PUTTING STATESMANSHIP BACK INTO STATECRAFT: THE ROLE OF
TRANSFORMATIVE AMBITION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By

Mark Antonio Menaldo

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Political Science

2010

ABSTRACT

PUTTING STATESMANSHIP BACK INTO STATECRAFT: THE ROLE OF
TRANSFORMATIVE AMBITION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By

Mark Antonio Menaldo

In this dissertation, I explore how changes in foreign policies are in large part a result of the

political ambition of national leaders. I critically examine how prevailing theories in

international relations conceive of leadership. Specifically, I reevaluate the role of political

ambition in international-relations and foreign-policy theories. Neorealism couples leaders'

ambition to the state's imperative to survive in the anarchic international system; leaders display

either restrained (security maximizing) or unlimited (power maximizing) ambition. Institutional

theories of strategic interaction focus on leaders in domestic arenas but narrowly focus on their

ambition for political office. Personality theories rightly assume that leaders' motivations vary,

yet these are seen as the product of idiosyncrasies; they mistakenly reduce the ambition for

power and achievement to unconscious drives and character defects. I investigate leaders who

have greater and a qualitatively different kind of ambition than is ordinarily recognized in

political science. I carve out a sphere of autonomy for statesmen by introducing the notion that

leaders with transformative ambition not only rise above constraints but also change the rules of

the game. Such high acts of statesmanship depend on the redefinition of ordinary political

ambition into great ambition, which is something leaders are self-aware of. Drawing on

Aristotle's idea of magnanimity and Niccolò Machiavelli's lessons to princes through

his examples of great founders, I distinguish between ordinary and great ambition. The latter is usually a precondition for transformative ambition, which leads an individual to challenge the rules of the day and can be revolutionary as leaders seek to make their marks on the world. As such, these leaders' foreign policy is not defined by the structure of international relations, but by their view of what can be accomplished through international politics. They are not blind to constraints, but use state capabilities and the art of statesmanship to push others to accept their worldviews. Through the force of their initiative, personalities, and the practice of statesmanship, leaders with transformative ambition try to accomplish great goals despite international and domestic constraints. Successful leaders manage to change the conventions and rules of international politics and (re)set the relations between states. In support of this argument, I examine various cases studies, including Otto Von Bismarck, Woodrow Wilson, Charles de Gaulle, and Pericles.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Leadership in International Relations, Political Ambition and Transformative Ambition, and a Critique of Neorealism

Introduction

Otto von Bismarck is considered an artful practitioner of realpolitik and a veritable diplomatic genius. He opposed the Vienna settlement because in designating Austria as the central state in the newly formed German Confederation, it "locked Prussia into being Austria's junior partner" (Kissinger, 1994, p. 104). Bismarck lived unhappily with this arrangement and strove to advance Prussian interests. In doing so, he bypassed domestic political forces that sought to unify Germany through parliamentary institutions and forged unification on the basis of the preeminence of Prussian power. His actions shifted the power dynamics in the region; after his deliberately orchestrated war between Austria and Prussia, Austria was forced to withdraw from Germany. In the aftermath, Bismarck deposed the rulers of states that had sided with Austria, challenging Klemens von Metternich's principle that in the interest of stability, the legitimate rulers in Europe had to be preserved. The North German states became subject to Prussian leadership "in everything from trade legislation to foreign policy" (Kissinger, 1994, p. 117).

Why did Bismarck pursue these policies, and why were his foreign policies successful? Did his desire for Prussian power and German unification inspire his foreign policy, or was he primarily responding to international constraints? Neorealist scholars attribute Bismarck's policies to his well-timed reaction to the international environment; that is, he responded correctly to the competitive nature of the system that Germany inhabited (Waltz, 1979, p. 127).

Another neorealist explanation suggests that Bismarck sought to expand Prussia's borders in order to make it more secure and was determined to create a unified German state (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 182). With Germany's borders enlarged enough to guarantee its security, Bismarck appropriately changed gears from war to diplomacy; he made use of both open and secret alliances that prevented any hostile alliance from forming against Germany, bringing peace and stability to the nation for the next two decades.

During the periods of war and consolidation, Bismarck prudently worked within constraints and took advantage of the opportunities presented by the international environment. Yet, his success was not limited to his perspicuity about the world. His gift for international politics was evenly matched by his ability to lead internal elements within the German state, as he consistently restrained the more ambitious and aggressive goals of the military leadership (Byman & Pollack, 2001, pp. 121—125).

Despite Bismarck's diplomatic accomplishments, they proved untenable in the long-term because he was unable to establish firm domestic institutions and policies that less able successors could inherit and follow. According to Henry Kissinger, "where Bismarck failed was in having doomed his society to a style of policy that could only have been carried on had a great man emerged in every generation" (1994, p. 136).

In 1890, the German leadership changed. Kaiser Wilhelm II came to power, dismissed Bismarck, and overturned the chancellor's moderate foreign-policy program. Wilhelm II undid Bismarck's alliances and his foreign policy of restraint. Under Bismarck, Germany was in a defensive alliance with Russia, which Wilhelm II ended, increasing the likelihood that conflict with France would foster a dangerous Franco-Russian alliance. Wilhelm II also introduced a

policy of expansion and a naval program to match Britain's, leading to Germany's isolation as it drove Britain, France, and Russia into the Triple Entente to combat German expansionism.

What explains this drastic change in foreign policy, from Bismarck's complex diplomacy and policies of restraint to Wilhelm II's reversal of diplomacy in pursuit of German expansion? The latter set the tone for Adolf Hitler's much more aggressive plans for Germany's limitless expansion. Were new opportunities in the international environment and Germany's stronger strategic position the cause of this change? Or was the change in leadership, and the political skill, vision, traits, and personal political ambitions of the individuals in charge, the key factor driving Germany's foreign-policy transformation?

The conventional answers largely depend on the level of analysis one chooses when studying global politics. The system approach focuses on how the international system influences the interactions between states. The domestic approach looks at the factors within the state that motivate its foreign policies. And lastly, the individual level examines the role of leaders and key decision-makers.

In this dissertation, I explore how changes in particular foreign policies are sometimes in large part a result of the political ambition of national leaders. I critically examine how prevailing theories in international relations conceive of leadership. Specifically, I reevaluate the role of political ambition in international-relations and foreign-policy theories. Neorealism couples leaders' ambition to the state's imperative to survive in the anarchic international system; leaders display either restrained (security maximizing) or unlimited (power maximizing) ambition. Institutional theories of strategic interaction focus on leaders in domestic arenas but narrowly focus on their ambition for political office. Personality theories rightly assume that leaders' motivations vary, yet these are seen as the product of idiosyncrasies; they mistakenly

reduce the ambition for power and achievement to unconscious drives and character defects. I investigate leaders who have greater and a qualitatively different kind of ambition than is ordinarily recognized in political science.

Such leaders, much like Bismarck, intermittently shine through history and, consequently, fundamentally transform domestic and international politics. I carve out a sphere of autonomy for statesmen by introducing the notion that leaders with transformative ambition not only rise above constraints but also change the rules of the game. Understanding high acts of statesmanship depends on the redefinition of ordinary political ambition into great ambition.

Drawing on Aristotle's idea of magnanimity and Niccolò Machiavelli's lessons to princes through his examples of great founders, I distinguish between ordinary and great ambition. The latter is the necessary condition for transformative ambition; it makes an individual challenge the rules of the day and can be revolutionary as leaders seek to make their mark on the world. Their ambition is profound. As such, these leaders' foreign policy is not defined only by the structure of international relations, but by their view of what can be accomplished through international politics. They are not blind to constraints, but use their state capabilities and the art of statesmanship to shape their societies and the world. Through the force of their initiative, personalities, and the practice of statesmanship, leaders with transformative ambition try to accomplish great goals despite international and domestic constraints. Successful leaders manage to change the conventions and rules of domestic and international politics and (re)set the relations between states.

When Does Leadership Matter? The Difference between International-Relations Theory and a Theory of Foreign Policy

For decades, international-relations theory was dominated by system theories, especially neorealism. Neorealism is considered an advance over Hans Morgenthau's classical realism because rather than rely on assumptions about human nature, it examines how the anarchic international system constrains state behavior and how the interactions between states produce predictable patterns. According to neorealism, under anarchy, states cannot trust each other so they must vie for security and self-sufficiency. Under these conditions, states unwittingly produce a balance of power.

A balance of power exists when one state does not dominate the international system and is marked by stability, while deviations from a balance of power create international instability that put some states at strategic disadvantages. These shifts can lead to destructive wars. From a structural perspective, the prelude to World War I was marked by Germany's and Russia's ascendancy and the decline of the Austrian-Hungarian Empire. The power of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy) and the Triple Entente (Britain, France, and Russia) was roughly equal; thus, any change to the balance of power either through an allies defeat or defection could lead to major conflict. As a result, each state had to adjust its strategy and capabilities to the aims and fears of its partners; state behavior was strictly determined by the fear that the balance of power could be undermined by the defeat or defection of a major ally (Waltz, 1988, p. 621).

Leaders' miscalculations may also create instability in the balance of power.[1] For

example, under Hitler's leadership, Germany began to rearm. Hitler then went further,

remilitarizing the Rhineland in 1936 and marching into Austria in 1938 without resistance.

Finally, when he invaded Poland in 1938, England and France declared war on Germany.

Although his aggressive actions incited a war, he had borne the costs and by 1940 had defeated

and occupied the major powers of continental Europe. However, with an insatiable appetite for

conquest, and an overoptimistic view of his military forces combined with an underestimation of

the Soviet Union's, Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa, a massive invasion of the USSR that

aimed to defeat the great power in a single, quick campaign. Hitler relied on his knowledge of

the German Army, blitzkrieg warfare, and his estimates of the Red Army. He miscalculated the

strength of the Soviet Army, especially its ability to replenish its defeated forces, the capacity of

the centralized government to conduct the war, and the fierce resistance of the Russians toward

the German invaders. Eventually, the Soviet Army took back the conquered territory and brought

the fight to Germany proper.

If deviations in the balance of power dispose states to conflict, then we may ask if the

lesson for leaders is that they should become balancers of power? Neorealists would say no, it is

not the responsibility of other leaders to right the ship when a Hitler comes on the scene; rather,

the balance of power is produced by the uncoordinated actions by states, much as economists

---

[1] Robert Jervis' (1976) seminal work, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, offers an explanation of state mistakes that lead to conflict through a psychological model of decision-making. He argues that psychological factors routinely lead to a misunderstanding of the international environment as decision-makers are dependent on beliefs, images, and perception of the intentions of others in the decision-making process thereby limiting their rationality.

think that market price is determined by unfettered competition between suppliers and consumers.

Neorealists do not support the idea that a statesman can consciously guide the balance of power. They would argue that Winston Churchill mistakenly believed that Britain's international role was as a "holder of the balance" (Sheehan, 1989). Nor is a disruption in the balance of power by influential nations and ambitious leaders who are tempted to overreach proof that leaders can willingly change the international structure, since eventually other states will engage in balancing. For realists, state decision-makers are prone to mistakes when they seek to reestablish the balance of power (unless it is clearly in their favor), but those errors are eventually corrected by other actors in the system, as Wilhelm II and Hitler learned when coalitions formed to check their expansion. According to realists, the anarchic international structure causes state behavior and also provides a self-corrective to any instability, which results in a reproduction of the existing structure. There is no role for enlightened leadership to either keep international politics as it is or try to change it.

Neorealism assumes that leaders' personal differences do not really matter for an explanation of international outcomes. As Morgenthau famously stated, "a realist theory of international politics, then, will guard against two popular fallacies: the concern with motives and the concern with ideological preferences" (Morgenthau, 1978, p. 5). Classical realists like Morgenthau and Kissinger still believe that it is within the statesman's purview to skillfully apply the lessons of realpolitik to statecraft (Kissinger, 1994). Kenneth Waltz's neorealism completely expunges the necessity for leaders to be conscious and self-disciplined practitioners of realpolitik. Instead, he argues that we can expect state leaders to behave like realists because of the demands imposed on a state under anarchy. State survival is the primary goal of

international politics, so all foreign-policy decisions should take into consideration the relative power of the state and other states. For Waltz, it is not a question as to whether leaders should act like realists. They simply do.

When Waltz (1979) introduced his parsimonious and scientific neorealism, which assumed an anarchic international order and rational unitary states, he set the tone for the construction of—and a raging debate among—neorealist, neoliberal, and constructivist theories. Each camp's optimism differs about how much leaders and states can avoid the perils of anarchy when forging foreign policy. Neorealism is the most pessimistic about the idea that individuals can transcend the necessities of power politics and create an alternative international structure. It regards the balance of power as the most influential factor in state behavior. State leaders really only have two paths they can choose. They either defend the balance of power when change favors another state or undermine it when the direction of change is in their favor (Mearsheimer, 2001, p. 3).

A theory of international politics, neorealism explains the outcomes of state interactions and makes a few general assumptions about states and leaders. Leaders' motivations are subordinate to states', and the kind of behavior we can expect from decision-makers flows from Waltz's assumptions about states. Waltz explains the purpose and limits of neorealist theory:

> System theories, whether political or economic, are theories that explain how the organization of a realm acts as a constraining and disposing force on the interacting units within it. Such theories tell us about the forces the units are subject to. From them, we can infer some things about the expected behavior and fate of the units: namely, how they will have to compete with and adjust to one another if they are to survive and flourish. To the extent that dynamics of a system limit the freedom of its units, their behavior and the outcomes of their behavior become predictable. How do we expect firms to respond to differently structured markets, and states to differently structured international political systems? These theoretical questions require us to take firms as firms, and states as states, without paying attention to the differences among them. (Waltz, 1979, p. 72)

While Waltz's theory of international politics does not explain foreign policy, his understanding of international relations bears on the foreign policies of nations. As Waltz (1988) says, it can: "explain only certain aspects of them. It can tell us what international conditions national policies have to cope with" (p. 619).

The neorealist emphasis on international-relations theory neglects specific occurrences in international politics (Rose, 1998). For example, while it can explain how the distribution of power operated during the Cold War, neorealism cannot explain why the United States embarked on a grand strategy of containment, which eventually mixed both realpolitik and liberal internationalist ends and means (Lobell, Ripsman, & Taliaferro, 2009).

What is not accounted for by neorealism must be understood through theories of foreign policy, which do not try to explain state interactions and patterns of behavior but, rather, the individual behavior of states and decision-makers. This is why among neoclassical realists, who blend the lessons of classical and neorealist thought, the idea that leaders are vital in shaping foreign policy has resurged because "systemic imperatives can only influence a state's behavior in the international arena through calculations and perceptions of the 'flesh and blood' officials who act on the state's behalf" (Taliaferro, 2004, p. 228).

The neoclassical realists agree with neorealists that basic systemic forces such as a state's relative power and its position in the international system determine foreign policy. However, neoclassical realists contend that a theory of international politics, such as the balance-of-power theory, cannot explain why states and leaders pursue particular foreign policies and grand strategies. For neoclassical realists, systemic forces are constant, but the combination of international opportunities and existing threats are "translated through unit-level intervening

variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and the domestic state structure" (Rose, 1998, p. 152).[2]

For example, neoclassical realists try to account for why states sometimes fail to live up to neorealist predictions, such as when they do not recognize and react to clear and present threats or have "underbalanced" by responding to threats either imprudently or halfheartedly (Schweller, 2004, p. 159). These scholars seek to explain the reasons why and how great powers pursue grand strategies at specific times.

Following their lead, I examine how leaders work within domestic politics to respond to their international environment. But I disagree with neoclassical realists that leaders' foreign-policy responses that are not appropriately realist are clear evidence of poor judgment, irrationality, or folly. In other words, I do not contend that anarchy in the system, the relative distribution of power, and pervasive uncertainty are simply filtered by intervening variables such as domestic politics and leaders' perceptions.

In this dissertation, I argue that some leaders take center stage in bringing about major changes in international relations. Specifically, some leaders possess a kind of ambition which drives them to transform the international conditions under which they operate.

Transformative Political Ambition

I begin with the crucial but undeveloped idea in foreign-policy theories that a leader's political ambition matters. Political ambition in international politics can manifest in war,

---

[2] Gideon Rose coined the term "neoclassical realism" to describe a school of foreign-policy scholars that evaluates how leaders inhabiting domestic environments differently assess relative power and produce qualitatively different foreign policies (Brown et al. 1995; Christensen 1996; Schweller 1998; Wohlforth 1993; Zakaria 1998). These theorists are less interested in the pattern of outcomes produced by state interactions and more in the behavior of individual states.

diplomacy, empire, and the normative and legal shaping of the international order: Hitler's will to dominate Europe and promote his radical ideology through aggressive expansion; Churchill's great desire to practice statesmanship in order to save Britain and the rest the world from the dangers of Nazism and tyranny; Woodrow Wilson's grand moral hope to practice international leadership by transforming the anarchic order into a moral and legalistic one; Mikhail Gorbachev's stunning reversal of the Soviet Union's traditional Cold War foreign relations through his policy of "New Thinking," an attempt at reform via conciliatory policies with the West and loosening the Soviet Union's grip on Eastern Europe. Pericles channeled his enormous aims into a vision of Athens as an imperial ruler and civilizing force in the Greek world. Alicibiades' ambition, on the other hand, knew no bounds; filled with a desire to achieve greatness through unlimited imperial expansion, he lacked Pericles' unwavering patriotism, not to mention his prudence. Alcibiades' determination turned into hubris: he devised the plan for the Sicilian expedition that led to a catastrophic defeat for Athens.

When a leader shows great ambition, it strongly influences his political preferences. Ambition is a complex phenomenon because it is highly individualistic but, to some degree, is also nurtured by the leader's domestic regime. Constitutions, social mores, and the passions and habits of the polity favor particular qualities in their leaders and so have a hand in shaping and constraining political ambition.

At the same time, it is on account of political ambition that leaders seek to transcend the constraints of domestic politics by bringing in new modes and orders, transforming and redefining existing constitutions, or shaping the polity's moral and political understanding. These kinds of leaders turn to international affairs to accomplish their ambitions and find it quite necessary to also rise above the limits of the international environment as well.

11

In order to apply radically new foreign policies, leaders must change the conditions under which they operate. For example, we often say that on 9/11, the world changed. However, the response to 9/11 required that George W. Bush change the world, specifically the way the United States would confront the new danger presented by international terrorism. To fight the wars against Al-Qaeda and worldwide terrorism, Bush redefined what constituted a state threat. America's new enemy was stateless yet simultaneously inhabited states. Moreover, the Bush Doctrine altered the laws of war by giving preventative war a new meaning. Since winning could no longer be thought as the mere capitulation of the losing state, Bush also changed the aims of war and the way a state and conventional army would have to fight. Certainly, Bush had no desire to fight a war on terror. From necessity his international ambition took shape. He stepped in, for better or worse, and set the new rules of international diplomacy and war that are now the constraints that Barack Obama operates under.

Although necessity in international politics is inescapable, I am interested in leaders who manifest transformative ambition in both domestic and international domains. Domestically, transformative ambition surpasses the desire for political survival, and such leaders seek to change the concrete political and material elements of a regime. So what is the nature of ambition, where does it come from, and what effect does it have on leaders' political behavior? From the perspective of individual psychology, ambition is a product of unconscious motives and personal experiences. Seen in this way, it is the displacement of unconscious emotional needs upon public objects. As such, its origin is very idiosyncratic. Yet, ambition in political life, unlike other forms, is both personal and public. Personal motives drive individuals to seek positions of leadership. Politics is competitive, and to win office, politicians must please their constituencies.

Once in power, the less ambitious remain satisfied with their posts, while others may set their sights to positions of higher rank and more power. This dissertation pays particular attention to the idea that political ambition not only differs in degree but also in kind. This categorical difference is clearly and forcefully articulated by Abraham Lincoln (1953/1992) in his Lyceum Address, which he gave at the age of 28:

> Many great and good men sufficiently qualified for any task they should undertake, may ever be found, whose ambition would inspire to nothing beyond a seat in Congress, a gubernatorial or a presidential chair; but such belong not to the family of the lion, or the tribe of the eagle. What! Think you these places would satisfy an Alexander, a Caesar, or a Napoleon? Never! Towering genius distains a beaten path. It seeks regions hitherto unexplored. It sees no distinction in adding story to story, upon the monuments of fame, erected to the memory of others. It denies that it is glory enough to serve under any chief. It scorns to tread in the footsteps of any predecessor, however illustrious. It thirsts and burns for distinction; and, if possible, it will have it, whether at the expense of emancipating slaves, or enslaving freemen.

Lincoln draws our attention to those individuals with boundless ambition and the spiritedness to go with it; only bold and pathbreaking political actions that increase their power and glory can satisfy them. Figures such as Alcibiades, Napoleon, and Hitler displayed the restive and grand ambition of the family of the lion and tribe of the eagle. Each set his sights beyond the bounds of his context but lacked magnanimity, a rare virtue that couples with great ambition and makes it shine even greater while restraining it at the same time. Lincoln understood such transcendent ambition, and he thought that even in America, with its carefully crafted institutions, in which ambition is made to counteract ambition in an effort to tame the ambitious, towering figures with a hunger for glory would arise again.

Although Lincoln is concerned with America's future, he identifies the kind of political ambition that spills over into international politics. Yet, strongly motivated individuals cannot bend international politics simply by their wills. A leader who is dedicated solely to personal

13

aggrandizement must have a resourceful state at his disposal. In addition, international circumstances and other actors can either curtail or provide the opportunities to amplify his ambition. Conversely, leaders can try to stop dangerous global ambitions from materializing through diplomacy and by supporting institutions around the world that channel their ambition toward the fulfillment of international goals.

Leaders like Pericles, Churchill, and Charles de Gaulle pursued the good of their states and restrained the power-seeking motive, showing both great ambition and magnanimity. Regardless of what shape a leader's ambition takes, its fulfillment depends on the strengths and weakness of his rule, the domestic and international opportunities that are available, and how he adapts to changing circumstances.

Ambition in International-Relations Studies and Political Philosophy: Carving a Middle Ground

The first three chapters of this dissertation reevaluate the role of political ambition in various international-relations and foreign-policy theories: neorealism, institutional theories that assume leaders are motivated foremost by a concern for political survival, and personality theories that assume that the motivations influencing foreign policy are the product of psychological idiosyncrasies. For realists, states have to protect themselves from other states because no other state or governing body will do so. In this sense, all states perform the same functions for their citizens, and leaders represent the authoritative voice of the state in foreign policy. As a result, realists argue that a unitary state should be assumed in matters pertaining to international politics. In a realist world, the state's motivation for survival is a leader's too. Political ambition is coupled with the leader's obligation to respond to the demands imposed on the state by anarchy. Realist leaders select foreign policies while working in the realm of "high

14

politics," which means that they worry about the international environment, and state security is the overriding preoccupation of their statecraft.

Theorists that focus on the effect of domestic institutions are skeptical of realism's depiction of "high politics" and argue that political leaders are not only beholden to the state, but to themselves and their desire to remain in power. No matter which political regime is under observation, these theorists assume that leaders are always intent on maintaining power. As a result, their policy preferences are not independent of the citizens who are in command of the institutions that select them into power. These scholars describe democratic and autocratic leaders as strategic because they practice statecraft with a view to satisfy the preferences of citizens who control their political fates. The incentives of political actors at the level of "low politics" are the most influential factors in foreign-policy decisions.

Finally, personality scholars think that political ambition reflects behavior that is based on psychological needs, the most pervasive of which is the need for power although the need for approval and affiliation are also prevalent. For these theorists, ambition precedes political life because it is a function of psychological needs and drives that are well developed long before leaders enter politics. Strong internal motives combine with personality traits and produce individual orientations that determine leaders' behavior in international politics. For personality scholars, foreign-policy behavior is largely idiosyncratic: personal characteristics affect their foreign policy behavior.

My own understanding of political ambition and foreign policy blends the ideas of those who study domestic institutions and those who study leaders' personalities. First, these theories seek to explain the effect of leaders on foreign-policy outcomes, and to do so they make explicit assumptions about leaders' ambition. Domestic and personality theories also have a broader

15

appeal because they speak to ordinary opinions about political decision-makers. The idea that

leaders are ambitious, strategic, eyeing the next election and minding their competitors, and

acutely aware of how to wield policy to their advantage is the subject of everyday conversations

about leadership and politics.

Historical and contemporary leaders are also seen as colorful creatures: as severe head

cases like Hitler or confident and self-controlled like Churchill. They can be hungry for power

like Saddam Hussein or approval-seeking like Bill Clinton, as inherently belligerent as

Alcibiades or as naturally dovish as Nicias. We can't help but admire them for their good

characteristics and loathe them for their bad ones. Despite the broad appeal of these current

theories, the domestic-institutions and personality approaches are so theoretically and

methodologically distinct that they are rarely spoken about as natural complements to each other.

I unite the insights that these perspectives offer by turning to political philosophy.[3] The

nature of political ambition and the problems it poses in politics and to societies are major

subjects in political thought and are broached by classical and modern thinkers. The view of

political ambition that I present here relies on both international-relations studies and the

political and ethical treatises of thinkers such as Aristotle, Thucydides, and Machiavelli. For

---

[3] In this dissertation, I discuss the idea of leadership in international relations in a way that is intelligible and of interest to international-relations scholars. Yet, at the same time, I intend to keep this analysis free from the confines of any one theory. It is best understood as an exercise in interdisciplinary political theory. When international-relations scholars turn to political theory, they usually tie existing theories in international relations to classical and modern thinkers. Perhaps the most important example is Kenneth Waltz's (1959) famous book *Man, the State, and War*. Relying on the ideas of political thinkers, Waltz coined his famous three images, "human nature," "state," and "system," which became the standard way international-relations scholars study international politics, through the prism of distinct "levels of analysis." For another seminal work, see Michael Doyle's (1997) treatment of classical and modern political theorists, which shows how their ideas both fit in and help shape the major outlooks in international-relations theory: realism, liberalism, and socialism.

Aristotle, political ambition is a phenomenon in its own right and deserving of its own study, which Chapter 4 covers in depth. Through Thucydides' explanation of the Peloponnesian War, I observe how the ambition of ancient Athens's leaders was directly involved in the precipitation and conduct of the war against Sparta. Chapter 5 explores how Pericles' vision of Athens deeply influenced its politics and foreign policy. His diplomatic decisions were instrumental in precipitating the war against Sparta and his military strategy revolutionized the conduct of ancient Greek warfare.

According to personality scholars, political ambition is best understood in an analysis of the psychology of the individual, who exhibits completely unique characteristics and, as a result, cannot be compared to another. In this sense, political philosophy and personality theories share the same starting point. But for political theorists, discussions about political ambition are tied to the particular regime where it is observed. Scholars that study domestic institutions assume that leaders care about political survival, but the variance in regimes (democracies and autocracies) produces radically different strategies and policy decisions.

The relationship between political ambition and the study of regimes raises normative questions about justice and the proper role of leadership within a government. Institutional rational-choice theories of strategic leadership are as germane as personality theories because they can help us understand the political ambition of individual leaders and how it interacts with the international environment and institutions they must govern.

Combining the Insights of International Relations Scholars and the Idea of Statesmanship: Transformative Political Ambition and Leader Statecraft

Political ambition, I argue, is partly a product of a leader's unique development and personal experience, but it also depends on the regime type that conditions a leader and that a

leader may condition in turn. In this regard, my understanding of political ambition complements and combines the rational-choice and personality approaches, which tend to reduce it either to strategic institutional maneuvering for the sake of staying in power or to static personality traits and psychological needs that are prepolitical.

Political ambition and the leadership that accompanies it is partly the product of internal drives and unalterable idiosyncrasies that compel individuals to seek power but is also nurtured by and sometimes bound to the regime. Political culture and the process that brings leaders to power have a way of shaping ambition, as they do to decision-makers' political aptitude as a leader undergoes learning. Successful leaders learn the proper way to channel their ambition in their respective regimes. In this respect, as rational-choice theorists argue, political ambition is constrained by the institutions and subset of the population that select leaders.

Yet, leaders do not just mechanically respond to constraints and may be interested in ruling as well as staying in power. Furthermore, ambition and the desire for power do not follow one simple trajectory. Politically ambitious leaders can respect the laws of their country, subvert and manipulate them, and even seek to alter the principles and institutions on which a regime is based. Aristotle's magnanimous man represents a leader of great ambition who only acts for great political purposes but at the same time restrains himself from overstepping his regime's laws, while Niccolò Machiavelli's *Prince* speaks directly to leaders who found new regimes or refound existing ones. His leaders commit cruel and criminal acts to bring about their politics; they are willing to subvert existing political institutions or create them from the ground up. Contemporary scholars have examined the independent role of leaders to explain institutional change (see March & Olsen, 1984); leaders are viewed as educators and moral guides who are

capable of transforming the preferences of followers (Burns, 1978);[4] leaders can also practice the

art of political manipulation and change their environments through the use of "heresthetics" in

order to win (Riker, 1986).

I examine political leaders who have what I call transformative political ambition. On

their own initiative they try to make bold and sweeping changes to domestic and international

politics. Their ambition and concomitant behavior cannot be explained by current political-

science theories that posit political necessity as the source of behavior. Since such acts of

transformation are rarely necessary. The ideas I consider in this dissertation view domestic

constraints, the international structure, and the idiosyncratic personality of individual leaders as

the fount of leader behavior. I take an alternative approach and make the case that some of

history's leaders have purposely tried to change the course of politics. On account of their

ambition and statesmanship, they gained a mastery over politics and transformed their political

environments.

---

[4] James MacGregor Burns (1978) popularized the idea of transformational leadership, which
connotes leadership at its "highest," when leaders and followers engage with each other in such a
way as to provoke a change in morality. Transformational leadership contrasts with transactional
leadership, which is based on the cost-benefit transactions between leaders and followers. I share
Burns's interest in examining leadership that makes a difference in politics and also at the level
of ideas (pp. 454–55). However, Burns understands leadership types in a purely psychological
way and seems to think that transformative and transactional leadership are mutually exclusive. I
understand ambition and leadership to be more than a psychological process, and I disagree that
leaders engage simply in transformational or transactional leadership. Burns's leadership
definition are "ideal types," so it is unfair to criticize his ideas on the grounds that even leaders
that appeal to and help redefine the moral sentiments of followers must also engage in the
ordinary entanglements of transactional politics. However, Burns does think that
transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership as the latter appeals to
"selfish" concerns and is expressed through discrete actions and exchanges. As a result, I argue,
Burns does not spell out the full implications of transformational leadership. While the most
profound changes are moral and psychological, they will not endure without redirecting citizens'
habits, mores, and opinions through a concrete change in institutions: the challenge of a
transformational leadership is to create the conditions for transformation through practical,
transactional politics.

These leaders possess transformative ambition, which is spurred by a combination of personal and public concerns. Leaders want political power and need it to get things done. However, scholars tend to simplify ambition as an impulsive desire for power or as a calculated interest in political power that is held by rational and self-interested individuals. I do not argue against the plausibility of these claims. However, I propose that individual ambition can have a public scope beyond private aggrandizement. Leaders can seek honor that is gained from the esteem of respectable citizens. When leaders seek some public recognition, it can lead them to refuse power for its own sake. Moreover, such aspirations can result in leaders bearing themselves with responsibility toward office. Responsibility does not amount to a denial of ambition, but it does enable some leaders to distinguish between their sense of worthiness and the limits that political power presents to fulfilling their ambition. As I will discuss in greater detail, Aristotle's idea of magnanimity helps us to understand how leaders with transformative ambition hold high notions of their merit and a desire for greatness while also permitting them to consider moral goals, such as duty and justice, in their self-assessments.

The ambitions of the transformative leaders discussed in this dissertation share a common quality, which is a desire for grand accomplishment that is attained by making a lasting contribution to one's country. Thus, transformative ambition varies in its content and direction, depending on a leader's perceptive understanding of the prevailing order of political life. Such leaders aspire to reshape fundamental features of domestic society. For example, they may seek to reorder domestic institutions, to propose new policies and establish new doctrines, and to rethink the ideals that animate their countries. Far-reaching ambition, like that of Pericles and Charles de Gaulle, aims for a redefinition of the national character that not only influences citizens' beliefs but also shapes their habits and practices. However, in this dissertation I am

20

interested in a more specific political transformation, the kind that ties the success of domestic goals to foreign policy.

All leaders must pay some attention to the state's foreign affairs, but some transformative leaders like Pericles, Otto von Bismarck, and de Gaulle deliberately linked their domestic goals to foreign policy, attempting to amplify their country's political interests, which at the same time provided each leader with a greater stage and more substantial opportunities to fulfill his political ambition.

As leaders translate their convictions and ideas about domestic politics into clear achievable goals and successfully implement them at home and in their foreign policies, they may also make profound changes to international relations. In Chapter 2, I argue that Bismarck exemplifies how transformative ambition can have a profound effect on the state, geopolitics, and the rules and practices of statecraft. His domestic aim for German unification drove his transformative politics, which had consequences for international politics. Bismarck's political skill and genius was unmatched. He accomplished extraordinary changes not only by outmaneuvering domestic and foreign rivals, but also by taking it upon himself to apply a novel scientific outlook to international politics. Bismarck held to the notion that in the service of the state an amoral concept of power was required in the practice of domestic and international politics. He introduced Realpolitik, which prioritized power and opportunity over ideology. By abandoning established rules and beliefs, he led Germany toward unification. In the process Bismarck radically reshaped the geopolitical landscape in Europe, revolutionized diplomacy, and overturned the established rules that had held the international order together.

Leaders like Bismarck intermittently shine throughout history, and they manage to change its course. Critics point out that to try to understand historical change through the

ambitions and actions of one individual elevates him to the status of transcendent hero. In addition, the idea of transformative ambition favors traits such as boldness and decisiveness, as well as non-cooperative qualities, such as adherence to an abstract set of values and the ability to walk a solitary path. Although I argue that leaders' ambition is a unique quality that catalyzes historical change, I closely examine how leaders develop their unique attributes and art of leadership within the context of their regimes. Although I focus mainly on leaders who have risen to the pantheon of great statesmen, I pay careful attention to how they took part in the rough and tumble politics of their days. Yet, even when scrutinized in relation to the fine grain of their contexts, my analysis shows that they still managed to introduce new political ideas and novel practices that changed the established principles and customs that had governed their nations' domestic politics as well as the structure of global affairs.

Through the example of Pericles, I demonstrate how the interaction of personal characteristics and regime politics indelibly shapes some leader attributes. Yet, regimes can also foster environments where the better qualities of individuals can flourish, which enable leaders to stand above the morass of politics. These statesmen can also provide guidance to improve the lives of their fellow citizens. For example, Athens produced leaders who were very competitive, cunning, and bold. They were molded by the empire's ascendance, and they behaved in ways that added to its glory and strength. However, as a leader, Pericles was superior to his contemporaries in many ways. He was a natural imperialist like other leaders, but he acted as an independent force in policy and who was able to shape and curb his followers' political aims. Thus, he could define the Athenian imperial project in a way he believed was both sustainable and did justice to the Athenian character.

Transformative ambition aims for fundamental change, and when it succeeds, we can look back at historical leaders and observe what political ideas they held, how they perceived and used state power, and in what way their leadership modified the state's political interests and influence. The argument I present here is critical of the neorealist view that the international order is properly characterized as an unchanging systemic structure. Whether the world is populated by tribes, empires, small city-states, or modern nation-states, neorealists argue that the behavior of political actors only leads to changes in the distribution of power. Despite such changes, this kind of behavior only serves to confirm that anarchy, which is the basic ordering principle of international relations, is a continuous feature of the international system. Neorealism denies the possibility of system transformation, or treats such transformation as an unpredictable accident. It is highly skeptical of the idea that individuals can act as creative forces who redefine the parameters under which states operate. However, the emphasis on anarchy as an ordering principle fails to capture how a variety of statesmen throughout history have made sense of international relations. One way that the parameters and rules of international relations change is when leaders link domestic transformations to foreign policy, which in turn challenges prevailing international norms and practices. Realism explains how sharp changes to the balance of power affect the world of states and the outbreak of wars, but realists argue that the nature of international politics nevertheless remains constant. In contrast, I emphasize how transformative leaders introduce change into the nature of international politics as they grapple with foreign affairs, as they enter into conflict or try to avoid it, and as they attempt to control their international environment and other states' behavior.

I focus on transformative ambition because it is an exceptional quality that also varies among leaders. Not all leaders are ambitious for the same goals. Some seek political power and

practice strategic politics, while others might desire fame and, while in politics, have an eye fixed on posterity. Leaders might care about their legacies, love honor, and try to gain it by serving noble purposes. Conversely, some are ambitious for self-aggrandizement, heroic acclaim, and glorious accomplishment.

Transformative ambition needs content and direction, which flows from a leader's personal ambitions, his moral opinions, and the challenges and opportunities presented to him. In this dissertation, I do not make the simple distinction between self-interested leaders and public-spirited ones. Leaders with transformative ambition often combine a desire for personal achievements with service to the common good as they understand it. Through Aristotle's idea of magnanimity, I provide a model of leadership that demonstrates how self-regarding leaders reconcile their great personal ambition with the demands of public-minded statesmanship. Magnanimous leaders aspire for great honors and wish to act on a grand scale, but they often have a sober view of power; so they limit their honor-seeking to one that can also be dedicated to justice. Although their ambition is dedicated to the grandeur of their nations, their strength of character and prudence of judgment provides them with the capacity to think and act at a distance from ordinary citizens. The ability to remove themselves from quotidian matters and base self-interest enables them to translate their ambition into a productive vision that can transform the existing elements and principles of a regime toward greater and nobler purposes. In Chapters 4 and 5, I argue that de Gaulle's and Pericles' transformative ambitions did reconcile the desire for lofty accomplishment with service to the political community. As individuals, they possessed superior leadership qualities, virtues, and an inner sense of greatness. With their sights set on political goals that did justice to their pride and notions of dignity, they found that the opportunity to fulfill their ambitions arose through energetic service to their states.

For example, de Gaulle channeled his ambition toward public service; he sought to transform the state through the promotion of a distinct French unity, achieved by pursuing national greatness. He turned deliberately toward foreign policy to increase the nation's glory, its prestige, and a shared sense of national purpose. Like Pericles, he believed that the success of domestic transformation, de Gaulle's idea of French unity, resided in elaborating a grand foreign policy. However, the success of the states' political programs depended on each leader's ability to foster domestic and international institutions while they also prepared the polity for a psychological and moral acceptance of the new domestic and international orders they sought. In the bipolar era that was divided into two blocs, de Gaulle sought to recapture French grandeur for the sake of unity. He did this by increasing France's international role by transforming the global order at the margins: he attacked the Cold War status quo, made inroads in the third world, and sought to maximize France's influence and freedom of maneuver despite the fact that its relative power did not warrant such a forceful foreign policy.

Pericles, on the other hand, was the leader of a significant imperial power who prudently calibrated imperial expansion to Athens's material resources. He was acutely aware that the democratic regime he brought into being had a distinct daring character, which was both the source of Athens's imperial success and a potential security risk. Although realists consider the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta as an inconvertible case of the effects of dramatic shifts to the balance of power, I demonstrate how Pericles' leadership and ambition gave shape to Athens's imperial project. Pericles had the difficult task of managing an expanding empire's power in prudent ways. He did his best to turn the desire for expansion and wealth toward Athens's more noble activities, such as political participation, public works, and philosophical and aesthetic achievement.

A leader's political ideas and experiences also govern his ambition. The art of leadership and the political thought of statesmen can also have a decisive influence on state behavior. For example, leaders contemplate what their and their citizens' roles in society and politics should be. They differ in their views about the proper purpose of government and the meaning of the state's constitution and way of life. As a result, these ideas and circumstances can affect the ends toward which they wish to direct their countries.

Leaders with transformative ambition, like de Gaulle and Pericles, can be the driving force for political change in their regimes and they often deliberately turn to foreign policy to achieve their ambitions. I argue that these leaders are not blind to the conditions that international relations impose on states and that they use artful diplomacy and harness their states' capabilities to pursue innovative and beneficial transformation of their nations. Through their actions, moreover, the world of states is partly of their own making, reflecting their ideas about what the world is like and how it should be.

The remainder of this chapter discusses neorealist theory and leadership in greater detail. I first argue that, contrary to what neorealists claim, their assumption about the state is contingent on leaders who act on behalf of the state. I then outline the main neorealist theories, Waltz's structural or defensive realism and John Mearsheimer's offensive realism, which propose radically opposite views of ambition. Waltz predicts that a minimum of security guarantees state survival so leaders are cautious and not ambitious (unless they are irrational), while Mearsheimer thinks that leaders' ambition is incessant and cannot be satisfied.

