength of the relationship between citizens and the party of their choice had also sharply diminished over time. Translated on a different plane, it shows that British electors had become more 'independent' from the parties which they supported. The situation is broadly similar, though less clear cut across Western Europe. "Although they [the results] point to a decline in partisanship across Western Europe, it is obvious that the depth and spread of this development are quite different in different countries and for different periods of time" (Schmitt and Holmberg 1995: 101).⁵

In reality, the fact that citizens come to be related to parties rather more in the context of issues is not new: they always did relate to parties in relation to 'issues' to an extent, but, in the traditional conception emerging from the analysis of support based on cleavages, they did so 'in bulk', so to speak. Admittedly, this view was reinforced by the recognition that many citizens were attached to parties as a result of habit, indeed perhaps of a habit which may even have emerged as soon as political consciousness arose and which remained unquestioned for years; yet the view was also that citizens were globally comfortable with what the party stood for. However, this sentiment could prevail only so long as no 'dissonance' occurred between what citizens felt about a particular matter and what these citizens saw the party to be representing. If there came to be such a 'dissonance' over an 'issue' which was strongly felt, citizens had to decide whether or not to continue to support 'their' party. Thus it is not the case

that the citizens were originally attached to their party in a wholly 'unthinking' manner: they were sufficiently 'in tune' with their party because they felt that their party corresponded to their own broad sentiments.

What then is the mechanism, internal to the citizens' mind, which induces some of these to see some issues as being sufficiently important for them to start having doubts about continuing to support a party which they may have supported, perhaps for very long? It must be that something has changed in their vision of themselves and of the society in which they live to make them appreciate differently what 'their' party stands for in relation to their own position on some issues in contrast with the position of the party on these issues. There must be in effect an 'echo' in the minds of the citizens about what these issues are for them. Not every 'issue' becomes regarded as 'important' or as truly relevant. That importance and that relevance to particular individuals stem from the fact that an emotional chord is being touched about the problem which the issue raises: such a chord is being touched if and when the issue at stake corresponds to a strongly felt *preoccupation* of the citizens concerned. Preoccupations may be more or less precise and detailed; but their general characteristic is that they render the citizens concerned uneasy about some aspects of their life and therefore anxious to see a solution to the problem which that preoccupation relates to.

Admittedly, the notion of preoccupation is not mentioned in the context of the problem posed by cleavages since the psychological characteristics of individuals are not taken into account in the 'classical' model, although, as we shall shortly suggest, something similar to preoccupations was subsumed in that model. Yet matters of this kind are now examined, indeed regularly examined, in opinion surveys, for instance when these ask about the 'worries' which respondents may have; the existence of such worries is indeed regarded as likely to be related to the individuals' feelings for the government and perhaps for the whole political system. In the context of the build-up of the allegiance of individuals towards groups or towards parties, moreover, what are at stake are not just 'worries' but longer-term and deeper concerns connected with the whole life of individuals: this is why the word 'preoccupation' appears to be a more adequate expression. Preoccupations are in effect central to the link between individuals and the important social groups to which citizens belong or at least relate to as well as, in some cases at least, through these groups, between citizens and the parties to which they are attached. If the major preoccupations of citizens are 'in tune' with what they feel the party is 'for', there is real attachment to the party. If this is not or no longer the case, at least for many citizens, the question of the extent of support to the party comes to be posed. Specifically, if some important social changes take place in the society as a result of which new preoccupations emerge in the minds of many individuals with respect to their position in society, the question begins to arise as to whether these individuals feel that the social groups and/or parties concerned meet these new preoccupations. If these are then regarded as not being met or as being met only in small part, the links between these individuals and the parties can be expected to be affected, perhaps to a limited extent to begin with, but gradually rather more widely.

'Status' preoccupations and their decline in late twentieth century Western Europe

Why, then, assuming that strong preoccupations are needed on the part of individuals for these to owe allegiance to a group and to a party, did social cleavages seem to lead directly from allegiance to a group to allegiance to a party at the end of the nineteenth century and during a large part of the twentieth? Lipset and Rokkan did not state directly what the 'resonance' of social cleavages, so to speak, was for the electors, since their analysis focused on what happened to parties, not to individuals: however, at the time to which the analysis of these authors referred and indeed for reasons examined with great care by them, large numbers of citizens in Western European countries came to be 'preoccupied' by their *status* in society. They lived, for instance, in an area which was deprived because it was peripheral; they belonged to a region or nation or to a religion which was in a minority and/or was persecuted, or to a social class which was ill-treated and led to life conditions which were held by these individuals to be unacceptable. Thus the *status* of individuals belonging to these categories could be described as being (or as often being, if they were 'conscious' of the problem) a major 'preoccupation' for these individuals, as well indeed as for some others who felt that such a situation was not tolerable. Since that *status* was held not to be tolerable, it seemed at least to follow that the allegiance to the group came to be strong; the escalation into politics also appeared to follow: individuals were induced to support a party and perhaps to join that party. Thus, even then, the link between individual and group was not automatic; it cannot either be regarded as having been direct: there had to be a mediating element in the minds of the individuals concerned and that mediating element was constituted by the strength of *preoccupations about status*, both for those who belonged to the categories in question and for others who shared the same preoccupation.

One can thus understand why social cleavages played such an important part in Western Europe at that point in time that they could be regarded (and were indeed regarded, implicitly, by Lipset and Rokkan) as being short cuts from the individual to groups and to parties; but one can also understand why such a conjunction between group and preoccupations, while not fortuitous in the circumstances, should not always occur, indeed might not even occur frequently. That conjunction has not occurred, at any rate to the same extent, in Western Europe at the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first. Preoccupations associated with status have markedly diminished in intensity in Western Europe, except in some countries – indeed in parts of some countries – in relation to regional or national feelings and in relation to feelings of ethnic identity, especially among immigrants.

There are, on the other hand, other preoccupations – indeed strong ones – in Western Europe, but they are not in the main associated with the status of individuals in society. They tend to relate to what can broadly be described as *feelings of insecurity*, for instance those which relate to crime, immigration, jobs and, though to a lesser extent, with the environment.⁶ These problems have not

typically led to the setting up of organisations, except to an extent with respect to the environment. Moreover, although the problem of job security could be regarded with some justification as being central to the questions which trade unions are expected to deal with, few seemed to have felt, from the final decades of the twentieth century onwards, that trade unions were truly relevant in this respect. The result has been in many cases that citizens come to relate to parties directly *without* feeling that they do belong to a clearly defined social category which would then constitute a cushion (or a shock absorber) between them and the party of their choice.

As groups concerned with the new problems are small or non-existent and as, in many cases, these problems are politically very difficult to handle by the traditional parties, the most common solution has been for these parties to leave such matters in abeyance, to deny their existence or to view the issues with which they are associated as not 'politically correct'. Two consequences follow: on the one hand, the traditional social cleavage base of the classical parties has been eroded, although it has of course not entirely disappeared; on the other hand, there are no new groups or there are only very small new groups on the basis of which new social cleavages could lead to a similar party development to that which occurred in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed, were groups to develop around the new preoccupations, it is conceivable, perhaps even likely, that developments similar to those which had taken place in Western Europe earlier might occur, as when, for instance, the trade union movement was at the origin of a number of social democratic parties; but, since the preoccupations characterising many citizens in Western Europe relate to subjects, in particular immigration, but also security, which are not regarded as being fully 'discussable' within the context of what was referred to earlier as the 'traditional mould', it is unrealistic to expect that such groups will have the importance and resonance which trade unions came to have, even if these were not immediately accepted as legitimate by the rest of the political and social elites at the time.

These currently-felt preoccupations thus tend to be without 'parent-groups'. Yet there is no reason to believe that this type of new preoccupations will cease to play an important part in Europe. Indeed, citizens are unlikely to be mainly 'preoccupied' any longer, in that region, with their 'status' in the society and are thus unlikely to feel that they belong to social categories linked to one of the major 'classical' cleavages (geography, religion or class).

'New' preoccupations and the role of personal leadership in both new and old parties

The decline of what might be regarded as the 'classical' preoccupations and the emergence of new ones has thus affected the strength of the traditionally strong Western European parties. It has also affected the nature of the relationship between these parties and the citizens. As we noted, few groups, at any rate few groups of a substantial size, except perhaps with respect to the environment, meet the citizens' new preoccupations and in particular those which relate to

feelings of insecurity. One solution to what was termed earlier the feelings of 'dissonance' between citizens and the parties which they previously supported consists for them in withdrawing from the political system and abstaining: abstention has indeed increased, as a matter of fact, across Western Europe in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century. Yet, as a political space was created by the relative retreat of the traditional parties, another solution, not surprisingly, has been for new parties to be launched; but these parties will not be launched and have any chance of success unless they are set up and 'nursed' by leaders willing and able to devote their time to these organisations, since there are no groups to which electors are closely linked which can act as springboards for these parties. Indeed, many endeavours based on personalities are likely to have little following, but the existence of a space, especially at one of the ends of the ideological spectrum, suggests that there is a significant probability that some of these new parties will obtain at least a minority position within the electorate.

Meanwhile, however, some rethinking, in a number of large traditional parties at least, tends to occur within the elite of these parties as the decline among the electorate and in terms of membership appears to persist and as the traditional message no longer seems to have the appeal which it had in the past. Here too, leaders have to be in the forefront, not just in terms of the rethinking itself but perhaps even more when it comes to implementing any changes which might have to take place in the party to help solve the problems which that party faces. Thus not just in the new parties, but even in the traditional parties, leadership is likely to play a major part in stating that a new line is to be followed. As was pointed out earlier, the role of leadership was probably very large when many of what became traditional parties were set up, in the nineteenth century, in Western Europe: at the time, however, the role of leaders consisted in convincing electors that they should participate in groups based on key cleavages in the society: as this is unlikely to obtain in the contemporary world in the case of either new parties or of changes of direction among the older parties, it is understandable that the role of leadership should have become even more crucial than was the case a century earlier.

Not surprisingly, given the vast development of the media in general and given the emergence of the electronic media in particular in the course of the twentieth century, the possible part which leadership plays has been orchestrated by the press, radio and television. This is not the place to attribute a specific score to the role of the media in emphasising the importance of leaders and, thereby, in ensuring that citizens become aware of that importance. Yet the part which the media play in the processes which are being studied here must at least be registered, even if the character and extent of the influence on citizens has to remain somewhat undetermined (Mazzoleni *et al.* 2003).⁷

The emergence of highly personalised leadership in new parties

As was noted earlier in this chapter as well as in Chapter 3, there are scarcely any social cleavages associated with the types of issues which preoccupy sub-

stantial numbers of citizens in much of Western Europe. The only exception in this respect would be, as was pointed out in the previous section, with respect to groups promoting the rights of immigrants: but these have no or at most very limited voting rights unless they become citizens; immigrants constitute also by and large small minorities, except in some districts. Their impact on the political system cannot therefore be expected to be large unless they do succeed in mobilising the support of the larger traditional parties.

Thus the new parties which will tend to emerge in Western Europe in the context of the preoccupations of citizens, primarily with respect to security issues, will of necessity depend on the popular appeal of their leaders; these parties depend specifically on the ability of their leaders – and in this respect ‘appearance’ can be very important – to put across a message to which those citizens who are most sensitive to security problems are likely to respond, perhaps even with enthusiasm. In such a context, personalities are likely to have an opportunity, ostensibly greater than previously, to play a part in the build-up and life of parties of Western Europe. As Mény and Surel suggest: “A man rises and, because he meets latent but contained preoccupations [‘attentes’ in French], is able to act as a catalyst of these desires or these silent protests” (my translation) (2000: 104).

There is an exception to this ‘personalised mode’ among the parties, however, which is constituted by the Greens. The fight for the environment has two characteristics which are markedly distinct from the other types of preoccupations which have emerged in the context of feelings of insecurity. First, the issue, far from being ‘politically incorrect’ as security issues tend to be, is on the contrary regarded highly positively. Second, as was suggested earlier in this and the previous chapters, the environment is probably the one issue which has a true potential for being part of a ‘new’ social cleavage, in the context of the general notion of ‘post-materialism’. This may account in part for the fact that, despite what are (or more precisely were for a substantial period) deliberate decisions to give very limited influence to leaders, Green parties have had some success, although this success has tended to be markedly more modest than might have been expected.

In all other cases, the parties associated with new issues have also been strongly associated with their founding-leader and, in some cases, did not survive that founder, as if only with the founder of the party could that organisation survive. On the other hand, a new party was sometimes created by another leader to replace the one who had disappeared, as if the ‘preoccupation’ which the party was associated with was so strong that it made the creation of a new party a necessity. There is thus a kind of ‘symbiosis’ between leader and preoccupation: there is not enough of a social group foundation for the party to appear able to have a permanent basis without the leader; but the latent ‘demand’ in terms of preoccupations among the population renders the emergence of such a leader-based party most likely if not inevitable.

The emergence of highly personalised leadership in older and larger parties

There is clearly no inevitability, only a potential, with respect to the development of personalised leadership in older and larger parties. The fact that these parties are based on social cleavages renders personalised leadership less crucial and in many cases rather frowned upon. The bureaucratic structure of these parties makes it more difficult for any leader wishing to bring about substantial changes to the programme or the structure of the party to avoid seeing these efforts countered or even frustrated by others within the party. The decline of the party is often not perceived – or at least perceived as being truly serious – by many members of the top echelons of the organisation.

There have thus to be a combination of factors, alongside the presence of a leader anxious to bring about major changes, for such a leader to be able to convince the party as a whole that these changes have to occur. Successive electoral defeats, provided these have been under previous leaders, are unquestionably among the circumstances most likely to provide any new leader with the opportunity required, although even this may not be always sufficient where no party is close to obtaining a majority of seats in parliament and coalitions of ‘middle-sized’ parties have been the norm.

Yet even those leaders who are given a free rein and are most radical in their desire to change the goals, structure and image of the party may not be able to achieve more than partial results. To the extent that the larger traditional Western European parties are (and have been) associated with governmental power, they cannot meaningfully make suggestions which are highly idiosyncratic and have not, for instance, been tried elsewhere. Moreover, substantial discontent in parts of the population is due to feelings of frustration resulting from a sense of insecurity; this sense of insecurity is in turn due to a large extent to the fact that the fabric of the society in Western Europe is changing along lines which tend to increase, rather than diminish these frustrations. As a result, whatever their leadership, older parties cannot move with the same freedom with respect to policies as the new parties and there is therefore a limit to the ability of these leaders to ‘reconquer’ the ground which the party lost in the course of previous decades.

As these older parties have manifest problems, however, the quest for and the realisation of personalised leadership can be said to constitute the constraint under which these parties have to live. That leadership may not in the end do more than maintain the party or achieve modest gains which may in turn be lost in subsequent elections, but, to an extent at least, this is a success. Moreover, such a success has to be measured in comparison with the fate of the new parties: the leaders of these parties are not typically able either to bring about a major change in the nature of the party system. With the notable and important exception of the very special cases of countries in which the whole political system was effectively destroyed by massive problems in the society itself or resulting from events abroad, personalised leadership has tended to play a part alongside

social cleavages, but has not normally resulted in a complete transformation of the nature of the landscape of party systems in Western Europe.

The conceptual framework which suggested that citizens were associated to parties because of major social cleavages has played such a part in the analysis of electoral behaviour and, more generally, in the interpretation of citizens-parties relationships that it is understandable that there should be considerable reticence when the suggestion is made that such a framework no longer has the overwhelming significance which it once had. Indeed, it is still the case that the parties set up when that traditional framework was fully convincing continue to prevail in most countries of Western Europe. Yet there have been changes and these changes suggest that the exploration of the basis of the attachment of electors to parties can no longer be wholly accounted for on the basis of a purely sociological or socio-historical interpretation: the fact that issues had eroded party identification was already an indication that psychological characteristics had to be introduced in the overall analysis. There is manifest reluctance to consider personalities as an important factor, on the other hand, some of the reasons for this reluctance having been indicated in Chapters 2 and 3. In the course of this chapter, some general evidence has been presented which suggests that it is possible, and perhaps likely, that many parties have come to rely on personal support to emerge or, on the contrary, to avoid substantial decline. We need therefore to examine the position of leaders in the parties themselves: this is the object of the coming chapter.

Notes

- 1 An analysis of Professor Caprara, based on an Italian opinion survey, suggests that there is a tendency for electors to vote for leaders whom they feel have the same personality characteristics as themselves (Caprara 2007).
- 2 Although Rokkan does not specifically state that groups in general emerge before parties, this is manifestly implied by what is pointed out in particular by him in relation to religious groups. This is so for example in relation to religious movements and the emergence of Christian parties.

The parties of religious defence generated through this process [the waves of mass mobilisation mentioned in the previous paragraph] grew into broad mass movements after the introduction of manhood suffrage and were able to claim the loyalties of remarkably high proportions of the church-goers in the working class.

(Rokkan 1970: 103).

The point is made even more explicitly in an article published in 1977 "Towards a generalised concept of *Verzijling*". Three patterns are mentioned, but these patterns are said to be difficult to disentangle in concrete cases. However, it is noted that:

In Catholic Europe, the Church clearly offered the best basis for network-building but the incentives and the costs varied very much from system to system. . . . In Protestant Europe we have a number of examples of network-building. . . . From a cultural base: religious parties grew out of lay movements opposing the established States Churches, the few ethnically based parties were simply extensions of organisations already set up outside the electoral channel. The same was the case

with agrarian and social-democratic parties: they tended to be electoral extensions of organisations already active in the corporate channel.

(reprinted in Mair 1990: 144)

- 3 Paradoxically, the modern edition of Michels' *Political Parties* (1962) is due to Lipset (and it was published before the 'classical' article of Lipset and Rokkan). The point is that Michels is not so much concerned with the emergence of socialist parties as with what happens to them once they have emerged. Nor is the argument in favour of leadership, quite the contrary. Perhaps this is the reason why Lipset did not find it necessary to introduce leadership among the reasons why citizens become attached to parties.
- 4 This is of course not the place to examine the literature on issues, by now abundant. The point here is merely to note that they appear increasingly to constitute an alternative to the 'general' support to parties on the part of many electors. See in particular Miller and Shanks (1996), for instance at p. 202.
- 5 Schmitt and Holmberg also argue that partisanship tends to decline when the (main) parties are closer to each other and the reverse when they are in greater opposition. They then conclude: "Thus one would expect partisanship and the relevance of political parties to increase again if and when ideological differences and issue conflicts flare once more" (Schmitt and Holmberg 1995: 123).
- 6 Feelings of insecurity vis-à-vis immigration in particular are sometimes felt to be associated with a sense that the 'identity' of the person concerned is markedly affected. This may be the case with some, but the rejection of immigration is primarily due to the sense, which is typically developed by some of the media, that immigration is associated either with the loss of jobs or with criminality, or indeed both. There may be a sense of frustration about the loss of one's identity in the case of some, but is highly unlikely to be the most common source of the feeling of insecurity. As the other problems which are referred to in this section, the feeling of insecurity resulting from immigration raises questions which can be analysed and ultimately answered through a sophisticated psychological analysis only.
- 7 While it is clear that the media offer to leaders opportunities to be 'recognised' by millions, it is not clear that this opportunity translates itself immediately in terms of either a direct influence of leaders on citizens or of an indirect influence of leaders on citizens via the political parties. It is worth remembering that leaders were seemingly very influential in the past, though the 'proof' is difficult to provide, since there were no sample surveys at the time. The point was made aptly by Ian Budge in a review of T. Poguntke and P. Webb's work on *The Presidentialization of Politics*: "The development of a mass press around 1900 had similar effects to the emergence of television in mid-century, while Gladstone's, de Valera's or Bismarck's election campaigns were dominated by a single personality" (Budge 2006: 408).

5 Personalised party leaders in pre-existing parties and new parties

A preliminary general survey

‘Party personalisation of leadership’ can have an impact in two ways. That impact can occur because the leader is able to help his or her party to affect ‘directly’ the citizens, in particular at elections; it can also occur ‘indirectly’ because the leader is able to move his or her party in a policy direction which enables that party to be more appealing to the electorate. Both ‘components’ of the influence of personalised leaders need to be taken into account if one is to assess realistically the overall role of these leaders: these two ‘components’ can be referred to as, on the one hand, the *personal power held in the party* by some leaders and, on the other, the ability of some leaders to *boost the strength of their party in the nation*.¹ The effect of the personalisation of leaders in political parties has thus to be assessed in terms of the extent to which some of them achieve these goals more or less successfully.

‘Personal power’ relates to the influence and at the limit to the control exercised by leaders on the key decisions taken by the party. Such a personal power can be assessed by considering decisions concerned with:

- 1 policies, especially in the context of the party programme and its implementation;
- 2 the appointment of members of the executive of the party and the selection of candidates for key electoral positions; and
- 3 the broad strategy of the party, for instance whether the party should join the government, remain in opposition or support the government without participating in it.

The leaders whose role is being examined need to have played a substantial part at these three levels if they are to be regarded as having exercised ‘personal power’ in their party.

‘Boosting the strength of the party’ is more difficult to assess, as it means finding out, not only whether a party leader is or has been ‘popular’ in the nation, even ‘charismatic’, but how far that leader has affected positively the result at the polls of the party to which he or she belongs. It is obviously hard conceptually for the interviewees themselves to disentangle support for the party from support given to the party by means of the leader: one may like (or dislike) a

party for what it 'is' or represents ideologically, for instance, but one may at the same time like (or dislike) that party because of its leader. Yet opinion polls make it at least possible to discover whether and, if so, even to what extent the leaders concerned appear to have had some direct impact of the results of elections. The next chapter will examine how far it is indeed possible to solve satisfactorily the methodological problems posed when attempting to assess how far party leaders achieve direct personal influence on the electorate. It is of course essential to note that conclusions drawn about the impact of personalised party leaders in terms of both components of the influence they may hold are subjected to obvious time constraints. Leaders do not start 'all-powerful'; they are likely to acquire gradually more power; they are then also likely to lose some of that power before eventually losing all of it.

This chapter is devoted to a preliminary examination of the extent to which, primarily in Western Europe, 'party personalisation' appears to have had an impact in terms of both components. This examination takes place in two ways. First, it surveys the extent to which new parties emerged during the last decades of the twentieth century and thus modified the 'classical' equilibrium of party systems. Second, it considers how far, both in new and in traditional parties, there is evidence to support the view that some leaders have exercised 'personalised' power within their party and also boosted the strength of that party among the citizens. The aim is not to attempt to 'prove' that 'personalised party leadership' has prevailed but merely to suggest that this form of leadership *may have had* an impact in contemporary politics. The findings of more detailed analyses in six country cases will then back this first impression. Before undertaking this empirical survey, however, the present chapter also examines the conditions under which both the direct and indirect components of leaders' influence are likely to occur simultaneously and in particular whether the combination of the two components is more likely to occur in new parties than in traditional parties.

I

The contours of leader personalisation in party and nation

The difference between 'pre-existing' and 'new' parties in terms of the potential for the personalisation of leadership

All parties have been 'new' at some point, even if, in Western Europe in particular, a sizeable number of rather large parties have existed for long periods, perhaps with a different name and a different structure: some of these parties may well have begun as or originated from 'parties of notables' in which the localised leadership became gradually supplanted by a 'national' elite. This is so of some conservative and liberal parties; on the other hand, social democratic parties were set up from the start as 'national' parties with 'national' leaders. The 'personalised' character of the role of some of the nineteenth century founders of these parties or even of the subsequent leaders of such parties seems to

have been large: as was pointed out in Chapter 4, a substantial part of the Michels' study of political parties was devoted to that question, especially section B of Part I in which the author describes "The Psychological Causes of Leadership" and examines the extent to which the strength of the party in the nation has been affected by leaders (1962: 81–106).

Leaders creating new parties benefit in this respect from advantages which leaders of pre-existing parties do not seem to have. There are two sets of reasons for the existence of these advantages. One set has to do with the opportunities which those who create new parties have to determine what the policy of the party is to be: at least for a while, their 'personal power' in the party almost certainly runs supreme in many cases, though not in all. As a matter of fact, that 'personal power' appears to depend markedly on the extent to which leaders also enjoy popularity in the country, a popularity which they are able to transfer to the parties which they created, for example if they are regarded as being better able to deal with the current 'preoccupations' of the part of the population which these leaders target for support.

In the most extreme cases, those in which the leader is markedly popular among some elements of the citizenry at the very moment in which he or she created the party, what takes place would seem to be more than just 'boosting the strength' of the party, a party which was non-existent before the leader did set it up. In such an extreme situation, one may even state that the leader concerned 'embodies the party'. The substantive word 'embodiment' (or 'incarnation', to use the expression which Ionescu and Gellner adopt to refer to various forms of populism (1970: 3)) is probably almost never used in this context, but the verb is and it does provide a clear impression of the part which the leader concerned may play when the party is, in effect, wholly dependent on that leader for its success in the nation. Such a form of popular support for the party through the leader is not likely to occur in pre-existing parties.

The second set of reasons which suggest that leaders of new parties have advantages compared to leaders of pre-existing parties has to do with the nature of the link between older parties and their supporters, in particular when these parties are really old. As was pointed out in Chapter 2, the analysis put forward by Ian Budge suggests these older parties may well be regarded as being 'in orbit', that is to say that the link between supporters and 'their' party is based on habit or tradition rather than, at any rate any longer, on the cleavage and/or for that matter on the personality support which may have given rise to the development of the party originally.

It seems therefore that the potential for the personalisation of leadership is greater in parties which are created *de novo* than in pre-existing parties. Yet, even if this impression is correct, one needs to examine the extent to which, on the one hand, such a felicitous starting point for the leader does indeed take place frequently, let alone always and, on the other, how far such a 'honeymoon' situation appears to last. This means looking carefully at the fate of leaders of new parties in Western (and indeed Eastern) Europe in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century; before doing so, however, one must first go back to the

question of the combination of the two components, this time both in ‘pre-existing’ and in ‘new’ parties, as well as among a third category which can be regarded as intermediate between ‘pre-existing’ and ‘new’ parties, namely organisations which were small and had very little appeal but were given a ‘new lease of life’ by leaders who took them over. This occurs, for instance, if the goals of the parties are changed in order to be rendered more attuned to the pre-occupations of the citizens whom these leaders wish to reach.

How securely can leaders hold jointly the two components of party personalisation

PERSONALISED LEADERS, ‘EMINENCES GRISES’ AND POLITICIANS WHO ‘ORCHESTRATE’ THE POPULAR APPEAL OF THEIR PARTY

Assuming that we can find convincing evidence suggesting that a leader controls the key decisions taken by the party to which he or she belongs and boosts the strength of that party in the population, there remains the difficult question of determining in each case the nature of the relationship between the two components of leader personalisation. While these two components can be expected to be present, though not perhaps to the same extent, in the case of ‘truly successful’ personalised party leaders, they are analytically distinct, indeed very different in their nature. How far they are closely connected in practice needs therefore to be assessed and the reasons why they happen to be connected in particular cases need to be determined.

Let us therefore begin here by considering the two components separately. If someone has ‘personal power’ in the party without having a real standing in the population to rely on, his or her ability to exercise influence in the long run is likely to operate behind closed doors. It is therefore fair to describe such a leader as being primarily an ‘eminence grise’. Examples of such an influence are probably numerous, especially in parties which have many factions but wish to preserve an appearance of unity: Italian Christian Democracy was such a case and

		Personal power in the party	
		Yes	No
Ability to boost support for the party	Yes	Personalised leader	‘Party orchestration’
	No	<i>Eminence grise</i>	Not a personalised party leader

Figure 5.1 Personal power in the party.

the role of some of its more successful 'leaders', Fanfani or Andreotti for instance, can be described in that fashion. On the other hand, leaders who might 'boost their party' in the nation but are not very influential within it should be described as 'orchestrating' the party's tune. As will be seen in the third section of this chapter, there do seem to be examples of 'aspiring' leaders whose strength in the population develops before these leaders are able to control their party. The relationship between the two components can be summarised by means of a two-by-two figure, although such a presentation is a simplification, since one is confronted here in reality, not with dichotomies, but with dimensions: a leader can 'orchestrate' the party more or less or be more or less of an 'eminence grise' (Figure 5.1).

A DIFFERENT EVOLUTION OF THE TWO COMPONENTS IN BOTH PRE-EXISTING AND NEW PARTIES?

It was pointed out earlier that, in a new party, leaders may well benefit from the fact that they are able to dominate the organisation internally and boost the party in the nation. An empirical analysis of that type of party will make it possible to discover the characteristics forms of the evolution of the two components with respect to each other. Do they reinforce each other? Or does one component decline while the other remains strong or at least adequate and, if so, which declines first?

In the case of pre-existing parties, the path which leaders have to follow seems likely to be arduous. Would-be leaders have first to establish their credentials by proposing a strategy and policies likely to appeal to the party elite as well as to a large section of the rank and file. This will take time and is unlikely to be often a straightforward progression. The danger is that would-be leaders remain examples of 'eminences grises', unless, in parallel, they succeed in gaining support among the citizenry: this may be achieved by stressing and indeed stressing repeatedly, during what can be a long campaign, how valuable the policies proposed can be. These leaders then achieve some popularity and only at that point can they begin to be in a position to help strengthen the party in the country. When this has started to occur and if the result is truly positive with respect to both components can one say that, at last, 'a leader is born'.

Yet, in pre-existing parties, success may be temporary only. The party has a structure; it has members, local leaders, other national figures. The new national leader may be able to maintain his or her control over the party apparatus, in part because of the fact that there is an apparatus: as Michels had noted, the bureaucratisation of political parties helps leaders to maintain their personal power within the party for substantial periods (1962: 117–28). Such an advantageous predicament does not seem to be as likely with respect to the ability to draw more support in the nation: disillusionment may set in among the broad mass of party 'identifiers'; almost certainly, new, younger, alternative figures will begin to emerge. The leader may be damaged by the fact that, as in crises in international relations, 'groupthink' begins to take place: the problems which the party

faces in terms of support in the nation may be hidden by close advisers who provide a screen shielding the leaders from the broader reality (Verbeek 2003: 20–5).

There might therefore be a substantial difference between the evolution of the impact of personalisation in pre-existing parties, perhaps especially in large pre-existing parties, on the one hand, and, on the other, in new parties started by a leader who enjoys support in at least some sectors of the population, previously unaffected, particularly on the part of a leader who may have known how to respond to a given set of ‘preoccupations’. Yet even leaders of new parties are not likely to be immune from experiencing, as ‘popular’ leaders of pre-existing parties do, disillusionment on the part of some supporters: in new parties, too, there is a degree of fragility in the ability of the leaders to boost support among the population; there, too, competition from potential leaders may emerge. A ‘new’ party is almost certainly ‘new’ for a limited period only.

The systematic analysis of the extent to which there is leadership personalisation in political parties in contemporary Europe thus depends on the ability to assess both the extent to which leaders have internal power and can draw support from citizens to the party which they are running. As such an analysis will take time to develop on a comparative basis, it is therefore more prudent at this stage to concentrate on case studies designed to identify precisely the way specific party leaders have acted within their party and have attempted to attract support among the citizens. Before doing so in the second part of this volume, however, we need to have a first impression of the forms which the party personalisation of leadership appears to have taken in European parties in the last decades of the twentieth century and the early part of the twenty-first century: this is the object of the coming two sections of the chapter.

II

New parties and ‘personalised’ leaders in Western Europe since the late twentieth century

There are nineteen countries in what has been conventionally described as Western Europe, including five Northern countries (Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland) and five Southern countries (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Malta and Greece), three of the nineteen, Iceland, Luxembourg and Malta, having markedly less than a million inhabitants. These nineteen countries fall into four groups from the point of view of the extent to which the party system has experienced variations in the course of the last two decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first.

- 1 The first group includes four countries, all from the South of Europe, Portugal, Spain, Malta and Greece.² It is interesting to note that these are the only countries of the region where splits have not taken place and where the Greens have made little headway.

- 2 The second group is composed of seven countries in which there have been changes in the party system, but where these changes have not been due to the emergence of new parties in which the part played by a 'popular' leader has been large. These countries are Iceland, Ireland, Britain, Sweden, Finland, Luxembourg and Germany: it should be noted, however, that, in Britain, the role of 'popular' leaders in the two largest traditional parties, Conservative and Labour, has ostensibly been very large, admittedly exclusively within the party itself, but with the result that that party did change markedly its character. In this sense some element of personalisation cannot be ruled out altogether. In Finland, Luxembourg and Germany, the changes have been due largely to the emergence of the Greens.

In eight countries the personalisation of leadership has apparently brought to the fore new – or markedly invigorated – parties.

- 3 In two of these eight countries, the Netherlands and Austria, the new or markedly invigorated party subsequently declined. In the Netherlands it disappeared eventually after the assassination of the leader, Fortijn; in Austria, apparently as a result of the policy of the Conservative 'Popular' party, the Freedom Party, led by Haider, first lost over half its popular support and then split; Haider's own breakaway party came very near to being no longer represented in the National Assembly in 2006, while, under a new leader, the Freedom Party was moderately successful, gaining 11 per cent of the votes. In both countries, 'new' parties were also set up and they thus constitute intermediate cases between the second group and the fourth.
- 4 The last six countries are those in which at least one party with a highly personalised leader has continued to play a significant part in the electoral process at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century. In Switzerland, however, (where new parties also emerged), the party which is headed by the strongly personalised leader, Blocher, is not new: it is the Swiss People's Party which had traditionally been the smallest of the four parties permanently represented, since the 1960s, in the Federal Council. In three of the other five countries, Norway, France and Belgium, a medium-sized (with about 15 per cent of the votes) strongly personalised party of a 'populist' character has existed for long periods, although, in Belgium, this is only, since the 1990s, in the Flemish part of the country. In Denmark, the party which had long represented the 'populist' right, Progress, almost disappeared from the scene in 2001, but it was then replaced by the Danish People's Party which doubled the percentage it had obtained at the previous election and obtained over 12 per cent of the votes. Finally, in Italy, two parties have been led by personalised leaders, the Northern League by Bossi and *Forza Italia* by Berlusconi. While the Swiss People's Party has been in the government and the Danish People's Party has been supporting the government, the Norwegian Progress Party, the French National Front and the Flemish *Vlaams Blok* (subsequently renamed *Vlaams Belang*) have been ostracised by the rest of the political parties. Meanwhile, Italy is the only Western European country which has been, on three occasions (1994,

2001 and 2008), led by a major party which was created by a 'popular leader' and could be described at any rate ostensibly as being largely dependent on the popular appeal of that leader. Table 5.1 gives the details of the proportion of the votes obtained by the parties led by 'popular' leaders in the eight countries of groups 3 and 4.³

Although this volume does not systematically examine the case of Eastern European parties because of the relatively short time which elapsed since the fall of communism, it should be noted that new parties based on 'personalised' leaders have emerged in seven of the ten countries which had joined the European Union by 2007 and that, in six of these countries, these 'personalised' leaders have headed the government. The only three countries in which such parties have not emerged are the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia and the only country in which the party led by a 'popular' leader has not been in power, let alone led the country, is Romania.⁴

As has been pointed out repeatedly in previous pages, this survey does not aim at demonstrating that there is a vast spread of personalised leadership in Western European parties and in particular in a crop of new parties. What is merely being suggested here is that there is a *prima facie* case for analysing the problem of personalised leadership in order to see how large is the spread of the phenomenon. That case is based on two sets of preliminary findings. First, only in a minority of countries, all of which are in Southern Europe and most of which had experienced immediately previously a strong dictatorship, has there been no significant change in the party panorama in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first: the fact that these countries are in a minority suggests that, on the contrary, there is a degree of 'instability' or 'dealignment', to use the expression of Sarlvik and Crewe (1983), in the majority of (Western) European countries: this needs to be examined with a view to looking at the factors which may appear to account for this development.

Second, the spread of personalisation of leadership and of its impact is apparently wide and the forms which it takes also appear to vary. New parties of the type which is often referred to as 'populist' have emerged in several countries while an ostensibly highly personalised leadership has also emerged in the large traditional parties of several countries, Britain and France, but also Spain, Portugal and Greece, as well as even to an extent Germany.⁵ One must therefore examine whether personalisation is marked both in these new parties and in the large traditional parties or whether it affects only marginally the link between parties and citizens. Is it the case, in other words, that, as much of the academic analysis of parties continues to suggest, the amount of change remains rather small, is in part illusory and largely due to the media's exaggerated emphasis on the role of personalities? The rest of this volume and to begin with the next two sections of this chapter attempt to answer this question.

Table 5.1 Electoral strength of leader-based parties in eight Western European countries since the 1980s¹

NORWAY	1981	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005		
Progress	5	4	13	6	15	15	22		
DENMARK	1981	1984	1987	1988	1990	1994	1998	2001	2005
Progress	9	4	5	9	6	6	2	1	1
People's Party							7	12	13
NETHERLANDS								2002	2003
<i>List Fortijn</i>								17	6
<i>List Wilders</i>									
									6
BELGIUM ²	1981	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007	
<i>Vlaams Blok</i>	1	1	2	7	8	10	12	12	
FRANCE	1981	1986	1988	1993	1997	2002	2007		
National Front		10	10	13	15	11	5		
AUSTRIA	1983	1986	1990	1994	1995	1999	2002	2006	2008
Freedom Party	5	10	17	23	22	23	10	11	18
BZÖ (Haider)								4	11
SWITZERLAND	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	2003	2007		
Swiss People's	11	11	12	15	23	27	29		
ITALY	1983	1987	1992	1994	1996	2001	2006	2008	
Northern League ³	1	9	8	8	10	4	4	8	
<i>Forza Italia</i>									
<i>Casa della Libertà</i>				21	21	25	23		
								37	

Notes

1 Percentages.

2 Flanders only.

3 In the north of the country, only.

III

An impression of party personalised leadership across Europe

Let us therefore see whether one can draw some conclusions about what appears to be the extent of party personalisation of its impact in Europe and especially in Western Europe, as, for Eastern Europe, any conclusions have to be highly tentative. To do so, let us distinguish ‘pre-existing’ parties from ‘new’ parties and ‘larger’ parties from ‘middle-sized’ parties, as there seems to be little point in examining the case of small parties; ‘larger’ parties are defined here as those which normally obtain at least 20 per cent of the votes and ‘middle-sized’ parties as those which normally obtain between 10 and 20 per cent of the votes. The analysis will be limited, in Western Europe, to the sixteen countries whose population is one million or more, as questions of party personalisation of leadership can be expected to be somewhat different in the other three countries of the area, Iceland, Luxemburg and Malta, all of which have of a population of appreciably less than one million. The period covered extends from the end of the Second World War to the early years of the twenty-first century except for the Federal Republic of Germany, which began in 1949, for Fifth Republic France, which started in 1958 and for Spain, Portugal and Greece, where the dictatorship ended in the mid-1970s.⁶

The numbers of large and middle-sized parties in Western Europe.

There does not seem to be much point in calculating the proportion of party leaders who appear to be ‘personalised’ in the sense which we have given it here among the universe of all leaders of parties or even of all ‘larger’ or ‘middle-sized’ parties as they have just been defined: the variation in the duration of leaders in office is substantial, so substantial that an average has little significance.

On the other hand, it is valuable to bear in mind the number of both ‘larger’ and ‘middle-sized’ parties which are found in the sixteen countries of Western Europe.⁷ Between 1980 and 2008, there were forty-one ‘larger’ parties, typically the same ones throughout the period, an average of two and a half parties having this character in each country; as a matter of fact, there were two such parties in ten of the sixteen countries, three in five and four in one (Switzerland). Although, as we shall see, there have been a number of cases of ‘recreated’ parties, strictly speaking, only two ‘new’ larger parties were set up at the national level during the period, those of De Gaulle, set up in 1958 (an earlier version had emerged in 1947 but was disbanded six years later), and of Berlusconi, created in 1993. It is not meaningful to look for equivalent parties in Eastern Europe since all the parties, except the ex-Communist ones, were effectively ‘new’ parties. On the other hand, it is worth noting that at least one sub-national party, that of Pujol, *Convergència i Unió*, which dominated Catalan politics for over two decades, can be described as a ‘new’ party.

During the same 1980 to 2008 period, there were twenty-four ‘middle-sized’ parties in the sixteen Western European countries analysed here, excluding those which succeeded in obtaining 10 per cent of the votes or more only once. In two countries, the Netherlands and Switzerland, no party fell in this category; in seven of them, Britain, Germany, Spain, Ireland, Finland, Austria and Greece, only one party belonged to that group, while there were two in Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and Portugal and three in Norway, France and Italy. On the other hand, in contrast with what occurred in the ‘larger’ parties, there were somewhat more ‘new’ parties in this category (nine) than ‘pre-existing’ parties (fifteen).⁸ The ‘middle-sized’ ‘pre-existing’ parties were often liberal (in Britain, France, Germany, Sweden), sometimes socialist or Labour (Ireland, Italy) or communist (France, Finland, Spain, Portugal, Greece).⁹ The ‘new’ parties included two ‘Left-Socialist’ ones (Norway, Denmark) and one Green (Austria), while, in three countries (Finland, France, Germany), the Green party came rather close to belonging to that category, but did not pass the 10 per cent barrier more than once. The other new parties, on the other hand, have often been referred to as being of the ‘radical right’, which are about to be examined (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Larger and middle-sized parties in Western Europe, number per country

Larger parties (20 per cent or more) (41)	
Countries with two parties (10) Ireland Britain Norway Sweden France Germany Portugal Spain Italy (2, then 2 others) Greece	Countries with three parties (5) Denmark Finland Belgium Netherlands Austria
Country with four parties Switzerland	
Middle-sized parties (10 to 20 per cent) at more than one election (24)	
Countries with no such parties (2) Netherlands Switzerland	
Countries with one such party (7) Ireland Britain Finland Germany Austria Spain Greece	Countries with two such parties (4) Sweden Denmark Belgium Portugal
Countries with three such parties (3) Norway France Italy	

Personalisation in middle-sized parties

PRE-EXISTING MIDDLE-SIZED PARTIES ARE RARELY HELPED BY PARTY PERSONALISATION

In only two cases were personalised leaders successful in running and strengthening middle-sized pre-existing parties, while in a third there was only a limited strengthening seemingly due to the part played by a leader. Admittedly, a number of leaders, in particular from centre parties, attempted to ‘rescue’ parties belonging to that category; these leaders have rarely enjoyed enough appeal in the population to be able to boost the support for the party, however. Progress has tended to be slow and not linear. For instance, the British Liberal party has had zigzagging results in the course of the last four decades of the twentieth century; the French Centre party has not progressed at all, despite the fact that Giscard d’Estaing was elected president (with Gaullist party votes, admittedly). The Irish Labour party never succeeded in moving much beyond its 10 per cent base, despite the efforts of at least one leader. The party which gained a little as a result of the intervention of a leader was the Italian Socialist party when it was (somewhat) ‘revived’ by Craxi, who moved the party in the 1970s and 1980s out of its bottom performance of about 10 per cent: yet this was not a real success as the Socialist party had obtained over 20 per cent of the votes in 1948, but had suffered markedly from the electoral alliance with the Communist party instigated by its leader of the time, Nenni, who subsequently broke away from that alliance, the only result being that the size of the decline of the party came to be revealed. Despite Craxi’s efforts, however, the party did not succeed in obtaining more than 15 per cent of the votes under his leadership; it then collapsed ignominiously in the context of the scandals which shook most Italian parties in the early 1990s.

The two clear examples of a truly rapid party success of pre-existing middle-sized parties apparently directly due to the action of a leader are those of the Austrian Freedom Party under Haider and of the Swiss People’s party under Blocher, both these leaders having taken positions aligned with the ‘security’ ‘preoccupations’ of a segment of the electorate. Yet the success was subjected to marked oscillations in the case of the Austrian Freedom Party, as the rise from only about 5 per cent in the 1960s to 23 per cent in the 1990s was followed by a fall to 10 per cent in 2002: the party was stable in 2006 at 11 per cent, although Haider had left it but his new party obtained 4 per cent of the votes only at the election of that year.¹⁰ Thus, by the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the only party in this group which had remained clearly successful, apparently as a result of the impact of leader personalisation, was that of the more classical national Swiss People’s party, regular gains being made from the 1995 to the 2007 federal election, when it obtained 29 per cent of the votes instead of the usual 11 or 12 per cent which it reached up to 1991. The ostensible basis was that the new party leader, Blocher, attacked the other three ‘classical’ parties permanently occupying seats in the Federal Council because these were

held not to have sufficiently taken into account the preoccupations of citizens with respect to immigration.

NEW PARTIES

Expanding a middle-sized party thus proved difficult and seemingly temporary, even with a 'personalised' leader: creating a new middle-sized party seemed easier to achieve, again apparently, essentially as a result of the presence of a forceful leader. Out of fourteen such cases, nine fall in this category, all nine belonging to the 'radical right'. Thus parties with a personalised party leadership constitute over half the universe of new 'middle-sized' creations.

The numbers of these 'personalised parties' also increased in the course of the second half of the twentieth century. Only two 'middle-sized' parties of the 'radical right' started by a leader were set up before 1965, *Uomo Qualunque* in Italy and the Poujadist party in France; both these parties collapsed rapidly, the Poujadist party as a result of the emergence of the Gaullist party, which will be examined shortly. There were also only two significant creations of new parties based on popular leaders between 1965 and 1985, both in Scandinavia, the Progress Party in Norway by Lange, who died in 1974, and the Progress Party by Glistrup in Denmark.

The majority of the cases in which a significant party was created by a strong leader thus occurred in the 1980s or later. These were the Progress party in Norway, restarted by Hagen, the People's Party of Kjærsgaard in Denmark which benefited from the collapse of the Progress party (while protest parties of the same kind did not succeed or collapsed rapidly in Sweden and Finland), Fortijn's party in the Netherlands, which did suffer a major setback and indeed disappeared, but after its leader had been assassinated, the *Vlaams Blok* (later *Vlaams Belang*) in Belgium, under Dewinter, which obtained major successes in Flanders, the *Lega Nord* of Bossi, which obtained over 10 per cent of the votes in the part of the country in which it stood, (with a similar, but less remarkable move in Ticino, in Switzerland) and the National Front of Le Pen, which hovered between 10 and 15 per cent of the votes in French national elections since 1988.

Analogous developments occurred in Eastern Europe, but, given that competitive party systems emerged only in 1990 or 1991 in the area, not only are all non-ex-communist parties 'new', but it is somewhat difficult to distinguish sharply small or medium-sized parties from large parties. This is partly because fluctuations have indeed often been very rapid, for instance in the Baltic States and in Poland (as well as in the mid-1990s in Hungary, where Antall's Forum collapsed soon after the death of its original leader); this is also partly because in some of the countries where the president is directly elected, and especially in Lithuania and Poland, 'outsiders' obtained surprisingly good results but did not always set up a party. The most successful cases of personally-based intermediate-sized parties are those of Mečiar in Slovakia and of Tudor in Romania, and, in Poland, at the 2004 European election, of Lepper's *Samoobrona* (self-defence) party as well as in the same country, of the Law and Justice

party which had been set up and dominated by the two Kaczynski brothers and which succeeded in being the main partner in the government which emerged from the 2005 general election, but was defeated in 2007.¹¹

Personalisation in larger parties

In the 'larger' parties, there appear to be significant differences in the extent and even type of party personalisation between the five most populous Western European countries (Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain) and the other eleven countries, whose population ranges from under four million (Ireland) to sixteen (The Netherlands). Twelve of the thirty-seven of the Western European 'larger' parties belonged to the five most populous countries, while twenty-five came from the other eleven countries,

PARTY PERSONALISATION IN THE LARGER PARTIES OF THE LESS POPULOUS ELEVEN WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND IN EASTERN EUROPE

Let us begin by considering the case of the eleven less populous Western European countries as well as of Eastern European countries. First, except in the South of Western Europe, no new larger parties emerged during the second half of the twentieth century, if we assume (seemingly justifiably) that the two main Austrian parties were continuations of the parties which had existed before the Second World War. Both Greek 'larger' parties were new;¹² the same was true of both larger Portuguese parties, as there had been no serious development of the Socialist Party earlier. Five 'personalised party' leaders ostensibly emerged from these two countries, Soares and Caraco Silva in Portugal, Papandreu senior, Karamanlis and Papandreu junior in Greece. All five were instrumental in changing fundamentally the characteristics of the party system as a result of the part played by the new parties which they had set up and which became the key political forces in their respective countries.

The situation is different in the other nine less populous countries of Western Europe. Not only were there no new parties among those which were large, but those leaders who had a strong personal influence seemed more to have boosted support for their party than to have been concerned to introduce major policy changes, with the possible exception of Kreisky in Austria. In the early post-Second World War period, perhaps the best examples of such leaders are those of de Valera in Ireland (who, as the Portuguese leaders who have been just mentioned, had founded a party – and the country – but before the Second World War), of Erlander in Sweden, of Gerhardsen in Norway, of Drees in the Netherlands. Since the 1970s, some leaders had the same effect, especially Kekkonen, who dominated a very long period of post-Second World War Finnish history as president, Palme in Sweden, Haughey in Ireland, Lubbers and later Kok in the Netherlands, Dehaene and later Martens in Belgium. Therefore, except for the two cases of Portugal and Greece and, before 1945, of de Valera, the personali-

sation of party leaders in the less populous countries of Western Europe was somewhat more 'subdued', so to speak, in part because no new parties were created and in part because, even in their party, these leaders did not truly 'control' developments – perhaps as it did not seem to them necessary or appropriate to do so.

In Eastern Europe, the clearest cases of strongly personalised party leaders are those of Klaus in the Czech Republic and of Antall and Orban in Hungary. Except perhaps in the Hungarian case, there did not seem to be 'personalised' leaders behind the policy changes which took place in Communist parties, partly because the changes which occurred were forced upon the party collectively by the need to rescue what could be rescued and partly because any leaders who emerged did not seem able or perhaps even willing to boost the support for their party among the population (Table 5.3).

PARTY PERSONALISATION IN THE LARGER PARTIES OF THE MORE
POPULOUS FIVE COUNTRIES OF WESTERN EUROPE

The case of the five more populous countries is different. There have been new parties in at least three and arguably four of these countries and, in all five of them, 'party personalised' leaders have emerged who successfully modified the goals of their own party, even when they did not create a new party. Whether these leaders also had a direct effect on the electorate is more problematic and, as was pointed out earlier, there are in all cases substantial measurement problems.

It is in these cases also somewhat arbitrary to decide whether some of the 'larger' parties of these countries are 'new' or 'pre-existing'. If one excludes the parties which were clearly new, those of De Gaulle, Berlusconi or Aznar, although Aznar himself was not the one who created the *Partido Popular*, there are cases which have to be deemed as intermediate. This is so both of the German CDU/CSU, which was an heir to, but also a marked expansion of the pre-1933 Centre party and of the Italian Christian Democracy which was even more of an expansion of the *Partito Popolare* of the 1920s. Moreover, there is some doubt as to whether the PSOE of the 1970s is a clear continuation of the pre-Spanish civil war party of the same name or whether the Socialist Party founded by Mitterrand truly continued the old French SFIO. Even in Britain, Blair was anxious to state that the party he led was 'New Labour' and not 'just' the same as the old Labour Party.

In contrast with what occurred in the case of the other eleven countries of the region, there are relatively few examples, in the five more populated ones, of leaders who seemed to boost the strength of their party and to have some influence in the party but without apparently attempting to do more than 'manage' that party. The British Conservative prime minister Macmillan is one of these few examples. Churchill did not win the 1945 election despite of his war record; the Conservative party improved appreciably at the 1950 and 1951 elections (8 per cent of the votes overall, after having lost markedly more – 14 per cent – at the 1945 election; yet it only won the 1951 election because of the electoral

Table 5.3 European leaders who appear to have boosted the appeal of their party

	<i>Boosted party externally but no large decision power in party</i>	<i>Boosted party externally with large decision power in party</i>	<i>Embodied new party and decided in party internally</i>	
			<i>Marginal</i>	<i>Large</i>
To 1965	Drees Gerhardsen Erlander Macmillan Kekkonen Palme Haughey Lubbers Dehaene	De Valera Papandreou Togliatti	Uomo Qual Poujade	Adenauer De Gasperi De Gaulle
1965–1985		Brandt Kreisky Mitterand Karamanlis Berlinguer Soares Thatcher	Hage (N) Glistrup (DK) Craxi	(Pujol)
1985–2004	Kohl Martens	González Papandreou Jr Aznar Blair	Haider Le Pen Anders (N) Kjærsgaard (DK) Bossi Fortijn Dewinter	Berlusconi

Eastern Europe

1990–2004	Wałęsa	Laar (EST) Antall Klaus Mečiar Orban	Olechisky Tudor Lepper	Saavisar (EST) Skele (LV) Adamkus (LIT) Paksas (LIT) Simeon Kaczynski
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Notes

- 1 The table includes all nineteen Western European countries and, for Eastern Europe, the ten countries which had joined the EU by 2007.
- 2 The cases of the Baltic states raise problems as the variations from one election to the next are often very substantial.
- 3 The other six countries of the Balkans, Croatia, Serbia and (up to 2006), Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Albania and Moldova are somewhat more problematic to categorise, especially because the first two have been run by strongly nationalistic leaders for a long period, while Bosnia-Herzegovina is in effect run jointly by three parties of a nationalistic character. Albania and Moldova have had 'new' parties, but not truly nationalistic parties, while Macedonia is the only country among the six to have been run, rather as Spain or Portugal, by the same groups of parties alternating in power.

system, since more votes went to Labour than to the Conservatives. Despite the fact that the Labour government had had serious internal difficulties and had in effect implemented what seemed to be the bulk of its programme, that party lost only a little (under 2 per cent) at the 1950 election and recovered to gain somewhat more at the 1951 election (2.6 per cent). The decline of the Labour party occurred afterwards, in the 1950s, when it lost twice 2.5 per cent of the votes, at the elections of 1955 and 1959.

Macmillan, who became leader of the Conservative party in 1957 almost accidentally in the aftermath of the Suez debacle for which his predecessor, Eden, was regarded as responsible, may well have had a personal following in the country: admittedly, the Conservatives lost very slightly in percentage at the 1959 election (0.4 per cent); but they lost less than the Labour Party and the fact that this was the third Conservative victory in a row was felt to be at the time a tribute to Macmillan's appeal. Yet it was an appeal to continue in the way the party had acted in the previous ten years. Macmillan appears thus to have boosted the party's strength, relatively speaking at least, without having changed (or even wanted to change) the direction of the Conservative party. Kohl is the German leader whose 'personalisation' profile resembled most that of Macmillan.

Meanwhile, a string of other leaders were able to change radically their party's policy outlook; they also seemed to have a substantial impact on the citizenry of their country, even if, as we shall see in the context of the case study analyses, it is difficult to document with certainty the extent to which these leaders did boost their party's support at elections.¹³ The leaders' impact on their party's policy was noticeable, not just in the cases of Adenauer or De Gasperi, but of Brandt (over the SPD programme), of Berlinguer (over the Italian Communist Party programme), of Mitterrand, of Gonzales (over the PSOE's programme), of Thatcher and of Blair. The changes which these leaders brought about were triggered to a large extent by the sense that the party programme had to be more in tune with citizens' preoccupations and that, therefore, the party could not stick to its traditional line without risking serious decline.

Moreover, personalised party leaders were to emerge also for another reason in four of the five more populous countries of the region: these countries were indeed confronted, at the end of the Second World War but also in subsequent decades, with a breakdown of political authority which called either for total reconstruction or for at least major 'surgery'. This was the situation which Adenauer, De Gasperi, Gonzales – and indeed the Portuguese and Greek leaders who were mentioned earlier – had to face. This was also the situation which was to be at the origin of the rise of two entirely new large parties based on personalities in Western Europe, at forty years' interval, in France and in Italy.

THE VERY SPECIAL CASE OF THE RISE OF 'NEW' 'LARGER' PARTIES,
EVEN IN WESTERN EUROPE

The 'new' Western European parties which have been mentioned so far are 'medium-sized' and, as a result, have tended to be – and indeed can be con-

sidered as being – marginal to the political system of the countries concerned. There are exceptions, admittedly: Fortijn's party and Haider's party joined and the Danish People's Party supported governments of the Right. Yet, in Eastern Europe and even in Western Europe, other, more remarkable developments did occur.

It is perhaps not too surprising that not just 'middle-sized', but 'larger' 'unconventional' parties based on a leader should have emerged in Eastern Europe since the fall of communism. Without taking into account the authoritarian leaders of Croatia and Serbia in the 1990s, Tuđman and Milošević, at least three cases occurred which showed that 'personalised' leaders who had created parties of the 'unconventional' type succeeded in winning elections and in becoming themselves prime ministers of their country. Mečiar obtained that position twice in Slovakia at the head of a coalition; his role was subsequently reduced, admittedly. Ex-King Simeon of Bulgaria set up the National Movement Simeon II, which obtained a near absolute majority of seats at the 2001 general election, but support for that party fell to under 20 per cent of the votes at the general election of 2005. The party of the Kaczynski brothers, Law and Justice, won the 2005 Polish general election, although that victory owes much to the electoral system as the party obtained a quarter of the votes only; two years later, at the 2007 election, the party did lose, although it had increased its support by 2 per cent of the votes, seemingly by squeezing its two allies on the Right.

Yet developments of this kind did not occur in Eastern Europe only: in Western Europe, too, 'larger' parties created by a leader enjoying a substantial popular support succeeded, not just in eroding, but in effectively replacing the parties of the Right and centre-Right which had previously ruled their country. The first cases were in a sense those of the German CDU/CSU, led by Adenauer, and of the Italian Christian Democratic party, led by De Gasperi, but, as was pointed out, these parties were not entirely 'new'. There was then De Gaulle's party in France, which first appeared in 1947, failed at the time but re-appeared in 1958, at the height of the Algerian war, and remained a permanent central feature of French politics under a variety of names (it came to be called UMP (Union for the Presidential Majority) in the early part of the twenty-first century). In the same vein, nearly forty years later, in the 1990s, Berlusconi created *Forza Italia* which gained almost immediately over 20 per cent of the votes, a score which it retained at a series of elections and which enabled its leader to become prime minister in 1994, from 2001 to 2006 and again in 2008.¹⁴ At the sub-national level, moreover, as was mentioned earlier, the *Convergència I Unió* of Pujol ruled Catalonia up to the regional election of 2003, the Galician party of Fraga being rather similar, but much smaller in terms of its absolute size. Pujol's party is very large within Catalonia: it did for that region what De Gaulle's and Berlusconi's parties did for their respective countries, namely replace the traditional Right.

