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Political Leadership: A Study in State Government

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Introduction

Political leadership. Two words that don't seem to fit together. Our society has become so accustomed to the corrupt and lackadaisical attitude of politicians. The extreme emphasis on career politicians who no longer represent their constituents has left a bad taste in the mouths of nearly every American citizen. Even at the State and local levels of government, scandal and inappropriate behavior are the norm.

Never has the cry for political leadership been so piercing. Is it possible for politicians at the local level to be leaders. Hopefully the response is ‘yes’. For this study, a member of the House of Delegates, who has been designated as a leader by his peers, has been selected for analysis. Delegate William Howell agreed to be observed during the legislative session of the House of Delegates. Three specific areas of leadership were observed during this time period. The decision making process, leader-constituent interaction, and the influence of values on leadership have been chosen as the three key areas of political leadership study.

Future implications of this work are as follows: it will demonstrate some correlation between the key areas of study and political leadership, it will leave some suggestions for how those who aspire to be leaders in state politics can do so, and show that there are in fact political leaders
Methodology

This project was conducted using several different methods of inquiry. Observation, participation, and direct inquiry were employed at different points in the completion of this project. Decision making, leader constituent interaction, and the influence of values on leadership were examined using these methods. Any one of these methods would have provided much information on political leadership. But, these three methods added to create a more complete picture of political leadership at the state level.

Observation was most heavily relied upon. From the beginning of session on January 11 until the end of the session on February 25, an average of two days a week was spent at the General Assembly. Watching Delegate Howell in his office and monitoring his performance on committees, and in session, represented the bulk of time spent at the General Assembly. This observation time yielded valuable information regarding where the delegate spent his time, and who he spent it with. Since complete access was granted, substantial information on interaction with constituents and office staff was gained. Seeing the delegate in action on the floor and in committee yielded information on how his values influenced his legislation and the final steps in his decision making process.
When observing at the General Assembly, a few guidelines were followed. First, each observation was carefully monitored so as to interfere with the outcome as little as possible. One example of this was sitting in on a meeting between the delegate and several older women who were arguing to have funds restored to the extension services (4-H). In this interaction, the participants sat in a circle with the delegate. Observation was conducted from outside of the circle without any input. The second rule of observation was to take into account the Hawthorne effect. The Hawthorne Effect is “the fact that people behave differently when they are being studied than they might otherwise behave” (Nelson and Quick 11). By realizing this at the beginning of the project and keeping it as a rule throughout, observations were always taken with a grain of salt. On several occasions, it was necessary to observe a group from the outside of the group. However, in political arenas the Hawthorne effect is almost unmeasurable due to the fact that politicians are always under observation.

Participation was another technique employed to achieve a picture of political leadership. This took the form of office work. Entering constituent opinion surveys into a database, answering phones, making copies, and delivering information to other delegates were among the tasks. These duties uncovered the most information regarding the leader constituent interaction roles that the delegate and the delegate's office
played. In addition, participating in office work allowed for even more informal observation of the delegate and his staff at work.

Direct inquiry, in the form of interviews and conversations, provided background information and a broader perspective on political leadership than just observation or participation could. The interviews of other delegates provided a bipartisan view of leadership in politics. Even if the delegates did not agree on policy, they did agree that leadership is necessary in politics. This is not to say that all of them exercised leadership in this setting, merely that the recognized political leadership when they saw it. Interviews with the staff of Delegate Howell provided yet another perspective by which to analyze political leadership. And, finally, informal conversations with the delegate, and his staff, greatly helped in clarifying information gained in interviews. On occasion, the delegate even responded directly to statements that other delegates made in interviews.

**Personal Background**

William James Howell was born on May 8, 1943 in Washington, D.C. He attended the University of Richmond were he graduated with an undergraduate degree in Business Administration, and the University of Virginia were he received his degree to practice law. Mr. Howell did not pursue a career in law, but in the field of banking, in which he worked for
22 years. In 1987, Howell made the decision to run for the House of Delegates. He won, and began his first session as a Delegate in 1988. Since that time he has been reelected to office three times. After a short time of continuing to work in the banking field, Howell retired to focus on state politics and a small law practice. Currently, Delegate Bill Howell is seeking reelection to a fifth term as Delegate for the 28th House District.

Delegate Howell is a member of the Baptist Church, a member and past president of the Fredericksburg, Stafford, and Spotsylvania Chamber of Commerce, member and past director of the Virginia State Chamber of Commerce, past president and campaign chairman of the Rappahannock United Way, and vice chairman of the board of directors of Mary Washington Hospital.

*Background of Virginia Legislature*

The Virginia General Assembly has been meeting in one form or another since 1619. The ancestor of the current legislative body was the House of Burgesses which began meeting in the settlement of Jamestown only twelve years after the colony of Virginia was founded.