Since it was introduced by Waltz (1979), neorealism has influenced modern international-relations theory in one way or another. It has spawned other systemic theories and also has spurred a long-standing debate with leading scholars refuting its basic tenets (Fearon 1995; Keohane 1986; Legro & Moravcsik 1999; Vasquez 1998).

For Waltz, a theory of international relations is not one of foreign policy; its predictive power is meant only to disclose historical trends. His general discovery is that state interactions under anarchy produce a balance of power. For Waltz, leadership plays a role in bringing about the balance of power, but it is not because of leaders that such an equilibrium forms in the first place. Moreover, there is no way for states to avoid international anarchy, thus leaders can should worry about how to maximize security. Leaders that fail to follow these realist precepts will not be around for long. Yet, because the system's structure so overwhelmingly determines what states do, neorealists presume that all leaders would do the same thing under conditions of anarchy.

However, not all realists think that a theory of international politics is inapplicable to understanding foreign policy as an academic and practical endeavor. In fact, the idea that anarchy defines the international system and induces state behavior sharply contrasts with the theories of classical realists like Morgenthau, Kissinger, and the previously discussed neoclassical realists. Classical realists view international politics, and domestic politics as well, as an incessant struggle for power among self-interested human beings. Although classical realists have a pessimistic view of human nature, they make considerable room for the practice of statesmanship in foreign affairs. Given the primacy of power and the human desire for security, classical realists urge statesmen to put aside utopian approaches like Wilson's idealism.

Instead, they encourage leaders to keep the goals of statecraft simple by worrying about state security and basing foreign policy purely on calculations of power and the national interest (Kissinger, 1994, p. 137).

Like neorealists, classical realists believe that states compete for power and are also not too keen on utopian and liberal theories of international relations. Yet neorealists differ from classical realists and neoclassical realists insofar as they do not explain what particular leaders do and why. Neorealists focus on what states do internationally and not their internal processes and dissimilarities such as the type of government, society's values, and leaders' preferences and particular decisions.

If neorealists exclude the internal factors that animate a state's politics, then what motivates states to act in international affairs and, specifically, why are they motivated to compete for power? To answer these questions, neorealists examine the international system that states populate. Defined by anarchy, it lacks an international arbiter to solve disputes and punish aggressors. As long as the system remains anarchic, all states remain vigilant of others, prepare for defense, and compete for power to ensure survival.

Since all states face the same challenges, neorealists assume that they respond to international constraints in the same way. As such, Waltz describes them as "functional units," and neorealists like him leave aside questions about the cultural, economic and political, and military interactions of states (1979, p. 80). Instead, Waltz understands states as homogeneous interacting entities: "how units stand in relations to one another, the way they are arranged or positioned, is not a property of the units; [t]he arrangement of units is a property of the system" (1979, p. 80). The system that Waltz and neorealists care about is the decentralized and anarchic international system.

Neorealists think of states as unitary because when they look at them at the system level, they suppose that no other goals or internal interests deter states from enhancing their security. As Waltz's argues, "units in a condition of anarchy—be they people, corporations, states, or whatever—must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves"(1979, p. 111). States must help themselves (self-help). However, neorealism does not tell us the direction that this self-help takes. Is it up to the decision-makers responsible for state security? For Waltz, leaders are necessarily engaged in the state's need to act out of self-help because if they don't, they will be punished. This consequence is similar to how a firm suffers when it cannot price its products competitively; the market punishes inefficient firms, and they inevitably go out of business. Likewise, the system punishes leaders that deviate from realist precepts because leaders' security is tied the state. If they make poor decisions, especially if their ambition defies a prudent observance of the balance of power, then leaders may lose power because their states will lose power.

The neorealist conception of states and leaders is purposely abstract. It helps explain the sort of conflict when many great powers vie for supremacy, when two great powers control the system, or even when one power is preponderant.[5] If a strong state appears to threaten the security of other non-dominant states, the latter will form an alliance to balance the stronger power or risk their security if they don't. While some states engage in forming a counterweight, others will join the bandwagon, which calls for a weaker state to ally with the stronger one as a form of appeasement or to share in the spoils of war, much like Benito Mussolini's declaration of war on France and Russia's entry into the war against Japan in 1945 (Walt, 1985 p. 7). The

---

[5] The conventional terms used by scholars to describe these types of balances of power are multipolar, bipolar, and unipolar systems.

balance of power is understood as an outgrowth of states responding to international threats and the circumstances that prevail on nations. Balance-of-power politics exists whether states are democratic or autocratic, capitalist or communist, religious or secular, and governed by good or bad leaders. Thus, for neorealists, the balance of power is a leaderless outcome; the preferences and conduct of statesmen are not important in its creation.[6]

Defensive and Offensive Realism: Restrained versus Unlimited Ambition

In international-relations studies, Waltz's (1979) structural realism and Mearsheimer's (2001) offensive realism both share the systemic approach. These scholars draw on the assumption that the international system's structure and its defining feature, anarchy, compel states to pursue strategies that enhance security (Waltz) or to behave aggressively and maximize power over rivals (Mearsheimer). States are compelled to act in these ways because while anarchy persists, no international body can effectively adjudicate disputes, enforce agreements, and prevent conflict.

While Waltz stresses that states seek security and are cautious not to upset the balance, Mearsheimer argues that they can never be certain that their current power will make them safe in the future, so powerful states have an incentive to seek hegemony. These theories lead to divergent views about what leaders should desire for their states under anarchy. In Waltz's world conflict is rare and can be avoided, but a few ambitious leaders spoil it for everyone else. Individual ambition is atypical because it is irrational; leaders' ambition is bound by the necessities of the international structure, which calls upon leaders to seek only as much power as necessary to make the state secure.

---

[6] For Hans Morgenthau, the balance of power is one foreign-policy device among others that statesmen can use (1985, pp. 198–221).

For Waltz, leaders are defensive realists when they rely on an offense-defense strategy, which can be understood as the ease or difficulty of conquest. When defensive military capabilities hold an advantage over offensive ones, major wars can be avoided (Glaser & Kaufmann, 1998). With uncertain intentions worldwide, leaders should prefer defense to offense.

Balanced power is a statesman's preferred outcome, as he is motivated to acquire only enough to ensure survival and will hesitate if other states begin to collaborate to arrest the increase in his state's power. Security, being a statesman's highest aim, will lend itself to a world of satisfied states, or at least the satisfaction of the status quo powers. In short, power is a means to security and not an end in itself. Rational leadership avoids the self-defeating "excessive accumulation of power"; if a statesman proves too ambitious, other states should react by balancing against the "un-reasonable" leader (Waltz, 1988, p. 49).

Defensive realism enjoins leaders to follow a moderate foreign policy on account of the sobering effects of the international struggle for power. Moderation is not an independent characteristic of individual leaders. Rather, in their pursuit of security, states are mindful of not pushing the limits that could spark a war since war is expensive (unless the state is willing to bear the cost). Security maximization lends itself to a world of satisfied states, or, at least, satisfied status quo powers. However, miscalculation or rogue and expansionist states unsettle this balance, which leads to the outbreak of conflict. For Waltz, the presence of ambition that exceeds what other states' leaders are willing to permit is unreasonable ambition because all other states should always unite against the ambitious leader.

For example, expansionist states, such as France under Louis XIV and Napoleon, and Germany under Wilhelm II and Hitler, accumulated excessive power. They perhaps were misguided or irrationally hoped that an opposition would not form. However, in each case

alarmed leaders created coalitions to push these states back. Waltz has an explanation for this kind of behavior:

> The lessons of history would seem to be clear: In international politics, success leads to failure. The excessive accumulation of power by one state or coalition of states elicits the opposition of others. The leaders of expansionist states have nevertheless been able to persuade themselves that skillful diplomacy and clever strategy would enable them to transcend the normal processes of balance-of-power politics. (1988, p. 625)

The primacy of "high politics" and the focus on conflict and war require that leaders pay special attention to state capabilities. For Waltz, capability is a measure of state power, and its distribution across the system defines the system's structure (1979, p. 97). Only states that can amass capabilities due to fortuitous circumstances such as population, territory, resource endowment, and economic and military strength can exercise power in the international sphere (1979, p. 131). The focus on power and how it is dispersed puts primary focus on the behavior of great powers.

For Waltz, a leader should prefer to balance power by making alliances or strengthening itself internally. States may increase their power, but they must show restraint and acquire as much power as appropriate to enhance security and not exacerbate the security dilemma: "where one state's measures to increase security diminish that of another state and when the latter state responds in kind, this reaction serves to confirm the former's suspicion that there was a reason to worry" (Waltz, 1988, p. 619). Although peace is fragile in Waltz's world and conflict is frequent, he believes states are risk averse.

For Waltz, miscalculation and irrational ambition leads to conflict, while Mearsheimer contends that lulls in aggressive behavior are evidence of missed opportunities or that leaders are just biding their time. Since Mearsheimer's theory examines states that have offensive capabilities, he attends primarily to great powers. Ironically, the most powerful states are also the

most disgruntled about the relative distribution of power, and their leaders must actively seek opportunities to increase their state's power.

The substantive difference between offensive and defensive realists is reminiscent of that among human beings in Machiavelli's *Prince*. While Machiavelli thinks that all people share the desire to acquire, only some actively seek more (offensive realists), while the majority simply wants to keep what they have (defensive realists). Offensive realism presumes a persistent and unrestrained ambition among the leaders of great powers. A satisfied leader quickly learns to adjust to the offensive nature of the world since all leaders are ready to take advantage of rivals as they seek to become hegemons in their regions and in the international system.

Mearsheimer describes his theory as genuinely tragic because under uncertainty states have to pursue power and dominate others. No amount of power can guarantee security, so states should actively seek new opportunities to expand their power. At all times, leaders should craft ambitious foreign policies that maximize power. Mearsheimer's world is populated by revisionist states, and even if a state already has an advantage in its region, it will behave aggressively "because it has the capability as well as the incentive to do so" (2001, p. 34). Among great powers, such behavior is more prevalent because leaders are rationally bedeviled by the fear of what other states might do to them. They must operate on worst-case assumptions, and "states are disposed to think offensively toward other states even though their ultimate motive is simply to survive" (2001, p. 34). Yet, survival requires ambitious foreign policies and the readiness to seize opportunities, best rivals, and try to dominate the region. Even if their states become regional hegemons, leaders cannot rest satisfied because they must be vigilant and actively prevent the rise of ambitious rivals.

When leaders act as defensive realists, they aim to limit state ambition, keep what they have acquired, and maintain their position in the international system. A skillful defensive realist can still gain advantages for his state, but he must do so "without antagonizing other states and frightening them into united action" (Waltz, 1988, p. 622).

How does an offensive realist behave differently? First, security is much more tenuous if increases in power are not being consistently attained. Leaders will assess threats by calculating the difference in power between states. They also assume that others are primed to use their power offensively. Leaders should want to maximize state power because its accumulation creates an incentive for more power rather than the restraint that Waltz proposes. When leaders have gained more power, they should use it.

Offensive realists pursue policies of conquest through territorial expansion. Although conquest is necessary given the incentives in the international environment, offensive realists usually carry it out in the name of national glory, personal ambition, and economic gain. For example, Bismarck, Wilhelm II, and Hitler all acted as offensive realists should, and Germany made it priority to increase its power through expansion from 1862 to 1870, then again in 1903, and, subsequently under Hitler until 1945. Its aggressive Weltpolitik was a function of strategic security calculations. Yet, from 1871 to 1890, Germany remained pacific, and it seems that it was satisfied with the balance of power in the way Waltz would argue.

According to Mearsheimer, however, Germany unhappily accepted the status quo during this period simply because it could not risk a major war with either France or Russia. The practice of offensive realism was in a period of dormancy, but the desire to act like an offensive realist was held constant. German leaders were biding their time as they increased the country's relative capabilities.

Mearsheimer is explicit about the prescriptive implications of offensive realism: "states should behave according to the dictates of offensive realism, because it outlines the best way to survive in a dangerous world" (2001, p. 10). Failure to act in this way is tantamount to foolishness (2001, p.11).

Conclusion

Neorealism takes leaders' political ambition for granted: ambition is tightly coupled to the international structure, and it is muted and unreasonable in Waltz's theory. In addition, Waltz thinks that too much ambition defies the precepts of defensive realism. In Mearsheimer's world, all leaders are ambitious. Those who show what I call transformative ambition are not unique because this kind of ambition will be matched and checked by another leader. Much like a game of chess, to win one must play aggressively, and when one player embarks on such a strategy, the other player must respond in kind. Even though Mearsheimer brings ambition back into realism, it is ultimately reined in by structure because all leaders are behaving in the same way.

Neorealists take leader ambition for granted and by doing so fail to acknowledge that varying kinds and degrees of ambition shape the paths to the balance of power. I propose that leader ambition is independent of the incentives and constraints of the international structure. I am not arguing that leaders are blind to the international reality, but that, for some, ambition transcends the tight coupling of the state's motivations under anarchy. For Waltz, the idea of transformative ambition is tantamount to folly, so we should scarcely witness it. Yet, for Mearsheimer, all leaders of great powers should have a healthy dose of transformative ambition because they are actively seeking to change the balance of power to their advantage.

Neorealist theorists need to acknowledge that ambition matters in a way that cannot just be explained away as a series of mistakes, irrational behavior, or lulls in the active pursuit of power. Political ambition is a phenomenon that requires an independent explanation from the international structure. Waltz's and Mearsheimer's theories cannot help us with the independent nature of political ambition since a realist leader's ambition is derived from the international structure. Realist leaders are constants as they act on considerations of state survival. However, realists leave much unexamined in the realm of foreign policy. For example, since realist leaders respond only to external constraints and opportunities, they do not calculate the impact of foreign policy on their political fates (Lalman & Mesquita, 1992, p. 12). Once we relax the assumption that leadership is completely determined by structure, we can separate the motivations of the state under anarchy from the political ambition of state leaders. Chapter 2 examines the effect on foreign policy when leaders are ambitious for political power. Chapter 3 investigates an idiosyncratic theory of political ambition and its effect on foreign policy.

Realist assumptions about leaders' ambition are a convenient conceptual device, but they do not do justice to the way political ambition, and especially transformative ambition, can overcome structural constraints. Realists never would admit that structural constraints are surpassed. When scholars reconsider whether structure determines political ambition, they conceive of various other goals that leaders entertain when conducting foreign policy. For example, decision-makers who value political power should rank their personal political welfare over any other goal. A more individualistic view of political ambition emerges when we understand leaders in this way. They are held accountable not by the international system, but by the people who grant them political power. The way in which they maximize their welfare,

however, requires a more precise examination of domestic institutions and their influence on

leaders' behavior. To this argument I now turn.

Chapter 2

The Strategic Perspective of Leadership

Introduction

In Chapter 1, I criticized defensive and offensive realism on the grounds that both theories derive leaders' political ambition from the incentives and constraints of the international structure. I also argued that whereas defensive realism understates the role of ambition, offensive realism overstates it. According to both these realist theories, leaders' ambition and behavior are tightly coupled to the demands imposed by international anarchy.

This chapter examines a theory of strategic interaction and its relationship to transformative ambition. Unlike realism, this theory examines how leaders respond to domestic incentives and constraints as well as international circumstances. I concentrate my attention on *The Logic of Political Survival*, an ambitious theoretical and empirical study conducted by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, Alastair Smith, Randolph Siverson, and James D. Morrow (2003) in which they explain how leaders make domestic and foreign-policy decisions that are compatible with national incentives. Although leaders are aware of international circumstances when they form foreign-policy goals, their aims primarily reflect the interests of the groups that help keep them in power.

Their work is a tome that combines an original theory of politics and leadership, statistical analyses, mathematical models, and many illustrative case studies. First, the authors propose a theory of institutional incentives: democratic and autocratic institutions impact both the selection of leaders and the decisions they make. Second, they demonstrate how these

decisions affect leader tenure and at the same time influence key dimensions of governance, such as taxing and spending, public welfare, civil liberties, trade, war, and regime change.

At the heart of the theory is an assumption about leaders' foremost political ambition: they seek political office and find ways to ensure survival in office. This belief improves on realism because it examines leaders rather than states as the essential unit of analysis. Leaders act according to their self-interest: "since the earliest polities, leaders have worried about their hold on power" (Mesquita et al., 2003, p. 15). Their choices "are motivated by the interest politicians have in holding on to office" (2003, p. 15).

The authors base their theory of strategic interaction on "this belief in the desire to hold power," which raises some interesting implications concerning the relationship between regime politics and political survival (2003, p. 16).[7] Leaders' interests are separate from the general population; they don't rule for the common good. There is no public-spirited leadership that is divorced from self-interest. Whether leaders are democrats or autocrats, they advance policies that enhance their hold on power.

In this chapter, I argue that the strategic perspective's assumption about ambition fails to account for political ambition that sets its sights beyond office.[8] Mesquita et al. narrowing of ambition begins in their failure to distinguish between political ambition and interests; they define interests as self-interest. When political ambition is understood as furthering one's interest, which can only be accomplished through political office, the result is that ambition is reduced to the sole desire for office, which the authors assume is uniformly shared by all leaders.

---

[7] The authors explicitly note that the examination of institutions and their relationship to political survival is a unique theory that has received limited attention in the literature on political institutions (2003, p. 16).

[8] I refer to Mesquita et. al. as the authors of the strategic perspective throughout this chapter.

When defined precisely as a drive that varies among individuals, political ambition is something that disposes leaders toward different objects (and some more strongly than others), such as power, political accomplishments, greater prestige, fame, and honorable distinction.

Whereas offensive and defensive realism offer two distinct views of leaders' international ambition (cautious security maximizers and dangerous revisionists), the strategic perspective offers one.[9] I critique the notion of strategic ambition from the inside out by examining the thought of Machiavelli. In the next section, I discuss how the Florentine philosopher accepts the premise that political survival may be a leader's only tenable goal, yet he still differentiates ordinary from great ambition. I pay specific attention to his discussion of the greats: political founders whose politics were not tied to any particular institutions. Following the analysis of Machiavelli's ideas, I compare the strategic perspective's explanation of why the American founders chose republican government to Douglass Adair's interpretation, which is that they transformed their parochial self-interest into a desire for grand fame.

The reason that the authors of the strategic perspective circumscribe political ambition is that they think the intense competition for office induces the politics of political survival at the expense of other goals. Successful leaders create and maintain a winning coalition within a regime's electorate. This faction is a smaller part of the general polity that has a say in choosing and supporting the leadership. Leaders who desire to survive in office, if rational, will adopt policies that are compatible with the preferences of their most important supporters (the winning coalition).

---

[9] Randall Schweller (1996) is a realist that argues for that the neorealist theorist should distinguish between different state goals. He argues that neorealism suffers from a "status quo bias" (state security is the only goal) in the explanation of international relations, which makes the theory unable to comprehend the outcomes produces by state with revisionist goals.

Since ambition among political leaders does not vary, the authors explain that the coalition's size makes a profound difference for the way leaders govern. Winning coalitions are large in democracies and small in autocracies. The former induce leaders to promote the public good, while in autocracies leaders distribute private goods to shore up the support of the few. Strategic leaders use their power and the state's economic resources to both vitiate rivals' challenges and keep their supporters satisfied. They maintain the loyalty of the groups that are instrumental in choosing and promoting the leadership by satisfying their preferences. In short, ruling is the satisfaction of the winning coalition's preferences.

Mesquita et al. argue that in democracies the majority of the population and even the disenfranchised are better off than in autocracies, as goods are more equitably distributed. However, they also find that leaders fare better in autocracies. Autocrats have longer tenures and their supporters tend to be more constant, while democratic citizens' allegiance is lukewarm. For the authors, loyalty is not a moral phenomenon; it is the product of political calculus among supporters. For example, it is more often the case in autocracies that supporters have more to lose from leader turnover or regime change, so they tend to remain faithful to an incumbent.

I challenge the strategic perspective's interpretation of leadership by comparing examples of democratic and autocratic leaders. I show the effects of transformative ambition in both types of government and also how the different ambition and character of leaders in similar autocracies sometimes supported or undermine their political survival.

This chapter also emphasizes how the strategic perspective departs radically from realism. Realists conceive of a division of high from low politics, which means that leaders decide matters of national security without worrying about their political fates. The authors of the strategic perspective suggest otherwise. Politics does not stop at the water's edge. Leaders'

41

foreign-policy decisions do not flow from the imperatives of national security but from the strategic interaction of leaders who respond to domestic incentives and international circumstances. Leaders in democracies try to avoid war, but when they do fight, they usually try hard to win. Autocrats tend to be more belligerent yet are less willing to expend precious resources toward a war effort.

My criticism of realist foreign policy also extends to the strategic perspective, and I offer the example of Otto von Bismarck. Although he regarded as the consummate realist, I argue that his refashioning of the world on the basis of realpolitik required that he subordinate personal ambition to the practice of statesmanship, hold the assumption that beliefs were relative, and the formulate policy and measure its success on the basis of power.

Machiavelli: From Strategic Ambition to the Transformative Ambition of Political Founders

Strategic leaders are self-interested and the actions they choose are intended to redound to their own benefit (Mesquita et. al., 2003, p. 21). Self-aware leaders should enhance their supporters' welfare, which implies that public-spirited leadership has selfish motives. Once in power, leaders gain authority over public resources and can use them in either of two ways: "they can promulgate general public policies that satisfy the desires of their supporters and perhaps the desires of others among the citizens of the state, and they can dole out private benefits to purchase the continued support of their critical backers" (2003, p. 29).[10]

While many leaders are motivated by run-of-the-mill self-interest and the desire for office, political office is a small prize for those with transformative ambition. The latter may

---

[10] Decision-making authority and the distribution of resources are not always centralized in one person, but the authors' model requires that they make an assumption that the decision to tax and spend is centralized in the leadership and that leaders must have some control over public resources (2003, p. 74).

have a thirst for distinction, lust for fame, and a passion to rule over others (this entails office but has a greater scope). These motives can catalyze them to change the political landscape through bold and significant actions. They thrust themselves into grand enterprises, which manifest in various forms: wars of conquest or independence, imperial domination, and constitutional building that introduce new modes and orders. The first two actions may overturn existing governments and have a revolutionary character that can have a disorderly effect. The last goal is decisively transformative because it's motivated by the desire to found a state, which shapes a polity's way of life; it represents a grand political achievement and a paradigmatic shift in citizens' lives.

Only leaders with greater ambition and a superior awareness for what is possible can found a state and perpetuate its survival. To explain this phenomenon, I must turn to a model of political ambition that has a larger range than the one provided by the strategic perspective, which presumes a structured political environment. Machiavelli's thought prepares the way for a particularly powerful view of the ambition of founders and political virtue.

Machiavelli's advice to princes closely resembles what strategic leaders already know: to gain and keep power, they must heed circumstances and necessity. Machiavelli warns princes to avoid standards of moral virtue that do not aid in acquiring and retaining political power. He instructs them to answer to necessity, which calls them to follow what is truly in their hearts: personal aggrandizement at the expense of others. For Machiavelli, princes must use moral virtue for the sake of their selfish ambitions. Thus, a prince's virtue artfully blends vices and virtues, and he uses it to bond people to him. For leaders, politics is an arena where they can hold onto their power through controlling and managing individuals and their desires for acquisition. On some level, the politics of survival is Machiavelli's central theme.

43

The Prince speaks to a general audience of existing and prospective leaders. Yet, Machiavelli tells us that his lessons are not derived from his study of ordinary leaders, but from the behavior of the greats. He explicitly differentiates between the ambition and actions of great men and all others who must emulate them. Machiavelli does not just prescribe rules that leaders should follow to survive; his advice is animated by inspiring examples of those whose supreme achievement ensured political survival through ambitious aggrandizement:

> I bring up the greatest examples. For since men almost always walk on paths beaten by others and proceed in their action by imitation, unable either to stay on the paths of others altogether or attain the virtue of those whom you imitate, a prudent man should always enter upon the paths beaten by great men, so that if his own virtue does not reach that far, it is at least in the odor of it. (trans. 1998, p. 22)

The great men Machiavelli speaks of such as Moses, Cyrus, Romulus, and Theseus were founders. Although they established entirely new regimes, they still responded strategically to incentives, which Machiavelli describes as the ability to seize opportunities. Machiavelli says, "[I]t was necessary for Moses to find the people of Israel in Egypt, enslaved and oppressed by the Egyptians, so that they would be disposed to follow him so as to get out of their servitude" (1998, p. 23). At some level, Moses practiced the politics of political survival and the Jews took a calculated risk in following him. They had to believe that they would be better off in a new regime and under different leadership.

But how do a people become persuaded to leave behind an accustomed way for a novel order? For Machiavelli, the ambitious must understand necessity and command it: "such opportunities, therefore, made these men happy, and their excellent virtue enabled the opportunity to be recognized" (1998, p. 23). Moses took advantage of the Jews' misery. They were in the grip of necessity, which he adroitly recognized as an opportunity. Moses understood

human necessity and how to manage it; as a founder he introduced "any form as he pleased" and created a regime with an altogether new polity and national creed (1998, p. 22).

For Machiavelli, it is sensible for leaders to engage in political survival; but selfish ambition needs a vigorous expression. Since Machiavelli is a realist, he would agree that the prize of princely virtue is political power. However, princes with small ambition do not endure. Although they answer to necessity, they must aim for unnecessary glory. A prince's prerational disposition is for great ambition, which is the only secure platform for political survival.

This is an argument for the predominance of power-seeking, which edges aside other considerations like justice and nobility. It has a tyrannical impulse behind it and can narrow a leader's concern for politics toward superiority and domination. When not tempered by other characteristics, this ambition exhibits aggressiveness and victory-seeking in leaders. Great ambition, even for power, can evolve, however, as the experience and political thought of a leader changes. Throughout Chapter 3, I present leaders with transformative ambition whose self-awareness and personal characters allow them to stand outside of the political desires that are product of more spirited natures. In essence, transformative ambition is best described as a deliberate desire.

To illustrate how this conception of transformative ambition is possible, I turn to the strategic-perspective explanation of the ambition of the American founders, in which Mesquita et al. argue that the forefathers acted in their interests and were presented with fortuitous circumstances that favored republican government. In contrast, I present Adair's more powerful explanation of the founding fathers' self-conscious ambition for fame, which led them to channel their combined efforts in order to establish popular self-government.

Contending Explanations of the American Founding Fathers' Political Ambition

Besides worrying about their political survival, leaders face the additional problem that political regimes don't last forever. A government's decline is bad for incumbents and good for rivals. Regimes are threatened when "they are no longer able to provide sufficient resources to sustain political support" (Mesquita et al. 2003, p. 26). When a regime faces an existential crisis, it creates an opportunity for rivals to think of ways to ensure their own political survival. In some cases, elites with strategic ambition will band together "with a shared mindset or collective new belief system" and remake political institutions (2003, p. 27). Moments of crisis that were followed by this particular kind of regime change include the Glorious Revolution as well as the American, French, Russian, and Chinese Revolutions (2003, p. 27).

These states of emergency were unique because elites cooperated with each other to bring in new institutions, but even under such circumstances, strategic ambition was still in play. Elites will band together to design and select political institutions because "their incentive to cooperate at a moment of crisis exceeds their divergent interests" (2003, p. 27). The extraordinary circumstances of the American Revolution postponed the politics of political survival, but elites were selecting institutions and thinking forward to a time when political competition would be no less intense.

Mesquita et al. acknowledge that the leaders of the Glorious Revolution and the American Revolution formed a consensus, which fostered "lasting changes that channel[ed] future competition in socially productive directions" (2003, p. 27). Yet this result is puzzling because, as the authors note, at other times "the solutions adopted in response to the momentary crisis fail to remove the incentives for destructive competition in the future" (2003, p. 27).

All revolutionaries, they claim, "are motivated by the intention to overthrow the existing political order so that the excluded (i.e., revolutionaries and their followers) become the included" (2003, p. 368). The authors argue that these uncharacteristic political situations arise during times of crisis, and under uncertainty leaders have more to gain by momentarily putting their divergent interests aside. As ambitious for power as the leaders of the American Revolution were, they created institutions that did not necessarily secure their hold on it.

Mesquita et al. fail to acknowledge the particular kind of ambition that is responsible for the promotion of the public good. The founders were motivated toward a deliberate desire for something grander than political power. Basing himself on Bacon's five-stage classification of the highest fame and honors, Adair (1974) offers an alternative explanation of the American founders' ambition in his influential essay, "Fame and the Founding Fathers". His take not only reconsiders the scope of ambition but also shows how self-interest can promote public-spiritedness in nonstrategic ways. He quotes Bacon's peak of honor and fame: "in the first place are *conditores imperiorum*, founders of states and commonwealths; such were Romulus, Cyrus, Ottoman, 'and significantly' Julius Caesar" (1974, p. 15).[11] Adair acknowledges that most leaders are self-interested, but the founders manifested a much more powerful desire for fame:

> Fame, in contrast to honor, is more public, more inclusive, and looks to the largest possible human audience, horizontally in space and vertically in time. Fame is "celebrity, renown," it is the action or behavior of a "great man," who stands out, who towers above his fellows in some spectacular way. To be famous or renowned means to be widely spoken of by a man's contemporaries and also to act in such a way that posterity also remembers his name and his actions. The desire for fame is thus a dynamic element in the historical process; it rejects the static complacent urge in the human heart to merely be and invites a strenuous effort to become—to become a person and force in history larger than the ordinary. The love of fame encourages a man to make history, to leave the mark

---

[11] Douglass Adair changes Francis Bacon's ordering by placing Julius Caesar last, and by excluding Ismael (the founder of the Safavid dynasty) to emphasize Alexander Hamilton's statement that "he considered Caesar 'the greatest man that ever lived'" (1974, p. 15).

of his deeds and his ideals on the world; it incites a man to refuse to be the victim of events and to become an "event-making" personality—a being never to be forgotten by those later generations that will be born into a world his action helped to shape. (1974, pp. 10–11)

The strategic perspective attributes the American Revolution to a rapid and large change in the incentive structure. Adair argues that it also presented fortuitous and extraordinary circumstances that spurred the love of fame, which was "a noble passion because it can transform ambition and self-interest into dedicated effort for the community, because it can spur individuals to spend themselves to provide for the common defense" (1974, p. 12). Adair admits that the founders "were no angels but passionately selfish and self-interested men" (1974, p. 24). Yet, they became highly conscious of their desires, which led to a "redefinition in their own minds of their ambitions and the choice of new heroes to model themselves on," as well as their evolving situations as they "became fantastically concerned with posterity's judgment of their behavior" (1974, p. 7).

Adair sketches out each main figure. Alexander Hamilton modeled himself on Caesar. Thomas Jefferson sought immortal fame through the modern scientific project, and so he founded a scientific regime. James Madison identified with classical lawgivers and wanted to be remembered as the American Lycurgus. George Washington was obsessed with his honor and reputation; he feared that political office might tarnish it. Benjamin Franklin, who wrote in his autobiography that one should "imitate Jesus and Socrates," was the only founder who had achieved world renown before 1776.

The desire for fame, which Adair understands as the hope for immortality, directed the founders toward the great intellectual and political project of their time, which was the cause of

enlightened progress. The politico-scientific project they settled on was to found "a national system dedicated to liberty, to justice, and to the general welfare" (1974, p. 24).

The American founders certainly had strategic ambition. They effectively ruled the new regime. Yet, to secure fame, they geared their efforts to the thoughtful and deliberate establishment of democratic republicanism and constitutional government. Thus, their audience extended beyond the coalition of supporters that would keep them in power to the entire world and, as Adair argues, to us as well, the unborn who would judge their lasting contribution and political greatness.

Strategic Ambition and Strategic Leadership

The loss of political power is always more dangerous for autocrats since leader turnover can be violent. Thus, to gain political power in autocracies, leaders should not shy away from using violence and unscrupulous methods. Despite the inherent dangers leaders face, there are no fewer contenders vying for control in autocratic regimes. Political survival is a high-stakes game, and a tactical approach is needed to win. Leaders may very well lack strategic ambition and not want to doggedly pursue office, but the authors note that leaders who have meeker dispositions are likely to be few and do not stay in power for long (Mesquita et al. 2003, p. 23).

In democracies, the size of the group that selects leaders is relatively large. On account of the vast membership in a leader's coalition, it is difficult for him to retain his supporters' loyalty, which is why a democratic public may seem fickle and unforgiving of his mistakes. Citizens in democracies are always ready to oust incumbents in the wake of setbacks and when public opinion turns against them. On the other hand, autocrats rely on a small coalition of supporters that must be personally rewarded for its loyalty through the distribution of private goods.

49

Autocrats have a disincentive to distribute public goods, and, as a result, their states tend to be less prosperous. Autocrats also put less emphasis on national security.

For autocrats, loyalty is more important than prosperity and security. Their supporters' faith in the leadership is based on the fear that if a new leader comes to power, their private goods and privileges could disappear (2003, pp. 65–67).

From a realist perspective, an autocrat should benefit greatly by increasing the state's economic growth, power, and safety. He may need to satisfy the preferences of cronies, but shouldn't he act like a realist too, especially when national security is threatened? State security and power should be a primary concern even for a self-interested leader with strategic ambition. When power is maximized, it redounds to the leader's benefit as the state is in a better position to fend off international challengers.

The strategic perspective reverses the realist conventional wisdom and also the common opinions we hold about this sort of politics: "for autocrats, what appears to be bad policy often is good politics" (2003, p. 19). When the number of people who keep autocrats in power relative to a country's population is very small, corruption, cronyism, and doling out special privileges to the members of those groups is the most efficient way of maintaining their continued support. Strategic leaders' ambitions are not tied to the motivation of the state under anarchy; they prefer to further their own interests. These leaders with strategic ambition want political power, they compete for office, and they prefer to hold power for as long as possible.

The political institutions that create and sustain positions of leadership dictate the scope of leaders' political ambition. That scope is quite narrow. Even if leaders have policy objectives not tied to office-seeking, political institutions across regimes create very strong incentives for them to focus on survival. Since all institutions in some way subject leaders to competition,

survival becomes the primary and most palpable ambition. The incessant competition for office

has a way of narrowing leaders' menu of policy choices to those that help them to perpetuate

their tenure.

Enlarging the Scope of Leadership and Bringing Personal Characteristics Back In: A
Comparison of Democrats and Autocrats

The strategic perspective introduces the idea of competence, which assumes that

differences among leaders ability run government vary, which influences their success in

securing power. Mesquita et al. define competence as "the leader's ability to induce the

government to run efficiently" (2003, p. 280). More specifically, it is the ability to produce and

distribute public and private goods more effectively from the same pool of resources. Here, I

argue that a more comprehensive view of leadership requires an understanding of the dynamic

relationship between leaders, institutions, and supporters without dismissing the idea that

institutions influence interests and strategies.

An enlarged definition of competence entails a leader's personal characteristics, goals,

and ability to deal with constraints, defy these limits, and, in the vein of Machiavelli, take

advantage of opportunities. These factors also contribute to a leader's ability to induce

government to run productively, but inducing efficiency is only one element of what leadership

can accomplish. A more extensive view of leader competence includes both the efficient

management of institutions and the ability to confront fundamental organizational dilemmas.

In this section, I expand the strategic perspective's concept of competence by comparing

transformative leadership across democratic and autocratic regimes: Abraham Lincoln and Fidel

Castro both fundamentally altered their regimes in distinct ways. Initially, Lincoln's statecraft

was aimed at preserving the state, which incidentally preserved his political power. Through his

experiences though, Lincoln arrived at a reinterpretation of America's institutions; specifically, he gave new prominence and meaning to the founders' principle of equality. Castro is a revolutionary and founder of the current Cuban state that is undergirded by Fidelismo, a socialist experiment that is product of his political agility, imagination, and stubborn grip on power.

I continue with an examination of autocratic regimes and use Alfredo Stroessner of Paraguay as an example of how personal characteristics can foster strategic ambition for power and limit any greater ambition. Conversely, Francisco Solano Lopez 's greater motivation for glory clouded his strategic ambition and led to his ruin. Lopez was heir to his father's (Carlos Lopez) authoritarian reign over Paraguay. His father had no great ambition beyond kleptocratic rule. Conversely, Francisco Lopez modeled himself after Napoleon Bonaparte and was obsessed with national security. He became intent on adding distinction to his name and launched an offensive war against Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay, which proved disastrous to the Paraguayan state and to Lopez.

Lincoln took extra-constitutional powers in a time of deep uncertainty in order to ensure the survival of the state and its constitutional order. His political strategy depended on fealty to the Constitution on the one hand, and a strategic and rhetorical ability to work around constraints, on the other. His decisions to suspend habeas corpus, print paper money, draft civilians into military service, seize rebel property, and emancipate the slaves straddled a fine line between illegality and the necessities of war.

Lincoln resorted to "otherwise unconstitutional" measures after the rebels bombarded Fort Sumter in 1861 (Landy & Milkis, 2000, p. 136). His institutional competence is seen in his rationale for his wartime policies:

Was it possible to lose the nation and yet preserve the Constitution? By general law, life and limb must be protected, yet often a limb must be amputated to save a life; but a life is never wisely given to save a limb. I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the nation. (2000, p. 136)

Political necessity, the war, and the potential dissolution of the union confronted him as the sovereign. Lincoln enlarged the army's size without authorization and suspended the writ of habeas corpus, which "prompted charges of 'military dictatorship,' even from some Republicans (2000, p. 137). His actions helped him run the government efficiently during the war, but they must be understood in the context of Lincoln's overarching principle: America's constitutional order was worth defending, and this faithfulness to the Constitution led Lincoln to wage the war to hold the union together.

Lincoln managed three public policies that only a supremely competent leader could accomplish. He had to win the war, preserve the union, and uphold the law. But as the war unfolded, so did Lincoln's ambitions. What started as a war to save the union evolved into a quest to reorder the nation's moral principles. The presence of slavery was stain on the founders' standard of moral equality; Lincoln's transformative leadership embarked on a realization of this ideal. He boldly redefined the American regime without appearing to violate its laws by displaying a mastery over democratic leadership. Lincoln used rhetoric to arouse public opinion, hoping to steer citizens over to his vision. In 1863, Lincoln proclaimed the war's larger purpose in the Gettysburg Address:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle-field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those

who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate—we can not consecrate—we can not hallow—this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

In the speech, Lincoln's exalted praise of the Declaration of Independence drew attention away from the Constitution as the founding document: "a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal" (2000, p. 143). Lincoln's speech showed a broadening of the war's aims from saving the union to equality and union (2000, p. 143). His strategic actions served the purpose of national survival, but in the process he refashioned the American regime's understanding and commitment to equality.

Castro created a regime that encroached completely on every aspect of Cuban life: "no autonomous groups or non-regulated counter-revolutionary forms of behavior exist independent of Castro" (Sondrol, 1991, p. 606). As early as 1961, he began to squeeze out potential rivals when he fired and exiled Anibal Escalante, who was the most powerful of the older Communists in Cuba. During his tenure, Castro regularly engaged in "moral rectification campaigns," which punished unscrupulous public officials but were really designed to help him avoid criticism and pulverize rivals (1991, p. 611).

Without a doubt, Castro's regime was repressive, and his tactics for political survival flowed from the incentives presented in his autocratic regime. Yet, his political success and

behavior cannot be understood solely on the basis of strategic ambition. Although he behaved strategically, Castro was a founder who transformed the Cuban regime. He astonished citizens and captured their loyalty through his heroic acts, manly authority, and moralizing rhetoric. There was an enigmatic relationship between Castro and Cuba's masses that cannot just be described by the provision of private goods, fear of repression, or even the idea that his charisma overawed his followers.

In fact, Castro was the regime on a political, historical, and moral level. He was both its founding memory and its reality. As the mythical hero who created a government on the principle of moral rebellion, he transformed domestic society by blending socialism with his personal vision of la Revolucíon.

In Castro's purview the idea of a just regime was included; yet, it was a perverted one as he retained all moral and political authority in his person. He embodied the great man, el caudillo, the ideal man of Latin American society who represents the morally superior attributes than men should possess, but only a few do. Castro's rule clearly aimed for political survival, and his repressive tactics and backward economic policies were in the spirit of a strategic leader. But his greater ambition was to make his revolution and rule legitimate, perpetual, and historically significant.