The parties which have just been mentioned are exceptional in Western Europe in having been 'larger' parties based on a powerful leader: it has to be added that they were set up in the exceptional circumstances of the Second

World War and its aftermath or of truly major social and political crises. Two key questions arise in this context. Will developments of this kind be repeated only if major crises take place or will 'unconventional' larger parties based on personalities also emerge in what could be described as 'normal' situations? Such a question cannot as yet be answered on the basis of empirical evidence, but it is manifestly linked to the extent to which the traditional parties' support is being eroded; it is indeed interesting to note that the question has not arisen as yet in the 'less populous' countries of Western Europe.

The second question raised by these 'unconventional' 'larger' parties based on a leader is whether they are truly durable. The fate of Simeon's party casts doubts about such a survival. The Berlusconi experience does show, however, that such a party can at least overcome two defeats when the leader forcefully directs the opposition to the government; but the future of *Forza Italia* remains uncertain, especially when the question of a change of leadership will arise. Yet the Gaullist party did survive its founder and a number of subsequent internal crises. As the Peronist party, the Gaullist party is the living proof that parties based on personalities can be maintained for decades; it is also the living proof that a party of this type can remain afloat in an 'advanced' liberal democracy, admittedly a liberal democracy which had never previously had a solid party system. Moreover, thanks to the Gaullist party, the French party system is perhaps no longer markedly weaker than those of countries, such as those of Scandinavia, which had long been very strong and indeed had an almost rock-like structure.

It seems therefore no exaggeration to state that parties based on their leaders are a significant feature, even if admittedly a minority feature, of the landscape of European politics, East and West, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Some leaders did play a part in strengthening parties which had long existed but seemed in difficulty; but these cases were few and rather unsuccessful. What occurred more frequently was the emergence of parties at the margin of politics, typically on the Right and even extreme-Right, the parties of the Left, either those of a Marxist character, most of which are small, or the Greens, having eschewed, officially at least, a strong personal leadership. Such a development is still marginal to most political systems of Western Europe: it has not normally affected the 'survival' of the traditional 'large' parties, even if these did decline. The effect has been more marked in two countries at least, however, France and Italy, where the configuration of the party system was indeed transformed by the emergence of a large party led by a leader.

The least that can be said at this point is that it is thus surely valid to come to the conclusion that the classical view of the development of 'modern' parties based on social cleavages can no longer be held without major amendments. The European picture has become markedly more varied in terms of the socio-political basis of parties than was anticipated earlier. It seems therefore to follow that, not only do these new party configurations need to be systematically analysed, but that a move must be made in the direction of one or more new models of party development.

Notes

- 1 See Chapter 2, note 5, about the fact that A. King and his collaborators concentrated exclusively on the direct influence of leaders in the volume published in 2002.
- 2 There was a major set of party changes in Spain in the early 1980s, as the UCD collapsed and, for a while, the CDS aimed at being a significant centre party, but the Spanish party system displayed great stability since the late 1980s. On the other hand, parties of a 'personalised' character emerged in the regions, not just in Catalonia as a result of the major part played by Pujol, but in Galicia and, but with very limited success, in Andalusia. There have also been attempts, in particular by Eanes, to build a 'presidential' party in the early period following the return to democracy, but the Portuguese party system remained very stable since the mid-1980s. In Greece, attempts were made to create a right-wing party in the 1990s, but that party failed to obtain more than 5 per cent of the votes. It should also be noted that in these three Southern European countries, the leadership within at least one of the major parties, and, in at least Portugal and Greece in both of them, has had characteristics which would lead to describe it as strongly 'personalised'.
- 3 While Berlusconi's *Forza Italia* has been, in Western Europe, the only large national party led by the man who created that party which has been in power at the end of the period under investigation, a rather similar situation occurred in France with the Gaullist party in the 1950s and 1960s. Whether that party has become an 'ordinary' conservative party in the course of the subsequent decades is being considered in Chapter 9. As a matter of fact, France has had highly personalised leaders in both the Gaullist party and the Socialist party. Japan can be said to fall in the third category since it has had new parties, but, as Britain, the leader of its main conservative party, the Liberal-Democratic party, in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, Koizumi, resembles Thatcher and Blair in having had a marked 'popular' appeal. The situation in Thailand in the early years of the twenty-first century resembled that of Italy (and indeed of Bulgaria) in that a highly personalised leader, Thaksin Shinawatra, created a party, the TRT (Thais like Thais) and proceeded to win two elections and be the prime minister of the country, before being deposed by what turned out to be a temporary military government.
- 4 This is the party led by Tudor, *Romania Mare*. In Bulgaria, the ex-king created a party which won the general election and governed the country as prime minister between 2001 and 2005; the party lost the election of 2005 and the ex-king retired from the government, though his party came to be in the new governmental coalition. On the (very limited) role of cleavages in East-central Europe and the Balkans after the fall of communism, see K. Lawson *et al.* (1999).
- 5 Although the extent of personalised party leadership has been limited in Germany since 1949, there were elements of such a development with Gerhard Schröder. It seems difficult to believe that there was nothing of the kind in the relationship between Adenauer and the citizenship.
- 6 The political system of the French Fourth Republic was so different from that of the Fifth, as was the political system of Greece in the early post-Second World War years that it would make no sense to average out party personalisation in these countries during the two periods.
- 7 There are oscillations in the strength of all parties, but in the case of some, they are rather substantial. In particular, some parties moved on both sides of the 20 per cent figure, while others moved on both sides of the 10 per cent figure. Those parties which were mostly above the 20 per cent range were classified as 'larger' rather than 'middle-sized' in the first instance. Those parties which were mostly above the 10 per cent range were classified as 'middle-sized'.
- 8 The Italian National Alliance (AN) was classified as a new party, although it originated from the MSI (Italian Social Movement), but changed its approach, especially

with respect to its acceptance of the democratic ideology; moreover, the MSI never obtained more than about 5 per cent of the votes, while the AN obtained regularly over 10 per cent until it ceased to exist in 2009, having merged then with *Forza Italia* to form the *Popolo della Libertà*.

- 9 The Italian Communist party was classified as 'larger' as long as it existed with that name. The French Communist party was 'larger' before 1981 only: it never had 20 per cent of the votes afterwards. It was therefore classified as 'middle-sized' in this analysis.
- 10 Haider regained appreciably at the election of 2008, but he was killed in a car accident shortly afterwards. His party was none the less successful at the regional elections in Carinthia in 2009.
- 11 Lepper's party lost heavily at the 2008 election and failed to re-enter the Polish parliament as a result.
- 12 Karamanlis had already started a (successful) party under the monarchy, but New Democracy was a post-dictatorship party. In any case, the origins of that party were in the entirely new party which Karamanlis had set up two decades earlier.
- 13 The extent to which Thatcher, for instance, boosted the votes of her party is far from obvious, despite the fact that she ostensibly had an undeniably immense ideological and programmatic influence, worldwide. She was not seemingly popular at the time of her first election as leader, in 1979: the gains of the party at that election (8 per cent) appeared essentially due to a 'realignment' in the direction of the Conservatives of electors who had become dissatisfied of Labour's performance, which had been helped for a while by the support given by the Liberal party: both these parties lost appreciably, in particular the second, at the 1979 election. Subsequently, the Conservative vote declined, admittedly minimally, at the general elections of 1983 and 1987, the Conservative victory being ostensibly due largely to the problems which the Labour Party was encountering at the time. The question is examined in detail in the case study devoted to Britain in the second part of this volume.
- 14 As mentioned in note 8, above, *Forza Italia* merged with the National Alliance led by Fini in 2008 and was renamed as a result the *Popolo della Libertà*.

6 A prospective methodology for the analysis of the links among leaders, parties and citizens

This chapter proposes a methodological framework designed to assess the role of personalised party leaders. As was noted in Chapter 3, this role has been examined to an extent, for instance in the context of party organisation and leadership, of political communication and campaigning and of clientelism and patronage; above all, party personalisation has been studied recently in connection with what is regarded as a trend towards the “presidentialisation” of the governmental process in parliamentary systems (Poguntke and Webb 2005; Mughan 2000). Many studies focusing on personalisation thus consider from different points of view various important features of contemporary politics: what is still lacking, however, is a wide-ranging framework covering this multi-faceted concept in a comprehensive manner.

This chapter proposes to contribute to the issue by suggesting an overall approach in which all aspects of party personalisation are examined. Personalisation is thus assessed both inside parties, by looking at the role of the leader in these organisations, and outside parties, by studying the relationships existing between leader and public opinion. We proceed in this chapter in two directions. First, when possible, we review methods, techniques and variables adopted in the past with respect to aspects of party personalisation. Second, with respect to topics so far largely overlooked or at least less scrutinised, we propose, whenever possible, a new use of existing data, or, when data are not available, we suggest how data collection can take place. This justifies the adjective ‘prospective’ which has been adopted here.

Party leaders have been assessed recently at length in two types of studies. First, the emergence of extreme right (‘populist’) parties has been viewed as a consequence of long-term cultural changes, of medium-term conditions, such as electoral de-alignment and the salience of new issues, and of the short-term presence of ‘political entrepreneurs’, variously described as “charismatic”, “proto-charismatic” or “high-profile” (Mény and Surel 2000; Ignazi 2006). Second, some students of elections – albeit remaining sceptical – admitted that voters may be influenced by leaders or candidates: they refer to growing electoral “personalisation”, “presidentialisation”, or “candidate-centred politics” (King 2002b; Poguntke and Webb 2005; Wattenberg 1991).

The literature on parties and elections which suggests that there are limited leaders’ effects has two opposite characteristics. That which concentrates on

populist parties is largely descriptive: a picture is presented of an important aspect of party system change, but some concepts, such as charisma, are left obscure or undefined. By contrast, the other branch of that literature is firmly based on theories of electoral behaviour and makes use of methodologically sophisticated tools. Unfortunately, it assumes a rather narrow standpoint in accounting for voters' motivations.¹

A broader perspective is adopted here, as both the parties' internal life and electoral behaviour are considered to be worthy of attention; citizens' views towards leaders may result from a feeling of political trust, as in the case of incumbency, but leaders are also assessed on the basis of non-political attributes, such as gender and race as well as psychological traits (Caprara and Vecchione 2007). We shall therefore consider both these matters in the context of the aspects of personalisation analysed in Chapter 3.

The political discourse of leaders

Chapter 3 analysed the relevant aspects of the political discourse of leaders: alternative communication styles were described as well as the relationship between these styles and party personalisation. A particular emphasis was placed on populism and on populist leaders. We now move one step further and discuss 'where' and 'how' this relationship should be researched; by so doing, we enter the field of political communication and of its methodologies. Generally speaking, content analysis is the technique suited to gather this kind of information; it may be used, in principle at least, to measure and scrutinise all forms of communication in which parties and their leaders are involved, whether written, oral, or televised.

Given its versatility from a methodological point of view, content analysis renders irrelevant the distinction between the external communication between leaders and public opinion at large and the processes of internal communication within the parties. This distinction raises practical problems, however: while parties are very open about their external communication processes, politicians usually prefer to conceal internal matters, such as factional disagreements or spoils systems arrangements. One way of bypassing this problem consists in examining party manifestos: among many functions these perform – from candidate recruitment, to electioneering, to governmental decision-making – parties offer policy proposals to attract voters' support. Of course, the policy profiles of parties have been adapted to changes in party organisation. The policy programmes of the mass parties originated directly from the ideology of these parties: thus policy positions did not change frequently and the leaders' role was limited, as these were not supposed to be original policy 'designers'. Policy propaganda was largely due to the party bureaucracy and to the grassroots campaigners.

The roles of policy profiles and of leaders changed, however, with the advent of 'electoralist' or 'catch-all' parties from the 1960s. Policy profiles became based less on ideology and were more (electorally) market-oriented; they were

built on the basis of the people's views ascertained by means of surveys. Party leaders also came to play a critical role, as they were responsible for promoting among the voters party policy positions associated with their own image. Paraphrasing one of the typical concepts used in electoral research, one could say that parties competed attributing to their leaders a 'personal issue ownership'.

The leaders' presence in political communication is a key theme to be discussed later in this chapter. Here the problem is how to assess the leaders' role in settling the party policy agenda. As every matter affecting the internal life of parties, the drafting of the programme is not a fully transparent process. To weigh different influences exercised by internal branches and organisational bodies on party policy positions is complex. Quantitative methods do not seem particularly helpful in this respect; interviews with sophisticated observers should be used to implement a qualitative and prevalently descriptive approach. Nevertheless, at least some points could be assessed with the help of quantitative techniques: a major opportunity is offered by the data collection undertaken by the Comparative Manifesto Project (Budge *et al.* 1987, 2001), in which content-analyses of electoral manifestos are divided into fifty-four categories falling into seven general sectors.² This approach aims at assessing position or valence issues, the relationship to social groups as well as Left-Right standing. A huge amount of information is thus available about a large number of parties in Western democracies. This information renders possible the systematic comparison of the policy standpoints of parties as well as their Left-Right positioning. Yet a question remains: what is the leaders' role in these processes?

The Comparative Manifesto Project data differs from the others which are usually used to assess parties' positions, such as survey data and expert judgments: showing the party policy profile in all elections since the Second World War, this data is able to describe long-term changes. It is thus possible for instance to throw some light on policy U-turns. Alternatively – but with the same scope – one can measure the movement of a party along the Left-Right continuum between two or more elections. British politics offers some remarkable examples of such movements. On the one hand, the leadership of the Conservatives under Mrs Thatcher has been viewed as the start of a neo-conservative approach, when an authentic policy 'revolution' took place in the government or, which is more relevant here, in the party. On the other hand, during Tony Blair's leadership, Labour adopted a new organisation, campaign style and policy standing. Changes were so marked that the party was renamed 'New' Labour. The Comparative Manifesto Project data rightly detected what was happening: examining the Left-Right positioning of the main British parties in the 1997 parliamentary election, Budge (1999) discovered a remarkable stability among both Liberals and Conservatives, while Blair's New Labour experienced major changes.

First, at the 1997 election, New Labour leapfrogged the Liberals, assuming for the first time since the 1940s a median position between Liberals and Conservatives. Second, the centripetal movement was so striking that 'New Labour' bypassed the centre of the ideological space and moved to a position which was slightly on the Right.

The Comparative Manifesto Project data has been collected to study party competition; it disregards the role of leaders inside their own parties. It may none the less be used to assess the extent of party personalisation, particularly with respect to the extent of the leader's control on the party manifesto. To do so, the best research strategy consists in a joint use of qualitative knowledge about the role of the leader in the party and of quantitative evidence obtained by analyses of party manifestos. Periods of policy 'revolution' and of ideological change are dramatic and easily identifiable: they should be closely examined to determine precisely the leaders' control on the positions adopted by their party.

The direct personalised relationships between leaders and citizens

Party leaders and clientelism

Clientelism has been described in Chapter 3 as a personal relationship between patron and clients. That relationship characterised traditional societies, but survived the emergence of representative democracy. Electoral clientelism still played a large part at the time of parties of 'notables'. Up to the end of the nineteenth century, as long as fully nationalised politics did not prevail in most European democracies, locally-based notables spent their private resources to further their political careers in the context of single-member constituencies. Despite the decline of the role of local notables when universal suffrage and mass parties came to dominate the scene, clientelism did not wholly disappear; indeed, it still persists in some areas, especially Southern Europe and Latin America, although most democracies are characterised by highly nationalised politics with strongly centralised campaigning. The question does none the less arise as to whether clientelism continues to play a part in promoting party personalisation at the national level. Three points need to be examined in this respect, namely the nature of the constituency 'service' at the start of political careers, the extent to which a position in local politics helps to gain popularity at the national level and the role of 'populism' in the build-up of electoral support.

Many politicians lack previous experience in a party; instead, they may take advantage of extra-political positions in trade unions or in business. This was almost inconceivable previously, when would-be politicians had to follow a *cursus honorum* within their party, which meant, at any rate very often, starting at local level before being nominated for a parliamentary seat. In such a context, candidates have to develop a face-to-face, clientelistic relationship with voters in their constituency, although such a trend is usually felt to be less prevalent in multi-member district systems for two main reasons. First, single-member constituencies lead to more personal links between candidates and voters than the larger constituencies of multi-member districts. Second, in majority systems, the personal characteristics of candidates often matter more than party labels. Thus, in their research about congressmen in the US and about MPs in the UK, Cain *et al.* (1987) start from the assumption that candidates and parliamentary represent-

atives want to be elected and eventually be re-elected. To achieve these goals, they attempt to become indispensable to the voters in their constituencies.

Broadly speaking, they may use their parliamentary positions in two different ways to achieve this purpose. First, as legislators, they can advocate funding for pork barrel policies allocating disproportionate resources to benefit their voters. Second, they may provide the services necessary to solve constituents' problems brought about by the inefficiency of the governmental bureaucracy. Together these activities result in the so-called 'constituency service' which aims at raising the personal support for a given candidate. While Cain *et al.* (1987) focus on two English-speaking democracies which have single-member constituencies, Carey and Shugart (1995) deal with the same problem in a broader comparative perspective. They also estimate whether candidates adopt electoral strategies based on their own personal reputation rather than on their party's brand name. According to their analysis, the classical distinction between majority and proportional representation systems is not particularly relevant here, because both types of electoral systems spur personalisation. While a comprehensive analysis of clientelism in relation to electoral processes in modern democracies is well beyond the scope of this volume, the possible role of local clientelism during the initial years of the career of a party leader needs careful consideration. Although it is less frequent, the maintenance of these personal ties by leaders having achieved a national position deserves also due attention.

Clientelism may help to launch the career of a political leader in another way. As was noted earlier, the very beginning of many a politician's career often takes place at local level. Especially if they are able to reach an executive position at that level, politicians may start to build their popularity at that point. Thus Ségolène Royal in France and Walter Veltroni in Italy adopted such a tactic. The former was president of a Western French region, the latter was mayor of Rome: both were nominated through primaries to run for the position of national chief executive.

The pursuit of popularity by taking advantage of incumbency in local government is only one strategy available to prospective national leaders, however. Indeed, politicians may also use their local position – and related resources – to develop personal relationships in order to build up support for their next steps in politics. While the pursuit of popularity for its own sake will be examined below, the personal use of local political roles can be akin to the practice of clientelism. France is a case in point: not only have parties in that country often felt to be mere tools to support the personal ambitions of the so-called 'présidentiables', as they lack the strong organisation of many other European parties, but prominent national French politicians have usually been mayors of towns at the beginning of their career and often have maintained these positions all along their political life. Jacques Chirac's career is the most extreme case of a self-promoting national French politician using local resources. According to a specialised observer, "[he] had discovered that his control of the Paris Town Hall was a better logistical and financial substitute for state power than a large party" (Knapp 2002: 120). Admittedly, the analysis of parties in multi-level political

systems is an understudied field of research (Deschouwer 2006) and it may therefore be problematical to refer to it in the context of party personalisation, but at least a broad distinction between unitary and federal states should be considered. The usual view is that the latter give local politicians more resources to be used freely to advance their career.

Modern clientelism is a face-to-face relationship between a patron and his or her locally entrenched clients in order to foster the interests of a narrow electoral constituency. Defined in this manner, clientelism can be expected to play only a small part in the case of national political leaders, a part which tends to be limited to the beginning of the career. Things may be different if clientelism is viewed as the representation of a portion, albeit large, of the national territory: under the label of clientelism one may then consider those populist political parties which have a racial/xenophobic leaning *and* have strong links with a specific geographical area. Two possible examples of such a party are the Austrian FPÖ and above all the Italian *Lega Nord*. In both cases, these parties have been able to exploit their local position in Carinthia and in Northern Italy to gain national influence, while giving their leaders a charismatic aura. Admittedly, to consider personalisation in these parties as a consequence of clientelism – here intended as the strong link of a party leader with a territory – means running the risk of concept ‘overstretching’, but it makes it possible to analyse better a crucial aspect of contemporary party systems.

Party leaders and patronage

Patronage can be defined as the patrons’ power to advance their clients’ careers using resources originating from a working spoils system. If one focuses on parties, patronage refers to the leaders’ ability to place their own followers in party positions and in representative institutions. Far from being new, patronage was the normal relationship linking notables and rank-and-file supporters in ‘parties of notables’ (Duverger 1954). Mass parties constituted an alternative model, as, in these, the bureaucratic apparatus constrained leaders in exercising patronage. Nevertheless critics have shown the oligarchic tendencies inherent to these parties, where leaders are able to exert an informal but effective personal power (Michels 1962). More recent organisational changes are viewed as enhancing the leaders’ power over their parties. For instance, the spread of communication media since the 1960s strongly increased the leaders’ role as party spokesmen, a point which was illustrated by theorists of the ‘electoral-professional’ party (Panebianco 1988).³ Moreover the view that parties were forming a ‘cartel’ in some cases, in part as a result of the role of state financing, led to the conclusion that leaders had substantial resources which helped to increase patronage (Katz and Mair 1995). Finally, a so-called ‘business firm’ model was applied in some cases to party organisations in which leaders came from the private sector and spent liberally from their own resources (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). Patronage is thus a changing activity, but one which affects markedly the internal life of parties.

In order to describe the leaders' personal control of their parties through patronage, three aspects are particularly relevant, the appointments to the party apparatus, nominations to parliament and the choice of Cabinet members. In a strongly personalised party, the leader can freely choose the members of the party elite; these become mere subordinates of leaders, with only little say in the party's affairs. In order to maintain their comfortable control on their party's internal life, personalised leaders also avoid building a truly bureaucratic organisation and rely on small teams of well-known people. Moreover, internal democratic procedures designed to select a variety of leaders are limited to low and peripheral positions, while key posts are directly controlled by personalised leaders by means of a top-down selection. Thus, to assess the extent of personalisation within parties, one should scrutinise the extent of the leaders' control of central offices.

The central office is only one of the parties' "faces" (Katz 2005), but it is becoming more and more important. To assess the extent of personalisation in this respect, one must consider the triangle formed by party, parliament and Cabinet as well as the part played by the party leader in developing relationships among these three bodies. To approach the "secret garden" (Gallagher and Marsh 1988) of the parties' internal life little is gained by examining formal statutes: these invariably refer to the need for cooperation between central office and party on the ground; practices are often radically different, however, alternatively allowing for inclusive or exclusive methods (Hazan 2002). On the one hand, inclusive methods of candidate selection are based on citizens' involvement, primary elections being the most obvious mechanism; critics of the procedure state that primaries are simply a tool used by top leaders to manipulate participants and surmount opposition coming from middle-level office-holders inside the party (Katz 2005): yet internal democracy does limit the leaders' appointment power. On the other hand, the most extreme formula of external methods occurs in some religious parties in Israel, where a single leader – a rabbi – can freely choose all parliamentary candidates for his party. In between, one finds most cases where local organisations may propose candidates but the national leadership exercises a veto power. The actual appointment power of the top leader can be assessed at that point.

A comprehensive examination of the leaders' power on their parliamentary party would entail roll-call analyses designed to discover the extent of voting discipline resulting from the leaders' control, a research strategy which is reliable, but expensive and time-consuming. The power of candidate selection provides leaders with a tool enabling them to exercise total control on MPs; it is also more easily detectable. It is also a reliable shortcut if one is to assess personalisation at the level of parliamentary party.

Party government researchers have discovered that with very few exceptions European ministers are appointed after having had a long internal career in their party (Wildenmann and Castles 1986). Which party body is entitled to recommend the nomination is less clear; nor is it clear whether party leaders always play a critical part in this respect. However, given the importance of ministers in

national political life, the news coverage on Cabinet formation is widely available and it can usefully be integrated with interviews with well-informed observers. The task is not particularly difficult in principle, but the leaders' freedom in nominating the Cabinet team does not simply rely on their personalised power within the party, as external relationships with potential coalition partners have often to be taken into account.

Two points need to be borne in mind in this respect. First, one needs to consider the nature of the part which the leader plays in the Cabinet. To simplify, three broad options are available: the party leader may become chief executive, as with Mitterrand, Thatcher or Berlusconi; the party leader may be appointed as a minister, as in the case of Bossi; a 'cordon sanitaire' surrounding an extremist party may exclude the leader from the government even after a good election result, as with Le Pen. Party leaders will be more assertive in the first case, more inhibited in the second, and, in the third, no Cabinet appointment is available.

Second, the leaders' freedom to appoint ministers is constrained by the structure of the government. Coalitions have markedly different forms shaped by the character of the party system (Laver and Schofield 1990). To refer to two types of government only, in one-party Cabinets, as in Britain or Spain, the chief executive is normally not concerned with the coalition bargaining process, though there are situations bordering on such a process, for instance if the main party does not have an overall majority. In coalition governments there is not only inter-party bargaining, but small partners may in some cases circumscribe markedly the leaders' appointment power.⁴

Party leaders and communication: media dominance

Political communication has become recently one of the most important functions performed by political parties and, since the 1980s, the topic has attracted much attention among researchers. The relevant literature is too large even to be referred to quickly here; it is sufficient to note that there is broad agreement about the existence of three stages in the development of media systems (Farrell and Webb 2000). According to Norris' definition (2000), the pre-modern stage spans from the middle of the nineteenth century to the 1950s, the modern stage from the early 1960s to the late 1980s, while the post-modern stage is in progress since the 1990s. Obviously communication channels, campaign styles and the actors involved changed markedly over the period. The point, however, is that each stage did not simply erase the main characteristics of the previous stage: modernisation joined old and new media rather than replace old-fashioned communication styles by 'post-modern' ones.

The leaders' critical presence in party communication is one of the main characteristics of 'electoral-professional' parties (Panebianco 1988); how this centrality of leaders should be researched is less clear. As a consequence of the modernisation process, leaders are present in a large array of communication channels. They can be talked about in a face-to-face dialogue among relatives or friends; they may go to a local party meeting to endorse local candidates striving

for a parliamentary seat; they may coordinate a permanent and centralised campaign at national level; they may use the most recent tools to organise a “cyber party” (Margetts 2006), a topic so far scarcely researched but increasingly important.

Each of these approaches imposes the use of a different methodology. For instance, Huckfeldt and Sprague (1995) are interested in studying the effects of political communication at local level and adopt a small group approach. They gather survey data concerning personal relationships and face-to-face communication in one county only. A similar research design could be used to learn how discourses about leaders affect face-to-face dialogues. The study of local campaigns has a long tradition based on direct participation of researchers at election meetings, on semi-structured interviews of well-informed observers and on the scrutiny of party and candidate messages through the content analysis of leaflets, manifestos and press conferences. Although in its infancy, the study of “cyber parties” could also content-analyse websites and e-mails. All these methods fit specific research designs and are judiciously used by many scholars. Yet we prefer to focus on the role of leaders in national election campaigns in the coming chapters of this volume: we seek to obtain in this way reliable results by comparing comparable cases.

The choice of the level of analysis does not resolve the question of the best methodological approach, however. The question which arises in this context is how one can assess the level of party personalisation of the communication process in a national (parliamentary or presidential) election. This issue is multifaceted, as it raises matters about voters’ attitudes which will be examined later in this chapter. We refer here only to some insights from research on campaigning and political marketing (Farrell and Webb 2000; Newman 1999; Swanson and Mancini 1996). These inquiries agree on two points. First, the best way to estimate party communication is to examine the role of television, which in nearly all democracies still continues to be the medium most used by about three quarters of the citizenship. Second, as stated much earlier by Otto Kirchheimer, parties centre their communication during a campaign on the image of the leader (1966).

One can elaborate a quantitative approach to the study of party personalisation in political communication by assessing the extent to which various leaders appear on television. Two different research strategies are then possible. One of these aims at measuring the personalisation of the communication process in general. To do so, one needs to classify at the outset the various issues referred to during a campaign: for instance, Mancini and Mazzoleni (1995) or Marini and Roncarolo (1997) found four different types of issues in Italian campaigns, namely debates about the policy issues in the governmental party’s agenda, about the political issues raised by the nature of the coalition and by governmental stability, about the campaign issues over the distribution of time in the media and over fairness in the use of money, and, lastly, about personal issues relating to the politicians’ pluses and minuses. The general level of party personalisation in political communication can be assessed by measuring the incidence of the time devoted to personal issues compared to the other three types of issues.

The second strategy is more pertinent here, as single leaders and not general communication are what matters. To assess whether a party leader succeeds in emphasising his or her image in a campaign one needs to compare the extent of his or her presence on television with the presence of other party leaders. Media dominance is the situation in which a leader's presence is overwhelming. Silvio Berlusconi has often been regarded as a good example of such a strategy. Figure 6.1 shows the televised presence of leaders in the Italian general election campaign of April 2006. Three party leaders of the right-wing coalition – the 'populist' Berlusconi, the catholic Casini, and the conservative Fini – agreed to enter the competition as equals and to postpone the leadership question until after the election. Fairness was more ceremonial than real, however: in what was a strongly televised campaign, the presence of Silvio Berlusconi, measured as his incidence on total time dedicated to political information, greatly prevailed over that of his allies and over his left-wing competitors as well.

As was pointed out earlier, the part played by the leader's significance can be assessed in other aspects of political communication; thus, for instance, when aspiring to the premiership, Berlusconi forced all parliamentary candidates supporting him and running in single-member districts to publish his photograph, not theirs, in political leaflets and brochures. Yet television remains the most important source of political information and data are also more easily available in this respect than in other cases.

Three remarks need to be made at this point. First, severe rules have been adopted in many countries to regulate the use of television, as the dramatic role of the media communication in current electoral politics was being recognised: because of these constraints, data about the leaders' media presence are readily

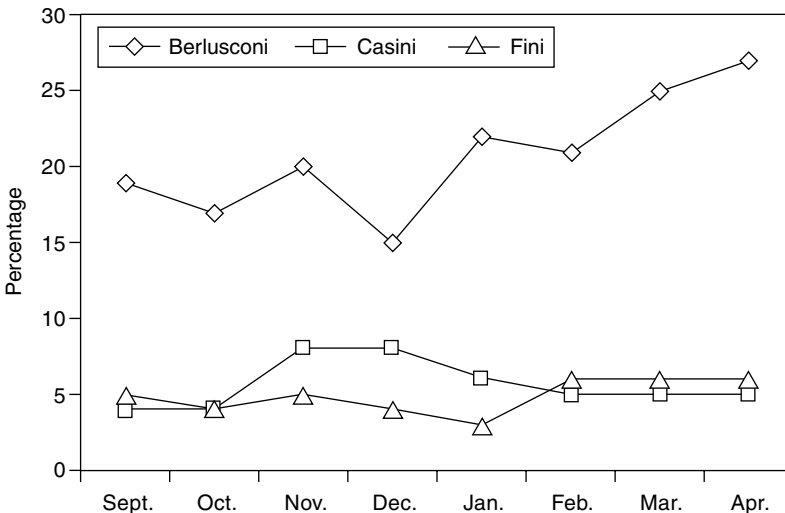


Figure 6.1 Televised presence of the right-wing Italian leaders in the 2006 campaign (source: Legnante and Sani, 1997: 174).

available. Second, we are not concerned in this process with the thresholds on the basis of which to assess the leaders' media presence but to find out whether there is media dominance: this is a critical matter, but the difficulty is not insoluble. Third, while we examine here the leaders' role on television during a finite campaign period, contemporary party politics is moving towards permanent campaigning (Blumenthal 1982). Yet this is only a limited hindrance which can be eliminated by means of small changes in the analysis.

Citizens' reactions to personalised leadership: popularity, notoriety, and charisma

Assessing external personalisation by means of aggregate data

As was indicated previously, external personalisation concerns the relationship between party leaders and the citizens. This means entering two research fields where survey data are predominant, electoral analysis and public opinion studies. Although the survey approach is clearly dominant, aggregate data analysis has also been used recently to estimate the amount of leader personalisation at elections. This strategy varies depending on the characteristics of electoral systems, which have become increasingly complex since the 1990s. There have for instance been concurrent elections for the legislature and for the chief executive: in such cases the extent of the personalisation of the electoral process can be measured by looking at the difference between the votes for candidates to the position of chief executive and the votes for the parties or the coalition supporting these candidates. Personalisation is assumed to be low or non-existent when the difference is negligible: in such a case, voters would appear to cast both their votes on the basis of ideological or partisan motivations. Personalisation is significant when executive and legislative votes are different: voters appear then to cast their vote prevalently on party grounds when voting for their MPs and prevalently on personal grounds when voting for the chief executive.

Once one has detected an element of personalisation, however, two different situations occur. Either the amount of votes for the candidate for the chief executive position is greater than the amount of votes for his or her party or coalition: personalisation is at work since the candidate for the chief executive position is able to attract more votes than the party or coalition. Or the amount of votes for the candidate for the chief executive position is smaller than the amount of votes for his or her party or coalition: personalisation then plays a negative part, since some voters are diverted from the candidate for the chief executive position because of his or her personal characteristics.

Electoral personalisation can be measured using aggregate data in presidential systems, at least when presidential and legislative elections take place concurrently. It can also be measured in the 'hybrid' cases of 'presidential parliamentarism' (Hazan 1996 and 2005), a system which was adopted at national level in Israel for a period, but has also been adopted in local politics in many countries. The personalisation index proposed by Baldini and Legnante (2000: 210) to

estimate the level of personalisation in municipal elections in Italy is thus calculated as the ratio between the votes obtained by a candidate for the position of chief executive and the votes obtained by the party or coalition supporting this candidate, minus one. It may assume a value of minus one when a candidate for the position of chief executive does not obtain any vote, while the maximum value tends to be infinite when the related party or coalition does not obtain any vote. Positive values mean that the candidate for the position of chief executive boosts up his or her party or coalition, negative values that the candidate for the position of chief executive does not obtain as many votes as his or her party or coalition.

Aggregate data make it possible to assess the level of personalisation in another way. A party leader is usually a crucial electoral asset for his or her party; such a point is not relevant in sub-national elections, where national politicians are less involved and may go unnoticed because of the dominance of local candidates and issues. As a consequence, whether or not a leader has a strong 'boosting' power vis-à-vis the electors, his or her party is expected to do better at national than at local elections. One can therefore measure the extent of personalisation by comparing local and national election results.

Measures of personalisation based on aggregate data suffer from some disadvantages, however. This is unquestionably so when executive and legislative elections are not concurrent. Moreover, as local elections are regarded as being 'second-order', with an appreciably lower turnout, comparisons with national elections become difficult. Thus, while aggregate data is less expensive to collect, survey data is to be preferred when feasible: we therefore turn to survey data in the coming sections of the chapter.

Popularity

Candidate-centred politics spread principally in the United States (Wattenberg 1991): the decline of party identification brought about the growth of the electoral role of candidates, which had also been heightened by the popular election of the president. Meanwhile, the changes which occurred in the American electoral process affected other polities: the decline of party identification, the increase in electoral volatility and the mediatisation of politics came to characterise many democracies across the world, while, since the 1980s, a number of case studies examined the electoral impact of leaders. At first, these focused exclusively on English-speaking countries (Bean 1993; Bean and Mughan 1989; Graetz and McAllister 1987; Nadeau *et al.* 1996). They then came to be concerned with countries which had adopted proportional representation, such as Greece (Dinas 2008), Italy (Barisione 2006, 2007; Venturino 2000, Ch.5 and 6), Norway (Jenssen and Aalberg 2006; Midtbø 1997), and Portugal (Costa Lobo 2006). The study of the role of party leaders finally became fully comparative (Curtice and Holmberg 2005; King 2002b), given in particular the interest in the growing role of 'populist' – and strongly personalised – parties (Givens 2005; Ignazi 2006).

All these studies adopted a quantitative approach and made an extensive use of survey and opinion poll data: this naturally led to ‘popularity’ being regarded as a key concept, which refers to the reputation of political leaders in public opinion, whether these leaders are incumbents or running for election for the first time. When incumbents are assessed, popularity is regarded as being a consequence of governmental policy-making. One usually finds that popularity suffers a sudden decrease after a honeymoon period because of the dissatisfaction of some interest groups. Towards the end of the incumbent’s term, however, and when governments come to play with macro-economic variables in order to improve their re-election prospects, popularity grows (Tufté 1978). Meanwhile, the ‘normal’ popularity cycle can be altered by such external – and often unpredictable – shocks as economic crises and wars, which can, however, from a methodological point of view, be easily handled by being treated as dummy variables.⁵ In connection with new candidates, on the other hand, voters cannot obviously base their attitudes on retrospective evaluations of past performance: the popularity of these candidates stems merely from perceived qualities, political or personal.

Incumbency is an important asset which largely determines the way a candidate enters the electoral campaign. Yet it is less relevant in terms of measurement. In the case of both incumbents and new candidates, popularity is usually measured in two ways. One of these consists of a single-scale thermometer measuring the sympathy of the voters. For instance, a one to ten scale is commonly used in Italy because these are the typical scores used in schools and therefore sounds familiar; on the other hand, in the United States, thermometers are usually based on a range between zero and one hundred. Moreover, thermometers composed of an even number of steps lack a median position often associated with a feeling of indifference; alternatively, thermometers have an odd number of steps, but, as this might mislead some, it seems more practical to propose to respondents negative and positive values coinciding directly with negative and positive evaluations. Thus, in the United States, thermometers sometimes range between minus fifty and plus fifty. Such thermometers have an odd number of steps (101) and therefore a unique median position to convey indifference towards the leader (zero).

Besides thermometers, survey research often uses scales built on a battery of questions about leaders; respondents are asked to answer positively (one) or negatively (zero), the overall assessment being made by summing the scores. The main disadvantage of this procedure is the amount of time taken by respondents to answer a large number of questions. On the other hand, the procedure makes it possible to assess the part played by each attribute and in particular to distinguish between political and non-political aspects.

Thermometers and scales used to assess leaders’ popularity can also be adopted for comparative analyses. The relevant procedures differ depending on whether the comparison is between two leaders or more than two. If only two leaders are involved, as in two-party and two-bloc systems, the procedure is simple, since it is sufficient to note the difference between the scores attributed by each respondent. When there are more than two leaders, one has to subtract

from the score attributed by a respondent to a leader the overall mean of the scores attributed by the same respondent to all leaders.

Westholm (1997) showed that the result is markedly different if one chooses non-comparative or comparative measures of evaluation. He then further pointed out that the Downsian approach is superior to other spatial theories. His findings can be generalised to establish that the electoral effects of leaders should be undertaken by means of comparative evaluations.

We have examined so far how scholars have handled problems concerning concept formation, methodology and data gathering with respect to the relationships between voters and leaders. Four points need to be made in this respect. First, the study of personalisation with respect to elections is embedded in the context of general electoral research: this means that quantitative approaches based on sophisticated techniques are usually employed. Second, the leaders' electoral impact is customarily analysed in terms of 'popularity' being regarded as a key independent variable. Third, wide-scale data gathering has been achieved by using thermometers and scales, thus allowing interested scholars to undertake case studies as well as comparative analyses. Fourth, non-comparative measures are generally adopted to undertake studies of single leaders, but comparative measures assessing simultaneously the popularity of various leaders yield important results. What is important to remember is that survey-based electoral research has collected large amounts of data which can be used for a variety of purposes, including the assessment of personal relationships between party leaders and voters. These data make it possible to measure, in part at least, the three concepts which are essential when studying personalisation, popularity, notoriety and charisma.

Notoriety

A leader is popular when he or she is well known among voters and is also appreciated by a large segment of citizenship, including at least the supporters of his or her own party. Notoriety is something less and charisma something more than popularity. Someone has notoriety simply if he or she is well known among voters, without there being any positive or negative evaluation. Notoriety can be measured by asking respondents in a survey whether they have ever listened to a talk given by a given politician. One simple way to find this out is by taking into account refusals to answer given in respect to the thermometers and the scales which were discussed earlier. Admittedly, such refusals may not be motivated merely by ignorance, but by distaste: yet this seems rare and the percentage of refusals can therefore be considered to be a reliable indicator of someone's notoriety.

When respondents in a survey are asked to express a subjective assessment of established leaders, differences in knowledge are likely to be small. All top party leaders are invariably recognised by very large proportions of respondents, usually of around 90 per cent. Precautions are needed in the case of small parties, however, as the leaders of such organisations may be well known among the supporters, but not among the citizenry at large: this creates a situation which can be referred to as 'concentrated notoriety'.

The concept of notoriety may be useful to describe the beginning of a political career. Initially a politician is known only to a small number. Then, with notoriety growing, that politician may move towards popularity. Conversely, some may have reached high levels of notoriety before entering politics, for instance when someone had an earlier career, in business or the military for instance, as a result of which he or she had received substantial public exposure. Among the cases considered in the case studies which follow, Silvio Berlusconi in Italy and Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand entered politics in this way.

Charisma

Both popularity and notoriety are rooted in the tradition of survey research; they do not create substantial methodological problems: this is different with charisma. As was pointed out in Chapter 3, the concept, which was developed by Max Weber (1968), refers to exceptional qualities attached to an extraordinary individual and it has been used primarily in a political history context. This explains why it has not been well-fitted for systematic empirical research, despite the fact that it is widely used in contemporary political science. It tends to relate to cases in which there is a direct link between leaders and followers *and* where political institutions are weak or non-existent.

Two branches of research are mainly involved. One concerns populist regimes, especially in Latin America; the other, which is more pertinent here, relates to the populist parties which have emerged in several European countries since the 1980s. Charismatic leadership is felt to be the key to the understanding of the abrupt ups-and-downs of those parties. They may have early successes at the polls and sometimes be able to participate in governmental majorities and be given ministries to run. Yet they have also split and lost executive positions and electoral strength; they have even, occasionally, purely and simply disappeared. This instability of populist parties has often been accounted for in terms of their leaders, these being considered as electoral assets for their parties because of their personal charisma.

These points suggest that the charisma of leaders can explain *ex ante* the electoral success of the party; but the existence of charisma is inferred *ex post* by the fact that the party has been electorally successful (Van der Brug and Mughan 2007; Givens 2005: 19). Yet those who believe that charisma is a key concept in electoral research do not provide a precise definition: can some suggestions at least be made?

Van der Brug and Mughan (2007) equate charisma with popularity, the latter to be measured by a typical thermometer of approval: they thus avoid giving an empirical definition of charisma. Meanwhile, Jenssen and Aalberg (2006: 254) state incidentally that a leader should be considered charismatic when he or she is popular among the voters who do not support the party of that leader. Alternatively, a leader could be felt to be charismatic if he or she is more popular than the leaders of other parties (Barisione 2006). While not dealing directly with charisma, Curtice and Holmberg (2005: 248) compare the percentage of respondents

who give a positive evaluation of a party with the percentage of respondents who give a positive evaluation of the leader of that party: they are thus able to distinguish leaders who are more popular than their parties from leaders who are less popular than their parties: the first group could be considered to be charismatic, on the suggestion that are charismatic the leaders who enjoy substantial popularity but guide parties which are not popular. This is close to the original sociological conception of charisma, which is adopted if a very popular leader lacks a powerful party organisation.

These examples show that it is not easy to distinguish sharply between charisma and popularity; but they also seem to suggest that charisma could be a redundant concept which would correspond to certain levels of popularity. The problem stems in part from a lack of conceptual clarification, but it is also partly due to a lack of data. Popularity is regarded as being the result of a political object (a leader, a party, a government) being appreciated on rational grounds; but a crucial feature of charisma as originally conceived is being overlooked, namely that it is an emotional feeling linking leader and followers. If this point of view is accepted, then the survey should incorporate items designed to tap that emotional dimension. In reality, existing surveys rarely do so, although this could well provide a way out of the difficulty in which the empirical analysis of charisma is found currently.

Problems of reciprocal causation among variables: recursive versus non-recursive models

Electoral behaviour has long been explained by privileging a particular independent variable, usually party identification. A single variable highlights then all other voters' attitudes, such as with respect to attitudes towards the incumbent government, towards the most debated issues, as well as – albeit not very strongly, according to the traditional standpoint – towards party leaders. If such a variable can be found, theory can be conveniently modelled using recursive statistical techniques, namely methods where causal relationships among variables are thought to be unidirectional.

Since the 1970s, party identification lost much of its importance in the United States: it is no longer considered powerful enough to provide a satisfactory account of voters' choices. New variables were therefore inserted in the models. The so-called 'funnel of causality' provided a solution (Miller and Shanks 1996), as long-term and short-term variables could be jointly taken into account. The former are the lasting sociological and cultural variables, such as gender, class, religion, ideology, and party identification. Short-term variables are those which change from one election to the next, as the retrospective judgement on government, party policy proposals and the candidates.

Yet a methodological problem arises once this theoretical perspective is adopted. If a role is given to a number of independent variables – and not just to only one – the question arises as to what are the relationships between these variables. Let us suppose that we attempt to determine the support given to 'popu-

list' parties. As these emerge often suddenly and are characterised by substantial electoral ups and downs, party identification – a typical long-term variable – is not sufficient to provide an accurate picture. Besides assessing the general sympathy for the party, we are also interested in finding out the impact of the party's proposals on immigration and the party leader's appeal, these being two elements which are typically used by those parties to enhance their electoral fortune. Yet this leads immediately to another problem, namely whether the leader's appeal does account for the sympathy for the party in the voters' mind. Moreover, is the leader's appeal in turn influenced by the party's aggressive position on immigration? Or does the sympathy for the party remain the key variable which accounts for voters' attitudes towards both policies and leaders?

To solve such a problem a change in the research strategy is required. The solution which predominates currently was in fact originally proposed in two articles which appeared in the late 1970s (Markus and Converse 1979; Page and Jones 1979). The idea consists in departing from the recursive and unidirectional models and in using instead non-recursive models, which are a family of statistical techniques allowing for a full assessment of reciprocal effects among independent variables. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 are a visual presentation of the basic

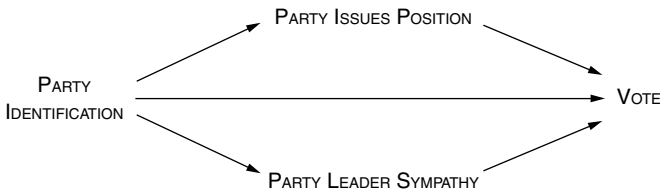


Figure 6.2 The recursive model (source: adapted from Miller and Shanks 1996).

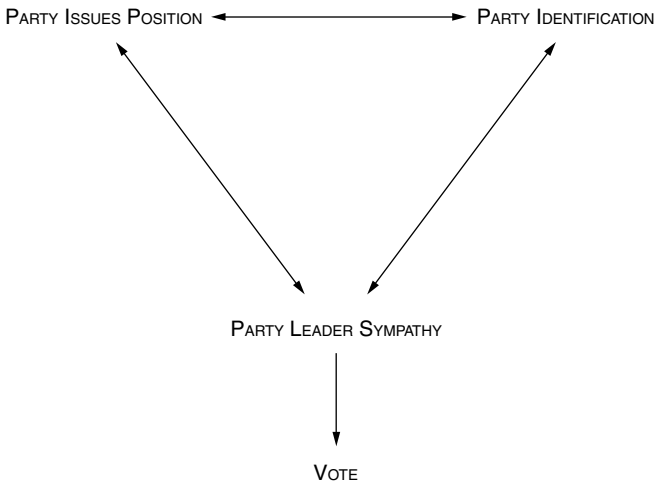


Figure 6.3 The (basic) non-recursive model (source: adapted from Venturino 2001).

tenets of the two models. Figure 6.2 illustrates the recursive model, where party identification is an exogenous variable, as it is not influenced by any other variables included in the model and all causal relationships are unidirectional.⁶ Figure 6.3 pictures a basic non-recursive model.⁷ In this case, first, all variables are endogenous, that is to say that they are all influenced by other variables included in the model; second, reciprocal causation among variables are expressly introduced.

The studies explicitly designed to compare the two models – recursive versus non-recursive – in terms of their validity did not reach an uncontroversial conclusion, however. Yet they did show that the two models view differently the role of leaders' in determining voters' choices. One cannot demonstrate, in the strong sense of the word, the superiority of one model over the alternative, but non-recursive models seem more promising. Although they are more complicated, they would appear to be the complex but accurate response to a complex problem.

Party personalisation: experimental designs

Political science was mainly influenced during its development by sociology and economics, while remaining distant from psychology. In electoral research, for instance, voters have been for a long time considered to be 'black boxes' reacting to external stimuli: important differences due individual characteristics were generally disregarded. *An Economic Theory of Democracy* by Anthony Downs (1957) is a typical – and prominent – example of such an approach to the study of electoral behaviour. There have been some changes since the last decades of the twentieth century, however. Following the path-breaking work by Herbert Simon (1985) psychology and political science are now closely linked in many fields. Without attempting to discuss here a growing and complex body of literature,⁸ one can note that the link has led to the introduction in political research of several concepts designed to help analysing differences in individual political reasoning, such as competence, sophistication or heuristics. Those concepts are also relevant for the study of the relationships between party leaders and voters, where emotional ties are at stake and can be usefully approached from a psychological point of view.

In addition to a theoretical improvement, the links with psychology have also led to methodological advances in political science. In particular, political research has become familiar with experimental, as opposed to descriptive, research designs (Fink 1995). These experimental designs are typically based on the comparison between at least two small groups. The experimental group is given a particular treatment or stimulus, such as a communication or a reading. The control group is given an alternative treatment or often no treatment at all. This method is largely used currently to evaluate the impact of political communication on voters' attitudes. The pros and cons are well known, if one judges by the available research. On the one hand, descriptive designs study citizens in their usual environment: researchers have only a weak control on the range of

independent variables considered. On the other hand, experimental designs lead to a rigorous control of the variables under consideration, while studying the reactions of people operating in an artificial environment. Experimental designs are essential tools if one is to analyse matters which are strongly linked to a psychological conceptual framework. This method is to be welcomed besides classical survey research if one is to shed full light on the problem of party personalisation.

A classical conclusion seems to be out of place to end the exposition of such a 'prospective' methodology for the study of party personalisation. This chapter first re-examined the foundations of the approach to party personalisation described in the first section of this volume. Some general points were then made about the methods needed to approach the various aspects of party personalisation from an empirical point of view. By so doing, we have maintained the structure presented in Chapter 3 and based on the threefold distinction among leaders' political discourse, personalised direct relationships among leaders and citizens, and citizens' reactions to a personalised leadership. We hope to have reached two conclusions. First, the framework developed out in Chapters 2 and 5 should provide some indicators likely to help the analyses undertaken in the case studies on individual countries. Second, some general points have been aired although a full examination of these matters is well beyond the scope of this volume. Thus the most promising research strategy is being suggested, but with no direct (or with only limited) consequence for the following case studies. This is due to limited knowledge about the role of party leaders in the origin, organisation and electoral results of the parties. All long walks start with a single step, however: we are confident that the step which has been suggested here is in the right direction.

Notes

- 1 King and his associates focus only on the electoral face, overlooking parties' personalisation. Yet this is not the only limitation of their approach. They also consider electoral personalisation relevant only when leaders' personalities are *the* critical key to win elections. They assume that talking about personalisation "does not encompass, specifically, leaders' and candidates' ideologies or views on policy issues" (King 2002a: 9). Indeed, a list of relevant personal attributes by King includes only idiosyncratic and non-political characteristics, such as "bold", "friendly", and "youthful".
- 2 These sectors are: external relationships, freedom and democracy, government, economy, welfare state, social organisation, and social groups.
- 3 This point is fully developed further in this chapter.
- 4 One-party minority governments are doubtful cases. We assume they are similar to the former category, because parliamentary partners are more policy-oriented than office-oriented and therefore less engaged in limiting leaders' ministerial appointments from their party.
- 5 The Falklands war during the mandate of Margaret Thatcher is the most typical case of an external shock affecting the popularity of an incumbent government (and the whole career of a politician). The obvious role of the war for Thatcher's popularity has been invariably modelled by relying on a dummy assuming value 1 in the war years, and value 0 otherwise.

- 6 In such a case, Ols (Ordinary Least Squares) regression is the appropriate statistical technique.
- 7 The basic model cannot be estimated because one has only three correlations to calculate six relationships. This impasse can be overcome by spelling out a full model recurring to additional exogenous variables. Non-recursive full models may be run by recurring to various statistical techniques. The most often used technique appears to be 2sls (Two Stages Least Squares) regression analysis.
- 8 For a quick view cf. at least Ferejohn and Kuklinski (1990), Iyengar and McGuire (1993), Lupia and McCubbins (1998), Lupia *et al.* (2000), Mutz *et al.* (1996), Popkin (1994), Sniderman *et al.* (1991).

Part II

**Case studies of party
personalisation of
leadership**

7 Introduction

The need to examine specific aspects of the impact of leader party personalisation by means of case studies

In the first part of this study, general reasons which militate for the existence of an impact of leaders' personalisation have been presented, whether there is direct influence on the citizens or whether it takes place through the parties of these leaders. These reasons were given both in terms of what might be broadly described as 'human nature in politics' and in the specific context of the current evolution of societies, primarily in the West. Yet, while these reasons have been put forward, there is widespread scepticism about these forms of influence among the specialists of electoral behaviour: there may be consensus about the difficulties and even the decline of large parties, at any rate in Western Europe: but there is much less agreement, to say the least, about the impact of personalisation in propelling at the polls either the leaders themselves or the parties which these direct; indeed, as we saw in earlier chapters, that impact has been regarded globally as insignificant according to conventional electoral behaviour wisdom. Thus, either the apparent appeal of leader personalisation on the electorate directly or through the parties of these leaders is (at least in large part) an illusion entertained primarily by the media, or more 'digging' has to be done if the claim that the impact of leader personalisation does play an important part is to be regarded as convincing.

It is therefore safer to start from the recognition that a truly significant impact of leader personalisation on the electorate directly and/or through parties, at any rate in the West, is not universal. Yet it also seems counter-intuitive to go to the other extreme and hold the view that nowhere in any Western country is there a strong impact of leader personalisation either directly on citizens or through the party of these leaders; nor does it even seem justifiable to claim that any impact of leader personalisation on the electorate, directly or indirectly, occurs only in new parties and, almost exclusively, in new parties which have remained small: as a matter of fact, as we saw in Chapter 5, it is not always the case that new parties which remain small are all benefiting from the impact of leader personalisation on their electors.

There has to be an intermediate position between the two extremes. This could be that there may be a significant impact of leader personalisation on the electorate directly or indirectly, that that impact may take place in various types of parties, large or small, old or new, and in a number of countries, but that such a development is by no means universal nor always very large.

If this is indeed the case, how should the inquiry proceed? As a blanket analysis across the whole universe seems to reveal little, if anything, about personalised party leadership, the only practical strategy must be to examine in detail what has been going on in some countries, which means that one must undertake case studies. In theory, one should examine both the cases of countries in which the impact of leader personalisation on the electorate, directly or indirectly, has been significant and of countries in which that impact has not been significant.¹ As this work is a first effort to explore the way in which leader personalisation may influence the electorate, it was felt more prudent in this volume to examine only a number of countries in which there had ostensibly a very clear impact, the general aim being to study the various aspects of this impact: the developments of Chapters 3 and 6 are to provide the guidelines to such an analysis.

The choice of countries and of leaders

In three countries of Western Europe, Britain, France and Italy, the role of some leaders of major parties has been ostensibly so strong, since the 1980s, that it seemed wholly justified to give pre-eminence to these leaders. In Britain and in France, changes in the goals and programmes of the main parties, on the one hand, and on the structures of these parties, on the other, were due markedly to the actions taken by personalised leaders from the 1980s onwards. In the Italian case, the unsuccessful attempts made during the 1980s to modify the party system were followed by the emergence of what was in effect a wholly new party system largely brought about directly by the setting up of *Forza Italia* by Berlusconi. There was therefore a *prima facie* case for examining the part played by Mrs Thatcher, Tony Blair, François Mitterrand, Jacques Chirac and Silvio Berlusconi. The only other Western European countries which might have also been studied would have been from the south of the continent, Portugal, Spain and Greece; but in all three of these the strong role of personalities followed a period – and in the case of Portugal and Spain a very long period – of dictatorship, a period which might be regarded as having had an impact on the extent of leader personalisation in these countries when the democratisation process took place. Meanwhile, in the other Western European countries, personalised party leadership was at a maximum limited to small parties, again in almost all cases since the 1970s and 1980s, as had been indicated in Chapter 5: since leaders of small parties who were highly personalised were found in France (Jean-Marie Le Pen) and in Italy (Umberto Bossi), these being two of the three countries already selected, it did not seem necessary to add leaders from other Western European countries.²

The other three countries which were selected were Japan, Poland and Thailand, as these illustrated the extent to which personalised party leadership on the Western European model had emerged, again since the 1980s. In the Japanese case, the aim was to examine the extent to which the Liberal Democratic Party was in the process of undergoing, when Junichiro Koizumi became prime minister in 2001, the same kind of transformation as the two main British parties

experienced. Given the long tradition of rather weak leaders in what was by far the largest party in Japan (a tradition which had only two exceptions, those of Tanaka and of Nakasone) the fact that Koizumi was attempting the kind of change which Mrs Thatcher had attempted or Tony Blair was attempting at the time meant that the experiment was well worth examining. The fact that Koizumi's departure was followed by a return to the previous practices of his party showed that the change had not truly affected the mentalities, while perhaps Koizumi's desire to leave politics and his unwillingness to fight to continue in power were contributory elements in leading to the rather abrupt end of the experiment in personalised party leadership within the Japanese Liberal Democratic Party.

Poland was selected because of the fact that, in a sense, Lech Wałęsa had been doing – but still under Communist rule – what Berlusconi was to attempt a few years later in Italy: the only difference was that Solidarity, which Wałęsa led, was not technically a political party, but a trade union, although, in practice it acted as if it were a party: its role in destroying the Communist system was at least as large as – indeed almost certainly larger than – that which Western European leaders of new parties were able to achieve. The fact that Wałęsa found himself without a party at his devotion when he became President of Poland a few years later is no proof that he failed: what it proved was that his role as a truly successful personalised leader had been a temporary one, a point to which we shall need to come when examining the duration of the influence of these leaders. As a matter of fact, the predicament of Wałęsa as President was related to the fact that the former leader of Solidarity was probably never reconciled to the collapse of the organisation which he had been so instrumental in setting up. As a matter of fact, attempts have been made by others in Poland to achieve the kind of position which Wałęsa once enjoyed, but without any real success. On the other hand, Lepper did set up much later a farmers' party which, as those of Le Pen and of Bossi, was dominated by the personality of its founder: his role is therefore analysed here alongside that of Wałęsa.

The case of Thaksin Shinawatra in Thailand is peculiar in that it is not so much an instance of a 'Third World' type of personalised leadership, but on the contrary one of the very few examples, perhaps the only true one, of what might be described as the importation of a Western European type of personalised party leadership in a country which had been run for long periods by the military and had not succeeded in setting up afterwards, as Taiwan did, a well-structured party system: in many ways the party system of democratic Thailand resembled the party system of the ('First') Italian Republic up to the 1990s, except that the many parties which existed had had a short lease of life, save for the Democratic Party. Perhaps the parallel with Italy also explains why, as in Italy, Thaksin set up a party which depended markedly on the leader's wealth and on the leader's dominance of the media. Yet, interestingly, unlike so many leaders outside the West who wished to change the party system and more generally the political life of their country, Thaksin was not to be the one who was to overthrow (temporarily) the regular constitutional order: his opponents did, helped to a limited extent by the king. The parallel with Berlusconi and the idiosyncratic character

of the development of Thaksin's party in Thailand made it therefore most valuable that the country should be chosen alongside the five others which were selected.