*Background of House District 28*

The physical make-up of House District 28 has changed in the past five years. The former composition of this district included all of
Stafford County and half of the city of Fredericksburg. Redistricting, which took place around 1990, has changed the district to no longer include the city of Fredericksburg.

These changes have been significant in how the district is represented. Since there is only one local government to deal with now, some of the intricacies of dealing with a city and a county have been reduced. In addition, the geographic area has been condensed significantly.

Stafford County is the second fastest growing county in the Commonwealth of Virginia. A transition has brought Stafford from a rural, agricultural county to a suburban county. Approximately 70% of the residents of Stafford County are commuters who work in either the D.C. or Richmond area. The fast growth of the county is adding to the commuter population. Due to the large commuter population, transportation and education are key issues in this district.

One of the best sources of voter attitudes over the past seven years are questionnaires that have been sent to every household of registered voters in the district. The results of these questionnaires yield relevant information about the district’s stance on taxation, education, transportation, crime, abortion, gambling, environmental issues, gun control, and health care.

In the most recent questionnaire, which 807 households returned, the issues examined were Governor Allen’s proposed tax cuts, river boat
gambling, lessening environmental regulations on businesses, borrowing money to build prisons, gasoline tax increases, toll roads, the Governor's "welfare-to-work" program, and illegal aliens. 59% of respondents favored the Governor's tax cuts, 15% were undecided, and 26% were opposed to these cuts. On the issue of river boat gambling, 41% were in favor, 9% undecided, and 50% opposed to river boat gambling. Deregulation of business in the area of the environment was a split issue with roughly 40% on each side and 20% undecided. 46% responded in favor of borrowing money to build prisons, with 37% opposed. The two transportation issues, raising gasoline tax and more toll roads to fund road improvements, received roughly 45% on either side of the issues with 10% undecided. The Governor's "welfare-to-work" program was clearly affirmed with 90% of the respondents favoring this program. The issue regarding allowing illegal aliens to use state and local social services was opposed by 77%.

The most striking observation involves the last question on the survey which asks respondents to list which out of the following areas that spending should be cut: education, social services/health, law enforcement, and transportation. Although 68% say that they would like to see the total budget cut, there is no clear area where the cuts can come from. 64% want to increase or maintain education, 26% want to increase or maintain social services/health, 76% want to increase or maintain law enforcement, and 43% want to increase or maintain transportation. So,
although many wish to cut the state budget, few respondents are willing to make tough choices on where to make these cuts.

In addition to this year’s results, some survey results from the past shed some light on the make-up of the district. A majority of the district favor parental notification. A large majority of the district classify themselves as pro-gun, and in opposition to gun control. Legalizing radar detectors is also the desire of the majority. These responses paint a more-or-less accurate picture of Stafford County.

Decision Making

Truly analyzing political leadership requires that decision making not be overlooked. To examine decision making, bases of power will first be looked at, and then the decision making process will be outlined. Information gained in observation, participation, and through interviews will be applied to these decision making theories through-out.

In essence, politicians are trained decision makers, hired by the people to make those decisions that best represent and protect their interests. Every day, delegates are in touch with their constituency regarding upcoming decisions to be made. And every day, delegates make decisions on important legislation. In order to do this, these professional decision makers must have power.
Power in Decision Making

It is of particular interest to those who study the decision making process to first determine what form of power the decision maker possesses. French and Raven's classic analysis of the five different bases of power provide a good framework for understanding power in political leadership. The five bases of power are reward power, coercive power, legitimate power, expert power, and referent power. Reward power refers to the ability to offer positive rewards to constituents. This type of power depends heavily on whether or not the constituents expect that a positive reward can be provided. Coercive power is just the opposite of reward power, in that it hinges on the decision maker's ability to provide negative consequences to constituents. Legitimate power is directly related to the position held in an organization. Expert power is power obtained from the leader's knowledge or skill in a particular area. And, referent power is obtained by an individual being identified with a group that constituents view favorably. (Harrison 327-328)

French and Raven's study reveals quite shocking repercussions on state political leadership. Generally, in most contexts, one base of power or another is prevalent. For example, in large organizations, legitimate, or position power is the norm. In small community organizations, who you know, or referent power, is present. Political leadership, in contrast, utilizes all five bases of power. Numerous examples of each type of
power were evident in the decision making processes observed.

Time and again, it was evident that Delegate Howell’s decisions had the power to reward his constituents. The best example of this was his interaction with 5 older ladies who were lifetime residents of Stafford County. These ladies met with Delegate Howell to encourage him to help restore funding to extension services, which had been cut in the Governor’s budget proposal. The ladies presented a solid case, highlighting the good outcomes that the extension service had on all of their lives. Clearly, these ladies perceived that if their delegate were to decide to back this move, it had a good chance of happening. In this example, Delegate Howell demonstrated reward power.