The last of these goals might be in reach, as Castro has used foreign policy for decades as a symbolic act of defiance against his perception of America's imperial aggression. Castro's transformative ambition, however, seems to have lacked the American founders' lust for fame insofar as the latter was directed toward building a lasting monument in the form of republican government. The Cuban revolution and regime are so tightly coupled to Castro that it remains to be seen whether the regime will outlive him.

Stroessner's long tenure was built on his firm control of the winning coalition, which included members of the unified Colorado political party, military, and state bureaucracy. Stroessner did not plunge Paraguay into war as his predecessor Lopez had done, nor did he restructure national politics or reshape society like Castro. Stroessner acted strategically by rewarding loyalty and excusing vice. In his regime, party affiliation brought sinecure office. In addition, as the military's supreme commander, he made all decisions regarding the promotion of military officers. Loyalty, of course, trumped merit.

Stroessner induced loyalty by allowing corruption in the military and state bureaucracy. In contrast to Castro, he had no illusions about the aim of political power beyond cementing his rule and did not make use of the moralizing rhetoric of his Latin American counterpart. Stroessner limited his desire to office; it can be argued that he appropriated Machiavelli's advice to princes and also understood the important use of the loyalty norm for political survival. In a striking quote, Stroessner allegedly said, "it is necessary to foment criminality, because criminality produces complicity and complicity produces loyalty" (Alexander, 1977, pp. 16–17).

Stroessner's modest ambition limited him to a strategic ambition; he lacked the determination of his belligerent predecessor, Francisco Lopez, whose warped sense of glory and honor corrupted his ability to behave as a strategic leader should. He wished to emulate the warrior-statesman Napoleon, but he had no military experience beyond his study of it in books. His father, Carlos Lopez, put him in command of the military at a young age to groom him for succession. In foreign policy, Lopez showed expansionist desires as he waged the war against the Triple Alliance (Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay). Yet, he had no strategy for victory, and his only explicit goal was to win glory for himself. His military strategy and behavior was non-Napoleonic and downright ignoble.

Lopez did not give his field generals any discretion on the battlefield, so the Paraguayan army's strategy was set even as circumstances changed. Although Lopez was in firm command of his forces' movement, he could not change battle tactics either. A natural coward, he always advanced at the rear of his army and retreated to safety at the first sight of battle. During the war, Lopez bestowed many honors on himself for his bravery. In addition, he had Congress orchestrate scripted supplications to Lopez to keep himself away from harm's way during combat. Since Lopez could not manage orderly retreats, the Paraguayan soldiers were known for their notorious courage as they assaulted Allied positions while suffering massive casualties (Centeno, 2002). The outcome of the war proved a disaster for Paraguay and ended when Lopez was killed in 1870.

Bismarck's Transformative Ambition: "The White Revolutionary"

The strategic perspective limits leaders' ambition and statecraft to institutional constraints, and these restraints are managed by meeting the preferences of domestic constituents. In this section, I turn to the example of Bismarck in order to prove this thesis inadequate. As a transformational statesman, he transcended the ambitions of strategic autocrats and democrats. As a diplomat, he turned to foreign policy and realpolitik because of his understanding of the realities of political life: ennobling the government of a state was absurd, and international politics was an amoral universe, in which the final arbiter was not law but superior force. He was famous for saying that the main questions of day were not to be decided by the majority but by iron and blood.

This sober outlook and relativity of all belief informed his understanding of politics as the continuous flux of forces. Bismarck had a scientific outlook about politics; he believed that these

forces were animated by the interests of actors, and both human beings and states were alike in this way: "In politics," he argued, "no one does anything for another, unless he also finds it in his own interest to do so" (Pflanze, 1958, p. 495). Yet, Bismarck did not pursue his interest at the expense of all else; he tied his statecraft to the state's permanent interest. Although he shared Machiavelli's view about political power and practiced princely virtue, he did not have princely ambition. Bismarck did not lack ambition; rather, his idea of politics led him to subordinate his personal ambition to a practice of dutiful statesmanship. Henry Kissinger (1994) describes Bismarck's worldview and understanding of leadership in *Diplomacy*:

> In the world of *Realpolitik*, it was the statesman's duty to evaluate ideas as forces in relation to all other forces relevant to making a decision; and the various elements needed to be judged by how well they could serve the national interest, not by preconceived ideologies. (p. 127)

Bismarck's ambition was channeled into applying realpolitik; his comprehension of this concept was the basis of his decisions: power and opportunity trumped ideology, flexibility in diplomacy stood over any convention, and proportionality dictated the limits of state ambition. In the process he transformed the geopolitical landscape by changing the character of European diplomacy.

Bismarck was a transformative leader who simultaneously overturned the international order and produced German unity. How did the nature of Bismarck's ambition contribute to this radical change? His ambition lacked an honorable devotion to moral ideals, yet he felt bound by notions of dutiful statesmanship. He wanted to establish Prussian preeminence but had no hope that his actions would give him immortal glory: "I would overestimate the value of this life strangely . . . should I not be convinced that after thirty years it will be irrelevant to me what political successes I or my country have achieved in Europe" (1994, p.127). Bismarck's

statesmanship was marked by the self-denial of personal ambition, which, as result, elevated the exercise of realpolitik. His path-breaking application of the tools of statecraft made him a historical force of significance.

Kissinger (1968) has described Bismarck as a "White Revolutionary," a rare statesman who profoundly altered the history of his society. Bismarck's innovation was unconventional; he did not seek revolutionary change and furthered his goals from a position of inferior strength. Kissinger argues that Bismarck's substantial political change was a triumph of the will as he subjected contemporary institutions to "strains for which they were not designed" (1968, p. 869). Kissinger calls Bismarck's revolution "strange" because it appeared in the guise of conservatism; "the scale of its conception proved incompatible with the prevailing international order, it triumphed domestically through the vastness of its successes abroad" (1968, p. 889). For Kissinger, it is clear that German unity was accomplished by Bismarck's force and genius.

Bismarck might be the paragon of realist statecraft, but I argue that he set out to achieve realist goals and power for his state. Because of his transformative ambition, he also sought to practice statesmanship in the pure arena of realpolitik that was unfettered by moral principle. His international statecraft did not follow historical precedent; he forced Prussia to abandon its traditional alliance with Austria and her native hostility to France. Otto Pflanze (1958) explains why Bismarck chose such a course: "[a]mid conflicting forces Bismarck usually sought to occupy the middle ground: that is, the pivot position from which alternative alliances with either of two hostile interests was possible or the fulcrum position from which they could be brought into equilibrium" (1958, p. 503).

Bismarck had no passion for ideology; he was a pragmatist who pursued the Prussian state's interest at every turn. He chose German unity not because of nationalist sentiments, but

because of its advantages to Prussia, despite the fact that Prussian identity was sacrificed for the sake of unity. As such, he strongly rejected the conservative unity that linked states on the basis of legitimate crowned heads. Under Bismarck's realpolitik, foreign policy became a contest of strength (Kissinger, 1994, p. 121). He forged alliances in all directions, "so that Prussia would always be closer to each of the contending parties than they were to one another" (1994, p. 122). At the same time, he altered Germany's liberal, progressive path toward unification: "he rested Prussia's claim to leadership in Germany on its strength rather than on universal values" (1994, p. 128).

Bismarck reversed liberal progress by leading a conservative transformation of Prussia's politics. He resisted the identification of Prussian nationalism with liberalism and opposed a democratic constitution. Bismarck's ambition was conservative because he sought to rescue what he thought was Prussia's traditional political order over and against liberalism. The Prussian parliament believed that the slow march of progress and consensus politics would eventually produce German unification. The pillars of Prussian foreign policy rested on the belief that relations among states should be based on common interests and shared principles. Bismarck was adamantly opposed to the liberal view: Prussia could only be Prussia as a strong and internationally ambitious power.

Even though Bismarck's policies enhanced the state by amassing power, he did not pursue power like a zealot. On the one hand, he subjected the European balance of power to a relativistic analysis that discovered ways to exploit opportunities for Prussian gain. On the other hand, the forces massed against the state restrained Bismarck's pursuit of power: "foreign policy had a nearly scientific basis, making it possible to analyze the national interest in terms of objective criteria" (1994, p. 130). As such, he showed moderation in victory. He was deliberate

about Prussian ambition and did not desire unlimited expansion, "Bismarck said that from the mistakes of Napoleon I he learned to exercise 'wise moderation after the greatest successes'" (Pflanze, 1958, p. 500). His predecessors lacked his sense of measure. He was sensitive to both the failure to take advantage of opportunity and the need to stave off coalition-building against Germany, a balance that was absent in his more aggressive forebears.

In order to influence public policy, Bismarck urged a new direction in foreign policy that would guide Prussia based on an assessment of the state's relative strength. As a consequence, Prussia would enter and break alliances when it proved useful. But such a policy required it to abandon the self-restraint that had been in force since 1815 (Kissinger, 1968). For Bismarck, a change in policy was necessary to see Prussia become a great power, and only this goal served as a justification for German unity. However, as I discussed in Chapter 1, the Metternich system previously informed Prussian policy. Bismarck would need to overturn it.

Kissinger describes Bismarck's approach to foreign policy as the art of the possible: he waited for an auspicious moment and then seized the chance to increase Prussia's power. While the neorealist view of ambition and statecraft presumes a structurally constrained leadership, Bismarck's statecraft was balanced between a response to the international environment and his desire to fulfill what he believed was Prussia's natural role in Europe, a position his contemporaries did not share. It was Bismarck's ambition for Prussia to achieve supremacy over Austria and in Europe that set his international statecraft in motion. At the same time, his ambition pitted him against Prussia's conservatives:

> Thus the conflict between Bismarck and the conservatives turned on ultimate principles. Bismarck asserted that power supplied its own legitimacy; the conservatives argued that legitimacy represented a value transcending the claims of power. Bismarck believed that a correct evaluation of power would yield a doctrine of self-limitation; the conservatives insisted that force could be restrained only by superior principle. (1968, p. 914)

Bismarck was the lone figure who defined Prussia's interests on the basis of utility, while liberals and conservatives rested on Metternich's principle of legitimacy. For a man of Bismarck's ambition and political skill, the existing domestic institutions and international structure proved inadequate for his goals and type of statecraft. His transformative ambition and skillful leadership helped dismantle the status quo. In practice, this meant that Bismarck would oppose Prussia's partnership with Austria and the Holy Alliance. Moreover, he advocated that Prussia become an ally of its natural enemy, France. Bismarck overturned its public policies through foreign policy and by 1871 had concluded German unification through war and a diplomatic compact among sovereigns. Ultimately, Germany did not become unified by the slow march of parliamentary consensus that the liberals had expected.

Conclusion

The examples in this chapter highlight the important role that personal characteristics have in directing leaders' ambition and statecraft. The strategic perspective's uniform definition of political ambition as strategic and narrow explanation of leadership as competence do not do justice to the full exercise of leadership. The theory clearly fails to understand the range of political ambition and the varied personal attributes that make a difference in leadership. Personality scholars have tried to fill this void.

Dissatisfied over the lack of emphasis on individuals in international relations studies, these scholars prioritize the complex influence of psychological motivations and personal characteristics. However, the study of personality and politics raises a question about such an approach. Which traits are pertinent to leaders' political behavior and to what degree do their personalities help or hinder their political goals? The scholarship and use of psychological

terminology are both rich and diverse in this area. Next I examine the main advocates of this

approach, and I also turn to an example that has become a classic in the personality and politics

scholarship: Woodrow Wilson and the ratification of League of Nations Covenant.

Chapter 3

The Political Personality: A Psychological Explanation of Leadership and Political Ambition

Introduction

Realism and the strategic perspective explain leaders' political ambition as something predetermined by the nature of international anarchy (realism) or by the requirements for political survival in democracies and autocracies (strategic perspective). These theories are not interested in the traditional view of leadership, in which individuals can have a greater degree of superior qualities such as courage, moderation, prudence, justice, and patriotism. In addition, some leaders have a much greater store of political ambition than others. This traditional perspective attaches critical importance to the character traits that are requisite for leadership, and the variation in these qualities has important consequences for politics.

Realism and the strategic perspective emphasize the instrumental decisions that leaders should make when faced with different circumstances. Theories of statesmanship seek to explain how the correct assemblage of character traits fosters its practice, or how an incomplete or flawed character can lead to failure.

Realism and the strategic perspective do not properly link the practice of statesmanship to leaders' behavior. While rational leaders are mindful of constraints and incentives, leaders' ambition and behavior are not predetermined by the circumstances leaders inhabit. In fact, transformative leaders can work around constraints because they seek accomplishments with lasting power that are not necessarily tied to institutional incentives, such as political office.

A more comprehensive understanding of statesmanship does acknowledge that leaders' behavior is in large part a response to circumstances. However, amid the flux of international challenges and dangers to peace statesmanship requires judgment and definition: to understand a situation and know whether to use diplomacy, alliances, force, or persuasion. The practice of leadership involves more than the application of resources. It requires gaining insight about reality, including an overarching knowledge about politics, what motivates others and what a leader should motivate others toward, as well as a grasp of one's own ambition and capacities.

Using this more comprehensive view, scholars must not only examine the constraints leaders work under but also illuminate which traits make statesmanship possible. In this dissertation, I single out transformative ambition as a unique quality of statesmanship that inspires some leaders to make substantial differences in the organization of the international world and in the lives of their fellow citizens. This chapter focuses on scholars who examine the same unit of analysis and phenomena that I do: leaders and the various motives that inform their political ambition. These scholars study leaders' personalities and how the full spectrum of human passions, inner motives, and personality traits influences their political behavior.

Personality scholars begin from the premise that personal characteristics and psychological motives are the most influential determinants of leader perceptions and behavior. They reverse the assumption of realism and the strategic perspective. For example, leaders behave like realists when they view the world of politics in terms of anarchy, distrust, and realpolitik and not because anarchic conditions make leaders behave like defensive or offensive realists. Likewise, the strategic behavior observed in autocracies is the product of a power-motivated individual who has a disposition for authoritarianism, and not because autocratic institutions incentivize despotic rule.

The personality approach focuses our attention back on the individual and shares common ground with this dissertation by relating political action in international relations to a leader's independent character, thus broadening our understanding of foreign policy choices beyond the confines of realist or strategic-perspective explanations. However, this focus is the only thing my approach shares with personality theories. I am interested in carving out a sphere of autonomy for statesmen in which transformative leaders not only rise above constraints but also change the rules of the game. Such high acts of statesmanship depend on the redefinition of ordinary political ambition into great ambition, which is a process that a leader can be self-conscious of as his experience and beliefs about politics evolve.

The personality approach is blind to the idea that leaders can act freely or that they can act from political reflection because it conceives of leaders as driven by psychological needs and subterranean compulsions; politics is the public display of deep-seated motives. Ironically, the idea of leadership is turned on its head through the study of leaders' personalities. Leaders lack the superior qualities I mentioned at the outset of this chapter. Instead, they are attributed the worst set of traits and problems related to egocentric drives.

The Personality Approach: Leaders as Drive-driven

The problem with the personality approach is one that can be traced back to the ideas of the father of modern political psychology. Harold Lasswell (1948) makes the obvious observation that most political actors are power seekers. And why? For Lasswell, a political personality is characterized by "low self-esteem," which is the proximate cause of political ambition (pp. 40–41).

66

The personality approach skews our perception of leaders and political ambition toward the idea that politics is an expression of subterranean psyches. We cannot take a leader's words and actions at face value because the psychologist knows the leader better than he knows himself. Political ambition masks deeper needs. In the final analysis, politics is the manifestation of a leader's underlying and unconscious motives, which result from chance events in childhood. A real, and very problematic, effect of the study of personality on politics is that it minimizes the importance of statesmanship. As a consequence, we cannot take either leadership or politics seriously; and there is no real alternative to realist and strategic theories of leadership.

The mistake of personality theories is the explanation of the origin of political ambition and leadership and the inability to distinguish between differences in kind. Personality is an immature prepolitical development of an individual. Thus, the source of political ambition is squarely the product of an individual's desires and unalterable idiosyncrasies, what Lasswell calls private motives. Personality scholars have expanded beyond Lasswell's power-seeking personality, but they continue to conceive of motives as drives that are developed in the unconscious, especially the need for power, achievement, and affiliation.[12]

The leader's dominant motivation not only defines his distinct political personality, but it is also the most influential factor in his approach to politics. The primary drives fall on a continuum, where each point expresses the level of relative isolation or interpersonal relationships that the personality demands. The desire for power ends in isolation, achievement is in the middle, and affiliation at the other end is defined by a strong need for interpersonal relationships. Next, I will examine two of these motives, power and achievement, and show how

---

[12] Personality scholars use the terms "motives" and "political goals" interchangeably and tend to express the idea of motivation as needs.

each one reveals an incomplete truth about leaders' ambition; but, ultimately, all of the categories are too simplistic and fail to recognize that individual ambition (motives) can exceed mere desire by being transformed by a leader's beliefs and experiences.

Power-motivated individuals have a problem adapting to political contexts that demand flexibility. Margaret Hermann (2003) argues that when the desire for power is high, a leader in a nondemocratic setting is prone to manipulate his context to stay in power (p. 379). In her view, leaders who have this underlying motivation tend to have authoritarian personalities and create the conditions for autocratic rule. In their relationships they seek to dominate others, which reinforces and produces the hierarchical political environment that they prefer in the first place. For example, Hermann identifies Saddam Hussein's various needs: a high need for power and control and the need to influence other persons and groups. Hussein exemplifies the autocratic leader who chooses autocratic rule for private reasons but will act according to the logic of political survival. Strategic behavior (institutional behavior) is epiphenomenal: what really drives behavior is psychological motivation. To sustain their power, says Hermann, "such leaders work to manipulate the environment to stay in power and to appear a winner" (2003, p. 379).

Whereas the strategic perspective sees autocratic rule as result of autocratic institutions, the personality approach views autocratic institutions as the product of the practices of a leader who is psychologically primed for power. When he has the desire and ability to increase dominion over others, sometimes over an entire population, autocratic rule can be established. Without a doubt, many political regimes reflect an individual's lust for power and need to dominate. However, the personality approach crudely examines these basic drives and dispositions. Not all leaders who have the will to dominate others actually do, for an ambitious individual can judge other goods in life as superior to mere power. Moreover, according to the

personality approach's logic, the power seeker is never disinclined to take power as long as an opportunity is present. But the exercise of power can be a conduit to greater achievements, esteem from one's equals, and the pursuit of noble purposes, among other things.

Leaders who have a need for achievement lust after distinction. Much like power-driven leaders, they want to be on top but are willing to fulfill their needs through competition among equals. Those with a desire for high achievement want peer recognition, but they compete for esteem in the hope that they will be judged as better than their rivals and competitors.

As I will explain in Chapter 4, the achievement motive bears a striking resemblance to Aristotle's examination of the lover of honor, which I refer to as ordinary political ambition. For Aristotle, the complex desire for honor in politics depends on socially recognized traits and virtues on the one hand, but also on an appropriate (nonrelativistic) attitude toward honors, which also prepares one for the practice of great leadership. Yet, personality scholars ground the need for achievement and esteem in a defect of the human character. This need for admiration is fostered by a "grandiose self" (Popper, 2005), and for the more "famished selves," a continuous flow of adulation is required (Post, 2004). High needs for either power or achievement pull leaders in opposite directions. As David Winter argues, in contrast to an overwhelming desire for power, a balance in the need for power and achievement can develop into a "more pragmatic and (in a democratic context, at least) effective approach to politics" (Winter, 2003, p. 373).

Is pragmatism good for the leader's psychology or for the health of a democracy? Winter is not precise on this issue, which leaves some unresolved questions about his view of ambition. Specifically, does the balanced leader satisfy his needs for power and achievement through his pragmatism, or does a leader's pragmatism benefit a democracy because he neither craves too much power nor is too deeply in need of admiration? Winter implicitly assumes that as long as a

leader's needs are balanced, then his fulfillment of them can bear positively on political life. However, balance is an accident of personality development. Winter does not conceive that balance can be the product of a leader's political moderation, a characteristic that is maturely and consciously developed by an individual. Winter's error, and the general flaw in the personality approach, is that, in an attempt to present the psychology of political actors, he drains leaders' characteristics of their vitality, especially their ambition. As a result, he and other personality theorists underestimate the complexity of ambition, particularly great ambition.

An example of complex and great ambition will help illuminate the problem with the personality approach. Alcibiades was a leader in ancient Athens at the time of the Peloponnesian War; he had equal stores of ambition for power and achievement, but he exhibited a fascinating imbalance of personal characteristics that made him the most famous man of Athens in his time. Although his ambition was characterized by both desires, they were anything but balanced, as Winter would suggest; the objects of his ambition were more greatly developed than what personality scholars understand by the individual's desire to satisfy his needs.

Alcibiades' desire for glory and grand accomplishments could not be fulfilled by the honor of his fellow citizens. In addition, Alcibiades' belief in his self-worth was not directly contingent on attaining raw power, recognition, reputation, and material wealth. At the same time, his actions were motivated by all of these material and psychological goods, which we know because he was proudly outspoken. In Thucydides' *History* (trans. 1996), he frankly tells his fellow citizens what he is worth: "nor is it unfair that he who prides himself on his position should refuse to be on equality with the rest" (6.16.4).

A personality explanation of Alcibiades would find him entirely narcissistic: "the Hellenes, after expecting to see our city ruined by the war, concluded it to be even greater than it

70

really is, by reason of the magnificence with which I represented it at the Olympic games"

(6.16.2). From this perspective, narcissism edges out other considerations, such as the good of

the state. Yet, Alcibiades understood that his private accomplishments influenced Athens's

reputation; they bore witness to foreigners' perceptions of the city-state's power. His

international celebrity, which he gained through successful and expensive chariot racing, had a

public purpose: "this is no useless folly, when a man at his own private cost benefits not himself

only, but his city" (6.16.3). The personality approach cannot understand how Alcibiades'

ambition creates a prism through which his own splendor reflects the greatness of imperial

Athens.

Alcibiades, by his own estimate, claimed to be better fit to lead than others (6.16.1). He

did not suffer from low self-esteem even though his sense of self was grandiose. Alcibiades

yearned to add splendor to his name by outshining all others. But admiration was not enough; he

wanted a heroic reputation. As a result, he turned to politics; his rare ambition for ageless

distinction could be gained through a politics of grandeur, a topic I will resume in Chapter 4.

That is, Alcibiades pursued personal greatness through the Athenian regime in an indulgent

pursuit of unlimited imperial ambitions. Athens's resources were such that glory could be

accomplished through foreign policy; and on account of Alcibiades' great ambition, he pressed

the Athenians to embark on the great Sicilian expedition that ended in catastrophic failure.

Personality and Idiosyncratic Foreign Policy

So far, I have focused on personality and motives, but motives are one variable among

others that comprise personality and affect behavior. Personality scholars think about leaders'

political personas as a more dynamic and integrated whole. I deliberately focus on motivation

and political ambition because the idea of ambition in domestic and international politics is the

unifying theme that I have discerned across theories of leadership in international relations. And

it is the main idea that I revisit in the next two chapters through an in-depth discussion of

Aristotle's examination of magnanimity and political ambition, Pericles' transformative

ambition, and the latter's effect on Greek international relations. Although it's sufficient, for our

purposes, to show that political motives take root in an individual's psyche, the remainder of this

section discusses factors, which combine to produce complex personality orientations that have

varied effects on leaders' foreign policy. No one has contributed more to the study of leaders'

personality and foreign-policy decision-making than Hermann, who has devised an elaborate

series of foreign-policy outcomes based on a wide range of personality orientations.[13]

Of the rich range of orientations and foreign-policy approaches, I will only concentrate

on the most basic levels. Hermann (1980) has argued that the two basic and overarching

personality types exist, aggressive and conciliatory. Each personality maps on to two patterns of

foreign-policy behavior; aggressive leaders tend to have a war disposition, while conciliatory

leaders look to peace. Naturally, a war disposition leads to the outbreak of conflict, but it also

disposes a leader toward advocating force or hostility, perceiving an enemy as a threat, and

maintaining an independent foreign policy. A peace disposition is conducive to cooperation,

arms limitation, and interdependent foreign policy.

Hermann's more complex personality orientation relies on four key characteristics, and

different combinations allow her to predict a series of behaviors:

---

[13] The personality orientations include expansionist, active/independent, influential, mediator/integrator, opportunist, developmental, and each has a respective foreign-policy definition. In addition, each orientation is made up of component personality variables, of which the motivation for power or affiliation is one (See Hermann, 1980).

Aggressive leaders are high in need for power, low in conceptual complexity, distrustful of others, nationalistic, and likely to believe that they have some control over the events in which they are involved. In contrast, the data suggest that conciliatory leaders are high in need for affiliation, high in conceptual complexity, trusting of others, low in nationalism, and likely to exhibit little belief in their own ability to control the events in which they are involved (1980, p. 8).

Although political motivation can underlie a leaders' behavior, other key characteristics are quite influential as well. Beliefs reflect a leader's self-conception and worldview. One who is war prone and aggressive is likely to have a need for power. For Hermann, it is likely that this leader will believe that national sovereignty is supremely important. For realists, leaders do not need to be aggressive in order to have this view as they are bound to protect sovereignty and ensure their state's survival.

Hermann differs from realists who argue that miscalculation leads to conflict; she argues that states are more prone to conflict when a leader shows an independent leadership style that entertains nationalistic beliefs and is competitive and distrustful of outsiders. Hermann's theory is not compatible with neoclassical realism because she argues that leaders define constraints (filtered by their personalities). International politics is completely open to interpretation. Hermann's thesis puts too much emphasis on psychological dispositions and leaders' interpretations of reality. As a result, she actually hinders the study of leadership because her theory sharpens the dualism between subjective psychological states and objective realities. Transformative leaders, I argue, are fully aware of constraints and challenge existing rules and political orders because they are ambitious, so they take advantage of opportunities and are willing to commit good to some and injury to others. However, they may lack a sense of measure and are loathe to circumscribe their ambition, much like Alcibiades. This lack of restraint is not

because the world is simply a projection of their personalities; these leaders want to go beyond the very real limits imposed on them and must do so to see their ambition succeed.

Hermann's personality types also lead her to circular conclusions. She claims that aggressive leaders are predisposed to think the world offers few alternatives: they initiate action, want to enhance state sovereignty, urge independence by limiting cooperation, and usually attempt to negotiate on their own terms. When crises escalate into conflict, Hermann concludes that one or both leaders involved was an aggressive leader whose personality projects threats and insecurity onto the world. For the sake of argument, if a leader had a nonaggressive personality (my term), found himself in a situation where his state was challenged by another state, and decided to risk war, wouldn't he have to take on an aggressive leader's personality and learn to be aggressive? Depending on the context, any leader can and should act aggressively when war can advance his goals. However, Hermann's leaders' personalities are static. They neither evolve nor learn; they just bring their psychic states to bear on politics.

A need for affiliation entails the desire to associate, cooperate, and build trusting interpersonal relations. A leader with this motivation should be able to show trust and have optimistic beliefs. Hermann expects that conciliatory leaders will seek internationalist goals. They see the international arena no differently than the proximate political arena, as a place where mediation and conflict resolution can take place. While the conciliatory leader's foreign policy is also intended to help his country, he does this by encouraging the assistance of other countries and international organizations.

These typologies might be perspicuous observations about some kinds of behavior in international relations, but they are very poor tools to understand statesmanship. I am interested in self-conscious leaders who are more acutely aware of the complexity of things, especially the

more involved situation in which a leader's actions serve greater ends, either for himself or a body politic. In each case, leaders with transformative ambition seek political means to supersede ordinary constraints. Thus, they rise above ordinary citizens, and despite their personal defects, they must know themselves and define themselves politically and not just psychically.

The Personality Approach and Woodrow Wilson: Misunderstanding Transformative Ambition

To fully examine the misdirection of the personality approach's study of leadership, I turn to its classic application in Alexander George and Juliet George's (1956, 1964) psychobiography, *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: a Personality Study*.[14] The authors construct a model of Woodrow Wilson's personality through a psychological interpretation of his early childhood. Their characterization is an exact match of Lasswell's profile of a power seeker, an individual who compensates for low self-esteem by assuming leadership. The authors find confirmation of Wilson's political personality in key decisions and episodes in which he proved intractable.

Wilson's troubled behavior surfaced when he confronted monumental opposition, both as president of Princeton and of United States, which roused his strongest emotions and revealed his deep-seated motives. Wilson manifested a political personality by his inability to make political compromises, which were psychologically injurious to him. He could not share power, consult, or take advice from others. Instead, he tried to impose "orderly systems" on others. I believe that what the Georges mean is that Wilson had an independent streak, which got the best of him; he was responsible for the architecture of his greatest project, the League of Nations, and

---

[14] This text is a classic example of personality and biography, what is called the "psychobiographical method"—to assess political leaders' behavior. Since the publication of their seminal work, the authors have answered their critics (1981) and updated their interpretation in light of new data (1998).

selfishly guarded its form. He tried, but failed, to implement it with as little interference as possible.

Before I examine the intricacies of Wilson's personality and political behavior, I discuss the main events that interest Wilson personality scholars, the Paris Peace Conference as well as the ratification of the Treaty of Versailles and League of Nations covenant in the United States Senate.

Wilson took America to war in 1917, after the country had maintained a policy of neutrality for much of WWI. When the war broke out, it was Wilson who had declared that the United States should seek neutrality.[15] For three years, Wilson vehemently tried to avoid war and even campaigned for re-election on the slogan, "He kept us out of war." It's important not to misconstrue this idea since Wilson was not calling for isolationism but seeking to present the United States as a party outside of, but still politically engaged in, the European war (Clements, 1987, p. 163). Wilson thought that as a neutral state, the United States could act as a mediator and bring the warring states to a peace agreement. Yet, he found it difficult to maintain neutrality as Germany abandoned accepted international rules regarding naval warfare. On account of Germany's diplomatic brinkmanship, which culminated in its decision to wage unrestricted submarine warfare, and Wilson's desire that the United States would have a significant role at the peace table at the war's conclusion, Wilson decided to take the country to war (Saunders, 1998, pp. 90–91).[16]

---

[15] See Woodrow Wilson's message to Congress, 63rd Cong., 2d Sess., Senate Doc. No. 566 (Washington, 1914).

[16] Unrestricted submarine warfare meant that Germany's U-boats would sink without warning merchant or passenger ships, armed or unarmed, neutral or enemy, sailing in the war zone around England. Restricted submarine warfare meant that one or another of these categories might be

America's effort tipped the war in the Allies' favor, and in November, 1918 Germany signed an armistice. That same month, Wilson led the American delegation in Paris, where he hoped to build an enduring peace and establish a new international architecture. His aim at the Paris Peace Conference in 1918–19 was principled, a desire that cannot be said of any other statesman at the time. Just a year earlier, he had issued his Fourteen Points and views on self-determination, which not only revealed his terms for peace but also his blueprint for a new international order.

Wilson's goals were fundamentally transformative as he sought to erect a moral and legal governing institution for relations among states. Prior to WWI, as Kendrick Clements states, Wilson "really believed that he alone had a clear vision of a world organized for justice and democracy" (1987, p. 197). Wilson wanted a lasting peace, one that did not vindictively or harshly punish Germany. For a true peace, Wilson believed statesmen would have to redefine the international order and traditional statecraft. The reliance on power and interest, which he derided as products of jealousy and greed, would give way to principle and law.

Two factors worked in favor of Wilson's plan. The shared experience of destruction and loss of life produced by a total war would push nations toward the accepting the League of Nations, which promised to put an end to major wars. In addition, each state gained a clear benefit from the league: individual acts of aggression could be thwarted through the enforcement of collective security, thereby increasing each state's security. But before states could reap any of these advantages, they would first need to commit to the league. Wilson's strategy depended on

---

spared altogether, or that submarines before firing would surface, warn their victims, and give them time to abandon ship (Hull, 2004, p. 279).

showing how it provided a transparent and effective mechanism for peace over the unreliable and immoral balance of power.

Henry Kissinger underscores how momentous Wilson's plan to resolve crises without war actually was; it "had never been put forward by any nation, let alone implemented" (1994, p. 52). Wilson's political goals were as breathtakingly ambitious as they were unconventional. He sought to substitute Europe's long-standing diplomatic practices, the balance of power and realpolitik, which he deemed immoral, with self-determination and collective security.[17]

Wilson believed that international conflict was not caused by a breakdown in the international balance of power. Leaders invoked balance-of-power politics to legitimize and satisfy their selfish and illiberal ambitions. Aggressive leaders in nondemocratic nations made war more likely. In Wilson's mind, he sought to introduce order into what he thought was international disorder. As a consequence of Europe's diplomatic relations, states had routinely imposed force or other tactics to gain advantage over others. For Wilson, the former was fundamentally unjust. A true international order depended on fairness; he believed that the world needed a forum where a union of nations could address grievances, collectively stem individual acts of aggression, and increase states' prosperity.

Wilson also disliked how the balance of power nullified the exercise of leadership in international politics; it was a tool to limit the discretion of leaders who might overreach and begin to dominate other states. Leaders used the balance of power as a constraining device—in

---

[17] The concept of self-determination assumes that a cohesive group of people, a nation, has the right to choose its own political organization, and, consequently, its own state. As a result, this principle presents a challenge to the territorial status quo and invites conflict. Wilson understood this problem and only committed to the restoration of Belgium with complete rights to self-determination. According to Robert M. Saunders, this action underscores Wilson's pragmatism over his ideological aspirations (1998, p. 105).

other words, as preventative statecraft—to check the most powerful states and ascending powers. Wilson wanted to proactively engage nations in international politics, which could only be done by assuming political and moral leadership. In short, he saw the need for statesmanship at the international level, a means for a leader to act freely above particular national interests. The statesman's responsibility was to set down principles of international conduct and keep nations from straying from them. This responsibility, Wilson felt, fell on the United States and him, which explains why he was compelled to attend the talks. He was the only leader with the clarity and desire to bring about peace and end the balance-of-power system forever (Lang, 1995).

Throughout his academic and political life, Wilson was a proponent of the art of statesmanship. His early thoughts on the topic stressed the need for freer public leadership in the American political system; he "celebrated the transformative power of leaders such as William Gladstone, his boyhood hero (Stid, 1998, p. 31). Wilson believed that in a democracy the statesman acts as the linchpin between political life and political ideals. The former is carried on by the public, which can either represent democratic ideals or can deviate from them. Not only is it a leader's responsibility to guide the public toward existing principles, but he must also know the public mind and reform long-standing political practice when change is needed. Wilson understood the transformative power of democratic leadership as interpretive statesmanship, the practice of circumspection that a leader uses to gauge the pulse of the nation and prepare it for political change. Thus, he thought that independent leadership was possible through rhetoric that could capture the hearts and minds of the public.

Naturally, Wilson supported the notion that conflict and wars grew out of the failures of national leadership. The conflict in Europe stemmed from the gulf between leaders with aggressive ambitions and a beneficent public that longed for justice (Saunders, 1998, p. 165).

The outbreak of war not only represented the illiberal interests of autocratic rulers and nations but also the failure of European statecraft. If the 27 nations represented at the peace talks accepted Wilson's international-governing principle, embodied by the League of Nations, then the international community could avert future conflict. Collective security reduces nations' uncertainty about other states' intentions and decreases the inherent dangers in international politics. An aggressor calculates the prospects of facing the strength and will of many states in armed conflict and most likely backs down. As league members, states would no longer need to enter alliances, conduct diplomacy in secret, and build up arms because states would redefine their interests on moral and legal grounds.

Wilson's plan for the league was not just a lofty proposal. The new international order promised that laws and principles would govern international relations through the unprecedented security the league would offer to individual states. The balance of power lacked guaranteed security because it left smaller states exposed to the ambitions of stronger ones or excluded from alliances. Wilson laid out his conception for a new international politics in a speech to the United States Senate in 1917:

> There must be not a balance of power but a community of power. I am therefore proposing that all nations henceforth avoid entangling alliances that draw them into competitions of power, catch them in a net of intrigue and selfish rivalry, and disturb their own affairs with influences intruded from without. There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose, all act in the common interest and are free to live their own lives under a common protection. (Craig & George, 1995)

Wilson's ideas were unfamiliar to Europe's leaders, who were accustomed to conducting diplomatic relations with an eye to pragmatic results (Kissinger, 1994). Traditionally, victorious powers established a government in the vanquished state with which they could have relations, redrew territorial boundaries, and defined spheres of influence. The Congress of Vienna, which

was convened in 1815, exemplifies this type of balance-of-power diplomacy. For European

leaders its stable outcome was committed to Europe's historical memory as a blueprint and

evidence of how the successful construction of a new balance of power led to peace. The status

of France was the crux of the negotiations. Its redrawn boundaries deprived it of all territory

conquered by Napoleon Bonaparte. To buffer another attempt at expansion, France was encircled

by 39 German states. France, represented by Talleyrand, was part of the congress, so the

proceedings were not punitive but did ward off the potential for renewed French aggression. The

settlement led to 40 years of peace. However, true to the balance-of-power spirit, each state still

pursued its own interest, either to gain advantage or make up for some loss, all in the name of

stability. Kissinger describes the essential difference between the traditional and Wilson's new

liberal system:

> The preservation of peace would no longer spring from the traditional calculus of power
> but from worldwide consensus backed up by a policing mechanism. A universal grouping
> of largely democratic nations would act as the trustee of peace, and replace the old
> balance-of-power and alliance systems (1994, p. 52).

Wilson went to Paris supremely confident about his ability to dictate the peace terms,

since the armistice between Germany and the Allied Powers was a product of the United States'

negotiations with Germany. Moreover, Britain and France had agreed to the Fourteen Points as

the framework for peace. Wilson spent more than six months in Paris, which broke a long-

standing precedent that American presidents rarely travel abroad. His overriding goal was to

make the league proposal an integral part of the conference, and compromises, if necessary, were

to be made with an eye to getting states to accept the league (Saunders, 1998, p. 137).

Wilson's visit and goals in Europe might have set a trend for the American presidency,

but the leaders of the battered allies, Georges Clemenceau, the premier of France, and David

Lloyd George, the prime minister of Great Britain, were still simply interested in getting the best deal for their countries. To act otherwise could prove costly to their nations and to their political fates.

The British were determined to protect their command of the seas, and the French were especially concerned with future German aggression (Clements, 1987, p. 200). The fear of electoral reprisals at home certainly influenced George's opinion. In Britain, for example, the *Daily Mail* carried a box on its first page that read, "The Huns will cheat you yet!" David Lloyd George's 1918 election slogan responded to this sentiment, "We will squeeze the orange till the pips squeak" (Craig & George, 1995, p. 45), and he secured reelection on the promise to make Germany pay war reparations. The French response to Wilson's aims was sardonic; the 78-year-old Clemenceau, known as "the Tiger," remarked that where God had only Ten Commandments, Wilson had now come with his Fourteen Points (Boller, 1996).

As the conference began, Wilson found that he could not just dictate terms to the Allies. The first issue taken up by the Allies, the disposition of the German colonies, required resolution through compromise. The Allies wanted an outright partition of the colonies, and Wilson sought an anti-imperialist mandate. The Allies eventually agreed to give the colonies to the major powers under a mandate system (Clements, 1987, p. 200).

Throughout the proceedings, Wilson was drawn into a debate over procedural details. Starting the conference itself was an ordeal; thus, he accomplished little in his first month at Paris. The peace talks also revealed that Wilson was not much of a negotiator; rather he saw himself as a judge, "applying the yardstick of his principles to the proposals which the various foreign statesman made" (George & George, 1964, p. 231). The colonial issue proved to Wilson that he would have to sacrifice greatly to get what he wanted. As a consequence, he devoted his

strongest efforts to ensure an agreement about the league's creation in the treatise, rather than have a two-stage conference with two concluding documents.

While Wilson succeeded in making the league a priority, the longer the peace talks lasted, the greater his sense of urgency to close matters became, overriding his desire to create a new international order (Kissinger, 1994, p. 230). More experienced and clever diplomats stifled Wilson and America's voice during the talks. Much of this was Wilson's fault since he left his aides in the dark about his ideas and did not have systematic plan to work through the conference beyond his Fourteen Points. The American diplomats tended to play passive roles on various commissions, ceding the initiative to their French and British counterparts.

In mid-February, after being abroad for two months, Wilson had to return to Washington. Upon his return, Republican senators and the media met his aims and accomplishments in Paris with strong criticism and skepticism. Wilson was prepared to fight back: "immediately upon his arrival in the United States he had thrown down the gauntlet to his critics" (George & George, 1964, p. 235). He landed in Boston, home of his nemesis Senator Henry Cabot Lodge. Wilson quickly took the high ground, expressed the league "as the hope of the world," and stated that American rejection of the treaty would have tragic consequences for international politics (Saunders, 1998, p. 163).