Thus the case studies concentrate overall on six countries in which one could identify leaders – eleven in total – who did exercise strong forms of personalised party leadership which had an effect on the characteristics of political life (and perhaps, at least in some cases of social and economic life as well). The large majority – eight of them – were drawn from large parties which were, at least for a while, in government under these leaders. Three of the eleven leaders ruled small parties, however, two of whom were, for a period at least, also in government.

The characteristics of the analysis of the cases

The analysis conducted in the case studies aimed at identifying the specific role of these leaders as well as the impact they may have had on the political system as a whole. In terms of their specific role, the analysis focused on the aspects of their rule described in some detail in Chapter 3 and examined again, from the point of view of the empirical problems which this analysis poses, in Chapter 6. This meant, first, considering the extent to which the leaders attempted to influence citizens directly or attempted to do so indirectly through the party which they ruled – or indeed whether they did both simultaneously. This meant further examining the type of discourse used by the leader – in particular whether it was 'populist' or not – the instruments adopted, and especially whether there was a substantial reliance on patronage as well as on the media, and the ways in which the citizens responded, and in particular whether it was even leading to charisma. In this context, the timing of the extent to which the leader could count on the support of the citizens needs to be monitored, as it is far from axiomatic that the leader's personalised support among the people coincided with the period during which the leader exercised formal power, either in the party or in the government.

A further dimension of the inquiry touches on the extent to which personalised party leadership is related to the character of the political system, however. The 'social cleavages' approach to the relationship between parties and citizens suggests that the 'normal' form of that relationship is for citizens to be 'attached' to parties, not to personalities. The approach discussed in Chapter 4 suggested on the contrary that the links between citizens and personalities was 'normal' and, indeed, that the relationship between citizens and parties was likely to be based often on what was referred to as the 'appearance' of the party to these citizens. Without expecting that it will be possible to 'solve' the question of what is 'normal' and what is 'exceptional', it is surely important to examine these cases to see whether or to what extent the part played by personalised party leaders in the relationship between citizens and the political system can be viewed as being in effect associated to the part played by parties or whether it is on the contrary to be regarded as a 'substitute'.

These two sets of remarks about individual leaders and about the countries in which these leaders ruled will be brought together in the conclusion to this volume. The aim will be then to provide at least a first impression as to what the role of personalised party leaders may be in the contemporary world and, equally importantly, as to the variations which can be observed about the way in which personalised party leaders play a part in the political systems of the countries concerned.

Notes

- 1 A study by E. Kestilä examined the absence of such an impact in the Finnish case (Nordic Political Science Association 2006, and reproduced in English in the Annals of Turku University Press, 2007, 169–91).
- 2 As will be pointed out in Chapter 8, the only ‘small’ parties which had personalised leaders in the United Kingdom were regionalist or nationalist parties: it can be argued that, as far as their region or ‘nation’ was concerned, some at least of these parties were not strictly speaking ‘small’. The other ‘small’ parties did not truly experience personalised leadership, except perhaps at some point, but only at some point, the Liberal Party.

8 Great Britain

Did party personalisation of leadership save the British two-party system?

Britain has traditionally been the classical counter-example to the notion that the electoral results of parties could be more than very marginally affected by the personal impact of leaders and indeed of personalities in general. The view that parliamentary candidates had very little effect at constituency level (perhaps at most a few hundred votes) was repeatedly made at least during the early post-Second World War decades.¹ Perhaps more to the point, the massive victory of the Labour Party in 1945 appeared to prove that the great war leader, Winston Churchill, had been in no position to prevent the reversal of fortunes of the Conservative Party: whatever the fame of its leader, the party was paying for the policies it followed in the 1930s; the Conservative leadership of the time was held to be composed of ‘guilty men’. In comparison with the previous election, that of 1935, the Conservatives had lost 13.9 per cent of the votes, while Labour had gained 10.4 per cent. Moreover, despite its leadership having undertaken reforms of its structure and even more of its policies, the Conservative Party only gained 3.4 per cent of the votes between 1945 and 1950. It did gain a further 4.5 per cent of the votes between 1950 and 1951, but, over the whole 1945–1951 period, although Labour had gradually become increasingly divided and seemed to have exhausted its ability to introduce change, the party in power did not lose any support at all (it lost 1.9 per cent between 1945 and 1950, but regained 2.6 per cent between 1950 and 1951, thus winning more votes than the Conservatives, but fewer seats).

Thus if success during the 1945–1951 period is to be attributed to one of the two major parties, and, possibly, indirectly, to a leader, it is to the Labour Party and to Clement Attlee, not to the Conservatives and to Winston Churchill. Indeed, 1951 was to provide the highest percentage of votes ever for the Labour party – nearly 50 per cent: as we shall see, not only did Labour do badly under Wilson (and Callaghan), but the erosion of the Labour support under Blair between 1997 and 2001, let alone between 2001 and 2005, was substantial, and from a starting base which was appreciably lower. This is not to say that Attlee’s popularity accounted in any way for the result: he was described as “the most effective stopgap in British political history”, by Marr, who added, “a great man, loved for his limitations, not despite them” (2007: 17, 18).² Whatever popularity Attlee may have had cannot be substantiated given the limited number of opinion

polls at the time, but he manifestly presided over the most successful Labour government which Britain had, including Blair's; meanwhile, it is clearly difficult to find evidence suggesting that, on the other hand, the one who had been the great British war leader, Churchill, did contribute to helping the fortunes of his party.

Moreover, more seriously for British politics in the subsequent period, there is no evidence of any help provided by their leaders to either party from the 1950s to the end of the 1970s, except in the case of Harold Macmillan, briefly discussed in Chapter 5: it seems at least plausible to suggest that there was in this case some leadership help in that Macmillan presided over the third Conservative victory in a row in 1959, a victory in which the party lost merely 0.4 per cent of the votes after eight years in power although it had experienced in 1956–1957 very serious difficulties which had led to the resignation of Anthony Eden after the Suez fiasco. Meanwhile, the Labour party had lost in 1959 2.5 per cent of its 1955 support after having already lost 2.5 per cent of its 1951 support in 1955, in both cases under the leadership of Hugh Gaitskell. Neither Harold Wilson, under whom the Labour party was in power from 1964 to 1970 and from 1974 to 1977, nor Edward Heath who led the Conservatives from 1965 to 1975, nor indeed even Jim Callaghan, who replaced Harold Wilson as Labour prime minister from 1977 to 1979, would appear to have provided their party with any genuine personalisation features and/or positive electoral support, although, as we shall see, Callaghan was more popular than his party and than his Conservative opponent, Margaret Thatcher. As a matter of fact, by the mid 1970s, the story of the two main British parties was one of almost continuous decline: while the support for each of the two parties was in the high forties in 1951, it was by 1974 in the thirties and not always the high thirties.

Thus, on the one hand, evidence from the first three decades following the Second World War did seem to confirm the traditional view that personalities counted for very little in the two key political parties which ruled Britain in the context of a form of alternation between them. It could therefore be argued, as was suggested in Chapter 5, that large parties which had acquired their support generations previously were rather unlikely to be markedly dependent on or even amenable to being led by highly personalised leaders. On the other hand, two sets of serious developments had occurred in Britain by the middle of the 1970s, perhaps connected in some manner. First, the two main parties had been losing so much support – and losing support in what seemed to be an irreversible trend – that it was becoming questionable as to whether the traditional two-party system would be able to resist. It is true that, in the 1920s already, the old two-party system based on Conservatives and Liberals had been shaken and had been transformed by the 1930s into a two-party system based on Conservatives and Labour, but only after a difficult transition: perhaps the Liberals would be able once more to play a true significant part in British politics, since, by 1974, they had come to 'revive' and obtained nearly 20 per cent of the votes, although, as a result of the operation of the electoral system, they had still gained very few seats (under fifteen). Second, the British economic performance was poor, with

marked ‘de-industrialisation’ and high inflation, as well as with serious social consequences including high unemployment and major labour unrest. Thus the two main parties seemed blamed by a substantial proportion of the electorate for being unable to avoid crises, let alone solve them, as if the socio-economic decline was leading to political decline as well. In the event, the parties were to prove able to muster these difficulties – but on the basis of major changes within these parties and only after Labour suffered an even greater decline, to an extent almost self-inflicted, throughout the 1980s, while, in turn, the Conservatives experienced decline in the 1990s and beyond. It is thus in the context of the transformation of the two main parties that the question of the party personalisation of leaders seemed to begin to play a major part, even if, by and large, academic established opinion did continue to believe (at least for a while) that the evidence suggesting that party personalisation of leadership existed was at best mixed and perhaps even not conclusive.

This chapter thus examines the evidence suggesting that there might be an extent of such a ‘party personalisation’ of leadership in the Conservative and Labour Parties at the time of the leadership of Thatcher (1975–1990) and of Blair (1994–2007) respectively, these being the only two party leaders in the United Kingdom government who could be regarded as having characterised by and benefited from ‘personalised leadership’, either directly at the polls or indirectly through their role in modifying party rules. The analysis concentrates on these two parties and at the time when these two leaders were in power as there is little evidence of ‘party personalisation’ under the other leaders of the two main parties, even between 1979 and the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, either under Major for the Conservative party (1990–1997) or, for the Labour party, under Foot, Smith or Kinnock (1980–1995). There was no such ‘party personalisation’ in the case of the Liberal Party either, despite the ‘revival’ of that party from the 1960s. Perhaps the Social Democratic Party (SDP) did for a little while display some elements of party personalisation of leadership, but the electoral success of that party was so brief that it does not seem justified to go into the matter in any detail.³ The chapter will thus look successively at the cases of Margaret Thatcher and of Tony Blair. Within both the Thatcher and the Blair sections, this chapter will look successively:

- 1 at the way each of them became leader of his or her respective party,
- 2 at the personal power which they exercised and at its effect within that party, specifically by bringing about (large) policy or structural changes which both of them imposed on their party; and
- 3 at the (possible) direct influence which that personalisation may have had on a fraction of the electorate.

I

The strange case of Margaret Thatcher's personalisation of leadership

Margaret Thatcher has exercised enormous influence, not only on British Conservatives, but also beyond, as she succeeded in bringing about a favourable climate in favour of a conservative political ideology throughout much of the whole world and not just in the West. Yet the case of that enormous influence is rather strange, especially in the way it occurred. Not only was her influence unquestionably much greater than that of her key political ally, Ronald Reagan, but the ideological changes which she was instrumental in seeing adopted were truly 'revolutionary': yet that 'revolution' was wholly unexpected. It was unexpected, not just at the time of Thatcher's election to the British Conservative party leadership, in early 1975, but when she became prime minister in 1979 after her victory at the general election of that year; it was even unexpected for some years afterwards. Indeed, perhaps the reason for the success of that 'revolution' was the fact that it was unexpected and that it seemed to arise at most indirectly and almost insidiously. As a matter of fact, there remained throughout her ten years as prime minister a number of surprising elements, so much so that, in order to summarise realistically the nature of her tenure of power one must conclude, on the one hand, that there was ostensibly much 'party personalisation of leadership', but, on the other, that that personalisation had an effect only once she had been in power for a number of years; moreover, party personalisation in this case took place on the basis of the combination, strange in a democratic country, of a marked (almost religious) fervour in some circles of the society (essentially at the top, admittedly) and yet of relatively little apparent direct influence on movements towards her party in the electorate as a whole.

Mrs Thatcher becomes party leader in 1975 in an ostensibly freakish manner

There are two ways of interpreting the leadership victory of Margaret Thatcher in 1975. On the one hand, it has to be described as low key and as seemingly purely accidental, there being no better-known or apparently better-suited candidate to replace Edward Heath. On the other hand, behind the scenes, there was an ambitious 'personalised' project on the part of the new leader herself, of her husband and of a few persons closely associated with her. As a matter of fact, it is probably because these two contradictory aspects co-existed that Mrs Thatcher was able to win the leadership contest, first, and survive key difficulties, second. Let us therefore begin by looking at the ostensibly low key and almost lackadaisical character of the leadership election process before mentioning some of the peculiarly ambitious projects which were not clear-cut and distinct enough, however, to suggest that there was a real 'conspiracy'.

The 'accidental' aspect of the election of Margaret Thatcher as leader

The more pronounced defeat of the Conservatives at the polls in October 1974 than had been the case in February of that year obliged the incumbent, Edward Heath, to submit himself to a leadership re-election, which was to take place in February 1975. At the time, the leader was chosen in effect by an absolute majority of MPs, if necessary by more than one ballot; the leader has to submit himself or herself for re-election once a year, but only if he or she is challenged, which is rather rare, except after an election defeat. There was a subsequent ratification process, admittedly, by a somewhat larger body including Conservative peers, but this ratification was purely symbolic.

Who might be the candidates to fight against Heath at that leadership election was quite unclear. In the context of that uncertainty and in a most unusual move, the Chairman of the House of Commons Conservative backbenchers' committee, the 1922 Committee (so called because it was set up in 1922), Edward du Cann, looked for someone to challenge Heath. At least two much better known Conservative MPs than Mrs Thatcher were sounded but, for one reason or another, these would not or could not commit themselves. Meanwhile, Mrs Thatcher had one asset and seemingly only one, which was that she was a woman! As Andrew Marr points out,

[m]any Tory MPs were persuaded by him [du Cann] to vote for her [Mrs Thatcher] because she had no chance, as a way of easing out Heath. More 'serious' candidates would then stand. It was a brilliant ruse. On 4th February 1975, she shocked everyone by defeating Heath in the first ballot by 130 votes to 119. She then went on to beat the also-rans easily.

(Marr 2007: 357)

The lady who had so far been only Minister of Education in the Heath government of 1970–1974 (not usually a position from which one is likely to become leader of either main party) and who had encountered substantial difficulties even in being elected to parliament at all before 1959 had come to power by what seemed to be a total accident!

Mrs Thatcher's personal determination combined with a happy accident and the emergence of an alternative ideology

Yet this is not the whole story. In parallel to what was ostensibly an 'accident' (in part due to the failure or unwillingness of Heath to organise strong support for himself among the MPs of the party), three characteristics of Mrs Thatcher's own personality and of her entourage need to be taken into account. The first was her sheer dogged determination, ostensibly against all odds, to be a successful politician. In a sense, she was indeed trying out the impossible! Born in 1925 as Margaret Roberts, she was the daughter of a shopkeeper in eastern England and had therefore none of the connections with the solid middle class, let alone

the upper-middle class which constituted traditionally the group from which MPs and above all ministers of the party were drawn (although, admittedly, the elevation of Heath to the leadership had already constituted a partial break from this traditional rule). Yet, as Marr states, “Margaret Roberts was not only self-certain but clever” (2007: 384). She was university-educated, indeed had been to Oxford (where she lost her northern accent and became associated with the much more acceptable south-eastern one, at any rate to the Tories); but she studied chemistry, not a subject which was fashionable at the top of the Tory party: this did give her an advantage, however, in terms of her ability to handle data in general and figures in particular.

She was determined to become a politician. She was first given an unwinnable constituency, Dartford in Kent (this was in a sense natural, but in the particular case it may have been also because she was a woman, was single at the time and did not have the right background). Yet she did not lose heart after two defeats in Dartford and went on eventually to receive the prize she needed by being selected for Finchley, in north London, a seat she won in 1959. The Dartford experience had not been wasted, however, as it was during that period that she made the first move towards coming closer to power when she encountered Denis Thatcher, a divorced businessman appreciably older than she was but very successful in affairs and, as Andrew Marr states: “...[he retired] very rich in 1975. He provided her with the money and the political, moral support which allowed them to have twins while Mrs Thatcher, as she now was, devoted herself to politics” (Marr 2007: 384). Her husband thus enabled her to acquire an element which was crucial to her career, namely leisure to be in politics full-time as well as a degree of ‘acceptability’ in the party. Without these opportunities, it is doubtful whether her ‘determination’ would have been sufficient.

Yet there was another element in the ‘puzzle’. That element was based in part on the views of her husband, which were very right-wing indeed and wholly unfashionable at the time, but it was also based on the influence exercised on Mrs Thatcher by politicians she came to be acquainted with and in particular by Sir Keith Joseph, for whom she worked when she was in the Commons, and, who, too, had unfashionable right-wing views, especially in economics. He supported the ideas of monetarism propagated by Milton Friedman since the 1950s. These were typically simply set aside as absurd at the time, even in Conservative Party circles. Yet they began to make a strong impact on Mrs Thatcher, to an extent because they probably corresponded to notions which many had among the lower-middle-class small business groups from which she originated, but also because the experience of the Labour governments of the 1960s, of the failure of the Heath government of the early 1970s and of the Labour governments which followed later in the 1970s seemed to her to demonstrate that there had to be a stop to the policies which had been followed: they had led to vast inflation and to unacceptably large power for the trade unions. Although, by 1975, her views on these subjects were not fully formed – as was pointed out earlier, this was probably an advantage, as support for these views in public opinion was then very limited – but such views were to help her gradually to

acquire a special kind of authority: she could claim to have an alternative approach to economic policy while stating that she was determined to follow that line, as “the lady was not for ‘turning’” (while she pointed out that Heath had been ‘turning’).

The combination of her own determination, of her marriage to Denis Thatcher and of her general espousal of unquestionably right-wing views, especially in economics, was clearly instrumental in Mrs Thatcher’s eventual success. Yet, not just in 1975 when she was elected leader, but in 1979 at the first general election which was fought under her leadership and even up to 1982 and to the Falklands war, little occurred justifying the view that she was about to ‘revolutionise’ not just the Right of British politics, but British politics as a whole and indeed politics much beyond Britain.

What is crystal clear is that her party did not win the 1979 election because of any ‘personalised leadership’ on her part: it was Callaghan and the Labour party who lost it, largely because both Jim Callaghan, and Denis Healey, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, were virulently attacked both by the Labour Left which hoped to replace what was regarded as the ‘right-wing’ group which had dominated the party in the 1960s and 1970s and by many trade unions; these had harassed the government, especially during the autumn of 1978, by a series of strikes which became widely unpopular, an unpopularity which Mrs Thatcher was not to forget in her subsequent policies. Meanwhile, however, as Marr points out,

[d]uring the 1979 election, using all the skills of her new image-makers and advertising agency, she was still trailing Callaghan in the personal popularity stakes, by six points at the beginning of the campaign and a whopping nineteen points at the end. It was Labour unpopularity that cost the party power, not Mrs Thatcher’s allure.

(Marr 2007: 385)

Mrs Thatcher and Conservative Party policy in the 1980s

Mrs Thatcher thus found herself chairing the Cabinet in 1979, but a Cabinet in which she could not place many politicians of her liking. She did appoint an economic team who shared her views, but other ministers, including the employment secretary, James Prior, were regarded as being ‘wet’, that is to say unsympathetic to her ‘dry’ economic conservative ideology. Although Prior did immediately prepare a bill for trade union reform, it was one which Mrs Thatcher thought was much too moderate. There were thus Cabinet battles: as Marr states, “Thatcher punished them [ministers] for their lack of faith”, but he adds that these ‘wets’

were in the majority and had they revolted the history of Britain would have been very different. Indeed, ‘wet’ was accurate in a wider sense. They rarely tried to face her down..., the Cabinet dissidents waited till she fired or demoted them.

(Marr 2007: 388)

Meanwhile, the situation was grave in the opinion polls for the Tories, for Mrs Thatcher (the Conservatives merely deemed to come in third place) and even in the streets (the Brixton riots of 1981 were particularly harsh) and unemployment was heading towards three million. Yet “[t]his was the moment when Thatcher’s self-certainty would be tested most clearly” (Marr 2007: 389): not only did she not retreat as previous prime ministers would have, but “Thatcher egged her Chancellor [Geoffrey Howe] on” (*ibid.*). Strikes continued and the Cabinet was in almost open revolt: but Mrs Thatcher was in a belligerent mood and she periodically sacked or moved a large number of its members.

It was therefore obvious that she was unpopular within the government and indeed within the party at that point. As a matter of fact, she was then fighting for her political survival when a major ‘accident’ occurred, thousands of miles away, at the beginning of the 1982: the military which was then in power in Argentina decided to invade the British territory of the Falklands (called Malvinas in South America). There was in reality some justified expectation on the part of that military that an arrangement would obtain as the British Foreign Office was embarrassed by that scarcely populated set of islands which it seemed impossible (or ludicrous) to defend.

Mrs Thatcher decided not to follow that line at all: quite the contrary, ostensibly because the population there wanted to remain British, but, in reality, in order to show that she was truly determined and that her determination was crucial for the outcome, she had no hesitation in doing whatever was needed to recapture the islands. Her subsequent victory against the Argentine military was to be the turn of the tide in terms of her own personalisation of power and of the effect of that personal style on her reputation in her party and beyond: she immediately became popular in the context of a surge of nationalistic fervour. In the Cabinet, the government and the party, grumblings and discontent were replaced by praise and admiration. It is thus only from May 1982 that the expression ‘party personalised leadership’ can begin to be politically relevant in the case of Mrs Thatcher.

It was noted in Chapter 5 that the indirect relationship between leader and electors through the party had three aspects, relating respectively to the structure of the party, the key policies that party was putting forward from time to time and the selection of parliamentary candidates. In the case of the British Conservative party, the last of these three aspects played little part: each constituency association selected its candidate, broadly speaking, freely; moreover, it was assumed that the candidate who was selected would be ‘loyal’. Nor was the question of the structure of the party at all controversial, at any rate after the reforms of the 1940s when an effort was made to ‘democratise’ the constituency associations by preventing parliamentary candidates from ‘buying their seat’, as these associations were no longer to be allowed to ask their prospective MP to make more than token donations annually. Meanwhile, more importantly for the leader, he or she did not have to initiate any changes in the party’s national decision-making structure, especially at the level of the National Union, which constitutes the arm of the party in the country at large, as that body had always allowed the leader all the leeway which was required by the leader.

Thus it is almost exclusively on policies that Mrs Thatcher's influence on the party was exercised: that influence was very large from 1983 onwards. She launched her attack essentially on two fronts, the need to reduce drastically the role of trade unions and the need to engage in a vast programme of 'privatisations'. Given what was noted earlier about the role of the trade unions, in particular during the last year of the Labour government, but also given what the unions did during the earlier period of the Thatcher government, it is perhaps not surprising that the rank-and-file of the Conservative Party should have been highly supportive of the moves which the leader was making to curb the power of these bodies: thus, not surprisingly, the legislation which employment secretaries introduced became increasingly restrictive. Yet Mrs Thatcher went further; having seen to it that the National Coal Board did hold vast stocks of coal throughout the country, she decided, in 1984, that it was time to destroy the power of the miners' leader, the Trotskyite Arthur Scargill. She appointed and gave her support to a new Chairman of the Coal Board, Ian MacGregor, who was intent on bringing about major mine closures, a policy which the Miners' Union could obviously not support. Scargill did not realise that he was falling into a trap and, although the strike was harsh and entailed much confrontation with the police, Mrs Thatcher not only did win in the end, but she saw the 'capital' which she had acquired as a result of the Falklands grow further: she could thus embark on the second leg of her programme which was to reduce the part played by the state in the economy: a policy of wide-scale 'privatisations' was launched, the expression 'denationalisation' being deemed to be insufficiently positive to be used any longer.

'Denationalisations' had not so far been a topic which interested particularly the Conservative Party, however, although there had been strong opposition to the Labour Party in the 1940s when it engaged in the setting up of a large number of state enterprises, these including in particular the Bank of England, the coal mines, gas, electricity, the railways, the airlines and even steel. Yet, by the 1970s and 1980s, these 'national' bodies had been part of the British heritage, so to speak, and, although there was some grumbling, their status had ceased to be truly controversial in the Conservative Party at large: for instance, the railways had been partly reorganised and their network reduced under the Conservative governments of the 1950s and early 1960s. As a matter of fact, Mrs Thatcher herself did not undertake much in that area during the first Cabinet which she ran (1979–1983). Only during the second Cabinet (1983–1987) did she decide to start a major 'privatisation' programme and only then did she gradually win over Conservative Party supporters in relation to that programme: as a matter of fact, she did so to a large extent by means of convincing many in the population at large that there could be appreciable personal gains from buying shares of the newly privatised bodies at a rather low price and then selling them in the stock market at a higher price. This did occur, in particular in the case of British Telecom, while the privatisation of the railways was to be much less of a success. Thus partly for ideological reasons but partly for an immediate practical reason, party supporters became enthusiastic about the new policy.

In this respect, Mrs Thatcher did thus profoundly change the content of the policy of her party and she did so with the help of an entourage of only a few ministers and advisers whom she had carefully selected for their loyalty (although she was prepared to sack ruthlessly these ministers and advisers, when they seemed less useful, even if they had been previously instrumental in delivering what she wanted). What she had to do, meanwhile, was to rule on the basis of a combination of three characteristics, her own 'self-certainty', to quote Marr's expression, a great admiration for her determination among many in the rank-and-file, but also a modicum of fear because of her ruthlessness, a ruthlessness which was also part of her personalisation style.

She could rule supreme in the party so long as there was a balance among these three elements, but when ruthlessness came to be regarded as too great and admiration ceased to play enough of a part, some of the earlier problems began to re-emerge. This occurred first in Scotland and subsequently in England and Wales over the reform of local taxes in the late 1980s, a reform which was branded negatively as being a 'poll tax'. There remained by then too many memories of the fear which she had been exercising. She fell, ostensibly as a result of a dramatic speech by the person who had served her interest so well as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Geoffrey Howe, in the difficult early years, precisely because of what came to be viewed after ten years in power as unnecessary ruthlessness rather than merely determination. Thus the overall relationship between Mrs Thatcher and her party was in effect difficult and unquestionably tempestuous: only during the few middle years did she truly convince party supporters that she had found a 'highly personalised' way to curb the unions and showed that money could be gained by buying large chunks of what had belonged to the State. There are therefore some doubts as to how large a 'personalised leadership style' was effective in the case of Mrs Thatcher even with respect to her party.

A strange relationship also between Mrs Thatcher and the public at large

Yet the relationship between Mrs Thatcher and the people at large was also somewhat strange. On the one hand, as has been already alluded to, she did find 'fervent' support among many in the population; on the other hand, the results of the general elections, in effect those of 1983 and of 1987, did not appear to reflect a similar trend in the electorate. Let us examine successively these two elements of what appears to be a puzzle.

Devotion to Mrs Thatcher among some sections of the population (but also hatred among other groups)

From 1982 at least, the least that can be said about the reactions to Mrs Thatcher in the population is that there was no longer 'indifference', as there had been in the early years of her leadership. On the contrary, there appeared to be only extremes in the judgements which were passed about her. As Marr states "...so

many insults levelled at her tended to twist into unintended compliments – the Iron Lady, La Pasionaria of Privilege, She Who Must Be Obeyed, the Leaderene, the Blessed Margaret, even the Great She-Elephant” (2007: 469). There was support in some sections of the working-class, especially because and when she took a nationalistic line, first in connection with the Falklands, but to a substantial extent as well with respect to the European Community (now the European Union): she was the one who turned the Conservative Party against the European project, while, previously, opponents were to be found mainly in the Labour Party. There is no doubt that many in the population had been wounded by the spectacle of Britain becoming seemingly regarded as the ‘sick country of Europe’ and indeed being lectured at by many continentals and countless Japanese as to what the ‘patient’ should be doing. Mrs Thatcher managed to turn the tide. This was done first in the world at large by showing that, as in 1940, Britain was truly resolute; this was done, second, during the latter half of the 1980s, by showing that the country was able, on its own (but admittedly with the help of the billions produced by North Sea oil), to redress the economic situation and demonstrate that it was on its feet again without having to depend on the advice or help of anybody. This was also done by means of a dogged determination that Britain was not going to be dominated by the ‘bureaucrats of Brussels’ or by a coalition led by France and Germany. A flavour of the past dating back from the Napoleonic wars (and perhaps earlier) to the Second World War was thus underlying the feelings of admiration which many, throughout the nation, had for her.

Yet this was not the only source of what has been described here as ‘fervour’ or ‘devotion’. That other important source was the sheer selfish sense among many of the better-off segments of the population that she had given them at last the right to make as much as money as they wanted and not to have to bother with the constraints of a ‘society’ which had been imposed on them, in effect, since the 1945 Labour government and indeed probably earlier. De-industrialisation was viewed by these as a bonus, in a sense, as finance had become the real mechanism by which one could become rich quickly and without the constraints imposed in particular by trade unions. This meant coming closer to the philosophy prevailing in the United States and seeing New York as the real model, especially among those associated with the City. For those who had adopted such an approach, Mrs Thatcher was a godsend: she and she alone, in reality, had made this new *Weltanschauung* possible: not surprisingly there was fervour in the feelings which this new ‘liberated’ middle class had for the leader. Thus the personal style of Mrs Thatcher seemed to have a marked echo in the population at large.

Yet this fervour was also in large part the cause of the sheer hatred that Mrs Thatcher provoked among large sections of the population. This was of course the case among active trade unionists, but also among those who had been made redundant and became unemployed for substantial periods; this was also the case among those who had a sense that there was more to being British than making money and that there was a way of life based on ‘decency’ and ‘concern’: such a group extended upwards in the society and may well have explained why, in the

end, someone like Geoffrey Howe did deliver the speech which was the cause of Mrs Thatcher's downfall in 1990. This explains also why the outbursts of nationalism which were mentioned earlier and which benefited Mrs Thatcher on occasion were just that, outbursts, rather than something on which she could truly count, in the way she could count on the support of the new 'financial' class.

The mixed results of general elections with respect to Mrs Thatcher's direct influence on voters

It is possibly the existence of mixed views, very strongly-held on both sides, which accounts for the fact that, on the aggregate, the Conservative Party did not appear to gain appreciable electoral support from the fact that Mrs Thatcher's personal style was so strongly admired in some sectors of the population. Of the three elections in which she was involved as leader, the only one in which the party improved was the first, that of 1979, when the Conservative Party gained 8.2 per cent of the votes: but this was not because of Mrs Thatcher, as was pointed out earlier, since her leadership style not popular at the time and her policies still vague; Labour lost the election (it lost 2.4 per cent of the votes compared to October 1974) because of its own divisions and the 'extremism' of the Left of the party and of many unions. There was no specific 'Thatcher' factor in the result.

Yet the other two elections which were presided over by Mrs Thatcher show no aggregate evidence that she had played, as a personality, a positive part in the result; what made the result appear as a great Conservative victory, in seats, but not in votes, was the fact that Labour was split and that a large fraction of its electors joined the new alliance between Liberals and the SDP. Indeed, Labour lost a further 9.3 per cent of the votes in the process in 1983 compared to 1979; but the Conservatives also lost 1.5 per cent of the votes in 1983 compared to 1979; their overall percentage was down, not up.

Admittedly, the 1987 result was a little more encouraging for the Tories in terms of votes: they only lost 0.2 per cent of the votes at that election, and there seems to be no doubt that the various policy successes mentioned earlier must have had some influence; it is indeed also possible that Mrs Thatcher's presence may have had some part to play in the process. Yet that election was also marked by the slow re-awakening of Labour, which gained 3.2 per cent, having become markedly more moderate under Kinnoch, but also largely because the SDP was by then defunct and the merger of what remained of it with the Liberal Party suggested the beginning of a return to the classical two-party system.

There is thus at a minimum no clear evidence of the possible direct impact of Mrs Thatcher's personalised style on the Conservative vote at the elections over which she presided, even in the best case, which was that of 1987. It is not possible to know, of course, what might have happened had there been another leader of the party at the time. Yet it should be noted that two years after Mrs Thatcher fell, in 1992, the Conservative Party under Major again lost very little at the general election (0.3 per cent, no less), but no more than in 1987, when

Mrs Thatcher was at the height of her supremacy. That election was in effect a repeat of that of 1987, since Labour, again under Kinnock, succeeded in gaining a further 3.6 per cent of the votes – an appreciable success, but not sufficient to beat the Tories and Major. The real defeat of the Conservatives, still under Major, was in 1997, when the party lost 11.2 per cent of the votes: but this is another story, that of the part which Blair may have played since the mid-1990s to revitalise what came to be known as ‘New Labour’.

II

Blair’s personalised style and popularity, followed by decline

The case of Tony Blair is indeed profoundly different from that of Mrs Thatcher, both in the way it began and in the way it developed. While Mrs Thatcher’s ‘personalised party leadership’ started late and accidentally, that of Tony Blair started almost before he became leader. Admittedly, there was an ‘accident’ in the case of Tony Blair as in the case of Mrs Thatcher, but in Mrs Thatcher’s case that ‘accident’ occurred before she truly developed her ‘personalised leadership’ and it did enable her to acquire the popularity which had evaded her previously; in Tony Blair’s case the ‘accident’ occurred after he had been for several years a ‘personalised leader’ and, instead of bringing about more popularity, contributed to the decline in the leader’s position in the country, as victory in Iraq was, to say the least, elusive. Thus the first impression one may draw about Blair’s ‘personalised party leadership’ was that it was shaken, possibly destroyed, because Blair took, in relation to Bush and the Iraq war, a position which was at loggerheads with that of the British population in general: the positive sentiments which had led to the Labour victories of 1997 and 2001 were thus at last seriously diminished after 2003. Such an impression is not wholly incorrect, as feelings about the war did add to the views which many electors already had vis-à-vis Blair, but it is partial.⁴

There is unquestionably no clear-cut single explanation as to *why* Blair engaged himself on Iraq alongside Bush. The desire to maintain close, special links between Britain and the United States surely played a part: there are many strategic imperatives as well as a cultural and linguistic tradition for such a strategy. It is also possible that the fact that Mrs Thatcher gained much out of the Falklands war had an influence on Blair who might have calculated that a short and rapid victory in Iraq would boost his popularity as the Falklands war result boosted that of Mrs Thatcher. This was not to occur, since the Iraq war was clearly not to be short.

Yet the difficulties which Blair encountered were not only due to the Iraq war. Blair profoundly admired Mrs Thatcher. He was probably hoping to be seen in history as having brought about a ‘revolution’ by means of ‘New Labour’ which would have matched what Mrs Thatcher had done, at any rate at the height of her power in the mid-1980s. This was not to occur, not because, or not only because the Iraq war turned sour: it occurred also because the policies

which Blair initiated or supported never enjoyed the popular success which Mrs Thatcher's policies enjoyed in the mid-1980s. Not having enjoyed such a success, Blair went on over time to modify them, to present them differently, to launch new ones, with the result that the impression given was more one of creating confusion than of adopting a clear line.

There are indeed two problems with Tony Blair's approach to leadership. One has to do with his personality. In contrast to Mrs Thatcher, Tony Blair's was not particularly interested in bringing about a profound ideological change in British society: he was more concerned with being popular. Admittedly, on Iraq, this posture became increasingly difficult to hold without having, as Mrs Thatcher, an ideological line. Blair appeared 'self-certain' and 'determined' on the basis of what he himself called his 'conviction', a notion which has typically been related to his religious commitment. A reference to 'commitment' seemed indeed to be the only way in which Blair could justify his position about the conflict and yet continue to maintain close contact with the people; the general idea could be summarised in the formula: 'trust me: I know I am right', whatever the contortions and even lies which were gradually emerging as the war seemed never to end.

In general, however, that is to say in relation to the 'home front', Blair looked mainly for popularity: this can be seen from the fact that he was not anxious to create among his followers (and beyond) sentiments of profound admiration for his political principles, mixed to an extent with a degree of ruthlessness and fear, as Mrs Thatcher had done. In reality, the ideas he was putting forward were more in the nature of slogans than of principles. Perhaps the best example was that of the notion of the 'Third Way', which was presented at the beginning by Blair as the key underlying leitmotif of his policy: yet that notion was mentioned less and less over time until it came to be replaced by others, such as 'Education, education, education' or the need to reduce crime and to increase security.

What Blair aimed at achieving was in reality something in the nature of what 'celebrities' attempt to obtain, namely to be recognised for the fact that he was 'with it', in contact with the right people, fashionable even to excess: this was clear when he launched the expression 'People's Princess' about Diana after she died a violent death in a Paris underpass. That 'celebrity' aspect was cultivated by Blair throughout his time as prime minister (1997–2007). Much of the 'problem' he had with his appeal, both directly on the electorate and indirectly through the party, has been due to a desire for 'popularity' which led him to alter from time to time the emphasis on what was to be done on the 'home front' instead of sticking to a clear overarching line.

The second problem which the Blair leadership poses has thus to do with its content. It is not that Blair did not have a 'programme' of reform for British society, although the programme on the basis of which he became leader was more concerned with changes in the Labour party than with changes in society as a whole. Blair had a programme about British society, but, contrary to what he himself might have thought, such a programme, far from being easy to implement, was indeed very difficult to achieve and indeed was rather elusive. The

idea was to improve markedly the public services, and in particular those concerned with education, health and the repression of criminality: these marked improvements were expected to show that ‘New Labour’ was working well, especially with Tony Blair at the helm.

For a variety of reasons which have to do with the way in which change in administrative structures can be implemented, however, the improvement of public services entails long and complex efforts: the introduction of new arrangements often complicates the problems rather than solve them, particularly if they are introduced rapidly and essentially by means of new regulations. The net result is that the providers of the public services (those who work in the public sector) then complain because the changes which are proposed mean that the arrangements to which they are accustomed are being upset; meanwhile, the citizens may well not detect much improvement in the services, as any improvements may be slow to come and ‘implementation’ is always more elusive than it seems in principle (M. Barber 2007).⁵ The popularity which Blair enjoyed earlier was thus gradually frittered away, and already during his first term in office, as a result of a kind of scepticism as to whether anything was really happening. The effect of the Iraq war was thus added on to a sentiment that not all was going well on the home front – indeed perhaps that not much was actually taking place.

Blair becomes party leader in 1994, partly as a result of accident and partly through a ‘coup’

The accident: the death of John Smith

The ground had been prepared for a return of the Labour Party to the centre-Left of British politics by Neil Kinnock who, as we saw earlier, had managed gradually, at the two elections of 1987 and 1992, to recover part (in effect 7 per cent) of what had been lost under the leadership of his predecessor, Michael Foot. However, having failed, despite great hopes at the time, to win the 1992 general election, Kinnock felt he had to resign the leadership. He was immediately replaced by his shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, John Smith, who had conducted the election campaign alongside Kinnock, after having been the youngest member of Callaghan’s Cabinet. Smith was a solid Scottish Labour man, at the centre-Left of British politics and not of the ‘radical’ Left; but he was respectful of the traditions of the party: he was not in favour of modifying the basic structures and goals embodied in Labour’s constitution of 1918. Yet he probably would have presided over a Labour victory at the next general election, due to take place in 1996 or 1997, given the ‘mess’ in which the Conservatives were from 1993 onwards, except for the fact that he had a heart condition: he died suddenly but not unexpectedly in May 1994. The leadership question was thus suddenly re-opened.

The 'conspiracy' and the 'coup'

As was pointed out by Andrew Marr, “[t]hrough Smith swiftly advanced the careers of the brighter younger stars, Tony Blair, [who had been selected by a safe northern constituency seat in 1983], and Gordon Brown, they swiftly became depressed by his [Smith’s] style of leadership” (2007: 488). As a matter of fact, while Smith was still alive, Blair and Brown, together with Peter Mandelson and Alastair Campbell, were convinced that something drastic had to be done while Smith was viewed by them as too traditional and as risking, therefore, to render uncertain the future hold of the party on the electorate. Blair was even so depressed at one point that he began contemplating leaving politics for the law. As a matter of fact, it was not entirely clear why Blair had decided to choose Labour, except for the fact that, as Marr also says, “Labour offered an easier if riskier route” (2007: 502), given that there were many fewer bright lawyers in the Labour Party than among the Conservatives.

Moreover, after the 1992 election, which Major did win, new and very serious difficulties emerged for the Conservative leader and his party and to begin with the particularly heavy speculation against the pound in 1992, as a result of which Britain had to leave the European Monetary System. The damage to British prestige was once more profound, as if the efforts made by Mrs Thatcher to show that the country was again to be taken seriously had been to no avail. It would have been absurd for Blair not to stick to Labour in such circumstances.

Yet the presence of John Smith at the helm posed obviously a serious problem: the leader had made Blair shadow home secretary. There were therefore limits to the extent to which Blair could put forward standpoints which differed strongly from those of Smith. Admittedly, Blair did begin expounding rather ‘uncharacteristic’ views, in terms of the Labour party tradition, about immigration and crime. Yet not much could be done to the programme of the party as long as John Smith was leader: this is why his sudden death presented Blair with an equally sudden opportunity: in what Marr described as “a very English coup” (207: 502), Blair did seize that opportunity. This could be achieved only if serious obstacles were overcome, however, and overcome without provoking a rift among those who wanted major change in the party’s structure and outlook. This was because these obstacles arose principally from the fact that the notion of a radical change of the Labour Party’s ‘persona’, so to speak, was not only Blair’s view but was that of a ‘conspiracy’ of at least four key protagonists, Blair, Brown, Mandelson and Campbell. All four were deeply committed: his three immediate associates could not simply be by-passed by Blair in a feat of personal ambition, and this was so particularly in relation to Brown. Blair and Brown had been close for years; indeed, Blair was not the more ‘senior’ of the two. Not only was Blair slightly younger than Brown, but Brown was regarded as ‘weightier’ in terms of his ability to analyse the way Labour’s problems had to be tackled.

There was therefore no alternative for Blair but to somehow convince Brown that he, Blair, was the better candidate for the leadership, but that a deal could none the less be struck between the two of them.

The Brown and Blair relationship was less close than it had been earlier but it was still strong.... Brown's team began to ask whether Blair was now [already when Smith was still leader] manoeuvring and briefing against his old mentor. It was a grim time for Brown and he did not bother to reach out, or show a sunny side. Slowly but perceptibly, Brown-Blair was turning into Blair-Brown.

(Marr 2007: 504)

Blair did indeed act speedily. Only days after the death of Smith,

Blair decided almost immediately that he would run as leader. Brown, perhaps more grief-stricken than Blair or perhaps more cautious, hesitated. But he had assumed he would inherit and when he heard Blair's plans, he was aghast. In at least ten face-to-face meetings in Edinburgh and London, the two men argued. On Blair's side were opinion polls showing him much more popular, the support of greater numbers of Labour MPs and greater backing in the press.

(Marr *ibid.*)

Blair must have been convincing, but also much tougher, as Brown came eventually to accept the deal which Blair offered him (in a chic restaurant): while Blair would run as leader, Brown would become Chancellor of the Exchequer and reign "over a wide range of policy" (Marr 2007: 505). The 'coup' could then take place: Blair was indeed swiftly elected leader of the party.

The indirect 'personalisation' of Blair's influence via the Labour party

The state of affairs in the Labour Party has always been different in many ways from the one which characterises the Conservative Party. On the one hand, in the Conservative Party, there has been little need for or desire on the part of the leader to control the selection of parliamentary candidates, as we saw: meanwhile there had been classically an endeavour in the Labour Party to prevent candidates from extreme left-wing organisations from being selected: but this was achieved by the party organisation, not by the leader, who, by and large, had little need or even desire to exercise a detailed role, indeed even any role at all, in this respect. On the other hand, while the question of the structure of the party was of limited relevance in the Conservative case, it had played a major part in the problems which the Labour Party in general and Labour leaders in particular had to face: Blair was therefore anxious to see to it that he be not continually frustrated by the activities of some groups within the party, and in particular by representatives of trade unions and by representatives of local constituency parties. As a matter of fact, structural change and policy change had to be handled together, as major policy change was possible only if structural change were to give the leader a free hand.

Blair's influence in the party and the roots of that influence

The election of Mrs Thatcher to the Conservative leadership in 1979 did not have any particular significance in terms of an ostensible change in policy standpoints since, as we saw, that election preceded the ideological 'revolution' which the new leader was to introduce subsequently. This was not the case with the election of Blair to the leadership of the Labour Party. It was clear that Blair and his 'co-conspirators' wanted major changes in both the party's structures and policy outlook: indeed they had been referred to, at the time of Smith's leadership, as the 'frantics', while Smith and those who were associated with him were described as the 'long-gamers' (Marr 2007: 489). Thus the election of Blair as leader was obviously to be regarded as signifying that the party's character was to be altered markedly. In terms of the distinction which has been repeatedly made in this volume, the 'marked change of character' of the Labour Party is thus to be regarded as an instance of 'indirect' 'personalised' influence of the leader. In this case, however, if the changes within the party were to occur rapidly, that 'personalised influence' within the party would have to have been already in place before Blair's election to that leadership. This is in a sense suggested by Marr when he comments that Blair had (more than Brown) "the support of greater numbers of Labour MPs" (Marr 2007: 504).

Yet the question arises as to what could have been the origin of that popularity, indeed not just among MPs but more broadly within the party. Why was there large support for a major move towards the Right soon after the party, if not the bulk of the MPs, had tended towards the Left and indeed had done so, more and more, since the early 1950s. Admittedly, the Right of the party had managed to keep control (more or less) of policymaking up to the 1970s, but only on the basis of two arrangements, one being that the trade union leaders, most of whom still supported the Right at the time, did wield overarching power and the other that the structure and goals of the party would not be altered: when Gaitskell had tried to introduce major ideological changes in the early 1950s, he was soundly defeated; subsequently, no one, Kinnock and Smith included, dared to suggest that similar changes were even contemplated. Meanwhile, the party's move towards the Left did increase throughout the second half of the 1970s and beyond: thus a profound change of outlook in the party had to have occurred for moves towards the Right of great magnitude to be able to take place in the party's structure and the party's goals by the early 1990s. Otherwise the new 'conspirators', would have been dismissed as an unrealistic minority, instead of being popular enough to engineer a turnaround in that structure and these goals. It is therefore that turnaround that has to be accounted for.

As a matter of fact, the only one of the 'co-conspirators' who was truly 'popular' within the party was Blair. Mandelson and even more Campbell were regarded then and continued to be regarded afterwards as highly competent but somewhat sinister figures who tended to operate behind the scenes – for the benefit of Blair in particular. Brown was viewed as more of a political theorist than Blair – but perhaps as a little unrealistic as a result. Blair was popular, on

the other hand – and this did enable him to succeed, for the first time in the history of the party, in having enough following for a general policy stance which was not of the Left to prevail.

The reasons why such a turnaround of attitudes occurred within the party are still not entirely clear. The most plausible explanation is that, although it dominated the party in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Left was none the less a minority already then, but a minority which could control the two key structures of power in the party, the trade unions and the constituency parties, because of the way those of the Left were positioned in the party structure. Constituency Labour parties were run by their management committees without appreciable involvement of the bulk of the members: the line which these bodies would take on policy and on appointments at the top was thus in the hands of a small group of ‘activists’ who were known to be to the Left of ordinary party members, let alone of ordinary party supporters. In the trade unions, the right-wing leaders who had dominated these bodies up to the late 1960s were being gradually replaced by left-wing leaders, often because these appeared better able to defend their members’ interests on the shop floor; these leaders could exercise considerable leeway in political terms as those who were also in the Labour Party (to which most union members were affiliated) paid little attention to what was being decided in relation to the party and as in any case these decisions were based on an arrangement known as the ‘block vote’, by which the majority was deemed to include all the members, however small that majority might be. This meant in effect that minorities close to the trade union leaders could often become ‘the majority’, indeed ‘the unanimity’.

This classical system came to an end in the 1980s when, under pressure, greater involvement of the whole membership, by way of referendums, took place in the constituency parties, while the block vote was replaced by a much fairer arrangement as a result of which both the majority and the minority were taken into account in each of the unions belonging to the Labour Party. Such a change may have been accompanied by a degree of disillusionment with the Left among some members, given that Labour had lost four elections, those of 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992. Indeed the gradual increase in Labour votes and seats in 1987 and 1992 indicated a different direction to follow both to party members and even more to MPs and parliamentary candidates, given the direct personal gains which these would draw from a victory of the party at the polls.

The ‘Blair revolution’ in terms of party structure and of party policies

Whatever the roots of the ‘personalised leadership’ exercised by Blair with respect to MPs and to active party members, that leadership had become strong enough by the mid-1990s to enable its holder to alter entirely, in one stroke, the traditional ‘socialist’ bases of the party structure and of the party goals. The change was such that Blair took to referring not so much to ‘the Labour party’ but to ‘New Labour’. As Marr states: “... the self styled modernizers who seized the Labour Party... took it far further to the right than anyone expected” (2007:

509). The main change, main in terms of what had been its symbolic ideological role within the party, was the abolition of Section Four of the party constitution, which pledged Labour to “the public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange”: however limited the impact of such a clause had come to have in practice, the clause had been regarded as ‘untouchable’: it was therefore crucially important, symbolically as well practically, that, in a referendum of the whole party membership, a majority should have voted for its abolition. Moreover, the power structure of management committees in local parties was markedly reduced: for instance, the constituency party section of the National Executive Committee of the party (its highest body) was now elected by the membership at large.

These reforms profoundly modified the image of the Labour Party. A new phase of British politics had been entered into and it was Blair and his close colleagues who had achieved that transformation. Moreover, these reforms also had a further important consequence for the power of the national leadership of the party: that leadership became able to adopt the policies it wished to adopt without being embroiled in endless discussions with, and often suffering marked opposition from, trade union leaders and constituency party activists. Thus, in the period between Blair’s election at the top of the party in 1994 and the general election of 1997, the new programme which was adopted put forward eminently practical proposals, especially concerning education, which was being given top priority, the need to cut ‘red tape’ in the National Health Service and the promise to punish offenders more severely and more speedily, especially persistent young offenders. Such a programme – but also the major entanglements in which the Conservative Party in power was involved – resulted in a sensational victory for Labour: it gained 9 per cent while the Conservatives lost 11 per cent by comparison with the 1992 result.

How strong was Blair’s direct popularity in the electorate between 1997 and 2007? We have so far considered primarily the extent to which Blair and his close associates had been anxious and able to introduce major changes in the party: but the electors who were not particularly close to the party could not be expected to examine in detail the impact of these internal party changes: the most that could have permeated was that the party was being ‘modernised’ – and that Blair had been able to achieve that result. Yet, however vague, such a feeling seemed likely to have contributed, to an extent at least, to building a degree of direct personal links between the leader of the Labour Party and the citizenry at large, links which, again in contrast with the situation which Mrs Thatcher faced in 1979, could therefore be expected to have already played a part as Britain went to the polls in 1997.

However, in a sense, as with the 1979 election with respect to Mrs Thatcher, the 1997 ‘New’ Labour victory does not appear to have been, at any rate primarily, due to the positive feelings of electors towards Labour and Tony Blair: the major cause seemed to be the extreme weakness of the Conservatives and of John Major. There had not only been the 1992–1993 debacle over the European Monetary System; everything else seemed to be going wrong and, perhaps above

all, a variety of personal scandals suggested that ‘sleaze’ had become characteristic of Conservative politics. Thus the party was expected not just to lose the coming election, but to lose heavily: it did. Yet the question still remains as to how much, if at all, alongside the massive effect of the Conservative debacle, both the indirect ‘personalised leadership’ of Blair as a result of reforms within the Labour Party and the direct personal popularity of the Labour leader among the electorate at large accounted for the size of (New) Labour’s victory.

Despite the fact that the proportional decrease of the Conservatives was larger than the proportional increase of the Labour Party (11 versus almost 9 per cent) there appears to be indeed some evidence that Blair’s leadership had a direct effect on the way the electorate voted in 1997: an analysis undertaken by David Sanders based on an equation including all the main components accounting for the Conservative vote showed that that Conservative vote was to an extent negatively influenced by Blair. Such an influence was admittedly appreciably smaller than the large positive effect of the Falklands war (although that war had occurred fifteen years earlier) – two effects with coefficients of +9.21 and +5.40 respectively – and a substantial negative effect of the anti-pound speculation which occurred in 1992 to 1993 – with a coefficient of –4.91; but there was also a smaller but non-negligible effect of Blair’s leadership with a coefficient of –1.44 (Sanders 2001).

There was therefore a direct popular effect on the vote in 1997: to that extent the 1997 electoral result was thus unlike the 1979 result at which no effect of ‘personalisation’ was apparent in the Thatcher leadership. Such a direct element could continue to be traced in 2001, when Blair still was ‘reigning supreme’, at any rate within the Labour Party, that election being for Blair the equivalent of the 1983 election for Mrs Thatcher. Was there still a direct leadership effect in 2005, however, when the Iraq war had already lasted two years and opposition to the policy was very strong in the country?

In the aggregate, the Labour Party lost 2.5 per cent of the votes in 2001 by comparison with 1997, this loss being somewhat larger than that suffered by Labour in 1950 by comparison with 1945 (–1.9 per cent); there is no other comparable situation as far as Labour is concerned, since the party never previously completed a first term in office before engaging in a second election between 1950 and 2001; the only two cases in which Labour was able to obtain a second term during that period occurred after an incomplete first term, in 1966 and in October 1974: in 1966 the dissolution had taken place because the Labour majority was very small and in October 1974 because Labour was in a minority. For the Conservatives, the second term results were characterised by a gain of 1.7 per cent in 1955 by comparison with 1951, a loss of 8.1 per cent in February 1974 (and a defeat, the Heath government having dissolved because it was under extreme pressure from the miners’ union) and a loss of 1.5 per cent in 1983. Thus the 2001 loss experienced by Labour was marginally larger than that experienced by Labour in 1950 under Attlee and that experienced by the Conservatives under Mrs Thatcher in 1983. Yet the kind of calculation undertaken for the 1997 election did show that the extent of Blair’s direct ‘personal-

ised party leadership' had continued to be large by the time of the 2001 election.

On the aggregate, the 2005 election showed that Labour lost another 5.5 per cent, thus achieving, interestingly enough, the worst result of any party having entered a third contest since the Second World War. Labour gained 2.6 per cent of the votes in 1951 (but lost the election on gaining fewer seats than the Conservative Party, despite gaining more votes than that party); in comparable situations, the Conservative vote remained effectively stable; there was merely a loss of 0.4 and 0.2 per cent of the votes in 1959 and 1987 respectively. However, the Conservative opposition won very little in 2005 (0.7 per cent compared to 2001): perhaps the fact that the Conservatives had supported the Iraq war made it impossible for them to capitalise on Labour's predicament in this respect; moreover, the lack of appeal of its then leader, Michael Howard, seemed also to have played a part. The negative reaction of many Labour supporters to the Iraq war was manifest, although there may also have been some disaffection with respect to Labour policies on the home front. Yet Blair continued to exercise a degree of 'direct party personalisation', admittedly at a reduced level: it is of course impossible to know what might have been Labour's fate in 2005 and whether Blair's personal influence on the electorate would have been higher had there not been the Iraq war.

Thus Blair did enjoy both 'indirect personalised leadership' through the party and direct 'personalised leadership' with the electorate and the period during which this was the case seems to have coincided with the years during which Blair was leader of the Labour party (1994–2007) and indeed the years during which he was prime minister (1997–2007). There was a decline in the later years, admittedly, but that this should have been the case, given the unpopularity of the Iraq war among the British people, is not altogether surprising. This is also when the question of a degree of 'disillusionment' begins to enter the picture even on policies on the home front. Blair and his ministers pointed out that education, the health service and the repression of criminality were all successfully handled and better financed: whether the public was fully convinced that this was the case is somewhat doubtful. Yet 'personalised party leadership' had existed, up to the end, in relation to Tony Blair, and thus the Labour Party owed its three successive victories in substantial part to both the direct and the indirect influence of Tony Blair on the electorate.

It is of course not appropriate to attempt a general conclusion about the conditions under which 'personalised party leadership' emerges on the basis of the single examination of the British case. It is none the less worth noting that, among other things, the timing of the popularity effect was vastly different in the cases of Mrs Thatcher and of Tony Blair, such a timing being ostensibly more 'normal' with Blair than with Mrs Thatcher. There was also much difference in connection with the type of discourses and the type of approach to politics on the part of the two leaders.

Moreover, it is remarkable that Britain, a country in which 'personalised party leadership' was long said not to exist, should have been led during twenty of the

thirty years which elapsed after 1979 by two leaders each of whom lasted ten years in office and each of whom contributed by their ‘personalised party leadership’, at least to an extent and however differently, to maintain and even truly re-establish the primacy of the ‘classical’ two-party system in the country’s political life. The question which was posed at the end of the general examination of the need for case studies does therefore manifestly obtain on the basis of the examination of the evolution of British politics since the Second World War: does ‘personalised party leadership’ occur primarily when a political system experiences serious difficulties and when the model of government on which it was traditionally based appears to be in trouble? Or are there, on the other hand, countries in which ‘personalised party leadership’ tends to prevail continuously?

Notes

- 1 This has been the commonly-held view in the decades following the Second World War. Whether this was also the view adopted earlier is appreciably more doubtful. In the early part of the twentieth century, Lloyd George, who was prime minister between 1916 and 1922, acted unquestionably in a ‘personalised’ manner during his tenure of office; he was unquestionably popular in some circles (and hated in others). We have no means of assessing empirically in a systematic manner what the relationship between that leader and the people was. However, the earlier cases of Gladstone and Disraeli seem to suggest that electoral popularity (and popularity through the party) played an important part in Britain. See R. Aldous (2006). As was pointed out in Chapter 3, Ian Budge refers to that popularity in a review in APSR (2006).
- 2 A substantial amount of the analysis of this chapter is based on the volume of Andrew Marr, 2007, *A History of Modern Britain*.
- 3 The only United Kingdom parties in which there was ‘personalised party leadership’ among the smaller ones were ‘nationalist’ or ‘regional’. This was the case in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- 4 On the matter of the type of popularity of Blair and more generally on the problems posed by the ‘New Labour’ government, see Bell (2007).
- 5 In his *Instruction to Deliver*, published in 2007, Michael Barber describes in detail the efforts made by his unit in the Prime Minister’s Office to ensure that there be genuine implementation of some of the measures which the government had decided. The book is a fascinating and illuminating account of the problems which have to be faced and of the illusions under which public servants typically are in relation to implementation.

9 France

The personalisation of leadership and French political parties

France has known a strong personalisation of its politics since the beginning of the Fifth Republic in 1958. This was new, as French politics has been dominated by the fear of strong personalities, in public institutions and political parties, since the beginning of the Third Republic in 1875 (Hamon and Mabileau 1964). The origin was the rejection of the institutions and practices of the Second Empire of Napoleon III (1851–1870) by republicans. The Bonapartist temptation was thus systematically fought during the whole of the Third Republic (1875–1940), as well as during the Fourth (1946–1958). The setting up of a parliamentary system contributed to a decrease of the role of personalities, as well as the development of coalition governments. Strong personalities were eliminated both from the positions of president of the republic and of prime minister. Heads of government were mostly consensual personalities, able to manage coalitions, but rarely leaders.