Delegates also exercise a type of coercive power over their constituents. Certainly the delegates do not threaten their constituents to back them by guaranteeing negative consequences if they do not. However, constituents are acutely aware that if they do back their delegate, the outcomes they desire will increase. Likewise, if a constituent openly opposes a delegate, then the delegate will be somewhat less responsive to that constituent in the future. There is not an example to openly support this power with constituents, but coercive power is more evident with lobbyists. One lobbyist came to Delegate Howell to let him know what issues were important to his organization this session. This lobbyist ensured the delegate that this legislation was in line with
the delegate's beliefs, and were not to controversial. He was trying to ensure the delegate that he was behind his political ideology, and desired for the delegate to back his legislation.

One of the most evident bases of power in state politics is legitimate power. Political leaders are viewed as extremely legitimate sources of power. Not only do they occupy positions high in their organization (the government), but the politicians were placed in this position by their constituents. This is clearly evidenced by the respect and authority given to Delegate Howell. Generally, whether or not a constituent agrees with the delegate, they will treat him with a great deal of respect. Even most hard line Democrats who call into his office to let him know their stance on an issue give the delegate a great deal of legitimate power.

Expert power and referent power go hand in hand in the context of political leadership. In state politics, a legislator is assumed to be an expert after serving a term or two in the Assembly. This expert power comes from constituents observing the delegate making important decisions. Referent power is a result of legislators being a part of their peer group. When constituents see their representative working with others whom they respect, more power is allotted to them. Perhaps the best example of this occurred when a number of older women came to talk to Delegate Howell about an issue. They assumed that the Delegate
single-handedly had power to change a Bill that was in a committee that Howell was not even part of. Upon leaving his office, they also asked him for help in locating their State Senator. These ladies not only saw Howell as an expert, but also ascribed power to him because his peer group were legislators.

Politicians do have considerable power in their decision making. They are able to give rewards and punishment, and are deemed expert because of position and referent power. It is necessary to keep in mind the bases of power behind the decision making process in order to understand how Delegate Howell and his peers go about making decisions.

**The Decision Making Process**

When interviewing delegates on the decision making process that they use during the session, it was not surprising to find that few of them believed they consistently used a distinct process. Only a few respondents were able to outline some model of decision making. Others explained that there was simply not enough time involved to place each piece of legislation in any complex matrix for making a decision.

Every delegate interviewed, however, seemed to subscribe to some sort of process. First, the managerial decision making process will be analyzed, and then a model of decision making for the political setting will be developed. Finally, some critical analysis of the process and suggestions for legislators on the decision making process will be
The managerial decision making process as advocated by E. Frank Harrison employs four basic steps. The first step of this process is setting objectives. This step refers, very simply, to "the end point toward which management directs its decision making" (39). Setting a good objective for a decision will result in at least the opportunity of a good decision. Harrison mentions several other advantages of setting objectives, some of which are that they: "enable managers to appraise the soundness of their decisions while they are being made" and "serve as yardsticks for measuring, comparing, and evaluating the success of decisions in accomplishing organizational purposes" (40).

Political or governmental objectives are often the same for every decision. Delegate Jay Katzen listed a number of political objectives that shape every decision that he makes. Among them were that he is against regulation, opposes taxes and fees, and opposes encroachment of the Federal Government on the States. These type of broad political objectives were common denominators in the interviews with the delegates.

The second step of Harrison's decision making process is to search for alternatives. The purpose of this step is to find information which might indicate alternate decisions to be made. Searching for alternatives is summarized by Harrison.
Contrary to some opinions, the search for alternatives is parallel rather than sequential. The decision maker considers several potentially acceptable alternatives at the same time. The evaluation of each is a multistage affair; at each step new information is collected and evaluated about some of the attributes of a given alternative. (43)

Application of the concept of evaluating alternatives to the context of politics is simple. The question to be asked in politics, is “Can this be done in any other way than creating a new law?” Delegate Putney phrases this concept well: “Does it [the legislation] appear to be something needed to improve the status of the law in that particular area?” If the law does not need to be altered, then delegates can direct constituents in other ways of solving their problem.

Evaluating and comparing alternatives, and the act of choice are the third and fourth steps in Harrison’s model. In the third step, decision makers are confronted with question of how much the decision will cost, how much time it will take to implement, the physical resources necessary, etc... After this is done, the focal act in the process occurs, the decision is made. This act involves looking at the objectives and the alternatives, and choosing the best option.

In politics, some of the best decisions on paper may well be the hardest to implement. Delegate Howell gave Daycare Regulation as one example of this. Howell voted against regulating the daycare industry on
the grounds that it would be good to regulate it, but nearly impossible to
enforce. These are the type of decisions that must be made in these steps
of the decision making process.