Largely due to partisanship, the Senate's hesitancy also grew out of a genuine fear that the league would weaken national security and reduce America's influence in the western hemisphere. Critical senators also felt that the league's mandate to quell conflict supplanted Congress's war-making power. Following the advice of his closest counselor, Colonel Edward House, Wilson extended an olive branch by hosting a White House dinner with the Foreign Relations Committee, an overture that had no effect on the opposing senators.

Resistance stiffened when Lodge read a round-robin resolution in the Senate, signed by 39 Republicans. The proposal explicitly declared the covenant unacceptable in its present form and called for the separation of the league from the peace treaty. It "was intended to serve notice on Wilson and on all the negotiators in Paris that more than a third of the Senate was opposed to the Covenant in its current form" (George & George, 1964, p. 238). Wilson reacted forcefully by criticizing the league's opponents as "contemptible," "ignorant," and "provincial" (Saunders, 1998, p. 165).

Domestic opposition to Wilson and the league was not just the work of contrarian politicians looking to gain the upper hand. Their claims were rooted in a fundamental disagreement about the source and direction of U.S. foreign policy. Although Wilson's alternative to the balance of power and American aloofness was gaining steady support from the media and the public, he had not convinced a strident group of Republican senators who felt that Congress's power was being usurped. Wilson vociferously defended the league's moral advantages, but he had a very difficult time explaining exactly how the league would actually function. The main reason that Wilson lacked these details is because the peace conference was consumed with practical matters that grew out of each participant's self-interest, making it hard to build the architecture for the league.

Wilson returned to Paris with his domestic support clearly weakened. Aware of the widely publicized Senate criticism of the league, the Allies made a concerted effort to chip away at Wilson's Fourteen Points. They knew fully well that Wilson's desire to create the league took precedence over anything else and that he would sacrifice many of the peace aims in order to push amendments that would address domestic concerns, including recognizing the Monroe Doctrine, excluding national or internal questions from the league's jurisdictions, and providing

for the possibility of withdrawal from the body (George & George, 1964, p. 250). With his attention turned to the problem of Senate ratification of the treaty, Wilson's Fourteen Points were whittled down "to a barely recognizable state in the final draft of the treaty" (Hagedorn, 2007, p. 357).

As the peace talks came closer to an end, Wilson's image and standing had changed drastically. Throngs of cheering crowds greeted him when he first set foot in Paris; he was seen as a triumphant leader of great celebrity who would edify and save Europe. Once the conference began, he was pitted against more experienced diplomats and plucked from the soaring heights. Upon his return to Paris, he sacrificed his Fourteen Points to retain the League of Nations and was aware that the Senate might reject the league if he was not willing to compromise on major issues. Near the end he became an embattled negotiator, who took it upon himself to keep the league alive.[18]

In which ways did Wilson stray from his Fourteen Points? There is no better place to start than the first point, which stated that the process of creating the covenant would be an open and public procedure. During the entire conference, only the delegations were privy to its progress. Wilson also made major accommodations to other leaders, who were pressing their national-security concerns. As a result, harsher terms were inflicted on Germany that limited its economic and military strength. These concessions were a cause for concern for Wilson because Germany could have refused to sign the treaty and fighting might resume (Saunders, 1998, p. 195).

---

[18] One of the important dramatic elements of Wilson's time in Paris was the way his relationship with his personal counsel, Colonel Edward House, deteriorated after he returned from Washington. The interesting and dynamic relationship is fully explored by Alexander George and Juliet George.

Although he started with high hopes for a more humane peace settlement, Wilson sacrificed many of his principles in order to create the league.

By mid-June, the parties had finished the key negotiations, and signing the treaty was just a matter of time. For Wilson, the possibility of Germany's refusal was now a moot point. Around this time Wilson turned his attention toward the Senate's approval. The possibility that collective security would be institutionalized through the League of Nations led to political upheaval in the Senate. Wilson was very vocal about the need for the League to go beyond agreements between nations. He envisioned a robust organization that would act as a political force; and American strength would be wielded to enhance its common strength. Moreover, Wilson's international goals were without precedent. Historically, American foreign policy rested on two pillars: the inviolability of sovereignty and a long-standing view of America's guarded isolation from Europe's entangling alliances.

Besides its radical departure from the tenets of U.S. foreign policy, many senators fumed at Wilson's go-it-alone diplomacy. He drew up the league's framework entirely on his own. By not consulting the Senate's Foreign Relations Committee, he sidestepped the chamber's constitutional role in treaty-making, one that counsels the executive branch and therefore shares this power.

It did not help Wilson that in 1918 the Republicans retook the Senate. The constraints on him and the ratification of the league were clear, yet he was adamant about approving the treaty without reservations and hoped to avoid the concessions being asked of him by reservationist Republicans. Senate opinion was divided among loyal Democratic supporters, mild reservationists who sincerely supported the treaty, stronger reservationists, and irreconcilables who completely disapproved of the league.

The major divide in the Senate revolved around Article X—one that Wilson wrote himself—which could potentially commit the United States' economic and military power to the collective security of member nations. Article X states: "the Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political independence of all Members of the League. In case of any such aggression or in case of any threat or danger of such aggression the Council shall advise upon the means by which this obligation shall be fulfilled." Lodge was the strident leader of the reservationist camp. He was genuinely anti–League of Nations because he thought that it posed a dangerous contradiction between the nation's sovereignty and the United States' obligation to the body. He was also fervently anti-Wilson, a sentiment based on personal differences as well as his dismay over what looked like Wilson's riding roughshod over the constitution, specifically Congress's power to declare war.

Lodge made it his priority to absolve the United States of any of the obligations in Article X. For Wilson, adherence to it was the only mechanism to make the league effective; if the United States extricated itself from this rule, it would render the organization quite powerless in the face of international aggression. Unlike the irreconcilables, many Senators in the reservationist camp sincerely favored the treaty, but wanted it modified to protect vital American interests (Seymour, 1957).

To counter the opposition, Wilson took the offensive and defended Article X, while trying to mollify the objections of reservationists. He warned of the consequences of removing or weakening Article X, arguing that the covenant provided the proper mechanisms to preserve the United States' security and interests. First, as a veto player, the United States could avoid hazardous foreign ventures. Second, the United States was not legally bound to any of the

league's dictates. Yet, Wilson's rhetoric firmly expressed the view that even though the league did not constrain the United States in any legal way, it was morally obligated to respect and follow through on its decisions. Wilson never backed down from his position on Article X; he stated many times that it "was the very backbone of the Covenant" (Stromberg, 1963, p. 28). Thus, for Wilson, a moral obligation was infinitely superior to merely a legal one (Clements, 1987, p. 219).

Wilson's handling of the reservations was critical, since 79 out of 96 senators were in favor of approving the treaty and entering the league with some reasonable modifications (Stromberg, 1963). Wilson acknowledged the reservations but distinguished between substantive and interpretive ones. Substantive reservations, he argued, would require cumbersome and protracted process in which all countries would have to renegotiate the treaty's terms (Saunders, 1998, p. 216). Wilson accepted interpretive reservations as long as such understandings did not "form part of the formal ratification itself" (Clements, 1987, p. 218).

However, reservationist Republicans were intent on pushing beyond interpretive changes. Lodge held multiple hearings in the Foreign Relations Committee during July and August in an attempt to curb, radically reshape, and even defeat the treaty (Clements, 1987, p. 214). On August 19, Wilson invited committee members to a three-hour question-and-answer lunch at the White House. However, Wilson still refused to entertain the idea of significant amendments. Given the impasse, Wilson came out of the meeting believing that opposition was partisan in nature and might be overcome with an appeal to the American people (1987, p. 218).

Wilson embarked on a nationwide series of speaking engagements on September 3. On his tour, he "avoided making derogatory remarks about the mild reservations and concentrated his verbal salvos on the irreconcilables"(Kraig, 2004, p. 167). Wilson's rhetorical strategy was to

paint ratification in stark moral terms and gave the impression that reservations were tantamount to rejecting the covenant. Moreover, he made it seem that only two choices were available, accepting it as it stood or rejecting it.

Wilson masterfully weaved great moral promise and ominous portents into his speeches. While the league would render aggressive actions, such as Germany's, obsolete, rejection would plunge the world back into conflict. He was also keen to stress that the league's invocation of Article X did not automatically lead to the use of force. The organization would first use arbitration and diplomacy to deter aggressors and force as a last resort.

On his tour, Wilson made sure that his rhetoric transcended partisanship and turned ratification into a question of national greatness, which he defined "as that ability to develop a vision that penetrates to the heart of its duty and mission among the nations of the world" (Saunders, 1998, p. 223). His approach put aside the quibbling over details by reminding people that the League of Nations represented a great dream (Clements, 1987, p. 215).

Wilson's stirring oratory spoke to the moral sentiments that he held dear, and it also touched the hearts of his audiences as they greeted his speeches with cheers and applause. If he could not change the Senate's opinion, he would transform, steward, and rally that of the public toward this highest of causes. Wilson's approach had a political purpose. Wilson sought to exercise prerogative from the beginning of the peace process, but the Senate debate constrained him. On the speaking tour, Wilson could stand both outside of the debate and above the fray. As a result, he shied away from responding to criticisms and failed to suggest possible compromises (Cooper, 2009, p. 523). However, Wilson's omissions could have worked to his advantage. If he eventually compromised, such an act would be a necessary sacrifice for principle, while his opponents would never be able to position themselves as morally superior. But Wilson never

89

capitalized on this advantage because he refused any reservations even when its defeat was certain.

By the time he reached Colorado, Wilson had traveled almost 10,000 miles and "was attracting enormous, enthusiastic crowds and a groundswell of support for the treaty seemed to be building" (Clements, 1987, p. 215). But he had to cut his trip short after delivering what turned out to be his last speech, in Pueblo, Colorado. Thoroughly exhausted, he could not continue his rigorous schedule; he was forced to return to Washington. A few days later he suffered a debilitating stroke.

In the end, Wilson's strategy failed. He resisted Lodge's reservations to the bitter end though he knew that most senators wanted some included in the treaty. He directed Democratic senators to vote down the treaty with reservations. The Senate rejected the treaty with, and then without, reservations. The first vote, on whether to ratify with the Lodge's 14 reservations, was defeated by a vote of 39 to 55. However, the outcome did not bring reservationists who still desired the league over to Wilson's side. The second vote, for approval without any reservations, was defeated by a vote of 38 to 53.

The Failed Ratification of the League of Nations: The Personality Study

Which factors best explain the defeat of the League of Nations? From the perspective of political analysis, Wilson failed to have the Treaty of Versailles ratified in the Senate because he could not execute the complex balancing act that is required between international diplomacy and domestic politics, what international relations scholars refer to as "two level games"

(Putnam, 1988).[19] Wilson made decisions and compromises with the Allies at the international level to preserve the league, yet he did not go far enough to satisfy the central decision-makers (the Senate) in the United States. Even as he faced a Republican Senate, he openly defied his opponents, was unbending in his belief that the treaty's rejection was unthinkable, and was adamantly opposed to reservations since such a change, in his mind, nullified the treaty.

Wilson made political miscalculations both internationally and domestically that someone more strategically competent might not have made. In fact, just by attending the Paris Peace talks, he allowed domestic opposition to form in the Senate. His presence also negated the formidable bargaining power he would have enjoyed as the major veto player, which was contingent on his remaining in Washington during the conference (Keynes, 1920; Lloyd George, 1938).

Are Wilson's strategic blunders attributable to errors that he could have corrected at the time? As circumstances played out, why did he not adjust his strategy? Why would a distinguished scholar of executive-congressional relations and an experienced president of the United States take actions that would likely reduce the prospects for ratification when other, more reasonable, alternatives were clearly available (Walker, 1995, p. 698)? This puzzle intrigues personality scholars. They interpret the ratification process as Wilson's refusal to accept reservations that would have ensured ratification without altering the treaty's terms in other than a cosmetic fashion (Bailey, 1945; George & George, 1964; Freud & Bullitt, 1967).

---

[19] Robert D. Putnam defines two-level games as: "[A]t the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments. Neither of the two games can be ignored by central decision-makers, so long as their countries remain interdependent, yet sovereign" (1988, p. 434).

Based on this interpretation of his behavior, personality scholars have surmised that Wilson's personality—his inner drives—led him to this crucial political mistake.

I argue differently. While the ratification process made particular traits, such as his anger and stubbornness, more pronounced and visible, his fight with the Senate is attributable to his ambition to erect the league and the mode he used to attain it: prerogative and rhetorical statesmanship. His actions more likely reflected his own beliefs about the power of his statesmanship: that it must be an independent force, which guides political practice and that rhetoric can edify and sway the nation toward correct principles.

Woodrow Wilson's Personality: The Desire for Power and Achievement

Winter (2003) argues that Wilson's personality affected three key components of his political behavior: his inept negotiation, his confusion of rhetoric with substance, and his refusal to compromise. Despite Wilson's principled advocacy of the league and his supreme confidence in its success, he showed a "consistent pattern in which he seemed to undercut his remarkable leadership skills and defeat or undo his considerable accomplishments" (Winter, 2003, p. 15). These patterns reveal that what was truly behind his lofty political and moral goals was a desire to impose his psychological needs on others. Wilson's particular personality made him increasingly stubborn as the challenges to the league's ratification mounted. As a result, he countered his opponents with lengthy and exhausting speech campaigns (2003, p. 15).

There is a problem with this interpretation however. Wilson was a determined and high-minded statesman; his academic and political career was guided by a conscious attempt to unite political thought and practice. As such, he put his ambition toward noble purposes and poured his energy into the art of statesmanship. However, psychobiographers overlook Wilson's

deliberate choices and conscious political understanding in favor of the underlying psychological ambitions that produced the failed ratification. Rather than try to explain the nature of Wilson's political character and how it led to his attempt to overcome constraints on the domestic and international level, personality scholars divorce Wilson the individual from political practice and concentrate on his underlying compulsions. The latter surely exist, but they are mistakenly understood as both causes of individual behavior and political outcomes in general.

George and George (1981) plumb the depths of Wilson's life and argue that his personality orientation derailed his visionary goals as it led to "a ruinously self-defeating refusal to compromise with his opponents on certain issues that had become emotionally charged for him" (p. 642). Thus, their argument hinges on Wilson's inability to compromise, which was only a symptom of his underlying ambition: "an unconscious interest in imposing orderly systems upon others as a means of achieving a sense of power" (George & George, 1998, p. 38).

The Georges are of the opinion that the desire for power guided Wilson's behavior throughout his life. It remained an unconscious motive because it was in tension with his moral code. Eventually, this desire for power overrode his explicit political aims. While Wilson thought that he took the high road as the proponent of the league, he found it impossible to compromise with the Senate for the sake of saving it. For the authors, "the substance of his program, although sustained by a variety of personal needs and intellectual conviction which sincerely committed him to it, was in the last analysis the external vehicle of his need to dominate" (1964, p. 208).

However, this is an odd theoretical understanding of Wilson's political ambition. On the one hand, the authors admit that Wilson's political program grew out of his mature political thought. On the other hand, his program was produced by an unconscious need to dominate others and served to satisfy his underlying ambitions. How would have it been possible for

93

someone like Wilson, with a wealth of life experience and a thoughtful approach to politics and statesmanship, to be completely blind to his genuine desire, which was, apparently, to seek power? Here is the main problem with the examination of leadership character and ambition from a personality perspective. The personality is forged through conflict; so positive expressions of statesmanship such as Wilson's transformative, international goals are judged as latent expressions of inner turmoil. As a result of this poor theory of statesmanship, we are left with the low standards of the personality structure to judge Wilson's high, yet flawed, leadership.

Wilson's desire to achieve power was built on inner doubts and the low self-esteem that the authors attribute to his conflicted relationship with his father, Joseph Ruggles Wilson, a Presbyterian minister who made perfectionist demands on those around him and instilled Calvinistic doctrine into his family. [20] Thus, "the boy Wilson was steeped in a tradition which extolled moral achievement above all else" (1964, pp. 4–5). Joseph Wilson also played a very active role in his son's education, but mysteriously, even though his father was punctilious about the use of the English language, the young Wilson did not learn to read well until he was eleven (1964, p. 7). The authors suggest that "failing—refusing—to learn was the one way in which the boy dared to express his resentment against his father" (1964, p. 7).

---

[20] There are two methods to study personality and leader behavior. First, to study a particular leader's personality, analysts can use psychobiography, while a more generalized study of personality and behavior examines general traits that an individual possesses to varying degrees. For psychobiographers, personality is determined by the emotional and environmental influences during the formative stages of childhood and adolescence. Thus, a leader's personality assessment requires reconstructing these developmental stages using biographical data. However, there is an inherent problem with the biographical approach. This information can be scarce, and there is no direct access to political leaders as there is to clinical patients. In a clinical practice, a patient's narrative answers provide the psychologist with accurate information with which a personality assessment can be made, the same analysis that the psychobiographer wishes to replicate. Some scholars are explicit that the assessment of leaders' personalities at a distance is construction of a representation of a leader's personality (Greenstein, 1969).

The paternal demands exacted on the young Wilson were the origin of his motives and inner turmoil. He was a late reader and poor student but fully aware that individuals in his family sharpened their intellect and were expected to succeed in public life. The authors maintain that the gap between his father's demands and his own achievement created anxiety and resentment in him. However, Wilson never openly rebelled against his father. Not only did he repress his negative feelings, but he also adopted his father's standards as his own. As a boy, he could reduce his anxiety by pleasing his father through showing a strong desire for high achievement. Wilson's political personality pivoted on two distinct motives, the need for power and achievement. The authors' description of his complex relationship with his father is worth reproducing here.

> Dr. Wilson was noted for his caustic wit. This he directed not only at his contemporaries but at his young son as well. Tommy never retorted and he never rebelled. Instead, he accepted his father's demands for perfection, tried to emulate him, and interpreted his stinging criticisms as humiliating evidence that, try as he might, he was inadequate. He felt eternally inferior to his father in appearance as well as in accomplishment. He once remarked: "If I had my father's face and figure, it wouldn't make any difference what I said." (1964, p. 6)

Forged in his childhood, Wilson's power and high-achievement motives directed his behavior throughout his life via a compulsive striving for perfection (1964, p. 8). The timing and development of inner motives is critical to the personality approach because it suggests that psychological motivation is independent of a leader's maturing thought and political experience. If a leader's political personality is formed in his childhood and early adolescence, then inner motives are largely borne out of unconscious development and emotional turmoil. Political ambition emerges from this development; and its expression is interpreted as a displacement of these core needs.

The authors argue that Wilson rationalized his political behavior, actions that primarily satisfied his inner needs, by always appealing to a great moral purpose. Wilson's aims at the peace talks easily fulfilled his desires because he could vindicate himself as the architect of a moral peace settlement. However, even in grayer areas, Wilson's rationalization was at work, such as when he brought the United States into the war:

> His only means of justifying to himself his excruciating decision to go to war was to devote every last ounce of his strength to ensuring that out of the holocaust would emerge a moral peace settlement which would ensure that this would be indeed the war to end wars. The realization of such a sublime ideal was the only coin which could purchase peace of mind for him. To this compelling motivation were wedded others, perhaps even more basic, which sprang from Wilson's urgent inner needs. He had always wanted—*needed*—to do immortal work. Devising a peace settlement which would prevent future wars was a task which appealed to everything within him which strove for self-vindication through accomplishment. (1964, p. 197)

The authors reduce Wilson's great ambition, which was the desire to do a great and immortal work and pursue such a sublime ideal, to something that is not exalted at all but also morally illegitimate—the desire to dominate. By using a personality approach, we can only conclude that Wilson had a tyrannical character and was only limited by a combination of inner repression and the constraints of democratic government:

> He had always wanted—*needed*—to dominate. The greatness of his cause provided justification for imposing his moral purpose on the whole world. In service of such an ideal, he could allow himself to seek control of the peace conference and to impose his will ruthlessly upon those at home who dared question the wisdom of his ideas about the peace settlement. (1964, pp. 197–98)

Wilson's competing needs lead the authors to conclude "that temperamental defects contributed to the President's tragic failure both in negotiating the Treaty and later in attempting to secure its ratification" (1964, p. 197). In activities in which Wilson invested emotional effort, he did not like to be challenged by anybody. During his early presidency, these problems went unnoticed. Wilson had a Democratic majority in Congress and gained party unanimity by

"making unprecedented use of a traditional party institution: the caucus" (1964, p. 135). The authors also do not properly render Wilson's personality because they fail to examine his overall statesmanship. For example, early in his presidency, he galvanized Congress and used the office of the executive to produce more significant domestic legislation than any previous time in American history (Dimock, 1957, p. 6).

Wilson certainly had personality flaws; he angered quickly and was impolitic with his rivals. However, he also harnessed the drives of his personality; he developed a strong will and incessant work ethic. He spent most of his adult life thinking about the problem of statesmanship as it related to the American regime and then later to world politics. Far from being a tyrant, Wilson advocated and tried to practice elevated leadership through a blend of moral wisdom, oratorical persuasion, and coercive politics. The basis of Wilson political character was his highly conscious attempt to discern the enlightened interests of the public and the international world. However, we are supposed to believe that his irrationality blinded him to his political interests during the league's ratification.

Scholars of American politics and American political thought have also criticized the personality approach's interpretation of Wilson on grounds that it fails to distinguish the rhetorical demands placed on Wilson from his psychological impulses. According to Jeffrey Tulis (1987), Wilson's rhetoric was defiant in the face of reservations because he was trying to stave off an equivocal acceptance of the league: "Wilson was preoccupied with the *problematic* character of the League of Nations. The League rested on nothing more than goodwill and the ability of each of its member nations to transcend national interests" (1987, p. 156). In addition, Wilson had to adjust to quite different rhetorical necessities: he needed to persuade senators to vote for the treaty and the citizenry to pressure senators to vote for it (1987, p. 158).

From another perspective, Daniel Stid (1998) argues that Wilson's self-defeating tour and action in the Senate were attempts to resolve a contradiction in his program, namely: "his determination to exercise absolute control over the treaty-making power was inconsistent with his recognition that the Senate was in a position and often inclined to thwart such presidential control" (p. 161). Wilson proceeded with this approach because he thought that the league required America's unconditional support.

Conclusion

The criticisms levied against the personality approach's psychobiographical interpretation of Wilson are well worth exploring in depth. However, I want to emphasize one crucial flaw in the personality theories that serves as a bridge for the next chapter, which discusses Aristotle's idea of magnanimity as great political ambition. The development of a leader's political personality is random in nature. A mostly unconscious development underlies leaders' political ambition and concomitant statecraft. There is no way to distinguish between the more important variations of ambition among leaders, especially ordinary ambition from the greater transformative kind.

Wilson exhibited the latter kind of ambition; he directed it toward changing the rules of international politics, which in his mind benefited the world and the United States. Thus, he practiced statesmanship at both the domestic and international level. Conversely, the personality approach understands leaders' behavior as the product of idiosyncrasy that is devoid of both political prudence and a systematic way of understanding the relationship between the leadership and political environment he inhabits. Wilson is not an example of the idiosyncratic leader. He implemented novel diplomatic ideas, risked his and his party's prestige, gambled the league on

the power of his rhetoric, and defied constraints and other individuals not because of his personality foibles, but on account of his greater ambitions, understanding of the American regime, and beliefs about the international order.

For a more complex and balanced understanding of leadership and politics, we turn to Aristotle's complex examination of the magnanimous man. It provides a portal through which we can begin to see a more nuanced idea of leadership, which unites radically individualistic premises about leader ambition with the idea that statesmanship can aim to transform international and domestic institutions.

Chapter 4

Aristotle's Idea of Magnanimity: Ordinary, Great, and Transformative Ambition

Introduction

For Aristotle, magnanimity is the peak and completion of virtue, which is attained by the morally serious individual. An abiding characteristic of magnanimity is that it pertains to "great things," such as great honors and great deeds (*Ethics*, 1123b, trans. 2002). It is also defined by the right attitude toward the most valuable external good, honor. The magnanimous man's desire for honor is based on his self-worth; he believes he deserves not only great, but the greatest things. The greatest thing turns out to be honor, but his certainty of his merit is based on the presence of something truly great within him.

Honor is a recognition of worth and the starting point for the analysis of magnanimity. Like money, this external good is a fickle thing, but it differs from other external goods because honor refers to an individual's intrinsic character. It points to the magnanimous man's virtue; and while honor is a fickle thing, virtue is not. As such, the magnanimous man's view of himself is not empty self-esteem or narcissism. Aristotle says that he must be the best human being, and it would be impossible for him not to be good (1123b27–28, 1123b36).

As the peak of virtue, magnanimity involves all the other virtues Aristotle examines in the *Ethics*: courage, temperance, moderation, liberality, magnificence, political ambition, gentleness, friendliness, truthfulness, justice, and prudence. This overarching virtue does not come to sight as an event in the way, for example, that courage is displayed by one's actions on the battlefield. Magnanimity is a proper self-awareness and knowledge of one's virtue. It is the

virtuous individual's ability to delight in his own excellence of character. As such, the magnanimous man is concerned about honors, but he is characterized by knowledge of his worth: "who considers himself worthy of great things, and is worthy of them, for one who does so not in accordance with his worth is foolish" (1123b4).

For the purposes of this dissertation, magnanimity is a model of great political ambition that supports my theory that leaders' transformative ambition and statesmanship work independently of constraints and change the character of world politics. The latter is exercised by leaders who are more acutely aware of the complexity of things, including the nature of their greater ambition. Magnanimity's self-awareness points to a serious political leader's ability to transform his ambition beyond the desire for things like power. With the aid of Aristotle, I improve on personality theories that reduce all ambition to unconscious desire. In addition, magnanimity serves to illustrate the possibility of leaders whose power to make decisions is free from political constraints; this kind of ambition leads politicians to take on great and necessary risks to transform their world.

For Aristotle, the magnanimous man acts rarely, only in the exceptional cases that are worthy of his greatness; there is an unbridgeable distance between him and others upon whom he looks down with particular disdain. The magnanimous man's knowledge of his worth and belief that he is owed great honor make him remiss to openly desire political office and honors. This is a depiction of extreme individualism in Aristotle's thought; the moral man who lives for his own sake and conceives of himself as the highest thing. Aristotle describes an individual who must reject almost all political actions because they are beneath him. Magnanimity ironically produces an immobile being who sidelines himself from politics. Transformative ambition and this consequence of magnanimity are incompatible.

I am interested in exceptional leaders who desire to achieve greatness in politics through energetic statesmanship; their virtue does not lead them to stand outside of politics. Rather, their ambition is such that they look for genuine opportunities for leadership that are greater than political office. Transformative ambition is a more vigorous drive; it makes an individual challenge the rules of the day and can be revolutionary as leaders seek to make their mark on the world. Their ambition is profound. As such, these leaders' foreign policy is not defined by the structure of international relations, but by their view of what can be accomplished through international politics. They are not blind to constraints but want to shake them up and use their state's capabilities and the art of statesmanship to push others to accept their worldviews.

In some ways, Aristotle's magnanimous man lends support to the idea of great statesmanship. Although he represents the peak of excellence, he is inextricably linked to political life. He is owed honor and cannot maintain his opinion of superiority without others' esteem. His greatness is activated in the exceptional circumstances, in which he needs political power and other resources. Since he possesses all the virtues, he is just and, thus, must nobly devote himself to others. Or because he exceeds all others in virtue, he may rule over them. Magnanimity has two opposed natures: a depoliticized and a politicized one. The subtleties of Aristotle's argument reveal these two sides, and I will illuminate the political and apolitical directions that the magnanimous man takes later in this chapter.

Unlike the theories of leadership examined thus far, Aristotle's magnanimous man helps explain historical outliers, whose ambition and political leadership are in a class of their own, such as Pericles, Washington, Lincoln, Churchill, and de Gaulle. Their statesmanship proves that it is still necessary to understand the constitution of such characters and how they impact politics and world events. For example, Churchill's aristocratic background, hunger for glory on the

battlefield, and high ambition in politics were character traits that helped him lead Great Britain in its darkest hour. Through his wartime speeches he evoked the nation's greatness, grit, and fortitude. As a result, he not only galvanized his own countrymen but also helped strengthen the bonds between Britain and her vital allies. We heap admiration on Churchill not only because of his leadership during a time of great crisis, but also because we believe that he rose above the morass of office-seeking and political survival. Such principled behavior is what John F. Kennedy called courage in politics.

In this chapter, I first discuss how contemporary political theorists are applying Aristotelian ideas such as magnanimity, honor-seeking, and great political ambition to the study of leadership. I then raise a legitimate objection to their uses in studying leadership: Aristotle's context is too dissimilar from a modern one. Through a casual discussion of presidential character and ambition in America, I show that the scholarly necessity to distinguish between ordinary and great ambition is needed. Aristotle provides the framework for such a distinction. Next, I discuss Aristotle's presentation of magnanimity as a virtue by considering how it achieves the mean in contrast to its vices: vanity and smallness of soul. I further reveal the problem that I stated at the outset of this chapter: the magnanimous man is the peak of excellence and the prize of the political community, yet not in the least bit a political animal. He desires to be of great service, but by believing he is owed great honors, he looks down on those whom he is supposed to serve.

Despite these seeming contradictions in Aristotle's thought, an analysis of the vices, particularly smallness of soul, more clearly explicates the relationship between magnanimity and statesmanship: magnanimity is the capacity for statesmanship and the ability to wield power for the benefit of the political community. Later in the chapter, I also discuss what the direction that

magnanimous man's statesmanship takes by looking at magnanimity's relationship to justice. Although the magnanimous man may be dangerous to established governments, Aristotle points to an individual with a sober pride who prioritizes virtue over honor yet remains steadfastly superior by fully embracing politics from a position of independence. The magnanimous man's distance and disdain toward citizens can be transformed into a generous friendship toward the polity.

Lastly, with the connection of magnanimity and statesmanship in place, I turn to de Gaulle and Richard Nixon. De Gaulle not only embodied the spirit of the magnanimous statesman, but he also exhibited transformative ambition in international relations as he tried to reshape the order among states during the Cold War. Nixon looked up to de Gaulle; he understood the French statesman's enigmatic greatness and believed that he had also ascended such heights. To his credit, he was a bold and strategic thinker at the level of international relations, but he lacked de Gaulle's inner fortitude and character.

Aristotle and the Study of Statesmanship

Magnanimity and statesmanship connote something unusual, which makes it difficult to find many examples of leaders who deserve to be called magnanimous. I argue that those like Pericles (Chapter 5) and Charles de Gaulle approach this ideal. However, are there cases of leaders who embody magnanimity as Aristotle describes it? Robert Faulkner (2007) provides a terrific instance of how to apply this virtue to actual leaders in his excellently crafted book, *The Case for Greatness: Honorable Ambition and Its Critics.* By returning to the seminal accounts of ancient thinkers, he revives an understanding of honorable ambition and great political leadership. Examining Aristotle's "complicated treatment" (Faulkner's term) of the

104

magnanimous man, he argues that scholars who interpret modern leaders' great political achievements as motivated by a lust for fame, poorly understand iconic figures such as George Washington. For Faulkner, not only does the idea of leaders as fame seekers limit our ability to truly understand the motives of Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Nelson Mandela, among others, but it also depreciates great leadership.

His purpose is to correctly explain Washington's political ambition and leadership, an endeavor made possible through the prism of Aristotle's thought. As a soldier-statesman, Washington combined a desire for high honors with republican virtue, which were the qualities that led to his public-spirited statesmanship. Washington sought great esteem and was extremely cautious about tarnishing his reputation, which made him wary about holding political office. At the same time, his personal concern with honor was subordinate to a sense of duty that bound him to the young republic's survival and success.

Washington's magnanimity allowed him to turn his ambition toward the service of justice, honor, and duty (2007, p. 16). In this case, this quality produced a self-denial of personal ambition; he did not seek glorious victories and power. Rather, he "defended the democratic republic, accepted its limitations, and framed and settled its fundamental laws" (2007, p. 16). Washington had a gentlemanly attitude: he could have pride in his superior characteristics and virtues, on the basis of which he could claim exceptional opportunities. However, as Faulkner argues, Washington felt more concern for the common good of the common citizen (2007, p. 22). His magnanimity was neither superficial self-absorption nor was his contemporaries' recognition of his virtue a socially constructed category. Faulkner notes that thoughtful citizens recognized his superiority: "the Second Continental Congress chose Washington unanimously as commander in chief; the members of the Constitutional Convention chose him unanimously as

105

president" (2007, p. 23). His exercise of power lent credibility and support to America's fledgling and untested institutions. Washington set the tone for the seamless and voluntary transition of executive power, even though he had attained mythic status during his lifetime and could have easily retained power.

Like Faulkner, I am interested in applying Aristotle's more complex and rarified notion of political ambition and statesmanship to pertinent historical cases. Faulkner's approach emphasizes the transcendent qualities of leadership and ambition. However, I am interested in a modified version of the Aristotelian ideal that I can use with latitude and in conjunction with current theories that stress the difference between the attributes of leaders' personalities and the more reflective and self-conscious practice of statesmanship. Fortunately, Waller Newell has already paved the way for this approach.

In Newell's (2009) book, *The Soul of a Leader: Character, Conviction, and Ten Lessons in Political Greatness*, he shows how the traditional, but currently unpopular, idea of honor-seeking in public life can help us understand the difference between ordinary and great leadership. Although Newell and Faulkner both think of leadership in this traditional sense, Newell shows how the traditional concept can be considered alongside an examination of leaders' personalities and psychological pathologies (2009, pp. 28–35).

For example, Newell observes that many revered leaders were afflicted with a serious psychological condition such as Winston Churchill's black dog (depression) and Lincoln's melancholy. However, these "traditional" men of character also drew on their personal hardship to help them reflect both on themselves and the magnitude of the political challenges that they faced. Newell says, "[G]reatness may require a degree of depression, melancholy, a sense of one's own frailty, and the vicissitudes of fate. It is precisely in overcoming one's inner demons

106

to achieve something for the benefit of one's country or mankind that many men have risen to nobility and grandeur" (2009, p. 46).

In his quest to understand how great leadership is possible, Newell keenly interweaves modern psychology and Aristotle's ideas. For example, Newell observes the Freudian bent about Churchill's immense desire for fame: he longed for his distant and aristocratic parents' approval and love. However, it was Churchill's deep-seated desire for achievement and recognition that helped him reach his greatness through statesmanship, a feat true of many great leaders:

> The exceptional leader finds only the gravest challenges of statecraft arduous enough to demand his fullest talents. Such men are often bored by the ordinary domestic politics of budgets and taxes, and perform poorly when politics is confined to such issues. Yet the threat of war or civil war, stimulated by struggles worthy of their inner sense of greatness, allows them finally to show their full capacities. (2009, p. 46)

Newell endorses political greatness but does not airbrush notable leaders. In fact, he argues that a leader's talents and defects underpin great leadership. For example, in discussing Lincoln's political ambition and statesmanship, he describes Lincoln's contradictory impulses and personal traits that included his awareness of the tension between his great ambition and the republic's needs, his ruminations about achieving immortal glory, the severe bouts of depression that shaped his life and leadership, the simplicity and depth of his personal style and oration, and his lack of a gentlemanly upbringing, all of which Newell contrasts with Lincoln's goodness.

Through the Civil War, Lincoln found the opportunity to direct these conflicted drives and energies toward fulfilling his great ambition, which was also in service of the common good. Newell argues that Lincoln's significant achievement was to reset the political and moral principles of the American republic. Lincoln defined equality much further than the original founders might have intended, "pledging something like continual political action to work toward actual equality of condition" (2009, p. 183).

107

What I take from Newell's approach is that to understand a leader's politics and behavior, we want to know what makes him tick. However, we cannot understand the very personal dimension of a leader's ambition without a view of the leader and the regime. For example, Lincoln's admirable character was the product of his own inner motivation, composed nature, and maturing political thought, but these settled and became great in him through a confrontation with the challenges facing his party and country.

Newell contrasts Lincoln with his great antagonist, Robert E. Lee, the South's natural leader, as a man who embodied the Aristotelian gentleman in an outward form: "Lee was the perfect expression of a personally noble character and a stainless reputation for courage, honor, gallantry, love of family, and respect for higher learning. He was more balanced, more integrated, than Lincoln, aesthetically more pleasing" (2009, p. 192). However, Lee did not possess Lincoln's ability to choose principle over personal integrity. He lacked moral imagination. He thought slavery was a sin but owned slaves; he opposed Virginia's secession from the Union but chose loyalty to the state over command of Union forces. Lee had all the appurtenances of gentlemanly greatness but lacked Lincoln's justice. Lee's character was indelibly shaped by the Virginian way of life that demanded his fidelity. Though a gentleman warrior, he is not venerable because he was a prisoner of circumstances that he knew were immoral, while "the interaction between Lincoln's personality and his burdens as president gained in depth and intensity, fusing them into an increasingly legendary whole" (2009, p. 196).

Like Faulkner and Newell, I argue that Aristotle's account of ordinary and great political ambition, which culminates in his discussion of the magnanimous man, provides a model for publicly spirited leadership. I follow their application of Aristotle to leadership by showing how magnanimity also infused Charles de Gaulle's approach with what the late statesman referred to

as "grandeur." I discuss this example in the section "Magnanimity and Statesmanship: The Politics of Grandeur," which considers his professed grandeur as an expression of transformative ambition.

The Challenge: Why Aristotle?

Aristotle presents ancient Greek conduct and morality as the basis for his ethical teaching, which arguably limits the applicability of magnanimity to a contemporary context. In addition, his education toward virtue is highly exclusive and steeped in unbending moral standards that would be difficult for most individuals to follow to the letter. Aristotle's ethical teaching can be criticized on the grounds of a familiar adage: virtuous citizenship and leadership might be good in theory, but how does it stand in practice?

In practice, political ambition is usually in the service of personal gain, and we cannot count on an individual's virtue to limit his ambition. Classical philosophers understood that our self-centered and spirited natures were to blame for the fragility of the virtuous life and just politics. In light of human nature, modern political theorists neglected virtue in favor of the proper working of institutions that either checked or redirected the selfish interests of individuals. Of what use is Aristotle's lofty conception of virtue if it may be impossible to attain?

To address this concern, I begin with a discussion of how Aristotle's distinction between great and ordinary ambition is still relevant. Ambitious politicians are everywhere in America today, but virtue rarely makes an appearance in political life, not to mention that magnanimous statesmanship has no place in our political lexicon, as the term is loaded with unegalitarian and sexist implications. In our current political discourse, high-minded talk about virtue in politics gets a dubious reception. However, politics is filled with moral pretense since no politician could

survive on a platform that appealed explicitly to calculating self-interest. Despite politicians'

public vows of morality, many claim the moral high ground only later to become embroiled in

private scandals that expose them as hypocrites. Yet, politicians cannot be blamed entirely for

their conduct because the public is at odds with itself. Citizens hold political leaders to a higher

standard and want them to show their moral credentials. Simultaneously, they are cynical of

leaders who preach morality in politics.

While the public is ambivalent about morality and politics, it expresses its concern with

political ambition negatively. Americans are wary of leaders who show too much political

ambition, because it is commonly assumed that these people have selfish interests and will try to

oppress others. Political ambition might be a necessary trait for an individual to succeed in

politics, but it can also hurt his or her prospects for higher office. For example, in the most recent

American presidential election, Hillary Clinton was dogged by the media's and public's

perception of her "naked ambition." This characterization of her stuck, and little about Clinton's

character, speeches, and campaign could persuade people otherwise.

Conversely, the media and public gave Barack Obama's soaring ambition a comfortable

reception. Although Obama's message was vague, his rhetoric for hope and change appealed to

voters because he seemed genuine and his language bespoke a cause both larger than him and

strongly democratic. A younger generation of voters, enthusiastic about being part of a

grassroots social movement, helped shape his image as a social leader before politician.