Meanwhile, French political parties were weakly structured. Right-wing parties were typically parliamentary parties, composed of notables with strong local roots. Left-wing parties had more members and activists, but their leaders (Herriot or Mendes France for the Radical party (broadly speaking liberal), Blum or Mollet for the Socialist Party (SFIO)) were narrowly supervised in order to avoid personalisation phenomena from emerging within these parties. The same trend could be found even in the Communist Party (PCF) obeyed to the same trend, but a personality cult did none the less arise in the case of Thorez, on the lines of what had happened with Stalin in the Soviet Union.

The change occurred with the beginning of the Fifth Republic and the coming to power of General de Gaulle. A presidential slant was given to the political system in the new 1958 constitution, de Gaulle having been hostile to what he called the “regime of the parties”. The trend was reinforced by the election of the president of the republic by direct universal suffrage, which occurred as a result of a referendum in 1962 (Pierce 2002). The president was to be given the effective direction of the executive, as his legitimacy was strengthened by the direct link between the president and people (Hayward 1993; Suleiman 1980).

The presidential election became the most important event of French political life (Wahl and Quermonne 1995). This reinforced personalisation of politics while also leading to a restructuring of the party system (Cole 1990; Quermonne

1987). Anyone who had some ambition had, at some point, to declare that he or she was a presidential candidate and obtain the support of a political party, whether created for the circumstance, renewed or conquered. The failure of candidates from outside political parties (those of Barre or Balladur, for example) confirmed the need for candidates to be supported by a real political machine.

Personalisation had another consequence: every political party must propose at least one or even several potential candidates to the presidency in order to appear as a great party or a potential government party (Portelli 1980). Thus the presidential election led to the bipolarisation of French politics, to which the mechanics of that election (majority ballot with two rounds, with only two candidates at the second round) strongly contributed. The mechanics of the presidential election also demonstrated the influence exercised by the leaders of the larger parties, as these leaders were indispensable for the survival of these parties.

The role of leadership was further reinforced by the Gaullist notion of the autonomy of the candidate to the presidential election from political parties. This led to a specific presidential organisation, in fact, if not in theory, first in the Gaullist movement and subsequently in other parties, such as the Socialist Party. This resulted in the leader resigning his position as head of the party when he formally announced that he was a candidate to the presidential election. The leader then set up a presidential team including politicians, civil servants (temporarily transferred) and strong supporters. The team organised the electoral campaign of the candidate; it had offices and funding. This practice was maintained in the Gaullist movement even when a selection process began to take place within the party for the nomination of the candidate by members. The Socialist Party nominates its candidate by an internal poll comparable to a primary. Yet, there, too, the candidate does set up a specific organisation outside the party.

The leader uses the political party as part of his or her relationship with citizens (see the notion of presidential party, Cole 1993). In this context, the party is only an intermediary, while there exists a direct relation settled between leader and voters: the leader proposes a programme, presents answers to questions asked by citizens; the relationship develops outside the political party, largely because of the strong personalisation of presidential elections, the reduced party role, and the influence of television. For parliamentary elections, the relationship is less direct, as the party leader stands in a constituency and his personality as national leader tends to follow the line of the national campaign of the party; there is inevitably less personalisation of leadership in the parliamentary campaign.

Recently, three leaders asserted themselves at the head of their party, conceived as a real political machine in the process of presidential elections. These are:

- François Mitterrand, who appears more as the leader of an old-style party (called SFIO, then PS), which has renewed its structure, and his strategy.

- Jacques Chirac, who has created a large party, the RPR, even if that party continues the previous Gaullist parties (named RPF, UNR-UDT, UDR...).
- Jean-Marie Le Pen, who is the leader of a new party, for a long time a small extreme-right group which he markedly developed.

I

Mitterrand and the personalisation of leadership within the Socialist Party

The political career of Mitterrand

MITTERRAND AS CABINET MINISTER UNDER THE FOURTH REPUBLIC

The political career of Mitterrand has been long. He entered active political life, very young, at the end of the Second World War, after participating in the resistance against Germany. He was elected deputy of the Nièvre department, for the first time, in the election to the constituent assembly in 1945, never having had even a local position before: the choice of the Nièvre department was rather accidental. He occupied ministerial posts in a number of Fourth Republic Cabinets, notably those of minister of internal affairs (in the Mendes France government), and of minister of justice (in the Mollet government). The multiplicity of his ministerial functions can be explained by his membership of a small centre party, the *Union Démocratique et Sociale de la Résistance* (UDSR), which occupied a pivotal place in the party system of the Fourth Republic. That party was present in both centre-right and centre-left coalitions. Mitterrand proceeded to strengthen his base by becoming departmental councillor of the canton of Montsauche and mayor of Château-Chinon, a small town in the department; he became even chairman of the 'county' council of the department (on politics in Burgundy, see Abelès 1989), but his political career at the national level seemed to be stopped by the fall of the Fourth Republic in 1958 (Lacouture 1998).

MITTERRAND AS OPPOSITION LEADER UNDER DE GAULLE

He was against the return to power of General de Gaulle and against the new institutions of the Fifth Republic and campaigned for a No vote to the new constitution. This stand resulted in his defeat at the parliamentary election of 1958, but he rapidly found a seat in the Senate in 1959 and was re-elected as deputy at the 1962 parliamentary election and was subsequently re-elected until 1981. He used his position as deputy to be one of the most active opposition leaders to General de Gaulle. He then published a number of books, his best known one being the *Coup d'Etat Permanent*, which came out in 1964 and was a strong denunciation of the institutional practice of General de Gaulle. This placed him in the traditional line of French republican left-wing parties, which were characterised, as we noted, by the rejection of Bonapartism and the distrust of the role

of personalities in the national executive. Mitterrand thus appeared as the candidate most likely to be supported by all the left-wing parties at the presidential election of 1965. He did indeed force de Gaulle to a second ballot; he was defeated, but did obtain 45 per cent of the votes. This gave him both notoriety and legitimacy, which enabled him to launch the idea of a *Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate et Socialiste* (FGDS), which presented candidates at the parliamentary election of 1967. The May 1968 events did stop the increase of the FGDS under Mitterrand. Members of the old Socialist Party distrusted him and tried to renew the party without him; the new Socialist Party (PS) was set up in 1969 but was led by Savary, not by Mitterrand (Lacouture 1998).

MITTERRAND AS PARTY LEADER

Mitterrand had become leader of the new Socialist Party in 1971 as an outsider, but with the support of the large 'federations' of the department of the North (with Mauroy) and of the Bouches-du-Rhône (with Defferre), as well as the CERES faction (Chevènement), ideologically to the Left of the party. Mitterrand became a member of the party as he became leader of the party, having been previously president of the *Convention des Institutions Républicaines* (CIR), which linked left-wing political bodies, but somewhat distant from the parties proper: Mitterrand never was a mass party member before joining the new Socialist Party. The conquest of the PS allowed him to appear to be a real opposition leader and to agree to follow the logic of the institutional structures including with respect to the presidential election (Gaffney 1989a; Duhamel 1980). He then campaigned as leader of the socialists for the 1973 general election and was again presidential candidate with the support of all the left-wing parties, including the communists in 1974, when he lost against Giscard d'Estaing, but obtained 49 per cent of votes at the second ballot. He kept his seat in parliament in both 1973 and 1978, while remaining president of the Nièvre county council. He had thus acquired a strong political base to be presidential candidate again in 1981, in spite of the opposition of a younger party leader, Rocard. Mitterrand was well-placed at the first ballot (26 per cent) and proceeded to win at the second ballot (52 per cent) and become president. He then immediately dissolved parliament: at the general election which followed, the Socialist Party obtained for the first time an absolute majority and formed a government led by Mauroy which included, alongside Socialist Party ministers, four ministers from the much weakened Communist party (Lacouture 1998; Giesbert 1996; Cole 1994). Mitterrand was re-elected president in 1988 (54 per cent). He left office in 1995 and died shortly afterwards.

Mitterrand was never very popular, as opinion polls showed. He never played public opinion against politicians and party activists. Unlike that of de Gaulle, his approach was never plebiscitarian. On the contrary, he took advantage from his local roots in the Nièvre department, local roots which were the result of a network of relationships, constituted mainly of locally elected notables, belonging to all the political parties and also often apolitical.

The personal power exercised by Mitterrand within his party

Mitterrand and the Socialist party

PARTY STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

A first source of personal power for Mitterrand obviously lies in the Socialist Party's statutes and organisation: these gave him the opportunity to build a strong leadership internally (Cole 1994).

The conquest of the Socialist Party by Mitterrand took place at the Epinay congress in 1971 (Giesbert 1977). It resulted from the adoption of new electoral procedures. While a majoritarian electoral system in the old Socialist Party (SFIO) had favoured centralisation of power, especially under Mollet, the introduction of proportional representation favoured the development of party sub-groups, some of which enabled Mitterrand to obtain a majority in his favour. Yet Mitterrand did not change much of the party's constitution and organisation and, as a matter of fact, the presence of Mitterrand at the helm led to a more strongly centralised party. This was due, first, to the fact that he had been presidential candidate several times and was therefore viewed as the only leader able to fight the Right successfully. Mitterrand's position was also at the centre of the party, between the right-wing group of Rocard's supporters and the left-wing group of Chevènement's supporters. The collegial character of the party secretariat was in effect replaced by a strong personalisation around the function of 'first party secretary'.

A second indicator of personal power within the party is the form and nature of the party's policy line. The decision-making process was collegial. Two bodies played a key part, the executive and the secretariat. These included the main party leaders and representatives of the main party ideological groups in proportion to their 'weight' at the congress. There were three main ideological groupings, the majority constituted around the first secretary, Mitterrand, the group following Rocard and described as representing the "second left" and the CERES group, around Chevènement, located further to the left (Cole 1989). These groupings were constituted gradually as "presidential machines", in charge of supporting potential candidates within the party. In reality, the party line was devised by Mitterrand, 'first party secretary', and by his main followers within the party. The decision-making was therefore often the result of a majority vote.

A third indicator of the personalisation of leadership within the party is constituted by the way internal oppositions were managed. Mitterrand was able to represent and lead the party in spite of a strong opposition representing the groups within the party. He was taking advantage of the capital of support drawn from his record at the three presidential elections which he had contested, in 1965, 1974 and 1981, as well as of his numerous interventions on television, of his leading articles in the weekly party newspaper and of his political books.

Mitterrand was able to bring all the party groups together around his strategy of Union of the Left including alliance with the Communist Party, a strategy

which was not contested, mainly because there was no alternative. From the beginning of the Fourth Republic in 1946, socialists had become accustomed to form alliances with centrist parties, at both the national and local levels. These alliances subsisted at the beginning of the Fifth Republic. Many politicians participated in local alliances with centrists; many socialist mayors depended on local arrangements of this type. The adoption of the strategy of Union of the Left and the alliance with the Communists displeased some, but the new strategy was supported by the great majority of members, of activists and of those who were elected.

The party programme was criticised by the Rocard minority. The 1970s had been characterised by numerous debates about the self-management of firms (*autogestion*). Two conceptions of socialism were in conflict (Bauchard 1986). The majority within the party, following Mitterrand and Chevènement, was more *dirigiste*: it favoured state intervention in economy; the Rocard minority favoured self-management. Mitterrand's political leadership was such that it allowed him to rule by being above daily internal debates within; his followers or his allies were those who intervened. Mitterrand concentrated on opposing government and parties of the Right. Except in a few cases, Mitterrand tended to ally with Chevènement faction in order to have a large majority and to counter-balance the *rocardiens*.

INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR MITTERRAND

A further source of personal power for the party leader lies in his ability to attract support within the party, whether from elected politicians, from party officials or from grassroots militants. Mitterrand enjoyed support, on the whole, from the members of the party, but he relied in particular on those who had participated with him in setting up the *Convention des Institutions Républicaines* (CIR) in the 1960s and had followed him in the new Socialist Party: these intervened often in debates, on behalf of Mitterrand, who wished to be above internal struggles (Shonfeld 1985).

There were no main conflicts between Mitterrand as 'first secretary' and the socialist parliamentary party, of which Mitterrand was a member. Mitterrand sought constantly the support of elected politicians, and therefore of parliamentarians, deputies or senators (Avril 1982). The Socialist Party being essentially a party of elected politicians, it was important for the 'first secretary' to be able to rely on their support: they were important intermediaries to voters and to public opinion. Yet the 'first secretary' does not chair the parliamentary party; the chairman was for a long time Gaston Defferre, who was also mayor of Marseille, and who had been one of the main supporters of Mitterrand at the Epinay congress of 1971.

Mitterrand, as 'first secretary', did not participate formally in the selection of party candidates for parliament, but he exercised informal control (Thiébault 1988). There were inevitably conflicts about who was being chosen. *Parachutages* decided at the national level could be rejected at local level. Mitterrand

watched the fate of his followers. He could also help young advisers in the choice of some constituencies. Overall, he functioned by means of networks of relationships. In opposition, he had little means to distribute private or public resources, especially since there was no public funding of political parties at the time. He privileged contacts with local politicians over grassroots activists. Having come late to lead a large party, Mitterrand was more at ease with parties of notables, such as the UDSR or with political clubs, such as the CIR.

Mitterrand watched closely the preparation of party congresses where he made the closing speech. At Epinay in 1971, the motion defended by Mitterrand obtained 15 per cent of the votes, having only obtained the support of members of the *Convention des Institutions Républicaines*. At following congresses, the motion presented by Mitterrand, 'first secretary', was markedly more successful: for instance, at Grenoble, in 1973, he obtained 65 per cent of the votes, at Pau, in 1975, 75 per cent and at Nantes, in 1977, 77 per cent. At the last congress where he was present as 'first secretary', at Créteil in 1981, he was nominated unanimously as candidate for the presidential election of 1981. The point was also that, after the ballot of party members on motions presented, a synthesis was drafted: thus, at Grenoble, in 1973, Mitterrand rallied 92 per cent of the delegates, although he was not always as successful. Thus, during the period when Mitterrand was 'first secretary' a number of serious conflicts occurred. The main ones were:

- 1 about the union of the left-wing parties and the alliance with the PCF,
- 2 about the type of alliance with the PCF, and
- 3 about the "two cultures" across the French left, more *dirigiste* or more tending towards 'self-management'.

Overall, the socialist parliamentary party was disciplined, at any rate in opposition (Avril 1982).

The new statutes of the party were adopted at the Epinay congress of 1971, when Mitterrand became a member of the party: these statutes were the subject of major debates about the mode of selection of the executive committee; proportional representation prevailed. On the other hand, the selection of the 'first secretary' did not come under discussion: it was given to the executive committee, and, in practice, there was often no contest.

STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMMES

A third source of personal power for the socialist leader lies in his ability to elaborate party strategies and programmes (Gaffney 1988). Mitterrand did not initiate and/or embody a change in the party's ideology: as a matter of fact, he had some difficulty in internalising the traditions of French socialists; he never was Marxist and seemed to be a republican rather than a socialist. Yet he put forward the strategy of the Union of the Left, which meant elaborating a common governmental programme and agreeing to the reciprocal withdrawal, at the second

ballot of general elections, of socialist and communist candidates, as well as of the small number of 'left-radicals' (in effect liberals), in favour of the candidate who had obtained most votes at the first ballot in each constituency. Mitterrand's first objective was to bring the Left together, the appeal to centrists or to republicans being a secondary objective. Mitterrand privileged some economic and social issues in order to achieve the overall goal of unity, as well as some foreign policy issues such as security in Europe and peace in the Middle East.

According to the statutes, the national congress adopts the party programme, but the programme which is submitted to the congress is first elaborated by a small team, typically chaired by one of the secretaries. Mitterrand himself was not very interested in the process of elaboration of party manifestos: he was keen above all on party strategy. Conflicts did emerge, however, first between Mitterrand and Chevènement's left-wing CERES and, later, at the 1979 Metz congress, between Mitterrand and Rocard's supporters of the "second left". Meanwhile, when Mitterrand was presidential candidate in 1974 and 1981, he presented his own programme, a programme which included 110 proposals in 1981.

As was pointed out earlier, Mitterrand's main ploy was to create the conditions which would lead to a 'Common Programme of the Left' and, in the process, to see to it that the Socialist Party became stronger than the Communist Party. He did eventually succeed, but the process was slow. It took time for the Socialist Party, re-created as we saw in 1969–1971, to gather gradually greater strength: at the 1973 general election, the Communist party was still ahead, with 21 per cent of the votes against the so-called 'Federation of the Socialist and Democratic Left', which obtained only 19 per cent. The Communist Party became somewhat worried, however, and made greater demands; meanwhile, at the 1978 election, while the combined Left lost again, the Socialist Party did overtake the Communists with 22 per cent of the votes against 20 per cent. This made it possible for Mitterrand to be recognised as the leader, not just of the Socialist Party, but of the whole Left for the 1981 presidential election. The victory of the Socialist Party was then total, as we noted, at the subsequent general election: from then on, the party's top position was no longer challenged.

The external power of Mitterrand

Mitterrand and the citizens

The strategy adopted by Mitterrand allowed him to beat the centre-right candidate Giscard d'Estaing and to be ahead of the communist candidate at the 1981 presidential election. Mitterrand had been seen on television for the first time during the 1965 presidential election campaign: the fact that he forced de Gaulle to go through a second ballot gave him more than just notoriety. Yet it is only at the beginning of the 1970s that Mitterrand came to be seen often on television: he became leader of the Socialist Party just when that instrument of mass communication truly developed in the country. From 1971, he became viewed as the

main opposition leader and, during the 1974 presidential campaign, he was involved in a series of political broadcasts organised by the television networks in which he had to answer questions by journalists.

Mitterrand's (mixed) popularity rankings in opinion polls

After he became leader of the Socialist Party in 1971, Mitterrand's ranking in the opinion polls, around 50 per cent, was always below the rankings of the party itself and, after the defeat of the Left at the 1978 general election, the party was better able than its leader to recover from its electoral failure in public opinion. Mitterrand's record improved towards the end of 1980, as that of the outgoing president, Giscard d'Estaing, deteriorated, especially among socialist supporters, of course, but more generally among both manual workers and white-collar employees, among men, and among all voters between eighteen and thirty-four years old (Parodi and Perrineau 1979).

Moreover, the curve of Mitterrand's popularity in the opinion polls was closely linked to the ups and downs of the Union of the Left. Its peak was between May 1974 and March 1978, despite the fact that Rocard was a strong competitor. The image of the two socialist leaders differed markedly after the failure of the Left at the 1978 general election: the bipolar structure of support for Mitterrand (higher on the Left, lower on the Right) contrasted with the more centre-based structure of the support for Rocard. The conflict between the two socialist leaders ended in November 1980 only, when Rocard withdrew his candidacy in favour of Mitterrand, thus enabling Mitterrand's popularity to rise markedly (Parodi and Perrineau 1979).

The legislative elections at which Mitterrand has taken part as party leader

Mitterrand was MP for the Nièvre department throughout the Fourth Republic, between 1946 and 1958; he was also continuously candidate during the Fifth Republic, up to 1981, in that department. Yet his best result was that of 1967, when he won at the first ballot with 56 per cent of the votes: his support declined afterwards and he was elected at the second ballot only from 1968; in 1978, he did not even then succeed in gathering all the votes of the Left.

The candidacy of Mitterrand to the presidential election

At the beginning of the Fifth Republic, there was no procedure for the selection of presidential candidates within the parties. Nominations of presidential candidates were made by a variety of party organisations, sometimes at the party congresses, but more often only by their executive committees: this meant that these nominations were decided by relatively small groups within the party elites and not by party members. Yet the Socialist Party had been the first party to endorse a presidential candidate at a full party congress in 1965, although the candidate

it endorsed (Defferre) withdrew before the election and small party bodies decided to support Mitterrand instead (Pierce 1975; Blondel 1975).

For a few years, except in 1969, Mitterrand then became the unchallenged leader of the Left. At the end of the 1970s, however, the Rocard challenge occurred: in October 1980, encouraged by the opinion polls which demonstrated his popularity (Parodi and Perrineau 1980, 1979), Rocard announced that he would be standing for the Presidency of the Republic under the Socialist banner, but only if Mitterrand decided not to run. Mitterrand announced his intention to stand in November 1980 and Rocard duly withdrew. The Socialist Party then held a special congress at Créteil in January 1981 and gave its official blessing to Mitterrand as its candidate: Mitterrand won the prize in May (52 per cent)! (Machin and Wright 1982).

Mitterrand was re-elected at the 1988 presidential election, this time by as much as 54 per cent of the votes at the second ballot against the incumbent Gaullist prime minister Chirac. However, one month later, at the first ballot of the legislative elections, the Socialists obtained only 37 per cent of the votes as against 38 per cent in 1981 and this meant that the party did not achieve an overall majority in parliament and that it was only the largest single party, with 277 out of 577 seats. The presidential coat-tail effect had been less strong than seven years previously: as a matter of fact, between 1983 and 1985, Mitterrand had been the most unpopular of all four Fifth Republic presidents: this led him to lose the parliamentary majority at the 1986 general election. In 1988, he was thus the first president since 1958 to have to face a major re-election challenge from a hostile incumbent prime minister. In these circumstances, Mitterrand's large victory in 1988 was a remarkable success (34 per cent at the first ballot and 54 per cent at the second) (Guyomarch and Machin 1989).

The performance of Mitterrand

Mitterrand has demonstrated his great ability during his long political life. He was a formidable debater in the National Assembly. He showed his talent as an orator and became the most articulate spokesman of the opposition to de Gaulle (1958–1969) and to his two successors, Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing. He had acquired a strong reputation as a writer and commentator about politics. His books were popular and won him literary respect. He emerged as tenacious, obstinate and independent. Obstinance was the main personality trait. Yet other features of his personality were also important in building his leadership and in particular the fact that he had a calm, measured, almost fatalistic approach to electoral campaigns (Machin and Wright 1982).

Mitterrand succeeded in renewing the direction and the programme of the new Socialist Party after 1971 by allowing the different wings of the party to gather a majority around a common objective. He took over the leadership of the party and built an effective machine and one which had strong electoral roots. He was therefore the architect and the historic leader of that organisation. Mitterrand appeared more of a party leader than any of his predecessors. The Social-

ist Party drafted a new programme which included traditional socialist ideas, but also some new ideas expressed in May 1968. For the presidential elections, however, as we noted, Mitterrand presented his own programme, not the official Socialist Party programme, in part in order to reassure some moderate voters.

Mitterrand succeeded in renewing the strategy of the new Socialist Party by breaking with the traditional centrist strategy of a so-called 'third force', and by opting for the Union of the Left, which he aimed at dominating. He succeeded in negotiating a common government programme with the Communists, as he felt that this was the only way to stop the domination of the right-wing Gaullist party at the polls. He managed to call into question the domination of the Communist Party in the left-wing electorate, thus enabling him in 1981 to achieve everything he hoped for and thus became the undisputed leader of the Left. Once he has been elected president in 1981, he dissolved parliament: this gave a boost to the Socialist Party (38 against 22 per cent in 1978).

There were also failures, however. He did not succeed in imposing a new vision of socialism, able to take into account the new world economy. He did not succeed in obtaining the support of the great trade unions, and particularly the Christian-oriented CFDT. The new Socialist Party remained a party of civil servants, not of managers, white-collar employees, and manual workers. Above all, his electoral performance was in large part the result of the unpopularity of outgoing presidents or of an outgoing prime minister (Chirac). The performance of socialist candidates in 1973 (19 per cent) and in 1978 (22 per cent) had been rather disappointing in that the Socialist Party had not fully exploited the potential support which was consistently reported in the opinion polls.

II

Chirac and the personalisation of leadership within the Gaullist party

In the context of the Fifth French Republic, while presidential elections reinforce the personalisation of politics, each candidate to the presidency must show that he can create, renew or conquer a political party at his disposal. Indeed presidential candidates have to demonstrate that their party's electoral machine, will enable them to conquer presidential power. Mitterrand did so: so did Chirac.

Jacques Chirac first controlled the Gaullist party, then called *Union des Démocrates pour la République* (UDR, 1971–1976), in becoming its leader in 1974, when he was appointed prime minister by the newly elected Giscard d'Estaing. Chirac then proceeded to renew the Gaullist movement by creating a new party, the RPR, the Rally for the Republic (*Rassemblement pour la République*), just after he was dismissed as prime minister in 1976. The idea of a 'rally', specific to the Gaullist movement, was viewed by Chirac as a key to his own candidacy to the next presidential election. Yet the party was not the only element of the political machine Chirac was setting up; moreover, to reinforce this political machine he also used all the positions which he occupied, at the governmental level (when he was prime minister) as well as almost all the

positions he had occupied at the regional or local level (in particular when he became candidate to becoming mayor of Paris in 1976 and was subsequently elected in 1977).

The political career of Chirac

Chirac as Cabinet minister

After having been a student at the National School of Administration (ENA), Chirac began as a civil servant, being appointed a member of the Court of Accounts. He was then called by the prime minister of the time, Pompidou, to be a member of his personal staff. He became a candidate at the 1967 general election in the Correze department. He was said to be part of the ‘young wolves’, sent by Pompidou in order to conquer parliamentary seats, in a central southwest part of France, which had been bastions of the Radical (liberal) party since the Third Republic (Clessis *et al.* 1972). Chirac was elected, but he did not sit in parliament, as he was immediately appointed junior minister in the Pompidou government. Thus began a long career which led Chirac to occupy different governmental posts, including that of minister of home affairs in the last Messmer Cabinet and above all the position of prime minister after the victory of Giscard d’Estaing at the 1974 presidential election.

Chirac’s popularity was due to the ministerial positions he had occupied. He was mentioned in opinion polls from May 1971, when he was still unknown among three-quarters of the voters. By October 1973, however, his popularity had increased to 45 per cent of positive opinions, which placed him at the top among the right-wing politicians. Alongside his ministerial positions, the trust given by the President, the mixture of youth, competence and fighting energy accounted for this increase. As prime minister between 1974 and 1976, however, his popularity fell markedly (Parodi 1985).

Chirac as prime minister

As prime minister, Chirac was faced with the coldness of the majority of the UDR parliamentary party. He had supported Giscard d’Estaing’s candidacy at the presidential election of 1974, against that of Chaban-Delmas, who had been officially selected by the Gaullist party. Chirac wished to speed up the process of ‘Giscardisation’ of the Gaullist party: to achieve this goal, he declared himself candidate to being general secretary of the UDR party in December 1974; he was elected and thus took control of the Gaullist movement in spite of the hostility of “Gaullist barons” (Knapp 1994). In this way, Chirac became the first head of a Fifth Republic government to be at the same time head of government and party leader. Chirac’s gesture was bold, because it was made against the distrust, indeed the hostility, of the Gaullist movement towards political parties, viewed as factors of division: the Gaullist doctrine always preferred ‘rallies’ or ‘unions’, factors of unity, to the detriment of parties.

Giscard d'Estaing's seven-year term was marked by a will of reconciliation of all Right and centre-right political parties. Giscard d'Estaing wished to constitute a great conservative party, bringing together the Gaullists and the centrists who had supported him at the 1974 presidential election. This aim ran against Chirac's will to remain distant from the incumbent President. He resigned from his post of prime minister in August 1976: that was the first time that a Fifth Republic prime minister resigned as a result of conflicts with the President, Chirac having blamed the President for not giving him the means to assume fully his function.

Chirac as party leader

Chirac then gave himself the means of a political action by transforming the Gaullist party (Knapp 1994). The new RPR was to be a political machine designed for Chirac's candidacy at the next presidential election in 1981. Chirac was elected president of the new party at a Congress held in Paris in December 1976: this was in fact a great rally of a large crowd which had come to hear the leader presenting his political manifesto. The resignation from the government, the creation of the RPR and Chirac's election as mayor of Paris, the consequential discord within the right-wing majority, and finally the competition for the 1981 presidential election altered the characteristics of Chirac's popularity. Opinion polls between 1976 and 1981 showed a strong decline of Chirac's image as he was viewed as divider of the Right. In 1979, he reached his lowest levels of support. However, the memory of his role as prime minister, the RPR's dynamics and his presidential objective gave Chirac an undeniable national dimension. There came to be a specific Chirac electorate.

Chirac as President of the Republic

Chirac was elected President at the second ballot of the 1995 presidential election, with 52 per cent of the votes, having obtained only 20 per cent of the votes at the first round (Charlot 1995; Szarka 1996). He was re-elected in 2002, with 18.88 per cent of the votes at the first round but with 82.21 per cent at the second against the extreme-right candidate, Le Pen (Bacqué 2002).

The local implantation of Chirac

The constitution of a political fiefdom

PATRONAGE AND CLIENTELISM

Before becoming leader of the RPR party, Chirac was elected deputy in the third constituency of the Correze department. This was the beginning of a solid implantation in that department and the emergence of a political fiefdom, particularly when he became chairman of the county council. He was re-elected

up to the time he became President of the Republic in 1995. After becoming party leader, the 1977 municipal elections gave him the opportunity to be candidate in Paris: the Paris town hall constituted a fortress, but also a springboard for Chirac (Knapp 1994; Haegel 1994). The possession of the two posts of RPR president and of mayor of Paris gave Chirac the means to develop a large political visibility. It allowed him to occupy constantly the front of the political scene and to assert himself as one of the great national leaders in the perspective of a presidential election.

The personal power of Chirac within the RPR party

PARTY STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

A first source of personal power for Chirac obviously lies in the party's constitution and organisation, as it allowed Chirac to build a strong internal leadership. The RPR constitution was adopted in December 1976, after the dissolution of the UDR and the creation of the RPR. This constitution was on the model of the constitution of the Fifth Republic. Power was in the hands of Chirac (Knapp 1994; Passeron 1984). The RPR did not have wings or factions, at any rate before 1989. Thus Chirac was able to represent and lead the RPR, without meeting any organised opposition. Only after the defeat in the general elections of 1988 did some opponents press for a renewal of the party strategy and of the internal party management. Some 'streams', wings or factions did then appear in July 1989, but this did not prevent Chirac from continuing to lead the party. No strongly structured and permanent organisations emerged.

INTERNAL SUPPORT FOR CHIRAC

A second source of personal power resulted from Chirac's ability to attract support within the party, whether elected politicians, party officials or grassroots militants. Chirac controlled, directly or by means of the general secretary, the composition of the ruling bodies of the RPR (Knapp 1994; Shonfeld 1985). He relied on party officials in these bodies to reinforce his power within the party (Knapp 1994). He also had the support of the parliamentary party, even if this group was much less submissive than during the first years of the Fifth Republic, under de Gaulle and Pompidou (1958–1974) and if he was only the president of the RPR, but not of the parliamentary party, which did dispose of some autonomy.

The relationship between Chirac and the president of the parliamentary party was generally not conflictual, but there was sometimes tension (Knapp 1994). The presidents of the parliamentary party were generally strong. The difficulties encountered in 1988 for the election of a new president of the parliamentary party after the general election of 1988 showed that Chirac sought to reinforce his dominance on the parliamentary party, but the candidate Chirac supported was elected only at the second ballot and with sixty-four votes against sixty-three votes for his rival.

Chirac did not sit directly on the committee of selection of parliamentary candidates, but some of his close followers did; the committee also included representatives of the right-wing belonging to the government coalition: as a result, Chirac did not control the whole composition of that body. The main conflicts concerned *parachutages* and the re-selection of outgoing deputies: renewal is obviously important, but it inevitably provokes conflicts. There was some resistance in 1978: it was then decided that outgoing deputies who asked for re-selection would obtain it (Thiébaud 1988). Chirac used his patronage power to obtain the support of right-wing personalities in Paris; meanwhile, he also relied on the support of local politicians, particularly mayors from rural communes and party militants.

SUPPORT AT THE PARTY CONGRESS

Chirac was always supported by the quasi-unanimity of delegates who were present at the party congress. Opponents did not have the opportunity to voice their opinions by means of motions, except in the context of the preparation of the 1990 congress, when one of these motions, supported by Pasqua and Séguin, obtained nearly a third of the votes. Congress meetings were always closed by a speech by Chirac in the presence of delegates, but also militants or sympathisers – several thousand in all. The main points of the speeches were then taken up in televised news bulletins.

There were some serious rebellions, however. In 1978, Chaban-Delmas, deputy and former prime minister, was elected speaker of the National Assembly with the support from the UDF (liberal) parliamentary party, against Edgar Faure, the incumbent president, supported by the RPR: some deputies of the RPR had to be involved in the rebellion! In June 1988, as we saw, Chirac's candidate was elected president of the RPR parliamentary party at the second ballot only and with a tiny majority. In April 1989, six RPR officials and six UDF officials presented a manifesto asking for renewal. In February 1990, two wings emerged during the congress as we also noted. In March 1990, some neo-reformers from RPR and UDF parties created a 'United Force'. At the referendum of September 1992 on the Maastricht treaty, Séguin and Pasqua campaigned for the No, whereas Chirac advocated the Yes. As a matter of fact, new party rules allowing for wings within the party had been adopted at a special congress convened in January 1989. Pasqua and Séguin set up one of these, but it was dissolved in April 1991, when they set up an autonomous body outside the party.

Chirac's authority was therefore seriously put into question after the defeat of the right-wing parties at the 1988 general election. There was the opposition of Pasqua and Séguin, on the one hand, and, on the other, that of Balladur, who had been appointed prime minister by Mitterrand in 1993. Disciplined up to 1988, the RPR parliamentary party became more rebellious afterwards. Yet Chirac could still rely on the support of over two-thirds of the delegates at the 1990 congress. One must also note that Chirac had been elected president of the RPR with 95 per cent of votes of the Congress in 1976 and that he always remained the sole candidate to the presidency of the RPR.

Strategies and programmes

A third source of personal power for the party leader lies in the role he is able to play in the elaboration of strategies and manifestoes for the party. From 1981, Chirac wanted to broaden the electoral basis of the RPR party, which was only about 20 per cent; he sought to attract voters from other right-wing parties, so as to re-conquer power from the socialists. To achieve his goal, he gave up gradually part of the Gaullist doctrine and evolved gradually towards liberalism. He also suggested an increase in the number of non-Gaullist candidates at the first ballot of general elections. This new ideology and this new strategy rendered the RPR image less clear. Questions of security and immigration were stressed in the 1980s, before more social themes were tackled from the beginning of the 1990s.

The different RPR party manifestos were elaborated by a working group, then sent to the ruling party organisations and then adopted by congress. Chirac intervened directly in the process of elaboration of the presidential candidate's programme, as it was his personal manifesto (on the 1995 presidential programme, see Charlot 1995). In accordance with Gaullist doctrine, he considered that the elaboration of the presidential manifesto was a personal act of the candidate: there was no conflict on the matter. He also followed closely the elaboration and changes of party statutes, including the democratisation process proposed by a committee headed by Séguin which was adopted in January 1989.

THE ELABORATION OF THE GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME

During the period when Chirac headed the RPR, the Barre (1976–1981), Chirac (1986–1988) and Balladur (1993–1995) governments were coalitions, composed of right-wing and centre-right parties. The government programme, which was not the same as the electoral manifesto, was presented to parliament, although there was no constitutional requirement to do so. The programme was prepared by members of the staff of the prime minister, but consultations also took place with the leaders of other majority parties or with their staff, if these leaders were members of the government. The process was rather informal. A party leader did not intervene openly if he was not member of government; if he was a minister, he would either agree or suggest some amendments. Conflicts could occur; the prime minister would then propose an agreed text.

THE POSITION OF CHIRAC OUTSIDE THE PARTY

Chirac was minister on several occasions before becoming general secretary of the UDR in December 1974 and president of the RPR in December 1976. When he became general secretary of the UDR in 1974, it was the first Fifth Republic case of a prime minister being the head of a political party. Chirac also held jointly the prime ministership and the presidency of the RPR at the same time. In 1993, Chirac had pointed out that he did not wish to be head of government and

left the position to Balladur, a former finance minister. The relationship between Balladur as prime minister, and Chirac as party president, became tense, essentially in the context of the 1995 presidential election, at which both were candidates. Some ministers remained in favour of Chirac, others came over to Balladur. Conflicts were inevitable but Chirac did maintain a dominant position vis-à-vis the leaders of the other parties of the coalition, having been prime minister and candidate to the Presidency of the Republic.

The external power of Chirac

Chirac's ideological position

Chirac appeared for a long time to protect the Gaullist doctrine in the fields of institutions, social affairs, state interventionism, Europe, the role of France in the world. Yet, after the coming to power of Mitterrand and the Socialist Party, Chirac moved the RPR towards neo-liberalism, thinking to benefit from the electoral success of Mrs Thatcher in Britain and of Reagan in the United States: as we noted, Chirac thus shifted the line of the RPR on such matters as the privatisation of public enterprises or liberalisation of the labour market, but he retreated partly from this line at the 1995 presidential election (Charlot 1995) by proposing to fill the 'social fracture', as the previous more liberal line had not had the anticipated results: Gaullist voters were bewildered by this political and ideological evolution (Keeler and Schain 1996). French public opinion has never been strongly in favour of economic liberalism and remained favourable to state interventionism in economic policy while wishing to safeguard the country's 'social model'. His partial policy reversal in 1995 enabled Chirac to remain more in tune with public opinion.

The strategies used by Chirac

The use of parliament

Chirac was not often present in the National Assembly when he was deputy. He did not intervene much at the meetings of parliamentary party, in parliamentary committees or in plenary sessions, largely because parliamentary work was not considered a real springboard for a political action at higher level.

The use of television

Chirac did not like official interventions on television or interviews with journalists. He was a little more at ease in debates with other politicians: the debate with the incumbent prime minister Fabius in 1986 remained famous. Chirac preferred a direct relationship with voters at huge political meetings. Other members of the RPR appeared often on television; ministers and above all prime minister Balladur (1993–1995) were frequently interviewed. On the other hand, the

ratings of Chirac were not very high: he suffered, as many party leaders, from the limited audience of his political broadcasts on television. Yet Chirac had the support of owners of advertising firms, while also having a team of political communication advisers, particularly his daughter, Claude Chirac. Although every team of political communication advisers sought to create developments leading to attention being paid to the leader, Chirac benefited little of these initiatives; some were even disastrous for him.

The ratings of Chirac in the opinion polls

In May 1971, Chirac was still unknown: he was bottom among the twenty-four politicians who were tested at the time; in October 1972, he was still unknown among 61 per cent of voters. One year later, in October 1973, his popularity had increased spectacularly: with 45 per cent of positive opinions, his rating was at the top of the right-wing politicians. This rising popularity was confirmed when Chirac became prime minister in 1974, but dissatisfaction quickly rose from 20 per cent to 39 per cent. On the eve of his resignation as prime minister, in 1976, the satisfied were still only a little less than 40 per cent. There was then a marked decline: in July 1979, only 24 per cent had a favourable opinion of Chirac. Criticisms against any openness of the majority towards the centre-left and the tone adopted when the RPR was set up contributed to this low rating. Yet the dynamics of the RPR and the presidential candidacy gave Chirac a national dimension. The distance he took from quarrels within the majority allowed him to improve his ratings during 1980 and to benefit from the 'anti-Giscard' line he took: he appeared to be the real leader of the opposition to the Socialists: his image gained as a result.

By 1985, several tactical errors explained the decrease of his popularity. First, he did not protect his political 'territory' from the *Front National*: the barrier between the RPR and the extreme-right was set too low. Second, the combined list of the Right and of the centre-right at the 1984 European election meant that the RPR was absent from the contest; the space on the right was immediately occupied by the *Front National*. Third, a spectacular meeting with the former president, Giscard d'Estaing, seemed wholly unnecessary. (Parodi 1985).

The participation of Chirac in election campaigns

From 1967 onwards, Chirac was candidate at general elections in a constituency of the Correze. Indeed, the 1967 victory was the most difficult, as the constituency was traditionally on the Left and he had to go to a second ballot. Afterwards, Chirac won always the constituency in the first round.

Chirac took part in some electoral meetings in the most important towns during general election campaigns. He would first proceed to visit industrial firms or farms, welcomed officials of some interest groups and raised aspects of his manifesto likely to concern them. Chirac used only a little of the amount of time allotted to him by law on radio and television: he would often let the chair-

man of the RPR parliamentary party or some officials intervene instead of him. He concentrated on the major broadcasts organised by the television networks.

Chirac managed the RPR campaigns at all the general elections from 1978 to 1993. Paradoxically, it is the defeat of 1981 which boosted Chirac's popularity. He took advantage then of the defeat of Giscard d'Estaing and of the unpopularity of Barre, the outgoing prime minister. Chirac was considered to be the only right-wing leader to win again a parliamentary majority in front of socialists, but the defeat in 1988 marked the beginning of the decline of Chirac as undisputed right-wing leader.

Chirac as candidate at presidential elections

The RPR gave its support to a politician after he had already announced officially that he was candidate, but those who were endorsed were not considered as being the party's candidates, but merely as candidates supported by the party. This rule was the result of the distrust of the Gaullist movement towards traditional political parties. The presidential election was, from then on, presented as a free competition between candidates with their own manifesto, not that of the party: thus public financing of presidential elections was given to candidates, not to parties. Gaullist candidates stressed that they were above parties and embodied national interests: they had therefore to have some autonomy with respect to the party. Chirac respected this rule by resigning from his function of RPR president, by constituting his own campaign team and by moving into offices, rented specially for the presidential campaign, independently from those of the RPR party.

There were no primaries in the RPR: a special congress was convened to give the support of the party to a candidate. The congress was composed of delegates from the departmental organisations of the party and support was given to the candidate who obtained a majority of the votes of these delegates. The number of candidates varied. In 1981, two candidates wanted the RPR support: Chirac, former prime minister and RPR president, and Debre, former prime minister. Chirac obtained 95 per cent of the votes and Debre 3 per cent. In 1988, there was only one candidate, Chirac, who received unanimous party support. In 1995, there were two candidates: Chirac and Balladur, incumbent prime minister, but only Chirac sought party support, which he obtained with quasi-unanimity (Charlot 1995). In 2002, there was only one candidate, Chirac: he obtained unanimous party support.

Chirac's result, at any rate at the first ballot, was always rather limited. He obtained 18 per cent of the votes in 1981 and, being third, he did not participate at the second ballot. The defeat of Giscard d'Estaing in 1981, to which he contributed by not supporting him strongly at the second ballot, allowed him to become the leader of the opposition facing Mitterrand and the socialist government (Machin and Wright 1982). In 1988, he obtained 20 per cent of the votes at the first ballot and was ahead of Barre who was supported by the UDF, the centre-right party; he obtained 46 per cent of the votes at the second ballot

(Gaffney 1988). In 1995, his legitimacy as party leader was contested by Balladur. Yet he obtained 20 per cent of the votes at the first ballot and came second; but he beat Jospin at the second ballot with 52 per cent of the votes and was elected President of the Republic (Szarka 1996). In 2002, he obtained 19 per cent of the votes at the first ballot, but, having arrived in first position, he confronted the extreme-right candidate, Le Pen, who was second; he obtained 82 per cent of the votes and was re-elected President (Gaffney 2004; Miguet 2002). Thus there was in effect stagnation of Chirac's support at the first ballot. During all this period, his only success was to have maintained the dominant position of gaullism within the French right.

Chirac thus had power within the party he created, but he never achieved the take-off of that party, even when he was elected President of the Republic. In 1995, Chirac did not dissolve parliament, as Mitterrand had done in 1981 and 1988, and his party lost the general election of 1997 (17 per cent) (Szarka 1997). There was no boost given to the RPR as a result of Chirac's 'coat tails' (Knapp 1999). But, in 2002, the general election took place two months after the presidential election. The extraordinary result at the presidential election (over 80 per cent at the second ballot) was not followed by success for Chirac's new presidential party, the *Union pour un Mouvement Populaire* (UMP) at the general election (21 per cent). The impact of Chirac on that newly-created party was extremely limited, since that party received barely 21 per cent of the votes (against 17 per cent for the RPR in 1997). The overall verdict must therefore be that, however personalised, the rule of Chirac had, in the end, only a very small effect.

III

Le Pen: an electorally personalised leadership without representation

Jean-Marie Le Pen benefited from the impact of the presidential election by direct popular suffrage, as this type of election facilitated a direct relationship between candidates and voters. It also helped new political parties to emerge. Support has also been built by Le Pen's ability to use the mass media, especially during presidential campaigns. As a demagogic political leader, Le Pen used to the full the personalisation factor inherent in the Fifth Republic's presidential system and exploited the mass media in order to spread his message. He projected the image of a populist who said "what every one else [is] thinking". The simplistic solutions advocated by Le Pen made it difficult for mainstream politicians to compete on the grounds the leader of the National Front himself had defined. Le Pen's personal leadership skills were great (Schain 1995, 1987).

While Le Pen's influence was strong in the electorate, it was very weak in terms of representation. Admittedly, the two-ballot electoral system used at general elections penalises political parties, such as the National Front, which are unable to build alliances with other parties; indeed, there was considerable pressure on all parties to prevent electoral alliances with the National Front at the second ballot. The National Front has thus been isolated from coalition

arrangements with centre-right parties at general elections. Not surprisingly, the leading party (or coalition of parties) generally ends up with a markedly larger number of seats than its share in the popular vote would justify.

Yet the personalisation of leadership occurred only over ten years after the creation of the National Front. Le Pen's electoral audience was initially very limited and the National Front was small (Smith 1991). The National Front was a successful new political party, but its first successes occurred more than ten years after its creation, a situation which is very different from that of other new political parties which achieve much power more quickly.

There are numerous competing explanations of the growth of Le Pen and his National Front. Its success clearly testifies to the durability of the themes of anti-immigration and insecurity (Schain 1994, 1988). Le Pen also skilfully exploited an anti-political strand within French political culture. As a new party, the National Front was not tainted with the failings of the existing parties, partly because it did not hold many positions of elected responsibility. Le Pen's attack against the 'gang of four' (RPR, UDF, PS, PCF) should be understood in this way. The main question remains whether he is a permanent feature in the landscape of the French political parties or merely a transient phenomenon linked to an ultra-conservative reaction to the Left in power.

The way Le Pen became leader of the National Front

Before becoming leader of the National Front, Le Pen had been a veteran of the Algerian war; he had been elected at the 1956 general election with the support of a small business party run by Pierre Poujade, and at the 1958 general election with the support of a conservative party, the CNIP (*Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans*). The Poujadist movement was an anti-tax, anti-modernism movement of shopkeepers, traders and small businessmen. It had some success in rural areas and in small towns of west and south-west France, while Le Pen has obtained his highest support in large cities. After the 1962 general election, Le Pen disappeared from the political scene as a result of the weakness of the support for the extreme-right in French public opinion after the Algerian war. At the 1965 presidential election, he ran the campaign of Tixier-Vignancour, a defence lawyer of *Algérie Française* paramilitary leaders and the founder of the extreme-right *Rassemblement National*. Poujadism, the abortive coup in Algeria and Tixier-Vignancour's campaign expressed a durability of French extreme-right sensibilities stretching from the late nineteenth century to the present.

Le Pen created a new party, the National Front, at the beginning of the 1970s, but, up to the 1980s, it was one of a number of relatively obscure parties of the extreme right. It had initially a very limited audience. In none of the elections prior to 1983 did the National Front attract more than 1 per cent of the national vote. At the presidential election of 1974, Le Pen obtained under 1 per cent of the votes (0.75 per cent); at the 1978 general election, the National Front obtained 0.4 per cent. Le Pen's electoral fortune reached a low point in 1981, when he was unable to find the necessary 500 'sponsors' for a new presidential

candidacy. At the 1981 general election, the two parties of the extreme right gained together only a third of 1 per cent of the votes. Clearly, before 1983, Le Pen was unable to mobilise a significant portion of the electorate (Schain 1987).

From 1984, the political priority is given to issues of security and immigration (Schain 1994, 1988). The Le Pen list attracted 11 per cent of the votes at the 1984 European election, but only a fifth of those who were most concerned with security, and half of those most concerned with immigration. Although Le Pen had been raising these issues for many years, it was only after they had become important for the established parties that a legitimate political space was opened up for the National Front. Probably the worst confrontation on the immigrant issue occurred in a town located in the Eure-et-Loire department, Dreux. The local campaign was dominated by anti-immigrant themes fuelled by an alliance between the RPR-UDF opposition and the National Front. Local elections in Dreux became a test for the national parties (Schain 1987).

What is clear is that the National Front did not succeed before 1983–1984, because there was no personalised leadership coming from Le Pen. The personalised leadership component emerged more than ten years after Le Pen became leader of the party. The main reason or circumstance was the fact that immigration and insecurity came to be raised by the established parties but were also felt by the majority of the electorate. As a result Le Pen could seize this issue to obtain electoral successes and boost the appeal of his party.

The personal power exercised by Le Pen within his party, including by bringing large policy and structural changes

Party structure and organisation

In the 1970s, Le Pen was not a strong leader within the National Front. Le Pen was fighting within the party to strengthen his leadership. The party was divided. It had been set up in the context of a profound crisis of the nationalist camp after the Algerian war. The failure of the presidential candidacy of Tixier-Vignancour in 1965 had shown the need for a united and centralised party: there had been conflicts between different political groups during the presidential campaign. The National Front evolved out of the disparate and often antagonistic factions of royalists, neo-fascists, embittered Algerian activists, Poujadists, and right-wing Catholics. In October 1972, these factions came together to compete at elections. (Mayer 1998; Mayer and Perrineau 1996).

Le Pen was able to turn the party into a highly centralised and powerful machine in the 1980s and 1990s. Success at the polls and the new law on party finance gave the party a considerable boost. The different bodies had allowed the leader all the leeway required. Le Pen ruled on the basis of a mixture of great admiration for his capacity and of fear for of his ruthlessness. True ‘personalised leadership’ did develop.

Le Pen thoroughly dominated the National Front, dictating its platform and its organisational structure. From a marginalised and fractious extreme-right

party, the National Front became a “solidly anchored, mass-based political party” (DeClair 1999), based on a central committee of 100 members (the ‘parliament’ of the party), elected by the delegates at the congress, a political bureau elected by the central committee, a general secretary and a president. This internal development was accompanied by the setting up of a large number of peripheral organisations and the promotion of several associated newspapers. Le Pen initiated all major changes in the party structure; one, especially, which occurred at the thirteenth congress in 2007, was the election of the members of the central committee by all party members. Le Pen was re-elected president by 98 per cent of the militants.

Internal support for Le Pen

The success of Le Pen was to be the turn of the tide in terms of his reputation in the party. Only from 1984 can ‘party personalised leadership’ begin to apply to the case of Le Pen. He did not hesitate to sack those who were not loyal. For there were crises, the most important being that of December 1998, which was motivated more by conflicts over tactics and personal antagonisms than by ideology. It was the climax of a longstanding power struggle which opposed some of the pragmatic and issue-oriented cadre elements of the party to the old orthodox radical guard. The split led to the departure of Mégret and his allies and to the creation of a new *Mouvement National* in January 1999 (Ivaldi 1999).

Strategies and programme

Le Pen dictating the platform

At the 1984 European election, La Pen’s list secured 11 per cent of the votes by campaigning against immigration and insecurity, a result which many interpreted as a protest against the Socialists’ radical reform programme of 1981–1983. Early support for Le Pen came from the hard line faction of the traditional right-wing electorate, as the National Front offered an uncompromising opposition to the Socialist government (Mayer and Perrineau 1996).

From a party of activists, the National Front became a ‘respectable’ coalition of notables. Party officials fell into three groups, the founders, the notables and the new recruits, with different orientations and an appeal to different constituencies. This linked the founders with the younger generation, thereby ensuring some continuity, and broadening the ideological appeal of the party by including notables: these helped to change the image of the party at the local level. Indeed, the party clearly chose not only to maximise its electoral appeal, but its ability to engage in coalition bargaining (Schain 1987). The National Front became a true mass party insofar as it had a wide appeal, although, from a regional perspective, it was divided between strongholds in the eastern half of the country and little support in the west (DeClair 1999).

The National Front was founded in the 1970s, at a time when immigration was hardly an issue: initially traditional right-wing issues were favoured. When immigration was increasingly utilised in campaigns and this was perceived as successful in the mid-1980s, the issue was promoted to the centre of the party propaganda. Attention to the issue of security was then added, as a key element of law and order. Survey research showed that this was important: 40 per cent of the National Front electorate believed in Le Pen's capacity to enforce security (Schield 1995). Le Pen also linked security to socio-economic issues, such as unemployment and welfare provisions, especially since the early 1990s, when he reacted to the 'proletarianisation' of his electorate and consequently changed the party's social profile. He abandoned his earlier neo-liberal rhetoric in an attempt to exploit to the full his appeal among blue-collar workers: by 1995, the National Front had become France's first workers' party (Mudde 1999).

The direct influence of Le Pen on a fraction of the electorate

The direct influence of Le Pen on the electorate was strong. Le Pen proved his ability to perform well at elections, his greatest successes having been at presidential elections as well as at elections fought under proportional representation, such as European and regional elections.

Le Pen's reputation was made by stressing one issue above all others which can be summarised as 'France for the French'. By 1983–1984, the extreme Right and the particular brand of immigration politics were brought into mainstream politics. This was so in particular at the 1984 European elections when the salience of immigration was achieved. Le Pen presented a platform, with immigration as a major social, political and economic evil afflicting French society. "Two million immigrants are the cause of two million French people out of work" was the key political slogan of his electoral campaign. Social issues such as crime and insecurity were traced to the presence on French soil of immigrants, particularly those coming from North Africa. The National Front then used the same theme during the 1986 general election campaign (Mitra 1988). Immigration is consistently cited as the essential policy issue by the voters of the party (Mayer and Perrineau 1996).

France has always been a country of immigration, but whereas past immigrants were Catholics coming from Italy, Spain or Portugal, post-war immigrants were mainly of North African origin, with their own well-developed culture and religion, which many felt antagonistic to mainstream French culture. This reaction has been helped by a coincidental rise in unemployment which the socialist government did not reduce, by the reaction against socialist policy between 1981 and 1984 and by a more general loss of confidence in political parties and established political leaders (Schain 1994). The arrival of second-generation immigrants on to the French labour market and manifestations of a cultural difference increased the problem of the integration of ethnic communities into mainstream French culture. Le Pen proved able to mobilise popular fears on the themes of immigration and insecurity. The politics of fear paid dividends, the threat to national identity being the linchpin of Le Pen's appeal.

The breakthrough of the National Front was also linked to the post-1973 economic crisis. The association of unemployment with immigration led to simplistic solutions which were attractive to a proportion of the electorate alienated by the broken promises of Left and Right. The National Front gradually picked up substantial support in the deprived outskirts of leading French cities, which had high levels of unemployment and crime together with large numbers of immigrants. Although detailed studies repeatedly demonstrated that there was no straightforward correlation between support for the National Front and the concentration of immigrants (Fysh and Wolfreys 1998), post-electoral surveys also consistently portrayed the voters of the party as being those for whom immigration and security were the principal political issues.

Le Pen is the leader of a party which can be defined as an “anti-immigration party” (Fennema 1997). The party was ostracised as a result (Hainsworth 2000), not just by the Left, but by the mainstream right-wing parties as well (Minkenberg and Schain 2003). In the national election campaigns, the mainstream Right explicitly ruled out any kind of collaboration with the National Front (Givens 2005). The message sent by all other parties to the voters was clear: the National Front is a threat to liberal democracy and it should therefore be kept away from power, while, in Europe, some other parties, for example, the Freedom Party of Austria, the Northern League in Italy, and the Danish People’s Party in Denmark, were not ostracised and have been invited to join a government coalition or to support minority governments (van Spanje and Van der Brug 2007).

Le Pen was also the leader of a “new populist party” (Taggart 1995). New populist parties are recognisable along three dimensions. First, in ideological terms, new populist parties are on the Right, against the political system and claim to be speaking for the ‘mainstream’ of society. Second, these parties have strongly centralised structures with charismatic and personalised leadership as an integral component of their institutional development: the National Front has been successful in building a strong organisational network. The element of charismatic leadership is manifest: the National Front is identified with the name of Le Pen, with some commentators even referring to the phenomenon of *lepénisme* (Vaughan 1991). Third, new populist parties have a distinctive electoral profile, as they attract ‘protest’ voters from across the political spectrum (Taggart 1995).

The strategies used by Le Pen to develop the policies and the ideas of his party

The use of television

As a result of his electoral successes, Le Pen became the centre of political interest and debate. From January 1984, he was invited by major radio and television stations to participate in a series of important programmes. While the programmes gave journalists an opportunity to attack, accuse and criticise the leader of the National Front, they gave Le Pen the opportunity to present his most

powerful issues; perhaps, more importantly, each time established leaders of the Right appeared at interviews, they were forced to define themselves in relation to Le Pen. The consequence of the election victories, of media attention and of contorted statements by political leaders of the Right was that fewer voters found it possible to remain indifferent to Le Pen and the National Front. Both the percentage of voters who were sympathetic and of those who were opposed to Le Pen and his party tended to increase (Schain 1987).

The popularity of Le Pen in opinion polls

Before becoming president of the National Front, Le Pen did not appear in the opinion polls. From January 1984, however, the popularity of Le Pen and of his party has been measured every month by SOFRES for the *Figaro* magazine barometer. Between January 1984 and August 1997, the level of popularity of the National Front varied from a minimum of 8 per cent and a maximum of 28 per cent, reached in May 1995, while the rating of Le Pen oscillates between 8 and 31 per cent, also reached in May 1995, the curves of the National Front and of its president being closely linked and connected with the evolution of the political climate.

Yet, between 1981 and 1984, there was a change in the basis of the attractiveness of the Front National, by which time the party had become more 'acceptable'. This was true both about the ideas espoused by Le Pen as well as about the party itself. In May 1984, SOFRES found that 18 per cent of those surveyed "felt a lot or some sympathy for Jean-Marie Le Pen"; even higher percentages agreed with the Le Pen's positions on immigrants, security and the "struggle against communism". Between January and May 1984, the percentage of respondents who wanted to see Le Pen play a more important role in the months to come almost doubled from 12 to 23 per cent (Schain 1987). The increased electoral support for the National Front in June 1984 further enhanced the extent to which the party was acceptable: six months after the SOFRES survey in May 1984, sympathisers had increased from 18 to 26 per cent. In general, the popularity of the National Front and of its leader have increased during electoral periods.