Decision making as an aspect of political leadership often does not
follow the above model. A model proposed by J. Edward Russo and Paul J.
H. Schoemaker, in *Decision Traps*, seems to fit the legislative arena just
as well. Russo and Schoemaker propose the following four steps: framing
the issue, gathering intelligence, coming to conclusions, and learning form
feedback. (2-5)

These steps are applicable to the legislative process. Framing
means getting at the central issue of a piece of legislation. This involves
deciding how to broadly look at the bill. Gathering intelligence entails
finding all relevant information to a decision. As Delegate Clement
repeatedly mentioned, information gathering is a crucial part in his
making any major decision about legislation. Step two, according to
Clement, might include pursuing other avenues to accomplish the final
aim. The third step of coming to conclusions is a rational, rather than
intuitive, approach of actually reaching a decision. The implications of
this are to not simply vote along party lines, but as a result of a cognitive
process of decision making. Learning from feedback, the fourth step, is
listening to the repercussions that the law has on constituents, and how
they perceive the new legislation.
An Emerging Model

Neither of the above models seem to perfectly fit the legislative process for decision making. However, it is very clear from interviews with delegates that there is a process that can and should be used. The following four step model will be a combination of information gained from interviews with Delegates Putney, Orrock, and Clement.

The first step of the model is asking the question, "Is this legislation necessary?" In this step, the key issue at the heart of the legislation must be determined. Also inherent in this step is for a legislative decision maker to check if their own values match those advocated in the legislation. The legislator does not necessarily need to agree with the majority of his constituents at all times. As Delegate Howell stresses, a legislator must vote their conscience.

And, of course, the question must be asked, does this bill promote the good of citizens in the delegates district? If many letters and calls, or survey results, point in one direction, the delegate should use this as background. As can be seen, the issue of personal and political values are intricately weaved into the decision making process, and will be addressed later as a topic of their own.

After these initial concerns have been addressed, the question “Does the legislation accomplish its purpose?” can be asked. If the legislator believes that the end can be obtained without drafting a law onto the
books, this must be assessed now. In the legislative process there is almost always an opportunity to propose an amendment to a bill if the legislator believes that the current bill can not accomplish its purpose. One of Delegate Howell's bills dealt with deregulation of the bus industry. Several amendments were proposed to clarify the language and intent of the legislation.

The third step in this emerging process is to assess the impact of the legislation if it is passed. Issues of cost, ability to enforce, and time needed to enforce can be addressed at this juncture. If the legislation is not worth the investment in time or money, then it should not make it behind this third step. Again, if an amendment can be made to realign the legislation with acceptable cost and time margins, this legislation may still be considered.

The fourth, and perhaps most important aspect in political decision making, is to get feedback from constituents. This does not mean to simply monitor phone calls and letters, since most of these will be either very positive or very negative. Obtaining feedback means proactively getting constituent's opinions on legislation that has been passed. This could take the form of an opinion survey, an advisory board meeting, or informal contact with constituents. A good example of this is Delegate Howell's advisory board which meets twice a year to discuss current issues that have come up at the Assembly, or will come up in the near
future. These meetings are open to all constituents regardless of party affiliation. This step of obtaining feedback is crucial if the legislator plans to continue their career for years to come.

**Leader-constituent Interaction**

As in all contexts that leadership enters into, political leadership revolves around the concept of leader-constituent interaction. John Gardner describes this one concept as "the heart of the matter" of leadership (23). Delegate Clement describes the importance of leader-constituent interaction by saying, "Being a delegate is 10% how you vote and 90% how you keep in touch with constituents." Different authors choose varied sets of issues to deal with in respect to the interaction between leaders and constituents. Communicating with the public, two-way communication, structure and control, trust, pluralistic pressures, and follower responsibilities are among the key issues of leader-constituent interaction in the leadership literature. These areas will be examined, and then suggestions for the practice of good leader-constituent interaction in politics will be discussed.

**Credibility and the Role of the Leader**

Before any good case or argument can be made as to what the role of a leader is in interacting with constituents, we must first discuss the concept of credibility. For their to be any meaningful interaction between
a political leader and a constituent, the leader must be perceived as credible. In discussing leader-constituent interaction, J. Kevin Barge states, "the credibility of the source exercises considerable influence on the perceived persuasiveness of a message" (186). Kouzes and Posner list honesty, competence, and inspiration as the three dimensions of credibility (22).

To those observers of political leadership who have become so cold to the process of manipulation that occurs in politics, it would seem shocking to select honesty as a base criteria for any leader-constituent interaction. Most citizens would characterize political leaders as F. G. Bailey does in his book *Humbuggery and Manipulation*. Bailey states, "This cannot be done in any honest, open, reasoned, dispassionate, and scientific fashion. The leader must be partisan." (2) Kouzes and Posner openly disagree with this conception of leadership saying that, "Honesty is absolutely essential to leadership. If people are going to follow someone willingly...they first want to assure themselves that the person is worthy of their trust" (14). Delegate Lacey Putney stressed the need for integrity and honesty in saying, "To me, you can't pay a higher tribute to a legislator than to say this person is a man or woman you can depend on."