As Election Day neared, the interest in Obama began to shift from his inspirational

message to a discussion of his leadership qualities. Talk centered on his presidential tone,

coolness, and measured temperament in contradistinction to John McCain's gut decisions and

infamous hot temper. The focus on each candidate's personal characteristics and style showed

this important but less talked about factor. Voters were not only weighing who was fit for the job and where candidates stood on the issues, but they were also judging presidential character. Although the personality that citizens find desirable in a president is surely dictated by the times and there is no ideal type of American leader, Americans will always judge individuals with some universal traits favorably, as those deserving the highest office in the land: an admirable person who is recognizable as an ordinary citizen, yet concerned for all citizens' equality and liberty. The president must champion democracy at home and abroad, be self-assured and decisive during a crisis, have rhetorical skills that can inspire his fellow citizens yet such oratory cannot be overflourishing. Ultimately, Americans look for a leading citizen, a first-rate character who carefully balances his political ambition within the limits of cherished institutions and long-standing practices.

Presidential elections have a way of sneaking virtue in through the back door as leaders must demonstrate individual moral excellence. In this last election, Americans were especially sensitive to character and leadership potential, given the vacuum created by George Bush at home and abroad. John McCain received high marks for his character, he earned a solid reputation from his proven bipartisanship, long career in the Senate, heroism in war, and love of country. But it was Obama's inspiring rhetoric, remarkable background, cool execution, and deft organization, in the end, showed more glimmers of presidential greatness.

Americans are democrats at heart and so will continue to be suspicious of political ambition, yet the last presidential election showed that strong leadership qualities matter to citizens. Nonetheless, it will always be difficult to find good and powerful leaders who do not have a healthy dose of ambition. These contradictory desires point to a real phenomenon: there exists a range of ambition and leadership qualities. Oddly, while ordinary citizens show a fervent

111

desire for great leadership, the theories of leadership we have examined thus far do not differentiate between the ambitions of ordinary and great leaders.

Ordinary Ambition and Magnanimity: The Full Range of Ambition

Aristotle's explicit purpose in the *Ethics* is to instruct individuals on how to become virtuous. A basic precondition is necessary to achieve this goal; an individual requires a qualitatively superior education in virtue. As a consequence, Aristotle's main audience is an exclusive group of aristocratic elites, one that he refers to in *Rhetoric* as the "well born."[21] Despite its exclusive audience and stringent ethical goals, the *Ethics* describes a variety of lives and also the full range of political ambition, with ordinary political ambition following magnanimity in Book V. I do the reverse, describing ordinary political ambition, then continuing with an examination of magnanimity.

Ordinary political ambition is witnessed in individuals who are filled with a love for honor. Recall that honor is the external good, unlike power and wealth, that is related to a human being's perception of his intrinsic worth. The ambitious pursue honor, and among them political office is a much sought-after prize. Early on in the *Ethics*, Aristotle makes an observation about ordinary politicians' ambition: it is common for politicians to seek honors to be convinced that they themselves are good (1095b27–28). In general, the honor lover seeks to fortify his sense of worth by adding achievements and accomplishments to his name, which is dependent on his political climb. Aristotle's discussion of political ambition resembles our modern conception of

---

[21] In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle says, "[A]n individual is well born on the male or female side if he is a legitimate citizen on each side and, as in the case of the city, if his earliest ancestors were renowned for their virtue or wealth or any other admired quality and if the family had many illustrious members, male and female, young and old" (1360b trans. 1954/1984).

the politician who uses a self-interested political calculus to gain and retain office with the critical difference that Aristotle presents the moral conundrum that stalks ordinary politicians as they confuse ends with means.

The ordinary politician seeks honor, recognition, and power while pursuing a less venerable path. He uses office to add another achievement, another honor, and, ultimately, another office. Most politicians give into this ordinary desire, which is why scholars of the strategic perspective assume that all leaders are solely motivated by political survival. Aristotle might agree with some elements of this logic, but he views the ordinary politician's economy of honor as morally unstable. The pursuit of office for its own sake confuses the means to attain honor with honor itself. Racking up accomplishments and chasing after commendations, the honor lover must use his power and wealth. Although he believes he is attaining virtue, in reality this form of honorable ambition is compromised because power and wealth (the instruments to attain political honors) are truly what people come to respect (1124a24–25).

Magnanimity entails great political ambition and also concerns honor, but not just any kind of honor. It sets its possessor's sights on higher distinctions and fosters the desire to take part in great deeds. Yet, magnanimity is the peak of virtue and a collection of them all. As complete virtue, it necessarily involves justice and prudence, which connects it to statesmanship.

Aristotle says that the magnanimous man has a correct opinion of his worthiness. He deserves society's most prestigious tribute, and the highest political office is sometimes offered to the most deserving citizens. Political office is not just a reward since it entrusts an individual with political responsibility. Magnanimity has two sides: it is a virtue that is individualizing and rare but also one recognized by others and therefore subsists on a society that can properly acknowledge it. How else would citizens be able to bestow great honors if they could not

recognize greatness? As such, magnanimity is the most individuating virtue, but its basis is social and political. While only the magnanimous man can experience full virtue, magnanimity must be discernable to those charged with distributing honors and selecting the leadership.

A magnanimous leader will accept higher office, because this honor satisfies his self-worth. However, his fellow citizens can offer him nothing else. Thus, the satisfaction he gains from high office is circumscribed by the fact that even honor, which he is especially concerned with, turns out to be a small thing (1124a15, 19). The honor of serving is depreciated, which fosters the magnanimous man's contempt for the city. His virtue is not devotional, and in his estimation, his good is of greater importance to him than service to the city, which only cares about its survival. It preserves the life of its members and contributes to their basic interests.

What is the character of the magnanimous man's ambition? Although he does not openly desire office, he believes that he is owed such things. This assumption implies two distinct possibilities. First, individuals who hold such beliefs can be a danger to public life if the public does not recognize his worth and denies him his proper deserts. Second, magnanimity adds sobriety to the virtuous individual's expectations from politics, limiting his political ambition rather than fostering it. Aristotle directs us toward the second option, which is revealed more clearly through the relationship between magnanimity and justice. In addition, Aristotle subtly shows how such heightened self-awareness about one's virtue and depreciation of external goods contradicts the mechanisms that support magnanimity. In fact, external goods contribute to greatness of soul. An honor like political office is good fortune for the magnanimous man; a staging ground for the exercise of his virtue, it contributes toward "greatness of soul" (1124a22–23). Thus, the magnanimous man does not quite acknowledge that he needs external goods.

Although his goodness is truly honorable, his possession of power, wealth, and goodness is considered more worthy (1124a24–28).

Magnanimity as a Virtue

Magnanimity is distinct from the other virtues in the *Ethics.* It is a meta-virtue, a heightened awareness that combines the moral reasoning of the virtuous man with a sense of superiority, while the acquisition of the virtues is an ongoing project of perfecting the character. The exercise of these virtues depend on having a correct feeling and performing the proper action in a particular context. For example, one becomes courageous by forming the right disposition to fear. When confronted by something fearsome, too much courage leads to rashness, while too little makes one a coward. In practice, courage is the mean between extremes. The mean is not an average of rashness and timidity; rather it is the ability to face fear in a way that is just right. Aristotle says that the courageous sacrifice their lives for something noble, in defense of something greater and when the prospect of dying a beautiful death presents itself (1115b3–5). The most visceral virtue, courage points to the political nature of virtue itself. In Aristotle's context, political courage was martial courage, the bedrock of the Greek polis. It was born from political necessity, the defense of the city. However, if courage is a virtue, it must be noble and done for its own sake. When exercised in combat, it demands the greatest sacrifice, one's life. Yet, courage is also the most painful to those who long for nobility and the virtuous life because death robs them of the opportunity to continue the quest.

Other virtues demand less. For example, virtue is also practiced through the temperance of one's desires or generosity, and if one has great wealth, one can be magnificent. However, an individual's possession of only some of the virtues is not sufficient for him to live the moral life

115

that Aristotle has in mind. He reserves magnanimity, the peak of the virtues that makes each one greater (1124a3–4), for the first discussion of the full moral life. Yet, in the fifth book of the *Ethics*, we learn that justice is a second peak. It puts complete virtue to use (1129b30–33). Thus, the magnanimous man is pulled in opposite directions: his greatness fosters his sense of superiority over others, while it also pushes him toward justice.

Magnanimity, like the other virtues, stands apart from its extremes or vices, vanity and smallness of soul. The vain believe that their worth is greater than it really is. However, vanity suggests that the problem concerns an incorrect assessment of one's worth. Specifically, the vain judge that more honors are owed to them than they actually deserve; some may be mistaken but not necessarily vain. In the context of magnanimity, however, Aristotle says that vain people are unworthy because they consider themselves worthy of great things (11232b7). Carson Holloway (2008) clearly articulates Aristotle's distinction between a mistaken self-worth and vanity. He says, "[V]anity implies not mere pretense to unmerited consideration, but more specifically pretense to unmerited *extraordinary* consideration" (p. 15).

Vanity's opposite, smallness of soul is characterized by an individual's inability to realize his true worth. It is the condition someone is in when they are actually worthy of great things but do not consider themselves worthy of them (1123b11) and so are deprived of the things they deserve (1125a20–21). For Aristotle, smallness of soul is worse than vanity. There is a baffling hesitancy with these people. They have what it takes to perform deeds on a grand scale, but they don't. As a result, they fail to take part in ennobling and virtuous actions, which are exactly the kind that they are meant for. Aristotle is clear about what they miss out on: great (beautiful) actions, worthy pursuits, and external goods (1125a20–33). At the same time, as he discusses

these vices, Aristotle eases up on vanity, no longer calling it a vice and is harsher on smallness of soul.

Aristotle's explanation of these vices tells us something, admittedly in a very oblique way, about the political character of magnanimity. If smallness of soul is contemptible because it is the self-denial of virtue and honors through inactivity, then this points to the importance of action, specifically great political actions. On the one hand, political action must satisfy the magnanimous man's sense of worth and concern with virtue. On the other, political action is based on political necessity. In both cases, the magnanimous man's behavior depends on his role as a leader and relationship to the regime.

The order of Aristotle's examination of the virtues implies a relationship between magnanimity and justice. However, he does not say much about the relationship between magnanimity and political activity. Aristotle demands that we proceed cautiously when drawing inferences about magnanimity's political role because he offers two opposing portraits of the magnanimous man. There is a coolness and detachment that flows from him; "he seems to have a slow way of moving, a deep voice, and steady way of speaking" (1125a14–15). His outward characteristics show that he can easily postpone entry into politics as he is a slow starter and full of delay (1124b23–27). Moreover, he is not a business-as-usual politician and is not interested in things held in popular esteem: he does not ask for help, does not like to receive favors, and is indifferent to praise and blame. At the end of the day, the magnanimous man strives to be and becomes self-sufficient. His lack of interest to the concerns of ordinary politicians is the privilege of complete virtue.

Besides his reluctance to enter politics, Aristotle also implies that the magnanimous man has contempt for society. He looks down on others justly, is "not capable of leading his life to

117

suit anyone else" (1125a1), and, ultimately, thinks that "nothing is great" (1125a5). This is the peak of human excellence! In the end, the magnanimous man does not think anything is worthwhile, which is a despairing view of the virtuous life that is supposed to lead to happiness. This separation between virtuous life and life itself is odd. The character excellences that overlap with statesmanship only serve to keep the magnanimous man at a distance from the morass of politics.

Magnanimity is characterized by self-reflection and a heightened awareness of one's virtue, which slows the magnanimous man down and keeps him out of political life. Political life will seem quite pointless as he is not capable of leading his life to suit anyone else and, ultimately, nothing is great to him. Unlike the inaction produced by smallness of soul, magnanimity is inactivity. How can the idea that the magnanimous man who points to the possibility of great ambition and leadership be reconciled with his view, which borders on flippancy, that nothing is great?

The problem with Aristotle's depiction of the magnanimous man is that it creates the impression that he is a finished product. Aristotle does not describe magnanimity's ascent toward greatness, but rather shows it at rest; greatness is self-sufficient. What Aristotle demonstrates, however, is the magnanimous man's misunderstanding of himself. His knowledge is not proper knowledge.[22] He artfully forgets that his state of self-sufficiency (of supposed inactivity) needs the equipment, money, and action, which make the virtuous life possible. Despite the distance, asymmetric relationship, and feeling of contempt the magnanimous man may have for society, again this virtue is conditional on society.

---

[22] The magnanimous man's penchant to reflect on his own virtue should not be confused with the life of contemplation, or philosophy, since he is not giving into wonder (1125a4).

Poised to do great things, the magnanimous man is inclined to do so when a significant honor is there to claim (1124b27–30). Although politics is the natural arena for these deeds, Aristotle is not explicit about the way and to what degree the magnanimous man is involved in politics. In addition, Aristotle does not specify in which regimes we should see a magnanimous leader though his target audience is aristocratic.

One way to understand magnanimity's political character is by identifying the political things that the magnanimous man does not pursue. He is not single-mindedly bent on acquiring power and its attendant wealth. Unsurprisingly, many individuals believe that magnanimity is associated with power and riches, so many consider themselves worthy unjustly (1124a22–28). Honor is the only external good that the magnanimous man values; yet, the magnanimous man looks down upon external goods, including honor, which is why he is perceived as arrogant (1124a20–21). However, it would be a great pain to him to be dishonored or ruled by someone unworthy.

The magnanimous man is well fit for political leadership but is reluctant to enter into politics. While political leaders around him covet and pursue power, he stands aside. What sort of political action befits a man of his talents and desires? Few things are truly honorable: he takes few great risks, avoids having favors done for him, and is effusive when doing them for others (1124b5–6). Moreover, he assists others eagerly and will finally enter the fray when a great honor is at stake and not because of the opinion of others. The magnanimous man's politics transcends everyday politicking and partisanship, but he cannot transcend politics altogether. The ascendancy of virtue reaches its peak in magnanimity, yet the magnanimous man is brought back to earth because great honors and great deeds must be politicized.

The political direction of magnanimity is made explicit in Aristotle's *Eudemian Ethics*. Here he notes that magnanimity attaches importance to great offices (1232b20–25, trans.1935/1992). The most important honor society confers is its highest political office, "for by investing a citizen with its supreme authority, the community entrusts him with its most precious interests" (Holloway, 2008, p. 1). As a magnanimous statesman, he can use virtue and take part in great deeds. Magnanimity synthesizes virtue and practical political activity: there is no statesmanship without magnanimity and no magnanimity without statesmanship.

Magnanimity and Justice

Magnanimous statesmanship connotes such high-mindedness that it is easy to overlook the question of justice. We might even assume that justice flows naturally from this kind of leadership, but Aristotle reserves the discussion of justice as the second peak of virtue. Thus, we must examine what is only an implicit relationship between magnanimity and justice. In the discussion of justice, we learn that magnanimity must involve a consideration of the requirements of justice, such as law abidingness. Does the magnanimous leader accept the regime's rules? The laws that matter most for leadership are the ones that define and circumscribe his office. Of course, as regimes vary, so do leaders' responsibilities and discretionary powers.

The magnanimous man's law abidingness is implied by his disposition toward external goods and changes in fortune. When in power, he does not bask in it or find it troubling if he loses it, since he is "neither overjoyed when in good fortune nor overtly distressed when in bad fortune" (1124a18–19). He practices political moderation. In the end, virtue is more significant

to him than any worldly possession, so the magnanimous leader is disinclined to act unjustly to seize political power.

However, if the magnanimous man is capable of greatness and seeks grandeur, what discourages him from pursuing worldly achievements that fulfill his understanding of greatness but spill over into tyranny and conquest? He may not covet political power for its own sake, but power is the conduit for such a soul to act and make its mark in political affairs and history. Aristotle says that the magnanimous man holds few things in high honor and is prone to great risks and to be unsparing of his life (1124b5–6). If the opportunity for great and noble deeds does not arise, what keeps him from becoming the catalyst of his own opportunities?

Although the magnanimous man is self-sufficient, there is something unsatisfactory about complete virtue remaining idle. It would be tragic for the magnanimous man to wait in the wings but never be called on for lack of opportunity. Just think, if not for the "fortunate" crisis in Algiers, de Gaulle might have never returned to public life. Truly a misfortune for de Gaulle, but was it a misfortune for France?

Susan Collins (2007) points to this specific problem with Aristotle's account of magnanimity. She says, "[I]n the absence of the necessary 'resources' the longing for noble action that distinguishes the morally serious human being requires him either to remain idle or to acquire the means to exercise his virtue" (p. 64). We have no reason to assume that a cozy arrangement is reached between the magnanimous man's great ambition and the regime. Law abidingness can dampen greatness and the more individualistic virtues.

Collins directs us to two passages in Aristotle's *Politics* where he is more explicit about the tension between noble pursuits and justice. Aristotle says, for "having authority over all is best, for in this way one would have authority over the greatest number and noblest of actions"

121

(1325a3 –37). In addition, if political greatness is a leader's prerogative, then it requires that he forgo the obligations of justice, and even of family and friendship, in order to rule over others (1325a36–41). This might be especially tempting to leaders with ambition in the realm of international politics, where custom sometimes dictates behavior but no real laws prohibit international action, particularly in war. Previously, we observed that the magnanimous man was a reluctant political participant, but we now realize that he might also be a dangerous one.

Aristotle's progression of the virtues, specifically magnanimity and justice, poses a complex scenario: a life of moral virtue with two opposed peaks. At one end, the magnanimous man cannot live for anyone else and is self-sufficient. At the other end, full virtue depends on the regard for others.

What should keep a magnanimous leader from becoming a danger is the strength of his settled virtue. His concern for virtue leads him to constrain his behavior; he must voluntarily be just. He is not consumed solely by his honor-seeking motive because he measures all his practical activity by appealing to the standards of virtue. Justice is the virtue that is related to someone else and for this reason is believed to be the greatest one (1129b30). The magnanimous man can potentially pursue self-perfection and bring about the good of others simultaneously. While magnanimity is full virtue because all the individual virtues are made greater by it, justice puts full virtue to use and satisfies the magnanimous man's continued longing for nobility and goodness.

Yet, even if the magnanimous man's self-limitation makes citizens sanguine that their leader's intentions are benign, a problem persists. Why would his regard for others, which is good for his fellow citizens, also be good for him? On average, individuals care more about living untroubled domestic lives that guarantee security, freedom, and well-being. These very

basic needs are a far cry from great honors and deeds. As this discussion has shown, basic external goods, except honor, do not motivate a magnanimous leader. Aristotle says, "[H]e is someone who takes great risks, and when he does take a risk he is without regard for his life, on the ground that it is not on just any terms that life is worth living" (1124b6–9). If being just requires the magnanimous man to live for others, then, at some level, he must care about the basic needs that he not only neglects but also disdains.

How is the relationship that we established between magnanimity and society brought into balance? Does the magnanimous man lower his standards and treat the ignoble desires of the community as noble? Or does he elevate the political community's conception of itself? Although he observes justice, there is room for him to exercise his virtue when he practices statesmanship.

Justice reconciles his desire for greatness with the common good. The nature of his justice depends on a conditional relationship. First, one component is law abidingness, and as a just person, the magnanimous statesman recognizes the regime as the authoritative power in citizens' affairs. In particular, he accepts the political order and the duties of his office, believing that such an order is just. Law abidingness implies that an established consensus exists, but the political participants of a specific regime came to it for the common benefit of a select group. They also develop the leader's role, which indicates that external political constraints apply to leaders no matter how virtuous they might be.

However, the idea of great ambition and a politics of grandeur do not befit a coerced leader who chafes under the regime's laws. His justice flows from obedience to law, but it must also come from within. Aristotle's magnanimous leader already has an ingrained sense of justice, which may show itself as a prerational patriotism; and like all things magnanimous, this is a high

patriotism. As a patriot, the magnanimous man is a friend to the regime and able to see beyond its particular order since crisis and political discord can push a regime into less desirable forms. For example, the Vichy government's acceptance of fascism shocked de Gaulle. Although he rebelled against the regime, he did not abandon democratic and republican principles altogether. Upon his return to France, he sought to strengthen these tenets and elevate French citizens to see beyond their mere material interests.

Political ambition matched with public spiritedness can amplify a statesman's range of action. Much like Churchill and de Gaulle, great statesmen and statesmanship are summoned during crises, when a political community shows the greatest need and insecurity. Ironically, when these nations were in peril and their institutions were not robust, these two 20th-century leaders tried to transform their fellow citizens' political and moral understanding by instilling a sense of greatness and common purpose.

Magnanimity and Statesmanship: The Politics of Grandeur

Aristotle's discussion of magnificence precedes his dissection of magnanimity. He describes the grandeur of magnificence as anything "related to the common love of honor, for instance where people believe that one ought to equip a dramatic chorus, or fit out a warship, or even give a civic feast, in a splendid way" (1122b22–24). The magnificent possess great wealth and the ability to spend lavishly, in ways that not only fit an occasion but also evoke a sense of grandeur. Magnificence is only available to those with means, but the grandeur of magnificence does not result from spending money; it is the production of something beautiful and great, which inspires wonder: "and the excellence of a work, its magnificence, is in its grandeur" (1122b15–18).

124

The magnanimous man can also produce grandeur, but he has an alternative means at his disposal. The possession of all the virtues that are animated by great ambition; political leadership is the vehicle for grandeur, and grandeur is the prism through which the magnanimous man sees politics. A sense of grandeur in politics is partly the product of something concrete: an existing regime, its citizens, the concern for survival, and the values and way of life they believe are worth defending. Even a leader who calls his country to greatness must be dedicated to its survival. While public-spiritedness is necessary for leadership, a politics of grandeur calls for a productive vision and desire to create a lasting work. This vision originates from a leader's ambition, creative impulse, and energetic statecraft. A politics of grandeur is tied to his character; evocative in nature, it abstracts from the constraints on action without forgetting political reality.

The desire to practice politics on a grand scale resides within the "soul of a leader"—to borrow a term from Newell's study of greatness in leadership—and he must work to bring their sense of grandeur to bear on politics. Aristotle offers two examples of magnanimity, Zeus and the Athenians, but it is difficult to know what to make of them. Fortunately, both grandeur and delusions of it are perhaps best illustrated by comparing de Gaulle and Nixon. De Gaulle is not only recognized as a national hero in France but has ascended the ranks of great 20th-century statesmen. He not only demonstrated many magnanimous qualities but was dually committed to outstanding leadership and grandeur for France.

De Gaulle (1960) publicly announced his philosophy of military and political leadership in *The Edge of the Sword*, which he wrote when he was forty as the general secretariat of the Supreme Council of National Defense. In his book, he endorses a heroic and transcendent leadership. In some ways, this abstract silhouette points to the future, to General de Gaulle

(Lacouture, 1966). De Gaulle's vision of a great leader, writes Lacouture, "is an animal of great power, over himself and others, a man whose vision is so uncluttered by thought of God that action alone can raise him to 'the divine game of heroes'" (1966, p. 38). De Gaulle believed that there was a necessity for men of character who instinctively prefer action and gain their authority through personal leadership: "when faced with the challenge of events, the man of character has recourse to himself. His instinctive response is to leave his mark on action, to take responsibility for it, to make it *his own business*" (1960, p. 41).

De Gaulle's man of character is radically individualistic, but like the magnanimous man, his initiative and actions are generous. This man willingly and instinctively takes on the burdens of leadership: "the confidence of those under him give him a sense of obligation. It strengthens his determination but also increases his benevolence, for he is a born protector" (1960, p. 43). Unlike the magnanimous man who rejects politics and is openly disdainful, de Gaulle's exemplar reaches the summits as a highly politicized actor who seeks great distinction.

De Gaulle's endorsement of great leadership and active statesmanship worked in tandem with his conception of a politics of grandeur, French grandeur in particular. He routinely evoked these principles but never defined them because grandeur was not a policy with particular aims as much as it was "a self-conscious defense of the independence, honor, and rank of the nation" (Mahoney, 2000, p. 17). As Daniel Mahoney (2000) notes, its meaning cannot be inferred from policies but only by "unpacking the implications of his hortatory rhetoric" (p. 16). De Gaulle gives voice to this view in his *Memoires de Guerre*:

> All my life I have had a certain idea of France. This is inspired by sentiment as much as by reason. The emotional side of me naturally imagines France, like a princess in the fairy stories or the Madonna in the frescos, as dedicated to an exalted and exceptional destiny. Instinctively I have the feeling that Providence has created her either for complete successes or for exemplary misfortunes. If in spite of this, mediocrity shows in

126

her acts and deeds, it strikes me as an absurd anomaly, to be imputed to the faults of Frenchmen, not to the genius of the land. But the positive side of my mind assures me that France is not really herself unless in front rank; that only vast enterprises are capable of counterbalancing the ferments of dispersal which are inherent in her people; that our country, as it is, surrounded by the others, as they are, must aim high and hold itself straight, on pain of mortal danger. In short, France cannot be France without greatness. (Mahoney, 2000, p. 16)

For de Gaulle, the pursuit of greatness was a means for promoting France's unity, which was necessary during WWII and the Cold War because in reality the country was torn apart internally and in decline as a world power. Domestically, he sought a government and leadership free of partisanship; he did his part by casting himself as a nonpartisan patriot who proposed the prominence of the nonpartisan state (Codevilla, 1981, p. 222). His notion of France's "sacred unity" became genuinely achievable when he was called in 1958, after a decade of absence from public life, to take charge of the country. In 1958, France's stability was being threatened by an insurrection in Algiers. It was at this time that de Gaulle could try to make good on his goal for national unity because he was given special constitutional powers. The May 1958 crisis was the portal through which the country accepted de Gaulle's control of government policy through the presidency.

Did de Gaulle's notion of grandeur have its intended effect? Was France truly a nation that shone greatness? The stark reality was that France was no longer a great but a diminished power. During the Cold War, it was not a player on the world stage. Yet, de Gaulle, who had a nuanced viewed of the relationship between foreign and domestic policy, sought to prolong France's influence by the "subordination of that part of the domestic which is self-indulgent to that part of foreign policy which is responsible, that is, humanly virtuous" (Mahoney, 2000, p. 17).

De Gaulle consciously turned to foreign policy as a moral choice, in an attempt to fulfill his vision while also supporting France's national interest. His diplomacy rested on the principle that it was France's imperative to maintain a forceful independence during the Cold War. This idea extended to his views about European integration, which he believed had to be executed by subordinating the mechanisms of integration to the primacy of nation-states.

True to his principles, de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO in 1966, and he insisted on France's need to develop an independent nuclear deterrent.[23] De Gaulle did not think that France could become a superpower on par with the United States and the Soviet Union; his statecraft aimed to reshape the rules of Cold War relations that the superpowers had imposed by sheer dominance and the vicious logic of nuclear annihilation. Forceful independence was a means to reconfigure the idea of the world divided in two opposing blocs; France would lead the reemergence of cooperation among nation-states, each with its distinctive characters and peoples. In anticipation of the postcolonial era and France's waning international influence, he sought to retain its "civilizing" influence in the third world by becoming a broker between nation-states and the superpowers. De Gaulle's ambition to modify international relations was deliberately transformative; he linked foreign policy to France's national flourishing. He invested foreign policy with cultural and symbolic significance; such grandeur would deepen the public's convictions about France and help make the state's institutions more efficacious so that it could take on its international role.

Such politics is a deliberate choice to put political office, wealth, and the state's power, among other concrete elements, to greater and noble purposes. De Gaulle sought grandeur

---

[23]See Jacques E. C. Hyman (2006) for an analysis of how a national leader's individual understanding of the nation's identity contributes to the state's nuclear policies, especially the decision for a state to go nuclear.

through international politics; he was not motivated by power, but to make France a player on the world scene at a time when smaller powers' choices were constrained by the United States and Soviet Union.

De Gaulle's ambition was above the mandates of—but not contrary to—survival; it resisted the status quo and needed far-sighted statecraft for it not be destructive to the state. His ambition was transformative, but it did not destabilize the balance of power, seeking instead to modify it. He wanted to counter the hegemony of the two dominant superpowers by reconstituting the pattern of cooperation and interdependence among nation-states, which would be made possible by permitting France to assume a greater part in international leadership than should have been permitted given its inferior capabilities. France's rank would be recognized by its ability to fuse morality to power and by its historical position in international affairs.

Nixon looked up to de Gaulle with awe and reverence; he kept a copy of de Gaulle' *Edge of the Sword* in his library, which he read and annotated carefully. [24] Nixon also devoted a chapter to de Gaulle in his book *Leaders*, in which he showed a fascination with de Gaulle's presence, style, intelligence, and prodigious memory.[25] Nixon had Gaullist presumptions of attaining greatness through leadership. But while his hero carefully fashioned an enigmatic public character, Nixon tried to emulate the mystique that surrounded this great statesman by turning inward and rebuffing others. Newell writes, "when he rose to the level of the elite, Nixon

---

[24] See Roger Morris, "Nixon Goes to Europe (Part II)," *New York Times*, April 18, 2009.

[25] The article, "Nixon in Europe: Renewing Old Acquaintances" observes how Charles de Gaulle never used notes in his speeches: "When Richard Nixon visited Europe, William Safire, Nixon's speechwriter at the time, asked him how he did it. 'I write it out in longhand and then memorize it,' De Gaulle replied. 'I tear the page out and throw it away and it is in my mind.' Pointing to Nixon, De Gaulle asked Safire, 'What about him?' Safire answered, 'It is statesmen like you who will put us speechwriters out of business.' De Gaulle laughed heartily" (*Time*, March 7, 1969).

then deliberately chose not to join it; instead he reveled in his alienation and solitude" (2009, p. 74).

Nixon was an able and shrewd politician. As Fred Greenstein (2000) argues, Nixon even had a clear vision of international relations (p. 109). Though he preferred the challenges and politics of international relations over domestic issues, he never quite acquired the ability to link and articulate his foreign policies to an understanding of American principles in the way de Gaulle always kept the centrality and the grandeur of France in focus.

Nixon desired greatness, but he could only ape the great leader. In fact, his stronger personality defects overcame him. Fear and paranoia led him down a destructive path that destroyed his presidency. In America, Nixon's fame is that of a national villain, caught on tape as conniving and foul-mouthed. Nixon shows that a leader's self-conscious desire to achieve greatness is not enough; the age-old combination of good character and deeds must follow from a leader's ambition.

Conclusion

These examples help illuminate the relationship between the magnanimous man, the idea of a politics of grandeur, and the thesis I put forward in this dissertation. A leader with transformative ambition infuses ordinary politics with something greater by pushing the regime's political and moral elements further, challenging, and elevating them toward that which has not yet been realized. One way that this is achieved is by the proper articulation of a leader's goals. Newell observes that great statesmen have accomplished transformative goals throughout the ages—he does not use the term "transformative"—by making appropriate use of oratory, whose

130

purpose is "to describe the people *as they are* in such a way as to inspire them to be *what they should be*" (2009, p. 51).

Thus, the magnanimous man's ambition for a politics of grandeur is not simply self-serving or self-deluding, but something within the realm of possibility. It expresses a very ordinary and human desire to be a part of a totality greater than oneself. The magnanimous man will go through extraordinary lengths to achieve it. Whether a leader can actually fulfill his grand ambitions depends on prudent statecraft and fortuitous political conditions.

Is transformative ambition and grandeur always a prudent political program? Transformative ambition may lack the restraining influence of magnanimity. As I discussed in Chapter 3, Alcibiades' desire for grandeur sought to radically shift the pole of Greek power to Athens through an ill-conceived and grand imperial policy: he tapped into Athens's national ambition for daring and dismantled the remnants of Periclean restraint. Pericles had demonstrated a more reflective transformative ambition, more akin to de Gaulle's than Alcibiades'. Pericles sought grandeur but never took unnecessary risks to increase Athens's glory. In the next chapter, I will show how Pericles' ambition for supreme achievement led him to spearhead a political and cultural transformation of Athens that was based on a foreign policy to make Athens the center of the Greek world.

In the next chapter, I use the model of transformative leadership, infused with magnanimous qualities, to examine Pericles' rule of Athens. His rare intellectual gifts, prudence, moderation, and patriotism combined with his great political ambition so that he had a long tenure in politics and presided over the growth of the Athenian empire. Through imperial policies, he sought to bring unparalleled glory to Athens and its citizens. As such, he practiced transformational statecraft both domestically and internationally.

Although Pericles worked within the parameters of Athenian democracy and also contributed to the further democratization of the city-state, his unprecedented authority in Athens inspired Thucydides' description of Athens as a democracy in name only, effectively the rule of one man. Thucydides invites us to think about Pericles' leadership and his political motivation in the way Aristotle has made us analyze the relationship of magnanimity to leadership. Did Pericles want to expand democracy out of principle or use the democratic base to attain political power? Was he loyal to his supporters, the laws of the city, divine laws, or to his own grand ambitions and pursuits? What role did the Athenian empire play in his plans, and why did he pursue his international policies? I now turn to these questions and a thorough examination of Pericles' leadership.

Chapter 5

Pericles' Transformative Ambition: Democracy, Empire, and the Peloponnesian War

Introduction

Pericles was Athens's premier democratic statesman at the height of its empire. He showed transformative ambition on three levels: in policy decisions that brought the city's democracy and empire to fulfillment, in his inspirational rhetoric to inspire citizens to live up to their greatest ambitions, and in a wartime strategy he implemented against Sparta that aimed to solidify Athens as Greece's preeminent power.

Pericles neither founded the democracy nor was responsible for establishing the empire. He did, however, bring the democracy and empire to their peaks by inexorably linking domestic and foreign policy. His domestic agenda to increase democracy and embark on a grand building project relied on his reorganization of the Athenian empire; most significantly, he implemented a policy that siphoned off allied tribute for Athenian purposes. Pericles spearheaded a massive construction campaign that fortified Athens's defensive walls, beautified the city, and put the citizens under public pay. The use of these funds allowed Athens to blossom into an expansive democracy and cultural mecca, strengthening its position as the center of the Greek world.

While he was alive, Athenian democracy reflected Pericles' political ambition because of his masterful command over public opinion, known integrity, incorruptibility, and rank as the leading citizen. His ambition proved transformative as he had a driving desire to surpass in power and glory not only all of Athens's rivals but also the founders of the Athenian Empire. To accomplish these goals, he took the long view. His rhetoric not only persuaded Athenians to

follow his policies, but Pericles also tried to inculcate a particular political understanding of

Athens. Such an edifying feat was possible because he could both curb the Athenians' dangerous

imperial impulses and rid them of their fears. This accomplishment is best witnessed in his

Funeral Oration, which I examine in this chapter. In it, Pericles extols the Athenian way of life,

focusing his audience's attention and energies toward a standard that it simultaneously embodies

but must constantly renew, and, therefore, try to live up to. Pericles possessed a blend of personal

qualities that enabled him to lead and inspire the Athenians in peace and war.

Lastly, this chapter analyzes Pericles' statesmanship during the Peloponnesian War,

which is the subject of much debate. He devised a rational defensive strategy that broke and

radically reshaped the Hellenistic rules of war. Moreover, it was antithetical to the Athenian

national character, and through the force of his character, he executed and made the Athenians

stick to it. Ultimately, his plan failed. A plague decimated Athens's population and morale; it

also killed him two years into the conflict. While the turn of fortune contributed to Pericles'

failure to win the war, it also exhibited the major failures of the Periclean regime and his

statecraft. Focusing on the precarious balance of the common good in an especially

individualistic and wealthy democracy, his cautious and rationalist strategy strained the

institutional power that made the empire successful, expansion. His death proved that in the

absence of a great and prudent leader like Pericles, the imperial democracy produced selfish and

dangerous politicians who took Athens down a disastrous path and were eventually defeated by

Sparta.

My analysis of Pericles broaches scholarship in the subfields of political science and in

history. I first analyze realist and constructivist international-relations scholars who investigate

the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. I critique their various theses because they abstract too

much from the impact of actual decision-makers, especially Pericles. I then turn to the work of political philosophers who place a greater focus on Pericles and on the theme of statesmanship. The issue of Pericles' leadership and his importance for Athens's politics is only a subtheme of a more general interest in Thucydides' *History* and its relationship to political thought. In addition, I pay specific attention to various political theorists' interpretations of the Funeral Oration. These points serve to explain how Pericles used his oratory to confront two challenges that he thought were paramount to Athens's political situation, the difficulty that the democracy posed to the balance between self-interest and public duty as well as the moral justification for the Athenian Empire.

I contrast the theoretical interpretations of Pericles' actions with Donald Kagan's biography of Pericles, in which he portrays him as the champion of a stable and flourishing democracy. Kagan defends him against conservative accusations of demagoguery; flawed vision and policy inconsistency; and his dooming of Athens to war, civil strife, and loss of empire. Although I am indebted to Kagan's artful reconstruction of Pericles' life, I maintain a critical distance from his reading of the Athenian statesman's ambitions. I also examine Pericles' character to identify the unique qualities that shaped his ambition and leadership. I discuss these traits by distinguishing among pertinent categories of his experience as a citizen and statesman, including an aristocratic upbringing, sophistical education, and military experience. I also examine how his leadership was defined by his political rise in the rough and tumble of Athens's democratic politics.

In this endeavor I have culled information from various ancient and modern sources. Among the ancients, I concentrate mainly on Thucydides, Plutarch, Plato, and Aristotle. These sources pose some difficultly as each thinker supplies both biographical information and political

judgments about Pericles and his statesmanship, sometimes interweaving opinions with what each classifies as facts regarding Pericles. Thus, where applicable, I make explicit references to each commentator's overarching interpretation of Pericles' leadership.

International-Relations Theory: Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War

The Peloponnesian War, fought between Athens and Sparta, began in 431 BC; this total war engulfed the entire Greek world and lasted 27 years. When the conflict broke out, each polis was at the height of its power. In Thucydides' estimation, it was "the greatest movement yet known in history" (1.1.2, trans. 1847). On account of its intensity, duration, and the radical differences in political, military, and economic organization between Athens and Sparta, the war transformed the Greek world. The balance of power shifted to Sparta, Athens never regained the international vitality it had under its maritime empire, and civil strife, which unhinged the Greek poleis during the war, became commonplace in Greece.

Why did Athens and Sparta go to war? Thucydides provides an answer:

To the question why they broke the treaty, I answer by placing first an account of their grounds of complaint and points of difference, that no one may ever have to ask the immediate cause which plunged the Hellenes into war of such magnitude. The real cause, however, I consider to be the one which was formally most kept out of sight. The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta, made the war inevitable. (1.23)

International-relations scholars, who have duly noted Thucydides' distinction between the immediate cause and the real cause for the war, understand his *History* as an early expression of power politics and structural realism (Wight, 1978; Waltz, 1979; Keohane, 1986; Gilpin, 1988; Doyle, 1997). For these realists, Thucydides' statement about the war's inevitability implies a neorealist explanation. These scholars think that Thucydides vindicates the realist perspective for two reasons. His search for an underlying cause for the war ends in the discovery

136

of power politics. In addition, Thucydides thinks of power in transhistorical terms. As a result, the role of events, leaders, and regime politics give way to the analysis of power operating at the system level. Two great powers struggled in an unstable balance of power; the uneven growth of one contributed to the fear of the other; mutual suspicion and distrust led the states' leaders into a series of decisions that culminated in the great war.

Robert Gilpin (1988) has argued that Thucydides' explanation of the war in 1.23 offers an early attempt to provide a structural account of international politics, and, specifically, Thucydides proposes a theory of hegemonic war (p. 592). As such, Thucydides understood classical Greece as a system composed of two powers, in which the distribution of power defined the system and the hierarchy of power ordered and stabilized it:

> A stable system is one in which changes can take place if they do not threaten the vital interests of the dominant states and thereby cause a war among them. In his view, such a stable system has an unequivocal hierarchy of power and an unchallenged dominant or hegemonic power. An unstable system is one in which economic, technological, and other changes are eroding the international hierarchy and undermining the position of the hegemonic state. In this latter situation, untoward events and diplomatic crises can precipitate a hegemonic war among the states in the system. The outcome of such a war is a new international structure. (1988, p. 592)

Thucydides' theory of hegemonic war attributes the outbreak to the uneven growth of power in Athens over Sparta, which is explained by three factors: demographic and economic necessity, the mastery of naval power and the expansion of commerce, and the rise of the Athenian Empire after the Persian Wars (1988, pp. 597–98). Athens's commercial democracy and rule of the sea encircled and threatened Sparta, which was more conservative and austere. Up until the Persian Wars, Sparta was Greece's hegemon, thanks to its masterful command of land warfare. Its strength lay in its regimented warrior society, conservative constitution, and suppression of the Helots—a subjugated Greek people who lived as serfs to the state. However,

the conclusion of the Persian Wars had an inverse effect on Sparta in comparison to Athens: "that war and its aftermath stimulated the growth of Athenian power at the same time that the war and its aftermath encouraged Sparta, the reigning hegemon and the leader of the Greeks in their war against the Persians, to retreat into isolation" (1988, p. 598).