The impact of Le Pen at the local level

A large and surprisingly loyal vote rendered the National Front an effective actor in political bargaining at all levels of government. At the regional and municipal levels, where proportional representation has enabled the National Front to translate electoral support into representation, the party gained considerable influence. In 1992, the Right depended on the National Front for its majority in fourteen out of twenty-two regions. In 1998, this dependency was translated into a political breakthrough for the National Front when four UDF regional leaders formally accepted its support for the election of the president of the region. In 1995, for the first time, the National Front won municipal elections in three cities

(Toulon, Orange, Marignane) and gained representation in almost half of the larger French towns. It won an additional city (Vitrolles) at a 1997 by-election.

The general elections at which Le Pen has taken part as party leader

Le Pen was elected deputy for the first time during the 1956 legislative elections with the support of a small business party run by Pierre Poujade and at the 1958 general election with the support of a conservative party, the *Centre National des Indépendants et Paysans* (CNIP). In December 1983, Le Pen attracted over 12 per cent of the vote at a by-election in Brittany (Morbihan), a constituency with no significant immigrant population. In March 1986, the National Front won almost 10.1 per cent (about 2.7 million votes) and established itself as a substantial political force (Cole 1986). As the general election of March 1986 was fought on the basis of proportional representation, with a 5 per cent threshold, instead of the two-ballot system that has prevailed since 1958, thirty-five National Front deputies entered Parliament. The 1986 legislative victories of the Front National have been often cited as examples of how proportional representation has allowed extremist parties to gain a foothold in the political system (Carter 2002).

Meanwhile, the centre of gravity of Le Pen's electorate shifted from being primarily composed of traditional right-wing voters radicalised by the presence of the Left in power and their dissatisfaction with the divisions among the main right-wing parties, to a more popular electorate. The National Front electorate is more masculine and working-class than that of traditional right-wing parties (Mayer and Perrineau 1996).

The June 1988 general election produced a more surprising result: the party won two million fewer votes (9.4 per cent) than its leader had in April (2.3 million compared with the 4.4 million votes of Le Pen). As the electoral system has returned to being the two-ballot majority system, with single-member districts, the party elected only one deputy (instead of thirty-five) and this one deputy soon left the party after a row with Le Pen (Guyomarch and Machin 1989).

At the 1993 general election, the National Front obtained over three million votes (12.4 per cent), ahead of both communists and ecologists. This result was a success, especially as the party's campaign had been rather subdued; but no National Front deputy was elected. The party had established a solid base in over 100 constituencies out of 577, where its candidates, with over 15 per cent of the poll, could stand at the second ballot; it was strongest in the south, in the Paris area, in the north, in Alsace and along the Rhône. Yet, even around Nice where it was strongest, its isolation prevented it winning seats. Le Pen had some hope of success after the first ballot in his own constituency in that area, but his competitor gained a further 15,000 votes between the two ballots, as all the other parties campaigned against Le Pen. In only one constituency (Dreux) did a *Front National* candidate, with strong local ties, come close (by 105 votes) to winning.

At the 1997 general election, the party's vote was almost identical to Le Pen's result of 1995 (15 per cent). Though predictions about its decline were made

around 1993, National Front results attest to its longevity, but Le Pen himself was unable to find a seat to contest, as a result of internal dissensions and rivalry, notably on the part of Mégret. Le Pen irritated militants by calling for a second-ballot vote in favour of socialists where the National Front had no contender. It was argued, however, that the stagnation of the party's votes between 1995 and 1997 reflected the lack of preparation of its leaders to a snap election (Szarka 1997).

Over the years, the National Front electorate changed appreciably: it was markedly more 'popular' in 1997 than in 1984, with the party attracting 27 per cent of the working-class vote compared with 10 per cent ten years earlier. It was also younger with 14 per cent of the voters between eighteen and twenty-four (and 18 per cent of those between twenty-five and thirty-four), compared with 11 per cent in 1984. Indeed the National Front score among the twenty-five to thirty-four age cohort indicates that the party had increased its support among younger voters over a decade earlier. Its sociological make-up had become increasingly differentiated from that of traditional right parties. What most distinguished National Front voters from those of other parties of the Right was their issue orientation: for National Front voters the issues of security and immigration are of highest priority, which is not the case for voters of other parties (Schain 1988, 1994).

At the 2002 general election, the National Front was unable to capitalise on Le Pen's result at the presidential election or to hold the balance of power at the second ballot, as had happened in 1997. There was a swing away from the National Front, which, with 11.1 per cent of the votes, returned to its 1993 level, while no member of the party was elected to parliament (Miguet 2002).

Le Pen as a candidate in presidential elections

Le Pen was a candidate at the 1974 presidential election, but he obtained only 0.8 per cent of the votes; he could not stand in 1981 as he was unable to find the required 500 'sponsors', but, at the general election which followed, the two parties of the extreme right gained together only a third of 1 per cent of the votes. As a candidate, however, Le Pen proved somewhat more popular, with 2 per cent of the vote in the local elections of 1977 and 4 per cent at the 1978 and 1981 general elections. Before 1983, Le Pen was thus unable to mobilise a significant proportion of the electorate (Schain 1987).

At the 1988 presidential election, Le Pen's obtained 14.4 per cent of the votes at the first ballot, a result which was not predicted by the opinion polls. Le Pen launched attacks against Chirac, especially attacked the RPR leader's weakness about the two key issues of immigration and security: his campaign was as much against Chirac as against Mitterrand. As a matter of fact, the National Front was better organised for that campaign than ever before: Le Pen himself performed professionally on television and at his many meetings. He constantly strove to be 'positive' his message and to discuss issues other than security and immigration; he referred to the economy, international relations and European integration. On

a populist vein, he promised to solve complex problems with fast and simple solutions: this clearly found many sympathetic ears. At the first ballot of that presidential election, 90 per cent of those who had voted National Front in 1986 remained loyal to Le Pen. He obtained 17 per cent among the right-wing RPR-UDF electors of the 1986 general election, 6 per cent among the socialist voters and 5 per cent among the communist voters. Overall, Le Pen received 18 per cent of male voters and 11 per cent of female voters, 27 per cent of the shopkeepers' and small businessmen's vote, 19 per cent among managers and those in the professions and 19 per cent among manual workers (Guyomarch and Machin 1989).

At the 1995 presidential election, the Le Pen vote continued to be strong, at 15 per cent, being slightly up on the 14.4 per cent of 1988. Just over six million French voters (nearly 20 per cent of the votes cast) considered far-right positions to be credible and desirable (Szarka 1996).

On 21 April 2002, Le Pen became Chirac's opponent at the second round of a presidential election: this was his best-ever result. In the first ballot of the presidential election, he had achieved 16.86 per cent of the vote, two points more than in 1995. In his quest for respectability, Le Pen polished his image, but his favourite themes remained immigration and insecurity. In geographical terms his support was based in the east, along a line running from Le Havre to Lyon and down to Perpignan, through regions of comparatively high unemployment and with large immigrant populations. His core support was growing in strength and diversity, as Le Pen voters tend to be male and come from all sides of the political spectrum. Le Pen had substantial support among the young (20 per cent), in the working-class (one in three), among the unemployed, the self-employed, and with those low educational qualifications. Le Pen thus became the best 'catch-all' candidate. That presidential election was above all a rejection of the traditional political class, represented by the candidates of the parties of government: this contributed to the downfall of the socialist Jospin and to the freak presence of the leader of a populist party of the extreme Right at the second ballot of the most important election in French political life, a situation which created an earthquake at the political level: 21 April 2002 turned out to be into a festival of protest! On 21 April 2002, extremists of left and right were able to exploit the vast political area left open by the parties of government.

The second ballot of the presidential election in May 2002 was set to be a contest between Chirac and Le Pen. The left was present, since it campaigned for Chirac in order to block Le Pen. Le Pen's vote was held below 20 per cent of the votes cast (18 per cent). This result demonstrated the inability of the leader of the National Front to ride the wave of the first ballot success: Le Pen gained only 50,000 votes (1 per cent). Chirac was re-elected with the greatest endorsement ever received by a president of the Republic (Miguet 2002). At the 2007 presidential election, Le Pen only obtained 10.44 per cent of the votes. His challenge seemed to have evaporated, with Sarkozy having succeeded in winning voters from the National Front by being tough on crime, immigration and national identity.

The performance of Le Pen

Le Pen exercised a strongly personalised leadership with respect to his party, a party which was very centralised. The new law on party finance gave the National Front a considerable financial boost. Le Pen was popular in his party. His success at the polls gave him the opportunity to lead his party on the basis of the great admiration he enjoyed. Meanwhile, he did not hesitate to sack ruthlessly members who opposed him.

Le Pen used to the full the direct relationship between candidate and voters offered by the presidential election. He was the result of the process of personalisation inherent in the presidential system. He gave also the image of a populist. Le Pen's influence was strong in the electorate, stronger for himself than for his party. Yet, before 1983, Le Pen had been unable to mobilise a significant portion of the electorate, although the themes and issues that he developed through the National Front were already those used after 1981 (Schain 1987). His best performances were between the 1988 (14.4 per cent of the votes) and the 2002 presidential election (16.86 per cent) only to fall to 10.44 per cent in 2007. This last result seems to constitute the beginning of a decline. The results of the National Front paralleled the leader's scores, but at a lower level, at general elections: 9.4 per cent in 1988, 12.4 per cent in 1993, 14.9 per cent in 1997, 11.1 per cent in 2002 and 4.79 per cent in 2007. Legislative representation was almost non-existent, except from 1986 to 1988, when proportional representation allowed thirty-five deputies from the party to be elected.

The comparison of the performances of Mitterrand, Chirac and Le Pen shows that these leaders exercised strong personalised leadership on their political party. In Le Pen's case, personalisation of leadership and even a personal cult can be accounted for, partly by some personality traits (former army officer, cult of chief...), by Le Pen's political career, including the experience acquired as a former deputy, from 1956 to 1962, by Le Pen's populist discourse and his ability to mobilise voters on highly controversial political themes (immigration, security) and by the transformation of the National Front into a party machine for presidential elections.

Chirac also held a marked control over the political party he created: he was unquestionably the leader, even if that leadership was contested after his failure at the 1988 presidential election. Some former followers called into question his action at the head of his party. Chirac's leadership can be explained by his political career, by his experience as former minister and prime minister, by the creation of the RPR and its use as a party machine for presidential elections, by the leader's ability to mobilise militants during electoral campaigns, by his skill in resisting the pressure of the internal opposition and by his ability to maintain political networks as well as by his notoriety as mayor of Paris, which provided him with resources for patronage. He was also skilful in modifying his discourse and moving from state interventionism to neo-liberalism.

Mitterrand had a strong impact on his party, which he renovated. But his leadership was also contested after his defeat at the 1978 general election. The contest was both doctrinal and strategic. His rivals presented another conception of socialism while being less committed to the strategy of Union of the Left.

His leadership can be explained by his political career, his experience (as minister under the Fourth Republic), by his skills as parliamentary orator and political writer, by his ability to renew the Socialist Party and change its strategy. Mitterrand was also able to resist the pressure of his internal opposition by his ability to maintain political networks, by the links he had with the different wings of the Socialist Party.

The comparison of the three cases shows that there was a varied ability to exercise a sustainable impact on the voters. Mitterrand was never very popular: he never was 'plebiscitarian'. He rallied late to the idea of the election of the president by universal suffrage. Mitterrand increased his own impact on the presidential elections in the 1960s, but the electoral performance of his party at general elections stagnated in the 1970s; it increased only as the 'honeymoon' effect of his presidential victories in 1981 (34 per cent for the Socialist Party) and 1988 (37 per cent for the Socialist Party).

Le Pen increased his own electoral performance as well as that of his party, but at a level lower than that of Mitterrand and the Socialist party. Chirac failed to increase his own electoral performance and that of his party. He never achieved a real take-off for the RPR. During all this period there was no boost and no 'honeymoon' effect for the RPR or the UMP: 19 per cent in 1988, 19 per cent in 1993, 17 per cent in 1997 and 21 per cent in 2002 (Shugart 1995).

10 Italy

From partitocracy to personal parties

Italian political history after the Second World War is clearly divided into two major phases. The watershed is the so-called Tangentopoli scandal which occurred at the beginning of the 1990s. According to a largely accepted point of view, at that time a ‘Second Republic’ started, featuring characteristics completely different from the political system of the 1948–1992 period. To be honest, critics point to the lack of constitutional amendments to sustain that nothing has really changed in Italian politics.¹ In any case, the 1993 electoral reform (Katz 2001) and the dramatic turnover affecting the political class at the 1994 general election (Verzichelli 1996) marked a clear break at least for parties and the party system. Using classical indicators of party system change, Italy in the first half of the 1990s is similar to those political systems emerging from a regime transition (Mair 1997; Pennings and Lane 1998). So the often-used expression of an Italian political ‘earthquake’ occurring in the 1990s is surely valid.

This metaphor portrays what in fact happened in Italian partisan politics. As is well known, the starting point was a polarised pluralist system. According to Sartori (1976), the Italian party system had a large number of ‘relevant’ parties, including a strong centrist Christian Democrat party and two anti-system oppositions. This arrangement brought about governmental instability and a lack of alternance in government. When considered as organisations, the First Republic’s main Italian actors – Christian Democracy and the Communist Party – were perfect examples of bureaucratic mass parties. The neo-fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano* and the Socialist Party approximated the same model, while other tiny parties maintained a ‘cadre’ structure.

In general, this party arrangement allowed little room for party personalisation. Popular leaders were well-known and were also highly praised as founding fathers of the Italian democracy; but great mass parties emphasised ideology and religion, not personal charisma, as bases for political participation. Moreover, the First Republic pivotal party – Christian Democracy – conventionally attributed the positions of party leader and prime minister to different persons. Officially, this arrangement aimed at avoiding the power concentration characterising the fascist dictatorship; more realistically, it was a consequence of the extreme party fractionalisation. All things considered, for decades since the Second

World War, leader personalisation was limited to some short-lived examples of populism in southern Italy (Tarchi 2003).

To have a full picture of personalisation in the First Republic one should also consider the electoral system and its relationship with the so-called exchange voting (*voto di scambio*) (Golden 2003). From 1948 to 1992 parliament was elected on the basis of a proportional representation system with very large districts and no thresholds. Voters used a single ballot from which they were allowed to choose a party *and* a candidate inside that party. MPs were elected according to those second (preference) votes.² In order to gain large amounts of preference votes, candidates built local machines to recruit followers using clientelism. Thus local leaders took advantage of personal supporters largely uninterested in party politics, but induced by material rewards (Caciagli 1977; Piattoni 2005). This practice has been pervasive in southern Italy, but there were dramatic consequences for political life at national level as well. Christian Democrat Giulio Andreotti, for instance, obtained substantial power within the party and built a long-lasting governmental career from an astonishing amount of preference votes in Lazio. Yet no politician became an undisputable national party leader by simply using preference votes and clientelism.

Something new appeared in the 1980s. The 1976 parliamentary election is usually considered as the zenith of the 'First' Republic, with Christian Democracy and the Communist Party peaking jointly at about 75 per cent of the votes. In the successive elections both parties steadily lost popular support. Coincidentally, in the first half of the 1980s, third parties were able to displace Christian Democracy and to obtain the prime ministerial position, as was the case with Giovanni Spadolini and Bettino Craxi. The first was the leader of the Republican Party, a tiny centre party averaging about 3 per cent of the votes: in 1981 he formed the first Italian government in which the prime minister was not from Christian Democracy; for the first time, too, the prime minister was also party leader. In 1981–1982 Spadolini's two governments lasted less than two years, but they paved the way for the key experience of Bettino Craxi. In 1976 Craxi was elected leader of the Socialist Party. Immediately afterwards he launched a double strategy. First, he fiercely fought factions within the party, eliminating internal opposition and having a stronghold on the leadership. Second, he proclaimed the strategy of the 'great reform', a (never clearly defined) constitutional change whereby the Christian Democrat and Communist political duopoly was supposed to end. Starting from a discouraging 9 per cent of the votes, Craxi decided to achieve his goal by using his personal popularity, sustained by his position as head of the government. Craxi's political action during the 1980s was highly distinctive: he became prime minister in 1983 and his governments lasted until 1987, an impressive duration by Italian standards. Not only did he continue to hold both positions of premier and party leader, but he was felt to be a decision-maker. Disregarding 'consociationalism' and negotiation, his decisional style within the Socialist Party and in government was different from past practices. In the end, Craxi failed to change Italian politics, however: in the second half of the 1980s Christian Democracy seized power again, while the Socialist

Party never managed to become equal to the Communist Party. The great change, radically different from Craxi's expectations, took place in the 1990s only, when all the traditional parties were brutally affected by the Tangentopoli scandal, Bettino Craxi being one of the most outstanding victims of the new Italian politics. Yet he must be acknowledged as having been the key example of party personalisation in the 'First' Republic.

After the regime transition in the years 1943–1948, Italian politics had a second start in the early 1990s; this change mainly affected parties. The party system which developed came to be organised around two coalitions frequently alternating in government. Mass parties vanished and new organisations appeared, often defined as 'light', 'plastic', or 'business firm' parties (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). Moreover, in the Italian 'Second' Republic party personalisation came to overflow in various forms (Calise 2007).

Many former factions of Christian Democracy resurrected as single parties. Overlooking splits, mergers, and brand name changes, the most relevant parties in the centre of the political spectrum are the *Unione dei Democratici Cristiani* (Udc) and the *Unione Democratici per l'Europa* (Udeur). Both parties reject bipolarism and envision the return to a unified Catholic centre party; yet they have been forced by their differences and by their small electoral dimension to join alternatively right-wing or left-wing coalitions. In differing ways, both Udc and Udeur are strongly linked to their leader's appeal. Albeit more entrenched in Sicily, the former is a national party promoted by Pierferdinando Casini through a frequently televised image of moderation. The latter is truly a personal party led by Clemente Mastella, a local political boss based in Campania, with little electoral support nationwide but nevertheless able to obtain governmental positions.

Italia dei Valori is another moderate centre party, whose origin is completely different from the Catholic parties. The leader is Antonio Di Pietro, a former examining magistrate who led the Tangentopoli team and reached in the 1990s a popularity which never diminished. IdV is a successful movement even if it has a slight organisation: according to most observers, such a success depends exclusively on the leader's large appeal among Italian voters.

The critical election which opened the Second Republic was held in 1994. Former Christian Democrats and former Communists ran that election separately and were severely defeated by a right-wing coalition. Subsequently, on the Left, another electoral alliance – the *Ulivo* – was set up and gave rise in 2007 to the setting up of a new Democratic Party. The left-wing coalition has been barely able to have a strong leader, however. Organisational constraints and personal rivalries hampered the leadership of Romano Prodi, the most important centre-left politician of the Second Republic and Prodi finally abandoned it after his electoral defeat in 2008. Yet the prolonged experience of the *Ulivo* and the actual practice of the Democratic Party have at least resulted in an innovative method of leadership selection, the primary election. So far primaries have been used in 2005 to select Romano Prodi as coalition leader and candidate premier and in 2007 to appoint Walter Veltroni as head of the Democratic Party. In both

cases, competition among candidates was downplayed to emphasise the very large participation and the democratisation of the parties' internal life. The use of primaries led to party personalisation in an unusual environment, which the left-wing Italian parties clearly were.

Party personalisation, banished from the 'First' Republic, seems to have become well established in Italian politics. It appears in tiny centre parties and in the largest centre-left party as well; but it has emerged most impressively on the Right. The earliest rightist party appeared in the twilight of the 'First' Republic, and being wholly novel in the Italian politics of the 1980s. Its organisation, issues and language were previously unknown. Although popular party leaders were already present in the political landscape, what was a first was that Umberto Bossi was to be both the party's founding father and charismatic leader. Meanwhile, *Forza Italia* is the most important party of the Italian Second Republic. It was suddenly created by Silvio Berlusconi to run the 1994 parliamentary election. From the start it performed as a typical populist party: it had an unexpected electoral victory; a short government was followed by an electoral defeat and the party returned to the opposition. These phases are often a prelude to the total demise of a party: on the contrary, during the second half of the 1990s *Forza Italia* was able to stabilise itself, to maintain its original mission, that is to say to sustain the political career of its founder and – for fifteen years – its sole leader. Berlusconi has not simply been the leader of *Forza Italia*; he has also kept the centre-right coalition together. By doing so, he made it easier for the transformation of the neo-fascist *Movimento Sociale Italiano* to take place: by the mid-1990s that party abandoned its name to become the *Alleanza Nazionale*. In contrast to the *Lega Nord* and *Forza Italia*, AN is not a new party: it is an old party radically changed to adapt to a new political milieu. As its right-wing partners, however, AN has been led by the same politician since its foundation in 1994. Indeed, Gianfranco Fini has regularly been the most popular 'Second' Republic's politician, largely surpassing even Silvio Berlusconi.

To sum up, it should be acknowledged that after some rare experiments in a long first phase – however mastered by traditional mass parties – personalisation has affected most Italian parties since the 1990s. Party personalisation may assume different forms. The Italian political landscape includes completely new parties supporting prominent personalities (Idv, *Forza Italia*), a deeply reshuffled party supporting a strong leader (AN), another completely reorganised party supporting alternative leaders (Pd), a regional party with a charismatic leader (*Lega Nord*), and several local parties based on clientelism and patronage (Udc, Udeur, Mpa). Personalisation is also affecting left-wing parties, although in such a case this is probably an unintended consequence of the modernisation and 'mediatisation' of the political and electoral scenes rather than a deliberate strategy.

Personalisation thus affects all Italian parties, although in different forms and with a different strength. Moreover, besides merely steering their own parties – leaders of the 'Second' Republic perform a variety of different roles (Campus and Pasquino 2006). First, they are the party's main asset at election time;

second, they are coalition leaders, so that when in government they have to manage relationships with partners in order to distribute ministerial positions and to ensure that policy implementation occurs; third, they are responsible for coalition communication.

In this chapter, we deal with two cases of party personalisation occurring in the ‘Second’ Republic. We focus on Umberto Bossi, leader of the *Lega Nord* and on Silvio Berlusconi, leader of *Forza Italia* and also of the centre-right coalition from the mid-1990s. They have some shared characteristics: both lead right-wing populist parties, both founded them, and both guided them uninterruptedly from the start. Differences are also apparent. The *Lega Nord*, despite its huge relevance in national politics, is a regional party entrenched in northern Italy, while *Forza Italia* is a fully national organisation (Diamanti 2003). Bossi is the leader of a party only, while Berlusconi is also a coalition leader. Both Bossi or Berlusconi have had noteworthy careers at Cabinet level, but only the latter has been prime minister. From a personal point of view, Bossi originated from the middle-class, while Berlusconi has been a tycoon and richest man in Italy (and one of the richest in the world). There are differences in the type and degree of personalisation, as we noted earlier, but Umberto Bossi and Silvio Berlusconi have been two prominent cases of the phenomenon in the ‘Second’ Republic.

I

Bossi and regionalist populism

Umberto Bossi was born in Lombardy in a middle-class family and had an irregular education: both social provenance and limited culture came to be later emphasised as personal characteristics shared by the leader and his supporters. During his youth Bossi felt some sympathy for left-wing ideologies; and he had a short period of militancy in the Communist Party. His political career as leader of a federalist movement started in the late 1970s (Biorcio 1997; Diamanti 1993; Mannheimer 1991). At that time in northern Italy several regional movements – self-defined as ‘leagues’ – emerged but with a very limited organisation and support. They were in contrast to the strong centralisation of the Italian state and aimed at extending to all northern regions the special prerogatives then accorded nationwide to five regions only. Bossi was able to become the leader of the Lombard League, the most important of these regional movements. In 1987 he finally was elected in the Italian Senate and is indeed still known as *el Senatùr* (the senator).

The Lombard League was the most important of these regional leagues. In the late 1980s, by using this organisation and the popularity he owed to his parliamentary position, Bossi succeeded in unifying all these movements and to form the *Lega Nord*. Thus the party was not completely new: it resulted rather from the merger of pre-existing movements. Changes were dramatic, however. The previous regional leagues strongly emphasised cultural ties with their own territories and populations. Being an over-regional organisation, the *Lega Nord*

did not evolve as a strictly ethnic party; it blended territorial aspects with the protection of the economic well-being of the northern middle class endangered by national politics. By so doing, the *Lega Nord* fully came to deserve the often used label of 'regionalist populism' (Biorcio 1991). In this early phase Bossi faced some resistance from the leaders of the pre-existing regional leagues who opposed the escalation to an over-regional organisation. Bossi was none the less able to surmount these oppositions and to set up a durable centralised leadership.

Under Bossi's guidance, the *Lega Nord* had astonishing achievements, but failed to extend its presence beyond the northern regions. Moderate claims of territorial autonomy escalated to a full contestation of the national political system, however, with criticisms against representative democracy fitting closely a typical populist perspective. When the First Republic came to an end in 1993–1994 the *Lega Nord* entered successfully in the new political system. It elected mayors in many northern towns (included Milan), participated in the centre-right coalition led by Silvio Berlusconi which won the 1994 parliamentary elections, obtained a large parliamentary representation and joined the ensuing government. The exit of the *Lega Nord* terminated the first Berlusconi government after only seven months, however. In the following years political isolation pushed the *Lega Nord* to hold extremist positions. Autonomy and federalism were replaced by secession; criticisms against the Italian state took an extremist form, allowing – at least verbally – popular violence against the ruling class; immigrants were identified as targets for tough law and order policies.

A new course was initiated during the 2000 regional election, when the *Lega Nord* re-entered the centre-right coalition which won again the general election of 2001 to form a government which was to last five years. The new coalition was implemented by means of an agreement between Bossi and Berlusconi, symbolised by regular Monday meetings in the latter's luxurious personal residence (Biorcio 2000). Since then, the *Lega Nord* has participated regularly to the centre-right coalition, while none the less assuming its own policy goals and fielding its own candidates in local elections.

According to Albertazzi (2006), populist parties feature four main ideological characteristics. First, they criticise constraints posed by representative democracy on the popular will; second, they emphasise some threats impending on the good and hard-working people; third, leader and party are considered to be entirely in touch with the people; fourth, the party's political discourse adopts alternatively right-wing and left-wing ideas. As a typical populist leader, the political discourse of Umberto Bossi uses all available rhetorical weapons, adapting them to the regional scope of the *Lega Nord* and to the Italian political milieu. Bossi's starting point is the identification of the *Padania*, the northern area surrounding the Po river. There, he claims, honest and hard-working inhabitants do produce a great wealth which is for the most part misused to the advantage of parasites, mainly located, according to Bossi, in southern Italy. Furthermore, Bossi holds that the cheat is perpetrated by the national political class, identified with the epithet *Roma ladrona*: using the obscure mechanisms

of the centralised state, national politicians advantage a majority of lazy and deceitful citizens. Also central government threatens the Padania's security by implementing weak immigration policies. The only viable solution to all these problems is the everlasting engagement by the party and his leader in a constitutional reform stressing a variety of forms of territorial autonomy, spanning from limited devolution to full federalism and even to complete secession from Italy. Pursuing such a goal, Bossi uses different types of action. According to anti-system and anti-democratic ideas, secession could be implemented by extended violence while unpleasant immigrants should be confronted by tough law and order policies. Yet, meanwhile, pro-democratic participation is highly appreciated. The northern people are encouraged to become involved in politics through the party and the party-sponsored trade union and the supporters' middle- and lower-class origins are frequently recalled.

The *Lega Nord* thus uses all the vast repertory of the populist rhetoric. Its distinctiveness is the regionalist setting which is close to that of other ethnical parties in Europe.³ In previous chapters we have examined how party personalisation can arise through a clientelistic relationship between a leader and a specific territory, for instance in an electoral constituency. Bossi never used such a strategy. During early phases – from the late 1970s to the mid-1990s – the *Lega Nord* was an anti-establishment party, completely excluded from local and national government and therefore impeded to implement distributive policies which could enhance its popular support. Moreover, clientelism largely diffused in southern Italy is a recurring target of Bossi's political discourse. Thus the *Lega Nord* avoided clientelism from the moment it was set up and offers on the other hand public goods advantaging the whole of northern Italy, especially in matters of tax and security policy.

Therefore Bossi never exploited his local ties to practice clientelism.⁴ He preferred to increase his leadership by centralising the creation and circulation of the party agenda. The federalist programme proposed by the *Lega Nord* in the early stages of its political activity was a total innovation in Italian politics. During that phase, Bossi asked Gianfranco Miglio, a prominent university professor from Milan, to put forward a manifesto including either general federalist ideas or specific constitutional changes. Disagreements arose rapidly, however: Miglio left the party and Bossi became the only agenda-setter. The frequent policy changes – from regional autonomy to federalism, to devolution, to secession and again to federalism – were autonomously decided by the leader, enthusiastically approved by the rank-and-file and faced only minor resistance from party staff and MPs.⁵ Moreover, since for a small party such as the *Lega Nord* issue standings are strictly linked with coalition strategies, changing relationships with other parties were also autonomously decided by Bossi.

The changing party image and policies have thus been completely monopolised by the leader. Yet what is more important here is to consider how Bossi promoted his political discourse as well as the somewhat surprising consequences of his communication style. Up to 1994, when the first electoral coalition with Berlusconi was devised, Bossi was leading a small party ostracised by

the establishment. The Italian state media system was also largely controlled by traditional parties – including opposition parties – and the *Lega Nord* was scarcely referred to. To avoid being silenced, Bossi continued to adopt a type of discourse inaugurated in previous years by the former President of the Republic, Francesco Cossiga. During his presidential addresses Cossiga frequently uttered bizarre criticisms against party politics and used a paradoxical language completely new to Italian citizens. In the same mood, Bossi aimed at *épater le bourgeois* with a language which was original in the political landscape, near to that of the common people and sometimes exceedingly aggressive. By so doing, he achieved several goals. First, he was able to create a personal image of proximity with ordinary (northern) people; second, he showed that he differed from professional politicians, who tended to use a remote and unintelligible language; third, he attracted continuously the attention of the media, thus overcoming the ‘cordon sanitaire’ created by the traditional parties by reaching public opinion at large; fourth, he created a supporting community unified by an ordinary but national language, obviating the problem of unifying people from different regions and speaking different dialects. The absolute centrality of the party leader on all these aspects is acknowledged by observers (Biorcio 2003; Diamanti 1993).

These communication strategies rendered Bossi highly recognisable; yet he failed to be approved by the large majority of Italians. Indeed opinion polls repeatedly designated Bossi as the most disliked Italian politician, when all Italians – southerners included – were surveyed. Bossi was one of the most venerated party leaders, however, when only the *Lega Nord*'s grass-roots supporters and voters were interviewed. This helps to identify the nature of the relationship between leader and followers. As was pointed out earlier, the *Lega Nord* is often referred to as a ‘populist’ or ‘regionalist’ party; it is also sometimes described as a party based on a charismatic leader, which stresses the fact that the role of Bossi is unchallenged. Meanwhile, the supporters’ almost religious belief in the rightness and might of the leader is also accentuated. A full consideration of relationships within parties should include a psychological perspective on politics which is not available so far, a task which is well beyond the scope of this work, although one can describe some traits of the link between leader and supporters.

As Clark and Wilson stated in 1961, party activists may be mobilised as a result of material, purposive or solidarity motivating factors. Material incentives are composed of the economic benefits given to participants; purposive incentives are represented by party policies; solidarity incentives are found when participation itself constitutes an intrinsic and self-satisfying benefit and promotes a strong level of identification with the organisation. Particularly during its initial phase, the *Lega Nord* was wholly unable to distribute economic benefits to its supporters, as a result of the ‘cordon sanitaire’ excluding populist parties. Even after the *Lega* entered local and national government the party was never involved in clientelism, which is the customary way in which material rewards are allocated. What the party did was to emphasise federalism as the collective

good which would advance the fate of northern Italy in general. The leader guarantees the existence of a pact between ordinary people and the political movement about federalism, which is equated to the attainment of freedom. The federalist pact is periodically re-affirmed in mass rallies where Bossi occupies centre stage. The most important of these rallies takes place every year near Pontida: there the *Lega Nord* evokes the resistance of Italian communes against the emperor, with grass-roots party militants dressed as Middle Ages militiamen. Also relevant is the 'water ceremony', during which party leaders take water from the source of the Po and bring it to Venice, at the other end of the Padana plain, thus reaffirming the existence of a common northern community. These rallies have invariably been mocked by political opponents and most of the media; but they are perfect tools to pursue the party's goals. They attract the attention of the media, underpin the feelings of solidarity among supporters and highlight the critical role of Umberto Bossi as unique and distinctive party leader.

Party rallies therefore strengthen the leader's control of the party organisation by reinforcing internal relationships through emotional experiences. Although extremely relevant, this method does not prevent Bossi from using naked power. To assess this point fully, one must consider the history of the *Lega Nord* and the peculiar party model it produced. In the 1990s Italy embarked on the most dramatic party system change of any European country. That change led to the end of the traditional mass party and to new and less bureaucratised organisations in the 'Second' Republic. The *Lega Nord*'s experience was entirely different. Although it was a new party without a bureaucratic legacy, the party was structured from its origin according to the principles of the mass party: for instance, the *Lega Nord* maintained ancillary organisations such as the Sinpa (*Sindacato Padano*), its affiliated trade union; above all, it is considered to be now the Italian party which has the strongest links with the territory as a result of its extensive network of local offices designed to raise membership and improve participation. Finally, the *Lega Nord* is officially decentralised along the lines of the party's federalist ideology.

In contrast with its formal internal rules and statutes, the whole party organisation is effectively managed by the leader (Giordano 2001). Bossi wields his power by relying on strong patronage. First, all positions in the party apparatus are filled by means of appointments by the leader, a practice which markedly enhanced the stability of the executive: the appointment mechanisms within the party led to the development of an internal permanent elite hitherto recruited from among Bossi's early political collaborators. Second, Bossi is able to field party candidates at all elections. This is so for nominations to parliament, but, less obviously, given the alleged decentralised party structure, Bossi is also empowered to nominate candidates to local government, this being a particularly important function in a regionalist party aiming to rule the whole northern area. Third, the *Lega Nord* competes for elections in a limited area of Italy only: yet it has been able to play a substantial part in politics nationwide: from 1994 onwards it has entered in the national government in three occasions, on the

basis of the fate of the centre-right coalition, but it has always refused to take part in an electoral alliance.⁶ When it has participated in a coalition, it has been often accused either by the centre-left opposition or by some partners in government for having disproportionate ministerial strength and unjustifiable policy influence. Its key role in government has been buttressed by the fact that Bossi has himself been in the government, while this had never been the case in the 'First' Republic. Apart from the period during which he was seriously ill, Bossi has been a prominent minister. He has occupied the ministry for institutional change, an important position in view of the federalist policy of the party.⁷ In all cases, Bossi also exercised complete control on the appointment of ministers from his party. Not surprisingly, he has constantly enlisted his old comrades from the party elite. By so doing, the governmental team from the *Lega Nord* has been characterised by marked continuity, which was reduced only slowly because of generation change.⁸

Meanwhile, opponents in the party fared badly. Early in his party life Bossi was opposed by the leaders of the pre-existing regional leagues in Veneto and in Piedmont who were resisting the party centralisation practiced by the leader and his Lega Lombarda: external oppression was stated as coming from Rome and Milan. Bossi was more seriously challenged in the mid-1990s, when he decided to break up the parliamentary majority supporting the first Berlusconi government as he wished to leave the centre-right coalition and to replace federalism by secession as a policy goal. A sizeable segment of the parliamentary group wanted to overthrow the leader and to restore the coalition. Bossi was able to expel the insurgents immediately and to lead the party towards its greatest electoral performance in 1996. The *Lega Nord* became then the main party in northern Italy and reached 10 per cent of the votes nationally. The party could subsequently comfortably sustain five years of opposition in parliament and of political isolation in the country, under the continuous guidance of its sole *lider maximo*.

The organisation and leadership of the *Lega Nord* is somewhat puzzling. There is a facade which resembles that of mass-based parties, a surprising feature since that new party emerged when the old bureaucratic Italian parties were destroyed. Moreover, the *Lega Nord* proudly defines itself as a regionalist party organised on a federalist basis, but this definition does not conceal the true nature of the party structure, that of a leader-based populist body.

II

Silvio Berlusconi and 'mediatic' populism

"Indeed, in all of democratic history there is nothing to compare with Silvio Berlusconi's use of a massive television and advertising empire as a springboard to national power" (Gunther 2005: 264). Strangely enough, Berlusconi being now famous for his media empire, his entrepreneurial career started in construction in the late 1960s. In the following years, he re-invested his money to create the first

Italian private television channel, breaking the then unchallenged state monopoly. To prevail over economic and political opponents, in the 1980s he approached the Socialist Party to obtain the protection of its leader, Prime Minister Bettino Craxi, one of the most influential politicians at the time. Berlusconi gained many advantages out of using this political and personal connection. The absence of legislation allowed him first to reach a dominant position in the media and later this position was consolidated by what was unfair regulation. The consequence has been the creation of a duopoly in television, with a public sector strongly controlled by the parties and a private sector where Mediaset, once named Fininvest, Berlusconi's network managing three television channels.

Political career

In the mid-1990s, the ending of the 'First' Republic brought about the downfall of Berlusconi's political friends. To avoid possible threats to his business he attempted to endorse the leadership of Mario Segni – then a popular Christian Democrat – to form a new conservative party. When this strategy failed at the end of 1993, Berlusconi decided to transform himself into a politician. There is some controversy as to whether he was then planning to achieve 'a new Italian miracle' – a modernisation of the country as a whole – or, less ambitiously, whether he wanted to elude economic and judicial difficulties. What is clear is that, at the end of 1993, Berlusconi needed a party to be able to stand at the general election scheduled for March 1994. To accomplish such a difficult task, he took advantage of his impressive economic assets: for instance, most of his managers were recruited as party officials from Publitalia, whose local offices also selected the candidates to parliament (Poli 2001: 35–6). Thus the political involvement of Berlusconi's companies created in a few months the greatest party Italy has known since 1994. Such an accomplishment would be unimaginable without the use of the tycoon's personal resources. *Forza Italia* immediately revealed its powerful role in support of the political ambition of the leader, as the centre-right coalition won the 1994 general election and Berlusconi was appointed prime minister. But the first Berlusconi government lasted only few months, and the defeat at the following general election of 1996 relegated the party to the opposition until 2001. Many observers then thought that the political career of Berlusconi had quickly come to end. On the contrary, during that long period, *Forza Italia* was able to reinforce its structure, so that in 2001 Berlusconi returned to the government for the duration of parliament up to 2006. Furthermore, after the electoral defeat of 2006, the seventy-two-year-old Berlusconi won the 2008 election and became the longest-lasting prime minister in the history of the Italian republic.

Moreover, the political career of Silvio Berlusconi is not merely associated with *Forza Italia*. He has also set up the centre-right coalition. Alongside other minor partners, his key allies have been the *Lega Nord* and *Alleanza Nazionale*. The latter is the only party which since 1994 consistently sustained Berlusconi in all elections and in all governments. Frequent splits and internal struggles not-

withstanding, Berlusconi remains the only leader of a centre-right coalition in the whole history of the ‘Second’ Republic. By so doing he achieved a remarkable result, that of being the only Western politician able to be five times candidate chief executive.⁹ The stable connection between *Forza Italia* and *Alleanza Nazionale* led in 2009 to the merging of the two parties in a single organisation, named *Popolo della Libertà* (Pdl), Silvio Berlusconi having come naturally to be elected leader of the new party by acclamation. For many years, one of the most debated points about *Forza Italia* has been the question of the future of the party after the change of the top leader, a debate which did not stop with the emergence of the Pdl. There are also new predictions about the old problem, namely how the party will survive when Berlusconi ceases to be leader. The repeated changes in the rightwing parties and in the centre-right coalition suggest two points. First, there is an implicit assumption that personalised parties are inevitably short-lived, a view adopted by Panebianco (1988) when analysing the role of charisma. Second, observers agree on Berlusconi’s marked influence in shaping Italian politics since 1994.

Berlusconi’s political discourse

When Silvio Berlusconi started his political career, populist rhetoric and stand-points were already well-established in Italian politics as a result of the *Legga Nord*’s presence. Berlusconi was thus able to adapt pre-existing classical populist critiques to the characteristics of his party and of his leadership. While Bossi was then the leader of a small party, Berlusconi organised a strong national party wholly devoted to sustaining his governmental ambitions. Despite these differences, Berlusconi adopted the same starting point as Bossi, namely to blame the old political lifestyle for having damaged working people and the national economy. As Berlusconi could not emphasise the centre-periphery cleavage in the way Bossi did, the target of his political discourse was – and continued to be, somewhat surprisingly – that ‘professional politicians’ were unaware of the life and needs of ordinary people. In particular, ‘communists’ should be held responsible for the Italian economic and moral decline, because of their strong position in national politics after the Second World War. ‘Theatre’ politics had to be replaced by an entirely new political formula, in which the political class is largely recruited from among entrepreneurs unrelated to old politics. In this way, rulers will be perfectly in touch with public opinion, while also having the skills needed to produce a new Italian miracle, similar to the economic boom of the 1960s. According to ‘classical’ populist tenets, the relationship linking directly people, party and leader should not be restricted by formal limits: for example, election victories and voters’ approval render irrelevant the conflict of interest resulting from Berlusconi’s dominant position in the media. As other populist and right-wing parties, *Forza Italia* also adopted a rough law and order stand against immigration and criminality (especially during election campaigns). Meanwhile, Berlusconi has not excluded some concessions to left-wing positions, such as support for the welfare state or state intervention in the economy.

Clientelism and patronage

As was suggested earlier, clientelism played a substantial part at the beginning of Berlusconi's entrepreneurial career when he came to be in touch with Bettino Craxi. Later, as Berlusconi started his political career, he was immediately able to reach the top position and he did not need to develop any local clientelistic network. What followed is not entirely clear, but there seems to be signs that at various points in time Berlusconi actively induced floor-crossing in parliament and, to do so, he is said to have rewarded MPs with money in 1994 to render his first government possible, as he was then short of a majority in both Houses. In 2007, judges discovered evidence about pressures exerted by Berlusconi on the head of the Rai – the public-owned television – in order to hire some 'sou-brettes'. The purpose was to encourage some centre-left senators to desert the parliamentary majority supporting the Prodi government.

If there is some doubt about the use made by Berlusconi of clientelism, the use of patronage related to his key political positions has been clearer. First, Berlusconi completely dominated appointments in the *Forza Italia* apparatus. When the party was launched in 1994, its skeleton organisation was composed of the presidency (obviously self-attributed to Berlusconi himself), the presidency board and twenty regional party coordinators. Without exception, all those who filled these positions came from Fininvest and were selected on the basis of personal acquaintance with the leader. The party structure evolved significantly afterwards, but Berlusconi remained president and the presidency board grew by including new members directly nominated by Berlusconi among his associates. In the selection of party officials, internal democracy can be found at the provincial level where representatives are elected by party supporters, but regional coordinators continue to be nominated by the president as part of a typical top-down process.¹⁰

The part played by Berlusconi has also been crucial in the nominations of parliamentary candidates and at key local elections, though in this last case there are fewer differences from other parties, as, in all of these parties, nominations are decided on the basis of proposals made by the parties' local branches, but the final choice is made by central office. However, as a result of electoral system constraints up to 2005 which imposed centralisation at the level of the coalitions, the part played by local parties has been limited by the so-called 'parachuting' of candidates from the centre. Within *Forza Italia* nominations to parliament are initiated by regional coordinators on the basis of Berlusconi's indications and Berlusconi has again the last word in the case of local contests. This decision-making process ensures that there is the amount of parliamentary discipline required to support the highly personalised leader (Lanza and Piazza 2002).

Government

The third area in which Berlusconi widely used patronage concerns the government itself. He was three times prime minister and, although the Italian constitu-

tion never gave substantial powers to the holder of that position, he benefited from two circumstances. First, new electoral rules, the crisis of parties and European integration curbed the influence of traditional ‘veto players’, while, second, he was in total control of his party. Berlusconi could therefore appoint ministers from *Forza Italia* according to his personal feelings;¹¹ yet multiparty government limited the scope of personalisation, as *Forza Italia* shared the government with other partners. This led to frequent government reshuffles. Between 2001 and 2006 Berlusconi replaced the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of the Institutional Reform and the Minister of Economy, dismissing his favourite Giulio Tremonti. Thus Berlusconi’s governments combined overall permanence, surprising by Italian standards, with internal instability. Frequent reshuffles are usually regarded as constituting an indication of prime ministerial power in the Cabinet: in this case, however, Berlusconi is said to have re-arranged his government as a result of coalition disagreements; his freedom to appoint and dismiss ministers has been significantly constrained in the process (Blondel and Segatti 2003).

One cannot just restrict the examination of Berlusconi’s governmental role to patronage in relation to ministerial appointments, however. We have noted the stability of Berlusconi’s 2001–2006 Cabinet, a performance which supporters attribute to the leader’s charisma. Yet an overall evaluation is complex. First, governmental stability under Berlusconi is a partial consequence of the electoral changes of the 1990s, although, with identical rules, centre-left governments did not have the same longevity: the leader, his party and coalition governance appear therefore to play a significant role.

Second, the decision-making process should also be carefully examined. An overall evaluation of Berlusconi’s role in this respect is difficult and one should distinguish among policy areas. Foreign policy has been highly personalised (Andreatta and Brighi 2003). At the beginning of the 2001 government term the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was given to a non-politician, Renato Ruggiero, but Berlusconi stated that he was directing foreign policy: in so doing, he appeared to be less respectful of the collegiality of his Cabinet and rather inspired by the principles of presidential government or of *Kanzlerdemokratie*. After Ruggiero was dismissed Berlusconi personally assumed the interim of the ministry for eleven months and, interestingly, Italian foreign policy markedly changed from its traditional line at the time: to the usual multilateral relationships with European countries were largely substituted bilateral links with Russia and the United States.¹²

Foreign policy is not the only governmental area in which change occurred as a result of Berlusconi’s intervention. His most continuous involvement has indeed been connected to his personal interests, namely in the context of judicial reform and of media regulation, about which the relevant ministries repeatedly introduced bills, resisted sharp criticisms and faced the strong opposition of civil society. These actions, brought about by conflict of interests, may well remain Berlusconi’s most visible contribution to the personalisation of governmental policy-making: in many other fields his leadership has been much less visible.

This was due to indifference with respect to some policy fields, to inadequate governmental leverage and to poor coalition governance: thus ministers lacked coordination and MPs supporting the government often acted without strong control (Donovan 2004). The electoral platform has thus been only partially and slowly implemented (Ricolfi 2006), as a result of which public opinion was dissatisfied and Berlusconi's popularity suddenly decreased.¹³

In the last analysis, Berlusconi reached a truly vast amount of personalisation in his party, but governmental personalisation has been diminished by quarrels in the multiparty coalition. Thus his propensity to personalise politics has been ruled by the cycle of European and local elections. Berlusconi led the government in a presidential manner in the years immediately following the 2001 parliamentary election, when he appeared to be an indispensable asset for the whole coalition; but he became a disgruntled head of the government in the second part of the parliamentary term, after mid-term elections revealed his decreasing popularity.

Media domination

This last point leads to the field where the presence of Berlusconi led to the largest innovation in Italian politics, namely political communication and campaigning. As pointed out earlier, Berlusconi used his media companies to create the first Italian 'electoral party'. By so doing, he greatly contributed to moving campaigning into the 'post-modern' phase (Norris 2000). In the 1990s, television became the most important source of political information for a large majority of citizens, relegating other channels to an ancillary role;¹⁴ meanwhile, political communication became a professional activity performed by paid consultants. What is even more relevant here is the fact that Berlusconi inaugurated candidate-centred politics (Watterberg 1991). The core of such an approach is a careful use of personal image in order to improve popularity, the usual tool being a pervasive presence on all media, with variations due to the type and timing of the election.

Berlusconi led the centre-right coalition in parliamentary elections five times and in three of these occasions a large number of MPs were elected in single-member constituencies: in 2001 these candidates were only allowed to use the photograph of the coalition leader, not their own picture (Cheles 2006). By 2005 the proportional representation system was restored, single-member constituencies being replaced by twenty-six large multi-member ones. On the basis of what was a controversial rule, at both the 2006 and 2008 general elections Berlusconi was candidate all over the country. The alleged motivation was to grant all electors the opportunity to vote for a national leader; more pragmatically, *Forza Italia* used its main asset – the leader – to attract the largest amount of votes. The same campaign strategy was used in the European elections, though even Berlusconi could not be elected because of the national post which he held. A somewhat similar notion had indeed already been adopted at the 2000 regional elections: although Berlusconi was not candidate in any region then, the whole

campaign was completely centred on his image, while blurring the role of the real candidates.¹⁵

For right-wing parties the emphasis on the leader image in electoral campaigns is a necessary strategy. From 1994 onwards both *Forza Italia* and the centre-right coalition have had oscillating electoral results, but in all cases their performance at the European and at general elections has been better than at local elections. This suggests that centre-right parties gain from highly-mediatised campaigns focused on the leader, while candidates of centre-left parties seem to be more successful in local elections (Maraffi 1995: 255).

Berlusconi brought innovations in Italian campaigns by using all available tools, although television is at the core of his communication strategy, and "... as far as television is concerned, Berlusconi often goes beyond all limits that are not explicitly prohibited" (Roncarolo 2005: 80). For instance, at all elections he overtook all competitors by the amount of broadcasting in which he was involved; while this is true in general, the disproportion reaches an extraordinary dimension when the Mediaset network is examined. At the 2001 general election, Berlusconi was present on the public channels of Rai for 465 minutes, but for 1,427 minutes on his personally owned network. The centre-left candidate Francesco Rutelli achieved 441 and 887 minutes respectively, while all other politicians and candidates were barely relevant (Sani and Legnante 2002: 127). Similar figures have been found for all general elections (Sani and Segatti 1997: 29; Legnante 2006: 41; Legnante and Sani 2008: 33).

Berlusconi's overriding presence in election campaigns cannot be denied; yet the actual use of his image has been fine-tuned in accordance to election prospects. In the 2006 campaign, when he fared badly at the polls, Berlusconi launched an impressive 'propaganda by inundation' (Campus 2006: 519) based on obsessive presence on television. This strategy was implemented during the long-campaign – namely before the formal phase near election day – disregarding the format of the aired programme.¹⁶ The strategy was vastly different in 2001 and 2008, when the centre-right coalition was expected to win: Berlusconi preferred then to avoid such a overwhelming presence and he refused to participate in televised duels with his left-wing opponents, respectively Rutelli and Veltroni: Berlusconi seems to prefer monologues to debates. He thus has been both an innovator in Italian politics and a hindrance with respect to the use of the most popular tool of modern campaigns.

The *Lega Nord* and *Forza Italia* are both successful parties. Scholars explained the achievement of these parties at first in terms of the state of affairs in Italy in the 1990s. At that time the huge level of bribery in politics was apparent to public opinion, economic failure was clear and bureaucratic ineffectiveness had become unbearable when plummeting political identity and changing party-group relationships offered new opportunities to those who challenged the establishment.

Later observers noticed that Bossi's and Berlusconi's leadership style was indispensable to their parties' success. These two party leaders differ in a variety

of ways, to be sure. Bossi reached a national position by progressing from a regional one; he was from the start an anti-establishment outsider; he brought together a number of pre-existing small parties; he built a new organisation with some of the characteristics of mass parties; he faced internal opposition and frequent splits; he was marginalised by a ‘cordon sanitaire’; he had been a coalition-breaker and he participated in governments as a minister. By contrast, Berlusconi entered politics directly as a national leader; he was an insider in the pre-existing political system; he created an entirely new party; he shaped a purely electoral party in which there was no reference to class, no ideological profile and no grassroots organisation; he never encountered internal opposition; he dominated communication processes as a result of his privileged position in the media; he was a coalition builder; and he repeatedly led the government as prime minister.

Yet Bossi and Berlusconi share important features. Both founded their respective parties; both experienced uninterrupted party leadership; both largely used populist rhetoric and both produced huge changes in Italian politics. Indeed, they share a further key attribute. Because of their age and of their state of health, both are probably approaching the end of their political career. The long ‘First’ Republic has been unquestionably based on mass parties, from their renaissance after the Second World War to their degeneration in the 1990s. The ‘Second’ Republic has been dominated by personalised parties. Especially with respect to Berlusconi, his withdrawal may open a ‘Third’ Republic with unclear characteristics. Surely the *Lega Nord* and the *Popolo della Libertà* – the heir to *Forza Italia* – will then be fascinating research cases about the fate of charismatic parties.

Notes

- 1 This point of view was put forward during the 1990s. In 2001, the constitution was changed by the left-wing parliamentary majority to revise the centre-periphery relationship. No constitutional change affected the government-parliament relationship.
- 2 Differences existed in the election rules between the Chamber and the Senate, but they are not relevant here.
- 3 An ‘ethnical’ party is naturally in touch with a well-identified ethnic group. Most observers consider the Celtic culture inheritance to be simply an artifact used to legitimise the party. The point is not relevant here. As the Padania seems to be a typical ‘imagined community’, we prefer to view the *Lega Nord* as a regionalist rather than as an ethnic party.
- 4 To fully appreciate this point, one should consider that in the 1990s the *Lega Nord* was practically untouched by the prosecutions which contributed to the destruction of mainstream parties.
- 5 The relationships between Bossi and party structures are examined below.
- 6 After the short-lived 1994 experience the *Lega Nord* participated in the Cabinets led by Silvio Berlusconi in 2001–2006. The centre-right won a landslide victory in 2008 which led to a further Cabinet in which the *Lega Nord* participated.
- 7 Bossi has been Minister for Federalism in the fourth Berlusconi government from 2008.
- 8 The most striking case in point is the ministerial career of Roberto Maroni. The *Lega Nord* lacks a clear hierarchy, but Maroni is usually considered to be the most important party leader after Bossi. He was Minister of Interior in the short-lived government

- in 1994, then Minister of Health and Welfare for the whole 2001–2006 term. He has been again Minister of Interior since 2008.
- 9 He won in 1994, 2001 and 2008, and was defeated in 2001 and 2006 when Romano Prodi was the centre-left candidate for the position of prime minister.
 - 10 This arrangement giving a pivotal role to the party president has been replicated in the new *Popolo della Libertà*. Evidently the personal party model from *Forza Italia* prevailed on the traditional organisation from *Alleanza Nazionale*.
 - 11 Giulio Tremonti is the most relevant case. He has been a member of *Forza Italia*'s presidential board, he has been considered number two in the party after Berlusconi, and at times he is still believed to be his heir for the party leadership. He has been the Minister of Economy in the first Berlusconi government in 1994 and had the same post in 2009. In 2008 Berlusconi attracted much attention from the international press for having appointed a young pretty woman coming from show business as a minister.
 - 12 Less seriously, Berlusconi continued to demonstrate his international presence by means of unorthodox (mis)behaviour.
 - 13 This happened during the 2001–2006 government. In comparison, voters granted to the incumbent Berlusconi government which started in 2008 a long honeymoon.
 - 14 Surveys regularly report that about 75 per cent of Italian voters indicate television as the most important source of information.
 - 15 We have just described some of the strategies repeatedly used by Berlusconi, but in 2001 he sent by post to all Italian families a brochure containing the story of his life.
 - 16 In 2006 Berlusconi attended both a morning show about cooking and an evening show about football.

11 Poland

Personalisation of leadership – Lech Wałęsa and Andrzej Lepper

Personalisation of politics is far from being a characteristic of older Western European democracies only: the phenomenon can indeed be observed in post-communist countries, in Poland, for instance. The biggest country of Central and Eastern Europe thus constitutes an interesting example, in part as a result of the singular political history and of the last democratic transition of the country. For 123 years, between 1795 and 1918, Poland lived under foreign powers and without its own State: some strong personalities appeared on the political scene during the period, as Tadeusz Kościuszko who led the insurrection of 1794 or Józef Piłsudski who played a crucial role in 1918 when independence was regained.

The Constitution of April 1935 was based on a presidential system with some authoritarian features:¹ it is widely believed that that constitution was drafted on the basis of the comments of Józef Piłsudski, who was thought of as the future president of Poland, but who died soon after the constitution was adopted; yet Piłsudski's great influence was in reality more dependent on his charismatic power than on rational-legal authority. Subsequently, in the first years of communism, the cult of personality with respect to Stalin or Bierut was an important part of the totalitarian system, as it increased the lack of confidence in political representatives. Then, in the 1980s, the birth of *Solidarność* was closely associated with the figure of Lech Wałęsa. The personalisation of the fight at the time was indeed real, but that fight appeared in a very different light as a result of the non-democratic character of regime. What history suggests is that the relationship between Poles and their leaders is rather ambiguous; leaders are welcome when the general situation is difficult, during the period when there was no independence for example; when the situation seems more 'normal', the relationship becomes more complex, as the developments which took place in the 1990s and beyond do show.

Since 1989, Polish society underwent fundamental changes both economically, with the introduction of the 'free market', and politically, with the adoption of party pluralism and of the popular election of the president which was introduced in 1990. The power of the president was then reduced by a new Constitution in 1997, but the presidential election remains the crucial feature of Polish political life and the position is coveted by top political personalities. The powers of the president remain substantial, even if they are subject to significant limitations. These powers include the nomination of the prime minister, but par-

liament (the *Sejm*) must then approve the choice; moreover, the person appointed is usually the one who is put forward by the largest party in parliament – or is at least able to command a majority in the Chamber. The president can also dissolve parliament, but only if the *Sejm* fails to approve a new government after three attempts or has not passed the annual budget within four months of its first reading. The president can veto legislation, which then requires a three-fifths majority in the *Sejm* to be overturned; bills may also be referred by the president to the constitutional court. In addition, the president has the right to initiate legislation and nominate a number of key state officials.

Yet, even if the president's constitutional powers are limited, most of the time, it is the presidential election that overshadows political life. In 2005, Polish parliamentary and presidential elections showed that, although these elections were held on separate days, the two campaigns 'contaminated' each other and for most of the time the presidential contest overshadowed the parliamentary one (Szczerbiak 2005). That parliamentary campaign was also the most personalised and leader-dominated which had taken place since 1989; it benefited parties associated with visible and popular candidates, particularly those where the party leader was standing for the presidency or where presidential candidates and their party were, in effect, undistinguishable, as in the case of Lech Kaczyński and Law and Justice, of Donald Tusk and the Civic Platform and of Andrzej Lepper and Self-Defence.

The Polish party system seems to be in continuous reconstruction. The lack of confidence in parties is shown even by the vocabulary, as important Polish parties do not even use the term 'party'. Low turnout at elections and very small membership of parties constitute further indications of the lack of interest in politics in this 'young' democracy. In such a situation personalised party leaders exercise their influence directly on citizens, but the leaders who benefit from personalisation tend to suffer quickly from popular disillusionment. This chapter examines the evidence suggesting that Lech Wałęsa and Andrzej Lepper can be regarded as having been 'personalised party leaders' at two different levels and at two different moments. Wałęsa benefited, in opposition, from a truly extraordinarily large support, only to lose much of his 'charismatic' appeal when he was president of the country between 1990 and 1995. At a lower level, in his capacity as the undisputed leader of a small party which he had created and dominated, Self-Defence, Lepper saw the 'charismatic' support from which he benefited come to melt away in 2007 just as he seemed to be on the verge of being a key player in the political game.