Competence is the second dimension of credibility. In the context of politics, competence refers mostly to strategic planning and policy making (Kouzes and Posner 17). Political leaders are expected to know the
business of governing. In effect, they must be experts at what they do, knowing both the process and gaining input to the process from constituents.

Inspiration is the third dimension of credibility. This concept has to do with the attitude of a leader. An inspiring political leader is “dynamic, uplifting, enthusiastic, positive, and optimistic” (16). This type of credibility is vital to leader-constituent interaction, because it encourages constituents to take initiative toward involvement in the governing process.

**Aspects of Leader-Constiuent Interaction**

Dealing with the public is one critical area of interaction between a political leader and the constituents. Gardner broadly addresses this interaction in speaking of the move in political leadership from “coercive governance to a middle ground” (25). He also notes that in past forms of government the public is viewed as largely uninformed, and incapable of making decisions about how they should be governed (24). What Gardner insinuates is that elected officials should represent everyone within their jurisdiction.

Delegate Forbes agrees saying that it is, in fact, the job of politicians to “represent all people in their district.” However, even with this view in mind, he holds on to part of the model of how the public has been viewed in the past. Forbes stresses the need to assess if
constituents are “right or just mad.” This at least partially indicates that the old model of an angry but uninformed public is still employed.

Conflicting demands and pluralistic pressures frame the way in which political leaders relate to their constituents. Edmund Burke describes two types of viewpoints that political leaders can adhere to. “Should leaders in a representative form of government be no more than mirrors of their constituents’ views, or should they arrive at their own best judgments, taking constituent opinion into account but not being bound by it?” (Gardner 31) These two schools of thought provide the frame by which political leaders must look at their constituents. Simply put, are political leaders to legislate in the manner that the majority of their constituents would at all times. Burke holds that being a mirror is not the best route.

This is held to be almost absolutely true in the interview’s conducted with the delegates. Delegate Howell holds that “you are in trouble when you don’t stick to your convictions.” Voting your conscience rather than mirroring constituents desires is one of the keys to political leadership. One example of a conflict between Delegate Howell’s voting and his constituents desires is on the issue of abortion. Delegate Howell is personally committed to a pro-life stance. A good deal of his constituents are from a pro-choice stance. Howell’s response to this disparity in interest is to say “This is the way I feel, if you don’t like it
find somebody else." This is a reasonable response given that he has taken into account, and is aware of his constituents opinions on the issue.

The structure of politics presents several challenges for leaders to overcome. When John Gardner refers to structure, he discusses the nature of the leader-follower relationship in a given organization. Japan is given as an example of creatively approaching the roles of leader and follower in the structure of industrial production. Just as Gardner concludes, there are no clear directions for leaders to follow in how formal or informal, structured or unstructured their relationships with followers are.

Political leaders are in a special kind of dilemma that Gardner does not include in his discussion of structure. These leaders are heads of organizations which have few employees but many constituents to represent. There is always the tension that Gardner makes reference to in his quote of Woodrow Wilson: "How can I democratize this university if the faculty won’t do what I ask" (25). Political leaders must democratically represent their constituents, but often find it difficult to do so if the constituents decline to participate.

"One generalization that is supported both by research and experience is that effective two-way communication is essential to proper functioning of the leader-follower relationship" (Gardner 26). Barge stresses that feedback and communications must be a two-way street between leaders and followers. On the leadership side of things,
leaders are responsible for providing constituents with feedback about their performance. And on the constituent's side, followers must give leaders feedback about their performance (Barge 170-171).

Two-way communication is somewhat of an oddity in political leadership. Most of the communication that takes place is initiated by constituents who are interested in the legislative process. In Delegate Howell's office the vast majority of calls and letters are in support of his decisions and actions. Melissa Conner, his legislative aide, commented that "usually you hear from people who are against you, he [Delegate Howell] hears from people who are for him." Conner also notes that Howell is always willing to talk with any constituent on any topic. He answers his phone and opens his mail because of the belief that he should "respect the concerns of all constituents." From observation and participation in the office, this appears to be a valid assumption.

However, even if the Delegate is always willing to talk with constituents, several problems appear on the constituent's end of the bargain. These problems directly address the role of the constituent. The first problem is that from the information just presented, there is little evidence that constituents that do not agree with Delegate Howell make an effort to let him know about that. There are some cases such as the ladies who met with the Delegate regarding restoring funding to the extension service. In addition, there are constituents who call to express
their stance on issues. But, it appears that these instances are isolated. Delegate Howell rarely has the opportunity to receive negative feedback while the legislature is in session.

Another short coming of two-way communications is that the majority of constituents that a delegate interacts with are on one extreme of the political spectrum. This is problematic because it leaves the delegate with little input on what the average person in his district thinks or believes. Surveys counter this problem somewhat, but are still vulnerable to the problem of having one extreme or the other as respondents.