Despite Thucydides' explicitness about the war's true cause, Michael Doyle (1997), in a careful reading of the narrative, urges us to pay closer attention to the Greek thinker's complex realism. Doyle argues that Thucydides' work "is a testament to the fact that he held that a state's ends, its means, and (therefore) its choices could not be adequately determined through an analysis of international structure" (1997, p. 73). For Doyle, the explanation for the conflict is more complex as Spartan fear, vulnerability, and pride contributed to its declaration of war. Thucydides rejected shallow interpretations of power (1997, p. 74).

Each city's political, economic, and cultural systems animated, and constrained, their foreign policies. From a neorealist perspective, Sparta should have balanced against the increase in Athens's power by investing in a fleet, a larger expeditionary force, and its own empire, but Sparta's social structure, "which was equivalent to a massive penal colony designed to control and exploit the oppressed Messenian helots, resisted innovation" (1997, p. 74). Conversely, Athens's wealth and power was supplied by a strong navy that could project the city's power throughout the Aegean Sea.

In addition, Doyle argues that Sparta's and Athens's interactions were not just based on rational assessments of each other's power. Their dealings were also laced with enmity, mistrust, and Spartan envy. Doyle agrees that Thucydides offers a structural explanation for the war in 1.23, but he emphasizes each city's appeals to security, honor, and self-interest as sources of its

behavior. For example, Spartan fear and honor equally contributed to its declaration of war against Athens.

Ned Lebow (2001) is critical of the realist interpretation of Thucydides, which interprets him as a proto–social scientist who was primarily interested in discerning causes and outcomes. As a result, they lose sight of important ethical lessons that are embedded in what is a more complex story. Lebow takes a literary approach to the *History*; specifically, he explains the war of Athens against Sparta from a constructivist perspective.

Lebow identifies four layers in the text: "the nature and relationships among power, interest, and justice; Athens as a tragedy; the relationship between nomos (convention, custom and law) and phusis (nature); and the relationship between erga and logoi and its implications for civilization" (2001, p. 549). He also acknowledges Thucydides' distinction between the real cause and other grounds of complaint. Yet, Lebow proceeds beyond 1.23, the subsequent narrative, and paired speeches of Book 1, and discovers that the true cause runs deeper than Thucydides first admits. Sparta's fear of its rival's power was magnified by the threat that dynamic Athens posed to the traditional Spartan way of life. Moreover, its trepidation was stoked by third parties with their own interests; and, lastly, leaders' miscalculations at critical junctures during the crisis helped bring upon the war (2001, p. 549).

Lebow argues that Thucydides understood that the social conventions, which provided Greek life its significance, also regulated domestic and international behavior. Yet, as long-standing social meanings changed quickly, the Greek social world was disrupted, precipitating the conflict. Sparta had a greater apprehension of losing its identity than of Athens's actual military might. Sparta's declaration of war was proof that its citizens did not necessarily fear the Athenians but, rather, underestimated their power and resolve.

Gilpin, Doyle, and Lebow are titans in the field of international relations. They comfortably engage Thucydides' *History* and show how this timeless classic is relevant to the contemporary study of international politics. In an effort to continue in their footsteps, I focus on what they neglect to explore in more depth Pericles' pivotal role and the crucial importance of statesmanship in international relations.

International relations scholars make room for leaders' perceptions, but they mostly interpret them as a series of miscalculations that brought the cities to war. I argue the opposite. The war was consistent with Pericles' ambition to supplant Sparta's influence. I agree with Lebow's view that interests and moral meaning are thoroughly tied together and influence behavior. Yet, the root of many changes in Athenian society and Greek warfare were not just constructivist in nature. Although many social conventions are accidental, major shifts in Athenian politics were attributable to Pericles' domestic policies, far-sighted foreign policies, and high-minded view of Athens. These new conditions were not accidental. His statesmanship was marked by various episodes in which he convinced his fellow Athenians to follow his policies and accept his beliefs.

In this chapter, I present evidence that demonstrates how Athens's domestic politics, which was relied heavily on Pericles' personal leadership, were the driving force behind the war. Athens was an imperial democracy; domestic and foreign policy were tightly bound. Moreover, the Athenians' worldview was fueled by their daring spirit (a phenomenon recognized by the Athenians as well as outsiders) and the combined efforts of its greatest leaders. Pericles' influence on international relations explains the many steps that the Greek world took toward the imbalance of power that Thucydides' observed and the realists concentrate on. If the realists

want to understand the true cause of war (Athens's power), then they must understand Pericles' part in the historical drama.

Political Philosophy: Evaluations of Pericles' Ambition

As Clifford Orwin (1994) explains, Pericles' Funeral Oration defines one pole of the interpretation of Athenian imperialism: "it presents the empire as unextenuated by necessity" (p. 15). In the speech, Pericles praises the Athenians who enjoy many benefits from the empire but adds that they may relish in the fact that the empire is freely undertaken by them. He claims that Athens's citizens are not compelled to act in response to various necessities such as that of power politics or human nature. This view starkly contrasts with the amoral realism that Athenian ambassadors presented at the Spartan debate prior to the war's outbreak. In that blunt and inflammatory speech, discussed later in this chapter, the Athenians claimed that human nature and necessity compelled them to act out of fear, honor, and interest (1.75).[26]

Conversely, in Orwin's view, Pericles insists that imperial Athenian ambition rested on a supremely noble and original goal that had no precedent (1994, p. 16). Pericles' speech both describes and prescribes. On the one hand, he depicts the political culture that made Athens worthy of its empire. On the other hand, the speech exemplifies Pericles' power of rhetoric. He exhorts the Athenians to live up to his ideal, shaping their ambition and moreover disclosing his unusual ambition.

In the Funeral Oration, Pericles introduces novelty. Although Athenian tradition calls on its leading citizen to commemorate the fallen, Pericles does not praise the dead; he praises the living. He deprecates both custom and ancestral wisdom by acknowledging his compatriots for

---

[26] These are the reasons that the Athenian ambassadors to Sparta give at a Spartan assembly for Athens's acquisition and expansion of the empire.

their particular civic virtues, courage, love of beauty, love of wisdom, and self-sufficiency (1994, p. 16). The prize of Athenian virtue is the undying glorious reputation that is only attainable through the city and demands self-sacrifice and the greatest risk, which is one's life. Women, on the other hand, can only gain renown by not attracting attention of any sort (1994, p. 19).[27] Pericles sets out to convince his countrymen that risking death for the city is the greatest good because imperial Athens is the worthiest pursuit.

The Athenians acquired their empire because of their unique character and do more with it than most states, which simply try to accumulate vast amounts of power and wealth. The latter regimes' aims are based on self-interest. However, the Athenians' sheer ambition points to their noble superiority above self-interest. For Pericles, Athenian determination gives the empire its direction. Thomas Pangle and Peter Ahrensdorf (1999) argue that this particular view of what is exalted provides Pericles with a position on which he can claim that imperial Athens is good despite its abuses: "Pericles argues that the Athenians are morally superior to their adversaries, not only because they are generous to others without calculation of profit or loss, but also because of the sheer grandeur of their ambition" (p. 25).

Pericles presupposes unlimited Athenian imperial ambition: "we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere, whether for evil or good, have left imperishable monuments behind us" (2.41.4). He exaggerates to be sure, but the speech's plausibility in practice presupposes, according to Michael Palmer (1992), "a universal empire, which means a war like city, a city always in motion—power—is the ground of the glory that proves the virtue of the individual citizen" (p. 830).

---

[27] Pericles addresses women at the end of the speech, specifically the newly widowed of the fallen men: "great will be your glory in not falling short of your natural character, and greatest will be hers who is least talked of among the men whether for good or for bad" (2.45.2).

Steven Forde (1986) highlights the particular importance that Pericles pays to the virtue of daring, Athenian individualism, and erotic passion as driving forces for the empire's origin and behavior. Forde argues that Pericles' homage to Athenian "individualism" and exhortation to the common good point to the leader's attempt to address "the problem of cohesion in the city" (1986, p. 439). For Forde, the oration is not so much a testament to Pericles' ambition, as it is his awareness of the difficulty in asking the Athenians to die for the city. He makes both a customary and a novel appeal to the Athenians, persuading them to fight for their traditional love of glory. Meanwhile, he calls on their erotic longings and tries to fuse eros with patriotism, which "circumvents or supplants those conventional mechanisms of community, and seeks to bind the Athenians directly or immediately to the city, depicted as a beloved object" (1986, p. 440).

Political philosophers acknowledge Pericles' transcendent tone in his speeches and the qualified praise that Thucydides bestows on him. As a leader of the democracy, Pericles could restrain the demos, but he did not limit the regime's imperial insatiability. The only time he practiced imperial restraint was during the war, and as a precautionary measure. During his tenure, whatever moderation Athens had was the product of his moderation. After his death, the Athenians launched an ill-planned conquest of Sicily, destroyed the small polis of Melos, executed many talented generals, and succumbed to civil strife. Thus, political philosophers criticize Pericles' moral leadership and political wisdom. He deftly led the democracy, but from a Platonic and Aristotelian perspective, why did he not use his powers to make the Athenians better? I examine these questions in more detail when I discuss the relationship between his leadership and persuasive rhetoric.

My analysis of Pericles' transformative ambition builds on the former interpretations of the Funeral Oration. I emphasize his deliberate attempt to transcend traditional moral constraints and give Athens a suprapolitical character. However, this is not a universal ambition that genuinely seeks to foster Pan-Hellenism, which is Donald Kagan's (1991) thesis. He describes Pericles as both a rationalist and a visionary who faithfully served democratic principles; he wanted to give full power to the people, and, at the same time, "to educate his people to civic virtue" (p. 10). Kagan also argues that Pericles desired to peacefully coexist with Sparta.

Pericles' dovish foreign policy was shown in his restraint of Athenian imperial ambitions. He did not seek Athenian supremacy. Rather, he promoted Pan-Hellenism for the sake of gaining legitimacy for the empire, as evidenced by his founding of the colony Thurii, in Kagan's view. In 434–33, Thurri's colonists were beset by civil discord. Both Sparta and Athens claimed the territory, yet Pericles allowed the oracle of Delphi, which favored Sparta, to mediate the dispute. Prudently, the oracle claimed that the colony belonged to the Greeks. Athens respected the decision and gave up its strategic holding in the west. I disagree with Kagan on three key issues.

First, Pericles' ambition for Athens was not at all compatible with Pan-Hellenism. In the Funeral Oration, he pays homage to the city and speaks to the rest of the Hellenic world, but his language is exclusionary. He contrasts the Athenians with the Spartans to highlight the former's political and moral superiority. I draw the opposite conclusion that Kagan does. Pericles was devoted to the idea that the Athenians stood to gain glory and benefits from the empire, which depended on the subordination of other cities. What truly distinguished Pericles' ambition from all others was not his democratic spirit, but his belief that the imperial city could provide an "ageless life on each whose radiant virtue shines through it" (Orwin, 1994, p. 20).

Second, Kagan assumes that Thucydides and Plutarch were biased toward the aristocracy because they do not cast Pericles as an uncritical champion of democracy. As a consequence, those who learn about the historical Pericles from Kagan receive a one-sided reading of Thucydides' and Plutarch's Pericles. Kagan uses Pericles to defend Athenian democracy and in the process gives a misleading interpretation of his ambition. Here is Thucydides' assessment of Pericles' leadership: "Pericles indeed, by his rank, ability, and known integrity, was enabled to exercise an independent control over the multitude—in short to lead them instead of being led by them" (2.65.8). Plutarch divides Pericles' political career into two stages, which are marked by a watershed moment, the ostracism of his conservative opponent Thucydides. Afterward Pericles exercised aristocratic rule over Athens:

> After this he was no longer the same man he had been before, nor as tame and gentle and familiar as formerly with the populace, so as readily to yield to their pleasure and comply with the desire of the multitude, as a steersman shifts with the winds. Quitting that loose, remiss, and, in some cases, licentious court of the popular will, he turned those soft and flowery modulations to the austerity of aristocratic and real rule; and employing this uprightly and undeviatingly for the country's best interests, he was able generally to lead the people along, with their own wills and consents, by persuading and showing them what was to be done; and sometimes, too, urging them, whether they would or no, yield submission for their advantage. (2001, trans. Dryden, p. 215)

Third, Pericles' policies prior to the war indicate that in his estimation the conflict was inevitable. He carefully steered Athens toward the war. A victory over Sparta was necessary for the empire's maximum security and would vindicate Athens's elevation of its daring and limitless ambition over the traditional restraints imposed on cities and individuals by Greek morality. Pericles' transformative ambition reflects Athenian drives in general but is also an attempt to justify the empire by reshaping the Greek world in an Athenian mold. Kagan overlooks this dimension because he mistakes Pericles' prudence in diplomacy and war as signs of his being sated with Athens's gains.

However, Pericles fully endorsed the Athenians' love of glory, and he pursued it on the grandest scale. His drive for Athenian grandeur was international in scope. Yet, his internationalism lacked the concern with justice that the more pious and trusting Melians entertained. Although Pericles and the Athenians ignored considerations of justice, he still desired to justify the empire's, and his, actions, which he openly admits produced both good and evil (2.41.4).

The remainder of this chapter proceeds in three parts. I first provide a background of the Athenian regime and the setting in which Pericles developed his leadership qualities. Athenian politics was not circumscribed by the formal political system, which was practiced in the democratic assembly and the law courts. It extended beyond official government structures and encompassed the family, tribal allegiances, friendship and followers, agonal competition for honors and power, religious practices, and military service. Thus, I examine all the factors that contributed to Pericles' character development.

I then turn to Pericles' domestic policies and argue that they were intertwined with his aim to transform Athens into the center of international influence. The last part of this chapter examines Pericles' foreign policies over the span of his 15-year leadership with particular attention to his handling of the diplomatic crisis that led to the war with Sparta and his wartime strategy.

Family Background and Ostracism in Athenian Politics

Pericles' noble birth was most auspicious in his time. His renowned aristocratic lineage has no comparison in today's world. His father, Xanthippus, was the commanding general who defeated the Persians at Mycale and had a statue erected in his honor on the Acropolis (Pausanias

1.25.1, trans. 1918). As one of the men of Marathon, he won heroic acclaim, which gave him considerable political power. Through his mother, Agariste, Pericles was associated with the powerful Alcmaeonidae family. She was the great niece of Cleisthenes, an Athenian aristocrat who ended the tyranny of Pisistratus' sons and laid the foundations for Athenian democracy.

The illustrious history of the Alcmaeonidae family is recounted in Herodotus' *Histories* (6.121–31, trans. 2007), which culminates in Pericles' birth. We learn of it in a famous passage in the *Histories*: "this Agariste married Xanthippus son of Ariphron, and during her pregnancy she had a vision in her sleep: she dreamed she saw herself giving birth to a lion, and a few days later, she gave birth to Pericles son of Xanthippus" (6.131.2). Plutarch continues where Herodotus leaves off: "in other respects perfectly formed, only his head was somewhat longish and out of proportion, for which reason almost all the images and statues that were made of him have the head covered with a helmet, the workmen apparently being willing not to expose him" (2001, p. 203).

Political liabilities were also attached to his noble birth. Thucydides tells us that Pericles inherited a family curse, the agos, because the head of the Alcmaeonidae household had killed suppliants after promising them their lives. "From this deed the men who killed them were called accursed and guilty against the goddess, they and their descendants" (1.126.11).[28] The Alcmaeonidae were expelled from Athens twice, once by the Athenians and then again by Cleomenes of Sparta with the aid of an Athenian faction (1.126.12). During the diplomatic

---

[28] Aristotle provides more background on events surrounding the Alcmaeonidae: "the Alcmaeonids were tried, on the prosecution of Myron, by jurymen solemnly sworn in, selected according to noble birth. The charge of sacrilege having been confirmed by the verdict, the bodies of the guilty men themselves were cast out of their tombs, and their family was sentenced to everlasting banishment. Thereupon Epimenides of Crete purified the city" (*Athenian Constitution*, 1935/1992).

escalation just prior to the Peloponnesian War, the Spartans used Pericles' family curse to no avail in an attempt to turn the Athenians against him.

Ambitious Athenian aristocrats who aspired to positions of leadership carefully timed and prepared their entry into politics. Plutarch describes how the political stigma that Pericles inherited affected the timing of his career:

> Pericles, while yet but a young man, stood in considerable apprehension of the people, as he was thought in face and figure to be very like the tyrant Pisistratus, and those of great age remarked upon the sweetness of his voice, and his volubility and rapidity in speaking, and were struck with amazement at the resemblance. Reflecting, too that he had a considerable estate, and was descended from a noble family, and had friends of great influence, he was fearful all this might bring him to be banished as a dangerous person, and for this reason did not meddle in state affairs. (2001, p. 206)

The ambitious had to contend with possible ostracism, which Pericles experienced first-hand when, in 484, his father was banished and the family went into exile. Political rivals could well take advantage of any sign of ambitious behavior and seek his ostracism on the grounds that he was dangerous to the political order.

Cleisthenes introduced the practice of ostracism. Each year, the Athenian assembly voted on the question whether it should take place. If they agreed, the vote for ostracism would occur on some other date. On the day of the vote, each citizen could write the name of someone he wanted ostracized on a piece of broken pottery called an ostracon. If 6,000 citizens voted for ostracism, the man with the majority of votes had to leave Attica for ten years. Archeologists have found ostracons that identify Pericles' father, one of which states that he is "accursed" (Pomerory, 1996). The other says, "Xanthippus, son of Arriphron, is cursed for his rascality; too long he has abused our hospitality" (Broneer, 1948).

According to Kagan, the process effectively deterred hostile factions from starting coups to unseat popular leaders (1991, p. 17). Aristotle disagrees with Kagan's view that ostracism

148

functioned as a corrective device: "for instead of looking to the advantage of their own regime, they used ostracism for factional purposes" (*Politics* 1284b17). Aristotle argues that democrats unjustly used it to cling to power by banishing outstanding citizens. It may have been legal in the democracy, but it was wielded for private advantage and therefore "it is perhaps also manifest that it is not simply just" (1284b23–24).

During Pericles' tenure he successfully ostracized Cimon and Thucydides. There is no evidence that these conservative political rivals threatened to dissolve the democracy through a coup, as Kagan implies by his understanding of ostracism. Nonetheless, as a consequence of these actions, Pericles consolidated his power and ruled Athens without any serious opponents.

Pericles' Education: Rationality and Persuasive Speech

Pericles came of age at the beginning of one of Western civilization's most remarkable periods. Cutting-edge pre-Socratic philosophers and sophists were challenging traditional forms of instruction and turning religious ideas on their heads. Pericles' education was at the cusp of a monumental transition from orthodox Greek education in character formation to radical forms of rational demonstration and skepticism toward religion and tradition.

Through cosmology and speculative thinking, the pre-Socratic philosophers turned to nature to explain the underlying order of things. During Socrates' lifetime, the sophists came to be known as a particular class of professional educators who instructed young men in public displays of eloquence (Guthrie, 1971, p. 35). For a fee, they taught practical skills, and instruction was purposely geared toward the effective use of speech, which was becoming the critical skill sought by Athenian politicians.

In Plato's *Gorgias*, the eponymous character articulates the putative relationship between rhetoric and politics: "I for one say it is being able to persuade by speeches judges in the law court, councilors in the council, assemblymen in the assembly, and in every other gathering whatsoever, when there is a political gathering" (452e trans.1998). The difference between rhetoric and politics was almost indistinguishable, "the word 'rhetor', indeed, comes almost to mean politician" (Rhodes, 1986, p. 141). Owing to the expansion and ubiquitous use of rhetoric, Athenian citizens did not need a formal education in order to be exposed to the sophistical arguments of the day. For example, in the Mytilenian debate, Thucydides' Cleon criticizes the Athenians for letting clever points and sophistical arguments delude them (3.38.2).

Plutarch tells us that the pre-Socratic philosophers deeply influenced Pericles' education. He was a hearer of Zeno and kept close company with Anaxagoras, who first proposed the idea of an immaterial *nous* (mind). Early exposure to a philosophical education refined Pericles' thought and helped him perfect his use of speech. However, just as important, it provided him an understanding of the world that was "superior to that superstition with which the ignorant wonder at appearances" (2001, p. 205).

Kagan identifies Pericles' rationality as the key trait that guided his leadership, especially in developing the war strategy to fight Sparta, but Kagan does not see how Pericles' rationalism is in tension with his unorthodox morality. For example, in the Funeral Oration, Pericles denigrates tradition, shuns Homeric values, and makes no reference to Athens's religious beliefs. This outlook is consistent with his rationalism and shows strains of amoralism. However, Pericles' rationalism must balance his great aspirations for Athens, which are based on the notion that the city possesses moral superiority.

Notwithstanding his lack of piety, Pericles' ambition for Athens is suffused with a longing for nobility. Ultimately, his rationality is not opposed to belief. Yet, as noted before, such pursuit of nobility abstracts from considerations of international justice. For Pericles, the city's moral superiority rests on the Athenian choice to pursue goals that cannot be regarded simply as maximizing security: its unlimited ambition and quest for glory puts it at considerable risk. The Athenians transcend self-interest and are not compelled to act; rather, they freely choose empire.

Pericles was too intelligent to forget that conventional notions of justice made the empire a morally questionable project. Once the war was underway, he acknowledged that the Athenian empire is like tyranny (*History* 2.63). We cannot say that Pericles' statesmanship was summed up by his rationalism. In fact, I identify a tension between it and his moralism. His rationalism gives rise to a frank amoralism in Athenian foreign policy, but he also prides himself on the city's nobility. I return to these themes in the sections "Pericles' Transformation of Citizen Virtue" and "Athenian and Periclean Realism: The Debate at Sparta."

In addition to Pericles' rational disposition and ambition for nobility, the cornerstone of his education was persuasive speech. Plato attests to Pericles' prowess; the character of Socrates claims that Pericles was "the most accomplished of the rhetoricians" (*Phaedrus*, 269e trans. 1995). Further, he says, "[T]his was, as I conceive, the quality which in addition to his natural gifts, Pericles acquired from his intercourse with Anaxagoras whom he happened to know. He was imbued with the higher philosophy, and attained the knowledge of the Mind and the

negative Mind, which were favorite themes of Anaxagoras, and applied what suited his purpose to the art of speaking" (*Phaedrus*, 270a).[29]

Pericles' speaking style, rhetorical ability, and preference for rational explanations became well settled in him on account of his great natural genius. His preference for reason over custom, omens, and divinations made its way into his policy proposals. As I will discuss later, his long-term strategy to fight Sparta was based entirely on a sophisticated rational policy that not only defined how the war was fought for many years but also changed the Hellenistic rules of war.

Pericles' Political Character and Regime Politics

Plutarch considers that Pericles' aristocratic lineage combined with his education resulted in an elevation of purpose and dignity of language "raised far above the base and dishonest buffooneries of mob eloquence" (2001, p. 204). After Pericles' death, Cleon practiced just the opposite. Aristotle says the he "was the first person to use bawling and abuse on the platform, and to gird up his cloak before making a public speech, all other persons speaking in orderly fashion" (*Athenian Constitution* 28.3). Pericles applied his talents and virtues with perfect comportment, and "upon which account, they say, he had his nickname given him, though some are of the opinion he was named the Olympian from the public buildings he adorned the city; and others again, from his great power in public affairs," says Plutarch (2001, p. 207). Plutarch's description of Pericles' Olympian loftiness and composure provides insight into how he derived

---

[29] Despite the emergence of philosophy in Athens, we cannot underestimate the importance and power of piety in the Greek world, not to mention the backlash against philosophers (see Aristophanes' *The Clouds* and Plato's *Apology of Socrates*).

authority through self-command and persuasive speech. But Pericles' political power was built on more than good speeches.

In Athens, aspiring politicians needed renown. While this was partly inherited from family stature, Pericles had to attract a following of close companions and distinguish himself in Athens's competitive society. With no political parties to speak of, political groupings were formed around the name of one person. Thus, Athens's prospective pool of leaders was drawn from the most ambitious individuals who had garnered public attention through various accomplishments, for example, in war, athletic contests, successful prosecutions, paying for civic feasts, and producing dramatic choruses.

Leading politicians surrounded themselves with a group of lesser men who worked on their behalf, "holding offices, appearing in the courts and proposing measures in the assembly" (Rhodes, 1986, p. 138). Thanks to his network of associates, Pericles crafted his public persona. Wary of appearing common, he was present at intervals, "not speaking to every business, nor at all times coming into the assembly, but . . . reserving himself for great occasions" (Plutarch, 2001, p. 206).

Although Pericles naturally leaned toward aristocratic government, Cimon was the leading figure of the conservative faction. Pericles rose through the dissident democratic faction. During the early part of Pericles' career, Cimon was Athens's most powerful and popular leader. His father Miltiades "had won fame at Marathon and disgrace at Paros after losing a tyranny in the Chersonese" (Fornara & Samons, 1991, p. 60). Cimon was a highly regarded general whose many victories contributed to the growth and wealth of the Athenian empire; he was the first to use the spoils of war to beautify the city (Plutarch, 2001, p. 654).

Known for his ease and social grace, Cimon also redistributed his wealth among the poor as a way to satisfy the common people without granting political authority: "[h]e pulled down all the enclosures of his gardens and grounds, that strangers, and the needy of his fellow-citizens, might gather of his fruits freely. At home he kept a table, plain, but sufficient for a considerable number; to which any poor townsman had free access" (2001, p. 650).

As the leader of Athens's aristocratic faction, Cimon supported the conservative Aeropagus council and was the key promoter of friendly diplomatic relations with Sparta, which was a divisive issue in Athens. As the empire became more successful, thanks to leaders like Cimon, the Athenians began to conceive of themselves as the greater peoples in the Hellenic world. Cimon admired Spartan society for its traditional way of life, adopted many Spartan habits, and named one of his sons Lacedaemonius. Yet, a pro-Spartan policy eventually led to his political downfall, which opened the way for Pericles' democratic faction.

A critical episode in 461 led to the deterioration of the Athenian and Spartan relationship. Still allies after the Persian Wars, Sparta called on Athens, which was experienced in siege warfare, to help subdue a Helot revolt. In the assembly, Cimon successfully argued that Athens should aid the Spartans, a hard-won diplomatic mission as many citizens hoped for Sparta's demise. Cimon led the expedition, but when the Athenians arrived, they were hastily dismissed on the grounds that they were no longer needed. Thucydides says, "[T]he Spartans were apprehensive of the enterprising and revolutionary character of the Athenians, and further looking upon them as of alien extraction, began to fear that if they remained, they might be persuaded by the besieged in Ithome to attempt some political changes" (1.102.4). Cimon returned to Athens disgraced and was ostracized soon after.

Cimon's banishment coincided with Ephialtes' attack on the Aeropagus, which controlled legislative matters in Athens. Pericles was Ephialtes' younger associate in the democratic coalition. Together they transferred judicial and political power to the Boule of the Five Hundred, the assembly, and the dicasteries. During this transition, Ephialtes became the victim of a political assassination, and Pericles, still in his early 30s, inherited the democratic leadership.

In democratic Athens, matters of religion, public festivals, finances, inheritance, ostracism, office, and all issues of foreign policy were decided by a popular assembly, the Ecclesia. There was no restriction on speech in the assembly. Here citizens met to try and persuade each other to vote on decrees that affected both private individuals and public life. A simple majority decided an issue, and voting was mostly conducted by show of hands, sometimes by secret ballot.

The meeting drew at least 6,000 of 30,000 eligible citizens (the number necessary for a quorum), and the assembly convened 40 times a year. The Boule was council of 500 citizens who were selected by lot, and they set the agenda for the assembly to vote on. The meeting was called to order by a lotteried president chosen on that day; he announced (through a herald) the first item on the agenda. After reading it, the president asked, "Who of the Athenians has advice to give? " (Ober, 1993, p. 483). As the herald's identity remained unknown prior to the meeting, no person could control the items on the agenda once debate began. Leaders relied strictly on their ability to sway public opinion.

Once ordinary matters were settled, the assembly debated controversial issues. Given the range of concerns, both public and private, discussed in the assembly, each citizen had the freedom to speak his mind, but speakers did not face a calm and welcoming environment. They

155

could be met with *thorubus* (clamor or tumult), which signaled disapproval. It also acted as an informal mechanism to sanction members who seemed to lack proper qualifications to give an opinion on a given matter. Likewise, the constant banter, tumult, and shouting down of speakers deterred many from ever talking at all.

The chief and most prominent elected officials in Athens were the strategoi, ten generals serving one-year terms with no limit on reelection, who commanded the army and navy. The office did not carry formal powers, and when Pericles initiated policy in the assembly, he did so as a citizen. Unlike the demos-led assembly where he needed to be a leader of the people, "old attitudes may have lingered with regard to military affairs, and a general may have been elected (like Cimon on his return from ostracism) because their aristocratic birth was taken as a sign of their ability to lead" (Fornara & Samons, 1991, p. 33).

When acting as a general, Pericles was charged with military and diplomatic affairs. He was also scrutinized for each decision he made since the generals were subject to a yearly review, prosecution, impeachment, fines, exile, and even death. This position lent authority to Pericles, but the assembly is where his real power arose (1991, p. 31). Pericles was held in esteem by the people, and his overwhelming rhetorical skills gave him an advantage over them. Thucydides' Pericles says that he was "second to no man in knowledge of the proper policy, or in the ability to expound on it, and who is moreover not only a patriot but an honest one" (2.65.5). Pericles was conscious of his commendable qualities. What I find of special importance was his awareness that he could make his knowledge clear in exposition.

Pericles knew things about policy that most citizens didn't. Thus, when they accepted his advice, they were being influenced in a Periclean manner. Pericles might expound on what he knew, but this does not mean that the demos could retain knowledge and, consequently,

156

articulate it on its own. Pericles' rationalism was lost on the demos. Comprehending this, he

affected and used the passions of demos to lead them, "making that use of hopes and fears, as his

two chief rudders" (Plutarch, 2001, p. 215). As a master of political psychology, he could move

the demos over to his position, and, as Thucydides says, "whenever he saw them unseasonably

elated, he would with a word reduce them to alarm; on the other hand, if they fell victims to a

panic, he could at once restore them to confidence" (2.65.9).

Pericles' rank, integrity, and power of persuasion ran so deep that he led the people

instead of being led by them (2.65.8). Thucydides' claim is proven by Pericles' success in

making the Athenians submit to a painful strategy of restraint during the war. From Plato's

perspective, Pericles' absolute rule over the democracy was not praiseworthy because the

democracy was imperfect. He tried to graft this form of self-discipline onto the democracy, but

he never sought to make the citizens moderate. For Plato, Pericles' leadership did little to chasten

the imperial democracy's desires, and he used his rhetoric to flatter the many. In Plato's *Gorgias*,

the character of Socrates articulates the moral consequences of Pericles' statesmanship. In a

response to a question by Callicles, Socrates says:

> Nothing but if the Athenians are said to have become better because of Pericles, or, quite
> the opposite, to have been corrupted by him. For I at any rate hear these things, that
> Pericles made the Athenians lazy, cowardly, babbling, and money lovers, when he first
> brought them into the state as mercenaries. (515e, trans. 1998)

As one of ten annually elected generals, Pericles was given the post 16 times. Owing to

his unparalleled status and success in Athenian politics, Thucydides introduces him as "the first

man of his time at Athens, ablest alike in counsel and in action" (1.139). During his political

career, Pericles supported Athens's democracy, never usurped power, and was incorruptible.

Was Pericles, who advocated the democracy's expansion—which for Plato and Aristotle, was the root of Athens's corruption—committed to the rule of popular sovereignty as Kagan argues?

Thucydides makes us ponder this question when he announces that on account of Pericles' authority, Athens was a democracy in name only and effectively the rule of one man (2.65). To better understand this statement, I now discuss Pericles' particular transformative ambition and its influence on Athens's domestic and international affairs.

Pericles' Transformative Ambition: Individual Leadership and Athenian Glory

The Athenian and Spartan regimes shaped the character of their leadership; "the laws, the constitution, the mores, and way of life—fostered certain character traits to the exclusion of others" (Newell, 2009, p. 227). Athens promoted the rise of bold leaders who made foreign policy gambles, which more often than not helped expand the empire. Sparta's constitution produced moderate leaders who had an aversion to far-flung expeditions. They were reluctant to wage protracted military campaigns because Sparta feared a Helot uprising and the corruption of its generals.

In Athens it was common for individuals to gain prominence and establish a consistent program over many years. Before Pericles, some notable Athenians made great political strides. Themistocles laid the empire's foundation by persuading the Athenians to shift their military power to the navy. Ephialtes initiated the radical democratic reforms that Pericles fulfilled. Cimon won major battles against Persia; he diminished the Persian threat and heralded an era of magnificent civic benefaction. Yet as a visionary leader, Pericles surpassed them all (Hale, 2009, p. 126).

Pericles' tenure as a general was longer than any other Athenian. Unlike election to the advisory council (the Boule) and juries, the position of strategos had no term limits. As the authors of the strategic perspective observe, the ranks of the strategos grew in the fifth century and helped mitigated the perverse incentives created by term limits in the council (Mesquita et. al., 2003, p. 318). The strategoi's political survival was coupled to policy performance. From this perspective, because Pericles faced yearly reelection and review, he had an incentive to shift his attention to effective public policy. Although Pericles practiced his share of political calculus, his ambition is not reducible to the desire to remain a strategos for the sake of retaining power. Instead, it lay in substantially reforming democratic Athens and reorganizing the empire to draw on its vast resources for the city's purposes.

Pericles' rise to power, in the decade 460–50, was coeval with the implementation of *misthos*, state payment for public service. This disbursement gave poorer citizens a say in the city's affairs; their responsibility for Athens's naval power was now being represented in their share of the city's power. When Cimon returned from ostracism in 452, his power had been supplanted through this political victory of the common people over the upper class.

Thanks to Pericles, the poor were paid to attend the assembly, and, as Aristotle observes, public pay meant that all citizens took part and exercised their citizenship because the poor enjoyed leisure by receiving pay (*Politics* 1292b41). For Aristotle, Pericles' measures produced a public bad because the needy, not the laws, controlled political affairs. As a result, the desire for money replaced civic virtue as the requirement for political participation:

> The wickedness of human beings is insatiable. So to begin with an allowance of only two obols is enough, but as soon as this practice has become an ancestral tradition, the

demand is always made for more, and so it goes on without limit. For it is the nature of desire to have no limit, and satisfying desire is what the many live for.[30]

Pericles' most radical measure instituted jury payment. Aristotle explains the reason behind this policy: "Pericles first made service in the jury courts a paid office, as a popular counter-measure against Cimon's wealth" (*Athenian Constitution* 27.2). Jury payment marked the turning point that brought city affairs into a radical new balance.

Pericles' domestic policies were predicated on a deliberate decision to rely on the permanent availability of imperial revenue. Aristotle, who disapproved of the dependence on payment for civic participation, described how Athens's public funds were divvied up at the height of the empire.

> They also established a plentiful food supply for the multitude, as Aristeides had proposed; for the combined proceeds of the tributes and the taxes of the allies served to feed more than twenty thousand men. For there were six thousand jurymen, one thousand six hundred archers and also one thousand two hundred cavalry, five hundred members of the Council, five hundred guardians of the docks, and also fifty watchmen in the city, as many as seven hundred officials at home and as many as seven hundred abroad; and in addition to these, when later they settled into the war, two thousand five hundred hoplites, twenty guard-ships and other ships conveying the guards to the number of two hundred elected by lot; and furthermore the prytaneum, orphans, and warders of prisoners—for all of these had their maintenance from public funds. (*Athenian Constitution* 24.3)

The decision was truly epochal. The state treasury was opened up to the community at large, and the possession of Athenian citizenship entitled its holder to payment for public service. Judicial and legislative matters would be entrusted to persons without education, qualification, or, "indeed even the serious expenditure of mental or physical energy—unless vicarious participation in oratorical display" (cf. *Plato Republic*. 492b) (Fornara & Samons, 1991, p. 67).

---

[30] An obol was a sixth of a drachma, and a drachma was the average daily wage in Athens.

The new and expanding empire brought unprecedented wealth to Athens. In 431, Athens

had an annual income of 1,000 talents, of which 400 came from internal revenue and 600 from

tribute; and it had 6,000 talents of coined silver in the treasury (Kagan, 1991, p. 232). According

to some sources, at one point there may once have been as much as 9,700 talents in the treasury

(Rhodes, 1986, p. 91). What was the value of this currency? Pericles set up a peacetime routine

for the navy that launched 60 triremes each spring. One talent was the amount of silver needed to

pay a trireme crew for one month, with tours of duty lasting eight months. The annual cost of

Athens's peacetime navy of 60 ships was 480 talents (Hale, 2009, p. 127).

With Athens's largesse, Pericles spearheaded a massive building program. The Long

Walls that connected Athens to the port of Piraeus were completed. Later, I will show how

Pericles' strategic decisions during the war were contingent on the completion of a third Long

Wall. In addition, the most famous architectural works were built on the Acropolis: the

Parthenon, Erechtheion, Propylaea, and temple of Athena Nike. Pericles oversaw the conception

and construction of many of these buildings and temples. Politically, the initiative functioned as

a public works program. Laborers, architects, craftsman, traders, and merchants could be of

service, and as a result, "it put the whole city, in a manner, into state pay" (Plutarch, 2001, p.

212).

Pericles supervised the construction of the Parthenon, the crown of the campaign. Built

atop the Acropolis, it was "meant to achieve visually what the Funeral Oration aimed at orally:

the depiction, explanation, and celebration of the Athenian imperial democracy" (Kagan, 1991,

p. 161). The empire's steady stream of revenue became essential to individual well-being and

inflamed the passion for continued imperial conquest. Pericles' policies were inducing a

remarkable change in domestic ideology, one that was necessary to maintain Athens's empire.

Pericles' Transformation of Citizen Virtue

Ancient Greek societies relied on civic-minded citizen virtue and piety. This virtue was essentially self-sacrifice and was lived out through a passionate attachment to the city. These small communities were constantly at war on account of existential uncertainty, jealousy, and the desire to affirm their supremacy. Thus, the core citizen virtue was martial courage in defense of the city. Courage was a necessary condition of being a true man, an *aner* or manly man; "a manly man is understood in contrast with a mere 'human being' (*anthropos*), the undistinguished mass of mankind, including women, children, slaves, and others who did not have the privilege of bearing arms" (Newell, 2003, p. 56).

Too much preoccupation with one's private life was enervating to a masculine spirit and was deemed base. Greek life, including war, had a competitive quality, and what was most admired was the heroic ethos of outstanding individuals. Greek men aspired for esteem and fame by showing their excellence through publicly recognized activities, like athletic contests. Furthermore, the battlefield provided the perfect arena for them to demonstrate their quality. Immortalized by Homer, Achilles is depicted as the peak of courage because he outshines all others and accepts death as a consequence in the pursuit of immortal fame. Virtue entails action, and the enterprising man is esteemed (Balot, 2001). Although courage was essential for the survival of the polis, it also tended to provoke an unrestrained love of glory. The irony is that excessive courage was also a danger to the political community. Spurred by men's desire for achievement and great honors, the polis was prone to excessive belligerence.

Pericles was born into a Greek culture that was deeply rooted in the agonistic view of nature and social relations. The desire for individual glory was ingrained in the habits and imagination of the Athenian citizen. The city's most ambitious leaders attested this desire's

162

possibilities. Pericles, this model's paragon, actually sought to reduce the rarity of individual

achievement and moderate its more zealous expressions. He understood that Athens's unique

blend of democracy, empire, wealth and extraordinary military, political, and cultural

achievement stirred a passion for individual freedom among citizens, something unknown in the

Greek world. He recognized both the virtue and danger in this particular kind of Athenian

individualism. As a result, Pericles tried to direct the Athenians to attain a standard of virtue that

did justice to their individualism but also fulfilled the expectation of public service. His shaping

of the Athenian moral sense is given full expression in the most famous passage of Thucydides'

History: Pericles' Funeral Oration.

Chronologically, the speech postdates the outbreak of the war, but I discuss it first

because it is the clearest exposition of Pericles' transformative ambition. Pericles was chosen to

give the Funeral Oration a year after the war's start to honor the first Athenian casualties.

Although no great battle or momentous shift had occurred, it was a critical speech because it

justified the continued suffering was necessary, especially because Pericles had submitted the

Athenians to a painful defensive strategy that allowed the Spartans to lay waste to Attica.