I

Wałęsa: career, power and decline

Becoming leader

The role of Lech Wałęsa in the defeat of communism was pivotal. The birth of the first free trade union in a communist country was closely linked with the

figure of that electrician from Gdańsk. Wałęsa's public involvement started in the 1970s, but the most important event took place in 1980 with the strike in the Lenin shipyard. He led this strike and later negotiated the Gdańsk agreement. Everything that happened in August 1980 affected the course of Polish and European history: the creation of *Solidarność* made possible the defeat of communism, but, at the time, the career of Wałęsa had many ups and downs, as his activity was illegal and, for this reason, repressed. He lost his job several times and he lived under the close surveillance of the State Security Service, even after having been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

The electoral success of *Solidarność* in 1989 was the first bloodless victory in Polish history and the role played by Lech Wałęsa was huge. His key success took place in a non-democratic system; *Solidarność* was a trade union, not a political party. At the time Wałęsa showed his talent in gathering and mobilising people. This was not to be the case much later, when he was president. Admittedly, although he was defeated in his second bid for the presidency in 1995, he remained a major political figure, being very well-known the world over and remaining popular in Poland: according to a 2009 study of CBOS, 53 per cent of the Poles described him as the 'giant' of the twentieth century (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 2009). Yet, when in office in the early 1990s, he no longer enjoyed the appeal which he had had as leader of *Solidarność*.

Lech Wałęsa was born in 1943 in Popowo. He attended primary and vocational school before entering the Lenin shipyard in Gdańsk (*Stocznia Gdańska im. Lenina*,) as an electrical technician in 1970. The same year, he became an active member of the illegal strike committee of the Gdańsk shipyard and was offered a post on the committee. His political activity then started to influence his professional career. He lost his job in the shipyard in 1976 for having organised a celebration of the anniversary of the 1970 strike. He moved to the ZREMB Company, where he worked as an electrician. He continued to teach workers about their rights and was further involved with the free trade unions. He was soon laid off from ZREMB for political reasons. In May 1979, he was employed by the *Elektromontaż* Company, but worked for them only until December of that year, when he was dismissed for having participated in the celebration of the 1970 strike anniversary. He was jobless up to the beginning of the August 1980 strike, a state of affairs which had great significance in a communist country, as, legally, he and his family were no longer formally recognised.

The career of Lech Wałęsa

To understand better some of the choices of the future head of *Solidarność*, the origins of his engagement need to be examined. In 1970 an important strike in Gdańsk had ended with the death of thirty-nine workers: Lech Wałęsa then decided he would never allow such a situation to occur again. He used to say "that defeat caused my character – due to my character I spent the next ten years trying to work out the method that would actually bring about the victory".² Soon afterwards he became strongly committed to dissident free trade unions.

He used to organise shipyard workers' actions, distribute underground leaflets and hold meetings to teach workers about their rights and educate them. His main goal at the time was to commemorate the victims of the December 1970 events forgotten by the communist government. In June 1978 he joined the illegal underground Free Trade Unions of the Coast (*Wolne Związki Zawodowe Wybrzeża*), organised by Bogdan Borusewicz, Andrzej Gwiazda, Krzysztof Wyszowski, Lech Kaczyński, Anna Walentynowicz, Antoni Sokołowski and others.

Wałęsa as the leader of the strike

The 1970 strike in the Lenin shipyard of Gdańsk had thus a key impact on the career of Wałęsa. In August 1980 after his "jump over the fence", he found himself in the heart of events and became the leader of a strike which spread rapidly to other workplaces. Delegates from these workplaces formed a new body named the Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee (*Międz Zakładowy Komitet Strajkowy, MKS*). It formulated '21 Demands' (*21 postulatów MKS*) which were issued on 17 August. The first demand was the right to create independent trade unions; other demands called on the government to respect constitutional rights and freedoms, to abolish privileges of Party members and to take action to improve the economic conditions of Polish citizens. These demands led to the Gdańsk Agreement and the creation of *Solidarność*.

Wałęsa as chairman of Solidarność

In September 1980, the Communist government signed an agreement with the Strike Coordination Committee which legalised the organisation. The Strike Coordination Committee turned itself into a National Coordination Committee of *Solidarność* Free Trade Union and Wałęsa was chosen as chairman of that Committee. The new union NSZZ *Solidarność* (*Independent Self-Governing Union Solidarity*) came to have ten million members, some 80 per cent of the total Polish workforce.

Wałęsa kept this position until 13 December 1981, when he was arrested on the very day General Wojciech Jaruzelski declared martial law. Lech Wałęsa remained in prison until November 1982. One year later, he resumed work at the Gdańsk shipyard as an electrician, where he was officially employed until 1990.

In late 1982, when Solidarity was weak and disoriented after the arrest of thousands of opposition activists in December 1981, Wałęsa travelled across Poland as the 'fireman of Solidarity', preaching moderation for fear of an all-out civil war. In 1987, he helped to block General Jaruzelski's reform initiatives by organising the boycott of a government referendum. From 1987 to 1990 he organised and led the 'half-illegal' Temporary Executive Committee of the Solidarity Trade Union. In 1988 he led a series of nationwide strikes demanding the re-legalisation of the Solidarity Trade Union. These led to an agreement with the government in 1989 which legalised *Solidarność* and allowed it to campaign as a political party in the coming election.

Wałęsa was thus the originator of the major change which occurred in Poland, namely the Round Table talks, the registration of *Solidarność* and the first general election to which the opposition participated. In 1983 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Thanks to this prize, he became well known around the world, but his position vis-à-vis the communist government became also much stronger. He was the leader of the workers: he was also considered as a leader by the communist party in power. During his internment he was isolated from the movement and had had no contact with his colleagues. Yet in 1988 he could organise a strike in the Gdańsk shipyard, demand the re-legalisation of the Solidarity Trade Union and after eighty days the government decided to enter into discussions which led to the Round Table talks. Wałęsa was an informal leader of the 'non-governmental' side during the talks. The result of these talks was the agreement signed by the government to re-establish the Solidarity Trade Union and to organise 'half-free' elections to the Polish parliament.

The personal power exercised by Lech Wałęsa within Solidarność

The origin and development of Solidarność

The structure of *Solidarność* and the internal support for Lech Wałęsa in the organisation helps to understand the personal power which Wałęsa exercised within that body. Lech Wałęsa demonstrated many qualities during his political career, especially in organisational matters. As was already pointed out, Solidarity was created by him after the strikes in Gdańsk. Wałęsa was chosen as chairman of its National Coordination Committee. Strike Committees were quickly transformed into founding committees. The network of branches in the key factories of Poland was set up on 14 April 1981 in Gdańsk. It was made of representatives of seventeen factories; each stood for the most important factory of every *voivodeship*, except in one case, that of the Koszalin *Voivodeship*, while the Katowice *Voivodeship* was represented by two factories. The result was that, while there were only three members of the Founding Committee on 14 August 1980, there were about ten million members by early November.

On February 1981, on a proposal made by Wałęsa, the national commission elected a temporary 'presidium' composed of the chairman, Wałęsa, and two vice-chairmen, Andrzej Gwiazda and Ryszard Kalinowski. Wałęsa's new goal of building a strong, more centralised executive won against his own previous quest for a decentralised leadership (Laba 1991). The National Congress had overall power formally; it was also the key occasion at which delegates came from all over Poland. At its first meeting Lech Wałęsa was elected national chairman: this was the first opportunity which members of *Solidarność* had to show their support for the electrician from Gdańsk. The National Committee (*Krajowa Komisja Porozumiewawcza*) chaired by Wałęsa included twelve others, but Wałęsa's position as leader was entrenched. A magazine (*Tygodnik Solidarność*) was published weekly. A trade union of farmers (*NZSS Solidarność Rolników Indywidualnych*) and an Independent Students' Organisation (*Niezal-*

ezne Zrzeszenie Studentow) were also created. In fact, *Solidarność* rapidly changed into an umbrella organisation under which a broad range of political and social groups united in opposition to the communist regime.

Solidarność faced many problems linked to its illegal character. Not only did activists run the risk of repressive measures, such as imprisonment or at least the loss of their job, but they were also obliged to operate in secrecy. The organisation was regularly infiltrated by the secret service. It had ups and downs and the struggle for legalisation took many years. Martial law and the arrest of thousands of opponents to the regime had a crucial impact on the internal life of the organisation.

Yet Lech Wałęsa was able to work both in the underground movement and in the subsequent democratic system when, just before the election in June 1989, the organisation had quickly to adapt to its newly legal position. Wałęsa organised and led the Solidarity Citizens' Committee (*Komitet Obywatelski "Solidarność"*, the acronym being KOS), also known as the Citizens' Electoral Committee (*Obywatelski Komitet Wyborczy*), previously named Citizens' Committee with Lech Wałęsa (*Komitet Obywatelski przy Lechu Wałęsie*). Formally, it was just an advisory body but, in reality, it was a kind of political party, which spontaneously evolved into a nationwide movement attracting the vast majority of those in favour of radical political change in the country after the conclusion of the Round Table talks. At the same time, this was an example of the power of the name of Wałęsa during the first months of the establishment of democracy in Poland.

Internal support

Wałęsa was the chairman of *Solidarność* in the underground conditions as well as in the new circumstances of 1989. The activity of Lech Wałęsa in the shipyard in Gdańsk demanded courage as the danger of repressions was real. Communist Party propaganda attacked the Solidarity strikes and Wałęsa very quickly became the negative 'hero' of this propaganda: he was presented as an enemy of Polish workers and of the communist system, financed by foreign elements. Meanwhile, the future president of Poland attracted huge numbers of followers whom Wałęsa influenced. During the August 1980 strike he convinced workers to finish the strike. As Jan Kubik wrote, the impact of the personality of Lech Wałęsa was crucial. In the fragments of the speeches of Wałęsa recorded in clandestine publications from 1979 onwards, we can find several examples of his 'personalised leadership':

My name is Lech Wałęsa. I am one of those who formulated and bear responsibility for the slogan *Pomozemy*. I was a member of the First and Second Strike Committees in December 1970. Today I am in the same situation as all of us who have gathered here. We do not have the monument which Gierek promised us in the shipyard. We must hide and force our way in order to be allowed to honour our colleagues who fell here.

(Kubik 1994)

The second element of his personal power was his direct contact with the people. As a Solidarity activist he had to develop relations with many. During the presidential campaign he used to meet people in factories, in streets, in small villages. This close relationship with ordinary citizens was often mentioned; his simple language was also part of his strategy as well as his lack of diplomas which he frequently stressed. For many followers he was the natural leader of the new organisation, even if some internal conflicts had appeared early. As Roman Laba pointed out, the Gdańsk union did not show a wholly united front. In August 1980, “deep conflicts based on personal ambitions and differing policies and temperaments arose between the ‘upstart’ Wałęsa and most of the rest of the members of the free trade unions, in particular Andrzej Gwiazda, Bogdan Borusewicz and Anna Walentynowicz” (Laba 1991). Immediately after the signing of the Gdańsk Accords, the Gwiazda-Borusewicz faction attempted to oust Wałęsa as chairman. In some observers’ estimation, it was a conflict of ‘the Jacobins against the realists’. For some members of the trade union, Wałęsa was not revolutionary enough, too weak and too soft with the authorities while *Solidarność* should push harder by bringing the economy to a standstill until the government fell. His non-violence and his moderation earned him many enemies. The decision to start talks with the communist government was also criticised by some members of *Solidarność* who presented this compromise as treason against the founding values and principles. This same group, led by Walentynowicz and Gwiazda, maintained their opinion that Wałęsa had been a collaborator of the communist secret police.³

Yet these conflicts were kept as far as possible from the public eye in the 1980s. Wałęsa and his close supporters used the argument of the need for unity vis-à-vis the communist government. Thus the Gdańsk presidium presented a united front and it openly used its organisational power and its great prestige as the founding region to endeavour to control the trade union. In fact, Wałęsa managed to overcome these internal conflicts and to impose his leadership. Before and after the fall of communism, he was the main actor in Polish political life.

External power

Even if the main aim of Lech Wałęsa in the 1980s was to create a free trade union, he wanted to play a more important part on the Polish political stage. He was to be the first president of Republic of Poland elected by general suffrage and the programme of *Solidarność* was partly prepared by him and he also had a strategy designed to influence followers.

The programme

The impact of Wałęsa on the *Solidarność* programme was important, even if a major part was also played by a ‘group of experts’ composed of Bronislaw Geremek, Jacek Kuron, Tadeusz Mazowiecki and others. This programme was

in permanent evolution. In the 1970s, it was mainly focused on the defence of workers and of their conditions of work. Later demands for the creation of free trade union appeared. When the general political and economic situation in Poland became difficult, Wałęsa began calling for deep changes: these demands were at the origin of the Round Table talks. During the first 'semi-free election' he adapted the programme of the Committee to the new situation and the main point began to be political and economic change.

In 1980, the '21-point' Gdańsk agreement gave workers a guarantee that they could form independent trade unions and would have the right to strike. Social justice, decentralisation and self-management of firms directed by a workers' council were the main lines of the *Solidarność* programme which was then published in an official document prepared by the first Congress of the organisation and entitled 'Solidarity society and self-managed Poland' (*Solidarne społeczeństwo i samorządna Rzeczpospolita*). Even if the protection of workers, the right to strike and the improvement of social conditions occupied first place in the demands of workers, the programme of *Solidarność* contained many pro-democracy aspects which, in reality, demanded deep political change. At Solidarity's first national congress in the autumn of 1981, the political nature of the movement became explicit. The Congress adopted a programme calling for an active Solidarity role in reforming Poland's political and economic system. In the following months, outspoken radicals urged their leaders to confront the communist authorities, to demand free elections and to call for a national referendum to replace the communist government. Yet when one analyses these demands more carefully, one can see that the programme reflected the opinion of the 'realists', that is to say the members of *Solidarność* who aimed at avoiding violence and reforms which were too radical. That strategy was referred to as being 'step by step'.

The most important decision reached during the Round Table talks was to allow for partially-free elections to be held in Poland. The free election of 161 seats (35 per cent of the total) in the *Sejm* and an entirely free election for the Senate were assured. The remaining 65 per cent of the seats in the *Sejm* were reserved for the Communist Party and its satellite bodies. Yet, at the end of 1989, he persuaded leaders from these parties formerly allied to the communists to take part in a non-communist coalition government, which was to be the first non-communist government in the Soviet Bloc. The agreement having been adopted, parliament chose Tadeusz Mazowiecki as prime minister. Poland, while still a communist country in theory, started to change its economy to a market-based system. The 'Small' Constitution, in which important power was given to the President, was written for the leader of *Solidarność* in 1990. This constitutional change was the last step in the transformation of Poland's political structure.

The strategy of Lech Wałęsa

As was pointed out earlier, the main activity of Wałęsa was achieved by 1989. He had had previously no access to any official media: one of the most important

aspects of the opposition's activities was the publication of brochures or newspapers. One of these, *Robotnik* (*The Worker*) disseminated information about opposition's demonstrations and ceremonies, but these means of communication were limited: only four hundred copies were printed of the first issue of *Robotnik* (Kubik 1994). The publication of Solidarity materials took place in very difficult conditions with permanent lack of paper (controlled by the State) and other technical problems.

Two key decisions of Wałęsa had a major impact on the events which followed. The first was Wałęsa's participation in a televised debate. This was a wholly new challenge, as even if Wałęsa had had experience of the media in secret conditions, his participation in an official televised debate was a crucial step in the transformation of politics in Poland. In November 1988, Polish official television organised a debate between Lech Wałęsa and Alfred Miodowicz who was the head of the communist trade union. Miodowicz was at the origin of this invitation, a move which was a big surprise for the government as well as for *Solidarność*. Miodowicz knew that the leader of *Solidarność* had no television experience: he wanted to win some points for his trade union and to foster his own career in the process. In reality, the event proved to Poles that Solidarity was the key to the emergence of a democratic Poland and that Wałęsa was the politician who would achieve the change. Thanks to his talent in presenting his policies, he did win: Wałęsa, invited for the first time by Polish television, managed to convince the Poles. Yet some observers of Polish politics did note that Wałęsa had a complex relationship with journalists: this was to be so especially during the 1990 presidential campaign (Kurski 1991); some also felt that he underestimated the role played by the media in democratic Poland (Biernat 1999).

The second crucial event was the decision to have talks with government. The role played by Wałęsa in initiating these talks was crucial. Yet this decision was not easy to take and subsequent discussion about the value of the move confirms that the subject remains controversial. In the context of a widespread fear that there might be a social explosion as a result of the economic malaise, a secret meeting was held in September 1988 between Lech Wałęsa and the Minister of Internal Affairs, Czesław Kiszczak. They agreed on holding the so-called Round Table talks, which began on 6 February 1989. They included representatives of Solidarity and of the government, the meetings being co-chaired by Lech Wałęsa and Czesław Kiszczak. An agreement (the 'Round Table Agreement') was signed on 4 April 1989. Even if the decision was contested by several participants from the opposition, the agreement gave Poles the opportunity to vote in a 'semi-democratic' election.

The outcome of the election of June 1989 was unpredictable as Poland had not had a truly fair election since the 1920s. The Communists were clearly unpopular, but no hard data suggested how small was the size of their support. The Communist government still had control over most major media outlets; it adopted sports and television celebrities as their candidates, as well as successful local and business personalities. The campaign was a new challenge for

Solidarność, the organisation having worked in circumstances in which secrecy was the order of the day: many members of *Solidarność* were consequently scarcely known. The selection and the presentation of candidates were therefore a major challenge. In order to recognise *Solidarność* members, every candidate for the *Sejm* and Senate had a photograph of Wałęsa. The candidates from *Solidarność* were therefore called the Wałęsa team, another example of the personalisation of power in *Solidarność*. During the campaign Wałęsa's name and photograph were widely used as was the sentence 'I vote for *Solidarność*' with the signature of Lech Wałęsa. The relaunched union weekly *Tygodnik Solidarność*, then edited by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and the new *Gazeta Wyborcza* (subsequently Poland's largest daily paper), edited by Adam Michnik and launched on 8 May 1989, became influential organs for the movement. The Citizens's Committee nominated a candidate for each seat. In its campaigning, the Citizens' Committee relied on its 'Electoral Paper', *Gazeta Wyborcza*. The election posters were mostly printed unofficially by an extensive network of *samizdat* print shops which had been operating throughout the 1980s. All candidates had an article in *Gazeta Wyborcza* and posters showing them with the key figure of the opposition, Wałęsa. The election of 4 June 1989 (with a second round on 18 June) resulted in a landslide victory of *Solidarność*: all 35 per cent of the seats in the *Sejm* which the opposition was allowed to contest and ninety-nine of the hundred Senate seats (only one went to an independent candidate) were won by Solidarity. As the Committee was not a typical political party but a rather spontaneously formed, loose organisation to facilitate and focus on the opposition's pre-election efforts, it did not survive its own triumph for long. On 23 June 1989, the Committee candidates which found themselves in the *Sejm* formed the Citizens' Parliamentary Party (*Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny*, OKP), which elected Bronisław Geremek as chairman.

International visibility

For years, Lech Wałęsa was the symbol of the fight against communism. Wałęsa received many international prizes apart from the Nobel and he was awarded thirty-three honorary degrees from American and European Universities. He was named 'Man of the Year' in the 1980s by Time Magazine, The Financial Times and The Observer; but this international recognition gave one more argument to the communist government to accuse Wałęsa to be an international spy financed by foreign governments. At the same time, despite huge negative propaganda, the Polish government could not avoid the fact that many heads of state or of government met Lech Wałęsa in Gdańsk in the course of official visits: these meetings gave him an international legitimacy and recognition. This was in addition to the fact that the communist government could not continue to deny the power of *Solidarność*.

Apart from such honours as addressing a joint meeting of the US Congress on 15 November 1989 (the first non-head of state to do so), a number of books detailing his life and ideas were published at the time. Perhaps the three most

important ones are *Droga nadziei (The Road of Hope)*, in which Lech Wałęsa's memories of his childhood are confronted with those of his friends' and collaborators', *Moja III RP (My Third Republic of Poland)*, in which Wałęsa discusses the Third Polish Republic, its development, success or failure, and *Droga do prawdy (The Road to Truth)* which describes all the important, historic events of Wałęsa's life from December 1970 in Gdańsk (Wałęsa 1989, 2007, 2008).

Wałęsa as President of the Republic: early success and subsequent failure

After 1989 the presidential trend in the country was confirmed by the adoption of the rule according to which the President of Poland was to be elected by direct universal suffrage. That constitutional revision was prepared with the leader of *Solidarność* in mind. The conception of the role of the president was the answer to the power of Wałęsa. The president elected in direct universal suffrage would have an important role, that of directing the executive on the basis of the legitimacy acquired by means of the direct link between president and people. The presidential election thus became the main feature of political competition in the nation. Lech Wałęsa announced that he was to be candidate for the presidency in September 1990. During his campaign he stressed his political competence and developed the image of someone who was strong, just and wise. He was presented as the candidate of all Poles. His success in the fight with communism, his personal charisma and efficient leadership in difficult moments were the main arguments. He was elected President of Poland in 1990.

The role played by Lech Wałęsa in the transformation of Polish politics was crucial. The peaceful transformation, called a bloodless revolution, was an exceptional phenomenon in the world and an example for others of how to reach an agreement and carry out political change.

Yet, when he became president, Wałęsa proved difficult and authoritarian; he was unable to rally behind him the bulk of the population. His massive appeal seemed to have been exhausted by the Round Table discussions. Why this was the case is perhaps difficult to account for: but he clearly was a leader who, by the time he was elevated to the highest position, had ceased to be at the centre of events. His great moment was when he led an opposition movement to victory: his determination and courage, the way he headed the delegation of the democratic opposition at the Round Table, led to a compromise with the Communist regime, culminating in the election of 4 June 1989 and the establishment of the first non-Communist government in Eastern Europe. This coincided also with the apex of Wałęsa's popularity; but it was not to be his forte to exploit that victory and to help the country to be run as a democratic polity. He quarrelled with those with whom he had been previously associated and, between 1990 and 1993, the governments which he helped to create were weak and unstable, while he was confronted with a victory of the 'transformed' communist party after the 1993 general election. The next two years were naturally even more difficult for Wałęsa. Finally, after five years as President of Poland, he was defeated at the second ballot of his re-election

bid, in 1995, by the candidate of that ‘transformed’ communist party, Aleksander Kwaśniewski. This was a clear sign that the five years of his presidency from 1990 to 1995 had not just eroded, but truly destroyed the ‘charismatic’ appeal which, as leader of Solidarity, Wałęsa had enjoyed.

II

Andrzej Lepper: an ‘outsider’ as leader

The choice of the leader

During the post-communist period, a number of strong personalities appeared on the Polish political scene, often for a short period only. The case of Andrzej Lepper, the leader of *Samoobrona RP* (Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland), is the most remarkable. The history of Self-Defence begins in the summer of 1991, when Lepper organised some mass protests of farmers. This was an entirely new party which is entirely the result of Lepper’s work; without Lepper the organisation would almost certainly not have existed at all. Nor is it clear that it will ever survive the collapse in support for its leader in the later part of the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Samoobrona was altogether outside the political system until 2001 when the party managed to enter parliament. After a further electoral success in 2005, by which time there were local structures of Self-Defence throughout Poland, the party entered in coalition with Law and Justice (PiS); members of *Samoobrona* were given three ministries. Lepper himself was agriculture minister both in the coalition led by Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz and subsequently in the coalition led by Jarosław Kaczyński. Meanwhile, *Samoobrona* continued to be characterised by the unchallenged leadership of Andrzej Lepper, who succeeded, in 2005, in winning 15 per cent of the votes at the presidential election. He was to be suddenly and sharply defeated, two years later, however, at the general election of 2007, when his party received a mere 1.5 per cent of the votes and he was himself also the object of prosecutions for sexual harassment and financial corruption. In this Lepper’s success and failure follows a pattern which appears characteristic of personalised party leadership in Poland.

The career of Andrzej Lepper: from local protest leader to Deputy Prime Minister

Andrzej Lepper was born in 1952 in a rural area. Prior to entering politics, Lepper was a farmer in the village of Zielnowo in Pomerania, a region known for big state farms which suffered from the new economic policy. Lepper did not complete his secondary education at the State Agricultural Technical School in Sypniewo and has no higher education. From 1977–1980 he was a member of PZPR, Poland’s communist party. During the period of economic change his farm fell into debt and he was on the verge of bankruptcy.

Lepper as a leader of mass protests

The history of Self-Defence begins in 1991, when, as leader of the farmers' union, Andrzej Lepper organised mass protests of farmers against their difficult situation in agriculture. Using strongly populist messages and while committing spectacular acts of civil disobedience, Lepper managed to gain nationwide publicity and strong support in the countryside. The farmers' trade union Self-Defence, which had been founded in 1992, was then transformed into a political party in 1999 (Kubiak 2003). Lepper himself was regional councillor in Koszalin where *Samoobrona* was strong. He was elected deputy from that constituency in 2001 and 2005. That region was considered as Lepper's fief and his very strong local implementation in the area enabled him to stress his knowledge of the problems of simple citizens.

Lepper as Member of Parliament

The general election of 2001 was a great success for *Samoobrona*, which entered the *Sejm* with 10 per cent of the votes. Lepper thus succeeded in becoming a member of the political elite. He started to be well-known, being often invited on television. He was elected Vice-Speaker of the *Sejm* (*Wicemarszałek Sejmu*) with the votes of the left-wing majority in 2001, but at the end of November 2001 was dismissed from the position.⁴ In 2002 he was appointed member of the committee for state control of the *Sejm*. However, it was the prestigious position of vice-speaker which allowed him to occupy a key place in political Poland, to have real visibility and to exercise great influence. As a result, at the next general election, he had one of the best results in Poland with 33,535 votes in his constituency while *Samoobrona* obtained 11 per cent overall, 1 per cent more than in 2001. After the 2005 election he was appointed *Sejm* Deputy-Chairman; his candidacy was controversial, but thanks to the support of Law and Justice, he was eventually accepted. He held that position up to May 2006 when he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister.

Lepper as Minister

PiS did not have an absolute majority in Parliament at the 2005 general election. For some months, Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz led a minority government, but, to stabilise the situation, an agreement was reached by PiS, *Samoobrona* and the League of Polish Families (LPR), a small right-wing party, on the basis of which the two minor parties were to support some of the governmental proposals in the *Sejm*, but without entering the government. This was followed in May 2006 by a coalition arrangement as a result of which *Samoobrona* entered the government. Lepper was responsible for inter-party negotiations with Law and Justice about the character of the alliance and the distribution of the ministerial portfolios, as a result of which the brothers Kaczyński accepted giving him the agriculture ministry; *Samoobrona* had also two other ministries, Anna Kaleta at Employment and Andrzej Aumiller at Construction.

The relationship between Lepper and the two Kaczyńskis was difficult, as the leader of *Samoobrona* held the key to the survival of the government. As a matter of fact, PiS, Self-Defence and the LPR had only 230 seats out of 460 in the lower house of parliament and were thus one short of the absolute majority. This gave Lepper repeated opportunities to place Kaczyński and his party in an uncomfortable situation. Indeed Lepper and *Samoobrona* were ousted from the coalition in September 2006, but, as subsequent negotiations over another coalition between PiS and the Polish Peasant Party failed, Kaczyński had to re-appoint Lepper Minister of Agriculture three weeks later. Then, in July 2007, Kaczyński dismissed Lepper from the government once more, this time allegedly on the ground that Lepper was involved in corruption. This was to be the beginning of the decline of Lepper and of *Samoobrona*.

Lepper as a candidate to the presidential election

Meanwhile, his position in the Polish parliament and in the Polish government meant that Lepper had become an important politician: the goal of the presidency seemed a credible objective. Indeed, as party president, he had challenged Aleksander Kwaśniewski in 1995, but had obtained a mere 1 per cent of the votes; the score was a little improved five years later, in 2000, when he had 3 per cent of the votes. In 2005, however, there was very marked improvement as he scored 15 per cent – 4 per cent more than his party at the general election. Perhaps not surprisingly, in June 2007, at a time when his star was beginning to wane, he did obtain a decision of the Congress of his party to run for the presidency once more in 2010; in between, however, the results of the October 2007 general election eliminated him and his party from the *Sejm*. The future career of Lepper is therefore in question.

The personal power exercised by Lepper within the party

Samoobrona was set up as a trade union in 1992 and as a party in 1999. The links between the two organisations are very close: in some regions the members of executive committee of party and trade union are the same. Meanwhile, Lepper combines the position of head of the party and of the trade union (very often he is just presented as president of *Samoobrona*). The president exercises power in both bodies, even if there is a National Council composed of sixty persons. Until 2007 the president used to nominate all members of that National Council, but some changes were introduced then in the election of this body: each of sixteen regional councils and the council of Warsaw can choose three members and Andrzej Lepper can nominate nine persons. The National Council can also change the members elected by Congress. Meanwhile, Lepper, as president, can create and abolish organisational units and he can use this power to set up new positions for his followers (Sobolewska-Myslik *et al.* 2008: 120).

There is also a Congress whose role is essentially to express support for Lepper. The same scenario is repeated each time: there are speeches, the president

is elected and a short concert of a very famous group takes place. Yet the Congress is an important moment in the life of party, because members of *Samoobrona* can then meet Lepper, take photographs with him and buy his books. The aim of the meeting is to mobilise the troops. Lepper used to stress that the party was the fruit of delegates' work. Thus the Congress is a sort of 'high mass', a ritual rather than an occasion to discuss the programme, even if Lepper makes announcements concerning new proposals such as that of a kind of social allowance for every Pole.

In 2007 Lepper's speech at the Congress lasted one and a half hours. This was followed by three speeches, those of Genowefa Wiśniewska, of Minister Anna Kalata and of Józef Maksymiuk MP. The common point of all these speeches was the glorification of the leader, stressing the role he played in the success of *Samoobrona* and the changes which occurred thanks to his presence in government. Afterwards the leader is re-elected: in 2007 this was by 99 per cent of the votes (there were only three votes against). This result was commented by Lepper by stating that "Opposition is growing". It was after the announcement of the result and after the whole meeting was shouting 'Andrzej, Andrzej' that Lepper was chosen as the candidate for the presidential election of 2010.

On the *Samoobrona* website, all the commentaries made by members are very positive about Lepper and the articles chosen from Polish and foreign media present him as a serious statesman. This idolatry is visible in texts written by 'simple members' of *Samoobrona*, who very often link their membership of the organisation to the direct contact with Lepper during a meeting.

The programme

Andrzej Lepper decided what *Samoobrona*'s ideology was to be at the beginning of existence of the movement,⁵ but further documents were issued later, particularly "The third way of *Samoobrona*" (*Trzecia droga Samoobrony*) (*Samoobrona* 2003) and the "New Manifest of *Samoobrona*" (*Nowy Manifest Samoobrony*) (*Samoobrona* 2005). The main idea of the 2003 programme, published when *Samoobrona* was already in the *Sejm*, was the party's opposition to both communism and liberalism. The aim of the "New Manifest of *Samoobrona*" was to follow Northern Europe and Great Britain. The plan is to move Poland towards 'Social liberalism', its motto being "men, family, work and a suitable life". In these programmes, *Samoobrona* played on the disillusionment of millions of poor citizens with the current socio-economic situation in Poland, those living mostly in small towns and villages with high unemployment, who believe that they have lost out in the transition to the free market economy.

These programmes are part of a process which came to be referred to as 'Lepperisation' as they are mechanisms by which the goals of *Samoobrona* are associated with the person of Lepper. The leader does indeed control the preparation of the plans. Once a year, a special conference devoted to the party's programme is organised and presided over by Lepper. His presence seems necessary. He

signs the press releases. No divisive motions are allowed: those who have different ideas are invited to quit the party. Lepper used to monopolise some themes in the political agenda such as agriculture, European integration or anti-elite discourses. Lepper has also written books presenting his life and his political ideas. The titles of these books are significant: *List of Lepper (Lista Leppera)*, *Every Stick Has Two Ends (Kazdy kij ma dwa konce)*, *Inhumble (Niepokorny)* or *Self-Defence – Why? (Samoobrona-dlaczego?)* (Lepper 2002, 2001, 1999; Lepper and Ul 1993).

The main point of Lepper's speech at the Congress, in 2007, was to state the need for *Samoobrona* to stay in the coalition, even if the price to pay is high, since "as a part of coalition, Self-Defence can't realise all program announced before the election".⁶ Lepper repeated that *Samoobrona* was the first Polish movement that denounced liberalism. "We were first to say no to liberals..." he said. Agriculture had an important place in this speech. The general situation in agriculture was difficult, he explained, because the accession treaty signed by the previous government was bad; but, thanks to European funds, it becomes possible to strengthen this sector (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 2007).

The issue of agriculture was indeed the main feature in the programme of *Samoobrona*. To revive agriculture, the idea of so-called 'payable prices' for agricultural commodities was introduced. The state should guarantee reasonable prices for every farmer in Poland (Kocik 1996). According to *Samoobrona*, the foreign policy pursued after 1989 aimed at "transforming Poland into a market for the production of the surpluses from the West" and at destroying Polish agriculture (*Polityka* 1999).

Special attention is devoted to the impact of European integration on Polish agriculture. During the accession negotiations, Lepper often developed his opinion about the European Union and the process of integration. He used to repeat that Poles accept integration because there is a lack of information throughout the society about the real costs of Polish entry into the EU. His argument focused on the charge that Polish farmers would pay a heavy price for accession and that hundreds of thousands of them would be forced out of business, as their land would be purchased by foreigners. As some observers stress, this view, "underscored by the well-publicised confrontational tactics Lepper and his followers adopted, in and outside parliament, had its effects" (Pienkos 2003). Lepper argued that his party was not opposed to Polish EU membership in principle but was simply against the unfavourable accession terms negotiated by the government. *Samoobrona* campaigned on the slogan 'The Choice is Yours'.

The rhetoric of *Samoobrona* contains many anti-elite aspects. The leader took advantage of the debate that preceded his dismissal from the government to deliver a statement in which he accused the politicians who governed Poland since 1989 of bringing the country to the brink of economic disaster. "After all, it was you, wearing suit and tie and Dior and Chanel cologne, who pampered one another for twelve years," he said. "And you've pampered one another so effectively that today we're dealing with a complete crisis in heavy industry,

agriculture, small and medium-sized businesses, retail and services” (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 2002).

Lepper’s strategy

The success of Andrzej Lepper and his party in the 1990s and in the first few years of the twenty-first century was possible thanks to a well thought out strategy. Other parties used to classify *Samoobrona* as a marginal party: Lepper wanted to create the image of an organisation which was ‘outside the system’. He wanted to turn marginality into an asset. He stressed that he was not a former member of *Solidarność* but was new in politics and was a simple man close to ordinary people. During his campaigns he took part in several meetings in small villages and towns and even after his appointment as minister he used to travel markedly. Even if Lepper uses the media, he is also the champion of direct contact.

Lepper endeavours to put across the image of a leader who is very close to the life of the party. He travels often across Poland and he has regular contacts with regional authorities of Self-Defence. He used to intervene in local conflicts: In Wielkopolska he appointed the person who had to replace the local leader. New responsibilities in Warsaw induced Lepper to privilege these local contacts to show that his links with ordinary citizens are strong and that his new responsibilities did not change him.

Yet Lepper used also modern means of communication such as television and the Internet. His direct action method of protest attracted the attention of the news media. He is also telegenic and likes cameras. He had some gimmicks which were attractive to the mass media such as red-white ties worn by all members of *Samoobrona* as well as shows organised with a banknote of fifty euros, which was the price paid by the European Union for Polish agriculture, or the invitation to journalists to take his DNA. When, at the beginning of 2007, *Samoobrona*’s survey results were not good, Lepper organised press conferences on Saturdays so that what he said about his party could appear in the headlines. As a matter of fact, despite his media presence, he often criticised journalists: according to him, the media owned by liberals and foreigners did not want to show *Samoobrona* in a good light.⁷ The website of Self-Defence is also very professional, updated every day with much information about the activities of Andrzej Lepper as Minister of Agriculture. He has also his own website alongside that of the Ministry.⁸

It has been said by some observers of Polish political life that Lepper managed to put forward a double image, that of the man who breaks the law, but also that of the man whose two-hour meeting with the sceptical heads of the largest company ends in a storm of applause. He speaks in a colourful and concise Polish and he is excellent at communication with his listeners. For *The Economist* (2002) “he is a man of an acute mind, crafty and charismatic”, but he can also be seen as the ‘peasant monster’. Despite all his caricature-like qualities, he has had many supporters. As late as September 2006, studies published

by CBOS stated that 40 per cent of the Poles trusted Lepper. While this support declined in the following months it was still about 30 per cent in early 2007.

The decline

The party grew very quickly and its electoral successes in 2001 and 2005 had attracted many members more interested in possible benefits than in the programme. The situation in the parliamentary party became more difficult as a result. Some MPs left the party after the September 2005 election and became independents or joined other parties: *Samoobrona* lost ten MPs in the process, although this is not an exceptional case, as other parties do suffer from the same phenomenon. Some departures were due to the sex scandal in which Lepper and other leading members were involved. Others, as Andrzej Bunder, stated that groups of *Samoobrona* MPs surrounding Lepper were running the party as if it was their personal club. To counter this problem, Lepper asked party candidates after 2005 to sign promissory notes of 500,000 zlotys each, but that practice led to further judicial difficulties for the leader.

Problems also emerged in the selection of candidates, as conflicts occurred during the development of the constituency lists. Lepper did take an active part in the process, but some local groups were angry because he imposed candidates without any ties in the region, in particular in Lubelskie and Slaskie in 2005. There were also disputes in Silesia, where one of local candidates cut the red-white tie in public as a protest against those who were shunted to Silesia (*Gazeta Wyborcza* 2005): between 2001 and 2005 six MPs represented Silesia, but in 2005 there were only two. Up to the 2005 election, Lepper always won these battles; he did so even when some members tried to create a new party with a name similar to *Samoobrona RP* (for example *Samoobrona Polska*), as, when those who engineered that move failed to be elected, they had to return to the party.

Yet the question is whether his 'charm' may not be over and it is in this context that the very bad result of the October 2007 election for *Samoobrona* and for Lepper himself needs to be examined. After having obtained an impressive 15 per cent of the vote at the 2005 presidential contest, with over two million Poles having voted for him, the mere 200,000 votes obtained two years later at the 2007 general election unquestionably showed that Lepper's earlier charisma had ceased to operate. One does therefore wonder whether there can be a return to the 'enthusiasm' which characterised the earlier years. The mixture of 'anti-elitism' and of alleged 'responsible' behaviour in the government, combined with the attacks against all the other members of the elite and the occurrence of scandals, may well have provided occasion for the Poles to believe that the personalised character of the leader of *Samoobrona* was no longer truly acceptable and that 'normal' politics required 'normal' politicians.

The two examples of personalised leadership which have been examined in this chapter do show that, in Poland, the phenomenon may well have rather special

characteristics. In this context, what is peculiar to the country is perhaps not so much that there have been personalised leaders: such leaders have been found in Western and East-Central Europe as they have been found in other parts of the world; but what is more specific to Poland is the fact that personalised leaders find it difficult to retain their support for a very long period, in particular when they come to be confronted with the need to put forward policies and to defend these against opposition.

The first president of post-communist Poland and the ‘outsider’ leader of *Samoobrona* have had different careers and different goals: but they appear to have had the same fate, namely that their ‘charismatic’ appeal, which was manifest for a number of years, came to be destroyed or at any rate markedly reduced when these leaders came to be confronted with the need to defend policies and to induce those who followed them to agree with what had to be done. Perhaps the need to ‘descend into realism’ is what has been particularly difficult for these personalised party leaders. It remains to be seen whether, with time passing and the country becoming as a result more accustomed to the need for such realism, personalised party leadership will be markedly less prominent at the inception of parties and whether it will therefore become, as Max Weber (1968) had suggested, gradually ‘routinised’.

Notes

- 1 Konstytucja Kwietniowa (Constitution of April), Warszawa 1997.
- 2 www.ilw.org.pl.
- 3 Wałęsa himself denies any collaboration. On 11 August 2000, the Appellate Court of Warsaw, V Wydział Lustracyjny, declared that Wałęsa’s Lustration Statement is a true one, meaning he did not collaborate with the communist regime.
- 4 After describing President Aleksander Kwasniewski as “Poland’s most lazy man”, central bank governor Leszek Balcerowicz as an “economic idiot” and former foreign minister Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz as a “bastard” (PAP 2001).
- 5 In fact, even if Andrzej Lepper used to talk about “experts”, he didn’t give the names...
- 6 www.samoobrona.org.pl.
- 7 See numerous interviews at www.samoobrona.org.pl.
- 8 www.andrzejlepper.com

12 Japan

The personalisation of politics – Koizumi and Japanese politics

Personalisation of politics is defined as the salience of factors that emphasise individuals rather than organisations primarily in the context of national politics. In the context of subnational politics, individuals often play an important part as the size of political units is not very large. In the context of national politics, individuals normally operate in institutions and thus the salience of factors that stress individuals is not normally exceedingly high. The personalisation of politics I deal with in this chapter is in the national context in Japan at the dawn of this century. Its key features can be summarised as follows:

- 1 increasing attention given by citizens to personal appeals and styles of political leaders;
- 2 gradual decomposition of interest organisations and associations and other nationally organised groups into fragmented and loosely organised individuals; and
- 3 advances of digital and televised communications and interactions in politics.

In what follows, I first explain what came before personalisation of politics, namely the nationalisation of politics. This enables readers to comprehend the large trends of politics which unfolded in the previous centuries and this. Second, I turn to the personalisation of politics in the Japanese context focusing on prime minister Junichiro Koizumi (2001–2006). Third, I examine the personal power of the leader inside the party. Fourth, I examine the external power of the leader. Lastly, I make concluding remarks.

The nationalisation of politics

Personalisation of politics is not a new phenomenon, but, against the background of the intense nationalisation of politics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is often felt to be new. The nationalisation of politics in Japan took two steps, in the early modern and in the modern periods (Inoguchi 1997, 2005). First, in 1534, a Portuguese ship landed on an island in the far south of Japan. Stunned by the might of a gun, Tokitaka, the Lord of Tanegashima, was able to

have guns manufactured in the area he controlled. Japan was in the middle of a warring period where all areas were fighting each other to unify the country militarily. Guns were quickly manufactured and widely spread across Japan. This was one of the first steps of the nationalisation of Japanese politics. Nobunaga, a warlord known for his intense drive to unify the country, was the very person who utilised massive guns in a most innovative and systematic way to smash his rivals armed with medieval weapons, namely horses, arrows and swords. He almost achieved his ambition in 1582 when he was assassinated. The first absolutist developments were thus stopped overnight. As a matter of fact, Nobunaga had much in common with Elizabeth I in England. First, medieval politics had been 'centrifugal' in both societies and both rulers aimed at establishing a kind of absolutism. Elizabeth succeeded whereas Nobunaga floundered. Second, religious conflicts permeated both societies. Elizabeth I presided over the development and imposition of the Anglican Church and had to deal with continuing conflict with the Catholic Church and Catholic heads of state. Nobunaga massacred militant Buddhist monks near Kyoto, then the capital of Japan. Third, both wanted to enhance revenue sources by encouraging foreign trade. Since then, however, Japan and England took different paths, but guns and Nobunaga paved the way for the nationalisation of politics in Japan. Yet 'centrifugal' medieval forces were so strong in Japan that two actions were necessary to establish the first modern form of nationalisation. To begin with, external military campaigns in Korea were necessary to satisfy those warlords now working under the umbrella of Nobunaga's successor, Hideyoshi. Second, a major battle in 1600 was needed to determine who was to be Hideyoshi's successor. Ieyasu was the victor of that battle. That early nationalisation of politics was achieved by the military dominance of the Tokugawa shogunate, the monopolisation of foreign trade and other forms of foreign involvement by the Tokugawa and the provision of autonomy to 300-odd 'domains' in Japan. The nationalisation of the economy was almost completed before the quasi-nationalisation of politics. The technology of civil engineering in the construction of roads, bridges and ports was very high. Demographic and economic development precipitated the nationalisation of transport and commerce.

The second phase of the nationalisation process of Japanese politics came in 1853.¹ The coercive diplomacy of the United States Navy led the country to open itself to Western powers in 1853. In 1861 commercial treaties were also concluded with Western powers. To meet the Western challenge, the Meiji Restoration took place in 1868, with the Tokugawa shogunate being abolished and the Emperor at Kyoto now ruling from Tokyo and under him the modernising government centralised power. Shortly after the Meiji Restoration fifty-odd prefectures were established with their governors appointed by the central government.

The division of the population into four classes, warriors, peasants, artisans and merchants, in this order, was also abolished shortly afterwards: the ones who were most negatively affected were the warriors since they produced nothing in contrast to the other three classes. Many of them sought to serve the country by entering the bureaucracy. Before a meritocratic bureaucracy was born, the

leaders of the Meiji Restoration had to recruit public servants from among like-minded men, meaning literally those unemployed warriors from the same area: hence the colonisation of each bureaucratic agency by traditional ‘domains’. The army was colonised by the Choshu ‘domain’, the navy by the Satsuma ‘domain’, the accounting office by the Nabeshima ‘domain’, the police by the Higo and Aizu Wakamatsu ‘domains’, etc. While a strong central bureaucracy under the Imperial Constitution modelled on Prussia was the inevitable outcome, its ‘centrifugal’ tendency was rendered almost inevitable by the abolition of ‘domains’ and the members of the warrior class who took refuge in newly-created bureaucratic agencies; these were based on the same old principle of cronyism before meritocracy and schools designed to train the bureaucratic elite were introduced. A rich country and a strong army were the immediate slogans of the Meiji Restoration, while enlightenment and entrepreneurship were also stressed. The nationalisation of politics was accelerated in the process.

The centralisation of power was impeded constitutionally on a crucial point, however. Although the Emperor was sacrosanct, many actors were able to influence him, the Cabinet, the House of Peers, the House of Representatives, the Privy Council, the Imperial Army, the Imperial Navy and political parties, among others. In the Cabinet, the prime minister was only slightly more than a *primus inter pares*. In the Cabinet, the constitutional principle of consensus prevailed: one minister dissenting from the prime minister was sufficient to topple the Cabinet. Each minister controlled a bureaucratic agency, whose autonomy and power were very large. The nationalisation of politics was therefore not at all thorough: a ‘centripetal’ tendency remains, being the legacy of the way the Meiji Restoration was carried out and the Imperial Constitution drafted.

The third phase of the nationalisation of politics came with the Second World War and the economic recovery from the devastating defeat (Iokibe 2001). The Japanese economic system since the Meiji Restoration was rather of the *laissez-faire* type contrary to the ‘rich country and strong army’ image which was conveyed. The lack of tariff autonomy placed on Japan by the Western powers in 1858 strongly affected the Japanese economy until 1911. That was the time of free trade in the Western sense of the word: British cotton cloth should have penetrated the Japanese market since it was of high quality and reasonably priced. Yet the Japanese stuck to those cotton cloth traditionally manufactured at home and did not swing immediately to British cotton cloth. Meanwhile the Japanese cotton industry developed and started to produce, around the First World War, cotton cloth as good as the British. Unable to resort to state protectionism in the cotton cloth industry, Japan introduced market oriented industrialisation, with firms initially established as state enterprises soon being privatised; foreign engineers massively hired initially were dismissed after *bumiputra* (sons of the earth) Japanese engineers emerged. This market-oriented economy was not in perfect harmony with the centralisation of power and the nationalisation of politics: it was only in the 1930s and 1940s that the centralisation of power and the nationalisation of politics accelerated in tandem with the advancement of world protectionism and the war economy, a change which is referred to as state

developmentalism. Destined to be a latecomer, Japan perhaps should have practised state developmentalism from the beginning, but that was not to be the case: it only occurred when tariff autonomy was obtained and world protectionism prevailed (Johnson 1982). State developmentalism was interrupted by the Second World War but was resumed immediately after the defeat under the occupation of Allied Powers. Such economic ministries as the Economic Stabilisation Board, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the Ministry of Finance – and their predecessors and successors – acquired and exercised enormous power from the 1930s through to the 1970s, the Allied occupiers having purged the major actors and institutions politically tainted for their wartime activities. This rendered the Japanese state slightly more centralised. Constitutionally as well, the prime minister had gained more power vis-à-vis Cabinet ministers and the National Diet. Thus during the heyday of state developmentalism in the third quarter of the last century the nationalisation of politics reached its peak on the basis of the nationalisation of the economy.

Personalisation of politics came back only after the nationalisation of politics was heightened in tandem with the formation of nation states, the national economy and national culture in many parts of the world, most notably in Western Europe and North America. Political parties were in a sense the product of the nationalisation of politics in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Desai 2002). What we are witnessing is the personalisation of politics in an era of globalisation. Globalisation is a brutal force, weakening the national organic unity of the economy, politics and culture and slowly but steadily shaping the global economy, governance and culture in a hybrid form. Since national economic unity was being eroded, the dynamics of class formation changed from economic and social differentiation to individualised lifestyles and belief differentiation.² To advance clearly identifiable class and sectoral interests and ideologies, one needed political instruments, one of these being the political party. Thus political parties were set up at the time of the nationalisation of politics. One of the key factors which resulted in political parties losing the erstwhile solid organisational and programmatic features has been the loosening of classes, sectors and other nationally self-sufficient bodies, many of which lost their unity and solidarity at the national level and became globalised. What emerged instead was the personalisation of politics. Even if political parties do exist, their role and functions have steadily changed. Electorates have been increasingly individualised and atomised, floating and flowing, departing from their blocs of erstwhile ancestral class- or religion- or ethnicity- or interest- or belief- or area-based preferences. Electorates tend to give their support to those leaders who are adept at swimming in the sea of uncertainties. Japan's representative case is Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister between 2001 and 2006, who demonstrated that he was distinctively not one of those politicians who are consensus-based in decision making, district-oriented in terms of primary attention and respectful of bureaucrats. He disregarded consensus; he paid little attention to his district; he despised bureaucrats. He is a *rara avis* in Japanese politics.

The personalisation of politics

Biography of Koizumi

Against the historical background of the nationalisation of politics, I now turn to the personalisation of politics, specifically with Junichiro Koizumi, Prime Minister and President of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, 2001–2006. Koizumi is a rare case in Japanese politics,³ first, because he is a lone wolf. As did his father, he belonged to the Fukuda faction and, before he was elected to the House of Representatives, he was Fukuda's secretary. He was not an active member at all, however. He did not like meetings or dining with fellow politicians. He does not conspire with fellow politicians very much, but acts alone. When he dined with a group, this was mostly with his secretaries. During dinner, the conversation tended to be non-political: when a salmon was on the menu, he asked why the Pacific salmon comes back to a home river two years afterwards while the Atlantic salmon comes back to a home river one year afterwards. He likes to reach conclusions alone without consulting anybody. Koizumi surprises as he keeps everything in his mind until the last moment when he takes action: for example, when he was Health and Welfare Minister, a particular pharmaceutical hazard had not been acknowledged as such by the Ministry of Health and Welfare over a long period despite lower court rulings that the Japanese government was guilty. When the higher court ruling came out to the effect that the Japanese government was guilty, the Ministry decided to fight the judgement in the Supreme Court; but Minister Koizumi, overriding the Ministry's preference, dramatically announced that the government was guilty and that the government accepted the higher court judgement immediately. He overrode some bureaucratic decisions when he disagreed, as on that pharmaceutical decision. He did not want to have followers: after five years as prime minister, he was alone. He was uneasy and did not speak much in meetings or during dinner. He did not spend time in his district. He did not show favouritism to his own district. Unlike former prime minister Kakuei Tanaka, whose power came from 'barrels of pork' to the districts, Koizumi was not interested. His district looks shabby and is not filled with shining and dense road networks, let alone with bullet trains. He did not amass a fortune; nor did he seek many political donations: he collects 100,000 yen (about 1,000 US dollars) a month from 200-odd companies.

He divorced early in his career. Almost through his political life, one of Koizumi's three elder sisters, Nobuko, who was single, and Koizumi's right hand arm, Isao Iijima, carried out what must be carried out as secretaries of a politician. He has three sons the last of whom was born after the divorce. Koizumi raised two of them alone. The eldest is a film actor. The second will succeed his father who did not seek re-election in 2009 when his term in parliament ended; his second son returned earlier in 2008 from Washington DC where he was a fellow to the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Junichiro Koizumi's father was a member of the House of Representatives and Defence Minister briefly in the 1970s and his grandfather was a member of

the House of Representatives before the Second World War. His father, an adopted son, was married with a daughter of Koizumi's grandfather. Koizumi's, his father's and his grandfather's constituency is Yokosuka, a naval port near Tokyo, where the United States Navy has its largest facilities in East Asia. Koizumi studied in London at the London School of Economics after graduating from Keio University. His peers and mentors at Keio University do not remember him for his diligence or interest in economics. Upon his father's sudden demise, he returned to Tokyo and stood for election to succeed his father in his constituency. He was humiliated and started to work for his father's factional boss, Yasuo Fukuda, who later became prime minister. He went to Fukuda's house daily despite having to commute a hour and a half from Yokosuka. Once elected in his father's and his grandfather's district, he started to exhibit his distinctive style.

Koizumi's curriculum vitae is not full of the positions he occupied in the party or in the government. He was Health and Welfare Minister and Post Office Minister. He stood three times for the Party's presidential election without strong backing by any faction or other kinds of grouping. Until 1993, most Japanese prime ministers experienced a number of important party executive and Cabinet minister's positions: Koizumi's party positions were far less prestigious than those other prime ministers experienced. He held only three Cabinet positions, those of minister for health and welfare (twice) and of minister for the postal services. He did not hold any international positions or play any part except as a deputy or as a secretary to his bosses, prime minister Fukuda for instance. Koizumi is a man of few words. At press conferences, which he held twice a day, his style was casual but filled with well-calculated, short sentences. They were sometimes like *haiku*. To exaggerate, if Tony Blair's response has twenty sentences per unit of time, Junichiro Koizumi's response was two sentences. Reading or writing books is not something he particularly likes. He hates reading briefing documents. His calligraphy is not bad, though, conveying his wilful, forceful and adroit style. He hated his bureaucrats asking him to be cautious about his policy line and thus brusquely stated "that's irrelevant". He hated his secretaries asking for details of what he regarded as minor things by saying "I leave it entirely to you."⁴

Before rising to the prime ministership, his rating in opinion polls was not low, but after taking office, his popularity surged to as much as 78 per cent. When he sacked the popular female Foreign Minister Makiko Tanaka, his popularity dropped markedly, but it soon recovered and was continuously as high as 50 per cent on average until his departure in October 2006. His constituency is his kingdom since his grandfather: this is why he did not spend much time in it and why he did not bring back pork barrel to it. Patronage and clientelism seem to have been remote to him.

Who exemplified personalisation of politics apart from Koizumi?

The key features of the personalisation of politics are:

- 1 the increasing attention of citizens to leaders' appeal and style;
- 2 the increasing decomposition of organised groups into fragmented and loosely organised individuals; and
- 3 the increasing importance of digital and televised communications and interactions with citizens.

Looking through the post-1945 prime ministers of Japan, Koizumi is the one who best qualifies in terms of the three key features. Possible others would be Shigeru Yoshida (four times between 1946 and 1954), Kakuei Tanaka (1972–1974), Yasuhiro Nakasone (1982–1987), Morihiro Hosokawa (1993–1994), Shinzo Abe (2006–2007) and Taro Aso (2008–2009). Let's examine them successively. Yoshida was a key player in Japanese politics at the time of the Allied Powers' occupation (1945–1952) and a tough individualist acting for peace during wartime against the Tojo-led government; but he was not very popular. He was aristocratic and very loyal to the Emperor, always signing as His Majesty's subject, Shigeru. In the opinion polls of all the prime ministers since 1945 he comes below average. Internally, he relied for his power on the Liberal Party and on bureaucratic agencies including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where Yoshida spent his former career; externally he relied on the United States government. He was dismissive of the mass media reports on him. He clearly therefore does not fit the personalisation picture. Tanaka was very popular until he was toppled by scandals. He was a self-made man and climbed up the ladder from a modest background. His book, *Reconstructing the Japanese Archipelago*, was a bestseller, in which he detailed his policy platform in a most vivid manner. His power derived, however, internally from the Liberal Democratic Party and the bureaucratic agencies and externally from popular grass roots level supporters who benefited from his pork barrel expenditure. Though he had a charismatic appeal and a populist flavour, he does not fit the picture of the personalisation of politics because he relied ultimately on organisations. Nakasone was a populist leader, waving the Japanese national flag during his first election campaign, in 1946, and arguing against the Occupation by the United States, but he did not fit the picture of the personalisation of politics. He did pay attention to the mass media. He was known for having been the first Japanese prime minister who was at ease being photographed next to the American President. His power derived ultimately from organisations, however. Hosokawa fits the model of personalised politics. He was governor of Kumamoto prefecture for ten years before embarking in national politics. Amidst a chorus against the corrupt and incompetent Liberal Democratic Party governments of the late 1980s and early 1990s Hosokawa built a new party on the basis of which he moved successfully to the prime minister's position in 1993. The way he mobilised

grass roots level support and the mass media was most impressive. He was charismatic, stylish and youngish. He spoke of re-inventing Japan. It was an astounding achievement. He comes from an aristocratic family with his uncle being the prime minister Fumimaro Konoe (1891–1945) who committed suicide when he was called upon by the Occupation authorities for suspected war crimes. Hosokawa resigned abruptly after less than a year in power, however, and he left politics to become immersed in pottery art. Abe fits the picture of the personalisation of politics to a certain extent. He was Secretary General of the Liberal Democratic Party when Prime Minister Koizumi visited Kim Jong Il in Pyongyang in 2002 and 2004 to resolve an array of problems including those of persons who had been abducted by North Korea. Abe criticised Koizumi who was about to give his signature to the Pyongyang communiqué drafted by him and Kim Jong Il in which both resolved to move forward toward the diplomatic normalisation of both countries by resolving a number of issues. Abe took the position that without a complete resolution of the issue of those abducted there should be no diplomatic normalisation and he became instantaneously very popular at home. Anticipating the end of Koizumi's two terms (a two-terms only tenure is the rule in the Liberal Democratic Party), Abe mobilised his followers outmanoeuvring his rivals. He became prime minister by rending the 'abductees issue' popular. He is not particularly charismatic, however. He belongs to a long-standing political family, his father having been foreign minister and his grandfather prime minister. He resigned abruptly after having been only one year in power. Prime Minister Taro Aso, who succeeded Yasuo Fukuda in September 2008, does not quite fit the pattern. On assuming his position his popularity was not very high, being slightly under 50 per cent, 10 per cent less than Fukuda, 15 per cent less than Abe. Thus Koizumi is the best exemplifier of political personalisation in Japan, with Hosokawa and Abe perhaps coming next.