**Value-Oriented Leadership**

One might readily assumed that any section titled value-oriented leadership would be a discussion of values that are core to effective leadership. Gilbert Fairholm, author of *Values Leadership*, makes just such an assumption in asserting common leadership values that include respect for life, liberty, justice, and happiness (130-132). However, any discussion of values that asserted a certain set of ‘common’ values over another would be ineffective. Values manifest themselves in beliefs and actions. Radically different beliefs and actions can come from the same set of values. For example, a leader might hold that the worth of individuals and justice are two key values. If that leader is confronted
with a constituent who is not following the vision and purpose of a group, these values might prompt the leader to make one of two very different responses. One response would be to discipline the constituent, out of a sense of justice. A second response would be to look at deviation from the group purpose as innovation, a part of being an individual.

Values in political leadership hinge on the needs of the individual constituent. Abraham Maslow devised an excellent system for understanding the needs hierarchy of constituents that is necessary to political leadership. Maslow envisioned a pyramid of needs with physical needs at the bottom and internal needs at the top. He believed that as an individual's needs began to be satisfied, they would progress to higher levels of needs. (Nelson and Quick 145)

The first level of need in Maslow's pyramid are physiological needs. These needs include food, clothing, and other items necessary for survival. The second level of safety and security needs is similar to the first level. These needs involve having a home, job security, and general safety from harm. Physiological needs and safety and security needs are the primary concerns of people.

That these concerns are evident is clear from comments made by Delegate Whit Clement. Delegate Clement is from the most rural area of all the delegates surveyed. In his district he is responsible for a great number of constituents who live in poverty. Delegate Clement was quick
to note that these constituents were not at all concerned with most of what takes place at the General Assembly. They were concerned with issues of survival.

The next three needs that Maslow discusses finish out the top of the pyramid. Social needs refer to relationships between peers. When social needs are satisfied, Maslow asserts that individuals will move to the level of esteem needs. These needs are met by a feeling that what one is doing is worthwhile. Self-actualization needs are the highest level of need in Maslow's hierarchy.

These three higher level needs are exhibited clearly in Delegate Howell's district. Most of the constituents in the 28th district are upper middle class commuters. These individuals are greatly concerned with such upper level issues as education, transportation, and taxes. These constituents have had their base physiological and safety needs met, so they now have higher level needs.

**Needs and Style of Leadership**

The level of a constituents needs also seems to correspond to a constituents values at a very simple level. Delegate Clement, for example, holds protecting the rights of minority and underprivileged individuals as extremely important. This is significant because this is what his constituents need. Delegate Howell holds individual initiative and responsibility as two of his most important values. Again, this is
noteworthy because the needs of his constituents are in line with his political values.

These two examples and the remainder of the interviews also point towards different value-oriented styles of leadership for different needs of constituents. James MacGregor Burns proposes two theories of leadership that depend on the values of the constituent. Transactional leadership is providing for the needs and values of a given group of people. Transforming leadership is raising the needs and values of people to a higher plain. (425)

Transactional leadership is a valid manner in which to go about satisfying physiological and security needs because these needs are concerned with the present. These two needs are immediate and crucial. They will only satisfied when the base needs are no longer felt. “If the transactions between leaders and followers result in realizing the individual goals of each, followers may satisfy certain wants, such as food or drink, in order to realize goals higher in the hierarchy of values” (426).

Transforming leadership is future based. Leaders and constituents are “united in the pursuit of ‘higher’ goals” (425). Transforming leaders have no reason to be concerned about base needs, because they have already been met. Leaders who embody transforming leadership are concerned with bringing constituents to be self-actualized.
Burns best defines political leadership in saying that it can include both transactional and transformational leadership in satisfying values of constituents.

Political leadership is those processes and effects of political power in which a number of actors, varying in their composition and roles from situation to situation, spurred by aspirations, goals, and other motivations, appeal to and respond to the needs and other motives of would-be followers with acts for reciprocal betterment or, in the case of transforming leaders, the achievement of real change in the direction of "higher" values. Political leadership is tested by the extent of real and intended change achieved by leaders' interactions with followers through the use of their power bases. Political leadership is broadly intended "real change." It is collectively purposeful causation. (Burns 434)

Delegate Howell is actually an excellent example of transforming leadership. He understands the needs of his constituents clearly. One issue that exemplifies his attempts at transforming constituents to a higher moral value is the abortion issue. Personally, Bill Howell is pro-life in his values. He knows, however, that his constituents do not all agree with this stance. As a result, Howell does not try to accentuate this difference by proposing pro-life legislation. He does vote on issues regarding parental consent, and limiting abortion in certain circumstances. Howell is convinced that he is "moving the people" toward
a higher value.