In his praise of Athenian courage, Pericles disavows Sparta's fabricated brand of this

virtue. Spartan courage requires a systematic regimen of painful discipline at home and the

exclusion of foreign influences (2.39.1). The Athenian version is something that Pericles thinks

constitutes a broader characteristic, "the native spirit of [the] citizens" (2.39.1). The Athenians

profit from freedom that flows from government to ordinary life, ease in private relations, the

relaxation of the mind through games and festivals, and the enjoyment of pleasure (2.37–38).

Although they live as they please, it is thanks to their spirit that the Athenians are still willing to

encounter danger (2.39.4). What is important to note about Pericles' understanding of Athenian

courage is that its basis is Athenian individualism, and he does not mention that it serves the common good, the reason why the Spartans subject themselves to such painful discipline.

Although courage is an impulse that the Athenians seem drawn to, Pericles devotes this speech toward encouraging bravery in war. Perhaps he deprecates Spartan self-sacrifice because traditional courage demands that one risk one's life for the interest of something other than oneself. The Spartans were ready to sacrifice for the city, while the Athenians were willing to encounter danger. But their zeal to do so is not as clear as the reason the Spartans face danger. Therefore the discussion of courage proves a tricky subject because Pericles has appealed to the Athenians' self-interest before notions of sacrifice and nobility.

Pericles abstracts further from traditional virtue by identifying the primary characteristics of the Athenian spirit: daring, and deliberation (2.40.3). The first defines the native ethos. While a singularly Athenian characteristic, it is also an expression of human nature that is unbridled by traditional restraints on behavior. Daring differs from courage because it has no extremes— courage is flanked by its vices, brashness and cowardice. Yet, Pericles does not say that the Athenians can have too much daring. There are no inhibitions placed on the Athenian spirit.

Pericles inspires the Athenians by praising the bold national character rather than the accomplishments of any single citizen. Moreover, he does not appeal to Homeric ideals, but, rather, invokes concrete proofs of Athenian power (2.41.4). The Athenians do not need to imitate Achilles as they force land and sea "to be the highway of their daring" (2.41.4). They have proven their versatility to others; they have smashed any conception of the limits of human power. Athens is the real teacher of human nature, which leads Pericles to say, "as a city we are the school of Hellas" (2.41). As a model city, Athens gets all the glory, and the eulogized Athenians fought nobly and died for the city's honor (2.41.5). On mentioning the dead soldiers'

164

ambition for glory, Pericles first explicitly calls on surviving Athenians to be ready to suffer for the cause (2.41.5).

Thus, Pericles does not plead for the mere defense of the city; rather, he exhorts citizens to live up to their spirit for glory awaits them. Yet, his rhetorical move reveals a tension built into Athenian political culture. Athenian daring is a phenomenon that other Greeks can marvel at or fear. It created the empire and its subsequent greatness. Pericles thinks that Athens's excellence is noble and worth fighting for; he makes no mention of survival, as if such a pedestrian concern has no place in war. However, the neglect of survival points to Pericles' inability to ask the citizens to come to the city's common defense because the traditional bonds of Greek morality no longer hold it together.

Daring comes naturally to the Athenians, but the defense of the city does not. Why would Pericles go to such great lengths to promote the latter by emphasizing the former? The answer involves his transformative project both at the level of political psychology and in its practical dimension. Pericles has subjected the populace to an inglorious war strategy and must keep the people to it for as long as possible. I address this second issue later in the chapter.

Pericles' transformation ambition involves a moral balancing act that seeks to persuade the Athenians to evaluate their individual interests in light of that of the city. However, this evaluation does not "pivot on a norm of reciprocity between individuals and the city" (Monoson & Loriaux, 1998). A reciprocal relation depends on an individual's calculation about what he will receive for giving in turn. Athens provides citizens with a life where they can flourish as individuals. Indeed, it creates individuals. Yet, if one has to die for it, what good is Athens to the individual? Pericles must promise something that is not encapsulated by all the earthly goods Athens bestows. It must be greater than life itself and animate citizens' deepest passions. As

165

Orwin argues, Pericles does not present the choice to risk one's life for Athens as rational (1994, p. 26).

Athenians can only reach their peak as individuals by exercising their daring, which effectively supports the city's imperial majesty. Pericles asks the citizens to bask in the greatness of this collective production. The exalted glory of the city is worth the risk of one's life because it is the only action that can confer immortality on the average citizen. The city's honor is superior to that of the individual because it alone endows ageless fame. The problem that Pericles faces, though, is that his appeal is to individuals who hunger for acclaim and are not necessarily interested in sharing it (Forde, 1986, p. 440).

Thus, his second and more unconventional appeal is to citizens' erotic attachments: "[y]ou must realize the power of Athens, and feed your eyes on her from day to day, till love of her fills your hearts; and then when all her greatness shall break upon you, you must reflect that it was by courage, sense of duty, and a keen feeling of honor in actions that men were enabled to win all this" (2.43.1). A love for one's country is a common sentiment, but Pericles makes a very unusual call to patriotism. Unlike the Spartan's self-abnegating, dutiful patriotism, an Athenian's passionate and selfish attachment to the city is the path toward patriotism. As Forde (1986) observes, "Erotic passion is individualistic, even egoistic, yet leads to the most intense devotion and willingness to sacrifice" (p. 439). This odd appeal shows just how distanced Athens's mores were from traditional Greek morality. One must imagine that Pericles either had a theoretical or intuitive sense of this new reality, and his rhetorical strategy hinges on interweaving Athenian self-interests and passions with a novel conception of the city.

In order to transform traditional self-sacrifice into the Periclean form, a fundamentally new way of thinking about the relationship between citizen and the polis had to emerge. The

166

Funeral Oration does not imply a particular policy as much as a unique political understanding—what I have referred to throughout this chapter as Pericles' transformative ambition.

This speech reveals the consequential circumstances under which Pericles exercised leadership at the beginning of the war. Athens was at the peak of its political power, yet Pericles did not acknowledge that for Athens what still was at stake in the war is the perennial problem of power politics and basic survival. Instead, he sensed that domestic necessity was a greater issue, which is why he must urge his people to fight for Athens's exceptionality and the extraordinary character of its imperial rule.

Athens's unparalleled power helped Pericles gloss over its political abuses and heavy-handed approach toward its allies. For Pericles, Athens's singularity made it immune to the charges that it was acting unjustly toward its allies. Yet, Pericles reveals himself as a consummate imperialist: "we have forced every sea and land to be the highway of our daring, and everywhere whether for evil or good, have left imperishable monuments behind us" (2.41). I now examine Pericles' career at the international level through his contribution to the empire's growth, role in the run up to the war, and wartime strategy.

Managing the Empire: The Delian League and Imperial Expansion

The Delian League was formed in 478, in the aftermath of the Persian wars. Headed by the Ionians, a voluntary coalition of Greek city-states requested that Athens become its leader after Pausanias' Spartan leadership became harsh and unpopular. Athens accepted this request, but self-interest figured into its calculations:

> These resorted to the Athenians and requested them as kinsmen to become their leaders, and to stop any attempt at violence on the part of Pausanias. The Athenians accepted their overtures, and determined to put down any attempt of the kind and to settle everything else as their interest might seem to demand. (1.95.2)

In 478 the allies met at Delos and agreed that the league would function to avenge Greek suffering by ravaging Persian territory, liberate Greeks still under Persian rule, and swear to have the same friends and enemies. Three factors contributed to the league's founding: Greek cities in need of security against Persian ambitions, Sparta's conservative retrenchment, and Athens's greater political and commercial ambitions. Initially, the Athenians commanded autonomous allies, and the league's decisions were made in general congresses (1.96.2).

Between the conclusion of the Persian wars and the Peloponnesian War, Athens's power grew through successful military campaigns against Persia, against its allies in revolt, and against the Peloponnesians whom they encountered on many occasions (1.97). Athens's successes led to its problems with the allies. As the Persian threat receded, the allies were less compelled to support Athens's role as the policeman of the Aegean. As they became uneasy with Athenian leadership, Athens tightened its control over the league because the navy-intensive group was costly and demanded "a well-organized system for regular payments into the league treasury" (Kagan, 1969, p. 43). Only Chios and Lesbos contributed ships.

Pericles presided over the transition from league leader to imperial ruler, which conflicted with the identity of the free-ruling polis. By the Peloponnesian War, the Greek world saw Athens as an arrogant and aggressive city. The Peloponnesians stated aim was to liberate Greece, restoring freedom to subjugated cities, and only a destruction of the Athenian Empire could accomplished this goal. Thucydides discusses how three critical foreign policies that were carried out during 476–67 show when Athens's imperial ambition took root.[31]

---

[31] These dates are provided by Robert Strassler (1996), but the chronology of the *Pentecontaetia* is debated. Strassler suggests that the dates should cover possibilities rather than record agreed facts (p. 53).

First, in 471, Athens set a fundamental precedent when Naxos tried to leave the alliance: "it was the first instance of the confederation being forced to subjugate an allied city, a precedent which was followed by that of the rest in the order which circumstances prescribed" (1.98.4). Thereafter, Thasos' revolt in 465 was countered swiftly by Athens. Subdued rebellions also gave Athens the occasion to intervene in her allies' internal affairs. When a city's oligarchs had stoked an insurrection, Athens would supplant them and bring a democratic faction into power.

Second, under Cimon's command, the alliance won battles against Persia on land and at sea at Eurymedon in 469. The Persian navy's defeat was so great that it no longer posed a threat in the Aegean. The league's focus then became the maintenance of the Athenian Empire, but more defection followed. The Thasians revolted, and Athens's besiegement of Thasos took over three years. In response to the uprising, Athens sent 10,000 settlers from its own citizens and its allies to settle Ennea Hodoi (Amphipolis), which was opposite the coast of Thasos. The Thasians regarded the settlement as an act of hostility (1.100.3).

During the siege the Thasians turned to Sparta, which promised Thasos help. Unbeknownst to Athens, Sparta intended to invade Attica but was held back by a Helot revolt (101.1–2). The souring of relations between Athens and Sparta was occasioned by the Helot conflict when, in 462, the Athenians answered a Spartan call to aid them in a siege but were shockingly turned away soon after their arrival. This event had major political repercussions in Athens, which broke off its alliance with Sparta (the Hellenic alliance against Persia), laying the ground for Cimon's ostracism and the rise of the faction of Ephialtes and Pericles.

Soon after Pericles assumed power over the democratic faction, the Athenians committed to a major expedition in Egypt. Thucydides does not tell us who was responsible for the campaign. Although Pericles was not the author of the policy, it was in this critical moment for

169

the empire that his real experience with foreign policy began. The conflict with the

Peloponnesian cities was underway, and Athens was projecting its power in a high-risk

expedition. After supporting an Egyptian rebellion against Persia for seven years, in 454 the

Persian king sent a large army against Athens and the rebels. Athens lost at a terrible cost (40

ships and 8,000 men), which also marked its first loss against the Persians.

Pericles embarked on a new imperial policy when in 454 he changed the Delian League's

organization, moving the treasury from Delos to the Acropolis in Athens. The conservative party,

now led by Thucydides, mounted a challenge. Pericles' new direction violated traditional

religion and morality. The charge against Pericles took aim at his decision to transfer the treasury

and the building campaign:

> Greece cannot but resent it as an insufferable affront, and consider herself to be
> tyrannized over openly, when she sees the treasure, which was contributed by her upon a
> necessity for war, wantonly lavished out by us upon our city, to gild her all over, and to
> adorn and set her forth, as it were some vain woman. (Plutarch, 2001, p. 211)

Pericles defended himself from the implied accusation that he was becoming a tyrant. He

defended his policy by not apologizing at all. In Plutarch's explanation, as long as Athens

successfully defended the Greeks against Persia, the citizens could decide their foreign policy in

any way they pleased:

> They did not so much as supply one horse, man, or ship, but only found money for the
> service; which money, said [Pericles], is not theirs that give it, but theirs that receive it, if
> so be they perform the conditions upon which they receive it. And that it was good
> reason, that, now the city was sufficiently provided and stored with all things necessary
> for war, they should convert the overplus of its wealth to such undertaking as hereafter,
> when completed, give them eternal honour, and, for the present, while in process, freely
> supply all the inhabitants with plenty. (2001, p. 211)

Pericles rebuffed the charges of moral impropriety and the abuse of imperial funds as he

reminded people of the benefits they derived from the empire. His policies prevailed. In 443,

170

when he finally could secure adequate political backing, he called for Thucydides' ostracism. He succeeded, and secure in his policies without a considerable political figure to oppose him, he turned to consolidating the empire.

Athens had made sufficient progress against the Persian threat and sought peace with the enemy. Achieved in 449, the Peace of Callias formally recognized the end of the war between Athens and Persia. It was in Pericles' interest to decrease the city's commitments against Persia, but the formal peace "eliminated the rationale for the Delian League and raised the question whether the alliance should be abandoned" (Fornara & Samons, 1991, p. 78).

The repercussions were immediate and dangerous for the empire as major allies began to revolt. Evidence of this can be found in the Athenians' tribute lists. In 447, 171 cities are listed, and the following year shows only 156 (Kagan, 1969, p. 148). Pericles confronted the greatest foreign-policy test of his career to date as the sinews of Athens's power, the allied tribute, lay in the balance. He swiftly countered the major uprisings, personally directing the subjugation of Euboea and Megara in 446. The problem was compounded when the Peloponnesian league took the rebellions as an opportunity to strike a blow against Athens. As Athenian forces were subduing multiple conflicts, the Peloponnesian army marched into Attica. This was an emergency of first order. Thucydides describes the events:

> Pericles had already crossed over with any army of Athenians to the island (Euboea), when news was brought to him that Megara had revolted, that the Peloponnesians were on the point of invading Attica, and that the Athenian garrison had been cut off by the Megarians. . . . Meanwhile Pericles brought his army back in all haste from Euboea. After this the Peloponnesians, under the command of King Pleistonax son of Pausanias, marched into Attica as far as Eleusis and Thria, ravaging the country and without advancing further returned home. The Athenians then crossed over again to Euboea under the command of Pericles, and subdued the whole of the island. While they settled all the rest of the island by means of agreed terms, they expelled the people of Histiaea and occupied the territories themselves. (1.114)

Pericles brought his army back from Euboea to meet the invading forces, but the Peloponnesians returned home without a fight, supposedly after Pericles bribed the Spartan King Pleistonax. No strong evidence supports this allegation, however. An important point about this episode is that Pericles was not willing to wage a war against Sparta in 446. What changed to make him urge the Athenians to war in 431?

In 446, Pericles took his army to meet the invading Spartans. A conventional hoplite battle would have ensued, which the Peloponnesians were bound to win. Yet, by 431 the situation had changed. The threat of multiple allied revolts had faded, and Pericles was held in such esteem that he could direct policy unimpeded. He could fight the war against Sparta by using an unorthodox defensive strategy that principally relied on the strength of the navy and Athenian wealth.

Pericles' Sparta Policy

In 445, after Pericles successfully warded off a major military showdown with the Peloponnesians, Athens and Sparta agreed to a truce, which led to the negotiation of the Thirty Years' Peace. The treaty ended the first Peloponnesian War, and the peace lasted 14 years. The treaty stipulated that Athens give up any claims to territory in the Peloponnese while the Spartans tacitly recognized its rival's empire. To prevent future wars, they agreed to observe certain protocols: allies from one league could not defect to another side (the cause of the conflict in 445), neutral cities were free to become allies of either side, and each side would submit any future disagreement to arbitration. The arbitration clause was unconventional in Greek relations; Pericles was likely behind this diplomatic innovation.

What did Pericles hope to gain through this peace? Kagan (1969) argues that Pericles sought a lasting peace, as opposed to biding his time for the inevitable war. He argues that much like Otto von Bismarck and Augustus, Pericles became satisfied with what he had acquired and turned to a moderate diplomacy. Although these three statesmen might share some similarities, Kagan does not provide a sound basis for the analogy. Pericles faced a different strategic situation than the other leaders. Athens had not really concluded a major war with Sparta. While Athens still vied for Greek supremacy, Sparta was wary of losing its hold over the Peloponnese.

Kagan (1969) thinks that Pericles shifted his imperial policies after a long learning period that included past setbacks in Coronea, a disastrous Egyptian expedition, the Megarian defection, the revolt of Euboea, and the invasion of Attica. After these experiences, Pericles' imperial ambition waned; he shifted his goal to preserving the empire and did not want to endanger it with further growth (pp. 191–92). However, Kagan supports this claim by citing Pericles' advice to the Athenians to not expand the empire during the war against Sparta (1.144). Kagan concludes that Pericles' wartime policy of restraint was the same at the time of the Thirty Years' Peace.

There is reason to doubt Kagan's conclusion. Pericles cautioned the Athenians to suppress their expansionist aims during war; yet, there is no evidence of counseling them to not enlarge the empire indefinitely. His advice during the war was based on the strategic situation. Thus, it is a distinct possiblity that if a clear opportunity for growth presented itself, Pericles would not warn against it. Such opportunities are imaginable if Athens proved victorious in the war. While Pericles' ambition fostered Athenian daring, imperialism and power, Spartan hegemony, which symbolized how a great power could limit its international ambition, was an obstacle to the perpetuation and the expansion of the Periclean project.

Next, I discuss the series of events starting in 433 that precipitated the Peloponnesian War, in which I argue that Pericles played an independent role in fashioning events including the beginning of the conflict in 431. At critical junctures he made decisive diplomatic moves that brought the Athenians closer to war. Thucydides describes his exacting policies toward Sparta: "for being the most powerful man of his time, and the leading Athenian statesman, he opposed the Spartans in everything, and would have no concessions, but ever urged the Athenians to war" (1.127).

The war originated in a dispute between two smaller powers, Corinth and Corcyra, over control the Epidamnus, which was small city in a faraway corner of the Greek world. Prior to the disagreement, Corinth and Corcyra were on bad terms. Corcyra was originally a Corinthian colony, but as Corcyra's strength grew, so did its independence and pride. It failed to pay the customary reverence to its mother country, and the two cities became bitter rivals. The conflict over Epidamnus escalated, and the two cities went to war.

In 433, Corcyra appealed to Athens for help in what was becoming a dangerous conflict for it to undertake alone. Corinth was building a large fleet to counter Corcyra's, and while Corinth was Sparta's ally, Corcyra was neutral. Both cities sent ambassadors to Athens to plead their cases. The majority of the assembly preferred to stay out of the dispute because Corcyra was not an ally and remote Epidamnus lay outside Athens's strategic interests.

Thucydides tells us that the debate lasted two days, and on the first day, public opinion was disposed to reject Corcyra's plea. However, the debate was not resolved, and the vote was postponed for the next day (a delay on a vote was extremely rare). On the second day, public opinion had shifted to intervention (1.44). Pericles and his associates had made a case for the

174

strategic worth in coming to Corcyra's aid in what they were building up to be an inevitable war

with Sparta.

Among the diplomatic hurdles to this measure, Corinth was in the Peloponnesian League

and Corcyra was a neutral state. The Corinthian ambassadors had argued that Athenian

intervention on Corcyra's behalf, with the conflict underway, violated the Thirty Years' Peace.

Although Athens risked war with Sparta, it did not want to see Corcyra's fleet lost to Corinth. A

Corinthian victory at sea would embolden that city and threaten Athens's command of the

waters. Athens accepted the danger since its attitude about the possibilities for a long peace with

Sparta had dimmed, while its expansionist ambitions had not:

> For it began to be felt that the coming of the Peloponnesian War was only a question of
> time, and no one was willing to see a naval power of such magnitude as Corcyra
> sacrificed to Corinth; though if they could let them weaken each other by mutual conflict,
> it would be no bad preparation for the struggle which Athens might one day have to wage
> with Corinth and the other naval powers. At the same time the island seemed to lie
> conveniently on the coasting passage to Italy and Sicily. (1.44)

To avoid open war, however, Athens did not make a traditional alliance, a fully offensive

and defensive one, with Corcyra. Making such an alliance would have been tantamount to

declaring war on one of Sparta's allies. Instead, the Athenians crafted an innovative defensive

alliance with Corcyra (one with no historical precedent). Pericles played a hand in shifting public

opinion to his view and designing the less provocative alliance. It is very likely that without

Pericles the Athenians would have rejected the Corcyrean appeal for assistance, a fateful

decision that put Athens and Sparta on the path to war.

The cautious Athenians only sent Corcyra ten ships (and three strategoi) to reinforce its

fleet of 110. Yet, this small support still showed that Athens was serious about the alliance.

Moreover, the mere sight of Athenian ships could act as a deterrent. Athens's generals were

under strict instructions; "if they sailed to Corcyra and threatened a landing on her coast, or in any of her possessions, they were to do their utmost to prevent it" (1.45). The policy sought to hinder Corinth without fighting its military at sea because that would constitute the use of offensive force.

In the battle of Sybota in 433, Corcyra and Corinth used primitive methods of trireme warfare and lacked discipline and tactical sense. As the battle wore on, the Athenians were drawn into the fight and began ramming Corinthian ships. However, they had waited too long and had to flee with the remaining Corcyrean vessels. Corinth then rowed out again, in attempt to strike a fatal blow to Corcyra's navy. Yet, in dramatic fashion Corinth retreated when a second fleet of Athenian ships approached over the horizon. It is likely that at the last minute, the assembly regretted its decision to send such few ships.

In the battle's aftermath, other cities were now embroiled with Athens. Megara had fought alongside Corinth, and Athens decided to punish it with a peacetime embargo against the city, which was another new policy. Again, this was most certainly one of Pericles' innovations since he fiercely defended it in the assembly. The Megarian Decree, as it is known, was also Pericles' most "striking, and in some ways most puzzling, measure" (Kagan, 2003, p. 207). Through the only peacetime embargo ever documented in the ancient world, Pericles showed Athenian resolve and the ability to punish cities in the Peloponnesian League.

Through the Megarian Decree, Pericles found another inventive way to skirt the application of offensive military force with another Spartan ally. Cut off from Athenian harbors, the embargo strangled the city's economy and offended the Megarians who now joined Corinth and a chorus of other aggrieved Greeks in an effort to make Sparta declare war against Athens.

What explains Pericles' alliance with Corcyra and his unpopular decision to bar Megara from Athenian harbors? A realist would argue that Pericles' decisions were imposed on him by the strategic reality of the inevitable war, which narrowed his choices. Thus, under situational pressures, Pericles would have perceived that he had limited options. I have argued, though, that the Athenians were not eager to ally with Corcyra until Pericles persuaded them otherwise. The Megarian Decree further stoked anti-Athenian sentiment. Pericles did not rescind the decree even as Spartan ambassadors promised that war would be avoided if Athens did so (1.139). In fact, he had a great deal of latitude and could determine Athens's strategic behavior. Unlike any other leader in Athens and Sparta—the Spartans had ignored King Archidamus' advice—Pericles shows that he could steer opinion to his position despite considerable opposition.

A realist could reply that Pericles' calculations were based on the balance of power. He was prescient about the reality of the looming war while lesser figures were merely fretful about the costs of war. Pericles, however, had a plan to fight Sparta, which was arguably designed free from situational pressures. Pericles took the long view. He scrupulously observed the Thirty Years' Peace but then decisively shifted to a hawkish posture toward the Spartans. This behavior points to his coolly rational, strategic understanding of international relations. He could prescribe restraint or aggression when necessary.

However, Pericles' transformative ambitions figured into his strategic decisions. The continued success of his domestic and imperial policies was undergirded by the requisite shift in the Greek balance of power to Athens. Pericles' realism was in service of his ambition. His transformative ambition, which is transmitted with rhetorical flourish in the Funeral Oration, fostered his city's daring character and brought it to its peak. However, for other states, the consequence of this national greatness is that they must contend with a restless, innovative,

177

aggressive, and revolutionary regime. Next I examine how the Athenians justified their behavior

to other Greeks by appealing to contrary arguments: a rationalistic amoral foreign policy versus

their rank superiority over others, which I compare with Pericles' position regarding the moral

status of the empire.

Athenian and Periclean Realism: The Debate at Sparta

Soon after the battle at Sybota, the Athenians and Corinthians fought again at Potidaea

after the latter persuaded this city to rebel against Athens. The incident in distant Epidamnus had

escalated, and conflict was reverberating throughout the Greek world, unsettling allies in both

blocs. Whereas fear and anger against Athens was at a high, Sparta's credibility as the leader of

the Peloponnesian League was being questioned. Although Sparta controlled the league's foreign

policy, her poverty made her susceptible to Corinth's ascending ambitions. That city was

wealthy and could equip a fleet of 100 triremes. In 432 the Spartans convened a congress in

which her allies as well anyone who had a complaint against Athens gave voice to their

grievances. Athenian envoys who purportedly were in the city on some other business attended

and spoke at the debate. In contrast to Pericles' elevated defense of the Athenian way of life in

the Funeral Oration, the Athenian speech frankly admits the city's pursuit of its self-interest in

international relations, regardless of what justice demands (Pangle & Ahrensdorf, 1999).

The Athenians justified their dual pursuit of security and glory at the expense of justice in

two opposing ways. The envoys didn't bother to address grievances levied against Athens.

Instead, they issued blunt amoral arguments such as that Athens, like all other states, was merely

compelled to follow its interests. Acting in one's favor is a natural truth that is played out in

practice. The creation and perpetuation of the empire are products of human impulses that are

178

beyond the individual's control and lie outside the power of justice. States also feel these compelling pressures and act on them; they are "fear, honor, and interest" (Thucydides 1.76). Athens may be a mighty empire, but its fear is identical to that of others. Self-interest is characterized by compulsion. The root of interest is psychological necessity that perceives that the world is circumscribed by necessity. The identification of the latter confirms that necessity and moral choice are irreconcilables in international relations.

However, the Athenians' amoral thesis about necessity was betrayed by their insistence that they, who were the more realistic of nations, do not fully succumb to such needs. The envoys' seeming candor that they were caught, like all others, in the necessities of the human condition was belied by their belief in Athenian exceptionality. The city carried itself in such a way that she was worthy of her position (1.76.2). The envoys argue that they did not transcend human nature but still showed a modicum of moderation: "praise is due to all who, if not so superior to human nature as to refuse dominion, yet respect justice more than their position compels them to do" (1.76). The envoys failed to communicate how they were capable of even a minimum of justice when they are convinced that a realistic order admits no moral choice.

Yet the Athenians' slippage from an amoral argument into one that demonstrates their superior values and willful exercise of them reveals that the logic of necessity is strained by another psychological compulsion that the envoys are unaware of, the belief that one's actions merit rewards or punishments. The Athenians want it both ways, impunity from moral wrongs committed on account of fear, honor, and interest, and praise for the restraint they show for reasons not linked to the former motives. However, as Ahrensdorf (1997) suggests, the Athenian position is unreasonable insofar as an appeal to amorality is inconsistent with one to nobility.

A realist nation must never blame itself for acting unjustly, ignobly, or impiously in its pursuit of what it thinks is in its best interest, for it cannot reasonably expect itself to rise above or transcend its concern for its self-interest in any way (see 2.63.2–3; cf. 3.44–45 with 40.4). Therefore such a realist nation must never believe that it is morally superior in any way to any other nation. It must forswear the belief that it deserves rewards or benefits of any kind by virtue of its noble or just superiority to self-interest. It must deny itself the pleasure of believing that it is in any way a noble or just or holy nation. (p. 252)

The Athenians' disparagement of tradition and justice as well as the belief in their noble singularity concur with Pericles' thesis in the Funeral Oration. However, Pericles never admits that he believes in the envoys' amoralism; he was likely aware of such an idea though. As such, Pericles' thought tries to reconcile the inconsistent positions. He secularized nobility, and the Athenian project's worth was verified by the ground of its accomplishments. He does not admit to the amoral character of international relations but believes that Athens's noble purposes are shackled by conventional morality. Its moral superiority is witnessed through its ambition and the deeds of the daring Athenians. Pericles suggests that the Athenian citizen is part of an exceptional breed, an individual who has improved on mankind's pedestrian expressions of human nature (2.40). However, his inconsistency is revealed in his belief that Athens's moral greatness, which is proved by the power of the state, is so noble that it merits a transcendent gift, eternal fame for all individuals who die for the city (2.43.2). Even Pericles, who circumscribes the noble to earthly actions and power, succumbed to the moral hopes that he dismisses, a transcendent (divine) assurance that one's worth is justified.

After the contending parties spoke, the Spartan leadership deliberated on the issue. King Archidamus feared a protracted engagement with no clear outcome. Although he did not rule out war with Athens, he cautioned the Spartans not to declare war hastily. Archidamus proved prescient about the Athenians' resolve and the war's length. However, his advice was ignored. The aggrieved allies and the shocking candor of the Athenians inflamed the passions of Sparta's

hawkish faction, which are summed up well by the Spartan ephor Sthenelaidas' rallying cry for war: "Vote therefore, Spartans, for war, as the honor of Sparta demands, and neither allow the further aggrandizement of Athens, nor betray our allies to ruin, but with the gods let us advance against the aggressors" (1.86). The majority voted that Athens had broken the treaty, and they declared war on Athens.

Pericles' War Strategy

After the declaration of war, cooler tempers prevailed in Sparta. Over the course of a year, it seemed to try and avoid war by sending envoys to Athens with various requests. When the Athenians refused to entertain the Spartan demands, they made a final proposal that Athens give independence back to the subject cities, and "they proclaimed publicly and in the clearest language that there would be no war if the Athenians withdrew the Megarian Decree" (1.139).

The Athenians held a decisive assembly regarding Sparta's demands. They were divided into two camps, those who urged for war and others who believed that the Megarian decree was pure folly (1.139.4). Pericles came forward and gave the definitive speech.

He refused concessions to the Spartans on principle because Sparta had failed to abide by the legalistic clause of the Thirty Years' Peace, which stipulated that cities submit disputes to arbitration. Thus, any concession to Sparta amounted to direct interference in Athens's political affairs. Pericles warned that this was a slippery basis for negotiations because if they accommodated Sparta on the "trifle" that was the Megarian Decree, they "will instantly have to meet some greater demand, as having been frightened into obedience in the first instance; while a firm refusal will make them clearly understand that they must treat [the Athenians] as equals" (1.140.5).

Pericles was willing to incur the costs of war in 431 but not in 445. Both times he knew that the Peloponnesians would likely prevail in a traditional land war. What changed in Athens's favor was that he could now persuade the citizens to fight an unconventional war and also hold them to it long-term. He planned a long war at sea that relied on Athens's projection of power and wealth and exploited the enemies' weakness, which was a lack of naval experience and unfamiliarity with a protracted engagement.

Conventional Greek warfare was short and brutal and ended decisively. The Greeks understood war as a human activity that exercised a citizen's virtue and fulfilled his duty. War reflected the Greek moral code, which was inextricably tied to a conception that conflict was at work in nature. The city waging war did not intend to annihilate its adversary or even seek to destroy its army; rather, the object of challenging another city to fight was to "force it to acknowledge its superior strength as the outcome of a test as rule-bound as a tournament" (Vernant, 1996, p. 38).

As an invading army made its way into enemy territory, it began to lay waste to the countryside. Courage, honor, and sheer necessity demanded that the defending city's army go out to secure its territory. The decisive battle was fought on chosen ground that would make it easier for each hoplite army to form phalanxes. The soldier ranks held closely together and created a mass wall of shields that made frontal assaults difficult. Opposing phalanxes would collide against each other with the aim of maintaining the cohesion of one's front line while breaking the enemy's formation. The courage of the men in the front ranks made all the difference.

The hoplite soldier was a free adult male of the polis who had enough wealth to procure his own arms and armor. Citizens across classes were hoplites, yet they did not constitute the majority of the population. Still, hoplites held political power and moral authority above the

182

common people. Marching in the phalanx epitomized the civic nature of the Greek military experience. The citizen-soldier army was a microcosm of the political community, and fighting forces represented the agonal clash of cities. In battle, each hoplite depended on the man next to him for his protection where he lay exposed. Hoplites were armed with a 9-foot pike and short sword, and they carried shields in their left hands that were 3 feet in diameter. The shield protected the soldier's left half, but not the right so he needed his neighbor's shield where he lay exposed. This is why hoplites fought in tight formations, as each man tried to keep behind his neighbor's shield (Lazenby, 2004, p. 9). To hold the line and control the field were enough to claim victory over one's adversary. The more disciplined and well-trained army usually succeeded, and the Spartan polis was fully dedicated to fielding the best army.

In order to win the war, the Athenians could not engage the Peloponnesian army on land. Pericles told the Athenians that they had no chance in a conventional battle: "in a single battle the Peloponnesians and their allies may be able to defy all Hellas" (1.141.6). However, there was no other proven way to win a war against a land force. Thus, Pericles sought to exploit the military and resource differences between Sparta and Athens:

> As to the war and the resources of either party, a detailed comparison will not show the inferiority of Athens. Personally engaged in the cultivation of their land, without funds either private or public, the Peloponnesians are also without experience in long wars across the sea, from the strict limit which poverty imposes on their attacks upon each other. Powers of this description are quite incapable of often manning a fleet or often sending out an army: they cannot afford the absence from their homes, the expenditure of their own funds; and, besides, they have not command of the sea. (1.141)

Pericles devised a fully defensive strategy against Sparta. The Athenians would never go out to meet the invading Peloponnesians. He would test the enemy's will, hoping to convince it that conventional tactics were futile. Sparta might march into Attica every summer and devastate Athens's countryside, but as long as Athens controlled the sea, it was invincible. In his speech

Pericles advises the Athenians that if they "would remain quiet, take care of their fleet, refrain from trying to extend their empire in wartime and thus putting their city in danger, they would prevail" (2.65.7).

Pericles' defensive strategy would dampen Spartan morale by making them tire of invading Attica without inflicting any real harm. Athens's best shot at winning was through the empire. It could afford to import all the food it needed while maintaining the fleet for several years. Kagan has estimated how long Pericles planned to hold out. Considering the costs to the naval fleet, money in the treasury, and yearly revenue and tribute, he believes that Pericles planned the war to last no more than three years. Pericles was likely expecting that Sparta would recall the campaigns.

This strategy used Athens's fortifications, military capabilities, and vast resources. Its naval fleet was the largest and best trained in the Greek world. Long walls encircled the city and connected it to the port of Piraeus, which made it invulnerable to attack. Pericles had built a financial reserve that could sustain the fleet and the city's inhabitants.

Although these resources were unique to Athens, there is no reason that they naturally led to Pericles' war strategy. Consistent with his transformative ambition, Pericles abandoned traditional attachments. His leadership aimed at redefining the polity's conception of itself in such a way that citizens would value empire more than their territory and realize that the perpetuating the empire was above any private loss:

> Consider for a moment. Suppose we were islanders: can you conceive a more impregnable position? Well, this in future should, as far as possible, be our conception of our position. Dismissing all thought of our land and houses, we must vigilantly guard the sea and city. No irritation that we may feel for the former must provoke us to a battle with the numerical superiority of the Peloponnesians. A victory would only be succeeded by another battle against the same superiority: a reverse involves the loss of our allies, the source of our strength, who will not remain quiet a day after we become unable to march

against them. We must not cry over the loss of the houses and land but of men's lives; since houses and land do not gain men, but men them. And if I had thought I could persuade you, I would have bid you go out and lay them waste with your own hands, and show the Peloponnesians that this at any rate will not make you submit. (1.143.5)

Although Athens was a cosmopolitan city, the majority of people lived in the countryside and were not happy to abandon their homes. The idea of laying waste to their private possessions was unthinkable. Thucydides says, "[D]eep was their trouble and discontent at abandoning their houses and the hereditary temples of the ancient state, and at having to change their habits of life and to bid farewell to what each regarded as his native city" (2.16). Pericles' speech demonstrates that he was not attached to any traditional mores, and the city-dwelling masses and naval rowers certainly must have favored his strategy. I think that we are left to infer that, owing to Pericles' reputation, persuasion, a bit of cajoling, and the preponderance of resources he poured into the walled city, his policy passed and citizens evacuated the countryside.

Kagan (1991) and Josiah Ober (1996) have argued that Pericles' strategy was not only original but also completely rational. Abandoning homes and a defensive strategy were unorthodox methods so contrary to the ordinary passions and attachments of Athens's citizens that, for Pericles to discharge them, Kagan has said, "his greatness lay not only in conceiving the plan and implementing it decisively by yielding all of Attica instead of taking half measures, but, most of all, in being able to put the plan through a democratic assembly by the force of his personality and to see that it was carried out" (1991, p. 230).

Pericles' plan not only changed the Hellenistic rules of war (Ober, 1996, pp. 51–71), it also was the beginning of a long-term strategic analysis of war planning and waging. He substituted tactics for grand strategy, brute force with financial resources, and the predominance

185

of manly honor in agonal warfare with a psychological war of endurance. If it would not exact heavy losses on Sparta, Athens would project its power with the fleet around the Peloponnesus.

Kagan and Ober do not comment on how Pericles' radical policy did violence to the daring character that he had promoted throughout his leadership. If Pericles planned the war to last no more than three years, did he anticipate that glory-lusting individuals would accept being holed up within the city's walls for that long, especially if they began to suffer reverses? While Pericles had proven that he could articulate and mold the Athenian temper toward his imperial project in the Funeral Oration, he was now advocating a policy that cut against the grain of that temper and his own transformative project. Secondly, in the Funeral Oration Pericles promotes the common defense via imperial aggrandizement. In reality, however, he asked the Athenians to defend the city for the sake of the empire but at substantial personal losses.

In addition, was this a sound strategy to win? Pericles used some of the Athenians' strategic advantages by sending expeditions and launching assaults from sea. Yet, he did not lay siege to other poleis, which is because his grand strategy rested on a psychological dimension that Spartan futility would wither away its commitment to the war.

Athens launched a series of hit-and-run operations against Peloponnesian coastal cities. With a 100 ships, Pericles invaded Megara, which was in the Peloponnesian League. It was the largest Athenian force ever assembled, and it shows that in Pericles' mind it was a key component of his strategy (2.31.2). They ravaged the territory and then retired; subsequently, they invaded Megara annually, up until 424 (4.66). The goal of these invasions was to force the city to negotiate a separate peace or join the Athenian alliance: "their territory spanned the Isthmus, and even their neutrality would presumably have denied invading Peloponnesian armies passage to Attica" (Lazenby, 2004, p. 38).

However, without trying to seize and hold a ground, Pericles relied mostly on the expectations that Sparta's ineffectual invasions would require it to switch tactics or give up. As a result, Pericles put Sparta in the driver's seat. The defensive policy was rational, but he left victory to chance. Maybe Sparta would suffer reverses, its domestic system might strain, the Helots could revolt, and her allies might defect. Athens could have accelerated these problems by establishing a base in Spartan territory, which it finally did six years into the war and too much success.

Pericles did not match defense with a proper offensive strategy to make the war costly for Sparta. His rationalism took for granted that citizens would bear the costs of an empire at rest. The windfall of revenues, constant political activity, and daring that defined his and a younger generation of Athenians came to a complete halt.

However, the greatest reverse to his strategy was dealt by an event that Pericles could not have predicted. A plague decimated Athens's population and severely dampened morale. Allies defected from the league, and Pericles died from it two years into the war. The plague demolished Periclean ambition and cool rationalism. A third of the population also suffered excruciating deaths. People turned to selfishness and vice and disregarded each other, eroding the bonds of the community. It was so corrosive to Athens's social fabric that the people despaired; they turned on Pericles and sought peace with Sparta, which refused the ambassadors' entreaties.

Even Pericles adjusted his expectations after this incident. He abandoned his zealous goals for sober recommendations and substituted his praise for the Athenians character with harsh reprimands toward the unnerved citizens. He appealed to their egoistic interests, which reminded them that they could not meet these desires without the advantages of national

187

greatness (2.60.2). Whereas the idea of survival is absent in the Funeral Oration, he now revisits the matter: "[s]ince then a state can support the misfortunes of private citizens, while they cannot support hers, it is surely the duty of everyone to be forward in her defense" (2.60.2).

Pericles plays on their concern for security but still argues that the nobility of the city's glory warrants their continued efforts (2.63). However, he admits the empire's superiority rests on ambiguous moral foundations. Despite a lot of anti-Athenian sentiment among allies and foes alike, he argues that the Athenians cannot just walk away, "for what [they] hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny; to take it perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is unsafe" (2.64).

Pericles convinced the Athenians. Once they purged themselves of their need to punish someone for their ills, by fining their leader, they renewed their war efforts, and their confidence was restored in him.