The personal power of the leader within the party

The major change in the party presidential election rules introduced in 1994 was that the electoral college was enlarged to include local party elites in addition to the parliamentary members of the party (Reed and Theis 2001; Hicken and Kasuya 2003). Party presidential election results were more predictable previously. Given that the parliamentary constituency size ranged from one to five MPs, the candidates of the same parties, especially those of the largest party, the Liberal Democratic Party, belonged to different factions. There were two or three large factions and three or four minor factions reflecting the number of those constituencies in which those elected ranked one to five. The rule of thumb in coalition formation in the parties' presidential election was that there be a 'minimum winning' coalition. Ideology or policies seemed not to matter much. After the rules of party presidential elections were amended, results became slightly less predictable as votes could swing to more fashionable agenda setters and be affected much more by performance on television programmes in which candidates are requested to appeal to audiences and to debate live with rivals.

Here Koizumi benefited markedly, being simple, clear and forceful in the statements he made.

The party's direction is decided by the party

(Rippogaku 2005; Inoguchi 2008). When its president is prime minister, which is almost always the case in the Liberal Democratic Party, the party's direction is handled by the three members of the executive, the Secretary General, the chair of the Policy Affairs Council and the chair of the General Affairs Council. The Secretary General plays a key part in shaping the party's direction in harmony with that of the Cabinet and in linking the party to the prime minister. The chair of the Policy Affairs Research Council articulates and aggregates the party's interests and ideology in each party committee in close consultation with the bureaucratic agency concerned and with business, association and regional representatives so that the party can work in parliament most effectively. The General Affairs Council is the final decision-making body of the party. It used to work on the basis of consensus: this meant that a single member's dissent from the prepared party line could veto the draft concerned and 'immobilism' would prevail. Most recently, however, Koizumi dramatically changed the rule. He used a majority vote in pushing through the postal privatisation bill in 2005. Consensus is anathema to the kind of leadership needed in an era of globalisation.

Factions do exist

The presidential election rule prescribes that, to be eligible, a candidate must obtain the endorsement of at least twenty members of the parliamentary party. Though factions have lost considerable power since 1993, they still matter. To summarise the party's 'factional' history, there were two major groups arising from the fact that the new party was set up in 1955 on the basis of the merger of two centre-right parties. Once developmental momentum and state developmentalism operated in tandem, the Tanaka faction dominated, on the basis of a platform including high economic growth, vigorous infrastructure construction, increasingly high social policy expenditure, alliance with the United States and moderate defence without use of force. Even after having faded in the 1990s, the Tanaka faction and its allies or puppets monopolised almost always the prime ministership (except briefly in 1993–1994) until 2000. When Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi died suddenly in 2000, Yoshiro Mori was appointed prime minister in the dark as a result of a consensus-based conspiracy, but Mori resigned in disgrace a year later. An overwhelming majority then appointed Koizumi president of the Liberal Democratic Party. The faction Mori and Koizumi belonged to is the Mori faction, itself a continuation of the Fukuda faction in which Tanaka was prominent in his heyday. The Fukuda faction's platform consisted of moderate economic growth, anti-inflation, pro-alliance with the United States, nationalism and patriotic education. Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe used to belong

to the Mori faction, but he left it half-way through his tenure of the premiership. In general, once one of the two major factional groups won, the members of broadly the same faction continued to be in power. After one faction lost power in 1993–1994, the two prime ministers who were successively appointed, Ryutaro Hashimoto and Keizo Obuchi, belonged to the Takeshita faction which was broadly speaking the same as the Tanaka faction. After Obuchi's sudden death, Mori, Koizumi, Abe and Fukuda (Jr) belonged to the Fukuda faction or the Mori faction. Moreover, although they do not formally constitute a faction, the House of Councillors' members of the Liberal Democratic Party keep their presence felt in contrast to the much more powerful House of Representatives, with their leader Mikio Aoki, who used to belong to the Tanaka faction and kept a low-profile but was adroit and agile in his manoeuvres: but Aoki ceased to be leader after the humiliating setback of the party at the House of Councillors election of 2005, however. Taro Aso, who was appointed prime minister in 2008, has been a member of the Kohno faction, but was able to obtain support from the Mori faction.

There has been a major change in the party over the question of handling organised internal opposition (Harukata Takenaka 2006; Otake 2006). During the process leading to the party's approval of the postal privatisation bill in 2005, the principle that consensus was required in the Council of General Affairs was broken. Koizumi wanted to see this last barrier in the governing party removed by adopting the majority vote principle before it was presented to the National Diet. Its major consequence was to prompt internal organised opposition to vote against the bill first in the House of Representatives and later in the House of Councillors. The former voted for the bill, the latter against it. Prime Minister Koizumi's immediate action was to call for a general election by claiming that, if the National Diet as a whole was against his preference on the postal privatisation bill, he must ask the citizens whether they have confidence in him or not. In the context of the nomination of the governing party's candidates for the general election, he expelled from the party all the House of Representatives members who had voted against the bill and in the general election most of these expelled members lost their seat. One half of those opposed to the privatisation bill in the House of Councillors faced the election verdict in July 2007. Thus, at least under Koizumi's presidency, the way of handling organised opposition in the party changed dramatically. Before 2005 internal opposition normally forced the party leadership to postpone handling the issue concerned, while waving the flag of the revered principle of consensus. If the leadership conceded, the organised opposition often demanded further concessions such as a reshuffle of the Cabinet which would reflect some new power configuration.

How to manage organised opposition depends much on the leader. If the leader relies heavily on a working coalition of relatively cohesive factions, he or she is most likely to resort to the consensus approach, not to confrontation. If the leader depends heavily on the support of public opinion both within and outside the party, he or she is most likely to resort to mobilising the civil society, not to a conciliating approach within the party. The former was adopted by such

leaders as Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi whereas the latter was adopted by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and his approach seems now to be more frequently resorted to. The key reasons seem to be:

- 1 the steadily greater impact of globalisation, which has weakened, among others, interest associations, business firm federations, trade unions and has fragmented the traditionally strong economic blocs under state developmentalism; and
- 2 the growing ubiquitous influence of the mass media in which a media-based presentation of the leader and the party and as positive projection of the party are prerequisites to any success in running the government.

Internal support for the party leader

Prime Minister Koizumi's power within the ruling organisations of the party depended critically on his decisively beating other candidates at the party presidential election in 2001. Since he was not a factional leader, he could not rely on the factional coalition. He had to rely on the party's local 'chapters' which constitute one important component of the electoral college in the party presidential election. Local 'chapters' are often regarded by the governing party as being more or less synonymous with national public opinion. In comparison to former Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi who was criticised for having a poor vocabulary and former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori who was criticised for his use of grammatically incorrect adjectives, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi was lucid, short and forceful in his use of words and sentences and giving speeches which had moving stories. Party officials are no less important in that they are amplifiers of public opinion as they mediate between party leaders and local 'chapters'.

Parliamentary members of the party are most concerned about whether the party leader is weak in projecting the party at elections. All major forces are reinforcing each other in the direction of the importance of grassroots support and media-based mobilisation. Factions have lost weight, interest associations have lost cohesion and the parliamentarians' hold of support at grassroots level has lost solidity. To have a leader at the top who fulfils all requirements is their wish. They want to have an appealing umbrella under which they can win the election not only in the proportional representation list but also in the single member first-past-the-post constituencies. In other words, they want a party leader whose coat-tail effects are strong. Coat-tail effects seem to be amplified in an era of weak block voting. Prime Minister Koizumi met all of these effects. He is slim, single and appealing to the media. In the media, he was called Jun-chan, as if his mother were talking to a son who is achieving something great in public. As a matter of fact, his mobilisation of supporters in Metropolitan Tokyo included tens of thousands of female electors in Shinjuku, Mitaka or elsewhere.

In Japan, the governing party and the government are not as close to each other as they are in Britain, since in the Westminster system they are united with the party leader being hegemonic; in Japan they are separate. The prime minister

is primarily the head of the executive and his power relies heavily on the central bureaucracy, each agency of which claims semi-autonomy and does not shy away from exercising its power even vis-à-vis the prime minister if it is deemed necessary to protect that semi-autonomy. As a matter of fact, when Koizumi was preparing the post office privatisation bill, key bureaucrats in charge of the issue were waving the privatisation flag to oppose the bill: they were immediately demoted to obscure positions by the prime minister once they were spotted: in civil service law, no civil servant is immune from being dismissed from office. The party's Secretary General is appointed by the party's president who is normally prime minister. The Secretary General is normally from the same faction as the prime minister and is expected to form the key link between party and prime minister. The party interacts heavily with interest and grassroots associations whereas the prime minister is kept as a kind of hostage of the central bureaucracy. Thus sometimes some differences in their positions on a controversial issue can be detected by those who have discerning eyes. In the 2005 postal privatisation bill, the prime minister made it crystal clear that all legislators who voted against the bill had to be expelled from the party and that those who were to be bona fide candidates of the governing party had voted for the post office privatisation bill. Secretary General Tsutomu Takebe merely amplified that principle of selection and executed it. The legitimisation of the candidacy was associated with the public and financial support given by the party to carry out the campaign.

The leader relies on local notables or politicians in their electoral campaign. Local notables are often members of city and prefecture assemblies, mayors or governors; these constitute key pillars of local electoral support. Koizumi's strategy was, however, to affect those local notables and politicians directly through his powerful message and not via his potential rivals in the party headquarters. When his rivals were menacing the leader, Koizumi's strategy was to smash them by expelling them from the party, thus forcing local 'chapters' to choose the leader, even if reluctantly. The leader sometimes relies on right-wing or left-wing militants, on extremists or marginals to the party for the purpose of achieving his or her policy goals. Koizumi's strategy for keeping the support of the extreme Right was to pay a visit to the Yasukuni shrine where the war dead are buried, including Class A war criminals. Each time his message is simple and does not assume nationalistic overtones, but that the purpose is to rescue the souls of the war dead. He wanted apparently to appease extreme right-wing nationalists by paying a visit to the Yasukuni shrine and at the same time to defy what he regards as the illegitimate interference of neighbouring countries in the internal affairs of Japan. During his tenure extreme right-wing nationalists never intimidated him. Towards the end of his tenure the Chinese government came to tone down, at least on the surface, its attitude of wanting apologetic statements from the Japanese government on issues of past history. This led apparently his successor, prime minister Shinzo Abe, to undertake a fence-mending visit to Beijing.

The party congress takes place in late January every year. The prime minister-cum-president of the party gives a major speech outlining the policy programme of

the party for the coming year especially with an eye on the elections taking place that year, whether local and national. The party congress is not regarded as an occasion for debates: debates take place in party committees. As in the National Diet, policy debates tend to be decentralised in the governing party as well.

The tenure of Prime Minister Koizumi coincided with the nadir in terms of economic recession while government deregulation was attempted with utmost determination. Koizumi focused on three policy issues, the liquidation of bad performance loans, the reduction of road construction by government money and post office privatisation. A sound financial service, the decrease of government expenditure and the encouragement of private initiatives and innovations were the highest items on his agenda. He tackled the issues one by one. Each time he met substantial resistance. In the first two cases, big business split into two, with the financial sector slowly moving in the direction of liquidating bad performance loans by means of mergers into mammoth banks. He could thus move forward without inviting too much internal dissent. In the case of the post office privatisation, however, internal putsches and rebellions took place. First, in the Ministry of Internal Communications and Affairs, which contains the former Ministry of Post Office Services, open defiance took place in the National Diet. Those post office-related high ranking officials contradicted the prime minister in their reply to legislators' inquiries from both governing and opposition parties. They were immediately demoted into obscure positions. Second, in the governing party, conspiracies were repeatedly built up and led to a substantial number of opponents in the National Diet (Heizo Takenaka 2006). The House of Representatives thus passed the bill with a surprisingly large number of opponents from members of the governing party. Koizumi decided to confront these head on, reciting the sentences of *Don Quixote de La Mancha*. Immediately after the House of Councillors rejected the bill and Koizumi called for a general election. It was almost like *veni, vedi, vici*. Having expelled those legislators of the governing party who had voted against the bill in the House of Representatives, the audacious and tough-minded Koizumi carried out a highly media-based vigorous campaign everywhere by rhetorically transforming the issue of post office privatisation into one of national confidence in Koizumi. The outcome represented one of the most resounding victories since 1980, when Prime Minister Ohira died in the midst of an election campaign and an overwhelming victory called *tomurai senkyo* took place: once a candidate dies before or during the election campaign, his supporters appeal to the sentiments of the people that he or she must be 'resurrected by victory'.

The term of the president of the governing party is three years. Koizumi left the position at the end of his second term in October 2006. He became president in 2001 after Yoshinori Mori resigned from office abruptly due to his continuous and massive unpopularity. Koizumi won the party presidential election by beating two other contenders, Ryutaro Hashimoto and Takeo Hiranuma. Hashimoto was a former prime minister and belonged to the largest faction which represented the centre-right of the party. Hiranuma was from a medium-sized faction representing a hard core right-wing voice in the party. Two-thirds of the

electoral college are constituted of parliamentarians and a third of representatives from local ‘chapters’. As a candidate, you must demonstrate your prime ministerial ambitions in order to keep with your potential followers. You need to do so to impress a victorious contender that you are someone to be reckoned with so that, if you are underestimated by the victorious contender, that contender is bound to face enormous trouble. In other words, give me a high-ranking position in the Cabinet or the party or I will not support you. Defeated, Hashimoto died in 2006. Defeated, Hiranuma was expelled from the party and was sick and inactive politically for about one year.

Strategies and programmes

The Liberal Democratic party has shifted to the Right. Koizumi has contributed to this ideological shift immensely. The long-term trend of party ideology changes is clear (Kabashima 2008). The relentless tide of globalisation threatens state developmentalism which assigned key roles to the ‘iron triangle’, composed of the central bureaucracy, the governing party and big business. The ascent of neo-classical liberalism in guiding economic management has been visible and tangible during the Koizumi administration. He first prompted city banks to sort out their affairs. Then he reduced road construction expenditure radically. Lastly, he pushed the post office privatisation bill through the National Diet. Koizumi is a believer in small government. He abhors the state developmentalists led by the late Kakuei Tanaka and his friends. He welcomes the liberalising influence of the United States government and Congress as long as their suggestions are made *sotto voce*. His ideology fits the era of globalisation. The neo-classical liberalism dubbed as the ‘Washington consensus’ triggered the counter strike of nationalism, patriotism and sometimes protectionism, Japanese style. Koizumi’s tenure moved along with the ‘9/11 terrorism’ issue. He adroitly and astutely leaned to the side of a tighter alliance with the United States. Then using this leverage he signed the Pyongyang communiqué with Kim Jong Il of North Korea and the Azadegan oil exploitation agreement with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran. Similarly he refused to kowtow apologetically and deferentially to China and to South Korea by saying that he prayed solely for the souls of the war dead and by visiting the Yasukuni shrine where the war dead including Class A war criminals were buried since 1978.

Koizumi’s electoral strategy fits the era of globalisation. In contrast to the era of state developmentalism, during which the leader relied heavily on his party ‘troops’ and on allied interest associations and block votes, the era of globalisation needed a simple, lucid and exciting message conveyed by a highly mediatised leader and amplified by skilful and tough-minded hard debates televised live. Koizumi exemplified this electoral strategy. Being no faction leader himself, he firmly believed, as did Charles de Gaulle, that in a battle, he had to rely solely on himself, his determination, audacity and vigour. Koizumi was in marked contrast to his immediate predecessors. Obuchi was addicted to phone

calls made to those to whom he wanted to convey some praise or encouragement. Obuchi also wanted to see all television programmes where he was mentioned. He saw all the evening programmes as late as midnight. Yet his public speech was low-key. Mori was a witty and cunning speech maker. He remembered persons and events well and made many jokes in his speeches as if good old folks in rice paddies were listening to him with their hands temporarily having a rest. He was very talkative and always excited everyone within the range of five metres surrounding him. He alienated journalists who, in a sense, in turn voted him out. Neither prime minister was ideal in an era of globalisation.

Koizumi is the embodiment of one of the party's two major historical traditions. One of these focuses on nationalism and on local notables; it is primarily to be found among professional politicians who formed the core of the Democratic Party. The other tradition focuses on the US alliance and on big business: it is often found among former bureaucrats who were the core of the Liberal Party. The two elements merged in 1955 to counter the newly united Socialist Party. Koizumi belongs to the first tradition. His grandfather and his father were professional grassroots politicians and one of his sons, after learning his skills at the Center for Strategic and International Studies at Washington DC, is about to succeed him. His grandfather was a legislator at Yokosuka, a naval port both for the United States Navy and the Japanese naval Self-Defence Forces. His father was an adopted son from Kagoshima where the largest kamikaze air base was built during the Second World War; he was himself Defence Minister. Koizumi was known for having uncharacteristically mourned and wept at Chiran, Kagoshima, where thousands of young suicide airmen left the air base in the 1945 operation called 'Returning to Heaven'.

Koizumi opened a new era of Japanese politics, which had been hitherto based on consensus decision making, clientelism, give and take, state paternalism and developmentalism. His is an era of individualistic politics. He is himself an individualist politician, not interested in raising political money, in pork barrel brought to his constituency, in forming groups and leading factions. He is an eccentric man, neither interested in policy briefs of bureaucrats, nor in articulating his thought at length. He is said to be an instinctive politician. His most well-known policy actions have been marked by a strong element of surprise. When the higher court issued a verdict according to which the state is guilty of giving permission to a pharmaceutical company to manufacture and sell a certain medicine, the Welfare and Health Minister Koizumi accepted the verdict and ordered his Ministry to take responsibility, against all the high-ranking bureaucrats of the Ministry. When he was opposed by a large number of legislators of the governing party, he called for a general election and expelled these legislators from the party. When the United States waged war on terror and named Iran, Iraq and North Korea as the 'axis of evil', he concluded agreements with North Korea and with Iran without eliciting President Bush's disapproval. When the Chinese Ambassador Wu Dawei asked Koizumi not to pay a visit to the Yasukuni shrine on 15 August, the date of the Japanese surrender to allied powers,

Koizumi did so on 13 August 2001, during his first year in office, saying that he did not break his promise.

The governing party elaborates and repeats its overall manifesto primarily at the party congress held normally in January every year. The party congress is managed by the Secretary General and the party manifesto is therefore in the hands of Secretary General, but it is also produced in harmony with the party leader. In the party organisation, the party leader may give full power to the Secretary General, although the Secretary General is often not the leader's closest ally: thus Secretary General Yasuo Fukuda distanced himself from Koizumi in part because of Fukuda's prime ministerial ambition; on the other hand, the next Secretary General, Tsutomu Takebe, called himself a 'great yesman' and was loyal to Koizumi throughout his tenure (Asakawa 2006: 162). When conflicts arise over the party's manifesto, the manifesto of the previous year is normally re-adopted while conflicts arise on other issues. The 'legislative' manifesto is drafted by the chair of the National Diet Affairs Committee appointed by the governing party. Eighty-five per cent of the proposed bills come from various bureaucratic agencies; these proposed bills are examined and further elaborated by the Cabinet Legislative Bureau. The other 15 per cent of the proposed bills come from legislators and are examined and further elaborated by the Legislative Bureaus of both Houses. The first of these two categories of proposed bills are called 'Cabinet sponsored' while the others are called 'legislator sponsored'. Government bills are much more likely to be adopted than private members' bills. Priority is given to proposed bills by the prime minister and the Cabinet Secretary in consultation with the chairs of the National Diet Affairs Committee dealing with committee debates and in the Parliamentary Management Committee dealing with plenary debates. Koizumi had a clear view of the priorities to be given to bills and he acted in a most concentrated and concerted manner.

In a single-party Cabinet, the government programme is almost the same as the legislative manifesto, but there is an important proviso, which relates to the budget. This is drafted primarily by the Treasury in strong consultation with all the central bureaucratic agencies: bureaucratic dominance is thus entrenched in the elaboration of the budget. On the other hand, the government programme itself is handled by governing party committees in the most detailed manner; this is so especially in the governing party taxation committee but the budget proposals are further examined and redrafted by the government tax committee. The relative power of the party tax committee and of the government tax committee has moved from the latter to the former. Parliamentary members and interest associations have grown in strength vis-à-vis the central bureaucratic agency. In a coalition government, on the other hand, a coordination committee of the coalition members handles matters often through ad hoc summit meetings of Secretary Generals or party leaders. Koizumi paid the utmost attention to ensure that the coalition was not unnecessarily burdened by various types of conflicts.

The external power of the party leader

Koizumi's power was based on a variety of institutional factors (Shinoda 2004; Harukata Takanaka 2006). He was sometimes referred to as a 'presidential' prime minister on the grounds that he wielded enormous power. Japan practices parliamentary democracy, however. Its Cabinet is chosen by parliament. It is becoming closer to the Westminster system, but with some substantial differences. First, the central bureaucracy is semi-autonomous and decentralised. It is not necessarily meek and loyal to the incumbent government. Second, the Cabinet is pulled strongly towards the central bureaucracy whereas the governing party is partially but often strongly tied with interest associations and economic and ideological groups. The prime minister does not assume that Cabinet and governing party are one and the same. Yet the predominant party system gives great strength to the party leader. Meanwhile, the semi-autonomy of the bureaucracy has been markedly reduced, and the electoral system changed twice, in 1982 and 1994. For the House of Representatives, it used to be based on the single non-transferable vote in constituencies of one to five members. A mixed system was then introduced, based:

- 1 on proportional representation in regional and/or nation-wide lists for both Houses; and
- 2 on the first-past-the-post system in single-member constituencies for both Houses.

This had a great impact on the support for the party leader whose power has become markedly greater in view of the reduced 'semi-autonomy' of the bureaucracy and of the reduced representation of the state-protected sectorial interests while globalisation was steadily increasing.

Koizumi belongs to the right wing of the governing party. He stresses market liberalisation, small government, alliance, patriotism. The ideological shift has been prompted by a number of factors. First, the governing party faces the dwindling support from previously strong rural districts; second, business seeks profits and markets abroad; third, the decade's long recession coupled with a high level of unemployment and demographic decline has reduced the level of support for the governing party. Koizumi focused on the tightening of the alliance with the United States, steadily envisaging to move to a phase of making joint US-Japan operations, while pushing for the steady reduction of huge government deficits, enhancing inventions and innovations in science and technology, and consolidating gender equality as well as a fostering a move towards better demographic prospects. Public opinion pressures are strong. All the statements the prime minister makes, all his appearances, all his meetings have been reported on television, newspapers, magazines and on the Internet. Koizumi's closeness with the mass media has been enormously rewarded: he met twice a day with journalists, he expanded the range of journalists he saw to newspapers and magazines tailored to women and sports fans.

His sentences have tended to be short, lucid and unforgettable, his head of hair was taken care of frequently, his suits were fashionable. He is slender, smiling and single.

Parliamentary sessions, plenary and in committee, are televised live (in principle). Budget committee sessions, in particular, are watched carefully. The party leader appears most frequently. Relevant Cabinet members and all the parties' representatives must be present at such sessions. Television cameras normally see to it that all the legislators appear on television so that their local supporters can see their representatives participating in such sessions. Koizumi walks on a tightrope between being witty and hard. Thus when the opposition leader asked him to answer the question whether Samawa in southwestern Iraq (where the 600-strong troops of the Self-Defence Forces were stationed between 2003 and 2006) was a combat area or not, Koizumi's answer was: "Constitutionally, the Self-Defence Forces troops should not be sent to combat areas; since I as Prime Minister cannot but comply the Constitution, Samawa in Iraq to which the Self-Defence Forces troops were sent cannot be a combat area"!

Koizumi does not listen to others: he listens to himself. Yet his number one secretary, Isao Iijima, was highly trusted by him (Iijima 2006). He was in charge of all the logistics of the prime minister: this means that he was involved in every matter in which the prime minister played a part. Being highly experienced in politics, he is most knowledgeable about political actors and their weaknesses, about women (or men), alcohol, corruption, mishaps. Koizumi travelled abroad frequently, ten times a year on average during his tenure of office, while he did so less frequently at home unless major elections were taking place. His private life has been printed in all types of magazines, newspapers and on the Internet. He does not respond to letters, telephone calls or e-mails. He does not receive gifts: when they are sent, he sends them back. He criticised no one by name. His instructions were short and general. Koizumi was not as popular beforehand (Yoshida 2006), but as his speech performances became highly approved, he became very popular, indeed in all segments of the population but especially among women.

Koizumi was involved not only in House of Representatives' general elections but also in House of Councillors' and local elections. This is so despite the fact that the party Secretary General is primarily responsible for elections in three main ways. First, he or she is primarily responsible for determining who are the party candidates in each constituency and in the proportional representation lists. This used to be done primarily locally, but the centralisation of power in the party markedly increased the role of the Secretary General in this respect. Second, the party Secretary General is primarily responsible for allocating campaign money to each candidate and for sending groups of speakers and of campaigners to candidates. He or she appoints persons to report on how many attended candidates' speeches and he or she decides on the reinforcement or reduction of the groups to be sent. Third, the party Secretary General assesses local and national opinion polls and gives instructions as to which campaign slogans and sentences should be used alongside the more general election mani-

festos: in this respect Koizumi was most forceful in projecting a positive image of the governing party.

On another plane, the privatisation of the post office was a response to globalisation; but it meant that a number of employees were to be unemployed and it sounded therefore negative. Yet Koizumi portrayed it as a positive way of reducing government expenditure and thus relieving the tax burden. He also portrayed it as a positive way of generating more GNP by competitively elevating skills and innovative technologies. Koizumi was the principal speaker during electoral meetings. His strategy was to appear in a large square of a town to give a speech surrounded by tens of thousands of supporters. His speech was combative, fierce and determined, lasting normally only about ten minutes. Koizumi might remind one of Taisuke Itagaki, a statesman who fought the authoritarian government in the late nineteenth century, who was known for his “give me freedom or death”, or of Abraham Lincoln whose famous Gettysburg Address lasted only two minutes.

The personalisation of politics is increasingly visible and tangible in Japan. Junichiro Koizumi is the best example of this emerging phenomenon in the country's politics. A tough individualist, Koizumi reached the leader's position by means of his clever sense of public sentiments, his adroit use of the mass media and his agile selection of well-calculated actions. Although authors of books on Koizumi variously characterise him as a populist, a nihilist or an Epicurean, Koizumi is best viewed as an individualist as he acts alone in the belief that his determination and well-calculated prose will move the hearts of people. Without resorting to consensus-ridden old style, without following the rigid and time-wasting seniority system, without entangling himself indefinitely in clientelist networks and by occasionally strategically overriding the autonomy of central bureaucracy, Koizumi brought the nation to an era of personalised politics in tandem with the two universal forces that characterise the much-vaunted organic unity and solidarity of the national economy, culture and regime, that is to say the relentless tide of globalisation and the ubiquitous beam of the mass media. Yet it must also be said in the end that Koizumi is merely a harbinger of something which is likely to occur on an even more spectacular scale.

Notes

* I am most grateful to Jean Blondel and Jean-Louis Thiébaud for their most helpful comments.

1 See Banno (2006). The author portrays the two step revolution of the Meiji Restoration of 1868 as the first step of revolution from below in a couple of southwestern domains which were subsequently nationalised by a series of military battles and the second step of abolishment of class discrimination and of domain autonomy.

2 Block votes decreased visibly and steadily as seen from the number of votes obtained by interest associations in the House of Councillors' Propositional Representation Scheme. See Table 12.1.

Table 12.1 Sectoral interest associations' candidates pushed back by associations in the House of Councillors' Proportional Representation Scheme

	2001	2004	<i>Bureaucratic origins of candidates</i>
Construction	278,521	253,738	X
War veterans	295,613	101,651	–
Medical doctors	227,042	250,426	–
War veterans' families	264,888	171,945	–
Land improvement	207,867	167,350	X
Pharmaceutical	156,380	96,463	X
Dentists	104,581	–	–
Dental engineers	–	82,146	–
Nurses	174,517	152,685	–
Transport	94,322	196,499	X
Local governments	156,656	105,737	X
Facilities for the aged	–	199,510	–
Agriculture and fisheries:	166,070	118,540	–
Food	–	51,644	X
Fishermen	–	–	–

3 For Koizumi's biography and personality, see Iijima (2006); Asakawa (2006); Kantei shudou (2005).

4 Kabashima *et al.*, (2008). See also Yoshida (2006); Kabashima and Steel, (2007).

13 Thailand

The personalisation of the party leader – Thaksin, Party and Thailand

The majority of the political parties in Thailand have come into existence not because of money politics, which requires long-term development, nor because they form part of a prevailing myth of the ‘real’ mass bureaucratic notion. In fact, Thai political parties can be categorised as ‘electoral professional parties’ (Panbianco 1988: 264). A political party is run by a leader who aligns and identifies himself directly with voters and reaches out to them by using various forms of media and marketing tools (McCargo 1997: 130–1). This argument reflects the nature of politics in general and the formation of political parties across the globe; the political party as a ‘mass membership organisation’ has come to an end and westerners are increasingly ‘bowling alone’ (Putnam 2001). Examples of ‘mass membership parties’ are the socialist parties in Western Europe that evolved from a given historical context and have now been either disbanded or evolved into something quite different.

In comparison with what the world is currently faced with, the situation in Thailand is vastly different from what is happening in the West with its developed democracies where political parties are more important than political figures. In Thailand political parties are not significant institutions. Their ideologies never play a major role in attracting the public’s votes. This is mainly because Thais are more inclined to view themselves in a collective manner than Westerners. They congregate together not only for recreation but also for other purposes. Compared with the West, Thai political parties become distinctive: they are much more factionalised and more based on personal networks (McCargo and Ukrist 2005: 70–120).

Thaksin Shinawatra and his *Thai Rak Thai* Party had been geared towards becoming an electoral professional party. The party was run by networks of local candidates who worked closely with a group of professional political organisations in the fields of media, marketing and advertising. To them, Thaksin was more than the leader: he was their sole sponsor – the ‘lord’ of all party members as he would be the one with the final word on matters related to policy and strategy.

In reality, his party has never had an organisation. This is the main reason why his party changed the Thaksin brand from *Thai Rak Thai*, People Power Party and now *Peua Thai* Party (For the Land) because Thaksin remains more

important than the organisation. Any Thaksin appearances on radio or television in the news showed there is no party organisation: Thaksin is the party.

Above everything else, Thaksin's ideas, beliefs and aspirations were reflected in the *Thai Rak Thai* Party's and the Thai government's policies. In his early years in office, Thaksin strongly believed in the merits of modern business administration. He likened the running of a country to a company, while he himself as the prime minister of the country would act as the CEO of 'Thailand Incorporated' and managed the country in the way he saw fit.

Thaksin is the first politician in Thailand to have such a personalised leadership. Because of his wealth and his business career, his MBA vision always dominated his own political point of view. Since his first entering Thai politics as foreign minister, the Thaksin type of business-style politics has expanded to other Southeast Asian countries. His political success story was achieved through new telecommunication investments in Cambodia and Laos; apart from telecommunications, he also speculated on land investment in these two countries. His unique billionaire performance was promoted by public relations companies up to his political fightback after the 2006 coup. The following will clearly illustrate how Thaksin achieved this aim and what his political motives could be.

The *Thai Rak Thai* Party: its founder and development

In a speech he made in Manila in the Philippines in 2003, Thaksin Shinawatra revealed something about his family background: "The most important thing I learned from the simple, frugal family I grew up in is the virtue of hard work" (Thaksin 2003b). Actually, by the time Thaksin was born, the Shinawatra family was already one of the most prominent families in Chiang Mai, the second largest city in Thailand. The Shinawatra family had also established its business and political influence.

Thaksin is the fourth generation of an overseas Chinese merchant family founded by Ku Sun Saeng, who moved from Chanthaburi in eastern Thailand to Chiang Mai in northern Thailand in 1908. Ku Sun Saeng became a tax collector in the Mae Rim, San Sai and Doi Saket districts of Chiang Mai province (Plai-Or 1987: 53), and began a sideline business as a silk trader in Chiang Mai on the Chiang Mai-Burma trade route. His successors in the second and the third generation extended the business by building a silk factory in Chiang Mai in 1932 (Plai-Or 1987: 53–4) and by diversifying their business activities. They became representatives of commercial banks (the Siam City Bank), school owners, bus operators, land traders, as well as department store and cinema owners in Chiang Mai (Plai-Or 1987: 104–5). Thaksin's father, Boonlert, entered local politics in Chiang Mai, while his uncle, Suraphan, entered the national political arena. Suraphan was for a long time the Chiang Mai member of parliament for the Chat Thai Party as well as for a time Deputy Minister of Communications (Sorakol 1996: 20–1).

Thaksin's career differs in many respects from that of his forebears, who were firmly rooted in northern Thai society and politics. Thaksin was born in 1949

and graduated from the Royal Thai Police Academy as top student in 1973. He then received a Thai government scholarship to study criminal justice at Eastern Kentucky University, whence he graduated in 1976 *cum laude*. In 1979 he obtained a PhD in criminal justice at Sam Houston State University, Texas (Sorakol 1996: 32–3).

On his return to Thailand he started his first computer trading company in 1980 and married Potjaman Damapong, daughter of the powerful Deputy Police Chief General Samoer Damapong. Thaksin was the head of the Police Department's Research and Planning Division in 1979, when it was decided to install computers throughout the entire Police Department (Sorakol 1996: 30). By making use of General Samoer's connections, Thaksin became the computer supplier for the whole Police Department as well as other administrative officers at the beginning of the 1980s. One could therefore say that Thaksin came from a financially and politically affluent family. He had chosen a bride whose family retained much influence in the Thai bureaucratic system. Once he graduated from overseas, he was immediately appointed secretary to the prime minister office minister Preeda Patthanathabut (Preeda 2003). Thaksin was, in effect, groomed and nurtured by wealth, power and prestige.

As other members of the Shinawatra family in the past, Thaksin moved to Bangkok for his higher education and never returned to Chiang Mai. As other scholarship students, Thaksin went abroad to further his studies and was eager to put his knowledge into practice. In his case, he was deeply interested in computer technology, but unlike others, he made a billion dollars out of it in a few years. His business acumen was extraordinary as he foresaw the high demand for the new technology and used his political connections ultimately to monopolise the market.

In his early years in politics, Thaksin was not very successful and scarcely was in the public eye. He entered politics in 1994. In late 1994, his party joined the Chuan Leekpai government coalition and he was briefly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs (McCargo and Ukrist 2005: 8–9). Thaksin protected his telecommunication business by installing his friend Vichit Suraphongchai, previously manager director of the Bangkok Bank, as Minister of Transport (Ukrist 1998: 70). In 1995, during Banhan Silpa-archa's premiership, Thaksin was made Deputy Prime Minister. He vowed to solve Bangkok's notorious traffic problems within six months, a task which was impossible and in which he failed miserably. Thaksin later became a member of the *Palang Dharma* Party under the leadership of Major General Chamlong Srimuang: this smeared the party's image, as it was allegedly based on clean, disciplined and transparent politics. Thaksin was then viewed by the public as a corrupt businessman who abused his political connections and benefited from state projects.

Thaksin's position in the *Palang Dharma* Party proved divisive. It diminished the popular support which that body had once enjoyed. In 1996, a substantial number of *Palang Dharma* members left the party and the people of Bangkok withdrew their support to former *Palang Dharma* leader Chamlong Srimuang while he was campaigning for his third consecutive term as Bangkok's governor.

The party won only one seat in parliament at the following general election (Pasuk and Baker 2004: 63). Duncan McCargo concluded (1997: 299) that “in his 12-month membership of the government, Thaksin undid the eleven years of hard work of Chamlong Srimuang and destroyed his reputation”.

On 14 July 1998 Thaksin launched his new political party, the *Thai Rak Thai*. There were twenty-three founding members, five of whom were former *Palang Dharma* members, two real estate giants and the rest academics, bureaucrats and retired bureaucrats. In its initial stage, Thaksin downplayed his ambitions of the *Thai Rak Thai* Party. He anticipated only minor changes in Thailand’s political environment after the following election and *Thai Rak Thai*’s only goal was to overcome the economic crisis. He said that:

even if the Thai Rak Thai Party lost, I would consider it a success if my party could inspire the current government or if the government adopts policies proposed by Thai Rak Thai party. This is definitely more important than mere political victory.

(*The Nation* 25 July 1998)

At that time launching economic slogans was his main mode of campaigning. He did not position himself against the International Monetary Fund’s (IMF) strategies to solve the economic crises in Thailand. Two weeks after the party was inaugurated, Thaksin even commented: “The Government led by the Democrats have taken the right path in tackling Thailand’s economic problems” (*Bangkok Post* 1998b).

The major turning points in Thai politics that benefited Thaksin and his party were the 1997 economic crisis and the 1997 Constitution. The economic crisis led to the restructuring of big businesses as a result of the massive debts which had been incurred, a restructuring which had a major impact on commercial banks, the industrial sector and large retail companies. Thai large business groups either went bankrupt or were taken over by foreign investors (Hewison 2001: 92). Fighting for their own survival, these groups, which were close to bankruptcy, aligned themselves politically and economically with Thaksin and his party, a move that would in turn protect their economic position.

The other key issue was the 1997 Constitution. It highly facilitated the administrative functions of government, as it gave unprecedented liberty to the Cabinet and more importantly to the prime minister. In the 1990s the Cabinet was composed of small political parties, it was frequently reshuffled and never completed its full four-year term. It was also often accused by the media of bribery and corruption. The 1997 Constitution attempted to rid the Cabinet of its administrative instability in several ways. It introduced a two-party system, gave extra power to the prime minister: a no-confidence motion could only take place if called by at least two-thirds of the total number of MPs. More indirectly, the administration was clearly separated from the legislature: an MP who became a member of the government had to give up his seat in the parliament; a minister who lost his post after a reshuffle would no longer return to parliament. Ministers were therefore

reluctant to disagree with the prime minister, fearing that they would be dismissed. Moreover, the prime minister could dissolve parliament and call for an election within forty-five days, but the candidates had to have been members of a political party for at least ninety days. This made it difficult for MPs to negotiate with the prime minister for fear of being sacked.

The other change that benefited the *Thai Rak Thai* Party was Thaksin Shinawatra himself. Before the general election, Thaksin impressed the nation with his ability to run a one-man show. He was the only attraction of the *Thai Rak Thai* Party, and his autobiography was then advertised along with the party's campaign and platform. Thaksin spoke about his success as a businessman claiming that he represented a new kind of bold, decisive and determined leadership. After the January 2001 general election, he gained further popular support. This partly reflected the public feeling that the new prime minister would steer the country out of its economic mess, but it was also partly due to Thaksin's open and amiable personality, which was an unprecedented characteristic among Thai political leaders. He started a Saturday radio programme called "Prime Minister Thaksin Talks to the People" speaking out about his activities and other issues of interest to the public. Soon afterwards, Thaksin began going further: he started to vow that he would 'end poverty'. In Thailand, a poll by ABAC revealed Thaksin's popularity had risen from 30 per cent among all party leaders before the election in January 2001 to 70 per cent in May 2001 (*The Nation* 2002).

The 2001 general election: the party and politics in the hands of Thaksin

The 2001 general election gave political power to Thaksin. His *Thai Rak Thai* Party gained 248 constituency seats and forty-eight party-list seats, while its rival Democrats won only 128 constituency seats and thirty-one party-list seats, according to the results announced by the Election Commission on 2 February 2001. The 1997 Constitution and Thaksin's prominent role as *Thai Rak Thai* party leader gave new life to Thai politics, which developed into a two-party system. Political parties, such as the Solidarity Party, the *Muanchon* Party, *Rat-sadon*, and the Social Action Party, won only two seats and a single seat in the parliament respectively. The three biggest political parties of the decade, the *Chat Thai* Party, the New Aspiration Party and the *Chat Phatthana* Party, became medium-scale parties winning forty-one, thirty-six and twenty-nine seats respectively. These three parties were no more than groups of influential local MPs: for instance, the *Chat Thai* Party comprised the Silpa-archa family from Suphanburi, the Chidchob family from Buriram and the Khunpleum (Kamnan Poh) family from Chonburi; the New Aspiration Party was led by General Chavalit Yongchaiyudh from Nakhon Phanom and Wan Muhamed Noor from the three bordering provinces in the South of Thailand; the *Chat Phattana* Party had its base in Nakhon Rachasima where the founder of the party, General Chatichai Choonhavan, still enjoyed popularity.

Following his landslide victory, Thaksin was able to form a single-party government but chose to include the *Seri Dharma* Party (fourteen seats) in his new government in February 2001. Thaksin was still aiming to include other political parties under his wings. In early 2002, the New Aspiration Party was disbanded and merged with the *Thai Rak Thai* Party. General Chavalit admitted that he could not sponsor his New Aspiration party and remain party leader simply because, after Thaksin's return, the price of the 'political market' had risen tremendously. After the merger, the *Thai Rak Thai* Party secured control of government with 296 seats in parliament.

With an absolute majority in parliament, Thaksin became even more popular with the public. He claimed that he would govern Thailand for two consecutive terms, over a period of eight years. Then, he kept changing the number to twelve, sixteen and even twenty years. At the party conference, he spoke confidently of his party maintaining such popular support that

as long as he lived, he would even beg the populace to choose other political parties to form the government because the people had been waiting for so long for government to do their job and that the media would have other more exciting political news to write about.

(Thaksin 2003a)

Nevertheless, the landslide victory and merger did not contribute alone to the immense political stability of Thaksin's government. It was Thaksin himself who steered the wheels of Thailand towards a direction he had single-handedly defined. Why was he capable of doing so? The answer was that he had both money and loyal followers.

Wealth and the Thaksin loyalists

On 14 July 1998, the day Thaksin registered his *Thai Rak Thai* Party, he also pledged his entire devotion for the country. His *Thai Rak Thai* Party was founded under the new Constitution and would work for the sake of all Thais (*Bangkok Post* 1998b). Yet any political party was funded with money: in this case it was funded by Thaksin himself and his allies. At the party's meeting in 2000, Thaksin had declared:

I have asked my wife and my children for their permission to use their money to sponsor my political career. Now I am using their money.... Please do not be afraid of my affluence. Look only at my hard work and my conduct.

(Thaksin 2000)

After his victory in 2001, Thaksin again spoke at the party's meeting that he and his friends sponsored the party. He declared:

I have obtained enough already from this country. For fifty years from now, in case I could live to my one-hundredth year, I dedicate myself, my brains and all my strength and time for the nation. Therefore, I am willing to use the personal funds I have accumulated to make this a political party that persons could have some hope in. Before the political reform process was complete, I was ready, having several friends who made use of their personal wealth without ever troubling their families to come and help make this party a clean party that doesn't resort to corruption . . .

(Thaksin 2001)

But once he governed Thailand. Thaksin's persona overwhelmed his Cabinet that decidedly comprised his friends and followers. From the time he had formed his first Cabinet, Thaksin was surrounded only by his close friends whom he appointed to key ministerial roles. This included Purachai Piemsombun, whom Thaksin met and became a close friend of during his doctoral years abroad, Somkid Jatusripitak, who was Thaksin's private secretary when he acted as Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1994, Khunying Sudarat Keyurapan, a long-time colleague, and General Thammarak Isarangkura na Ayudhaya who had strong popular support in the North-East. Two other close associates were given appointments: Suwan Valaisathian, who worked as a tax consultant for the Shinawatra family and Pongthep Thepkanchana, who was a legal adviser for the Shinawatra's company Shin Corporation. These people obtained key ministerial posts, such as the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Finance and Justice. These posts were not only crucial to his economic policies but also in terms of their involvement in Thaksin's asset concealment case in the Constitutional Court.

Other Cabinet ministers were leading businessmen, including Adisai Bodaramik, who owned the Jasmine Company, a telecommunication business, Pitak Intarawitayanunt an envoy from the CP Group, Sombat Uthaisang, formerly an administrator at the Telephone Organisation of Thailand with also close ties with the CP Group (Ukrist 1998: 70–1). They were all businessmen from telecommunication companies and they allied themselves with the government hoping that the political ties would in some way benefit them (see McCargo and Ukrist 2005: Chapter 2).

Thaksin was quick to get rid of the ministers whose ideas clashed with his. It is noteworthy that Purachai was the only minister who dared to criticise Thaksin and he lost his job during the 3 October 2002 reshuffle. Somkid showed his efficiency as Minister of Finance and was praised by the private sector. This coincided with Thaksin's decline in popularity. The private sector wished that Somkid should replace Thaksin. Thaksin decided to sideline his loyal follower by making him Deputy Prime Minister, a post that was void of administrative power, on 8 February 2003. While people were demonstrating on the streets of Bangkok asking Thaksin to resign (March 2004–September 2006) (see Ukrist 2008: 130–6; Pye and Schaffar 2008: 38–61), Somkid was dismissed from the Ministry of Finance and the post was taken by Dr. Thanong Bidaya, Thaksin's friend from the early days who had helped him set up his business empire

(1980)¹ and who was also recommended by Thaksin to act as Minister of Finance during General Chavalit's premiership. Dr Thanong remained Minister of Finance until the coup that deposed Thaksin on 19 September 2006.

Thaksin as the party and the country

Let us now turn to Thaksin's thought process, especially his unprecedented administrative approaches that were used to govern both his party and Thailand and let us also examine Thaksin's powerful management skills that were successfully employed during his term in office. Doing this, we shall focus mainly on how and why Thaksin came to embody the party and, in some respects, the country itself. This development can be divided into three periods:

- 1 the first campaigning period (1998–2001);
- 2 Thaksin's first term as prime minister (2001–2003); and
- 3 his decline in popularity (2004–2006).

This represents specific phases in Thaksin's career which can be used to personalise both Thaksin and his importance to the party and Thailand. Thaksin himself benefited greatly from his high level of 'personalisation' as this helped him survive the political conflicts he was drawn into: Thaksin employed several methods to escape these conflicts.

The period of campaigning: Thaksin was the Thai Rak Thai Party

The *Thai Rak Thai* Party was Thaksin's major selling point. The campaigning was engineered around the glorification of its leader's ability and character. Two years before the general election in January 2001, the *Thai Rak Thai* Party put up advertisements nationwide showing a picture of Thaksin and the main party plank: "Think New, Act New, for Every Thai". During the campaigning period, there were *Thai Rak Thai* posters depicting Thaksin standing side by side with local candidates. Also, his autobiography was published in *Matichon Weekly* from August 1998 to February 1999. After that, the work was republished as a biography entitled *Thaksin Shinawatra: Eyes on the Stars, Feet on the Ground*.² The book narrated Thaksin's life: his humble beginnings, his business achievements through hard work (Thaksin 1999). The content of this book was adapted to suit *Thai Rak Thai* campaigns and some portions were even cited in *Thai Rak Thai* posters: "Please allow me to employ my knowledge and life-time experience to solve our people's problems."

The documents and posters that were distributed to the public before the general election were mostly adapted from the life experience of *Thai Rak Thai* leader Thaksin Shinawatra. His family life and business achievements became central tenets of the party, and it was clear that after the landslide victory in January 2001, Thaksin used nothing but his own CEO ideas to run Thailand.

The first term in office: Thaksin as CEO Prime Minister

Prior to his assumption of the premiership, Thaksin differentiated himself from his predecessor Chuan Leekpai in terms of his family background, ideas and administration style. During the economic crises, Chuan had tried to handle the situation by strictly adhering to the IMF's plans, focusing mainly on the financial institutions. Thaksin took a different approach from Chuan, introducing policies that would prioritise the needs of medium-and small-sized business owners. In June 1999, Thaksin made it clear that he did not follow the Democrat Party's solutions that concentrated on the financial sector alone. He declared, "I will not solve the problems only from a banker's point of view". (*Far Eastern Economic Review* 1999).

In September, Thaksin launched a personal criticism of Chuan by comparing him to a civil servant who could "only wait for his monthly salary and cannot afford even to purchase his own house". This put Thaksin in a stark contrast to Chuan. Thaksin was a businessman who earned himself a fortune. Later, he commented:

if I was allowed the chance to form a government, I would open up opportunities to everyone. They can learn and become entrepreneurs. I will reduce the risks for people who work for wages so that they can quit their low-paid jobs and start their own businesses.

(*Matichon Weekly* 1999)

The country as a company

Thaksin had long wanted to apply his business administration skills to governing the country and transforming Thailand into a company he dreamed of. His plan was to eventually become Thailand's CEO Prime Minister.

Thaksin long believed that Thailand was like a company and that he could run the country as he did his company. His speech at Nakhon Rachasima in 1997 confirmed that:

A company is like a country and a country is like a company. They are one and the same. They require the same administrative methods, which are economic management. From now on, economics is the key. It can be nothing else.

(Chumphon 2002: 105)

Following his 'country as a company' idea, Thaksin believed that all natural resources should be included as part of the productive system. They would be inputs and the CEO would be able to profit from such investment. He was convinced that the true function of the parliament was to oversee the administration of the country which was the ultimate organisation. Thaksin said:

Thailand is like a big company. It has to make profits and encourage its myriad of employees to produce goods and compete with other countries. If we do not push ourselves to become accepted and to be able to negotiate with other countries and make money, how are we supposed to pay our employees? In other words, how are we going to take care of our citizens? The role of the MPs is to administer the biggest organisation of the country, the Thailand company. You can only go so far with politics. Good administration is, in fact, something that helps us move forward.

(Thaksin 1999: 228–9)

Once in power, Thaksin presented himself as ‘a CEO Prime Minister’. He felt assured that business administration methods were superior to the more conservative civil service bureaucratic system. He constantly lectured his Cabinet members on the latest theories in business administration and management tactics and suggested that diplomats and governors become CEO diplomats and CEO governors. In short, Thaksin wanted them to reprioritise their roles by putting economic interests ahead of everything. In fact, Thaksin’s ‘country as a company’ and ‘CEO Prime Minister’ concepts owed much to his business background and his former experience in business management and administration. He once experimented with the implementation of his theories during his brief stint as Minister of Foreign Affairs (1995). At the time he introduced a “New Vision” to the administration of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attempting to place “Economy before Politics” (Thaksin 1999: 174). Once he became prime minister, there came to be no boundary to his CEO ideas and all administrative sectors were included. This, in turn, made him the only CEO Prime Minister.

Under his premiership, Thaksin immediately put his ideas about ‘CEO governors’ into practice. He started off with five pilot provinces and moved on to organising mandatory seminars in Bangkok for all governors in the country. In these seminars the governors were taught international management and other business administration methods similar to those given in a business school. At the podium, Thaksin lectured on how he had discovered the CEO theory and futurology emphasising that it was time that the old bureaucratic system be replaced by ‘modern’ processes and culture (Pasuk and Baker 2004: 187).

Thaksin commented that the ‘CEO governor’ idea was challenging and that it was to be implemented immediately. He declared:

I am challenging all governors to become *real managers* [author’s emphasis]. In business terms, they say you profit from risks. If you do not risk, you will never be able to make profits. Therefore, if you encounter risks, you can use your ability to solve the country’s problems. If you succeed, you will be praised. You can then be proud of the success that this is the result of your decision. It will make you happy.

(Pran 2004: 375–6)

Nevertheless, curiously enough, the image of Thaksin as a ‘CEO prime minister’ who adopted methods of business management and administration to run the country gradually disappeared almost entirely, mainly because of the political conflicts which arose during his last years in office. Thaksin became the target of political accusations and the anti-Thaksin camps were marching in the streets asking that he resign his premiership, while his popularity diminished rapidly.

From 2004 onwards, Thaksin completely stripped himself of the ‘CEO Prime Minister’ image. He stopped using English words and shelved his MBA textbooks. The CEO fascination had come to an end. Thaksin hung his expensive suits and reinvented himself once more, this time transforming himself into a ‘reality show’ hero, a programme broadcast live from one of Thailand’s poorest villages. The new public image had been built to lure poor villagers into believing that he was on their side and that they would, in turn, shield him from all dissent and opposition.

Political downfall 2004–2006: the reality show

In late March 2004, Thaksin came under harsh attack in the media and in the public for mishandling the escalating violence in the three border provinces in the south. Shortly afterwards came the news of the massacre at Krue Se Mosque where 108 people were killed. This took place soon after an incident where, seventy-eight Muslims who faced charges for surrounding the Tak Bai police station in Narathiwat Province had died after being suffocated in cramped conditions (Ukrist 2006: 73–94). Thaksin flatly denied his responsibility in both incidents throwing accusations at ‘dumb bandits’ or at Thailand’s neighbouring countries, including Indonesia and Malaysia. He simply appointed a National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) and left them to deal with the impossible task of reducing public pressure. Yet Thaksin could not shield himself from intense criticism with respect to other issues as well: these included allegations on corruption and cronyism and the privatisation of state enterprises. The events coincided with the campaigning for the upcoming general election in early 2005. Thaksin was adept in maintaining voters’ support, based on an emphasis being placed on the country’s rural poor.

The asset concealment case: support from the middle classes

In fact, from the time he had entered politics, Thaksin had been keen to employ marketing and public relations tools to induce the public to support him. His very first challenge was in December 2000 when he was charged by the National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC) for failing to report all his assets during the time he held the portfolio of Minister of Foreign Affairs in the mid 1990s.³ If charged, he would be barred from politics for five years. Thaksin combated those charges with a legal defence which included intense lobbying of the judges of the Constitutional Court.

At the time, he used the popular support which he enjoyed to shield him from allegations in two different ways. First, he voiced his conviction that “Nothing stands between me and my devotion to politics – to save people from poverty” (*The Nation* 2000). His declaration at the Constitutional Court was broadcast live and later published in newspapers. It was closely followed by members of the middle class who became quickly fascinated by Thaksin’s political commitment. At the Constitutional Court, Thaksin also claimed: “The Thai people want me to stay. They know who is right for the country. Who should I then listen to, the people or the Court? I love the Thai people and I want to work for them.” (*Time* 2001: 19). Once his rhetoric touched the middle classes they immediately warmed up to him and became his political shield. Dr. Sem Primpungkaew (MD), a senior citizen and leading intellectual, was instrumental in gathering tens of thousands of signatures in support of Thaksin.

Second, apart from using his skills of oratory in the court and in the media, Thaksin emphasised the three policies that formed the major part of his campaign and put them into practice while the case was still in court. Thaksin ordered his Cabinet to hasten the implementation of a health care scheme. The Cabinet first met to discuss about the project in February 2001. It was first tested in April and put into effect nationwide (except for Bangkok) in October 2001 (Viroj and Anchana 2006). A debt relief scheme for farmers was also put into practice in October 2001; this alleviated more than 2.3 million farmers of their financial woes (*Bangkok Post* 2001). Finally, in September 2001, the village fund scheme was launched in over 75,000 villages nationwide with an allocation of 5.3 million baht (Worawan 2003).

These urgently-reinforced schemes were first mentioned as *Thai Rak Thai* policies but were not realised until Thaksin was summoned to appear at the Constitutional Court. While underscoring his commitment to work for the people during the court proceedings, news of the meetings taking place about these schemes were broadcast frequently. Even though the tangible results of these schemes had yet to be seen, Thaksin did succeed in coining a fresh image for himself, that of being recognised to be a man of his word.

In short, the Thai people had become a protective shield for Thaksin and had helped him to weather all political obstacles since the day he took over the nation’s administrative helm; but the increasing political conflicts reached their breaking point when people protested in the streets of Bangkok calling for Thaksin’s resignation, primarily over rising allegations of large-scale corruption. The massive protests were broadcast on television and reported in newspapers nationwide. Thaksin’s popularity declined sharply. Why wouldn’t Thaksin then use the people as his shield again? The time had come for Thaksin to manipulate the poor in the rural areas.

‘Reality show’: the country hero

During his campaign in early 2005, Thaksin was already marred by criticisms over his premiership. He was none the less able to maintain voters’ support in

the rural areas. He started a television reality programme, featuring his travels across the country visiting rural areas and local administrative units where he was warmly greeted by local authorities and village seniors. He made several short trips to central Thailand and later to the south in August 2004. When he visited Chiang Mai, he promised he would make poverty history in three years and, at Nakhon Prathom, he told local students “Come here. Tell me if you do not have a notebook computer and I will buy you one with my own money” (*The Nation* 2004a). Thaksin also invited taxi drivers in Bangkok to have lunch with him at the Government House (*The Nation* 2004b).

One month before the general election of February 2005, Thaksin took another trip to the rural areas in the north and the north-east. According to election laws, he could not distribute gifts or money to voters. Thaksin won their support by promising them more than he ever did in his first campaign. His dream projects were to expand the village fund, to issue title deeds to land holders, to provide community wells to cut down energy costs, to give out free livestock, to offer training for low income people, to lower education expenses, to give out financial aid for students forced out of school because of poverty, to give out gift bags to new mothers, to build health care centres for the elderly, to build more gymnasiums and sports facilities in towns, to provide cheap housing, to improve the irrigation system nationwide and to determine a deadline by which to end poverty (*The Nation* 2004c, 2004d; *Bangkok Post* 2004).

Every word, every sentence of Thaksin’s lofty promises was broadcast on the media. This time he chose television because his target group was the poor. While the educated, urban middle class had access to both television and print media, the poor had access to television only. A novel idea using a ‘reality TV’ format with Thaksin as its hero was subsequently launched. It came as no surprise that after the 2005 general election, Thaksin and his *Thai Rak Thai* Party enjoyed yet another landslide victory. He modified some of his promises to suit the script in his ‘reality show’. At the same time, he organised mobile Cabinet meetings, a new marketing strategy that targeted the poor in the rural area. This climaxed in January 2006 when Cabinet and top bureaucrats led by Thaksin conferred for more than a week in Samat province, Roi-et, one of Thailand’s poorest provinces.

This might appear to be merely a show: Thaksin brought the Cabinet to the people in the rural areas giving gifts to the locals and at the same time winning their heart and securing their votes for the following election. What was most crucial was Thaksin’s decision to wipe out his image of ‘CEO Prime Minister’ of the Thailand ‘corporation’ and replace it by a ‘reality show’ ‘down to earth’ hero who shared the community bathrooms, who was seen wearing a native *pha khao ma* native cloth wrapped around his body, who drove the village’s tractor, or who rode a motorbike along the dusty village roads. As expected, Thaksin emerged as an idol for the poor who pinned his photos on their walls at home.