**Critical Analysis of Decision Making**

The reality of decision making in the political arena is that delegates do not always follow a cognitive process in making decisions on legislation. Often, as Delegate Forbes says, "only the larger pieces of legislation get research." This means that lawmakers are often forced to vote on issues they know little or nothing about. Delegate Katzen echoes the problem saying, "I do follow a model on big bills."

By not using at least some decision making process on all bills, the delegates are subscribing to the fallacy that someone else is doing their homework for them. This makes delegates easy targets of special interest groups, small groups of constituents, and lobbyists who almost always feel strongly on some small bills. As Russo and Schoemaker say, "People cannot consistently make good decisions using seat-of-the-pants judgment alone, even with excellent data in front of them" (3).

Another problem with the current methods of making decisions on legislation is that delegates make numerous decisions on legislation according to the party position. The party position should be taken into account, but legislators should not vote as blindly as they do along party lines. By doing so they make the hasty generalization that they should vote like everyone else in their party (or at least like the typical member of their party).
The last objection to the decision making process deals with leader-constituent interaction. Delegates are not acting as true representatives of their constituents if they choose to overlook certain legislation. Obviously, delegates do research on legislation that is important to their constituency. In addition to representing their constituents, the General Assembly is assigned with the task of representing the citizens of the entire Commonwealth. Perhaps it is a little altruistic to assert that legislators should use a defined decision making process on all legislation. But, legislators should make efforts to be informed on all legislation which they vote on.

**Critical Analysis of Leader-constituent Interaction**

Most of the problems with leader-constituent interaction can be solved by clarification of the political leader, and the political constituent's role. The constituent's, or follower's, role is incredibly ambiguous in the context of politics. Ideally, politics at every level is a participative process whereby representatives do their best to truly represent their constituency. The ideal is far from the reality in regard to constituent participation.

Robert E. Kelley, in his article "In Praise of Followers," offers some specific suggestions for constituents to be part of just such a process. Kelley's thesis is that "organizations stand or fall partly on the basis of how well their leaders lead, but partly also on the basis of how well their
followers follow" (124). What a frightening prognosis for the institution of government in this country. According to Kelley's thesis, if the role of followers (and leaders) does not dramatically improve, our democratic system of government is doomed.

Since it is so clear that "what distinguishes an effective from an ineffective follower is enthusiastic, intelligent, and self-reliant participation...in the pursuit of an organizational goal," what steps can political constituents take (125). In government an appropriate organizational goal is to represent the needs of the people. Kelley proposes four essential qualities to being an effective constituent. The first quality is that constituents manage themselves well. The example of workers who take initiative, are creative, and work well in teams is given in Kelley's article. In politics this could be translated to mean that a constituent is self-managed if they are able to employ strategies and techniques to solve their problems (presumably methods other than legislation). Constituents who think creatively for themselves and are able to do something about a need are certainly self-managed.

The second quality of constituents is that "they are committed to the organization and to a purpose, principle, or person outside themselves" (127). Commitment to a cause can be as simple as a constituent desiring to make this country a better place for their children. As Kelley points out, strong commitment to an organization is contagious.
This can be evidenced by looking back to the founders of this country. These individuals were deeply committed to creating a country where individuals were free to pursue life, liberty, and happiness. And, this commitment was incredibly contagious. It can still be caught today.

Building competence is the third factor that adds to make an effective constituent. Kelley gives the example of an individual who worked on a product development team. Upon realizing that no one was yet responsible for coordinating the engineering, marketing and manufacturing departments, she began to work towards that task herself. She then was able to present both a problem and a solution to her supervisor. (130) This is possible in politics. Individual constituents must be competent enough with the process of legislation and government to be able to propose new ideas. In effect, constituents must be experts in the process of governing, just as their representatives are expected to be experts.

Courage is the final ingredient of an effective follower. This courage involves two steps. First, the constituent must be evaluating if they agree with their representative. Second, the constituent must be willing to openly oppose or support their representative on the basis of the evaluation. If constituents are to participate in the governing process, they must be courageous. (130)

Perhaps it is naive to believe that constituents should participate in
their government. Maybe it is invalid to assume that political leaders should be leading political followers; individuals just as involved in the process as they are. But it is clear that if the system of government in the United States will ever improve, the participation of constituents will be necessary to help lead the improvement.

**Critical Analysis of Value-Oriented Leadership**

Perhaps the most significant problem with some of the delegates political values, is that they did not relate to their constituent’s needs. Delegates vote on and propose legislation out of their own needs and values, seldom realizing that their constituents may have drastically different needs. This approach is neither transactional nor transformational leadership.