Conclusion

Pericles was an imperialist, but a prudent one who calibrated imperial expansion and war strategy to Athens's resources, which he gauged accurately (2.65.5). He knew that his people were too enthusiastic, too whimsical, and obsessed with gain. However, he directed these impulses and engineered a moderate and conservative policy that brought the empire's greatness to its height (2.65.5).

Pericles' war strategy was not bold, but it did not hazard the city's security. After his death, his prudent course was lost amid the cacophony of policies that allowed "private ambitions and private interests, in matters apparently quite foreign to the war, to lead them into projects unjust both to themselves and to their allies" (2.65).

Lesser leaders such as Cleon, Nicias, and Alcibiades possessed strong attributes but lacked the Periclean blend that enabled him to exercise an independent control over the multitude, "to lead them instead of being led by them" (2.65.8). Cleon was patriotic but immoderate. Nicias was esteemed for his prudence. His conservative nature assuaged the public's uncertainty and fears, but his cautiousness was paralyzing. Alcibiades was bold and intelligent; his desire for personal glory knew no bounds. He embodied both the daring spirit and also the grander egoistic ambition of the Athenian; his statecraft stoked the imperial impulses that Pericles had so diligently tried to restrain during the war. Alcibiades' irrepressible ambitions and Nicias' trepidations led to the catastrophic Sicilian expedition.

This disaster exposed how the post-Periclean state failed to match resources and strategy to foreign-policy aims. Athens lost thousands of men, almost the entire fleet of ships, and the allies broke out in rebellion. This failure produced civil discord in the city, from which they finally fell victims too. Conversely, Sparta proved capable of waging a long-term war and adapted to naval warfare, scoring some surprising victories against Athens. In 404, 27 years after the war started, Athens surrendered to Sparta: the fleet and alliance were dismantled, the city's wall turned down, and its foreign policy was commanded by Sparta, which then imposed the Thirty, the infamous oligarchic regime.

The missing element in Pericles' transformative ambition was that he relied so greatly on his statesmanship. He proved that he had a unique ability to guide Athens's imperial might and resolve tension between democracy and empire. But to whom could he pass the torch when he was gone?

The problem that leaders with transformative ambition like Pericles and Bismarck present to their polities and the world is that they can set forces in motion, which, if not entirely beyond

the control of their less capable successors, can certainly overwhelm them. Transformative

ambition and the reality of practical politics present a paradox. The former is willful; it seeks to

bend the rules toward the demands of a single human being. The latter is indifferent to any

particular desire or hope; it is the realm of impersonal and shifting circumstances. These two

forces can align harmoniously or clash. Pericles of Athens experienced the duality of this

phenomenon. He drew out the strengths and abated the weaknesses of democratic energy and

freedom and in his lifetime achieved great things that brought the Athenian empire and

democracy to their peaks. Yet, he learned how fragile the summits of human greatness are when

an unpredictable calamity undermined his polity's character, nerve, and social bonds. While

Pericles is proof that a statesman's intervening influence can fundamentally change the course of

international and domestic politics, he also shows that in the long run transformative ambition

may not produce its intended effects.

Conclusion

Realists believe that as long as states continue to predominantly compete for power in an anarchic world, then realist theory, which seeks to explain competition among great powers, is the best analytic tool to explain the patterns of international politics. Realists care about how changes in the balance of power affect state behavior. The most significant change in a realist world is when the number of dominant powers, for example, is reduced from many to two, or even to one. Such a change has a profound effect on diplomacy and how leaders cooperate with each other, because a new arrangement of power in the international system requires all actors to reassess their position. Although changes in the distribution of power in the international system have important ramifications for international politics, the essential features of the system remain intact because anarchy persists and states continue to practice power politics.

Leaders arm their states and seek allies because they want to buttress state security, providing certainty in an uncertain world. Yet a leader's relative power and security in the present provides little comfort because all leaders are jockeying for a position that will make their states safe from present and future threats. With this potential for flux, leaders are motivated to employ tactics and devise strategies that increase state power. Strong states try to remain strong by limiting the opportunities and freedom of weak states, while weak states can balance against stronger powers and attempt to resist them.

A leader's possession of a relative advantage over other states makes all the difference in a realist world; as such they are eager and ambitious to change their environments and tilt the balance of power in their favor. However, transformations in the distribution of power are never deep enough to lead to a wholesale restructuring of the system, because such a change would

require that the international system cease to be anarchic. Realists argue that a genuinely new order in state-to-state relations can only occur when anarchy is replaced by a political system. For example, such a substitution could take place if states were incorporated into larger institutions that take on the functions that states do, such as security. Instead of focusing on security competition, leaders would work on ways to cooperate more and coordinate their efforts around political goals, such as increasing state wealth and promoting greater global governance.

Realists correctly point out that a fundamental shift in the organization of the international system has yet to take place. This is why they are quick to criticize proponents of democratic peace, who claim that democracies completely change leaders' perceptions of security, because a global democratic order has never existed and is unlikely to come into being any time in the near future. Realists claim that as long as the international system provides high incentives for security maximization, leaders will be motivated by problems of power and they will worry about discerning the intentions of their friends and enemies. The realist perspective presumes that change is possible only insofar as it preserves the basic continuity of the international system. Even though a realist leader can shift the balance of power in his favor he cannot transform the world. Leaders reproduce anarchy again and again.

The fundamental problem with the way realists conceive of leaders is that they always posit them as inheriting an existing position and try to explain what the leader does or fails to do with that power. This explains why for realists like Henry Kissinger, the mark of a good statesman is his ability to define the national interest in a way that accurately represents state power, make few mistakes, and take advantage of opportunities. While the distribution of power can be stable, it can also be in flux, which is when realist leaders should respond to these shifts; they can anticipate and adapt to change, but the international world is not of their own making.

While it is true that the world has not evolved into something other than an anarchic order, the realist bias for continuity over change makes it difficult to comprehend the ways in which new practices and new rules of international politics are created or transformed. In this dissertation, I have argued that realism's failure to account for such changes is partly caused by its exclusion of the crucial role that transformative leaders play in shaping international relations. To understand this role however, requires a novel approach to the study of leaders and international politics.

First, I have shown that leaders' ambitions exceed the necessities of realist politics because foreign policy is informed by domestic political projects. The transformative leaders I have examined in this dissertation were instructive and used innovative methods to solve political problems. They applied novel diplomatic and political concepts to foreign policy while introducing new modes into their regimes. Leaders with transformative ambition found revelatory ways to solve the perennial problems of war and peace, and in the process they simultaneously reshaped the domestic and international order.

Like Otto von Bismarck, leaders may completely redefine the rules of diplomacy to their great advantage. Bismarck sought German unification by halting the progress of Prussian liberals and introducing Europe to the practice of Realpolitik. He single-handedly overturned the rules of diplomacy by straining and weakening the system he inherited. Bismarck's contemporaries had long abided by the principles established by Metternich at the Congress of Vienna; once he had changed their world, they had to learn to live within a Bismarckian one. Pericles' transformation of Athens's democracy and empire also depended on his introduction of various innovations into Athenian and Greek foreign affairs. Pericles's domestic and foreign policies reinforced each other and amplified the effects of the Periclean project. The democratic revolution that Pericles

inaugurated primed the Athenians to extend the imperial project as more citizens realized the stakes they had in the empire.

Pericles anticipated his citizenry's needs and growing desires; he restructured Athenian politics and the empire. His grand strategy had three components. Athens was to exert military, economic, and cultural control in its region. Yet, at the same time, Pericles found opportunities to expand the city-state's influence into Persia and throughout the Greek world. Under Pericles, Athens learned to project its power, and with this advantage the city hoped to deprive Sparta of its role as the dominant Greek power. Pericles not only managed power; he also defined and directed the ethos of Athenian daring.

In Bismarck's and Pericles' cases, their ambition to remake the international order stemmed from domestic projects. As transformative leaders, they consciously undermined old practices. As established rules and old orders give way to new ones, less effective leaders risk losing their rank and ability to influence international affairs. Conversely, leaders who are products of the new system and may not have the command of a Pericles or a Bismarck can lose status because they inherit the new orders but are not fully conscious of what holds the domestic and international orders together. Some examples of these more personally ambitious yet immoderate successors include Wilhelm II in Germany and Alciabiades of Athens.

Leadership is an independent force; it shapes the world because leaders can anticipate change. Leaders with transformative ambition commit their genius and political talents to the practice of leadership. Through leadership they may reinvent the rules of politics and can change how citizens and states view the world. Bismarck exemplifies this kind of leadership, and his case is especially important because realists have thoroughly appropriated the statesman's political judgment and actions as the embodiment of realist statecraft. For realists like Kissinger,

194

Bismarck's foreign policy not only affirms the central precepts of realist theory, but it also proves that leaders who master the art of Realpolitik do best. Thus, a realist can conclude that Bismarck was prudent because he was an astute practioner of Realpolitik, skilled, and had a superior character. He correctly assessed that Prussia's security could be enhanced through an expansion of the country's borders, and he accomplished this goal through wars of conquest that strengthened Prussia, debilitated Austria, and led to German unification.

Realist scholars, however, tend to elevate Bismarck's leadership because he perfectly exploited opportunities but could also show restraint. In other words, he did not let his personal ambition or foibles get in the way of calibrating Germany's security needs to accurate assessments of state power. In addition, realists applaud his shrewd ability to enter into active alliances in all directions; and his genius for the art of Realpolitik simply proves he was capable of discerning and applying realist principles. What they fail to realize is that Bismarck's superior realism can be explained by the fact that he created a world governed by Realpolitik. Realism flowed from Bismarck's deliberation.

I argued previously that Bismarck understood history as a universal movement. His view of the world was more complex than is recognized by the realist's structural assumptions about the international system. Bismarck developed his view of history, which includes the role of states and people, through a combination of political thought and experience. At some level, this giant of European diplomacy believed that the individual mattered little. The force of circumstance, not a single person's moral predilections, dictates history. As such, Bismarck saw politics as the art of the possible and not a stage for gaining high honors or personal glory, which is why Bismarck was a transformative leader. His policies did not just respond to actual events but were also designed to meet all unforeseen contingencies. Although he did not think an

individual could make history, he believed that a statesman could learn from history and lead the state to some greater purpose.

Bismarck's realism was lodged between his view of a destined but undisclosed history and his understanding of human freedom. While history follows a definite and rational trend, the content of history is not disclosed fully to statesmen. This limit of human understanding also constrains man's freedom since a political actor can never be sure if he is acting for or against his state's historical destiny. Nevertheless, Bismarck did believe he possessed a historical sense; he could discern the relations among forces and events but it was impossible to master them. Bismarck's skepticism shaped his political ambition differently than the transformative ambitions of statesmen who desire to do immortal work. The latter consciously wish to leave a mark on the world, which they try to do by bringing a novel and coherent political order into being. Yet Bismarck's political and moral compass is more difficult to pin down because he did not rigidly adhere to any policy, political order, or moral code. Throughout his career he seemed to prefer a conservative order. However, as events unfolded in Europe, many of his own making, he breached Prussia's traditional alliances with conservative Austria. Bismarck ended the slow march for German unity through the process of consent; rather, he unified by conquest. As long as Bismarck had a strong grasp over foreign affairs, relations of power would dictate Germany's politics and shape the continent. As a result, Bismarck turned Prussia into a large and successful military monarchy. While liberal politics declined, Germany's state power grew at a tremendous pace as the forces of the economy and industry were unleashed. Between 1862 and 1871, Prussia became the dominant continental power after winning wars against Denmark, Austria, and France.

Bismarck's rejection of traditional politics and acceptance of amoral superior force as the final arbiter gave him a steely view of international politics. This unromantic political disposition and his practice of Realpolitik are why realists have placed him in the pantheon of realist statesmen. Yet, his realism, which transformed the international system, undermines some key realist premises. Germany's sole political aim became power: Germany for the sake of German power. Yet among German leaders, only Bismarck, whose political relativism gave him a sense of measure, reigned in this force that became unhinged from any moral or political purpose. Bismarck was a political and moral relativist. His successors however did not accept a relativistic analysis of German power. They inherited what they believed was limitless might. Pride trumped sobriety. This pride gave way to the belief that power was the just desert of German supremacy, which, to the disastrous consequences witnessed in the twentieth century, was the dangerous ideology that replaced the Bismarckian order.

Realism cannot explain why Bismarck so perfectly espoused and practiced realist statecraft without appealing to aspects of his character. The leader as individual is the proper lens through which we must understand Bismarck. Yet, scholars will be seriously disappointed in the personality assessments of such leaders because these explanations exaggerate the importance of repressed, idiosyncratic, and underlying personality motives. Certainly, every individual's personality matters for what he does. After all, the personality is composed of needs, motives, unsatisfied desires that intrude on even the most sober and self-aware individuals. Personality traits can tell us some things about leaders' political behavior. However, for personality scholars, leaders are always a step behind their perceived ambitions and intentions because leaders' personality is the product of unconscious drives and the development of idiosyncratic traits. As a

197

consequence, leaders are not quite aware of why they do what they do. Leaders might have strong political motives but they cannot articulate their ambition precisely.

Psychological interpretations of leadership conceive that all leaders desire some fundamental unconscious fulfillment. These needs can only be met in public life, by acquiring political goods and achieving success. However, personality scholars are not very good at explaining the interaction between leaders' ambitions and political life. They are more interested in constructing models that recreate their subjects' psychological development rather than understand leaders the way they understand themselves. As a result, these schema tend to box leaders into oversimplified types. Some seek power and dominance out of emotional need, others adulation because they are narcissistic, and the less egoistic want affiliation in order to be part of a group. I argued that a more systematic explanation of personality and politics must look at how opportunities in regimes can direct a statesman's drives and energies. The personality development that precedes leaders' political lives can only inform their behavior to a minimal degree, which is especially true of those discussed in this dissertation.

Leaders who demonstrate transformative ambition all undergo a deeper and more fundamental psychological development as political actors. It is the appropriate to vet their mature political thought and political careers. At its core, transformative ambition is a rare phenomenon, but it is always activated in a regime and fulfilled through service to it. The transformative leaders examined in this dissertation were not trying to fulfill unconscious desires or acting just on emotion. They thought of ways of reconciling their ambition with the good of their political communities, which is not to say that leaders' ambition to transform politics and the polity's good were not in tension.

The concept of transformative ambition, which is a component of the overall political character of leaders, improves on the use of personality types because it explains the individual only from visible phenomena: leaders' actions, their words, and the ways society influenced them and they influenced society in turn. What I have done is to present a model of leader character that shows how leaders work freely beyond constraints, but also that the practice of leadership is always anchored in the institutions, moral beliefs, and habits of their political environments.

The notion of a self-interested and strategic leadership, which I presented in Chapter 2, resembles my idea that leaders and their policies are inextricably tied to domestic politics. It posits that the different institutional incentives and disincentives presented to autocrats and democrats are the real cause of what we define as tyrannical and public-spirited leadership. One leadership quality across all regimes, however, is the strategic ambition to gain political power, and the competitive nature of office-seeking institutionalizes this human desire. In general, the ambition for office in democracy promotes a public-minded leadership. Democrats are rewarded for increasing public goods among the whole population. The opposite is true for autocrats: by rewarding their cronies and small base, they can hold on to power for much longer. In addition, autocrats are more successful in maintaining power than leaders of democracies.

The strategic theory of leadership explains the case of Pericles' leadership in the following way. Pericles answered to a democratic population. No matter how influential he was, the demos had the power to reelect him yearly as strategos. Although the position did not carry any formal powers, it was the most prominent position in Athens and coveted by the most ambitious politicians. Although Pericles reached the apex of Athenian power, he proved himself the quintessential public-spirited leader. He amplified democratic participation, promoted the

199

public welfare, and fostered values that cut across classes. Strategic explanations, however, isolate the institution of strategos and are not particularly interested in the interaction of Pericles' character and Athenian politics. The institutional explanation of Pericles as a strategic leader is simple. The office of strategos had no term limits, which mitigated the perverse incentives that term limits created in the legislative council. Pericles was more sensitive to electoral incentives as he faced yearly reelection. All the Athenian general had a motivation to promote the public welfare. In fact, the difference in leaders' success is traced back to how effective each was in elevating the public welfare. Although Pericles was a brilliant promoter of the public good, the strategic model reduces his leadership to political calculus: his finding appropriate policies to remain in power.

It is true that Pericles substantially reformed democratic Athens and reorganized the empire to draw on its vast resources for the city's purposes. Pericles' policies enhanced the power and prestige of the demos and those who supported his leadership and policies. He also proved extremely adroit in using ostracism. Yet, to say that Pericles was simply strategic under appreciates his vast talents and much grander political goals. The strategic perspective is limited because it simplifies political ambition to what is most tangible: office-seeking and leaders' desire to extend their tenure.

In Pericles' case I made a sustained effort to show how leadership characteristics, and the policies that such qualities lend themselves to, are deeply intertwined with a host of political institutions and cultural practices. I recognize a much more complex interaction of political leadership and regime politics than does the strategic perspective. Pericles' ambition and the characteristics that made him a successful leader cannot be circumscribed by the formal political system. The competitive nature of Athenian society influenced individuals like him from an early

200

age. His ambition was shaped early on because he came from a cadre of gentlemen groomed for leadership. However, he was habituated to direct and articulate his ambition through personal qualities gained through active participation in Athenian politics. Pericles' rule and the project he undertook to achieve Athenian grandeur is poorly understood without explaining the interaction between his ambition, political character, and Athenian politics over the span of his long political career.

This dissertation improves on the way current theories of international politics understand leaders' ambition and how they confront the perennial issues that nations face in foreign affairs. My study of transformative leadership also raises a number of questions about the consequences of having these intermittent figures rise to power in political regimes. The problem that leaders with transformative ambition like Pericles and Bismarck present to their polities and the world is that they can set forces in motion, which, if not entirely beyond the control of their less capable successors, can certainly overwhelm them. Transformative ambition and the reality of practical politics present a paradox. The former is willful; it seeks to bend the rules toward the demands of a single human being. The latter is indifferent to any particular desire or hope; it is the realm of impersonal and shifting circumstances. These two forces can align harmoniously or clash. Pericles of Athens experienced the duality of this phenomenon. He drew out the strengths and abated the weaknesses of democratic energy and freedom and in his lifetime achieved great things that brought the Athenian empire and democracy to their peaks. Yet, he learned how fragile the summits of human greatness are when an unpredictable calamity undermined his polity's character, nerve, and social bonds. While Pericles is proof that a statesman's intervening influence can fundamentally change the course of international and domestic politics, he also shows that in the long run transformative ambition may not produce its intended effects.

201

Though success is never guaranteed, transformative statesmanship will continue to be exercised as long as men continue to believe that chance is not indifferent to human greatness, action is followed by good fortune, and people desire great leadership. As Abraham Lincoln reminds us, despite the constraints imposed on political office, leaders with greater aspirations than to serve in an office will arise. Faced with mounting crises, magnanimous statesman like Lincoln and Charles de Gaulle put their energy and ardor toward noble purposes and in the service of the common good. War and internal discord each pushed his regime's political and moral elements further, challenging and elevating them toward a good that had not yet been realized.

The leaders discussed in this dissertation took their bearings from what they believed were aims worthy of their ambition. For Lincoln and de Gaulle, it was patriotic duty and self-denial of personal glory in the pursuit of higher principles. The American founders' lust for fame led them to design unprecedented political institutions. Bismarck's pursuit of Prussian power produced a Bismarckian international order that changed history. Fidel Castro's hope to achieve mythical status and desire to bring about a Cuban revolution has led an small and enigmatic country in defiance against the largest superpower the world has ever know. Pericles' and Alcibiades' thirst to bring glory to Athens promoted the greatest cultural achievement of Western civilization and the first model for a society built upon individualism.

We must acknowledge that transformative ambition will continue to make its presence felt in political life and that ever-changing circumstances will produce different expressions of it. As such, the phenomenon of ambition is worthy of further exploration and analysis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Adair, D. (1974). *Fame and the founding fathers* (T. Colbourn, Ed.). New York: Norton.

Ahrensdorf, P. J. (1997). Thucydides' realistic critique of realism. *Polity, 30*(2), 231-265.

Alexander, R. J. (1977). The tyranny of General Stroessner. *Fredom at Issue, vol. 41*.

Ambrosius, L. E. (1987). *Woodrow Wilson and the American diplomatic tradition: The treaty fight in perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Aristotle. (1935). *The Athenian constitution; The Eudemian ethics; On virtues and vices* (H. Rackham, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Aristotle. (1954/1984). *The rhetoric and the poetics of Aristotle* (W. R. Roberts & I. Bywater, Trans.). New York: Random House.

Aristotle. (2002). *Nicomachean ethics* (J. Sachs, Trans.). Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing.

Aristotle. (1997). *The politics of Aristotle* (P. Simpson, Trans.). Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Arnett, J. (1991). Winston Churchill: The quintessential sensation seeker. *Political Psychology, 12*(4), 609-621.

Arthurs, J. (1994). The term rhetor in fifth- and fourth-century B.C.E. Greek texts. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 23*(3/4), 1-10.

Bacon, F. (1985). The essays (J.Pitcher, Ed.). New York: Penguin Books.

Bailey, T. A. (1945). *Woodrow Wilson and the great betrayal*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

Balot, R. (2001). Pericles' anatomy of democratic courage. *The American Journal of Philology, 122*(4), 505-525.

Bartlett, R. C., & Collins, S. D. (1999). *Action and contemplation: Studies in the moral and political thought of Aristotle*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Bimes, T., & Skowronek, S. (1996). Woodrow Wilson's critique of popular leadership: Reassessing the modern-traditional divide in presidential history. *Polity, 29*(1), 27-63.

Boller, P. F. (1996). *Presidential campaigns*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Broneer, O. (1948). Notes on the Xanthippos Ostrakon. *American Journal of Archaeology, 52*(3), 341-343.

Brown, M. E., Lynn-Jones, S. M., & Miller, S. E. (1995). *The perils of anarchy: Contemporary realism and international security*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Burns, J. M. (1978). *Leadership*. New York: Harper & Row.

Byman, D. L., & Pollack, K. M. (2001). Let us now praise great men: Bringing the statesman back in. *International Security, 25*(4), 107-146.

Camp, J. M. (1986). *The Athenian agora: Excavations in the heart of classical Athens.* Thames and Hudson.

Centeno, M. A. (2002). *Blood and debt: War and the nation-state in Latin America*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Chatterjee, P. (1972). The classical balance of power theory. *Journal of Peace Research, 9*(1), 51-61.

Chirot, D. (1994). *Modern tyrants: The power and prevalence of evil in our age*. New York: The Free Press.

Christensen, T. J. (1996). *Useful adversaries: Grand strategy, domestic mobilization, and Sino-American conflict, 1947-1958*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Christensen, T. J. (1997). Perceptions and alliances in Europe, 1865-1940. *International Organization, 51*(1), 65-97.

Jaffa, H. V. (1981). *Statesmanship: Essays in honor of Sir Winston Spencer Churchill*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Clements, K. A. (1987). *Woodrow Wilson: World statesman*. Boston: Twayne.

Codevilla, A. (1981). DeGaulle: Statesmanship in the modern state. In H. V. Jaffa (Ed.), *Statesmanship: Essays in Honor of Sir Winston S. Churchill* (pp. 213-234). Durham, NC:

Carolina Academic Press.

Collins, S. D. (2006). *Aristotle and the rediscovery of citizenship*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cooper, J. M. (2009). *Woodrow Wilson: A biography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Craig, G. A., & George, A. L. (1995). *Force and statecraft: Diplomatic problems of our time* (3rd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.

Dimock, M. E. (1957). Woodrow Wilson as legislative leader. *The Journal of Politics, 19*(1), 3-19.

Dobel, J. P. (1998). Political prudence and the ethics of leadership. *Public Administration Review, 58*(1), 74-81.

Doyle, M. W. (1997). *Ways of war and peace: Realism, liberalism, and socialism*. New York: Norton.

Doyle, M. W., & Ikenberry, G. J. (1997). *New thinking in international relations theory*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Faulkner, R. K. (2007). *The case for greatness: Honorable ambition and its critics*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Fearon, J. D. (1994). Domestic political audiences and the escalation of international disputes. *The American Political Science Review, 88*(3), 577-592.

Fearon, J.D. (1995). Rationalist explanations for war. *International Organization, 49*(3), 379-414.

Forde, S. (1986). Thucydides on the causes of Athenian imperialism. *The American Political Science Review, 80*(2), 433-448.

Fornara, C. W., & Samons, L. J. (1991). *Athens from Cleisthenes to Pericles*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Freeze, G. L. (1997). *Russia: A history*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Freud, S., & Bullitt, W. C. (1967). *Thomas Woodrow Wilson, twenty-eighth president of the United States: A psychological study*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.

Gaulle, C. d. (1960). *The edge of the sword*. New York: Criterion Books.

George, A. L. G., Juliette L. (1964). *Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A personality study*. New York: Dover Publishing.

George, J. L., & George, A. L. (1981). Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House: A reply to Weinstein, Anderson, and Link. *Political Science Quarterly, 96*(4), 641-665.

George, J. L., & George, A. L. (1983). Comments on "Woodrow Wilson re-examined: The mind-body controversy redux and other disputations". *Political Psychology, 4*(2), 307-312.

Gilpin, R. G. (1984). The richness of the tradition of political realism. *International Organization, 38*(2), 287-304.

Gilpin, R.G. (1988). The theory of hegemonic war. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 18*(4), 591-613.

Glaser, C. L., & Kaufmann, C. (1998). What is the offense-defense balance and can we measure it? *International Security, 22*(4), 44-82.

Graham, A. J. (1998). Thucydides 7.13.2 and the crews of Athenian triremes: An addendum. *Transactions of the American Philological Association (1974-), 128*, 89-114.

Greenstein, F. I. (2000). *The presidential difference: Leadership style from FDR to George W. Bush* (2nd ed.). Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press.

Greenstein., F. (1969). *Personality and politics*. Chicago: Markham.

Grieco, J. M. (1988). Realist theory and the problem of international cooperation: Analysis with an amended prisoner's dilemma model. *The Journal of Politics, 50*(3), 600-624.

Guthrie, W. K. C. (1971). *The Sophists: The fifth-century enlightenment* (Vol. 6): Cambridge University Press.

Hagedorn, A. (2007). *Savage peace: Hope and fear in America, 1919*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Hale, J. R. (2009). *Lords of the sea: The epic story of the Athenian navy and the birth of democracy*. New York: Viking.

Hansen, M. H. (1991). *The Athenian assembly in the age of Demosthenes.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Hermann, M. G. (1980). Explaining foreign policy behavior using the personal characteristics of political leaders. *International Studies Quarterly, Vol. 24*(No. 1), 7-46.

Hermann, M. G. (1986). *Political psychology*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Hermann, M.G. (2003). Saddam Hussein's leadership style. In J. M. Post (Ed.), *The psychological assessment of political leaders*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Hermann, M. G., & Hermann, C. F. (1989). Who makes foreign policy decisions and how: An empirical inquiry. *International Studies Quarterly, 33*(4), 361-387.

Hermann, M. G., & Milburn, T. W. (1977). *A Psychological examination of political leaders*. New York: Free Press.

Holloway, C. (Ed.). (2008). *Magnanimity and statesmanship*: Lexington Books.

Hull, V. (2004). *The Battle of Puffendorf*. Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Pub. Co. Inc.

Hyman, J. E. (2006). *The psychology of nuclear proliferation: Identity, emotions, and foreign policy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ikenberry, G. J. (2001). *After victory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jervis, R. (1976). *Perception and misperception in international politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jervis, R. (1978). Cooperation under the security dilemma. *World Politics, 30*(2), 167-214.

Kagan, D. (1969). *The outbreak of the Peloponnesian War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kagan, D. (1974). *The Archidamian War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Kagan, D. (1991). *Pericles of Athens and the birth of democracy*. New York: Free Press.

Kagan, D. (2003). *The Peloponnesian War: Athens and Sparta in savage conflict, 431-404 BC*. London: HarperCollins.

Kagan, D., Hamilton, C. D., & Krentz, P. (1997). *Polis and polemos: Essays on politics, war, and history in Ancient Greece, in honor of Donald Kagan*. Claremont, CA: Regina Books.

Karawan, I. A. (1994). Sadat and the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Revisited. *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 26*(2), 249-266.

Kennan, G. F. (1960). *Russia and the west under Lenin and Stalin*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Keohane, R. O. (1986). *Neorealism and its critics*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Keohane, R. O. (1986). Reciprocity in international relations. *International Organization, 40*(1), 1-27.

Keohane, R. O., & Martin, L. L. (1995). The promise of institutionalist theory. *International Security, 20*(1), 39-51.

Keynes, J. M. (1920). *Mr. Lloyd George's general election*. London: Liberal Publication Department.

Kissinger, H. (1994). *Diplomacy*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Kissinger, H. (1968). The white revolutionary: Reflections on Bismarck. *Daedalus, 97*(3), 888-924.

Kraig, R. A. (2004). *Woodrow Wilson and the lost world of the oratorical statesman*. College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press.

Krasner, S. D. (1983). Third world vulnerabilities and global negotiations. *Review of International Studies, 9*(4), 235-249.

Lacouture, J. (1966). *De Gaulle*. New York: New American Library.

Landy, M. K., & Milkis, S. M. (2000). *Presidential greatness*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Lang, D. (1995). *Woodrow Wilson: Diplomacy and the critique of equilibrium*. Paper presented at the International Studies Association 48th Annual Convention.

Lasswell, H. D. (1930). *Psychopathology and politics*. Chicago: The University of Chicago

Press.

Lasswell, H. D. (1948). *Power and personality*. New York: Norton.

Lazenby, J. F. (2004). *The Peloponnesian War: A military study*. New York: Routledge.

Lebow, R. N. (2001). Thucydides the constructivist. *The American Political Science Review, 95*(3), 547-560.

Legro, J. W., & Moravcsik, A. (1999). Is anybody still a realist? *International Security, 24*(2), 5-55.

Levy, J. S. (1998). Domestic politics and war. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 18*(4), 653-673.

Lincoln, A. (1992). *Selected speeches and writings of Abraham Lincoln I* (introduction by Gore Vidal). Vintage Books/The Library of America.

Lloyd George, D. (1938). *The truth about the peace treaties*. London: V. Gollancz.

Lobell, S. E., Ripsman, N. M., & Taliaferro, J. W. (2009). *Neoclassical realism, the state, and foreign policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Machiavelli, N. (1998). *The prince* (H. C. Mansfield, Trans. 2nd ed.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Mahoney, D. J. (2000). *De Gaulle: Statesmanship, grandeur, and modern democracy*. London: Transaction Publishers.

Mansfield, H. C. (1996). *Machiavelli's virtue*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1984). The new institutionalism: Organizational factors in political life. *The American Political Science Review, 78*(3), 734-749.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2001). *The tragedy of great power politics*. New York: Norton.

Meiggs, R. (1972). *The Athenian empire*: Clarendon Press.

Merelman, R. M. (1981). Harold D. Lasswell's political world: Weak Tea for hard times. *British Journal of Political Science, 11*(4), 471-497.

Meritt, B. D. (1968). *The Athenian tribute lists*: Ascsa.

Mesquita, B. B. d. (2002). Domestic politics and international relations. *International Studies Quarterly, 46*(1), 1-9.

Mesquita, B.B.d., Smith, A., Siverson, R.M., & Morrow, J.D. (2003). *The logic of political survival*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mesquita, B. B. d., & Lalman, D. (1986). Reason and war. *The American Political Science Review, 80*(4), 1113-1129.

Mesquita, B.B.d., & Lalman, D. (1992). *War and reason: Domestic and international imperatives*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Mesquita, B. B. d., Morrow, J. D., Siverson, R. M., & Smith, A. (1999). An institutional explanation of the democratic peace. *The American Political Science Review, 93*(4), 791-807.

Mesquita, B. B. d., Morrow, J. D., Siverson, R. M., & Smith, A. (2004). Testing novel implications from the selectorate theory of war. *World Politics, 56*(3).

Mesquita, B. B. d., & Siverson, R. M. (1995). War and the survival of political leaders: A comparative study of regime types and political accountability. *The American Political Science Review, 89*(4), 841-855.

Mesquita, B. B. d., & Siverson, R. M. (1997). Nasty or nice? Political systems, endogenous norms, and the treatment of adversaries. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 41*(1), 175-199.

Monoson, S. S., & Loriaux, M. (1998). The illusion of power and the disruption of moral norms: Thucydides' critique of Periclean policy. *The American Political Science Review, 92*(2), 285-297.

Morgenthau, H. J. (1978). *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace* (5th ed.). New York: Knopf.

Morgenthau, H. J., & Thompson, K. W. (1982). *Principles & problems of international politics: Selected readings*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Mowle, T. S. (2003). Worldviews in foreign policy: Realism, liberalism, and external conflict. *Political Psychology, Vol. 24*(3), 561-592.

Newell, W. R. (2000). *Ruling passion: The erotics of statecraft in Platonic political philosophy*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Newell, W. R. (2003). *The code of man*. New York: Regan Books.

Newell, W. R. (2009). *The soul of a leader: Character, conviction, and ten lessons in political greatness*. New York: Harper.

Ober, J. (1996). *The Athenian revolution: Essays on ancient Greek democracy and political theory*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ober, J. (2005). *Athenian legacies: Essays on the politics of going on together*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ober, J. (2008). *Democracy and knowledge: Innovation and learning in classical Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Orwin, C. (1994). *The humanity of Thucydides*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Palmer, M. (1989). Machiavellian virtue and Thucydidean arete: Traditional virtue and political wisdom in Thucydides. *The Review of Politics, 51*(3), 365-385.

Palmer, M. (1992). *Love of glory and the common good: Aspects of the political thought of Thucydides*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Pangle, T. L., & Ahrensdorf, P. J. (1999). *Justice among nations: On the moral basis of power and peace*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Pausanias. (1918). *Description of Greece* (W. H. S. Jones, Trans. Vol. III). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pflanze, O. (1958). Bismarck's "realpolitik". *The Review of Politics, 20*(4), 492-514.

Plato. (1995). *Phaedrus* (A. Nehamas & P. Woodruff, Trans.). Indianapolis, IN: Hackett.

Plato. (1998). *Gorgias* (J. H. Nichols, Trans.). Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Plutarch. (2001). *Plutarch's lives* (J. Dryden, Trans.). New York: Modern Library.

Pomeroy, S. B. (1996). *Families in classical and Hellenistic Greece: Representations and realities*. New York: Clarendon Press.

Popper, M. (2005). *Leaders who transform society: What drives them and why we are attracted.* Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers.

Post, J. M. (1983). Woodrow Wilson re-examined: The mind-body controversy redux and other disputations. *Political Psychology, 4*(2), 289-306.

Post, J. M. (2003). *The psychological assessment of political leaders.* Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Post, J. M., & George, A. L. (2004). *Leaders and their followers in a dangerous world: The psychology of political behavior.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Putnam, R. D. (1988). Diplomacy and domestic politics: The logic of two-level games. *International Organization, 42*(3), 427-460.

Rhodes, P. J. (1986). Political activity in classical Athens. *The Journal of Hellenic Studies, 106*, 132-144.

Rhodes, R. A. W., Binder, S. A., & Rockman, B. A. (2006). *The Oxford handbook of political institutions.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Riker, W. H. (1986). *The art of political manipulation.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Rummel, R. J. (1990). *Lethal politics: Soviet genocide and mass murder since 1917.* New Brunswick Transaction Publishers

Rose, G. (1998). Review: Neoclassical realism and theories of foreign policy. *World Politics, 51*(1), 144-172.

Saeger, J. S. (2007). *Francisco Solano López and the ruination of Paraguay: Honor and egocentrism.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.

Saunders, R. M. (1998). *In search of Woodrow Wilson: Beliefs and behavior.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Schroeder, P. (1994). Historical reality vs. neo-realist theory. *International Security, 19*(1), 108-148.

Schultz, K. A. (1999). Do democratic institutions constrain or inform? Contrasting two institutional perspectives on democracy and war. *International Organization, 53*(2), 233-266.

Schweller, R. L. (1992). Domestic structure and preventive war: Are democracies more pacific? *World Politics, 44*(2), 235-269.

Schweller, R. L. (1996). Neorealism's status-quo bias: What security dilemma? *Security Studies, 5*(3), 90 - 121.

Schweller, R. L. (1998). *Deadly imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's strategy of world conquest*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Schweller, R. L. (2004). Unanswered threats: A neoclassical realist theory of underbalancing. *International Security, 29*(2), 159-201.

Seymour, C. (1957). Woodrow Wilson: A political balance sheet. *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, 101*(2), 135-141.

Sheehan, M. (1989). The place of the balancer in balance of power theory. *Review of International Studies, 15*(3), 12.

Simpson, P. (1998). *A philosophical commentary on the Politics of Aristotle*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press.

Sitta Von, R. (1995). The Piraeus - A world apart. *Greece & Rome, 42*(1), 24-37.

Sondrol, P. C. (1991). Totalitarian and authoritarian dictators: A comparison of Fidel Castro and Alfredo Stroessner. *Journal of Latin American Studies, 23*(3), 599-620.

Steinberg, B. S. (2005). Indira Gandhi: The relationship between personality profile and leadership style. *Political Psychology, 26*(5), 755-789.

Stid, D. D. (1998). *The president as statesman: Woodrow Wilson and the constitution*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas.

Stromberg, R. N. (1963). *Collective security and American foreign policy: From the League of Nations to NATO*. New York: Praeger.

Taliaferro, J. W. (2004). *Balancing risk: Great power intervention in the periphery*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Taylor, A. J. P. (1967). *Bismarck: The man and the statesman*. New York: Vintage Books

Thompson, K. W., Morgenthau, H. J., & Brauer, J. C. (1968). *U.S. policy in the far east:*

Ideology, religion & superstition. New York: Council on Religion and International Affairs.

Thucydides. (1996). The landmark Thucydides: A comprehensive guide to the Peloponnesian War (R. B. Strassler, Ed.). New York: Free Press.

Tucker, R. C. (1971). *The Soviet political mind; Stalinism and post-Stalin change* (Rev. ed.). New York: Norton.

Tucker, R. C. (1977). Personality and political leadership. *Political Science Quarterly, 92*(3), 383-393.

Tucker, R. W. (1961). Review: Political realism and foreign policy. *World Politics, 13*(3), 461-470.

Tulis, J. (1987). *The rhetorical presidency*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Vasquez, J. A. (1998). *The power of power politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Vernant, J. P. (1990). Myth and society in ancient Greece. New York: Zone Books.

Vernant, J. P. (1995). *The Greeks*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Walker, S. G. (1983). The motivational foundations of political belief systems: A re-analysis of the operational code construct. *International Studies Quarterly, 27*(2), 179-202.

Walker, S. G. (1995). Psychodynamic processes and framing effects in foreign policy decision-making: Woodrow Wilson's operational code. *Political Psychology, 16*(4), 697-717.

Walt, S. M. (1985). Alliance formation and the balance of world power. *International Security, 9*(4), 3-43.

Waltz, K. (1959). *Man, the state, and war: A theoretical analysis*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Waltz, K. (1979). *Theory of international politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Waltz, K. N. (1988). The origins of war in neorealist theory. *Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 18*(4), 615-628.

Weinstein, E. A., Anderson, J. W., & Link, A. S. (1978). Woodrow Wilson's political

personality: A reappraisal. *Political Science Quarterly, 93*(4), 585-598.

Wendt, A. (1992). Levels of analysis vs. agents and structures: Part III. *Review of International Studies, 18*(2), 181-185.

Wendt, A. (2004). The state as person in international theory. *Review of International Studies, 30*(02), 289-316.

Whittman, D. (1983). Candidate motivation: A synthesis of alternatives. *American Politcal Science Review, 77*, 142-157.

Wilson, W. (1897). Leaderless government. *The Virginia Law Register, 3*(5), 337-354.

Winter, D. G. (2003). Assesing leaders' personalities: A historical survey of academic research studies. In J. M. Post (Ed.), *The psychological assessment of political leaders with profiles of Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton* (pp. 11-38). Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Wohlforth, W. C. (1993). *The elusive balance: Power and perceptions during the Cold War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Yunis, H. (1991). How do the people decide? Thucydides on Periclean rhetoric and civic instruction. *The American Journal of Philology, 112*(2), 179-200.

Zakaria, F. (1998). *From wealth to power: The unusual origins of America's world role*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Zentner, S. J. (1994). Liberalism & executive power: Woodrow Wilson & the American founders. *Polity, 26*(4), 579-599.