This ‘reality show’ might have had only minimal effects on Thaksin’s policies on poverty-relief schemes but it left a massive impression on the locals. The live television depicting a ‘country hero’ completely wiped out Thaksin’s

former ‘CEO prime minister’ as if it had never existed. Indeed, the CEO prime minister disappeared in the same way that people almost forgot the several political conflicts and controversies that Thaksin tried to ease. From then on, poor villagers in the rural areas became Thaksin’s staunch allies and supporters. They banded together against the anti-Thaksin camp on the streets of Bangkok between 2004 and 2006. Though Thaksin was later ousted by a *coup d’état* led by a group of high-ranked military officials and the elites in Thai society on 19 September 2006, the poor in the north and the north-east remained loyal to their ‘country hero.’ This was vividly reflected in the electoral victory of the reincarnation of *Thai Rak Thai Party*, the People Power Party, on 23 December 2007, despite the fact that their so-called hero was still roaming the world in self-imposed exile.

The political position of Thaksin was weak in Bangkok and strong in the north. Bangkokians did accept him as the new leader, however; the most dangerous political behaviour was the abortive takeover plan towards the *Bangkok Post* and the Matichon publishing house by his aide in the GMM group which is the dominant entertainment entrepreneur in Thailand: this failed deal revealed the authoritarianism of Thaksin. Bangkokians awoke and warned the public to note the new merger between power and money by way of monopolising the media; meanwhile, however, the north remains Thaksin’s political stronghold. As a matter of fact, Thaksin is popular in other important regions. The north-east also favoured Thaksin, but he could not exercise control there alone: his popularity increased by means of alliances with local politicians; he did lose popularity there, when his former allies, the *Newin Chidchob* group, turned to his enemy, the Democrat Party, with which they set up jointly a minority government in January 2009.

No mass party in Thailand

Thai political parties have traditionally comprised groups of MPs representing local networks. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, however, an unprecedented transformation of Thai political parties occurred. Representatives of local networks formed an electoral ‘professional’ party run by a small group of party leaders. These party leaders worked closely with professional political groups which included the media, marketing strategists and advertising experts. Thaksin Shinawatra worked to unite the heads of local networks and presented himself as the key leader of this new, modern network.

Apart from using marketing strategies, advertising and media, Thaksin presented himself directly to the electorate. His autobiography and business success became synonymous with the *Thai Rak Thai Party*. This led to a succession of victories of the *Thai Rak Thai Party* since 2001 and Thaksin became the ‘archetypical hero’ of the *Thai Rak Thai Party* and of Thailand. In his early years as prime minister, Thaksin likened Thailand to a company while being himself the ‘CEO prime minister’ of the country. Using business administration as his paradigm, he steered Thailand as if it were a corporation into the directions he wanted. When Thailand suffered political turmoil and people took to the streets

of Bangkok demanding his resignation, Thaksin reinvented himself by completely abandoning his CEO image and presenting himself as the ‘hero of the poor’ in a running TV reality show broadcast live nationwide. Each carefully-crafted public image Thaksin cultivated served as a ‘political shield’, from his first entry into politics in 1994 up to when he was deposed by members of the military elite on 19 September 2006. He was first protected by the middle-class urbanites and, later by the poor in rural areas.

Despite his political downfall, his self-imposed exile and the disbandment of his *Thai Rak Thai* Party by the Constitutional Court, Thaksin sought to re-unite his former party members under the new flag of the People Power Party. Indeed, Thaksin was the real founder of the People Power Party. In his interview prior to the general election on 23 December 2007, he said:

When the Thai Rak Thai Party was disbanded, I wrote several letters to former Thai Rak Thai members to apologise and asked them to *re-unite* [author’s emphasis] because the Thai people are still suffering and Thailand has to move forward. What we achieved in the past was going well; our country was moving in the right direction. I asked members to be patient and to find ways to help out the country. The former Thai Rak Thai members became members of a new political party [the People Power Party]. They discussed who would be their new leader and they agreed on Samak Suntravej.

(*Prachatouch News Magazine* 2007)

Thaksin suggested in the interview that it was the former *Thai Rak Thai* members who formed a new political party and recruited a new leader. It is clear, however, that Thaksin himself encouraged them to do so as it was also Thaksin who found them a suitable candidate to lead this new political party. Thaksin reportedly called Samak directly, asking him to become the leader of the People Power Party. Samak refused because he claimed his wife (Khunyng Surat) wanted him to quit politics. Thaksin, then, contacted General Chawalit Yongjaiyudh, the former New Aspiration Party leader, but the general wanted Thaksin to revive his New Aspiration Party and that former *Thai Rak Thai* members should merge with that party. Thaksin rejected that proposition. He then approached Samak again, who this time accepted his offer to become leader of the People Power Party.

The newly-founded People Power Party won a majority at the December 2007 general election. This, however, was not due to the popularity of the People Power Party members themselves or to the characteristics of their party’s policies: the People Power Party owed much of its landslide victory to Thaksin’s popularity and his new public relations strategies. Thaksin had created a strong political base and kept his former supporters constantly engaged: this resulted in unflinching loyalty on the part of the voters. Fifteen months after the coup, Thaksin made numerous public appearances. He travelled around the globe in style to shop and to play golf in Beijing, Indonesia and Hong Kong. Thaksin’s life, his travel, his rumoured relationship with a young female singer and his

takeover of the Manchester City Football Club attracted the headlines of newspapers, dominated television and radio and the pro-Thaksin websites, such as *truethaksin.com* and *hi-thaksin.net* (the latter available only within Thailand).

The takeover of the Manchester City Football Club was an interesting case. Thaksin was well aware of Thai national craze for football. The news about his takeover had more impact than his other attention-grabbing publicity stunts. The Manchester City Football Club purchase immediately became a public relations tool for Thaksin; it touched directly the Thai public who spent hours watching football without interference by the junta and the interim government, while these had attempted to block news of Thaksin in Thailand. This kindled the public's interest in Thaksin and his *Thai Rak Thai Party*.

As the national referendum on the new constitution approached, publications about Thaksin's life and achievement were widely circulated. A book *Thaksin, Where Are You?* was released (Sunisa 2007); video cassettes highlighting Thaksin's self-imposed exile; DVDs entitled *The Doomed Year after the Coup d'Etat* were distributed nationwide. Thaksin's and the *Thai Rak Thai Party's* popularity could be seen in the result of the referendum of 19 August 2006: twenty-four provinces in the north and north-east which were widely known to be Thaksin's bailiwick did not approve of the new Constitution drafted by the military-elected committee (*Nation Weekly* 2007). This arguably foreshadowed the victory of the new People Power Party in the subsequent general election.

The campaign of the People Power Party focused almost exclusively on Thaksin. Before the general election on 23 December 2007, the People Power Party also distributed DVDs outlining Thaksin's achievements during his premiership. This included Thaksin's statement asking for his loyal supporters and those who wanted to see Thaksin's return to Thailand to vote for the People Power Party. The statement was also posted on a pro-Thaksin website as 'hi-thaksin.net'. The result was highly predictable as the People Power Party gained 14,071,799 votes or 39.6 per cent of the votes (*The Nation*, online). It won 233 out of 480 seats in the parliament, which was enough to form a coalition government. The victory of the People Power Party was largely due to Thaksin's continued popularity among vast sectors of the rural and urban poor. Even though he lived in self-imposed exile and was never present on Thailand's political scene from 2006, Thaksin's mass media-driven image, personal life and new business ventures were instrumental in the victory of the newly-founded People Power Party.

Notes

- 1 Thanong had arranged Thaksin's first loans from the Thai Military Bank (TMB) in 1986, and joined Shinawatra as financial overseer in 1989–1992, before returning to TMB as President. He was Thaksin's foremost financial adviser and had been a director of Shinawatra companies (Pasuk and Baker 2004: 58).
- 2 Valaya as editor and published by Matichon Publisher (1999)
- 3 Many Shinawatra family companies were identified as being in the name of the Shinawatra family's servants, car drivers and guards. They became major share holders in the Thai Stock Exchange.

14 Conclusion

The overall aim of this work has been to induce political science to move away from the notion that one can fruitfully analyse, on the basis of social cleavages alone, the relationship between citizens and parties in liberal democracies, especially in Europe, at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The view that personalities count very little, which was put forward once more in *The European Voter* (see the article by Curtice and Holmberg 2005) and was reported in Chapter 1, is unrealistic in the context of developments which have taken place in a number of European countries since the 1980s: it seems therefore urgent to develop an alternative approach.

Such an endeavour has been undertaken in this work in two ways. In the first part of the book, alongside the examination of a number of concepts relating to the role of personalities and the presentation of empirical evidence of a general character, the point was made that, without a psychological analysis of the relationship between citizens and both parties and their leaders, a true understanding of that relationship was impossible. Such an analysis requires a substantial investment, however, as political scientists have simply not been accustomed to use psychological concepts and psychological empirical methodologies.

Meanwhile, in the second part of the volume, a number of cases were examined; these were chosen among three Western European countries and three countries from outside Western Europe where the role of ‘personalised party leaders’ had been large enough, since the 1980s, to constitute clear-cut examples of the ways in which personalised parties were involved in the process of influencing citizens. The nature of the evidence provided by these case studies was described in the introduction to Part II of the volume: it was noted that the reasons for the examination of the part played by a number of leaders in Poland, Japan and Thailand was somewhat different from the reasons for the examination of leaders in Britain, France and Italy: but the overall purpose was to obtain in this way material which would help to build a realistic picture of the forms which personalised party leadership were taking in a broad range of liberal democracies.

There had never been so far any attempt to discover how, in liberal democracies, personalised party leaders exercised their influence either directly on citizens or indirectly through the part played by these leaders within their party:

indeed, even the effect of that last distinction had not been explored. Such a lack of investigation seems once more due in large part to the fact that the role of personalised party leadership has never been truly recognised as 'natural' in liberal-democratic systems; moreover, so little space, if any, has been devoted to the psychological aspects of the relationship between citizens and leaders that this probably also accounts for the scarce development of the analysis of the characteristics and possible impact of personalised party leadership.

In the course of the six chapters devoted to these case studies, it was found that the forms which personalised party leadership took had indeed been varied: there was therefore also a need for an overall comparative analysis. This is one of the purposes of this concluding chapter, although a caveat has to be entered from the start: it cannot be legitimately argued that no other forms of personalised party relationship could be found in country cases which have not been explored here. One can, however, begin tracing the forms of involvement which are most likely to be occurring, given that the case studies analysed here provide evidence which covers large and small parties and old and new parties. The first section of this chapter is devoted to this analysis.

Yet there is another and at least equally important set of problems posed by the analysis of personalised party leadership. Might it not be that situations in which personalised party leadership have played a substantial part result from serious political, social and economic difficulties experienced by the countries concerned? We have argued in Chapter 3 that personalised party leadership is likely to be widespread, indeed to play a part universally, since, as we noted, relations between citizens and leaders, whether within parties or outside, include what we referred to as an element of 'appearance' – that is to say a dose of liking or disliking for these leaders – irrespective of the policies which these leaders had proposed or followed: this was indeed one of the key reasons why psychological analyses of the relationship between citizens and leaders needed to be undertaken. Yet, if there are some moments, perhaps crucial ones, in which personalised party leadership plays a particularly large part in the life of some countries, as seems to be the case in the context of the six countries which have been analysed here, space must be devoted to the examination of that question in the concluding chapter, even if one cannot expect at this stage to go much beyond a number of impressions.

There is a further complication, moreover, namely that the analysis which has been conducted here was triggered by the view, based on substantial corroborative evidence, although it could not be described as systematic, that personalised party leadership had increased in strength during the last decades of the twentieth century. As was also pointed out in Chapter 3, aspects of the socio-economic development which took place late in the twentieth century in Western Europe resulted in changes of the 'psychological' perspectives of many citizens with respect to their country's social structure; these changes did indeed lead to the suggestion that the 'social cleavages' explanation of the allegiance of citizens to parties was more likely to have been valid in the earlier part of that century than subsequently. A comprehensive analysis of the part played by personalised party

leadership in liberal democratic political systems has obviously to take into account these socio-economic developments as well as the more immediate psychological characteristics which enter in the decision-making process of the citizens. These points, including the difficulties which their examination raises, will be examined in the second section of this chapter.

In the six case study chapters devoted to Britain, France, Italy, Poland, Japan and Thailand, the eleven leaders who were selected as being particularly likely to have exercised personal influence on citizens, directly or indirectly through their party, are broadly representative of the general categories of party leaders, since they include, as we just noted, those in charge of large and of small parties, of 'old' or 'classical' parties as well as of new parties; the only category which is overrepresented is that of new large parties of which, as we saw in Chapter 5, there have been extremely few in Western Europe and probably in liberal democracies in general. Thus five of these eleven leaders had been in charge of large parties which they had 'inherited', so to speak, but did modify to a substantial extent: these are Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Jacques Chirac, François Mitterrand and Junichiro Koizumi. Two of the eleven did create parties which became immediately large, Silvio Berlusconi and Thaksin Shinawatra; a third leader who falls in almost the same category is Lech Wałęsa, as he created Solidarity; the fact that the organisation split in major ways before Wałęsa himself became president of Poland does have some implications for the determination of the extent to which the post-communist Polish party system was institutionalised; but the point remains that Wałęsa had been a very influential leader in building the organisation which was to contribute to the destruction of the communist system in his country. Two of the last three of the leaders studied, Umberto Bossi and Andrzej Lepper, set up a party which was to remain small but was representative of a particular section of the country, geographical – the northern part of Italy – in the case of Bossi, social, – the farming community – in the case of Lepper (at any rate up to the 2007 election, when the party almost disappeared); the third leader who also set up what was to remain a small party, Jean-Marie Le Pen, first worked within an existing tiny party for some years before he expanded it markedly; that party was never to be directed particularly at a particular section of French society.

I

The forms of personalised party leadership in contemporary Western Europe

The examination of the case studies undertaken in the previous six chapters showed that the forms which personalised party leadership took in the countries analysed here fall into four categories. First, a basic distinction needs to be drawn between direct influence on the people and indirect influence through the party, the latter mode of influence being defined as the ability of the leader to bring about changes in his or her party at the level of the ideology, programme

and/or structure. There are then the three characteristics which have been discussed in Chapters 3 and 6: these relate to the types of discourse adopted by the leaders, to the instruments which these leaders use in attempting to influence citizens, directly or indirectly via their party, and to the kind of responses which the leaders receive from the citizens: these are concerned both with the intensity of the support and with the period during which this response takes place: what needs to be examined is both the moment when personalised party leadership begins, and in particular whether it emerged when the leader came to power; and any subsequent fluctuations of that leadership, that is to say whether its strength remained practically speaking constant as long as the leader was in power or whether it increased or decreased substantially during that period. Let us therefore consider first the cases in which there is direct influence, those in which there is indirect influence through the party, or both; we will then examine the three aspects which characterise the substance of the types of leadership.

Direct and indirect influence of personalised party leaders

In the very large majority of the eleven cases of leaders examined in the six case studies studied here, perhaps not surprisingly, the influence of leaders was simultaneously exercised directly on the people and indirectly through the party. The only example of purely personal influence was provided by Wałęsa, but because Wałęsa's 'real' 'party' was Solidarity and he perhaps never truly accepted that that 'party' had broken up into a number of pieces after the end of Communist rule; indeed, under the last years of the Communist regime, Wałęsa's influence was both exercised directly personally and indirectly through the original Solidarity organisation; thus Wałęsa's mode of influence on Polish citizens bore a close relationship with the mode of influence of the two leaders studied here who had created large parties, Berlusconi and Thaksin. Admittedly, to place Solidarity in the same category means moving away (somewhat) from the analysis of liberal-democratic systems and entering into the distinct, though neighbouring, category of 'semi-pluralistic' regimes, which Poland was at the time Solidarity was set up.

However, if all other ten leaders analysed here were both directly influential and influential via their party (and even if the same does apply to Wałęsa if the point which was just made is accepted), the sequence and timing of the two sets of influence differed markedly. In three of the ten cases, those of Bossi, Berlusconi and Thaksin, the timing of the two aspects occurred simultaneously: these leaders became directly popular almost at the very moment at which they created their party and they were also indirectly influential through their party by means of having created it. In one further case, that of Lepper, there was direct influence before party influence, but because that leader had first created an organisation for farmers, an organisation which he did dominate and therefore through which he was indirectly influential before setting up his party.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, in about half the cases, those of Blair, Mitterrand, Chirac, Le Pen and Koizumi, influence occurred within the party and only

eventually, indeed often after a substantial amount of time, although not in the cases of Blair and of Koizumi, did direct influence on citizens occur: this suggests an idiosyncratic character of the three French cases, as direct influence of leaders was particularly slow to emerge in that country, while influence on the party was large. Thus, rather strangely, French political parties appear ostensibly to have been weak, but the party as an intermediary between leader and citizen did play a substantial part, even in the case of the National Front.

Finally, one case remains, that of Mrs Thatcher, as she was neither influential in the party, in the strong sense of the word, let alone personally influential, before her success against Argentina in 1982: she was thus years in government ‘on sufferance’, so to speak. Only after three years as head of the government was she able – indeed almost at the same time – to be directly influential in the nation as well as indirectly through the Conservative Party: she emerges therefore as having been at almost the polar opposite of Wałęsa, who created a party before liberal democracy emerged, lost the control of that party and was subsequently unable to exercise real influence directly when he formally headed the executive as president of Poland.

Thus, on the basis of the evidence provided by the eleven cases which were studied here, large parties continue to be relatively solid in liberal democracies, at any rate in the sense that a number of leaders exercised that influence not by creating new parties, but in existing parties in order to obtain policy or structural changes: the only cases in which newly created parties became large took place in Italy (with Berlusconi) and Thailand (with Thaksin); these parties did indeed become large immediately. One should note, a point to which we shall return in the second section, that these were countries in which the social and/or the political structure were experiencing major problems (as had been the case in France in 1958 as a result of the Algerian war). All the other ‘creations’ led to small parties only: such parties were set up in three cases, in Italy with Bossi, in Poland with Lepper, and, but on the basis of the refurbishing of an existing very small party, in France with Le Pen. Meanwhile, in Britain, France and Japan, influence was exercised by leaders to achieve changes in the major parties to which they belonged.

Personalised party leadership and variations in the substance of political life

The type of discourse of leaders

The determination of the type of discourse adopted by leaders, as was shown in the analysis of Chapter 3, is complicated by the rather unclear and complex character of populism, a concept which has markedly changed its significance over time. However, there is substantial empirical support in the group of leaders analysed in the case studies for the point made by Mény and Surel and referred to in Chapter 3, namely that populism tends to correspond to an ‘identification’ phase of political parties. Of the five leaders who set up a party (or developed a party

from almost nothing), three did adopt a populist discourse (Bossi, Lepper and Le Pen); these were also the three leaders whose new party remained small. None of the five leaders who altered the large party to which they belonged, Thatcher, Blair, Chirac, Mitterrand and Koizumi, did adopt a populist discourse: they did want to change their party's policy and/or structure and did succeed at least to do so to a substantial extent, but they did not 'appeal to the people'; this was perhaps because of the representative character of the political system of the countries with which these parties were associated (and the fact that the 'populist' leaders only succeeded in setting up small parties might also be a contributory factor); but this was perhaps also because a dose of greater 'realism' was required in the context of the larger parties which were expected to be in government and sometimes to form the government on their own. What can therefore at most be said is that they wished to introduce reforms to ensure that their party and themselves would be successful politically.

There remain the cases of the three leaders who were associated with the setting up of a party which immediately became large, Berlusconi, Thaksin and, admittedly with the reservations made earlier, Wałęsa. To them seems to apply in large part the Mény and Surel distinction between 'identification' and 'structure'. Large parties do not seem able, at any rate in a liberal democratic context, to operate on the basis of out and out populism: they therefore veer towards the 'technical' or at any rate the 'policy programmatic', presumably in order to appear realistic (including to opposite numbers in other countries). In this respect the difference between Bossi's statements and behaviour and those of Berlusconi and of his party colleagues is remarkable, despite the fact that they did jointly belong to the same government.

There are none the less appreciable differences within the broader groups which have just been identified. The five leaders of long-standing large parties who presided over changes in their organisations did adopt different strategies, to begin with in terms of the content of the policies which they supported. For instance, the policy changes which Mrs Thatcher pressed for were gradually more radical, while those of Mitterrand became gradually less radical and those of Blair and Koizumi were specific rather than comprehensive (on the health service or on the future of the postal service). Meanwhile, some of these leaders were markedly concerned with structural party reforms (Blair, Chirac), while the others were almost exclusively concerned with policy changes.

The point was made earlier that two of the three leaders who set up parties which remained small, Bossi and Lepper, were directing their efforts at a particular segment of the population of their country, mainly but not exclusively geographical in the case of Bossi, socio-economic – the farming community – in the case of Lepper: both these leaders can therefore be said to have garnered a large proportion of their 'target population', although, overall, their party remained small; Le Pen, on the other hand, did aim at French citizens in general, but he succeeded in obtaining the support of only a fraction of these citizens. Thus it may be easier to achieve a 'populist' goal when that goal is directed at a definable section of the population only: in this sense, the parties of Bossi and of

Lepper are intermediate between small parties in the strict sense of the word (as was the case with Le Pen's party) and other parties which were also directed at a specific segment of the population, such as regionalist or nationalist parties.

The 'semi-populist' Berlusconi and Thaksin parties are also rather different in character. Thaksin's party has been populist in the sense of some of the Latin American parties of the interwar and early post-Second World War period. The aim was to attract the support of a segment – in the case of Thaksin's party, primarily the agricultural part of the population of the north of the country, at any rate in a second phase of Thaksin's policy moves – a segment which was regarded as not having benefited sufficiently from the socio-economic progress of the country overall. Berlusconi also aimed at giving a greater voice to parts of the population which, according to him, had suffered under the influence of the Communist Party in Italy; but it was also necessary for the party to appear 'moderate' in order to be able to attract the support of much of the 'centre-right' electorate (a tactic which, interestingly, Thaksin attempted to adopt in an earlier phase). Wałęsa, meanwhile, seemed unaware of the fact that he was faced with the almost impossible task of keeping together the various strands of the anti-communist movement once the political system had become open, indeed suddenly, as occurred in Poland. What the examination of the eleven cases does clearly suggest is that the ambitions of personalised party leaders within large parties must remain within 'realistic' bounds and therefore operate by taking into account the reactions of the citizenry to the political system which these leaders inherited.

The types of instruments used by leaders to appeal to citizens

As was expected on the basis of the analysis of Chapter 3, clientelism played little part in providing one of the means of achieving influence among the eleven leaders who were studied here. There was, on the other hand, a rather widespread use of patronage as well as substantial variations in the extent to which these leaders used the media. As far as patronage is concerned, a distinction must be drawn between the extent to which it is used within the party and the extent to which it takes place more generally, for instance in the public sector or towards the bulk of the citizens. While patronage was used, indeed extensively, within their party by the leaders of the three smaller new parties, Bossi, Lepper and Le Pen, it did not occur outside the party, especially in the case Le Pen's party, as the *Front National* was generally ostracised by the other parties; patronage outside the party was used to an extent by Bossi and by Lepper, as they were at least for a period in government and could therefore, to an extent, have an opportunity to offer patronage favours beyond the party structure.

Patronage both within and outside the party was used by the other leaders, but with substantial variations. The assessment is complicated by the fact that, with respect to parties in government and especially those which control policy outputs, what is to be described as 'patronage' is sometimes – perhaps often in the case of some parties – difficult to circumscribe: legislation which favours

some groups, especially that which favours small groups, can be described in many cases as amounting to patronage. If the concept is defined narrowly and restricted to advantages given to individuals who are regarded as having been or as likely to be potentially helpful to the leader, patronage distributed by the leaders of large parties studied here was probably more extensive on the part of Chirac and Mitterrand than on the part of Koizumi, Blair and above all Thatcher, while it was unquestionably high on the part of Berlusconi and Thaksin. Outright patronage distributed by Wałęsa when he was president of Poland was probably small.

There is equally some difficulty in terms of the use of the media. In broad terms, it seems correct to divide the eleven leaders into three groups, a group composed of those leaders who were unable to use the media appreciably, except to an extent at election times, a group composed of those leaders who on the contrary were able to use the media, and especially television, more or less at will, and an intermediate group of leaders who were constrained by law or regulation to use the media only sparingly. The first group was composed of the three leaders who led small parties and were somewhat marginal to the political establishment: this was particularly so in the case of Le Pen, but also in the cases of Lepper and Bossi in that order; these leaders were simply not in a position to have either legal or 'paralegal' access to the media, at least to television: they even had access to the media rather sparingly during election campaigns. However, Bossi did launch and maintain a television station at his devotion. The second group was composed of Berlusconi and Thaksin, both of whom were television tycoons and who could therefore, more or less legally, benefit from various kinds of publicity arrangements offered by their television channels. The other six leaders (the five leaders of large traditional parties and Wałęsa) were not able to have access to television (and radio) except in the context of rather strict regulations; they did benefit to an extent from the publicity attached to their policy decisions – but they could also suffer if their policies were viewed as having failed. There were some differences among the members of this group, Blair being perhaps the leader who was the most anxious to benefit from the publicity attached to the 'celebrity' character of some of his moves. The whole area of the instruments used by leaders to pursue their goals, reward their friends and attempt to attract support widely in their party and among the citizens is one in which there is much secrecy; loopholes are also difficult to close, especially where government parties are concerned.

The reactions of the population to the leaders

Leaders have notoriety: what is in question is whether they are popular and, even more, whether they attract charismatic feelings on the part of their followers. As we shall see shortly and as is indeed to be expected, while notoriety is likely to remain constant, at any rate over a substantial period, once it has been achieved, neither popularity nor charisma can be expected to remain static in most cases for very long periods. The aim here is therefore to determine whether the eleven

leaders concerned did succeed in being popular, at any rate for some periods, and whether they also were the subject of charismatic fervour on the part of their supporters, again for some period. Moreover, popularity or charismatic support can be expected to be found among a section of the citizenry only, not across the whole population: it is in respect to supporters, whether they were also party supporters or not, that both popularity and charisma have therefore to be assessed.

INTENSITY

As was mentioned earlier, there are two aspects to the reactions of the population to the leaders, the level of intensity and the extent to which the support remains constant over time. The notion of intensity refers naturally to the two main concepts examined in Chapters 3 and 6 and covers in particular the degree of popularity and charisma. While popularity can be measured and is indeed measured to an extent, as has been indicated in Chapter 6, there are appreciably greater difficulties with the assessment, let alone the measurement of charisma, as the concept itself is far from being amenable to a precise definition. In liberal democracies in the contemporary world, however, it is very unlikely that charisma will be encountered, in politics at least, in its narrow and most intense form: it is being referred to here in the broader sense which is typically used and which corresponds to what Weber had in mind when he discussed the 'routinisation of charisma'.

Not all eleven leaders who have been examined here enjoyed the same degree of popularity, let alone enjoyed any charisma at all. This is of course partly, as was pointed out earlier, because the leaders concerned were popular among segments of the population of variable sizes. What is further needed to obtain a precise picture of the extent of popularity of leaders is a measurement of the strength of the popular sentiment among those who have such a feeling as well as the basis, instrumental or affective, for instance, for that popularity. Indeed, when the basis of the support is primarily affective, popularity begins to merge with charisma.

Although no attempt is made here to measure the two concepts, it seems permissible to distinguish, in respect to both popularity and charisma, between two levels, high and low, always on the understanding that reference is made exclusively to those citizens who have such feelings, with the exclusion of those who, on the contrary, are negative or neutral with respect to the leader who is being referred to. The assessment has to be made on average, since, as we shall see shortly, there may be variations over time, in some cases major variations, in the extent to which a leader is popular and/or enjoys charismatic support.

The only leaders who can be said to have attracted rather low popularity are Chirac, Mitterrand and, after communism fell, Wałęsa. Chirac and Mitterrand did not attract almost any affective feeling at all. In Mitterrand's case, there was a degree of respect, possibly of admiration, but that was combined with a lack of genuine empathy for the personage; support for Chirac was even less strong.

Support for Wałęsa was mixed: there was only a limited amount of trust in the ability of that leader to achieve definite results.

Popular support for the other eight leaders was higher, at any rate if assessed exclusively among the part of the population which was in favour of them. That support was more 'intellectualised' in the case of Koizumi, more emotional in the other cases. Yet, while there was therefore no charismatic element in the support for Wałęsa (except before the fall of communism), Mitterrand, Chirac and Koizumi, not all seven other leaders could be said to have attracted charismatic support. Thaksin, Thatcher, Bossi, Le Pen and Lepper did benefit from a high 'dose' of charisma, but, in this last case, the duration of the charismatic pull appears to have been short. There was some charismatic support, but only of a limited character in favour of Berlusconi; there was none in favour of Blair, although the popularity of that leader was large, especially at one point in time.

MOMENT OF ORIGIN AND DURATION

The assessment of popularity and of charisma is rendered difficult by the fact that only in some cases did the support last for long periods, while, in many cases, oscillations were marked. There are first sharp distinctions to be made with respect to the moment at which the leader became popular, let alone charismatic: the contrast between Thatcher and Blair is sharp in this respect. Blair became popular almost as soon as he became leader of the Labour Party, that is to say markedly before he became prime minister; Thatcher, on the contrary, was not popular when she was elected leader in 1975 and was not even popular when she became prime minister four years later: she only became popular – and even enjoyed charismatic support in 1982 – after the Falklands war.

Half the leaders became popular from the moment they led their party and/or became prime ministers. These are Blair, Berlusconi, Bossi, Lepper, and Koizumi, while Thaksin did become popular when he created his party, but after having been involved in politics earlier without enjoying much popularity. Wałęsa was immediately popular as leader of Solidarity under communist rule, but his popularity did not extend, as we noted in several occasions, beyond the moment when Poland became liberal-democratic. Meanwhile, Chirac, Mitterrand and Le Pen had to spend years before achieving a degree of popularity; similarly, as we just noted, Thatcher became popular, indeed enjoyed charismatic support, but only after she spent several years as leader of her party followed by several years as head of the government.

The matter is complicated, however, by the patterns of the curves of popularity and of charismatic support enjoyed by leaders. About half the leaders studied here were continuously popular, at about the same levels, when at the head of their party and/or of the government: these were Thaksin, Berlusconi, Bossi, Le Pen and Koizumi; Lepper was also popular as long as his party did last, but his marked defeat at the 2008 general election, when the party obtained under 2 per cent of the votes, makes it difficult to describe the support for that leader as continuous. Interestingly, with the exception of Blair, but with the inclusion of Le

Pen, the same leaders were popular and continuously popular from the moment they took over their party or the government. Moreover, in the case of Blair, the fall of his popularity must be largely attributed to the line he took, after four years as prime minister, over the Iraq war, although there had also been by then a degree of disillusionment about his policies on the home front.

Two general conclusions can be drawn from the examination of the extent of support enjoyed by the leaders who have been studied here as well as with the type of discourse and the instruments which these leaders adopted. First, in contemporary Western Europe at least, populism characterises ‘outsiders’ rather than ‘insiders’, that is to say in effect leaders of new parties rather than leaders of old parties; indeed, the extent to which populism plays a part diminishes as leaders come closer to power: the case of Thaksin appears, *prima facie*, to be to an extent an exception, as the Thai leader seemed to become more ‘populistic’ after he was ousted from power; but the fact that he was ousted from power may well have been in part responsible for what might be described as the ‘populist radicalisation’ of that leader. Second, intensity of support tends to be higher among ‘outsiders’ than among ‘insiders’, but there are exceptions, Thatcher being the outstanding one, although, in that case, while there may have been high intensity for a while, there was little continuity in the extent of that support. Moreover, continuity of support seems in general more marked at both extremes, that is to say among ‘outsiders’ who receive intense support but also among those ‘insiders’ who do not enjoy marked popularity.

II

The conditions of the society and the part played by leaders in Western Europe towards the end of the twentieth century

Weber tripartite distinction among types of ‘authority’ and the problems it poses

Probably the best way to attempt to understand how socio-economic structures and personality characteristics come to be fused in contemporary Western European political systems is to return to the famous tripartite distinction drawn by Max Weber about ‘types of authority’. Weber’s concern, possibly because he was a sociologist, was more with ‘types of society’, so to speak, than with types of political systems: but whether his aim was to understand how societies had been developing or whether he was more specifically concerned with political life, his tripartite distinction has helped, perhaps more than any other categorisation, to trigger analyses of the development of political life in the contemporary world.

Yet there is a double limitation to that tripartite distinction into traditional, bureaucratic-legalistic and charismatic authority. The first limitation stems from the fact that these three forms of authority are discussed as if they were ‘ideal-types’ and not categorisations of actual situations: in reality they have to be

viewed as poles of dimensions. This is manifestly the case, as any reflection on how to introduce actual societies (or political systems) in the scheme leads immediately to the recognition that societies are more or less traditional or more or less bureaucratic-legalistic. Such a reinterpretation can easily be introduced in the model: as it changes, a society becomes characterised by a decrease in traditional forms of authority, 'compensated', so to speak, by an increase in bureaucratic-legalistic forms. What occurred in eighteenth century Prussia is seemingly a good example of such a gradual transformation.

The second limitation is more difficult, perhaps at the limit impossible, to 'redress'. It relates, in reality, to a double set of problems posed by the concept of 'charismatic authority': Weber himself came to be aware of at least one element of the difficulty; he attempted to resolve the matter by introducing the notion of 'routinisation' of charisma. The difficulty is double, however, because it has to do, on the one hand, with the fact that one does not quite see how to turn the notion of charisma from an ideal-type position into the pole of a dimension; but one does not see either, on the other hand, what are the conditions under which leaders endowed with charismatic support can be expected to emerge.

The first of these two elements of the difficulty can be overcome if 'charisma' is viewed in a much less stringent manner and specifically is not regarded as being a 'religious' or 'mystical' gift enabling the person concerned to enjoy a following which is in the nature of a faith. The introduction of the notion of 'routinisation' may help to circumvent this problem, although it is at the cost of bringing charisma 'down' to something akin to large leader 'popularity'. The notion does not help to solve the second element of the difficulty, however: this is the more serious of the two, as it is not clear at all how leaders endowed with 'charismatic authority' ever come to emerge in a given society. Even if such a society is in peril for its very existence, why should a leader be ready and able to assume the authority needed to be followed by the citizens? One is tempted to conclude that such an outcome can only be the result of the intrusion, seemingly sudden, of a force external to the society, such as the intrusion of 'God' in the life of the country concerned. In any case, there seems to be no way of deciding at what point the 'decline' of the society is so marked that an appropriate leader must emerge. As a matter of fact, it is equally probable, indeed seemingly more probable, that no such leader will be found at all and that the society will continue to degenerate until it reaches the point when it actually breaks down into civil war and, indeed, as in Liberia, Sierra Leone or the Republic of the Congo, outside forces have to intervene.

Before attempting to move entirely in the direction of that problem, a problem which touches on the critical – and never solved – question of the relative role of social (or socio-economic) forces and of leadership, let us examine how large a part, in practice, party personalisation of leadership appears to have played in the six countries from which the eleven 'personalised' leaders have been drawn. To do so, two steps have to be taken. First, it has to be assumed, as we have done all along this volume, that the extent of party personalised leadership does vary from being very strong to being very limited. If we assume that there is a dimen-

sion here, this means in practice, in the Western European context, that the dimension ranges from the extent to which a given country is ruled by means of a bureaucratic-legalistic authority structure or by means of a party personalised leadership structure. This may be the import of Weber's insight which he referred to as the 'routinisation of charisma'.

Yet the question of the way in which the three types of authority come to be brought together in the context of what have to be two dimensions is not our main concern here. What is at stake in this volume is the extent to which 'modern' (that is to say non-'traditional') political systems with 'modern' political parties co-exist with leaders whose influence varies from being very strong to being very limited. This means in practice examining how these societies vary between at, one extreme, a pole in which bureaucratic-legalistic influence is prevailing (since we are concerned with non-traditional societies) and, at the other, one in which the personalised influence of leaders is prevailing. It is on this basis that the analysis is conducted in the rest of this chapter.

Moving from an analysis of leaders to an analysis of the characteristics of a given political system

We have so far examined the characteristics of individual leaders in a number of political systems. If we are to move towards an examination of societies or of political systems, and no longer of individual leaders, we must discover a way in which whole political systems can be characterised in terms of the extent to which personalised leadership prevails. As we are referring here to liberal democratic systems, we find necessarily a number of political parties, only some of which are in the government at a given point in time and only some of which are likely to be run by personalised leaders. In the Italian case, for instance, while Berlusconi's party has been run by its leader in a highly personalised manner, this has not been the case of the parties of the Centre and of the Left. It is therefore clearly wrong to describe the Italian party system as being wholly personalised; yet it is equally important to note that Italy is the only Western European country in which, from the 1990s, one major party has been wholly set up by a personality and in which that personality-based party has been in effective control of the government for a substantial number of years.

The only way to move from the analysis of single parties to an assessment of the whole system at a given point in time seems to be to take into account the extent to which the political system is 'affected' by the presence of one or more parties in which there is highly personalised leadership as well as the extent to which that or these parties have been controlling the government and are likely to be able to do in the future. Moreover, it is not necessarily the case that a given party should be continuously dominated by a leader; indeed a party created by a leader, such as the Gaullist party in France, can cease to be, over a period, and especially after the disappearance of that leader, dominated by its leader, at any rate to the same extent; moreover, the new leader may not be as 'personalised' and he or she may be popular rather than charismatic, for instance. This is indeed

what occurred with the French Gaullist party in the course of the last decades of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first, at any rate up to the coming to power of Nicolas Sarkozy. Although it is obviously impossible to be truly precise about the extent to which a given political system can be regarded as being as a whole markedly more characterised by personalised leadership than another, it is at least possible to obtain on this basis a broad ranking of political systems; such a ranking is valid at least at a given point in time. Let us attempt to do so by considering the six countries which have been examined in Part II of this volume.

How the six countries studied here fit on a dimension ranging from bureaucratic-legalistic authority to high levels of personalisation

Assuming that one takes into account the provisos which have just been made as well as a general proviso that the assessment is to a substantial extent ‘impressionistic’, it seems possible to rank five of the six countries along a continuum of greater or lesser incidence of party personalisation of leadership. If one moves from those of the five countries which are least characterised by personalised leadership to those which are most characterised by such a leadership the ranking appears to be Japan, France, Britain, Italy and Thailand. Meanwhile, it does not seem possible to enter Poland in such a ranking as that country does not appear to have occupied a sufficiently stable position during the years following the fall of communism.

Let us examine the case which can be made for the location of five of the countries on the continuum. Japan appears to be the country least affected by party personalised leadership as, during the period under consideration, the influence of Koizumi was markedly limited in time and a return to the classical bureaucratic-legalistic practices of the liberal-democratic party took place, if not truly smoothly, at least without real discussion. It was as if a parenthesis had been closed, as it had previously been after Tanaka’s and after Nakasone’s tenure. Party personalised leadership seems therefore to take the form in Japan of a number of disconnected episodes, not a ‘new way of life’ in the politics of the country: the manner in which Koizumi himself left office indicated that he was neither very interested in, nor that much looking forward to, his country moving towards greater party personalisation of leadership.

Meanwhile, at the other extreme of the range of the five countries examined here, the ‘charismatic’ character of the support of a large part of the Thai citizenship for Thaksin went unabated, principally in the north, despite the efforts made by the opposition parties to reduce, indeed to eliminate, the influence of that leader. This does not mean that there are no aspects of the Thai political system in which such a charismatic pattern of authority does not prevail. The more ‘classical’ Democrat Party was not ruled in that manner in the past and it continues not to be ruled in that manner. Yet charismatic authority appears (and appears for the first time under civilian rule) to play such a part in the country’s politics that Thailand can be viewed, at any rate at the beginning of

the twenty-first century as the polar opposite of Japan among the five countries examined here.

Let us now see why France, Britain and Italy can be ranked in the way which is suggested here. *Prima facie*, France may seem to be dominated by personalised party leaders, given that Chirac inherited a party which had been set up by de Gaulle on the basis of a truly overwhelming personalised authority and that Mitterrand recreated the French Socialist party largely on the basis of his own authority. Yet neither Chirac nor even Mitterrand, as was pointed out in Chapter 9 and earlier in this chapter, did attract marked popularity, let alone any kind of charismatic support. Indeed, within their respective parties, Mitterrand and Chirac were confronted with substantial, sometimes strong – and personalised – opposition. Admittedly, especially during his first mandate as president (1981–1988), Mitterrand did decide on a number of key policies without referring formally to his party; but the general style of his leadership – as well as that of Chirac – was more to ‘let things take their natural course’ than to pronounce authoritatively and independently about policy issues. The only one of the three French leaders studied here who did receive a degree of charismatic support was Le Pen, but even he, as was noted, had to wait many years before that kind of support emerged; he subsequently lost much of that support even whilst still party leader. The two main French parties can be described as ‘modern’ as they are no longer ruled by local notables; but they are not very different from the liberal-democratic party of Japan in terms of the part played by the elites of these parties in the decision-making process.

That Italy should be located nearer the personalised end of the dimension and relatively close to Thailand should not be regarded as surprising, given the way in which Berlusconi both came to power and has ruled when in power, as well in view of Bossi’s relationship with his supporters. However, these developments occurred from the late 1980s only and especially from the 1990s onwards: previously, and indeed since the Second World War, the Italian national decision-making process was based, even more than the French, on arrangements taking place among the leaders of the main parties and in no way as a result of the desires of personalised leaders: the personalisation of leadership was limited. Moreover, as was already alluded to earlier, the opposition to Berlusconi was constituted by a number of parties which, by and large, had the same characteristics as those which had prevailed in Italian parties before the 1990s. However, the fact that Berlusconi was three times head of a government which he dominated between the early 1990s and the first decade of the twenty-first century suggests that the country was becoming ‘accustomed’, so to speak, to a high dose of personalised leadership.

The case of Britain under Thatcher and Blair appears intermediate between those of France and of Italy. Neither of these two British leaders did create a party, to begin with: their role consisted in changing the policies and, in the case of Labour, the structure of the party as well. Moreover, while Mrs Thatcher was ‘charismatic’ during at least a period of her leadership, while Blair was markedly popular for a number of years after he became leader in 1994, disillusionment

with each of them, and especially with Blair, was such that that it is clearly not realistic to see their position as being on par with that of Berlusconi. Whether highly personalised leadership will be found to characterise Britain in the future is also rather doubtful, although efforts have been made, at least in the Conservative Party, by the leader to hold a posture which resembles that of Tony Blair.

While the position, on the dimension between ‘bureaucratic-legalistic’ and ‘personalised’ leadership, of the three Western European countries studied here is thus fairly clearly definable, that of Poland since the end of communism cannot be regarded as being determined. This is in part and perhaps primarily because the parties are less institutionalised in that country: oscillations from one election to the next have been very marked, even with respect to the socialist party which might have been expected – and seemed for a while – to be the best structured: divisions occurred in that party as well, but they have also taken place, indeed even more frequently, on the Right. Yet the fact that Poland ultimately cannot be located at a fixed point on the dimension, even during the period studied here, is also due in part to recurrent manifestations of personalised leadership, but of a personalised leadership which seems to be fundamentally ‘insecure’: the popularity, let alone charisma, of the leaders concerned has tended not to last long. Thus, while the merger or outright disappearance of parties has been frequent, it occurred to a large extent at the same time as, and under the shadow of, temporarily popular leaders. The Polish situation is thus different from this point of view from that of the other countries analysed here, including Thailand, where Thaksin’s party proved to be markedly resilient, given the strength of the opposition which it encountered, especially since the demise of Thaksin himself.

What accounts for the (current) location of the countries studied here on the dimension between bureaucratic-legslistic authority and personalised authority

Yet the main question which needs to be solved remains almost as difficult to handle after having examined the way in which leaders such as Mitterrand, Berlusconi, Thatcher or Blair have, if not saved the political life of their country, at least significantly contributed, at least ostensibly, to improvements in the way that political life has been run in a ‘smoother’ and perhaps more ‘comprehensible’ manner. It seems that we have not advanced markedly, if at all, over and above the key difficulty of the Weberian model: the question remains posed in similar terms, namely: why is it that a highly personalised leader emerges at a given point of time to bring about the improvements which have just been alluded to? Admittedly, the model which is presented here is a little more likely to provide elements of a solution to the difficulty since it views (a dose of) personalised leadership as being ‘normal’ in political systems, including liberal-democratic systems. The model is therefore consistent with the suggestion that personalised leadership may well be more marked where the general conditions

endured by a country are serious. Yet it still is not ostensibly axiomatic that the political system will automatically and necessarily 'produce' a leader who has the ability to attract major support from the population and therefore can be expected to lead the country out of the condition in which it finds itself. As a matter of fact, it is not even permissible to suggest that there will ever be automaticity in such a development, as this would mean that no country would ever be on the brink of collapse, let alone ever collapse.

In concrete terms, it could even be argued with some justification that the case of Poland is the most 'understandable' of those which have been examined in Part II of this volume. The obvious socio-economic and indeed political problems which that country had to face at a result of the abrupt fall of communism clearly both explain why the party system could not be expected to be institutionalised (and why, among other handicaps, Solidarity could not be expected to resist divisions and scissions) as soon as there was freedom to organise parties. Thus the Polish political system needed a personalised leader with large support in the population, but the society in general and the parties in particular were not likely to be able to meet the requirement.

Let us explore this point a little more rather than return to the cases of the five other countries which were examined here and where it seemed that, by some rather mysterious felicitous fate, the required personalised leader emerged at the right moment. The point which has just been made about Poland is that one of the key problems was that a pluralistic party system was not institutionalised enough (indeed it was not institutionalised at all when Solidarity emerged); as a matter of fact, there was probably a further handicap, namely that there had been a party, the Communist Party, which did embody the values of the old system and therefore was likely to suggest to many citizens that a link could be made between the existence of parties and an oppressive regime. What seemed required, therefore, was the institutionalisation of the party system before personalised leaders (and at least one personalised leader) could emerge and be widely supported in the population. This viewpoint seems paradoxical, at least on the surface, since, all along in this volume, we have contrasted the part played by parties in structuring the political system with the fact that personalised leaders are playing a different part in this context. Yet the Polish example suggests that there is, in practice, a link between 'stabilised' parties, so to speak, and the emergence of widely supported personalised leaders. The conclusion seems therefore to have to be that no truly satisfactory development will take place of what Weber referred to as charismatic leadership unless a 'pre-existing base', so to speak, is already provided and that that 'base' is to be found in the party system: the party system is the framework within which personalised leadership emerges with significant support in the population in the context of a liberal-democratic system.

Although such a conclusion seems ostensibly paradoxical at first sight, it is in reality logical in the sense that, without pre-existing parties, there is very little chance that a leader will emerge with the kind of profile required, both in terms of the content of the policies which he would propose and in terms of the

procedures which he would follow, whether it is by means of changing the structures (and policies) of the party to which the leader belonged or by creating a new party: such a new party has obviously little chance of success (at any rate of long-term success) unless it is organised in the way in which people are 'expecting' parties to be organised. Thus it could be claimed with some justification that there has to be some kind of 'understanding' between the citizens and the prospective leader, and that this understanding entails that leader and citizens have both an agreed view as to what a party should be 'like'. Without such a knowledge on both sides, the effort of the leader is likely to be doomed, at any rate if the liberal-democratic conditions of pluralism are respected.

We have therefore advanced somewhat in that, at any rate negatively, we come to know that, unless parties have existed for some time in a country and these parties have been 'recognised' by large segments of the citizenship (and are therefore viewed as useful, if not necessarily as truly satisfactory in practice), the conditions for the emergence of a highly supported personalised leader will not be met; at best the situation will therefore be unstable. This condition is fulfilled in the case of five of the six countries which have been studied here, the sixth being, as has just been argued, Poland, but Thailand is included, as Thai citizens had been confronted for some time with another party, the Democratic Party, which was institutionalised, while the others tended to be more traditional and rather localised. The condition that other parties be already institutionalised was met in France in 1958, when de Gaulle created a party for the second time: such a 'second' creation did not occur in a vacuum. The condition was also met in Italy in the 1980s and 1990s: what was at stake in the country was the setting up of a new party which would constitute an 'improvement' on the characteristics of those parties which were disappearing in the wake of corruption scandals after having been 'institutionalised' since the end of the Second World War or even earlier.

Yet, while the point which has been made so far does limit the extent to which satisfactory conditions will be met for the emergence of highly supported personalised leaders, it does not make it permissible to conclude that such leaders will indeed emerge when they are, so to speak, 'required'. There has to be a desire on the part of some politicians – or would-be politicians – to acquire a large dose of personal support: but the existence of such a 'desire' cannot be predicted with assurance; nor can one predict with assurance either that someone who has such a 'desire' has also the ability and the opportunity to succeed. There is clearly a limit in the extent to which success in these matters can be forecast, even only with a high probability.

Let us none the less advance a little further by summarising the conditions which have to be fulfilled. There have to be serious problems in the country concerned, social, economic but also political. Moreover, at least a substantial proportion of the population must perceive that something is markedly wrong and that strong remedies have to be brought about and that the current party characteristics are such that these remedies are very unlikely to be introduced. Moreover, there has to be some clear 'recognition' of what parties 'ideally' are for,

both on the part of citizens and on the part of actors and potential actors in the political system, whether within the parties or outside. Predictions have to stop at this point, however.

Yet this does not mean that the analyses of political scientists have also to stop at this point. Analyses have indeed to go further, but this can only be done by induction on the basis of the examination of what occurred in the past. This means that large numbers of cases have to be studied; these must include both situations in which successful personalised leaders have emerged, situations in which this has not been so as well as situations in which success has only been relative, for instance in the context of new, but small parties, but not in the context of large parties, whether pre-existing or not. The 'preoccupations' of citizens must be carefully noted: the psychological context at the level of the citizenry must therefore have been assessed. While such an 'inductive' programme cannot be expected to 'solve' the problems posed by the conditions under which 'charismatic authority' will emerge in political life, the examination of a large number of cases will ensure that the detailed contours of the problem in need of 'explanations' will become increasingly better known.

The case studies which have just been presented here showed that the personality of the party leaders had an impact, to begin with, on the way these leaders succeeded in changing party ideology or in modernising party image. Some of these leaders fared better than others in this respect: Blair, Mitterrand and Chirac were able to change the strategy of their party to such an extent that that party seemed to be a new party. Tony Blair won the leadership of the Labour Party by using the expression 'New Labour', on the principle that there was to be a break from the 'old' Labour ideology which had prevailed since the end of the Second World War, an ideology based on Keynesianism, nationalisations and trade unions' influence. François Mitterrand became the leader of the new French Socialist party created in 1969 by renewing the old SFIO and by gaining power on the basis of an electoral alliance with the Communist Party, although the aim was to overtake that party, despite the dominating position which it had acquired within the French Left. Jacques Chirac renewed his party and made it able to help him in his own desire to become presidential candidate. There are indeed other examples of party leaders, such as Willy Brandt in Germany or Felipe González in Spain, who were able to alter their party's strategy to such an extent that that party appeared to have become a new one.

These examples demonstrate the key part played by personalities in coming to power with the goal of bringing about ideological change or a modernisation of a party image. Others, for instance Mrs Thatcher and Junichiro Koizumi, have experienced greater difficulty in their early years as leaders. Mrs Thatcher gradually imposed a new image to her party, but only after she had won a battle against a variety of strong personalities. Her conquest of the Conservative Party meant that the party had to accept a neo-liberal doctrine instead of the traditional view that government intervention should play a key part in economic and social matters. Junichiro Koizumi became leader of the Japanese liberal democratic

party and prime minister of his country, as a result of the inability of the heads of the various party factions to agree on one of them being given the position. He did not truly change his party's outlook although his popularity in the country enabled him to provide the LDP in September 2005 with one of its largest parliamentary victories, namely with a net gain of eighty-four seats.

The impact of personalities is at its strongest when the party is created by its leader, as the fate of party becomes linked to the success of that leader. This has been so for Silvio Berlusconi in the case of *Forza Italia* and for Thaksin Shinawatra in that of the *Thai Rak Thai* party, both of them having built their parties by borrowing heavily from the techniques of marketing. They rapidly won a near-majority of seats in parliament, if not necessarily of votes. Berlusconi did succeed, not because he had created a new political party, but on account of his personality, his success in the business world and even his ability to invest in the sporting world with his soccer club, Milan AC. Thaksin profited from the instability of the Thai political system; he used his business success in building his party, but he also adopted a populist discourse to make a breakthrough in the rural and economically poorer areas of the country.

The role of the personality of the leader is also marked in the case of small parties, such as those set up to protect the interests of a social group, farmers, shopkeepers, the middle classes, for instance, as well as of a particular region or in connection with a specific issue, such as a fight against taxes or immigration. This type of party is generally strongly personalised. 'Green' or ecological parties did reject the very idea of personalisation of leadership in their internal organisation, admittedly; they favoured collegial leadership and introduced a rotation system for the key positions; they also opposed the plurality of elective mandates. The result was not very impressive, however, as these parties tended not to be very successful. On the contrary, most small 'new' parties had a strongly personalised leadership. This was often because of the circumstances of their creation, as with Le Pen in France, Bossi in Italy and Lepper in Poland. In some cases, the result is indeed close to a 'personality cult' on the part of party members, activists and officials. The party leader can thus intervene in the drafting of the manifesto, the selection of the candidates, the organisation of the ruling party organisations. The impact of personalisation is strong enough for some authors on the subject to even refer to 'charisma' in the strongest sense of that concept.

Personalisation of leadership has an impact not only on the party, with its members, its activists, and its officials, however: it had also an impact on the electorate (King 2002a: 6). By virtue of who he or she is, how he or she appears and how he or she behaves as a public figure, the party leader can have a direct effect on voters: the personal characteristics of leaders may then directly influence the result. Such an effect is helped by some institutional factors. There can thus be a degree of 'presidentialisation', either as a result of the popular election of some of the presidents of parliamentary systems; this can also be so if the prime minister is selected in the majority party or the coalition, by means of 'primaries': these have come to be adopted more frequently as a mechanism in

the selection process of leaders. Electoral systems, whether proportional or not, are also drafted more and more with the aim of engineering a majority, based either on a single party or on a coalition built around a personalised leader. Moreover, the public financing of political parties or of election campaigns did lead to a large increase in ‘communication’ costs designed to present such leaders in the best possible light: elections are therefore increasingly ‘mediated’ by television, radio and the press, television having become so pervasive that voters may even think that they know leaders whom they had never met.

Such institutional factors explain why parties display great care while selecting their leaders as these subsequently become candidates to parliamentary or presidential elections, as well as while preparing election campaigns since the personality of leaders is regarded as important. One must distinguish sharply between two types of selection processes, however. When candidates are selected by ‘activists’, the position held within the party tends to play a part: account is taken of the notoriety and even more the popularity of these leaders, as it emerges from opinion polls, to be sure, but activists are also influenced by such factors as the extent to which the prospective leader is a member of the majority within the party, is able or not to build a network of followers and has been truly successful at local or national elections.

On the other hand, when candidates to the leadership of a party are chosen directly by the voters by means of primaries, what counts essentially is popularity, indeed even charisma. These candidates have to be able to express themselves, either on television or at public meetings, clearly and precisely, while discussing in a lively but also comprehensive manner the main elements of the party manifesto. The personal qualities of potential leaders are thus dominant.

The personal qualities of leaders also influence the way in which these leaders campaign (King 2002a: 4). Election campaigns in most liberal-democratic countries are now leader-centred and no longer programme-centred. The change occurred first in presidential systems; it then affected parliamentary systems, above all those of a bipolar character, where the campaign came to have increasingly a ‘presidential’ character, with party leaders occupying the front of the stage, especially on television, as the performance of these leaders seems able to lead the party either to victory or to defeat.

The impact of personalisation does vary, however; it is most marked when two elements obtain, one of which being the unpopularity of the outgoing head of the government: such a situation profited particularly to Mrs Thatcher, Blair, Mitterrand, Berlusconi or Koizumi; the benefit then reverberated on the parties which these leaders ran. There were exceptions, however, as was shown in this volume in the cases of Chirac and Wałęsa.

Second, personalisation has also a large impact when the party profits from the ‘honeymoon period’ resulting from the victory of a leader at a presidential or parliamentary election. Such an impact is at its greatest when, in a semi-presidential system such as the French one, the dates of presidential and parliamentary elections do not coincide, although it does occur to an extent also when these two sets of elections take place on the same day. Thus while Mitterrand

was able to lead his party to a parliamentary victory in 1981 and 1988, this was not to be the case with Chirac in 1997.

The impact of personalisation on voters is marked in the case of small parties. The leaders of these parties can increase the awareness of voters with respect to specific issues and thus reinforce their party in the process. The use of a populist 'discourse' enables these leaders to cut across traditional cleavages, voters being attracted both by personal factors and by the political ideas which are being put forward. The impact of personalisation appears to be at its strongest when the leader stands on his own, for example by being a candidate at a presidential election: in France, Le Pen attracted more votes at presidential elections than did his party at general elections.

That social structure and leadership jointly play a part in the setting up, development and, indeed, fall of political parties is scarcely a controversial statement: yet there has been a tendency, in the course taken historically by the study of parties, for the pendulum to move sharply in one direction or the other. It moved too sharply in the direction of leaders in the studies undertaken by some well-known scholars in the years preceding the First World War. As was suggested early in this volume, the excesses committed by some leaders may have contributed to the emergence of the contrary trend which characterised most of the scholarly literature of the second half of the twentieth century: this has amounted almost to a denial that, in modern well-organised Western European liberal democracies at least, leadership should be regarded as truly relevant. Such an interpretation was unquestionably mistaken: developments of the later part of that century, in many, probably most, well-established Western European liberal democracies have shown that such a position was no longer realistically tenable as leadership strongly re-emerged.

The aim of this volume has been to attempt to move the scholarly literature towards a middle position, but on the understanding that such a position cannot be truly held unless two conditions obtain. One of these is that a key place in that scholarly analysis must be given to psychological alongside sociological investigations: this implies a 'retooling' of many, perhaps most of the members of the profession, especially in Europe, since, on the other hand, a psychological approach has been widely adopted in the United States, perhaps because the presidential system makes it more imperative to do so than the parliamentary system. The second condition is that detailed case studies be undertaken, as such inquiries are the only means we have at our disposal to unearth the complex ramifications of the part played by leaders and by the reactions of citizens in situations which are typically different from each other in many of their elements. If both these conditions are met, there seems to be no reason to believe that the question of the relative role of leadership and of social structure should remain controversial: there seems on the contrary to be every reason to believe that our understanding of the characteristics of parties, in contemporary Europe in particular, should as a result improve dramatically.

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