Another difficulty of value-oriented leadership is assuming that there are a set list of values that a leader must share with constituents. On the contrary, it is a leader realizing the nature of constituent needs and then attempting to meet them that is important. Just as there are no definitive lists of traits that make a leader, there is not set of values that should influence leadership. To attempt to narrow down a field of core or founding values for a leader to exhibit would be nothing less than distraction from the leader’s duty to know and understand the values and needs of their constituents.
**Conclusion**

Political leadership does still exist today. It is a much different animal than leadership in other contexts. Decision making is significantly more dependent on power in this context. In addition, political leaders use an all together different process for making decisions. Leader-constituent interaction is highly reliant on an individual's credibility. And, political values are related to the needs of constituents. Political leadership is far from perfection, but the future of this country is dependent on true political leadership.
Bibliography


Appendix A
Delegate William Howell

Decision Making
* no conscious process
* does utilize pros and cons list
* input extremely important
  - letters and calls from constituents
* 95% of legislative decisions are non-controversial

Leader-Constituent Interaction
* respect all concerns
* several different types of constituents
  - Adamant
  - New ideas for legislation
* takes into account religious beliefs
  - value of each individual

Values

Political
* individual rights, initiative, and responsibility
* state should not infringe on individual rights
* role of government is narrow

Personal
* faith in God
Delegate James Forbes

Decision Making
* larger pieces of legislation get research
* opinion on policy
* read legislation carefully
* call home to constituents with expertise
* make decision “in office with doors closed”
* what is best for commonwealth

Leader-Constituent Interaction
* represent all people in district
* “are they right or just made”
* Do we have resources to help?

Values
* integrity
* accountability
* moral consensus--families
* Is legislation going to have long term benefit/detriment?
* wisdom

Observations on Howell
* “character and values describe him”
* not vocal in session
* “can’t think of any legislator I respect more as far as values and character”
Delegate Whit Clement

**Decision Making**
- Information gathering
- Facts
- pros/cons
- Is it good public policy?
- Does it best accomplish intent?
- constitutionality of issue

**Leader- Constituent Interaction**
- ask what the problem is
- get to the route of the “real problem”
- listen

**Values**
- sensitive to minorities
- watches out for children
- “It’s my responsibility to apply political values to effectively improve the lot of my constituents.”

**Observations on Howell**
- “conscientious legislator”
- keeps in touch well with constituents
- “Being a delegate is 10% how you vote and 90% how you keep in touch with constituents.”
Delegate Lacey Putney

Decision Making
* no analytical process
* 1. Does it appear to be something needed to improve the status of the law in that particular area?—clear cut need.
* 2. Analyze proposal to see if it will accomplish result?
* 3. Fiscal impact--cost effective, worth it?

Leader-constituent Interaction
* “attempt to determine details of problem”
* constituents do not give total picture
* constituents don’t like results of laws
* have to listen

Values
* “Government which governs least governs best.”
* don’t want more government, unless there is a “clear and convincing need for it”
* “issues which tend to expand role of government in life are issues I’m not going to be associated with”
* not the purpose of the government to protect us against ourselves
* integrity, honesty
  “never understood why any candidate would mislead anyone”
  “To me you can’t pay a higher tribute to a legislator than to say this person is a man or woman you can depend on.”
In the old days...
* members voted conscience
*not concerned about financial backers
* "some more concerned with being reelected or supporting political party position than honestly doing what is best for the Commonwealth of Virginia."

Observations on Howell
* "The true conservative, common sense public servant/legislator."
* "If I knew there were 100 delegates and 40 senators with the same concern for Virginia, honesty, integrity, work habits, I would be happy to leave and sleep sounder knowing there were people like that."
* "does not engage in floor debate frequently"
* "when he does people listen"
* "he is informed"
Delegate Bobby Orrock

Decision Making
* 1. Is it necessary? why, why not
* 2. Does it accomplish purpose?
* 3. With least amount of regulation?

Leader- Constituent Interaction
* Advisory committee --meets quarterly
* questionnaire in newspaper
* “Don’t base decision on number of constituents one way or the other.”
* Let’s constituents know how he votes and why

Values
* Honesty
* Forthrightness
* “Don’t try to blindside folks during campaign, or mislead the public.”
* tries to moderate his own values with society’s values

Observations on Howell
* “a lot of how I perform my duties as a legislator are from watching Bill”
* Bill tries to push the values of society more
Delegate Jay Katzen

Decision Making
- "Do follow model on big bills."
- "in the flurry of the session each delegate does not review each bill very much"

Leader- Constituent Interaction
- "ask what views of people at home are"
- daily contact with schools, town, board of supervisors

Values
- Conservative
- value of human being
- "I trust people as being users of their own resources."
- accountability

Observations on Howell
- "We do share those same values that I respect so much."
Melissa Conner

Decision Making
• input from advisory committee—two times a year
• surveys on public opinion

Leader-Constituent Interaction
• talk to anybody
• candidate should open mail and answer phone
• availability to constituents is key

Values
• behind government
• subtle approach
• use values to represent constituents
• personal convictions are key.
Appendix B
Would you like to join Bill Howell's Advisory Committee?
(Members receive legislative updates and are invited to bi-annual meetings to discuss state issues.)

What is the most important state issue(s) to you?

Comments:

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